

HOW TO PLAY

Simple, creative direction guided 3 musicians on instrumental album

By WILLIAM FOY

LEADER-TELEGRAM STAFF

EAU CLAIRE — Peter Phippen’s philosophy of playing flute music may sound simple: Just play. But those who collaborate with him have discovered how much goes into it.

Percussionist Brian B. Reidinger, an Eau Claire native now of Minneapolis, described how he heard the Eau Claire musician’s advice and how it relates to the new album “Apparitions, Dreams, and Imaginings.”

The collaboration between Reidinger, Phippen and Eau Claire flutist Victoria Shoemaker stands out for the rich melodically expressive interplay between the various wind and percussion instruments the trio utilize.

“Peter and I have known each other for years, all the way back to the rock ‘n’ roll days,” Reidinger said during a Zoom conversation with, in separate locations, Phippen and Shoemaker. His comment alluded to Phippen’s experience as a bassist for groups including Aircraft, the regional band that gained a national following. Reidinger himself has always played rock, including heavier rock.

Since the late 1980s Phippen has focused on traditional flutes from around the world, and Reidinger went on to start his own company. He is a founding partner and longtime creative director, chief composer and producer at Minneapolis-based In the Groove Music. The firm crafts jingles, scores and songs for television, advertising, news, sports and video games.

But Reidinger and Phippen continued to play gigs once in a while, including a memorable one in the late 1990s at The Mode Theater in the small Jefferson County community of Waterloo. This occasion was around 1996, the year Phippen’s “Book of Dreams” flute album (Canyon Records) came out.

“I was driving down there, and I’m thinking, ‘Jeez, I don’t know how well I know these songs,’” Reidinger said. “And I got there and told Peter, ‘I probably should listen to them.’ He was like, ‘Don’t worry about it, Brian.’”

Phippen then gave him one drum; as he recalls it was a mini djembe (a goblet-shaped type of drum originally from West Africa). “So then he looks at me and says, ‘Play,’” Reidinger said.

“I know that feeling,” Shoemaker interjected, reflecting the fact that she is a music teacher and Phippen’s former student who now performs with him on flute projects and in the cover-song duo Virginia Steel.

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Photo by Jonathan Ringdahl

Flutists Peter Phippen and Victoria Shoemaker are pictured performing with percussionist Brian B. Reidinger last year at Kinstone near Fountain City. The three musicians collaborated on the album “Apparitions, Dreams, and Imaginings,” which was released this month.



Photo by Jonathan Ringdahl

Percussionist Brian B. Reidinger performs with flutists Peter Phippen and Victoria Shoemaker last summer at Kinstone near Fountain City. The three musicians are hoping to perform music from “Apparitions, Dreams, and Imaginings” live and possibly continue to record together.

MAIN EVENTS

Daily lineup announced for Blue Ox Music Festival

EAU CLAIRE — With headliners such as Jason Isbell & The 400 Unit, the Sam Bush Band and Shakey Graves, the Blue Ox Music Festival has announced its daily lineup for this year’s event, slated for Aug. 19-21 in the town of Union outside of Eau Claire.

The festival will take place at The Pines Music Park, formerly known as Whispering Pines Campgrounds.

Following are the lineups on the three days:

Thursday, Aug. 19: The Infamous Stringdusters, Horseshoes & Hand Grenades, Lillie Mae, Julian Davis & the Situation, Arkansasauce, Kind Country.

Friday, Aug. 20: Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit, Leftover Salmon, Charlie Parr, Lissie, The Lil Smokies, Pert Near Sandstone, Henhouse Prowlers with



Photo by Alyse Galkjen

Jason Isbell & the 400 Unit have won awards for albums such as “The Nashville Sound.”

Tony Trischka, Sunny War, Jon Stickley Trio, Short Round Stringband, Barbaro, The High 48s, Miles Over Mountains, Good Morning Bedlam, Never Come Down, Pit

Wagon, Doug Otto and the Getaways.

Saturday, Aug. 21: The Sam Bush Band, Shakey Graves, Molly Tuttle, Charley Crockett, Pert Near Sandstone, Kitchen

Dwellers, Them Coulee Boys, Nora Brown, Armchair Boogie, One Way Traffic, Feed the Dog, Intuitive Compass, The Thirsty River, Dig Deep, Katey Belleville, Gabe Barnett.

Three-day and two-day tickets are on sale now, and one-day admissions will become available at a later date based on event capacity. For more information go to blueoxmusicfestival.com or call 715-602-4440.

Book festival hosts virtual event with bestselling author

EAU CLAIRE — Brit Bennett, an award-winning and New York Times bestselling author, will discuss her blockbuster novel “The Vanishing Half” in a virtual presentation at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12.

The event is the first of two presentations this winter sponsored by the Chippewa Valley Book Festival.

Moderated by Allyson Loomis, associate professor of English at UW-Eau Claire, the program will include a casual conversation with Bennett as well as a question-and-answer segment allowing for audience participation.

The free event requires registration. Learn more at cvbookfest.org/festivalevents/bennett.

Winner of the 2020 Goodreads Historical Fiction Award, No. 1 New York Times best seller, and one of Barack Obama’s favorite reads of 2020, “The Vanishing Half” is an emotional family story about African American identical twin sisters in the 1950s and ‘60s. One passes for white and moves to California while the other returns to her tiny southern community to raise her dark-skinned daughter. “The Vanishing Half”

touches on themes of race, class, family, gender, community, love, and the cost of secrets. HBO recently purchased the rights to develop “The Vanishing Half” into a limited series with Bennett as an executive producer.

For the other event hosted this winter by the Chippewa Valley Book Festival, Brandon Taylor, author of “Real Life,” will be take the virtual stage at 7 p.m. Friday, March 12. More details about that event can be found at cvbookfest.org/festival-events/taylor.

The Chippewa Valley Book Festival partners with the Pablo Center at the Confluence, and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Foundation to provide literary programming for all Chippewa Valley residents.

From staff reports

BOOK REVIEW

Authors follow case of racist serial killer

BY LAURA MALT SCHNEIDERMAN
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE (TNS)

“The Killer’s Shadow: The FBI’s Hunt for a White Supremacist Killer” by John Douglas and Mark Olshaker; Dey St. (304 pages, \$16.99).

The names Ted Bundy, Zodiac Killer, Jack the Ripper and Jeffrey Dahmer resonate across America, while the names of other men who committed horrific crimes do not. Such is the case with Joseph Paul Franklin.

Franklin hated Black people and Jewish people. A damaged man with a childhood of abuse, he appointed himself judge and executioner of his hated groups and went on a four-year murder spree starting in 1977. In that year, he shot and killed an interracial couple in Madison, Wisconsin; firebombed a

Chattanooga, Tennessee, synagogue and fired on worshippers, leaving a suburban St. Louis synagogue.

In the Tennessee incident, Franklin thought people were in the synagogue, but none were, so his bomb didn’t kill anyone although it destroyed the building. In the St. Louis incident, one man died and two others were wounded (full disclosure: My family attended services at that synagogue, but didn’t make it on that particular Saturday).

The trademarks of Franklin’s attacks had already emerged in these crimes: anonymous attacks in cities that were far apart. The 1970s was a good time for serial killers in part because law enforcement departments rarely shared information, and what information they did share usually had to be mailed. Computers were in their

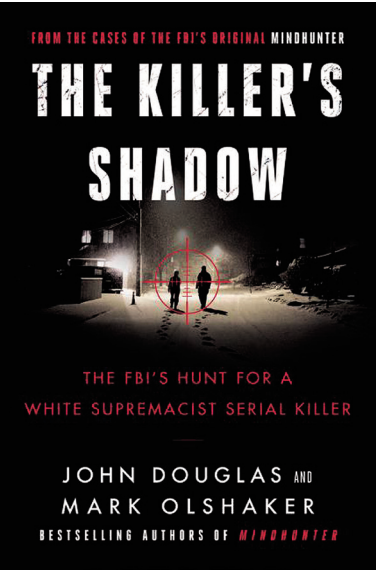
infancy.

So a killer who moved between law enforcement jurisdictions, especially between states, could expect to remain unidentified, at least for a long time. Franklin exploited not only that weakness but also his lack of involvement in his victims’ lives — they didn’t know him and never saw him. In 1978, Franklin shot an interracial couple in Chattanooga; the woman lived. He also shot and seriously wounded Larry Flynt, publisher of the hardcore pornography magazine Hustler, and wounded Flynt’s lawyer. Franklin had been offended by Hustler’s inclusion of interracial sex.

In 1979, Franklin shot and killed a Black Taco Bell manager — the killer was upset that the man worked closely with white women. His deadliest year was 1980. He shot and seriously wounded Urban League

President Vernon Jordan in Fort Wayne, Ind.; shot and killed two Cincinnati cousins in their early teens who were Black merely because he had the chance; shot and killed an interracial couple in Johnstown, Pennsylvania; shot and killed two white hitchhikers in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, whom he believed had dated Black men; and shot and killed two Black men in Salt Lake City.

This book appears to be the first in a series from the man whose professional work was fictionalized in the Netflix series “Mindhunter.” Douglas helped launch the FBI’s unit on criminal profiling. As a tale, this one lacks memorability, mostly because Franklin’s crimes are so similar and his path through the justice system not unlike others’. Douglas’ narrative also



suffers from a couple stumbles — the rabbi at the synagogue in St. Louis was Rabbi Skoff, not Skeff. The FBI building is light yellow, not gray. And he uses the phrase “ass-pucker” one or two too many times. He dredges up a couple chestnuts from his past interviews, like Charles Manson insisting on sitting

on the back of a chair so he would be higher than the FBI agents and David “Son of Sam” Berkowitz admitting with a laugh that his tale of being motivated by a demon inside his neighbor’s dog was a lie.

Douglas wants to link Franklin to today’s social justice climate, and to an extent, that’s valid. Franklin, after all, selected most of his victims because they were Black or had good interracial relationships. But Franklin was also viciously anti-Jewish, a type of hatred not part of today’s activism.

Because of Franklin’s poisonous ideas, Douglas views him as more dangerous than the usual serial killer, who murders for power or pleasure. Luckily, Franklin failed to draw anyone to his cause and failed to make a lasting name for himself.

Musicians eager to record again, play live

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When he and Phippen played for 10 minutes, Reidinger recalled, “I realized we were just having a musical conversation, and it was really one of those great experiences where you realize — we do this in my company’s branding — music is really a universal language. It’s just a different way to communicate.”

Road to the recording

For some time Phippen had been suggesting they record together, which interested Reidinger in part because his company responsibilities have limited his time with the creative side of music.

“I still love playing,” he said. “I’m sitting in my home studio — you can see what I’ve got in the background,” referring to his setup.

Phippen explained his interest in making music with Reidinger has to do with the “just play” approach.

“Sometimes you need a drummer, and I didn’t have to worry about Brian because he can play,” Phippen said. “I didn’t have to tell him what to play. He knew what to play without thinking about it — that’s the important thing.”

Describing how that plays out in the studio, Phippen said: “You might want to say, ‘Let’s do something like this,’ but you don’t want to give them too much information because that will ruin everything. You want to keep yourself out of the music, get out of the way of the music, and let the music happen all by itself. Kind of a Taoist philosophy.”

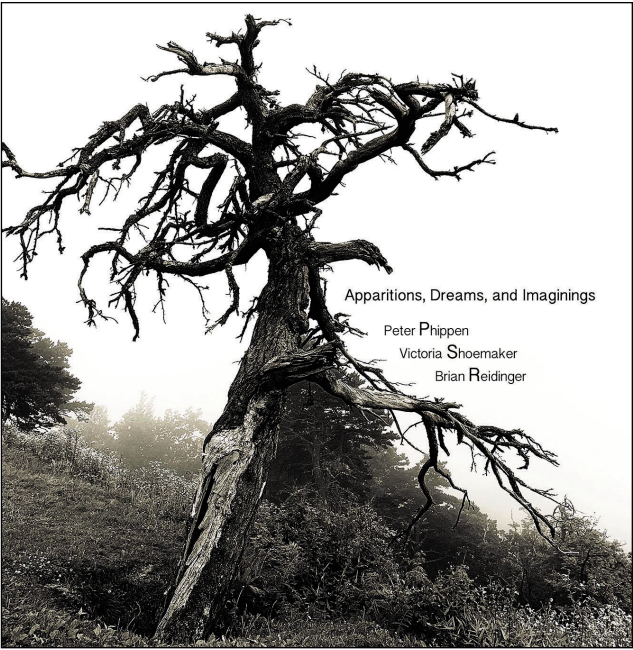
The trio started recording “Apparitions, Dreams, and Imaginings” in 2019 at the studio of Reidinger’s company, to which Phippen and Shoemaker traveled for late night sessions. For the six-song album, they would record one piece on each session, which occurred in 2019 and into 2020.

“We had finished recording all of the tracks by the time everything closed down,” Shoemaker said, “so we were fortunate in that all the manual work of us getting together in the same place was done.”

Handling the big-city traffic in downtown Minneapolis largely went smoothly for Phippen and Shoemaker, except for the evening they tried to find a parking place just before a parade.

Phippen said that, to him, the later hours tend to be the best for recording flute music. “Between 9 (p.m.) and 3 in the morning, that’s when you capture it.”

Shoemaker added: “It’s



This is the front cover of “Apparitions, Dreams, and Imaginings,” an album by Peter Phippen, Victoria Shoemaker and Brian B. Reidinger.

like at the end of the day when everything slows down, you have a chance to really sink into what you’re doing. The rest of the world calms down and slows down and is peaceful. It changes the whole feel. The atmosphere is different.”

Reidinger agreed. “There is a different mindset,” he said. “It’s later at night — to Victoria’s point it just feels more calm,” he said. “Maybe it’s people’s different biorhythms or whatnot. It made it easier to settle into what we were trying to capture.”

“We’re all night owls anyway,” Shoemaker added.

Same page

Once the recording was completed, Reidinger put his engineering skills to work.

“Brian would mix a track, send it to us,” Shoemaker said. “We’d listen to it, Peter would write down what he thought about it, we’d talk about it, send it back. Brian would fix it again and send it back and forth.”

Reidinger said he was impressed by what Phippen found.

“Very quickly I realized he can hear things that not many people I know in this industry can hear,” he said. “So I really relied on him. Any time after that he would send me a note and I would be like, ‘I’ve got to dig down until I find it because he hears something.’”

“Yep,” Shoemaker quipped, attesting to Phippen’s acumen.

For his part, Phippen acknowledged: “I should be deaf because I have cymbal ear from playing rock ‘n’ roll. Here’s what I think it is. It breaks flow. And I’m listening to flow — does that make sense? So anything that disrupts the flow.”

In complimenting Reidinger’s studio prowess, Shoemaker cited all

the layers Reidinger crafted into some of the songs. One example is “The Space Between Moments,” on which Phippen and Shoemaker play African hunter’s whistles. Shoemaker played a matched pair of instruments she got from the Antique Emporium in Eau Claire. Phippen found a couple others that worked from his own collection.

As Phippen explained, “Brian laid them in the background so they’re subliminal. But they’re there. It creates different dimensions to the recording. There’s different layers. You hear the drums and the synthesizer and two flutes; those are in your face. Behind them there’s other things going on, and behind that there’s other things going on.”

The rapport among the musicians helped make the recording process enjoyable.

“We’re all good friends,” Shoemaker said, “and that helps a lot in the studio when you’re working because you trust each other to do what you’re going to do. We show up and Brian’s got his stuff done and it’s done right, and we’re happy. Peter plays and it’s done right, and we’re happy. I play, it’s done right, and we’re happy. And then we go home.”

Reidinger said of these types of projects: “They’re a lot of fun to do. For me they’re fun to do because it’s simply about creating, even with the technological considerations of engineering and all that.



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For the Record

- “Apparitions, Dreams, and Imaginings,” an album by flutists Peter Phippen and Victoria Shoemaker and percussionist Brian B. Reidinger, came out this month and is available at online outlets such as Amazon and iTunes and through peterhippen.com/music. The album also is on streaming services, including Spotify and Apple Music.
- Phippen, Shoemaker and Reidinger will perform from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Saturday, June 19, for the summer solstice at Kinstone, S3439 Cole Bluff Lane, Fountain City. For tickets and more information go to kinstonecircle.com or call 608-687-3332.
- “Apparitions, Dreams, and Imaginings” tracks have been played on “Night Tides,” a radio program airing on KCUR (89.3-FM), the public radio station out of Kansas City, Mo. The program is hosted by Renee Blanche.
- In the 2021 Native American Style Flute Awards, Phippen earned a Lifetime Achievement Award, and Phippen and Shoemaker earned Healing Flute Awards. NASFA created the Healing Flute category to recognize those who share their gift with others during the COVID-19 pandemic.

About the Music

Following are the three musicians who created “Apparitions, Dreams, and Imaginings” and the instruments they played on the album:

- Peter Phippen: antique and contemporary shakuhachi flutes, Olwell bamboo flute, antique West African hunter’s whistles, Coyote Oldman native American style flute, wooden whistle.
- Victoria Shoemaker: Olwell bamboo flutes, Coyote Oldman Mojave flute, Hall Crystal flute, Powell silver flute with Ellis African blackwood headjoint, antique West African hunter’s whistles, wooden whistle, Xavier Quijas Yxayotl Aztec Death Whistle.
- Brian B. Reidinger: frame drums, Spanish Tongue drum, Congas, Dombek, African Talking Drum, Djembe, Metal Pot, Contemporary Bass Drums, Old World Shakers, Piano, Ambient Keyboard Textures.

Beyond all that, I still get to do music I enjoy with people I enjoy. That’s worth its weight in gold to me.”

For Phippen, that process went smoothly, in part because he and Shoemaker have been playing music together for 8½ years and he’s been making music with Reidinger “forever.”

“It was just super easy,” he said. “I trust Brian; he’s a great engineer. He’s got great ears, I don’t have to worry. And I don’t have to worry about Victoria.”

Reidinger said he would make another album with Phippen and Shoemaker “in a second,” and the flutists agreed. They also hope to play live when schedules and COVID-19 cooperate. They do have a performance scheduled for the summer solstice June 19 at Kinstone, a beautiful natural space outside Fountain City, where they performed for last year’s summer solstice and autumnal equinox.



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