

# Before There Was Time

Lynn David Newton

... as remembered from the perspective of June 26, 2001

## Point of Origin

These annals describe the volume of recordings titled *Before There Was Time*, made by my band in Toronto in January 1968, while we were living in Buffalo, New York, and also recount of some of our experiences of that era.

A detailed account of the band's history, along with recording notes, goes with the first volume of the band's demos, titled *Dog Days*. Those recordings were all made later than the ones described here, and the previous notes were conceived in the assumption that there would never be an occasion to write more. To read a more comprehensive discussion of our saga than is contained herein, I recommend you read the history section of *Dog Days—The Story of Think Dog!*

Unexpectedly, near the completion of *Dog Days*, Tom and Ellen McFaul ungaraged a reel-to-reel tape copy of the work we did in Toronto and sent it to me. These recordings had been missing for over three decades, and I had given up hope of ever hearing them again. Subsequently, in the process of transferring the recordings to disk, we discovered that I had been sitting on an even better quality copy of the tapes myself, which had been stored for those thirty years or so in poorly marked boxes, fifteen of those years in an outdoor storage shed. Remarkably, the tapes were still quite listenable, and in better shape than those McFauls sent me.

While working on these recording notes, it occurred to me that more background, including some heretofore untold anecdotes, might spice up the presentation. But the following tale supposes the reader already knows something about our eventuality.

## Rumblings

IN THE BEGINNING, the band known ultimately as Think Dog! (but never by many people) consisted of three zealous music students at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, and a local hippy named Jim. Jim played guitar

and I played bass. At first we used the same amplifier. Tom McFaul rented and ultimately bought a cheap Farfisa organ to use as a keyboard. It sounded like the one Ray Manzarek of the Doors played, but not that good. We all hoped it could be replaced soon, but we endured that organ sound for a long time. David Rosenboom played percussion. As an only child he was always seemingly independently wealthy, and accordingly well-equipped.

The first summer we searched for a permanent name. One I proposed was *Darshan*, an East Indian word that means something impossibly pretentious, but I've long forgotten what.

Not long before, The Beatles went through their swami infatuation phase, studying with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, an experience that proved to be enlightening for them in the sense that all but George became disillusioned by it. In the aftermath, Indian culture came to be in vogue for a while.

After all, it was what was to become known as the Summer of Love, a time of incense, flowers, and things exotic. We thought anything was possible. Besides, Tom and David and I all knew and liked Indian music since long before George Harrison ever heard of it. Except we were in Illinois, not San Francisco, and no one but me liked the name Darshan.

Being inspired by The Beatles, our ambitions were high, but for the first few months we were certainly worse than the Quarrymen ever thought of being in their worst nightmare. The tale of our first live performance is telling in this regard.

## Musicus Interruptus

We played on the sidewalk in front of a dormitory early one weekday evening in July 1967. I don't remember how we got the job. There was no announcement or promotion of this event. We just showed up, set up, and played. It looked entirely impromptu, like a street act. We played for free, and the performance was mercifully short.

By coincidence, my brother Dale, who is a cellist and seven years younger than I, was in Urbana that summer attending a string program for young students, and was staying in that dorm. He came out to watch the fête.

We knew no more than four songs. One was the old-time standard *San Francisco Bay*, and another was a piece of hokum by Jim, possibly the dumbest song ever written, called *The Massive Seed*. It went

Oh, a massive seed  
is the seed of life.  
A massive seed  
is the seed of life.

A massive seed  
is the seed of life,  
and such a seed have I!

And so forth. With words like that, the melody and chords didn't matter.

I don't recall what equipment we used for vocal amplification, but at that time only Tom sang, so it was simple. Everything we had was plugged into a single multiple-socket input, and run through a series of extension cords about a hundred feet back across the sidewalk, inside the front entrance of the dorm, to the nearest power outlet.

We experienced for the first time what it was like to play an outdoor rock and roll gig—hard. As I recall, people were laughing. Dale was probably laughing, too. There may even have been some booing. We expected that the first couple of times out things would be tough.

In the middle of the third song some student tripped over the power cord. It may have been done deliberately. We stopped, and in embarrassed confusion, hastened to restore our sound. I remember little else about the job other than wanting desperately to be done with it.

Such was our humble first appearance.

By mid-September, we had acquired better equipment, we had rehearsed a great deal, Jim had parted ways with us, and we had arranged to uproot our lives and move to Buffalo, where success, fame, and prosperity surely lay just around the corner.

## The Big Bang

David arrived in Buffalo first. By the time McFauls and I got there David had located a new guitar player for us to try. Richard Stanley, who taught guitar and lute at State University of New York (SUNY), began rehearsing with us immediately. He did a more than equal share in working to make us better, including taking on a lot of the dirty work. During our entire tenure in Buffalo, our personnel remained stable.

Within a few days, in addition to finding places to live, we secured a rehearsal studio we were able to rent for little money. It was a largish, isolated, upstairs room in an old factory building where they manufactured Pierce-Arrow automobiles many decades ago. The floor below us was being converted into a theater to be used for the presentation of underground works.

This room, where we could make as much noise as we wanted any time of the day or night, was a luxury for us. In Urbana, we had virtually no place to rehearse, and were constantly disturbing neighbors. For a while we had rehearsed in a fruit cellar beneath Tom and Ellen's rented micro-house, a space smaller than

an average bathroom, with no headroom at all. Despite the baffling we put up, too much sound escaped. It was so cramped we had to climb into it like a fighter plane cockpit, and could barely move inside.

One of the first things we did after getting settled was to decide upon a name for the band. For the seven months we lived there, between late September 1967, until May 1968, and for the first few months we were in New York City, we called ourselves *Time*.

Before we found any opportunity to perform, we acquired our manager, Jim Mohr, a man as different from the rest of us as bagels from donuts. We liked Jim, he trusted our musicianship, and we always enjoyed a good working relationship.

The next thing we needed was playing jobs. As much as we disliked the notion, we knew we would have to play other people's hits at dance clubs, so we worked hard to learn as many songs as we could. But for all the obvious reasons—we were new to the area and unknown, we had no contacts, we had no repertoire yet, and most of all because we still stunk—the jobs at first were few. David and Richard were both gainfully employed, and Ellen McFaul got a job to help sustain them, but I tried to make it on virtually nothing. There were many days during that cold winter that I had absolutely nothing to eat. We had been students just before, so were used to being poor.

## Time Takes a Bow

When the three of us left Urbana, we could barely blow our noses, much less our instruments. The average listener would have rather listened to pigs being castrated than to us.

But we were full of hope and creativity. Once we had a competent and committed guitar player, some usable equipment, and an excellent rehearsal space, we began to work hard. Although we couldn't possibly have advanced quickly enough to suit any of us in those days, in retrospect it is amazing how far we came in such a short time.

I'll attribute this rapid progress to our being broadly experienced as musicians before we started the band. Even though none of us had ever tried to play rock and roll or pop music, we did at least all know music well, so we just had to learn some new techniques.

We never did learn how to *mach schau*, though, as The Beatles were told to do in Hamburg. But neither did Roy Orbison, or The Band, and they got by all right without it.

On December 6, 1967, merely two months after arriving in Buffalo, we gave our debut concert at a Creative Associates new music concert at SUNY. We played four pieces: *Heroin* by Velvet Underground, *Introductory Lines* by Tom

McFaul, and *Sad Benjamin* and *The Aluminum Foil Fantasy*, both by me.<sup>1</sup> Further details of this performance are reported in the other set of notes, *Dog Days—The Story of Think Dog!*

## Rubbing Shoulders

Even though life in Buffalo was hard, and when we left our stew was still a long way from being cooked, we had some memorable experiences while we were there.

Lou Reed and John Cale of the Velvet Underground came to Buffalo to test some speaker systems we were using, made by someone in the area. I don't know how they found out about us, but somehow they did, and arrangements were made for them to visit us at our rehearsal studio in the old Pierce-Arrow factory. We got to talk with them for an hour or so, and Reed played guitar for a while using our Vox Beatle amplifier, the same amp he used at the time. The *most* pertinent coincidence of this meeting, one that amazed Reed, was that we were one of the only bands he knew of who performed any of his songs. At that time we played at least three Velvet Underground songs. By another coincidence, we too had a viola player. David was then making his living playing viola at SUNY with a new music performance group, though he never played viola with the band.

A second memorable experience was an improvisational performance in the theater downstairs by a trio led by the English composer Cornelius Cardew, whom I met when he came to visit and perform in Urbana the previous year, and later came to my apartment for a late-night party. More interesting than Cardew's three-hour performance was that other than the performing musicians and our band, the only other person in attendance was the great composer John Cage, who treated us to stories and conversation, and later listened to much of the concert lying on the floor of the darkened theater.

## Headliners

During the winter, in early 1968, the theater sponsored a small rock festival, featuring about eight bands, most of them terrible, but all more or less typical of what was coming out of San Francisco in those days, which made us all radical in ultraconservative Buffalo. We were the show's headliners.

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<sup>1</sup>In case you wondered: No, none of us were ever heroin takers. We just liked the Velvet Underground, Andy Warhol (who had a strong connection with Velvet Underground), and pop art culture in general. That song in particular had the power to raise the hackles of listeners, particularly in blue collar Buffalo. We didn't have much respect for our audiences in those days, and didn't understand much about marketing music.

As a room in a factory building, the theater had high ceilings. At the end opposite the entrance there was a room within the room, probably at one time used as an office space on a manufacturing floor. We dragged all our equipment up to the roof of that room, including our Vox Beatle amplifier, which weighed as much as a fat man, and played from up there, while the audience looked up at us in awe. All the other bands had to play from the floor below. As I recall, we played reasonably well, and our set included the notorious *Aluminum Foil Fantasy*, the last time we played it.

After our performance at SUNY, some talk about us spread by word of mouth. At that time there were two “far out” bands in town. The other band was called *Dendron*, and we were aware of each other. We heard them in performance before they heard us, and had a friendly conversation afterward.

There was a lingering question floating about as to who was the farther out band, and who was better.

We were, on both counts, by a long shot. We were musicians on the way up. No band I’ve ever heard has ever done material like *The Aluminum Foil Fantasy* or *Introductory Lines*. The contenders were a sorry crew of drug-sotted hippies, none of whom could sing, play, or write music. But they did have funny clothes and haircuts, and lots of beads.

There were five players in that band. The lead singer was a woman named Jeannie who appeared to be in her late forties. The bass player, whose father was a well-known conservative scholar and professor of English at SUNY, was so stoned both times we saw him play that his mouth dangled open with his tongue hanging out, and his head and eyes rolled around. We were surprised he could remain standing. He rarely seemed to be playing in the same key or even the same song as anyone else in the band. As it happened, it didn’t matter. Today what they played would be categorized as dated New Age music.

When we appeared together on the same program, I believe it settled the issue of who was the better band beyond any question, though the exposure did not get us any more work. The title of weirdest band in Buffalo came with no attendant benefits.

## Going Up

Barely a month after our premiere concert, in early January 1968, we made two trips to Toronto to record eleven songs. All are included on the disk I’ve entitled *Before There Was Time* that accompanies this history.

I no longer can pinpoint the exact dates for our trips. My best guess is that the first trip was made either January 4 or 5, 1968. I have vague recollections of staying in a motel the night before the session. It’s a certainty that we made the trip back to Buffalo after the session, a two-hour drive under normal conditions.

We returned early Saturday morning, which would have been the sixth. The second session was a week later, and may have been on a Sunday, in which case it was probably January 14, 1968.

Most of our equipment was stuffed into Richard's Land Rover, with the remainder in Jim Mohr's car. On our trip up, we had to stop at the border, and submit a list of all this stuff to the *gendarme du jour*.<sup>2</sup> Because it was 1968 (barely), and we were long-haired young musicians, we were viewed with great suspicion. We were told that we would be required to check our gear with the list upon returning to the US in order to verify that we didn't sell any of it in Canada, which would have been illegal. We had no intention of doing any such thing, and we were honest guys to begin with, but that was how the law worked, so except for the inconvenience, we had no problem with complying. We were delayed only about fifteen minutes.

The recording session itself was a thrill, as we worked steadily, successfully, and without hitches all day long. We used Bay Sound Studios, with Gary Starr as our recording engineer. (People probably asked him if he was related to Ringo.) The people there were proud to point out to us that it was at Bay Sound that Levon and the Hawks used to record, before they became known as The Band. Highlights of the session are related in the recording notes, in the section entitled **The Songs**.

## Coming Down

We recorded from early morning until late in the evening, and then had to pack up all our equipment and make the two-hour drive back to Toronto. This was not to be so easy. During the evening a blizzard hit the area. We changed riding arrangements on the trip back. I traveled in Jim's car with Dave, and Richard and Tom were in the Land Rover. The car was so full that all three of us had to sit in the front seat, dressed in our heavy winter coats. I had to sit in the middle and couldn't even move my legs. Sadly, the heater in that car was nearly non-functional.

The further we got down the road, the harder the snow fell. Visibility diminished to non-existent. We were on a modern but undivided highway, and at times could not even see the center line, or any signs of other traffic. Jim slowed down, driving part way holding the door open. He had to stop several times in the middle of the road to get out and look for the line. We were afraid of trucks coming the other direction. By 1:30 in the morning we concluded the only sensible thing to do was find a safe place to pull off the road and wait it out until it got light.

So there we were—three guys crammed into an almost heaterless car, in a blizzard, in a foreign country, and me in the middle with my feet on top of the

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<sup>2</sup>Yes, I know Toronto is not in French Canada.

drive shaft hump, without even something to rest my head on. Guys don't like to fall asleep touching each other. In fact, real men prefer not to fall asleep in the same *room* as another guy. It wasn't a pretty sight. That was one of the most miserable nights of my life.

Morning eventually came, as mornings do, but there was no shower, no tooth-paste, no breakfast, and worst of all no coffee. However, it had stopped snowing and the roads were clear. We had no idea where Richard and the Rover were.

Finally, we got back to the border. They waved us through without a blink. Remarkably, we met Richard and Tom on the other side. They had been there a long while, waiting for us to come through. Then one of us (I believe it was me) recalled that we were *supposed* to stop and have them check off the stuff from the list they made on the way up. We could have continued home, but what if we had to go back to Canada some day soon? Being honest citizens, we decided to go the few blocks back to the border, thinking surely they would just smilingly and superficially spot check the list and let us go.

Bzzzt! Wrong! They made us empty both vehicles completely out onto the cold, snowy street, so they could verify every single item. I'm surprised they didn't perform cavity searches. Then we had to repack everything before we could take off.

## Hullabaloo!

It was close to noon before I got home to my apartment. Unfortunately, we had a job that night at a Hullabaloo, a disco chain for teenagers that was popular during the late sixties. The clubs were spawned by a television popular music series by that name which broadcast during 1965 and 1966.

We had not rehearsed anything but our own music for weeks, and we were exhausted. After getting a couple of hours sleep we all met for coffee somewhere to discuss the evening. Some, including me, wanted to cancel the job. Of course, it is a Truly Unprofessional Thing not to honor engagements, but I did not properly appreciate that at the time. Greater wisdom than mine prevailed, and despite my whining and protests, we packed up and went to Hullabaloo that night.

We did not play particularly well, but the kids wouldn't have known that. What they did know was that what we were playing was not soul music or Young Rascals, which is all they wanted to hear. We were playing Jimi Hendrix and Frank Zappa songs. "Not hippy music!" one girl repeatedly cried out. A couple of big guys made overtures suggesting they were about to pull us off the stage and beat us up.

So Jim Mohr apologized to the club owner and gave the money back. I was furious, being much too broke to be ethical. Did The Beatles or even the Quarrymen ever have it this bad!?

A week later we went back to Toronto, without instruments, to overdub the vocals and do a rough mix. Without the instruments, we had room for Tom and Richard to bring their wives, who may have been fascinated by the proceedings for an hour or so, but undoubtedly got drugged with boredom before long.

When it came to mixing the tracks, we all wanted to get in on the act. The engineer, realizing we were new to recording, but having expressed appreciation for our musicianship, was patient with us, tried to comply with the conflicting requests that flew in from all directions, and as we left said that he was sure that we would want the tape remixed. He was quite right, but we never did it. The result of that day's work is what you hear on the CD.

## *The Songs*

**Caveat:** Our compositions could be described as “unique,” if nothing else. Some might regard them as experimental, though I personally always disliked that term in connection with music. Anyhow, it’s not exactly rock and roll.

It’s undoubtedly best not to hang a label on this music. It is whatever it is. I’m confident no other band ever tried to do material like some of these songs. What follows, then, represents the Best We Could Do after merely three months of hard work. When viewed in this way, in retrospect, I’m proud of how well we did.

### **A Song for You**

Composer: Lynn David Newton

Personnel: Tom McFaul — lead vocal, organ, harpsichord

Lynn David Newton — bass, recorder, backup vocal

Richard Stanley — guitar

David Rosenboom — percussion

A song for you  
Before we’re through.  
Listen to the things we’ve found—  
Things we’ve gathered from around.  
We play them now,  
Together.

La la la la . . . together.

*(Soundwash)*

It’s midnight now.  
It’s quiet now.  
Sleep until another day.  
Things around us seem to say  
That you should know:  
I love you.

With the opening words “A song for you before we’re through” this may have more appropriately been placed as the closing song, as though it were an encore. I no longer remember the reasoning behind the programming on the album, but other than those words, I think it also works as an opener.

I scored the full arrangement of the song part on this, including writing out the guitar part in full classical notation, although David was given freedom to do whatever he wanted with the percussion, as is usually the case with drum parts. I love the lemon-drop sour off-rhythm bell sounds he played. In the middle section, I like the basic frenetic sound of the instruments, except the recorder

is mixed too high, and should merge more fully into the texture. Also, I could play better than that, and cracked a lot of notes trying to be too fancy! It would have been better if I had listened more closely to what the others were doing.

The quote from *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes* was taken off a record of schmaltzy songs. I have no idea who is doing it. If we'd ever redone that song I would have revamped that middle section entirely.

The cascading electronic wash that tails that quote is extracted from the beginning of *Winter War*, a composition for electronic tape I created at University of Illinois' experimental music studio. (*Winter War* is on the CD *Classical Works*.)

What I have noted above as a harpsichord was probably really an electric keyboard with a harpsichord sound, because I'm sure that no real harpsichord was available at the session.

### **Kemp's Jig**

Composer: Traditional  
Personnel: Richard Stanley — lute

*(Instrumental)*

Richard taught classical guitar and lute at SUNY before he joined us. This lute piece, labeled only "traditional" on the tape, is probably an English piece, from the Renaissance period. Why did we include it? I don't know—partly to fill out the tape, and partly to demonstrate our versatility, I reckon. I wish it had been longer. He could have gotten away with playing it twice through.

### **Introductory Lines**

Composer: Tom McFaul  
Lynn David Newton — electronic tape  
Personnel: Tom McFaul — vocal, organ  
Richard Stanley — guitar, percussion  
Lynn David Newton — bass, percussion  
David Rosenboom — percussion

To encircle your constant incredible change,  
You shadow your way back to try.  
But the paths—open roads—all behind you extend,  
And melt into loss and to waste.  
And remember your fashion,  
Your fancy to groove, not to loose.  
Never mind what it is that you do.

And that much behind you, you sensitive sham,  
You turn once again not ahead,  
But behind once again, looking first back,  
Then where you think is ahead.

You looked at art, and not at yourself.  
To give to art and not think for yourself  
Is your blindness,  
Your incredible dishonesty,  
Your loss, and your waste,  
And the reason you stay in one place.

Now begin to believe your condition is new and unique.  
Now begin to believe that you know.  
Now you feel the insistent approach of continuous confusion,  
Of the inevitability of madness,  
Not to turn, but to absorb everything.

**White Boy's Rap:**

And there's no reason to go back.  
And to explain is only to delay.  
And there are cornucopias full of mirrors.  
And they reflect outside in.  
And too many things become one.  
And fear is becoming your muse  
And the glassy spirals reflect further.  
And all words become things.  
And famous among pedants,  
And ridden with scales,  
And imperfectly formed sentiments,  
And an insular spirit,  
And an inviolate cool.  
And only your grip is more strange.  
And through no effort yours,  
Your grip becomes loose,  
And you begin circling inexorably in.  
And with pure wall-eyed vision,  
And untimely contempt for yourself.  
And you're becoming and approaching  
Being.

It is becoming without ever being,  
And it's becoming and never being,  
That when accepted,  
Draws you eternally inside yourself,  
And the fear of madness,  
And the courage to approach  
For the first time yourself.

Tom must have been having a bad day when he wrote these lyrics! I don't think they are intended to be taken seriously, but I do like the vocal he did on this. Credit for description of the middle section as a "white boy's rap" belongs to my wife.

I recall Tom becoming enamored with and thinking there was something medieval sounding about the waltzlike organ ostinato this piece spun out from. It was written while we were still in Urbana. I created the electronic tape that plays along with the instruments at the University of Illinois' electronic music studio.

We performed this live a couple of times, including on our debut concert. There is no pulse on the tape with which to coordinate things, so to perform it we had to set and keep the tempo closely. I no longer remember how we arrived at the critical points on the tape at the right time, but we always hit it right on the nose. There was room for two or three seconds variance at the end of the first section, before the clicks under the rap started. That gave us a couple of seconds to scramble for percussion instruments to play during that section. How we got that ending to come out at the right time I don't recall, but we always did.

### **Sad Benjamin**

Composer: Lynn David Newton  
Personnel: Tom McFaul — vocal, organ  
Richard Stanley — guitar  
Lynn David Newton — bass  
David Rosenboom — percussion

Waking, little sleep,  
I think of places and times —  
Of her, and of when,  
And remember the problems of yesterday's rhymes.

A diamond edge cuts my mind in two;  
I really don't know what to do.  
Shall I go on, or should I turn back?

Waking from a dream,  
I think it's not so unreal  
To change my mind,  
And refuse to believe what I really don't feel.

A diamond edge cuts my mind in two;  
I really don't know what to do.  
Shall I go on or should I turn back?

*(Instrumental)*

Alone I remain  
To make my way with words,  
And (with) her and with time,  
And a new rhyme is all that's left of yesterday's dream.  
A diamond edge cuts my mind in two;  
I really don't know what to do.  
Shall I go on or should I turn back?  
(Instrumental)

*Sad Benjamin* is the first song I wrote, while we were still in Urbana. Tom may have composed the last verse of lyrics.

In those days it was still unthinkable to me to write a piece of music with a steady four beats per measure in it. So in *Sad Benjamin* there is an extra beat thrown in or dropped here and there. If it sounds like we trip up occasionally, be assured we didn't. To paraphrase George Harrison's hilarious tune *Only A Northern Song*, 'You may think the band is not quite right, but they are, I just wrote it like that.'

The song is about the sleepless nights I experienced for a while, trying to decide whether to accept the Fulbright to study in Italy I'd been offered, when I really wanted more than anything to have this band. The nature of the decision seems all the more ridiculous in that we still couldn't even play, and none of us had yet written any original material for the band. This was the beginning of it.

### **Lily Has a Rose**

Composer: Lynn David Newton  
E. E. Cummings — poem (adapted)  
Personnel: Lynn David Newton — vocal, guitar  
Richard Stanley — lute

Lily has a rose.  
Violet has none.  
"Don't cry, dear Violet,  
You may take mine!"  
"Oh how, how, how  
Could I ever wear it now,  
When the boy who gave it to you  
Is the tallest of the boys?"  
"He'll give me another  
If I let him kiss me twice.  
But my lover has a brother  
Who is good and kind to all."

“Oh no, no, no,  
Let the roses come and go.  
For kindness and goodness  
Do not make a fellow tall.”

Lily has a rose.  
Violet has none.  
And losing’s less than winning,  
But love is more than love!

*Lily Has a Rose* is one of my personal favorite songs. It was written shortly after *Sad Benjamin*. The text is a poem of E. E. Cummings that I adapted to make it suitable as a male vocal, since the poem is a conversation between two girls. Because of that, I always felt a bit self-conscious singing the line “He’ll give me another if I let him kiss me twice.” Listeners who don’t pick up on the perspective, might wonder what I’m singing about. I’ve inserted punctuation in the printed version of the lyrics for clarity. Readers of Cummings’ poetry are aware that Cummings himself eschewed such clues to the meaning of his work.

The most prominent feature of the song is its rhythm. The basic meter is  $\frac{18}{16}$  ( $\frac{6}{16} + \frac{3}{4}$ ), with sections in  $\frac{12}{16}$ , and occasional measures of  $\frac{1}{4}$ . Even if you are an experienced musician, you may never have encountered a time signature of  $\frac{18}{16}$ . Despite this, the song seems to flow along naturally. To thicken the texture for the sake of recording, I composed a lute part for Richard. We never played this song live, but I continue to play it solo for my own pleasure and for friends to this day.

### At Shadow’s Eye

Composer: Tom McFaul  
Personnel: Tom McFaul — vocals, piano, organ  
Lynn David Newton — bass (with fuzz)  
Richard Stanley — guitar  
David Rosenboom — percussion

Standing in the center looking out at the ages,  
All the people looking in and seeing out to the edges,  
And your eyes are in your head,  
But you find that you can see all around.  
  
Goin’ places where you’ve been but never seen,  
And all of the time is the same, but the soul, and you see  
That time and vanity  
Have brought you around the rim.  
  
Shadows crawling all around,  
And somewhere between you and me

You see you and through you,  
You see a gander at all the shadow shadow giants,  
Digging graves for giants,  
Digging graves for you and me.

*(Instrumental)*

*(Overlaid combinations of previous verses)*

And it's solitary madness for you in the center of time.

My recollection is that *At Shadow's Eye* is based on a dream Tom had years before he ever wrote the song, one he talked about from time to time while we were in school. (We've known each other since he was eighteen and I was nineteen.) It just goes to show that one's own dreams are more meaningful to oneself than they are to others!

Tom sings all the vocal parts on this recording, overlaid. (I think.) In the second half, different verses are overlaid, pitched an interval of a fifth apart.

We never played this live, perhaps because it would have required a second vocalist, which would have been me, and I probably wasn't able to learn all those lyrics I didn't quite understand and play at the same time. I always had a hard time with memorizing lyrics, even to my own songs.

## **Green Fields**

Composer: Lynn David Newton

Personnel: Lynn David Newton — vocal, bass, trombone  
Tom McFaul — harpsichord, backup vocal  
Richard Stanley — guitar  
David Rosenboom — percussion

Crossing into a dream,  
From roads that lead to Neverland,  
Strange voices whispered into our ear:  
"Take a walk with me, follow quietly,  
Into places of rain,  
Where things exchange their chemistry."  
We saw a sound and felt an hour,  
And a thought flew by dressed in red and blue.  
Green fields, they were green fields  
On a path of stones and wishing bones. *(2x)*  
Under trees where we found  
That things begin and things are green.  
There, too, was hope and understanding,  
And a place to think and a place to love.

Green fields, they were green fields  
On a path of stones and wishing bones. (2x)

This is our original recording of Green Fields. It's a much more delicate version than the overproduced decoration we recorded later at Columbia Records. The style here is more appropriate to the nature of the song. It's also shorter than the Columbia version—too short. Tom sang lead on the Columbia version, which was probably an improvement.

As with other songs on this album, I wrote a fully scored arrangement, and everyone just learned their parts. The trombone sounds like it was recorded out in the hallway.

### **Waking**

Composer: Tom McFaul  
Personnel: Tom McFaul — vocal  
Richard Stanley — dulcimer and Lute  
David Rosenboom — amplified cymbal

Whisper blue still, breathes the morning.  
Soft light touches, then presses warm.  
Draws the body up from sleep.  
Your eyes open to see.

Through the shadows light becomes moist.  
Flows in crystal into your mind.  
Touch of sound becomes a form.

Tiny prism, mind all glossed gold.  
Colored shadows escape the sun.  
Fractured sound melts into light.

Your mind open to see,  
Open to see.

While we were in Buffalo, Richard would leave his lute with me for a week or more at a time, and I learned to play it. It's much like the guitar, but more difficult to play in some ways, having double strings, and an extra A string at the top. At my best I was still a relative beginner on the instrument, but I progressed to the point that I could play a few Renaissance dances.

I learned to play the lute part to *Waking*. There are photographs of us rehearsing it in our loft in the Pierce-Arrow factory, where I'm playing lute. However, the lute part is beautifully played on this recording by Richard, not me. I doubt we ever performed this song in concert. If so, I had to play lute then. The meter of *Waking* is  $\frac{9}{8}$  ( $\frac{2}{8} + \frac{2}{8} + \frac{2}{8} + \frac{3}{8}$ ).

## Ma's Pan

Composer: Richard Stanley  
Personnel: Richard Stanley — dulcimer, guitar  
David Rosenboom — stomping foot

*(Instrumental)*

This bluegrass tune is all Richard's. He wrote it and played both parts. I'm not even sure that it's David's foot stomping. Richard told me he still plays this today.

## Dover Beach

Composer: Tom McFaul  
Personnel: Tom McFaul — vocal, tack piano  
Lynn David Newton — bass, backup vocal  
Richard Stanley — guitar  
David Rosenboom — percussion

When darkling plains do cloud your skies,  
    (I can't feel you)  
And stinging tears are in your eyes,  
    (I can't help you)  
Let me remind you  
    (I can't see you)  
That I can't tell you  
    (I can't help you)  
What you already know.  
  
Cause I can't help you,  
I can't tell you.  
I can't help you,  
I can't tell you.  
  
On Dover Beach, your empty land,  
    (I can't feel you)  
Perhaps someone could understand.  
    (I can't help you)  
But I can't help you,  
    (I can't see you)  
And I can't tell you  
    (I can't help you)  
What you already know.  
  
Cause I can't help you,  
I can't tell you.

I can't help you,  
I can't tell you.

Baby, I can't help yooouuu . . .

When you tell me that you're down,  
You can't go on and send it back to you,  
And you could fly if you could get away from him.

But I can't feel you when you talk to me,  
I know you must be 'round.

But I can't see you,  
No I can't feel you.  
But I can hear you very clear,  
But I can't feel you.

*(Instrumental)*

*(Hollering and bellowing)*

*Dover Beach* was evidently Tom's first attempt to write a real rock and roll song. That plop, plop, plop, plop unswinging rhythm, marching heavily on the beat, sounds quite dated today, but was not out of line for the time.

The studio happened to have a tack piano sitting around we were able to use, which is how we got that hard-edged sound on the piano.

### **Elin Experience**

Composer: Tom McFaul

Personnel: Tom McFaul — vocal

Richard Stanley — dulcimer

Lynn David Newton — bass

David Rosenboom — percussion

After rain there's often a clean, soft calm.  
Precious drops of rain remain quite calm now.  
After rain there is always calm.  
There is always calm.

Drops of rain contain just the stillness now.  
There is not a sound save a single sigh.  
After rain there is always sighing.  
There is always sighing.

*(Instrumental)*

After rain there's often a clean, soft calm.  
Precious drops of rain remain quite calm now.  
After rain there is always calm.

There is always calm.  
Drops of rain contain just the stillness now.  
There is not a sound save a single sigh.  
After rain there is always sighing.  
There is always sighing.

The basic meter of this song is  $\frac{7}{8}$  ( $\frac{2}{8} + \frac{2}{8} + \frac{3}{8}$ ), with some ordinary  $\frac{4}{4}$  at the ends of verses. During the instrumental solo, I brightened the sound of the bass by using a pick, and plucking it far back by the tail of the instrument.

### EXTRA—The Aluminum Foil Fantasy

Composer: Lynn David Newton  
Personnel A: The Finchley Boys:  
    Jim Cole — vocal  
    Mark Warwick — lead guitar  
    Larry Tabling (“Tab”) — bass  
    Glen Cronkite — drums  
    Lynn David Newton (guest) — guitar  
Personnel B: Time:  
    Tom McFaul — vocal, bass  
    Richard Stanley — lead guitar  
    Lynn David Newton — guitar  
    David Rosenboom — drums

*The Aluminum Foil Fantasy* is not included on *Before There Was Time*, but nearly was. Two different ragged recordings of it exist in my archives, available on the CD *Aluminum Works*, for those who really want to hear it. Though not great music, the work is of historical significance to my stunted musical career and to my band, and is certainly important from the standpoint of its uniqueness of concept.

This excursion of over twenty minutes of chaos requires explaining. It has been 33 years since I wrote the *Fantasy*, and I never before or since heard anyone else attempt anything remotely like it.

The full original designation of the piece is *The Aluminum Foil Fantasy* (tAFF), for screaming rock and roll kid band and electronic tape. It was written as part of my graduate composition studies.

The premiere performance of tAFF predates my band. It was played by a band of high school age musicians from Urbana, Illinois, called The Finchley Boys, who went on to some Chicago area fame after I knew them. I joined them on guitar for the performance, my first public attempt to play such music.

*Time* performed tAFF in Buffalo, as described earlier in this testament. We played it differently and better than The Finchley Boys. Our first Buffalo performance was recorded, a fact I discovered only by remarkable coincidence while

searching the Net one day, and discovered that the original tapes are in the SUNY music library. When I found out I wrote the librarian immediately, and was able to get a copy.

Regrettably, the recording is bad because of poor placement of the microphones. The recital hall we performed in had its microphones placed for chamber music groups, not for an amplified rock and roll band with its own public address system and speaker columns placed on the front edge of the stage. Therefore, almost all that can be heard on the recording is Richard's guitar, with a din pounding in the background.

*The Aluminum Foil Fantasy* is an atonal pseudo-rock suite in three continuous, untitled movements. It is constructed in part using techniques of serial music, with the first and third parts based on a twelve tone row, although much more loosely than my previous chamber works had been.

- The first section is a musical collage. The bass plays a tonal riff backed by drums, and the singer sings a mundane song about the frustration of living in a town like Urbana. The first three lines go:

I'm the victim of a midwestern rain.  
I'm the sufferer of a terrible pain.  
And I think it's gonna drive me insane.

The rest of the words are too difficult to pick out, and aren't worth the trouble.

Overlaying the song, the two guitars play improvised, winding, interwoven melodies based on assigned hexachords, much in the manner of an Indian *raga*. Each guitarist had one half of the twelve-tone row to work with, so they never play the same pitches.

- The second section begins with a cued high-decibel electronic tape that comes shrieking out of speakers placed in back of the audience. I composed the tape in the University of Illinois' electronic music studio specifically for this piece. The musicians improvise to what they hear, mostly because there was no time to work out anything complicated or difficult for them to play. The tape has a quiet middle part, including a long gap of total silence, then builds to a climax that launches the third part. When Time performed it, we pantomimed playing our instruments in slow motion in the middle, in low lights, so there is a silence of over forty-five seconds on the recording.

The Finchley Boys were not skilled improvisers in the language of the *avant garde*. I tried to teach them how to react to the music and also put on a visual show while doing so, but with the limited time we had to work, the results were less than satisfactory. Their gut instinct was: Make Weird Sounds.

- The third part consists of three too-long verses, with an improvised guitar solo in waltz time after the first, and a bass solo after the second. During the verse the bass player plays a series of six pulsing two-note figures (dichords), working through the basic tone row. Each pattern consists of seven repeated notes, with the eighth beat the second pitch in the dichord, played strongly accented: yup-bup-bup-bup-bup-bup-PAY . . . The drummer supports this riff-like figure.

The guitars play clangorous chops on the offbeats. When I wrote it, I had in mind the ringing back beat of the Beatles song *She's A Woman*. In this case the chops sound like crashing anvils, because in each one, both guitarists play different six-pitch chords, so that on each clank you hear all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale. As a beginning guitarist myself, I had to do some figuring to design chords that were playable. I wrote them in chord frame notation rather than on a musical staff. The guitarists shift chords whenever the bass pattern changes.

The vocalist's performance is chanted more than sung. Today we might think of it as rap. The original text consisted of a long list of names and telephone numbers chosen randomly from the Champaign-Urbana telephone book.

Predictably, the singer was both unwilling and unable to memorize long lists of names and telephone numbers. The performance became an exercise in calling out the names of his friends and making up numbers. This task he performed with a great deal of gyration and passion.

When Time performed tAFF, Tom had to learn to play the bass part so I would be free to play the second guitar part. Substituting organ for guitar would not have worked at all, particularly on the first part. Consequently, the vocal part was necessarily relatively free of histrionics.

The piece comes to a grinding finish with a final waltz time guitar solo at the end, reminding me of a large freight train screeching to a halt.

The occasion for the premiere performance was as the anchor work in a new music concert titled *The Black Bag Presents: A Musical Massage*. David Rosenboom and I and a third composer presented this in the Illini Union ballroom as a counter-revolutionary protest to some new music concerts given by the music school that we felt were not adventuresome enough.

The concert, with two new works by each of the three of us, was exciting. We assigned the name "The Black Bag" to ourselves in tribute to a student at University of Oregon who was attending classes anonymously with a black bag over his head. The expression "Musical Massage" is derived from media philosopher Marshall McLuhan's mantra: The medium is the message. We advertised it using sixties style posters with psychedelic lettering printed on DayGlo colored posterboard, but the signs were quickly filched from wherever we posted them. Despite this, word got around that something different was going down, and attendance at the concert was good.

The core of The Finchley Boys was a group of renegade high school dropouts with aspirations to make the big time. Their heroes were the Yardbirds. What they lacked in technique they more than made up for in passion, and they put on a good rock show. They had a drummer in his late twenties, Glen Cronkite, an experienced R&B and jazz player who held them all together. I knew Glen through school, and it was he who introduced me to the rest. The Finchley Boys later went on to record at least one album, which is considered a sought after item in some collectors' circles. Glen Cronkite pursued a successful career as a drummer with many well-known performing groups.

When I met The Finchley Boys in late winter 1967 at a club they were playing at, I told them I was a composer from the University, which aroused their immediate suspicion. I wanted to propose an unusual project unlike anything they would be likely ever to do. I couldn't pay them, but they would get a different kind of exposure. Despite some resistance, I talked them into it.

None of the boys (except Glen) could read music. I had to compose the *Fantasy* in such a way that I could teach it to them by rote. Not a scrap of paper remains today with any part of the music on it.

I would go to their afternoon rehearsals, in the basement of the lead guitar player's home. When they were finished working on their club show (including some originals they did), I'd work with them for a half hour or so.

One member of the band as it existed when I first met them was significantly less talented and motivated than the others. During the period I rehearsed with them they gave him the boot, making them a second-guitarless quartet. (It was lead guitar, bass, drummer, and a guy who did nothing but sing and writhe on the floor.) I needed a second guitar for my piece, so I wound up playing it myself, the first time I played guitar in public. (I'd been playing about six months.)

The result was a "third stream" composition, a blend of new music and rock and roll unlike any I've ever heard.

The impact on the audience that night was amazing. It made me a celebrity on campus briefly, and led directly to my deciding to form a band of my own just a few days later.