

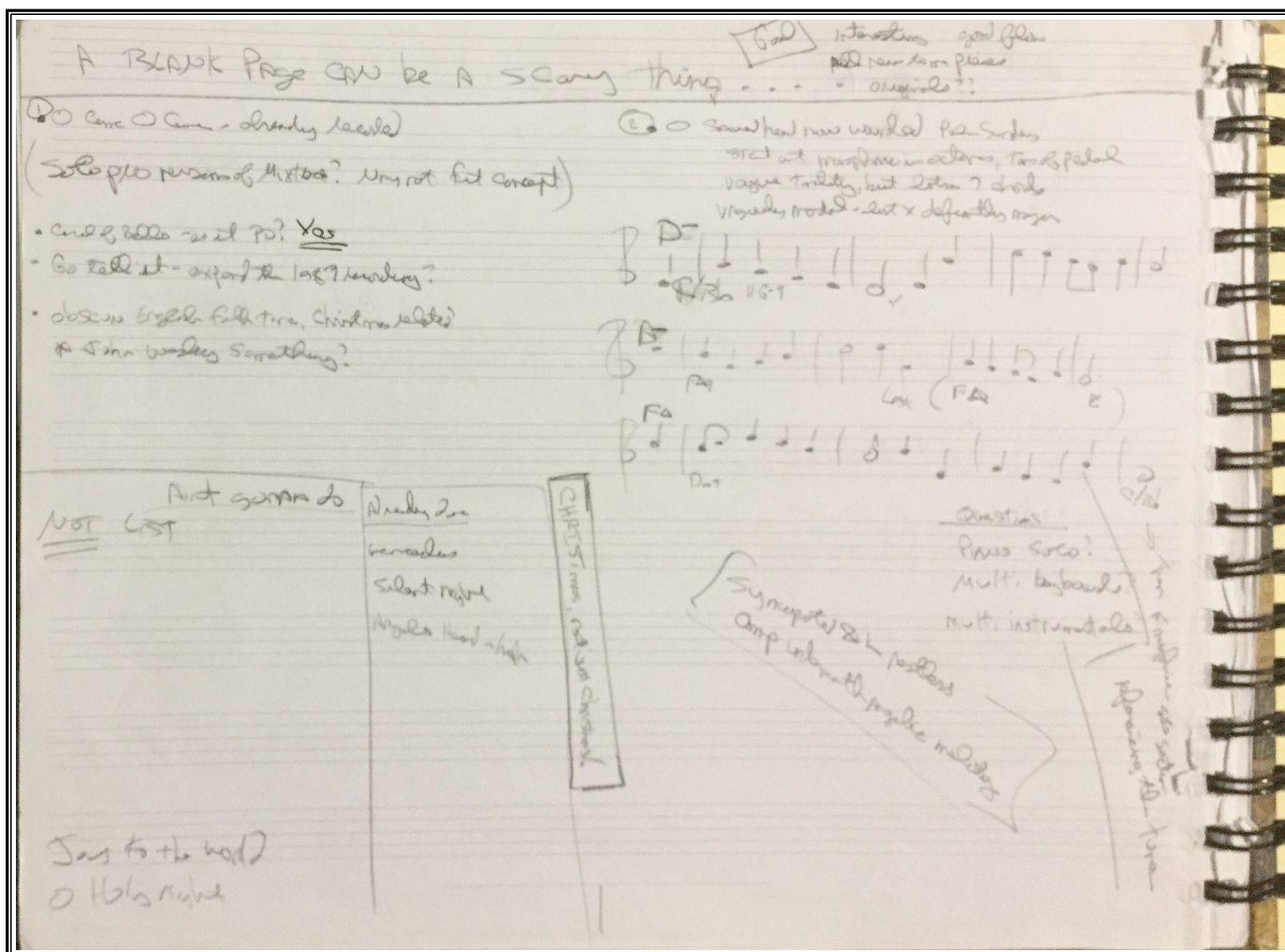
Thanks for looking at the “liner notes” for this album. Since you purchased the music from my Nimbit store, you get exclusive access to this document, which is not going to be available anywhere else.

It has all the panels from the physical CD, plus some stories and pictures from the 2 year process of creating this album.

I do have a couple of requests, though:

- 1) **PLEASE do not share this document with anyone!** I created it especially for people who bought the album from my Nimbit store. It really is supposed to be something special, and just splashing it out on the 'net reduces that specialness.
- 2) **At least once, listen to the album all the way through at one sitting.** I know this is counter-cultural, but take the half-hour, put down the smart phone, turn off the TV, and REALLY LISTEN to this album. I hope you'll find it a worthwhile investment, and an enjoyable one.

When you do, let me know what you think at music@macmusicguy.com. I'd love to hear from you!



Page 1 of the notebook

The top line was the absolute first thing written in the book after I bought it.

It is STILL true!

The top left has a couple of ideas for tunes to add to the album. To the right is a rough draft of *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* which I ended up NOT recording, although there's a hint of it in *The Gift*.

The "Not" and "Already Done" Lists were early reminders of tunes not to consider - either because I'd already done them, I don't like the tune, or I couldn't think of anything interesting to do with them.

1. WE GATHER TOGETHER
2. IT'S CHRISTmas!
3. O COME, EMMANUEL
4. AWAY IN A MANGER
5. LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS
6. BREAK FORTH
7. O WORD OF GOD INCARNATE
8. GO TELL IT
9. WHILE SHEPHERDS DID WHAT?
10. LET ALL MORTAL FLESH
11. THE GIFT
12. IT'S GOODNIGHT, NOT GOODBYE

THE BAND: Dr. Marcus Reddick, percussion (#6, 9); Miguel Castro, percussion (#2, 4, 8); Dan Wallace, bass (#2, 6, 9); Chet Burchfield, bass (#4, 8); Brian Bogle, saxes (#2, 6, 9); Vadim Volynets, cello (#2, 3, 10); Pam Rule, vocals (#6); And Tom Rule on piano, keyboards, and recorders.

INFO&CREDITS: Recorded Spring/Summer 2015 at Shadowsound Studio in Macon, GA. Joey Stuckey and Tom Rule, co-producers. Engineered by Joey Stuckey. Mastering by Joey Stuckey & Doug Diamond of DiamondDisc Audio. All songs © & this disc © 2015 Tom Rule [ASCAP, MaconMacMusicGuy Publishing]. Available for licensing at AudioSparx.com/TomRule. Marketing by Chelsea and Caleb Rule. Graphic design by Patrick "Untuxable" Rule and Chelsea Rule.



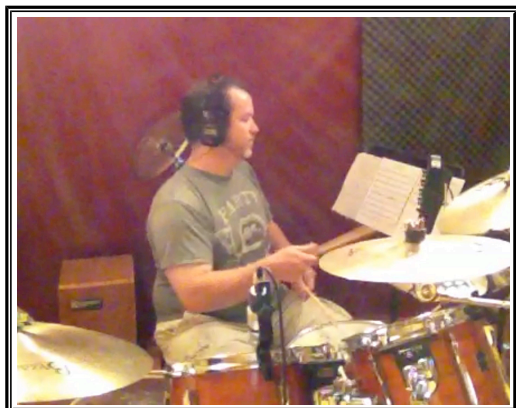
I started writing and thinking about the tracks on this album in the Spring of 2014. It took a year to get things where I felt comfortable letting someone else [*my wife!*] know that it was looking like an album. Joey Stuckey was absolutely invaluable in shepherding this project to fruition - I think we were pushed to our limits making sure this project turned out as well as it did.

You'll notice there are a lot of "Rules". Patrick is my youngest son - has an Associates degree in Art - and is a whiz at Photoshop. He did the initial design on the album jacket, which we then handed off to Chelsea, who is married to my oldest son Caleb. Chelsea and Caleb are both in Graphics and Marketing and SEO and such - they also helped with Marketing and Website/SEO.

.....and yes, that's my wife, Pam, doing some vocal work on #6.

THE BAND

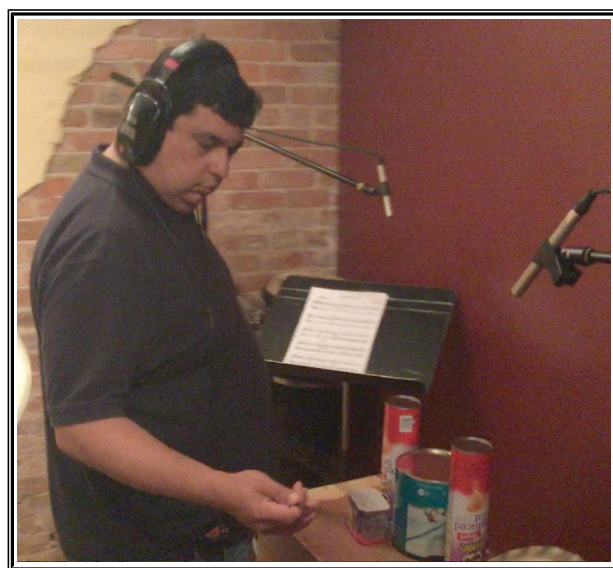
Here's the gang o' characters I coerced into playing on the album.



Dr Marcus Reddick is the percussion guru over at Mercer. I've got footage of him recording his parts - some of them are pretty funny. There is some incredible playing there - you really ought to listen to those tracks through some decent quality headphones.

Miguel *not-related-to-the-dicator* Castro

played on three tracks. I was thankful Miguel could squeeze in time to record - he had only one day between band camps, and we cut all three of his parts in one session. That's him playing on the title track *It's CHRISTmas* - in the opening I wanted some percussion toys, so I brought in some Pringles and coffee cans. THAT'S what he's playing on the opening part. It was fun to watch!



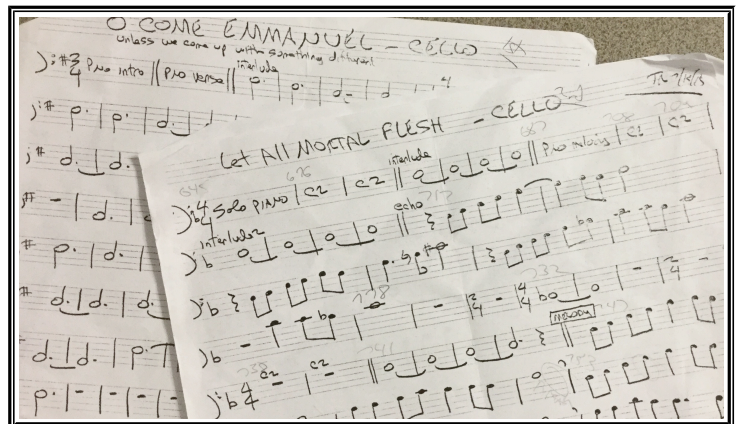
Vadim Volynets played cello on *Break Forth* and the title tracks, but also on *Oh Come Emmanuel*, which was originally supposed to be solo piano. The cello parts were actually written the night before, around 1 am - because that was the first chance I had to sit down and write them.

Sometimes things only get done under a deadline.....



Vadim came up with some excellent additions on the fly - the ending of Emmanuel played down an octave and the upward glissando on the title track were among his spur-of-the-moment additions. Things like that plus the emotional playing was just awesome! He brought so much music off that handwritten page.

But because of that scruffy handwritten score I had to be in the tracking room with him - basically conducting and cueing him when to play. At one point Joey's voice came over the headphones: "Dude, you've got to take your shoes off". My tennis shoes were squeaking enough for the mics to pick up - after all, we used three on the cello parts. So I worked the rest of the night in sock feet!





Dan Wallace is someone I've known for a long time - I was fortunate indeed that he could play bass on this project. He played bass in [tom&co](#), the abnormal praise band I led for a long time and recorded 2 albums with.

I've played several hundred performances with him, and love working with him because he's going to do things with my music that are unexpected and just plain cool. The ending of *While Shepherds Did What?* is just one example.

Plus Dan's an engineer with a dry sense of humor and he likes puns - so that makes it fun in the studio.

I finally talked **Brian Bogle** into playing saxes on the album - I play with Brian in the Joey Stuckey Band. His sax playing was always interesting and fun - and I enjoyed hearing him put together the Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bari sax parts on this project.

Listen to the end of *While Shepherds* - we had him walk away from the mics in the tracking room and out into the hall while playing. It's a cool sound that just can't be duplicated with digital tricks.





Chet Burchfield is one of the “old-timers” in Macon who have played in more places with more people than anyone in Middle Georgia knows about. He really should be rich and famous, but sadly is neither.

I called him in because of his acoustic bass and jazz background - he really nails the feel on the 2 trio numbers *Away in a Manger* and *Go Tell It*.

Pam Rule is my wife of lo-these-many-years, and is indeed my best friend. She took some difficult music and made some magic with it – look at the page detailing *Break Forth* for more details.

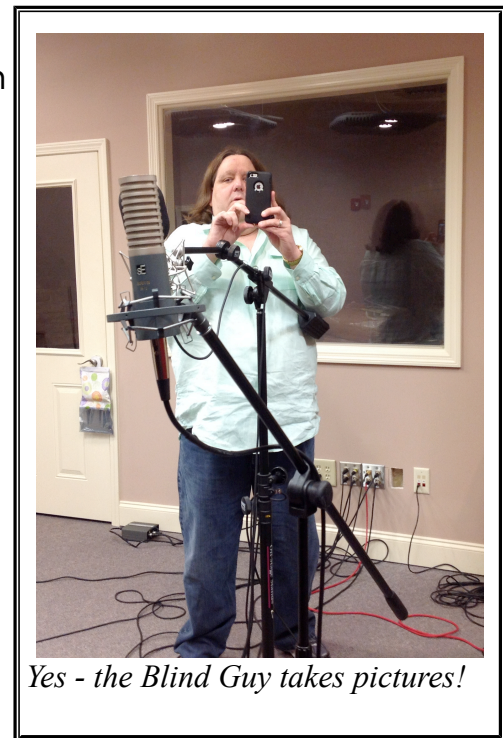


Joey Stuckey is the producer and engineer on this album – and not just because I’m in his band, and not just because I co-wrote and co-produced his album *MIXTURE* a couple of years ago. We work extraordinarily well together, and I could absolutely trust his opinion. We also feel free to bounce ideas, play what if, and tell really bad-I-mean-excellent puns while we were working.

We took 6 and 7 hours PER TRACK doing the mixdown on this album – and NOT ONCE did Joey say he was tired of listening to them.

That's patience!

His work on this album was absolutely critical, and I'm thankful he agreed to produce it.



The Piano @ Shadowsound – ready to record!



1 - WE GATHER TOGETHER

Kremser, Netherlands folk song. Lyrics from 1597.

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing/He chastens and hastens His will to
make known/The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing/Sing praises to His
Name; He forgets not His own

2 - IT'S CHRISTmas!

Tom Rule

Imagine you're a kid on Christmas morning, just waiting to race into the living room

3 - O COME, EMMANUEL

Veni Emmanuel

O come. O come, Emmanuel/And ransom captive Israel/That mourns in lonely exile
here/Until the son of God appear/Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel/Shall come to thee,
O Israel

4 - AWAY IN A MANGER

James R. Murray

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed/The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head/
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay/The little Lord Jesus asleep on
the hay

5 - LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS

Traditional Irish Melody. Christina Georgini Rosetti.

Love came down at Christmas/Love all lovely, love divine/Love was born at
Christmas/Star and angels give the sign

Yes, it's an instrumental album! So why put the lyrics?

Because it gives context to the tunes – and helps you see how the album flows from one song to the other. They roughly follow the CHRISTmas story – either by description or by concept.

.....and if none of that made sense, don't worry about it. Just listen and enjoy!

We Gather Together



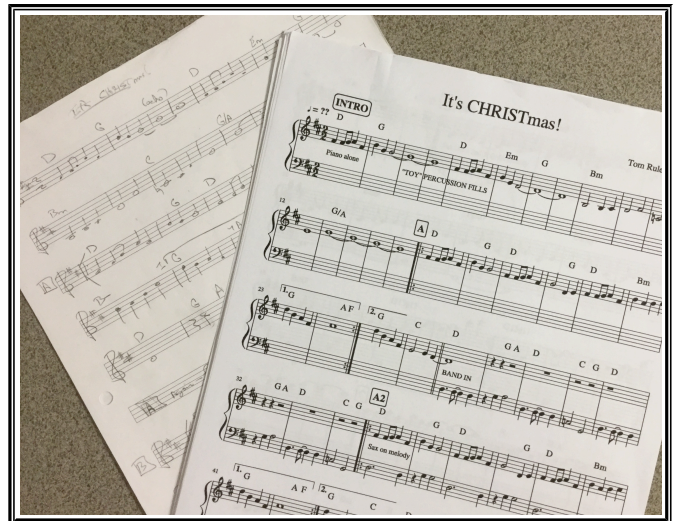
This is one of those tunes most associated with Thanksgiving, but if you look at the lyrics, it's really not a Season specific song. It's one I've always liked, though, and it definitely fits the album.

This one is one of the earliest tunes I started messing with - and it starts with that left hand ostinato - *bum bummm bummmmmmmmm* - that I really like playing. I also like the surprise when the left hand finally does something different - it's really ear catching.

It's CHRISTmas!

This is one of the 2 originals on the record.

I remember Christmas day growing up - we lived in a ranch-style house, and there were three of us kids at the time [*#4 showed up later*]. Of course we all woke up ridiculously early on Christmas morning, but the rule was that we couldn't go into the living room until Mom and Dad got up and made coffee, I remember the sense of anticipation - it about killed all of us at times, especially given how slow the coffeepot seemed to work.



Then the absolute rush into the living room, the excitement, the “WHOA” factor - I tried to capture all of that in this tune.

Oh Come Emmanuel

I love this tune – and the expressiveness of the track was a joy to record. Vadim did an excellent job on the cello part, in spite of sightreading a handwritten score!

Away in a Manger

Away in a Manger

arr. Tom Role
[ASCAP]

Jazz Waltz
♩ = 99

FΔ G-7 A FΔ G-7 FΔ G-7 FΔ G-7 FΔ G-7 FΔ G-7

FΔ G-7 FΔ G-7 FΔ G-7 EbΔ C11

IN

B FΔ G-7 FΔ G-7 FΔ G-7 Eb2 D-7 EbΔ AΔ EbΔ D-7 C11 C11

Solos - BAND IN HERE

C FΔ G-7 BbΔ EbΔ D-7 BbΔ11 G-7 EbΔ D-7

There are two jazz trio arrangements on the album - *Away in a Manger* and *Go Tell It*.

It was a blast playing with Chet Burchfield and Miguel Castro on these. Both are very tasteful players, and we synced up on our first run-through, even though we were in completely separate rooms with **no** eye contact.

Three months before going into the studio I wasn't sure about *Away in a Manger* - I wasn't completely sure I could play it. Keeping the left hand accurate and in the pocket while covering the melody - and I try to shy away from boring even though boring is easier to play- was challenging.

Fortunately I was able to squeeze in enough practice time to make it work. That one took about 5 takes before we had one that was magical enough to keep.

Love came down at Christmas

This is the only track NOT recorded at Shadowsound. It was recorded in my home studio - we call it the Outhouse. No, there's not a bathroom - but there IS electricity, air conditioning, and internet access!

It's a children's Christmas tune with Gaelic roots, and I put recorder on it because I thought it would sound cool. That's 6 tracks of recorder - using 3 different little soprano recorders I've collected on the way.

6 - BREAK FORTH

Ermuntre Dich. Words by Johann Rist, Himmlische Lieder (Leipzig, Germany: 1641).

Break forth, O beauteous, heav'nly light/And usher in the morning/Ye shepherds,
shrink not with affright/But hear the angel's warning/This child now weak in
infancy/Our confidence and joy shall be/The pow'r of Satan breaking/Our peace
eternal making

7 - O WORD OF GOD INCARNATE

MUNICH Music by Meiningen Gesangbuch, 1693. Lyrics by William How

O word of God incarnate, O wisdom from on high/O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky/We praise thee for the radiance that from the hallowed
page/A lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age

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including online exclusives, at:*

www.TomRule.info

*Special thanks to Pam, my wife of
many years who is still my best friend.*



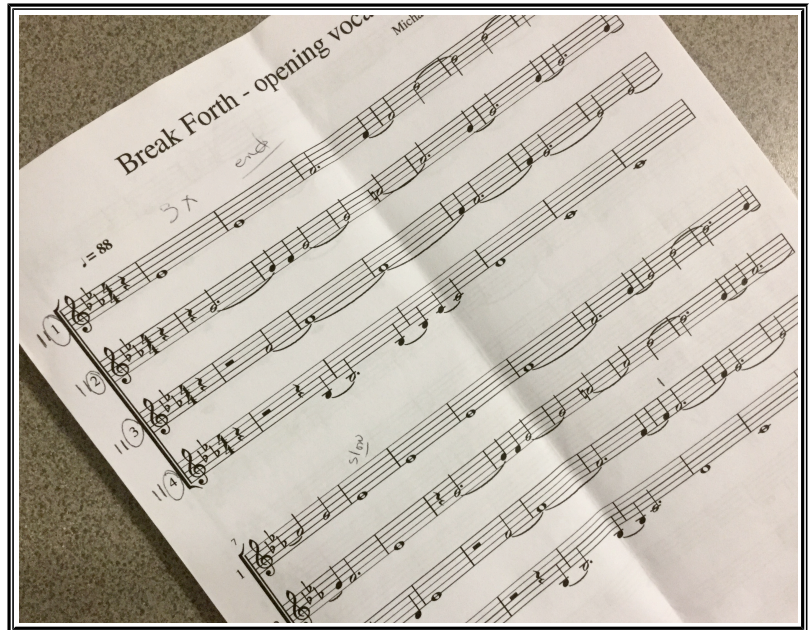
If you're curious about the "Online Exclusives", surf over to TomRule.info and click on the "Want free Music?" Link. I send music to the "Tom Tribe" on occasion, and make music available on the online store that you cannot get anywhere else [*just like THIS document!*]

There are also some extra digital-only recordings available – check the store section.

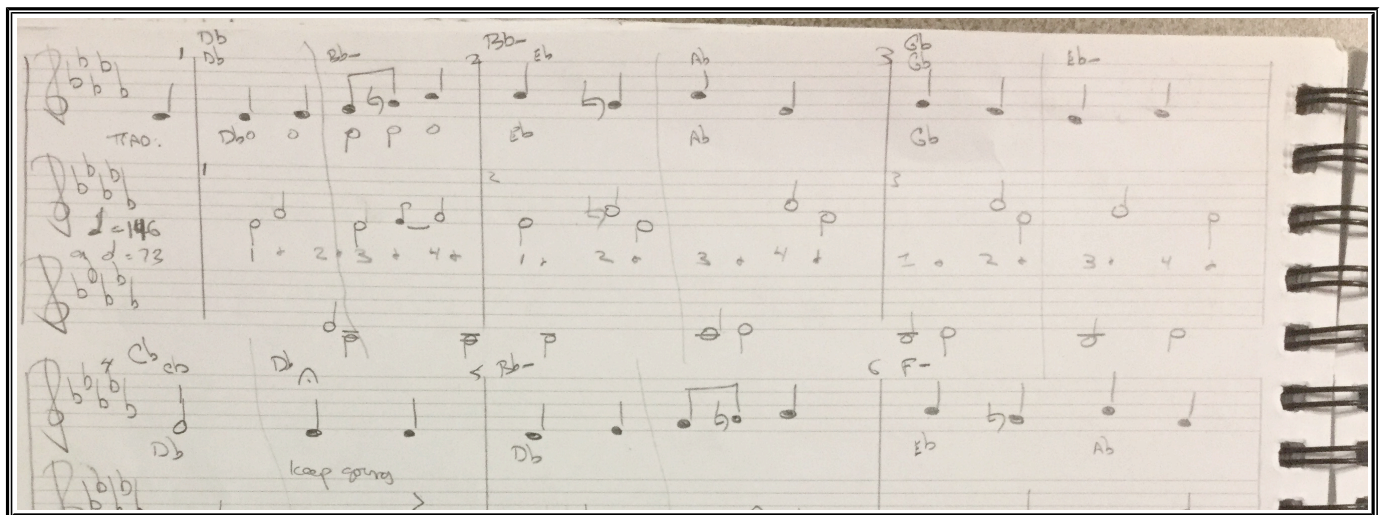
Break Forth

Pam sang some background vocal stuff on Joey Stuckey's album **MIXTURE**. We really have had people ask us what machine or synth or sample we used for her parts – she did such a fantastic job.

I wrote similar material for her this time - basically using the voice as an instrument. What I didn't know was that I wrote something incredibly difficult to pull off - yet she did it, and rather successfully.



No words, mind you - this IS an instrumental album! She sings the word "Doo" for 8 tracks. It took about 2 hours - including the time spent learning her parts because I didn't get them legible earlier. She really tried to read the handwritten scores, but some things in life are just toooooo much trouble!



My handwriting is the stuff of legends. Bad ones.

She pulled it off - it's absolutely beautiful, and I couldn't be prouder of her. It was far more difficult music than I thought when I wrote it!

[illegible]

8 - GO TELL IT

Traditional Spiritual. Lyrics by John J. Work Refrain.

Go, tell it on the mountain/Over the hills and everywhere/Go, tell it on the mountain/That Jesus Christ is born/While shepherds kept their watching/Over silent flocks by night/Behold throughout the heavens/There shone a holy light

9 - WHILE SHEPHERDS DID WHAT?

Harmonia Sacra - G.F. Handel. Text by Nahum Tate.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night/All seated on the ground/The angel of the Lord came down/And glory shone around/And glory shone around

10 - LET ALL MORTAL FLESH

Picardy. French Traditional Carol. From the Liturgy of St. James.

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand/Ponder nothing earthly-minded/For with blessing in his hand/Christ our God to earth descendeth/Our full homage to demand

11 - THE GIFT

A medley of: Angels from the Realms of Glory (tune by Regent Square), Good Christian Men Rejoice (in Dulci Jubilo, 14th century), Silent Night (Franz Gruber and Joseph Mohr).

12 - IT'S GOODNIGHT, NOT GOODBYE

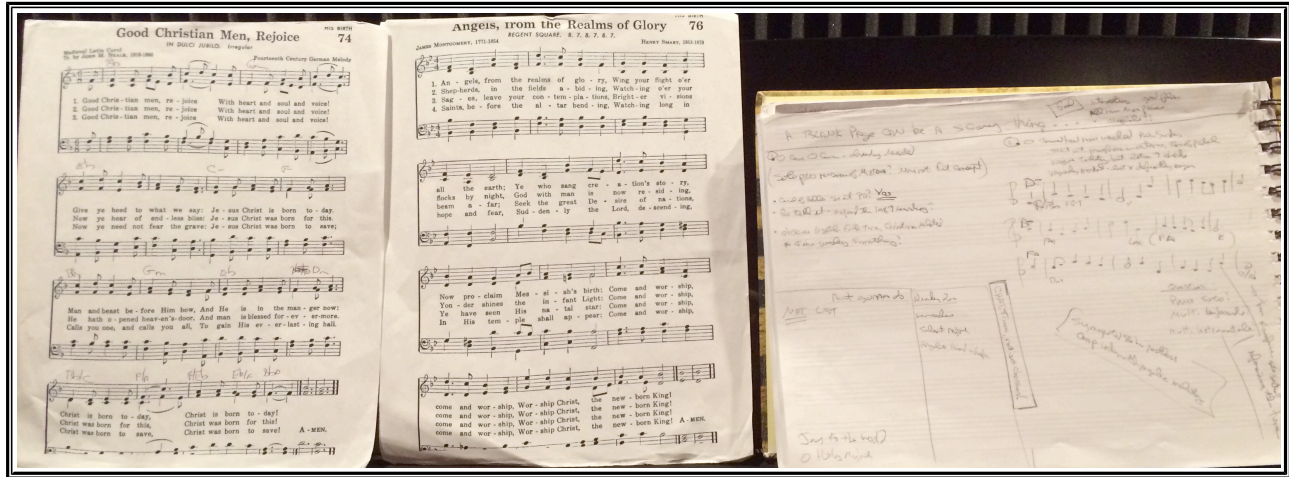
Tom Rule

In loving memory of Dad - Tom Rule Sr.

Go Tell It

Go Tell It was actually arranged back in the 80's. I recorded it on a 4-track-cassette deck, a bosendorfer gran piano, a couple of VERY cheap mics, and a little dinky drum machine. Come to think of it, I have that recording around here somewhere.

The Gift



#11 was an accident – maybe “*an invention sparked out of necessity*” is a better description. I had started recording *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* and stopped after a minute or two because I realized that it sounded almost exactly like my version of *O Come Emmanuel* which I’d recorded the week before.

Joey says that’s not an uncommon occurrence.

So I pulled some sheets of music from the “possibilities pile”, jotted down some notes, and played. 5 takes later we had track #11.

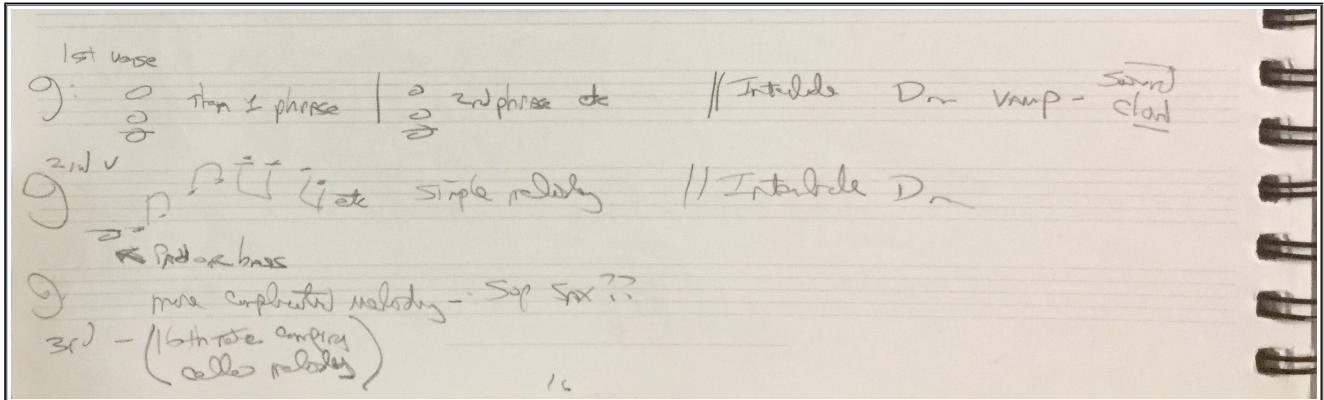
Looking back, it’s kinda cool. At the time, though, it was one of those scary moments when you say to yourself “*Well, crud – I gotta come up with something.*”

I, for one, am thankful it worked.

I actually posted the picture above on Facebook and Twitter asking for some help with a title – but none of the suggestions really floated my boat [*Sorry, Donna!*]. I wanted something concise, vague enough to be intriguing, and something that did NOT have the word “medley” in it.

Thus, “The Gift”.

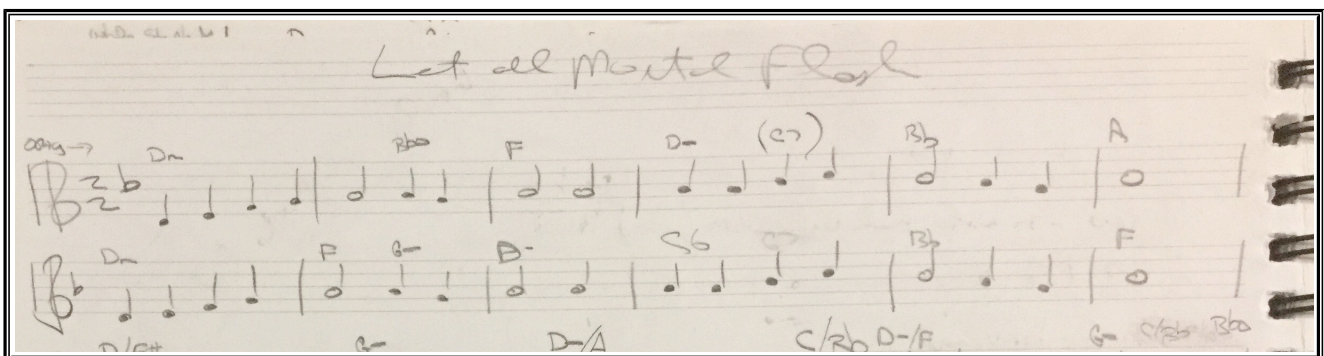
Let All Mortal Flesh



I randomly picked this tune out of an old hymnal sitting around in my studio and started experimenting with it. It landed on the “record this” list when I felt I had something interesting and unexpected.

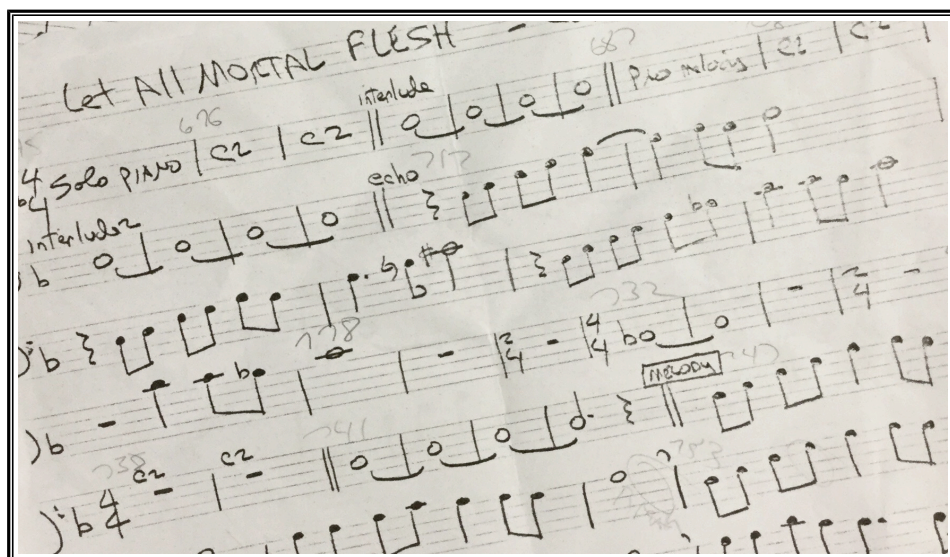
I went into the piano session with a pretty good idea of what I would play - but in midstream decided there needed to be cello on it.

About the 3rd take I started leaving space open for the cello to take the melody - I knew Vadim could do something special with it, and I was correct.



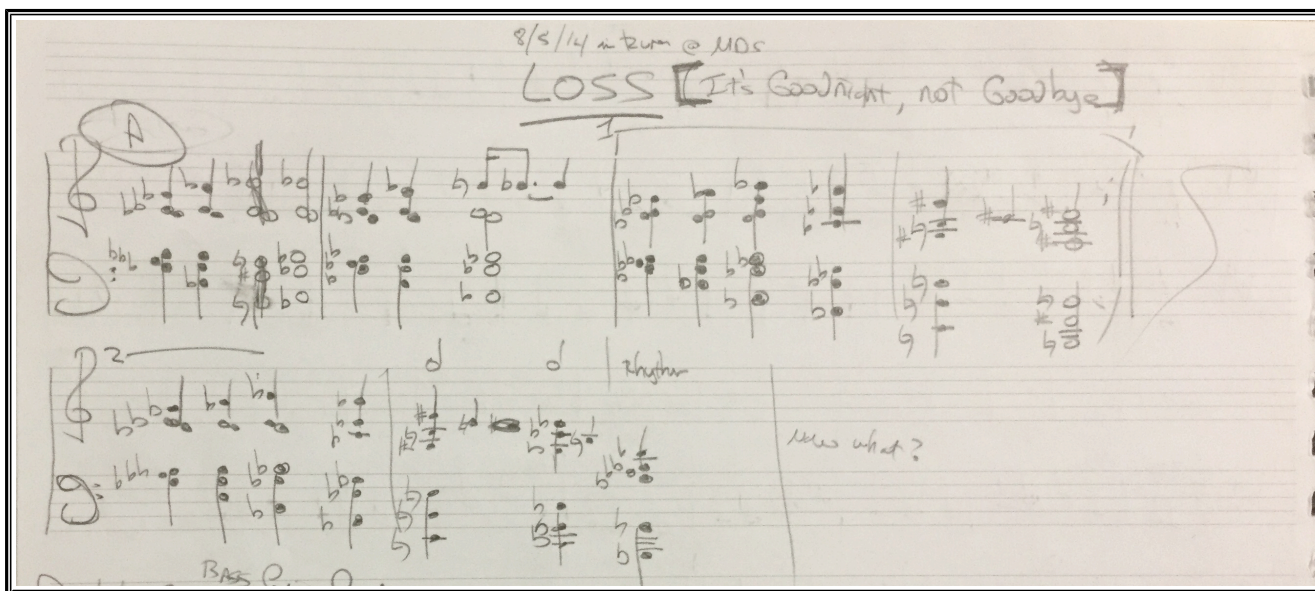
What's kinda odd is that the piano part was recorded several weeks before the cello part, well before I knew what the cello part would be - yet they sound like they were recorded together.

You can do those kinds of things when working with excellent musicians!



It's Goodnight, Not Goodbye

A few weeks before my Dad died [of cancer, among other things], I had a conversation with my sister about his coming passing, and she made the comment that was made more bearable knowing that we were not really saying Goodbye.



The next week I sat down at a piano and finished sketching out the tune that I had originally called *Loss*. I think *It's Goodnight, Not Goodbye* is a much better titles, and is a great way to close the album.

The Last Word

Between my last album, ***Accessible Depth***, and working on Joey Stuckey's ***MIXTURE***, I thought I was done with big recording projects. But God has a history of surprising me, because I soon found myself noodling on the piano ... and jotting notes.

Once it seemed like an album was in the making, I knew I didn't want to record stuff that's been over-recorded, though I did end up with a few familiar tunes. I also knew I wanted it to be personal, with a couple of featured originals.

What I didn't know was how hard it was going to be. How it was going to be so emotionally draining. How much time it was going to take.

How so worth it the final product would be.

The last song, "It's Goodnight, Not Goodbye," was written a few weeks before my Dad died in 2014. The title came from my sister, as we were discussing his upcoming passing. The song may not seem to fit the album at first, but the combination of CHRISTmas and Easter is what makes that title a reality.

I hope you take the time to listen to this album all the way through in one sitting, because you'll pick up on a few things you'd otherwise miss. I think you'll see that this is indeed the most personal project I've ever worked on.

Soli Deo Gloria, y'all!

-Tom Rule