

THE POINT OF IT ALL

Robin Holcomb and Talking Pictures with Wayne Horvitz



THE POINT OF IT ALL

Robin Holcomb
Wayne Horvitz
Ron Samworth
Bill Clark
Peggy Lee
Dylan van der Schyff

piano, voice
Hammond M-3, piano (3)
electric guitar, acoustic guitar
trumpet, flugelhorn (12)
cello
drums

Recorded and mixed in 24 bits/88.2K
Total time: 66:28



www.songlines.com

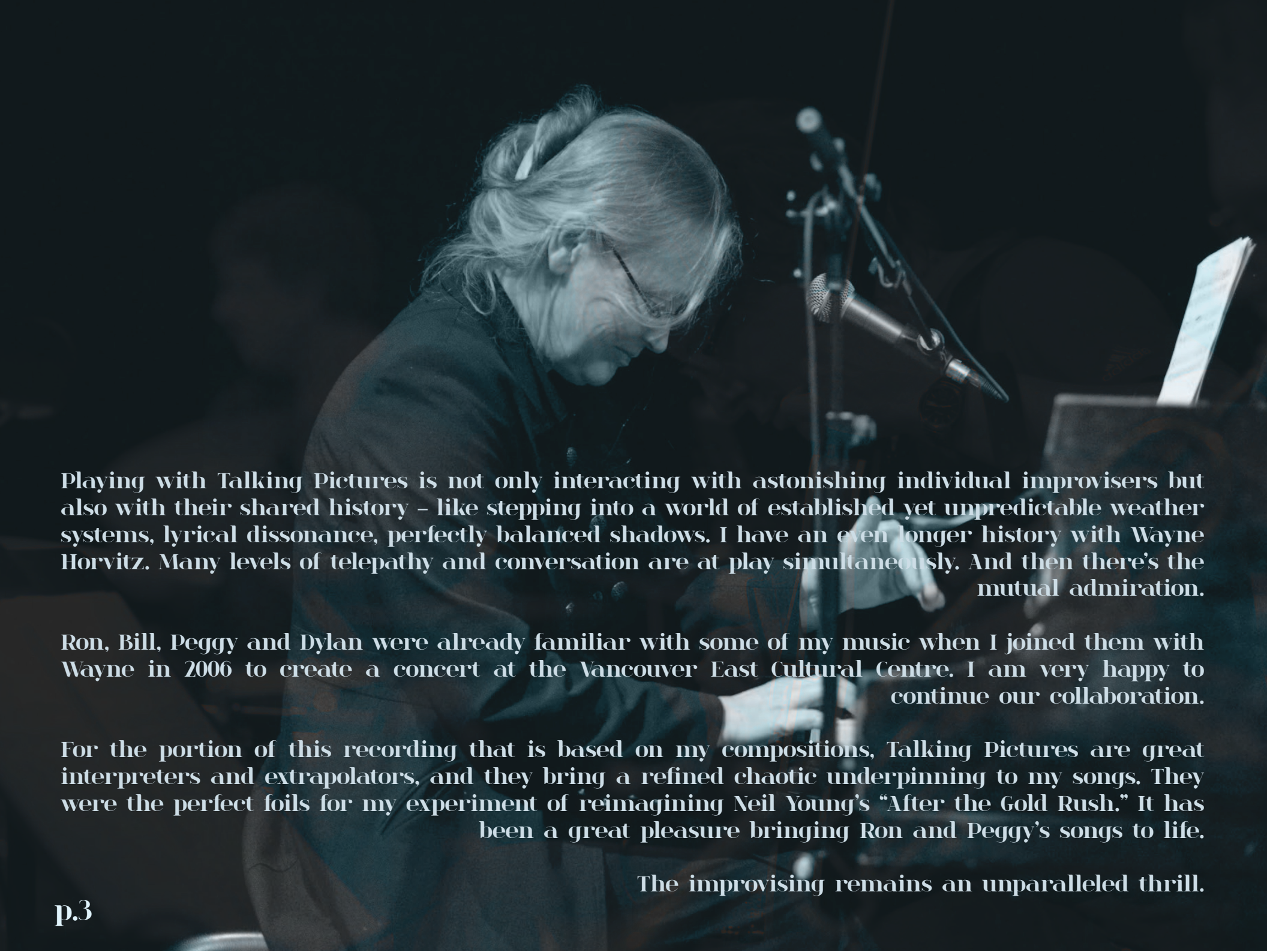
Canada Council
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C & P 2010 Songlines Recordings,
3036 W. 6th Ave, Vancouver BC V6K 1X3, Canada



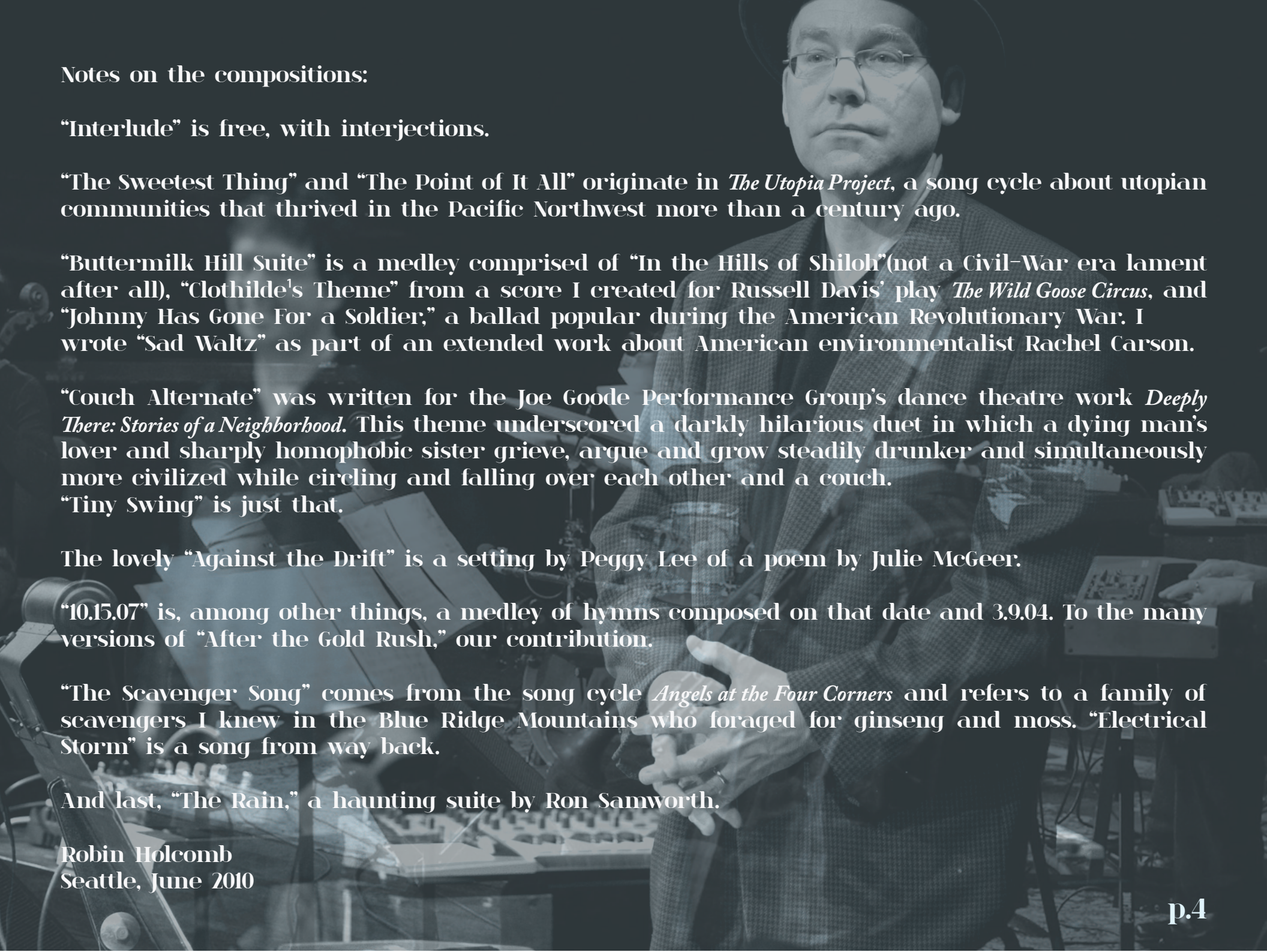
A woman with grey hair tied back and wearing glasses is seated at a piano, looking down at her hands. A microphone on a stand is positioned in front of her. The background is dark and out of focus.

Playing with Talking Pictures is not only interacting with astonishing individual improvisers but also with their shared history – like stepping into a world of established yet unpredictable weather systems, lyrical dissonance, perfectly balanced shadows. I have an even longer history with Wayne Horvitz. Many levels of telepathy and conversation are at play simultaneously. And then there's the mutual admiration.

Ron, Bill, Peggy and Dylan were already familiar with some of my music when I joined them with Wayne in 2006 to create a concert at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. I am very happy to continue our collaboration.

For the portion of this recording that is based on my compositions, Talking Pictures are great interpreters and extrapolators, and they bring a refined chaotic underpinning to my songs. They were the perfect foils for my experiment of reimagining Neil Young's "After the Gold Rush." It has been a great pleasure bringing Ron and Peggy's songs to life.

The improvising remains an unparalleled thrill.



Notes on the compositions:

“Interlude” is free, with interjections.

“The Sweetest Thing” and “The Point of It All” originate in *The Utopia Project*, a song cycle about utopian communities that thrived in the Pacific Northwest more than a century ago.

“Buttermilk Hill Suite” is a medley comprised of “In the Hills of Shiloh”(not a Civil-War era lament after all), “Clothilde’s Theme” from a score I created for Russell Davis’ play *The Wild Goose Circus*, and “Johnny Has Gone For a Soldier,” a ballad popular during the American Revolutionary War. I wrote “Sad Waltz” as part of an extended work about American environmentalist Rachel Carson.

“Couch Alternate” was written for the Joe Goode Performance Group’s dance theatre work *Deeply There: Stories of a Neighborhood*. This theme underscored a darkly hilarious duet in which a dying man’s lover and sharply homophobic sister grieve, argue and grow steadily drunker and simultaneously more civilized while circling and falling over each other and a couch.

“Tiny Swing” is just that.

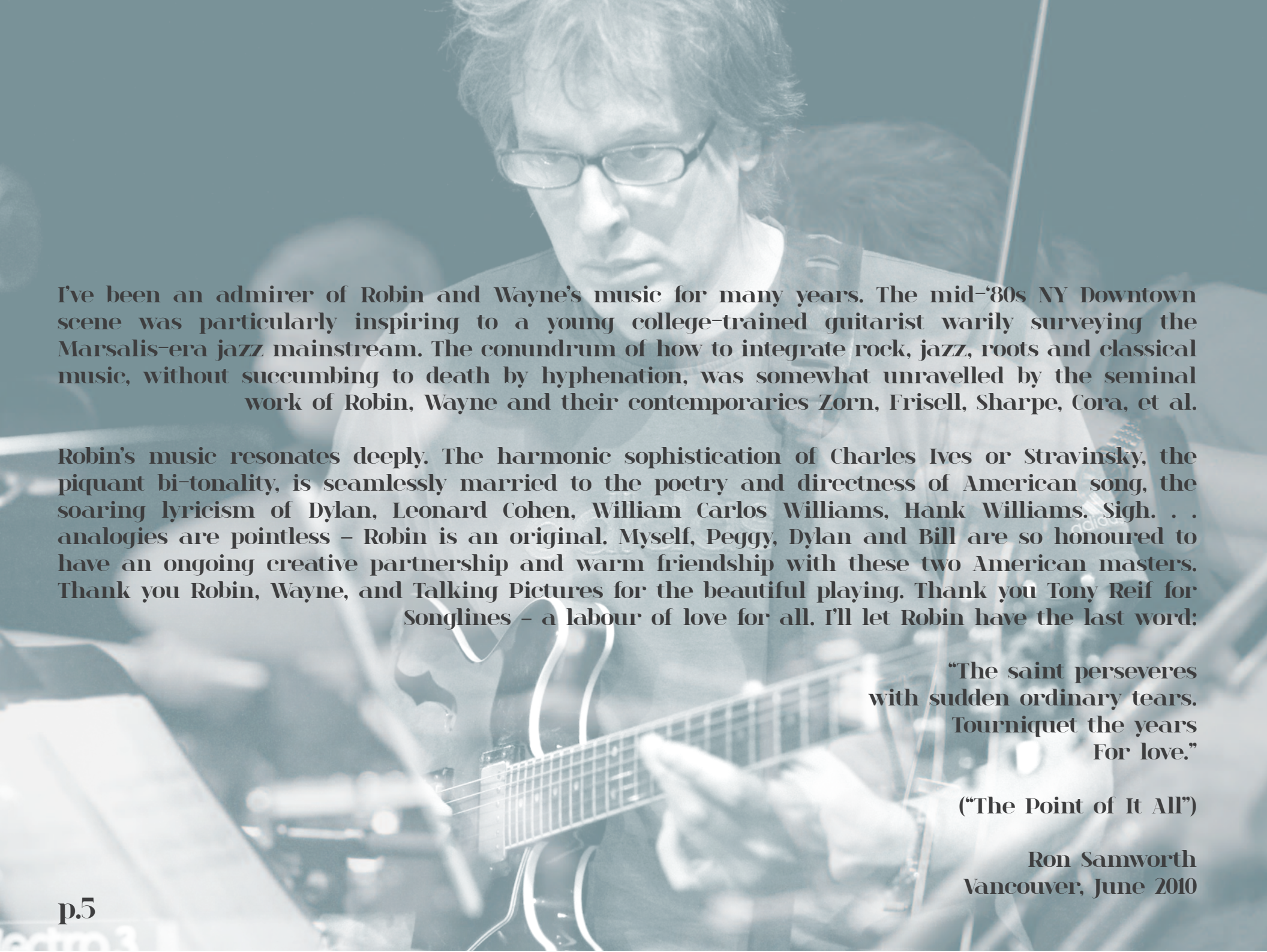
The lovely “Against the Drift” is a setting by Peggy Lee of a poem by Julie McGeer.

“10.15.07” is, among other things, a medley of hymns composed on that date and 3.9.04. To the many versions of “After the Gold Rush,” our contribution.

“The Scavenger Song” comes from the song cycle *Angels at the Four Corners* and refers to a family of scavengers I knew in the Blue Ridge Mountains who foraged for ginseng and moss. “Electrical Storm” is a song from way back.

And last, “The Rain,” a haunting suite by Ron Samworth.

Robin Holcomb
Seattle, June 2010

A black and white photograph of a man with glasses playing an electric guitar. The image is slightly blurred and has a blue tint. The man is looking down at his guitar. The background is out of focus, showing other people and what appears to be a stage or concert setting.

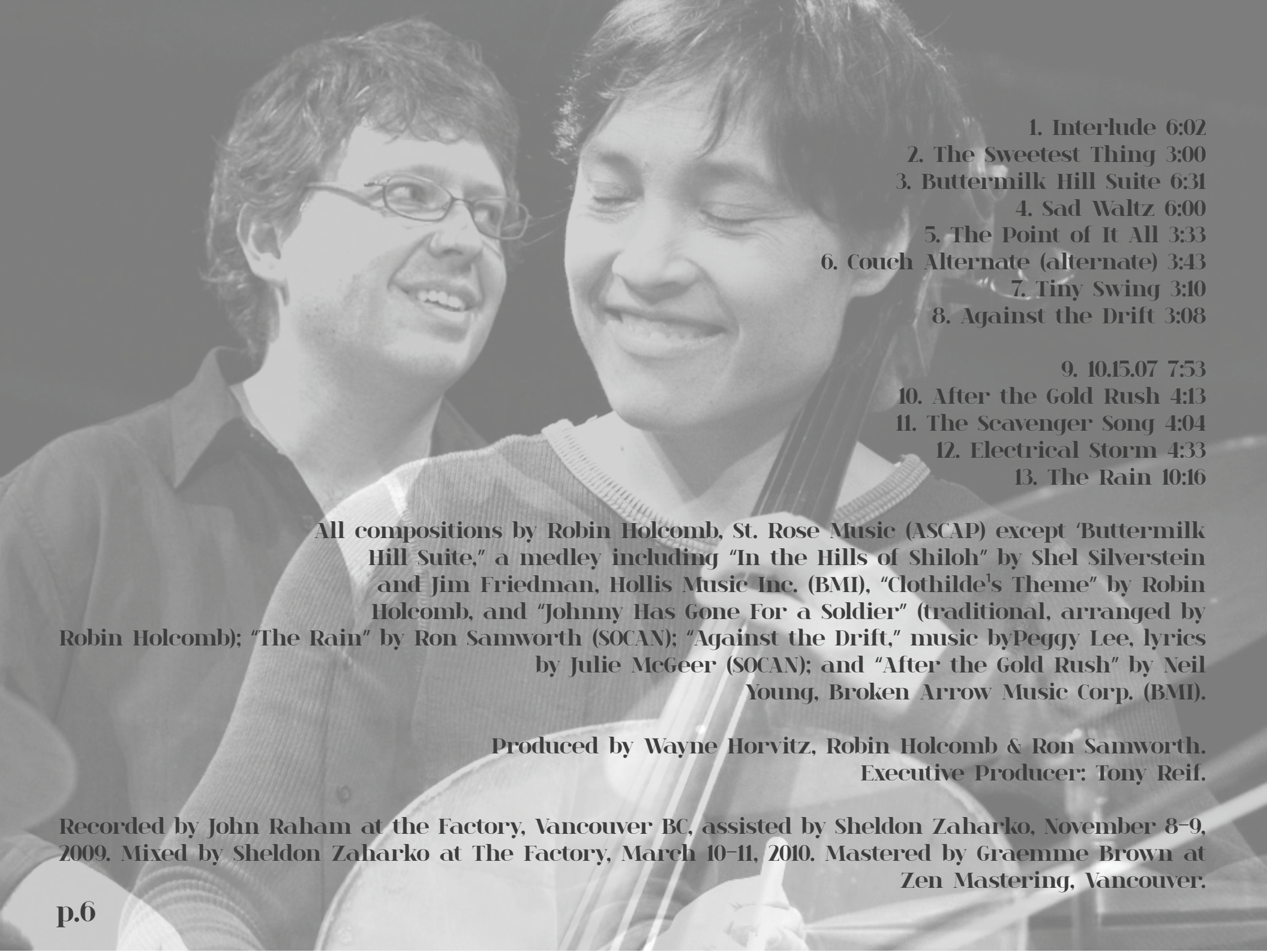
I've been an admirer of Robin and Wayne's music for many years. The mid-'80s NY Downtown scene was particularly inspiring to a young college-trained guitarist warily surveying the Marsalis-era jazz mainstream. The conundrum of how to integrate rock, jazz, roots and classical music, without succumbing to death by hyphenation, was somewhat unravelled by the seminal work of Robin, Wayne and their contemporaries Zorn, Frisell, Sharpe, Cora, et al.

Robin's music resonates deeply. The harmonic sophistication of Charles Ives or Stravinsky, the piquant bi-tonality, is seamlessly married to the poetry and directness of American song, the soaring lyricism of Dylan, Leonard Cohen, William Carlos Williams, Hank Williams. Sigh. . . analogies are pointless – Robin is an original. Myself, Peggy, Dylan and Bill are so honoured to have an ongoing creative partnership and warm friendship with these two American masters. Thank you Robin, Wayne, and Talking Pictures for the beautiful playing. Thank you Tony Reif for Songlines – a labour of love for all. I'll let Robin have the last word:

"The saint perseveres
with sudden ordinary tears.
Tourniquet the years
For love."

("The Point of It All")

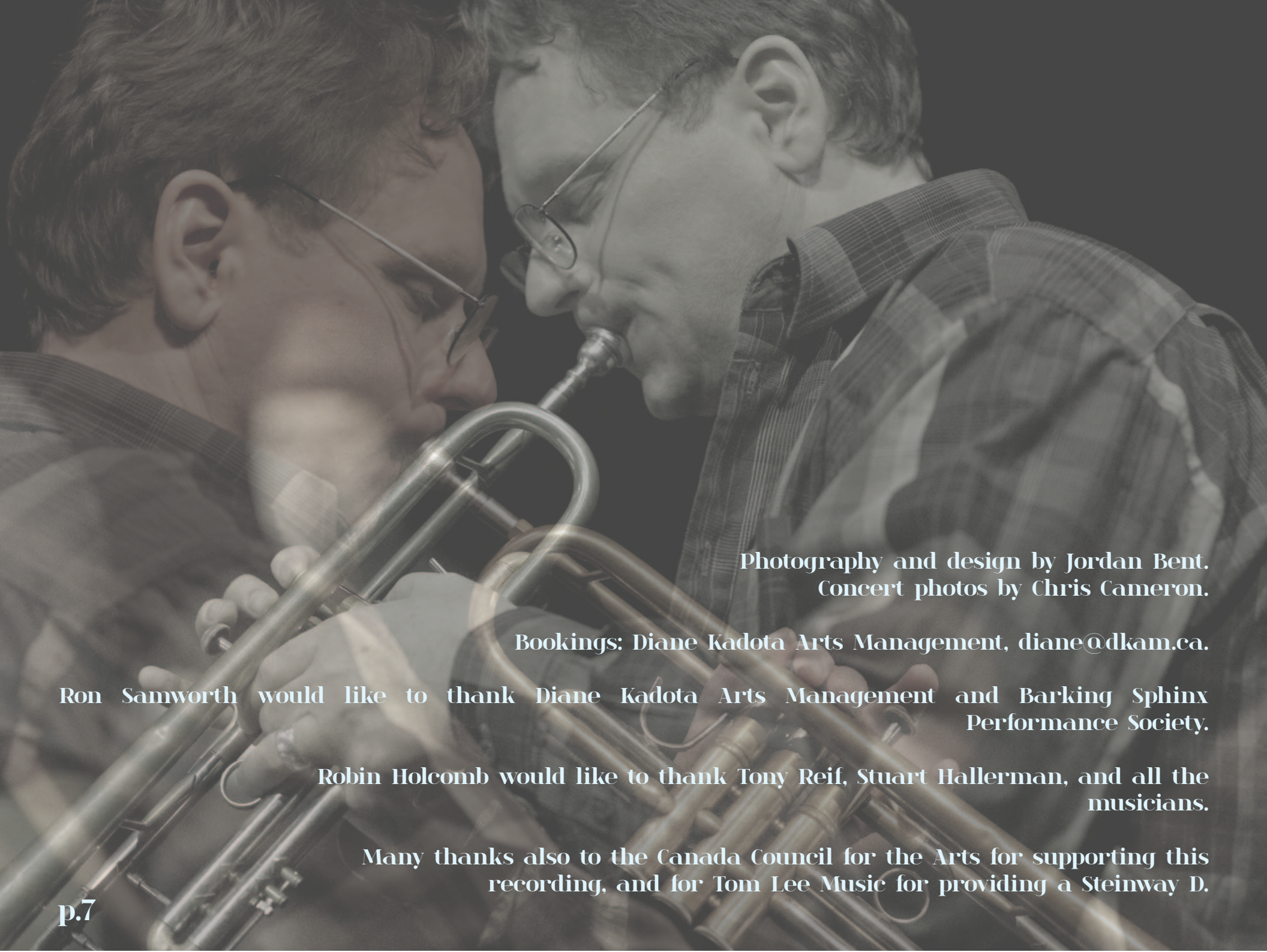
Ron Samworth
Vancouver, June 2010

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1. Interlude 6:02
 2. The Sweetest Thing 3:00
 3. Buttermilk Hill Suite 6:31
 4. Sad Waltz 6:00
 5. The Point of It All 3:33
 6. Couch Alternate (alternate) 3:43
 7. Tiny Swing 3:10
 8. Against the Drift 3:08
 9. 10.15.07 7:53
 10. After the Gold Rush 4:13
 11. The Scavenger Song 4:04
 12. Electrical Storm 4:33
 13. The Rain 10:16

All compositions by Robin Holcomb, St. Rose Music (ASCAP) except 'Buttermilk Hill Suite,' a medley including "In the Hills of Shiloh" by Shel Silverstein and Jim Friedman, Hollis Music Inc. (BMI), "Clothilde's Theme" by Robin Holcomb, and "Johnny Has Gone For a Soldier" (traditional, arranged by Robin Holcomb); "The Rain" by Ron Samworth (SOCAN); "Against the Drift," music by Peggy Lee, lyrics by Julie McGeer (SOCAN); and "After the Gold Rush" by Neil Young, Broken Arrow Music Corp. (BMI).

Produced by Wayne Horvitz, Robin Holcomb & Ron Samworth.
Executive Producer: Tony Reif.

Recorded by John Raham at the Factory, Vancouver BC, assisted by Sheldon Zaharko, November 8-9, 2009. Mixed by Sheldon Zaharko at The Factory, March 10-11, 2010. Mastered by Graemme Brown at Zen Mastering, Vancouver.



Photography and design by Jordan Bent.
Concert photos by Chris Cameron.

Bookings: Diane Kadota Arts Management, diane@dkam.ca.

Ron Samworth would like to thank Diane Kadota Arts Management and Barking Sphinx Performance Society.

Robin Holcomb would like to thank Tony Reif, Stuart Hallerman, and all the musicians.

Many thanks also to the Canada Council for the Arts for supporting this recording, and for Tom Lee Music for providing a Steinway D.

