

To Silver, Wood, and Ivory LLC:

December 9, 2020

Dear Cindy Keller Wittenberg and Tracy Dietrich,

If your memory serves you correctly (more than mine does for me at age 72), I am the person whom you communicated with many, many years ago wondering how a person living in Deming, New Mexico would order your CDs from two ladies living in Lititz, PA (I think). If you recall, I replied to your email that I did a Google Search for "panpipe music" and instead of "panpipe music," I got "Silver, Wood, and Ivory." Thanks to that, I am now a huge fan of your music. My lady friend, who used to play the oboe in high school and now plays the recorder at times in church, is now also a huge fan of your music, so much so that after hearing your CDs that I own, she wants a complete set of your CDs for herself as well, which is part of the reason for the order shown below.

As I now have your attention, I would like to share the below story with you. Please be advised that to read my story, you must be sitting at your breakfast table, drinking a hot cup of coffee. Note that my lady friend and I listen to your CDs while drinking hot coffee, preferably topped off with a smidgen (nip?) of Brandy for an extra special added taste. We use instant Starbucks coffee that comes in pouches that are easy to make (I like mine a bit bolder than she likes hers). She adds creamer in hers (what a waste of good coffee and brandy). I diverged.

And now for the story:

In September of 1996, I got my second job overseas in the Middle East, this one being in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (the first being in Kuwait). When I first arrived in Abu Dhabi, I was booked (by my new employer) in a new hotel (no longer there now) located on the south side of the old Maqta Bridge connecting the island that Abu Dhabi city is located on, to the mainland (Look it up on Google Maps). (The hotel overlooked the natural water channel separating the Abu Dhabi island from the UAE mainland.) As I didn't own a swimming pool (still don't), the first thing I wanted to do was to check out the swimming pool (I like to swim laps). OK, I was still young at the time and really wanted to check out the girls lounging around the swimming pool (I still like to swim laps). But I diverged.

So, the plan was to drop off my luggage in my room, which was located just a few feet down the sidewalk to the pool, and then check out the pool (you know what I mean). While in my room, I quickly turned on the TV to see what there was to watch in the Middle East, hopefully something different from the TV show (singular), that I watched when I was in Bahrain about 15 years earlier, which was during the time when Iran was holding the American Embassy employees hostage while Jimmy Carter was the President of the United States. Again, I diverged.

Back to my story. I was flipping channels on the TV and on one of them, there was this "cartoon" about a snowman flying through the sky during Christmas time (did I say that this was September and that there were girls lounging around a swimming pool?). OK, I diverged again.

After checking out all the other TV channels, I found myself back to the channel showing this silly snowman flying through the air. What kind of kid's program was this, anyway; it wasn't anything like the kid shows in the USA at that time (did I say that this was 1996?).

To continue, I watched a bit more of this long kids "movie" to satisfy my curiosity and to see if it could get any worse, but it never seemed to end (but did get worse); five minutes of watching this "movie" seemed like forever (did I say that I wanted to check out the girls around the pool?).

And again... ..you know...

To make a long story longer, I couldn't stop watching this silly "cartoon" and wondered why. In fact, I even sat down on the corner of the bed to watch it (I was tired of standing). It suddenly occurred to me that I was mesmerized by the music (it certainly wasn't the "cartoon"). The music was absolutely beautiful. It was not anything like what I was used to listening to in the USA at the time (and it still isn't, actually).

Many years after first hearing this beautiful music on a TV in a really mediocre hotel room halfway around the world in the Middle East, I finally "discovered" the DVD of this snowman that I saw flying through the air on this TV. The DVD was entitled, "The Snowman." I have watched it many times since and each time, it made a totally different impression on me. The "cartoon" is great. I now understood why this "cartoon" was unlike (and much better than) anything I have ever seen in the USA. It was British.

I have shown "The Snowman" DVD to next of kin and other people I care about, one of whom plays the piano at the local Catholic Church here in Deming, NM. She bought the sheet music on Amazon.com and has played "Walking In the Air" quite a few times during the Sunday morning Mass offertory in her church at various times of the year (nobody knows its Christmas music yet; that is, if they have ever heard it before). Note that I have never heard it played at all anywhere in public, even during Christmas, which is a shame. Maybe you have, only because you live in a more civilized world. It could be that I am living so far out in the wilderness that anything like "The Snowman" would ever be shown, seen, or appreciated.

And, now to the point (finally). My lady friend and I were ecstatic when we heard a couple of months ago your "orchestration" of "Walking In the Air" on your CD entitled, "Christmas with Silver, Wood, & Ivory." Because of this, my lady friend now wanted her own set of your Silver, Wood, & Ivory CDs, so that she could listen to your music before bedtime. We received your CDs in the mail this morning. It was a gift from me to her for her birthday, which was in October (or is it for Christmas). She is now 83 years old. She helped me take care of my Dad a couple of years ago before he died at 97 years old.

That's the end of my story. It had a good ending, don't you think?  
However, I would like to diverge one more time.

With respect to the beautiful music on these CDs from the flute and piano "orchestra sections" of the Silver, Wood, & Ivory "Orchestra," I think ABBA could not have said it more beautifully when they wrote and sung one of their many beautiful songs, "Thank You for the Music."

With the Highest Regards and Thanks!

Robert Lee Jones

p.s.: In case you are wondering, I still like panpipe music.--

Robert L. Jones.