



EDWARD SMALDONE
ONCE *and* AGAIN

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Cantare di Amore (2009)

Tony Arnold, soprano; Tara Helen O'Connor, flute; June Han, harp

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Longe date, cor mio | 7:19 |
| 2 | Piagn'e sospira | 5:05 |
| 3 | Darà la notte il sol lume alla terra | 5:09 |

4 **Double Duo** (1987/2006)

7:57

Tara Helen O'Connor, flute; Charles Neidich, clarinet

Daniel Phillips, violin; Marcy Rosen, cello

Letters from Home (2000/2007/2014)

Susan Narucki, soprano; Judith Mendenhall, flute and piccolo

Charles Neidich, clarinet and bass clarinet; Donald Pirone, piano

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|------|
| 5 | Mrs. P.H. Andrews | 2:02 |
| 6 | Your Loving Zola | 6:48 |
| 7 | Graduation Gift | 1:37 |
| 8 | Thank you, Luther | 2:39 |
| 9 | Dear Sister | 5:54 |
| 10 | Mrs. P.H. Andrews (reprise) | 1:32 |

Duke/Monk (2011)

Charles Neidich, clarinet; Morey Ritt, piano

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 11 | Duke | 6:47 |
| 12 | Monk | 4:44 |

13 **Sinfonia** (1986/2010)

The Brno Philharmonic Strings, Mikel Toms, conductor

Total Time 67:14



THESE FIVE WORKS EXTEND FROM 1986–2014. Each of these pieces was “tinkered with” over a number of years. Each piece was thus visited “Once and Again.” “Once and Again” is also a feature of the two song cycles whose texts have been re-cycled and re-purposed for inclusion in these compositions.

The first of these, *Cantare di Amore* (2009), is the most recent work. I was invited to contribute a piece to the Stony Brook Premieres Series and decided to write a vocal piece and use Italian texts already set by Monteverdi in his Madrigals. These revisited poems of aching romantic love, and the rich contrapuntal texture of Monteverdi’s settings provided potent resources, though there is nothing in the music that draws directly from Monteverdi. The first performances took place at the Staller Center at Stony Brook, and the Merkin Concert Hall in New York. The incomparable trio of Tony Arnold, Tara Helen O’Connor and June Han gave a brilliant concert performance in LeFrak Hall in Queens (incorporating new revisions), after which this recording was made. These iconic love songs provided highly ornate images which embody the

ideals of love. Who doesn’t want “to burn and die” at the sight of a lover’s “sparkling eyes”? Who wouldn’t want a love that will last until “the sun lights the earth at night?” My hope was to communicate the power, the beauty, and the importance of love as a central feature of our humanity, unchanged by time.

Double Duo (1987/2006) was the first composition written after the completion of my Ph.D, influenced especially by George Perle, whose *Sonata a quattro* shares the same instrumentation. I wanted to compose something that was really in my voice, while incorporating both the lessons I had learned, and the energy of the improvisational music I loved. I was not trying to be revolutionary, but merely true to myself. In many ways, this piece and this approach launched every other piece on this CD:

- the pitch material and motivic material is entirely derived from the opening measures
- the large-scale form seeks a straightforward outline, but is filled with asymmetries and irregularities
- harmonies are crafted with an ear for sonic brilliance, and a sense of forward motion
- harmonic areas are “prolonged” and one harmonic area “leads” to another providing a sense of forward motion, tension and resolution
- dance rhythms abound
- meters are often mixed, but the sense of a “beat” and rhythmic drive are enormously important, at all tempi
- there is a freewheeling sense of improvisatory sweep, but each line is crafted with careful attention to development, and goals that are both local and long range

Double Duo embodies these ideas, cast in a kind of modified sonata form. There is a jaunty “first area” followed by a dramatically contrasting slow and spare section (based on the same intervallic motivic material). A development section ensues, followed by a recapitulation, in which the two original “themes” are heard simultaneously, rather than sequentially. Throughout, the rhythmic interaction of the various parts is shaped by the fundamental idea of two opposing “duos.” The piece had its premiere in 1987 at the Sounds from the Left Bank Concert Series in Long Island City, at PS1. It has had many performances over the years (and appears on two other CD recordings!). I’m especially pleased to share this recording made by colleagues from the Aaron Copland School of Music: Tara Helen O’Connor, Charles Neidich, Daniel Phillips, and Marcy Rosen.

Letters from Home (2000/2007/2014) is a song cycle created from a group of letters I found in a cupboard in my house on Long Island in the early 1990’s. The texts for songs two, three and five are drawn directly

from this correspondence. I provide the text for songs one, four and six, to provide context. The principal character in the cycle is Mrs. P.H. Andrews, (variously addressed in the letters as Mrs. Lou Andrews, Aunt Lou and Dear Sister). She does not speak directly in the cycle, as she is the recipient of the letters.

The various women’s voices heard in these songs include a High School girl, a young mother, and aged infirmed sisters. Each letter reaches out to Mrs. Andrews for a connection. These letter writers provide a telling snapshot of mid-century women in the US, as each writer expresses some universal emotion: fear, love, anxiety, gratitude and joy. Then as now, these emotions resonate more meaningfully when shared with loved ones. Whether letters written in long-hand and mailed with a stamp, or typed with your thumbs on a phone, sharing our emotions is a central feature of our shared humanity. These letters, and thus the song cycle, give us a glimpse into some of the circumstances that both make this time period distinct and also illustrate the continuing importance of family, community and communication.

The work is dedicated to my family: parents, my wife and children, my siblings and their families, my in-laws, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. etc. (I tried counting and gave up after 200). I hope some of the experience of “family” resonates in this music.

The piece was written for the League of Composers/ISCM Chamber Ensemble and premiered in 2000 at Merkin Concert Hall in New York. This recording brings the brilliantly expressive Susan Narucki together with a dear collection of instrumentalists, Judith Mendenhall, Charles Neidich and Donald Pirone.

Duke/Monk (2011) was originally composed for flute and piano, and was re-worked for clarinet and piano by the composer at the request of clarinetist Charles Neidich. Neidich (and pianist Morey Ritt) premiered the new version in Beijing, China at the China Conservatory in May 2011.

The two movement titles refer to the iconic jazz musicians Duke Ellington and Thelonius Monk and were inspired by “Come Sunday” and “Well You Needn’t.” The music here is a straightforward celebration of the exuberance and expressive virtuosity of jazz. As much as the music draws inspiration from Duke and Monk, the central attributes of musical organization are the same ones I have used in every other work.

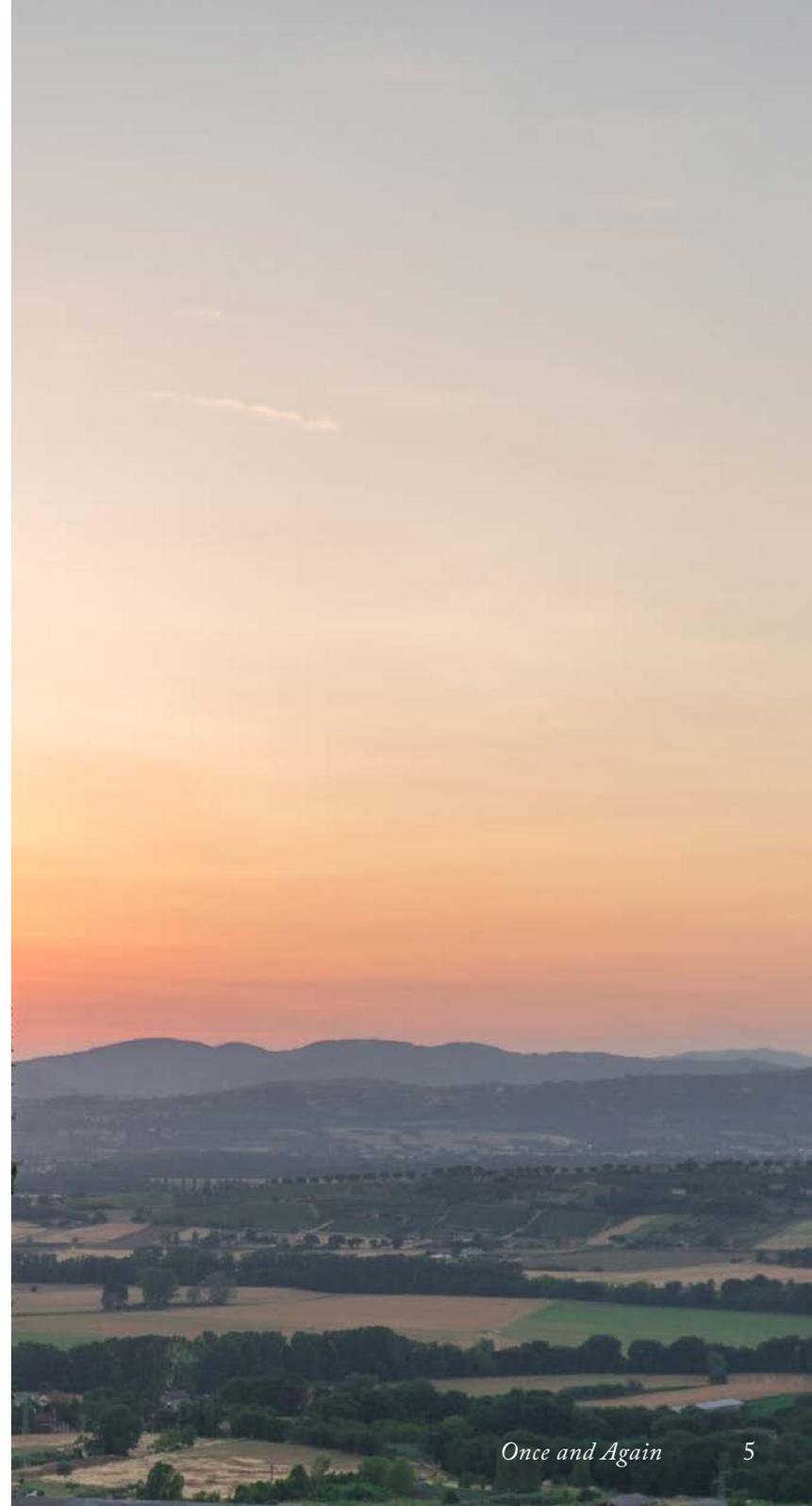
Sinfonia (1986/2010) began its existence as the third movement of my String Quartet No. 2, which was written in partial fulfillment of my doctoral dissertation. It is the piece that “launched” *Double Duo*, which launched everything else. Closing the CD with this piece brings the journey full circle.

The more overt “jazz like” gestures of *Double Duo* which were to emerge soon after are just below the surface here: there is energy and rhythm, motivic tautness and harmonic direction, but there is also a level of overt complexity of the kind that one might expect of a piece designed to display technical mastery to a panel of doctoral faculty. In some ways, this piece is “buttoned up” but also looks ahead to the more personal style reflected in the other pieces on the program.

It opens with a “Recitative” for viola, punctuated by massive chords from the ensemble. A dance (“Scherzo”) ensues with a bouncing dotted rhythm that pervades the texture. Like any good scherzo, there is a contrasting “Trio” and it is here that the music turns more emotionally personal. Rich harmonies swell and fade. The “Scherzo” resumes and spins nearly out of control until it lands on a final, resolute harmony.

The String Quartet had its first performance in 1986 in Long Island City at the Sounds from the Left Bank Series, at PS1, and was subsequently performed by the Romer Quartet in Beijing. The *Sinfonia* was then premiered at LeFrak Concert Hall in Queens by Dongmin Kim and the New York Classical Players in 2010. I’m thrilled to share this brilliant recording made by Conductor Mikel Toms and the Brno Philharmonic Strings, recorded in Brno in 2013.

– *Edward Smaldone*





EDWARD SMALDONE (B. 1956) RECEIVED the Goddard Lieberman Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1993, launching a steadily growing career that has garnered many other awards, commissions, performances and recordings. Other awards are from ASCAP, the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo Corporation, the Charles Ives Center for the Arts, the Percussive Arts Society, and the American Music Center. He was named 2016 “Composer of the Year” by the Classical Recording Foundation at their annual Gala at National Sawdust, in Williamsburg.

His most recent commissions (2019 and 2020) include a Clarinet Concerto (*Murmurations*) for Søren-Filip Brix Hansen and Den Kongelige Livgardes Musikkorps, (the Wind Orchestra for the Queen of Denmark), premiered in Copenhagen, and a Piano Concerto (*Intersecting Paths*) for Niklas Sivelöv and the League/ISCM Orchestra, premiered in New York City.

Other notable performances include the Munich Radio Orchestra, Denver Chamber Orchestra, Memphis Symphony, Queens Symphony Orchestra, Oberlin New Music Ensemble, The New York Virtuoso Singers, the Florilegium Choir, League/ISCM Chamber Players, Peabody Camerata, Stony Brook “Premieres!” Ensemble, Oratorio Sinfonica Japan, the EOS Orchestra of Beijing, China, the Chicago Composers Orchestra, and many other soloists and ensembles in the United States, Canada, China, Japan and Europe.

Smaldone is Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College, having joined the full time faculty in 1989 and was the Director of the School from 2002 – 2016. His music is recorded on the New Focus, CRI, New World, Capstone, Ablaze and Naxos labels.

THE PERFORMERS ASSEMBLED ON THIS CD are a collection of the very best American chamber musicians, and a stellar European orchestra. I'm honored and humbled that these wonderful players performed my music, and recorded it with such dedication. The incomparable Adam Abeshouse served as Recording Engineer, editor, Mastering technician and co-Producer, offering musical and sonic insight at every step of the process. In offering "bios" of these players, I'm focused on how they came to be part of the project rather than listing their resumes. They are all among an elite group of performers who play and record contemporary music of all kinds.

TONY ARNOLD – one of two “rock star” singers on the program, Tony Arnold was suggested to me by Tara Helen O'Connor. “You should ask Tony” sparked the communications that led to sharing this project. Whether singing Crumb or Schoenberg, Tony brings a warmth, clarity, perfect intonation and emotional depth that lifts everything she sings. What a gift to have her singing my music.

JUNE HAN makes magic on the harp. She is one of the most sought-after harpists in New York and around the world. Her enthusiasm for this project was only matched by her incredibly careful preparation. The rigorous detailed rehearsal allowed for spontaneous freedom at the performance and recording. The virtuosic harp writing seemed to flow effortlessly.

JUDITH MENDENHALL has been a colleague at the Aaron Copland School of Music for many, many years and has a stellar reputation for her work at every corner of the music world in New York City. Her

beautiful tone (and brilliant piccolo work) provide a bright highlight to this recording.

SUSAN NARUCKI – I was stunned by her recordings and especially by hearing her performances of Elliott Carter's *What's Next* at the Miller Theater in New York, in 2007. Her voice seemed ideal for *Letters from Home*. I mentioned this to a colleague who said, “why don't you just write to her and see if she'd like to do the project?” To my delight, she responded positively to my inquiry, and gives a positively glowing performance of the letters. Her Grammy nominations and stellar reputation are well deserved.

CHARLES NEIDICH was for 15 years a highly valued colleague at the Aaron Copland School of Music. We have shared several projects together, each of which has been a platform for his technical and musical brilliance. He makes it look and sound easy. I'm thrilled that he appears on three of these tracks.

TARA HELEN O'CONNOR has been someone I have wanted to work with since hearing her play Milton Babbitt's music in the 1990s. She has an amazing ability to take the most technically demanding music and make it sing effortlessly. No rhythm is too complex, no gesture technically out of reach, and nothing gets in the way of just singing the emotion of the music.

DANIEL PHILLIPS is a violinist of incomparable gifts, and another dear colleague. Whether as soloist, chamber musician or in the Orion String Quartet, his playing is a perfect balance of technique and expression. I was especially pleased that this project provided the first ever recording project he and his wife Tara Helen O'Connor have shared.

Recording session, LeFrak Hall, March 2016, Donald Pirone, Edward Smaldone, Charles Neidich, Susan Narucki, Judith Mendenhall.



DONALD PIRONE is a pianist and friend for 40 years. In 1994 I wrote a solo piano piece for him (Three Scenes from “The Heartland”) that was tailor made for his warm sound and resonant touch. His unerring support in *Letters from Home* grounds the ensemble without obscuring or overshadowing the texture. His many recordings and performances exude polish, warmth and brilliant articulation.

MOREY RITT has been Professor of Piano at Queens College since the 1960s, and a dear colleague since I joined the faculty in 1989. We have collaborated on several projects and she always brings the very highest level of expertise, care, musicianship and collaboration to every musical moment. When we were rehearsing, I was taken aback that she could play every note of the clarinet part, as well as her own! (Her score includes piano fingerings for the clarinet part!)

MARCY ROSEN is a cellist, colleague and friend whose cello sound is the ideal of my imagination. Her warmth and technique surround every musical gesture with just the right sound, articulation and expression. I learn so much from working with her!

MIKEL TOMS, the Brno Philharmonic and I have collaborated on three recording projects, allowing me to come to know him (and the orchestra!) for their professional brilliance. Here again is another example of a terrific match of technical ability, attention to detail and focus on putting all of those energies at the service of communicating a musical experience of emotional depth. He is currently resident conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of India in Mumbai.

THE BRNO PHILHARMONIC has a storied history dating back to the 1870s and was established under the auspices of Leoš Janáček.





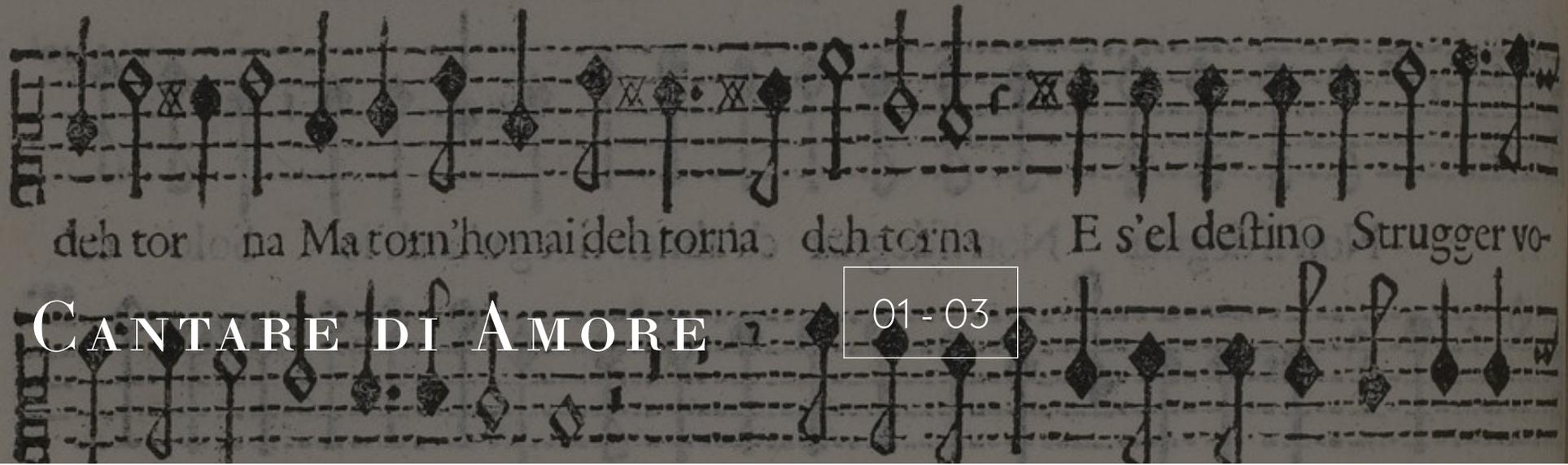
Cantare di Amore, recording session, LeFrak Hall, 2017, Tara Helen O'Connor, June Han & Tony Arnold

Duke/ Monk, performance at National Sawdust, 2017, Morey Ritt and Charles Neidich





Brno Philharmonic, Brno, Czech Republic, 2013; Mikel Toms, conductor



CANTARE DI AMORE

01-03

Longe da te, cor mio

Anonymous/ Madrigals, Bk. 4

Longe da te, cor mio,
struggomi di dolore,
di dolcezz'e d'amore.

Ma torna omai, deh torna! E se'l destino
strugger vorrammi ancor a te vicino,
sfavilli e splenda il tuo bel lume amato
ch'io n'arda e mora, e morirò beato.

Far from you, my heart,

I am consumed with sorrow,
tenderness and love,

But return now! And if fate
wills me still to suffer when near you,
let your beautiful dear eyes shine and sparkle,
so that I burn and die from them, and I will die happy.

Piagn'e sospira

Torquato Tasso, La Gerusalemme conquistata/ Madrigals Bk.4

Piagn'e sospira, e quand'i caldi raggi
fuggon le greggi a la dolce ombr'assise,
ne la scorza de' pini o pur de' faggi
segnò l'amato nome in mille guise;
e de la sua fortuna i gravi oltraggi
e i vari casi in dura scorza incise,
e in rileggendo poi le proprie note
spargea di pianto le vermiglie gote.

She wept and sighed, and when the sun's hot rays
put the flock to flight for the sweet shade,
into the bark of the pines or beeches
she wrote her sweetheart's name in a thousand ways.
And of her fate the cruel offences
and various misfortunes she carved in tough bark.
And in re-reading her own notes
She covered her blushing cheeks with tears.

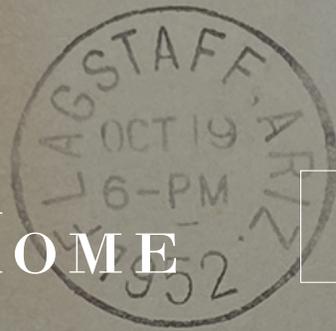
Darà la notte il sol lume alla terra

Anonymous, Madrigals. Bk. 6

Darà la notte il sol lume alla terra,
Splenderè Cintia il di prima che Glauco
Di bacciar, d'honorar, lasci quel seno
Che nido fu d'amor, che dura tomba
Preme; nè sol d'alti sospir, di pianto
Prodighe a lui saran le fere e'l Cielo.

The sun will light the earth by night and
the moon by day before Glauco will cease
to kiss, to honor this breast which was the
nest of love, now crushed by the weighty
tomb. May the heavens be kind to him
alone now with the pain of his weeping.

Kb.
rig-



05 - 10



LETTERS FROM HOME

1. Mrs. P.H. Andrews

Mrs. P.H. Andrews lived at 809 Beech Street,
in plain view.

That is, Plainview Texas.

She wrote letters to her friends and relations.

Sometimes they wrote her back.

Mrs. P.H. Andrews lived at 809 Beech Street.

In a world not long ago.

They seem so far away, and yet so close.



Williams, Ariz
Aug 29, 1956

Dearest Aunt Lou and all
We were surely glad
to hear from you, and
to learn you were feeling
better.

This leaves us all
in fine shape. Mommy
had a very high fever
the 18th and the doc
that he might be taking
polio. He said to keep
him under close observation
and to see how he got

2. Your Loving Zola

Williams, Arizona

August 1956

To Mrs. Lou Andrews:

Dearest Aunt Lou and all,

We are surely glad to hear from you, and to learn you are feeling better. This leaves us all in fine shape. Donny had a very high fever, the 18th and the Doctor thought he might be taking polio. He said to keep him under close observation, and see how he got along. His fever went down on Sunday morning, and he was playing that afternoon. We still don't know what was wrong with him. But are surely thankful it wasn't polio. Doctor Barnes said he had all the symptoms of polio.

September 2nd and 3rd is the big Rodeo Days, here in Williams. They are having quite a big celebration. Frankly, they bore me to tears, but I always have to go one day. The Lions Club sponsors it. And the wives all help with concessions, or something. I haven't helped much, the last two or three years, but I always try to go one day anyway. Auntie Darling! I'll cut this short, will try to do better next time. Write me again soon. Remember, I love you.

Always,

Your Loving Zola.

along
Sunday morn
up playing to
we still don't
wrong with h
surely thank
polio. Dr. Barnes
all the symp
I sent you
Hollie to read
enjoy yours
Ada's letters, t
never writes
She doesn't w
often. That's w

Thank you very
much for your
nice graduation
gift. Love,
Virginia Sutton

3. Graduation Gift

Dear Aunt Lou,
Thank you very much for your nice graduation gift.
Love,
Virginia Sutton

4. Thank You Luther

In October, 1947, Mrs. Andrews had \$52 in the bank.
Only two checks cleared that month.
One check was for \$7.95 to the Hail Shoe Store.
And one more check was to Luther Fowler, for \$15.
Whole balance in the account is \$52.95.
And she spends \$7.95 on shoes, two shoes.
And \$15 to tune the piano.
War's been over two years now.
Maybe Mrs. Andrews felt like dancing?



5. Dear Sister

Dear Sister,

Got your letter yesterday. I got kinda homesick for you so I thought I'd write you.

I will try to answer your letter which I was mighty glad to get.

I got home last Saturday week. Sure was glad to see the old house.

Arlene and Alta had come the day before and fixed things for me.

Alta come again, this morning and vacuumed the rug.

Everybody is so good to us. It makes me want to do like an ostrich.

I want to run off and bury my head because I've never done anything for them.

Have lots of company and every time, they bring something to eat

so Gus don't have to cook much. I roll around in the wheelchair and do what I can.

I am supposed to go the 23rd to have another x-ray. But may go sooner.

I am certainly getting tired of being waited on.

I whole lot rather wait on the other fellow. It was too bad Fern had to fall,
but such things do happen to the young as well as to the old.

Mrs. Hardy came one time and got me, and I sure did enjoy my visit.

She made a good supper, for me and one of the teachers at Parks.

Mrs. Hardy lives at Parks. You remember the big bank there.

She lives, back of the bank. They have made a nice home

out of the place and have everything modern, except has a wood cook stove.

I miss you. [Dear sister, got your letter yesterday. I got kinda homesick for you]

Well I make such out, I'll quit.

With love to you and all of your children, and grands and greats...

I am always, your old sorry sis,

Ada

All tracks (except *Sinfonia*) recorded at LeFrak Concert Hall, Queens, NY, 2014 - 2019

Edward Smaldone, producer

Adam Abeshouse, recording engineer, editor & mastering engineer

Sinfonia recorded June, 2013 at the Besední dům, Brno

Douglas Knehans, producer

Jaroslav Zouhar, recording engineer

All compositions published by LK Music (ASCAP)

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With special thanks to my family, for their support and their tolerance of the solitude needed to make this work a reality. Thank you Karen, Laura, (and Phil and Mushu), Gregory and Julia.

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