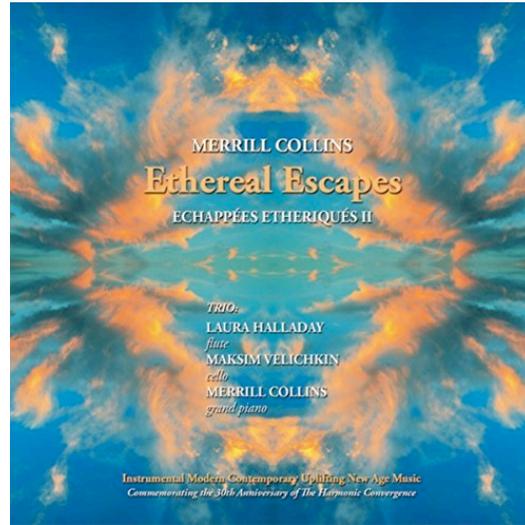
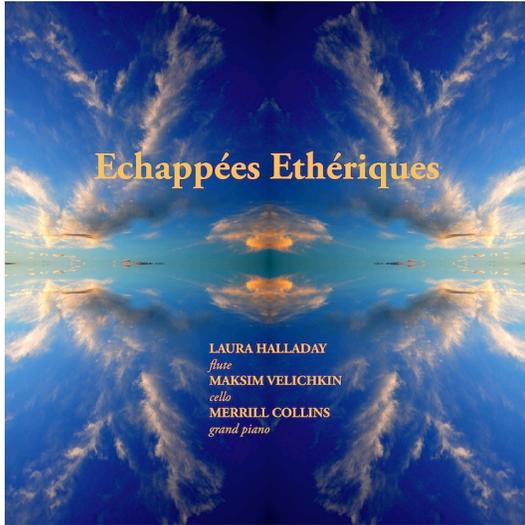


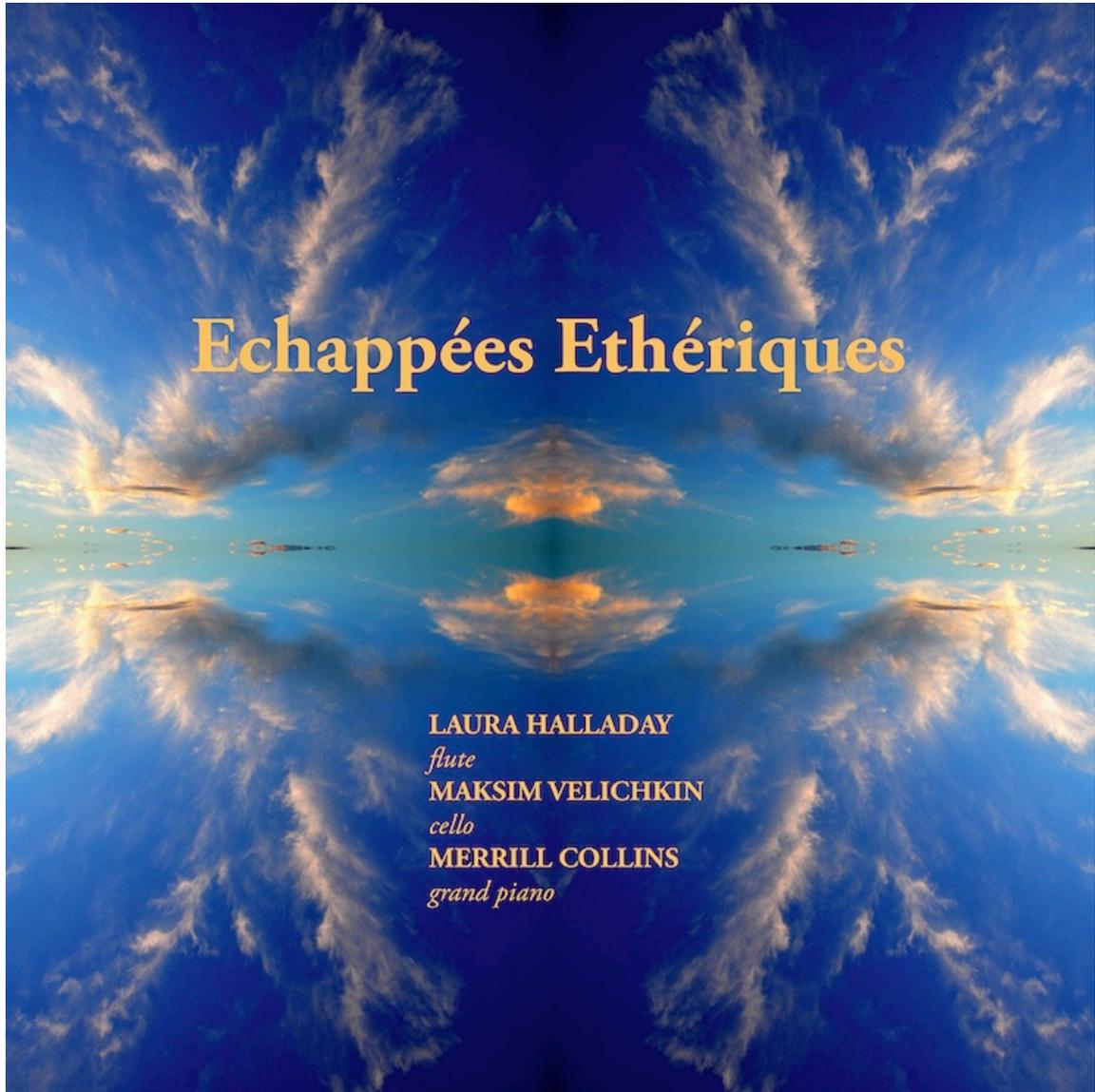
The Harmonic Convergence

A story by Merrill Collins
as heard through music on



Featuring
Merrill Collins
Grand Piano
Laura Halliday
Flute
Maksim Velichkin
Cello

- 1. *Echappées Éthériques*.....**
- 2. *Ethereal Escapes***



Echappées Ethériques was inspired originally by a set of chord progressions I wrote in 1987 at the time of the Harmonic Convergence, which happened on my birthday. I was overwhelmed with inspiration...

W

hen I was a very small child I imagined that the earth was contained within a large blue circus tent. The sun was a circular hole someone had cut in the tent, so we could see the land of the golden light that was always shining just beyond.... I dreamed of floating up to the hole in the tent to see what was over there in the land of the golden light. What a wonderful escape to another playground, I imagined! Making this music with two of my favorite musicians has been a realization of that fantasy. Along the journey we had many experiences, expressing our authentic emotions through the music: the desire to lift up, the "yearning to arrive in the Loving," the heartfelt joy of arriving, the sadness we had to leave the dream to return to earth, and the joy of waking up into the sunlight.

We floated

"**We Floated**" is a simple way to set up an atmosphere. The journey of Echappées Ethériques is intended to be meditative and uplifting. In many ways it is "anti-gravity". The story goes along with my childhood fantasy about floating up to the top of the sky which was a circus tent and out thru the hole which was the sun and beyond the hole was the land of the golden light. So we begin by floating....

to the blue hue,

"**To the Blue Hue**" is memorable. Laura brought the melody to a rehearsal several years ago when we were putting together a whole concert based on colors for the Peace Awareness Labyrinth Gardens in LA. We were happy to bring it back to life in this recording.

lifting upward...

"**Lifting Upwards**" is all about going up. Thus I added the chimes to elevate the ears even further. I was listening to it this morning and was reminiscing about the Baroque performance practice known as *inégaies* . From Wikipedia: *In music, notes inégaies (French: unequal notes) refers to a performance practice, mainly from the Baroque and Classical music eras, in which some notes with equal written time values are performed with unequal durations, usually as alternating long and short. The practice was especially prevalent in France in the 17th and 18th centuries, with appearances in other European countries at the same time; and it reappeared as the standard performance practice in the 20th century in jazz.*

***opening
into
the ethers.***

"Opening" "into" "the ethers" is a set of three pieces designed on the progressions I mentioned earlier. "Opening" sets up the atmosphere in key of G. "Into" is pulling us up with the flat 6th, which in the overtone series is #13. The note then magically becomes the 3rd in the new key of B Major, "The Ethers.". We have truly reached our harmonic destination! And I love the way Maksim slides up to the high B and then zones into the harmonics... Out of this world!

***We travelled,
riding the currents,
yearning to arrive
in the Loving.***

As the poem and story continues here is a set of four: "**We travelled,**" "**riding the currents,**" "**yearning to arrive**" "**in the Loving.**" These are experiential, not easy to describe. We are continuing on the journey of upliftment. "In the Loving" for me is truly the heart of the album. On a personal note...many years ago when performing a piece by Johann Sebastian Bach, I noticed that I could actually *feel* something opening in my physical heart chakra whenever I reached a certain point in the music. I was fond of having this experience as a performer, and also sensed that whenever this was happening, the audience was getting a special dose of loving energy. As I evolved musically, I really held that as an intention, to express the loving through the music.

Greens led us to Purple.

"**Greens led us to Purple**" was fun to create. The chimes and bells are again part of lifting up the ears into the mystical magical invisible realms. Like Scriabin I have always associated colors with sound. From Wikipedia: *Synesthesia is a neurological phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in a second ...*

***Wishing we could live this dream,
holding on to home,***

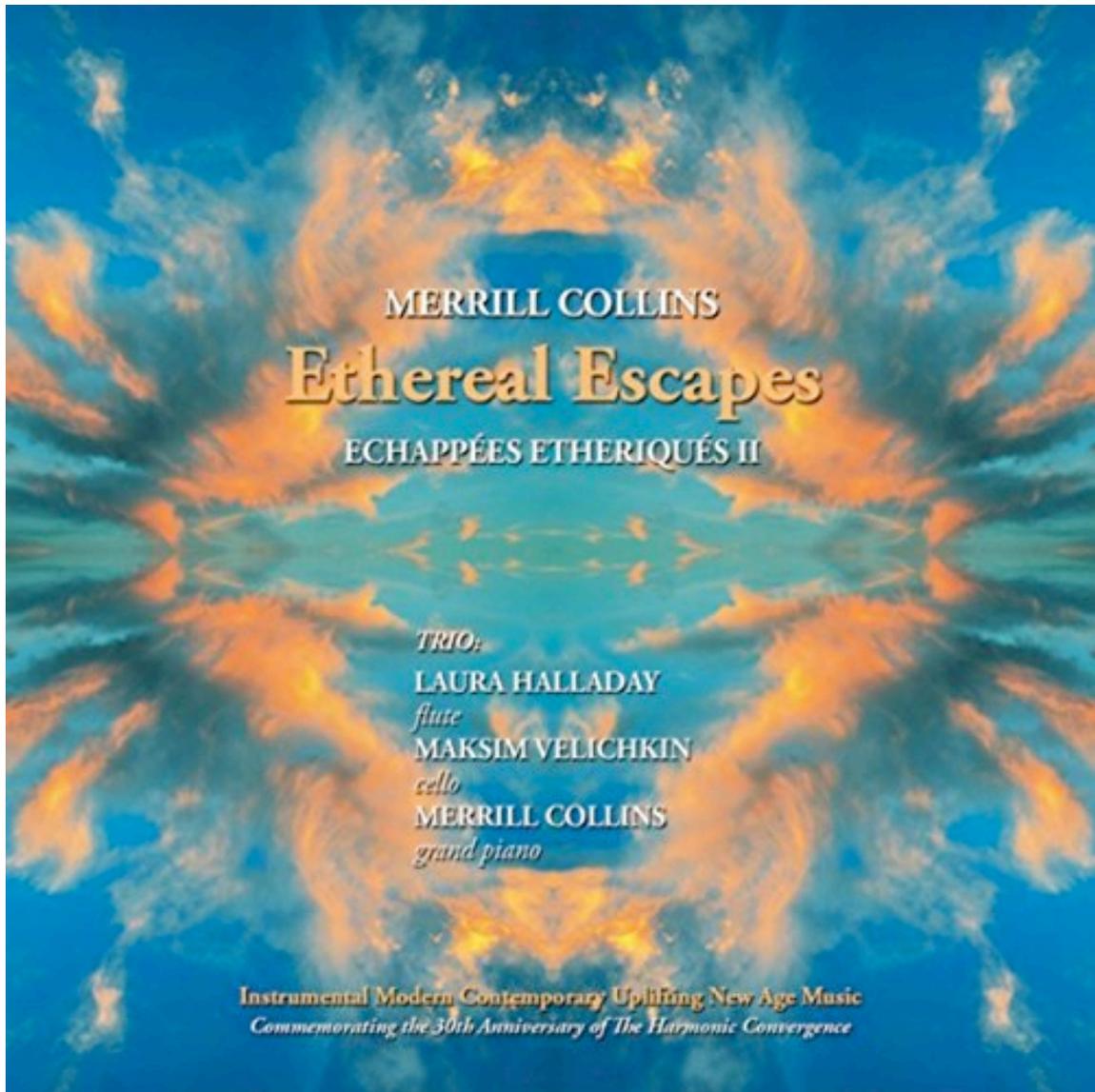
"Wishing we could live this dream" and "Holding on to home" are both emotional conversations between the instruments. We were improvising in keys we selected to best feature Laura's various flutes. For me, "Holding on to Home" really raises the question of "Where is home?" Is it the earth? Or is it the loving heart or is it the focus on the positive Light?

we awoke to the Sun,

At the end of our first recording session we played a joyful piece, **"Celebrating the Light"** just before surprising Laura with a piece of birthday cake with a lit candle. Laura said later that was her favorite take from the session. When I studied the takes I thought it would be good to include more happy pieces so we began the second recording session with intention of highlighting our joyful side.

celebrating the Light!

"We awoke to the sun" resulted. This concluding set addresses the sadness of coming to the end of the journey but also the celebration that we awoke to the sun celebrating the Light. The trip has a happy ending!



The Stories **that inspired the music**

1. The Story of the Conductor of the Music of the Spheres

Out in the etheric realms beyond our solar system we were met by the Conductor of the Music of the Spheres. He told us his recollections of his work that led up to the 1987 Harmonic Convergence from the intergalactic perspective. He had been frustrated with the tunings of several planets in our Earth's solar system and had asked the Intergalactic Council in the Pleiades

to issue forward instructions for all of the planets to tune and take responsibility for tuning themselves so that the Music of the Spheres would again be harmonious. This happened two years (Earth time) prior to 1987 , as the outer galaxies were fully aware and excited that there would be an opportunity to connect directly with the Earth and other planets in Earth's solar system's population and life forms.

2. The Story of the Fountain of Jewels

The planet Venus on the one hand took great pride in creating beauty, harmony, and expression of unconditional love. On the other hand, they were sited as having shadowed their expression by holding a prejudice toward the planet Earth and looking down upon it as a lesser place in the bigger picture of creation. Venusians naturally placed judgements on Earth for being barbaric, potentially self destructive, and in general being immersed in lower forms of emotion, including violence. The Venusian Board of Education was asked to retrain the population to eliminate the prejudice and become clear in their loving relationship of neighboring planet Earth, to embrace it, to make a plan to come into harmony. Each village and town enacted for two years a daily practice, every single citizen of every age was required to participate. First they would pick up a pebble off the ground and hold it in their hands. They would think of a quality of the Earth people's they were judging. They would imagine coming into the Earth people's heart beats as a form of empathy. And as they repeated the mantra "I love you" they would eventually be able to open their hand and the pebble had become a jewel. This did not happen over night, they would often have to repeat the exercise several times before they were able to move directly to the loving and thus open their hand and show a beautiful jewel. Each village and town was allowed to keep and display their collective jewels up until 2 months preceeding the Harmonic Convergence. At that point all the residents of Venus were asked to make a pilgrimage to the capital city (Reitz, researching name) where the Master Architects of Light and Sound were creating a beautiful fountain to be blasted off to Earth at the time of the Harmonic Convergence when the cosmic doors were all open.

TRACK 1: The fountain of jewels activated, TRACK 2: triumphant upon arrival! TRACK 3: Our peaceful uprising continues TRACK 4: flowing directly to love!

3. The Story of the Emerald

When the Conductor of the Music of the Spheres asked the Intergalactic Council in the Pleiades to offer instructions on the proper tuning of each

planet, the Earth was sited as needing special outside support as it was having an ecological malaise.

TRACK 8, We heard Earth weeping The Beings in the Temple of Balance (located in the Ethers) were commissioned to create a restorative healing emerald and to transport it into the etheric core of Earth at the time of the Harmonic Convergence. They gathered daily and focused on re-energizing the vibrational patterns of Earth, creating a magnificent emerald. They encoded it with an "rsvp" so they would have verification that it had been received.

TRACK 9 , remembering the emerald. OTHER NOTES: In our travels we were greeted not only by the Conductor of the Music of the Spheres, but also by our musical ancestors.

TRACKS 7, 11, 12 Track 7: Listening with our ancestors ...A "ground bass" from the Baroque era, a harmonic progression inviting instrumentalists to jam over.

Track 1: with our timeless elders, same idea, a progression over which instruments jam

Track 12: Living in harmonious worlds, a dance piece originally by Telemann, public domain

MORE NOTES ON "FLOATS" In the French Baroque era the dance suites were traditionally opened with "unmeasured preludes". Personal notes from Merrill: " I loved learning the unmeasured preludes of the French baroque composers, Louis Couperin and Rameau, etc. As an adult this was my first time being given the opportunity to play (harpsichord) in unmeasured time and I found it very enjoyable. In our studio sessions Maksim and Laura and me refer to these unmeasured pieces as "Floats" Just as Echappees Etheriques begins with "We floated" , we continued floating in Ethereal Escapes on

TRACK 10: "In the bigger picture" and final TRACK 16, "riding on waves of gold"

Other notes: TRACK 13 "Particles in Space" is a peace song written about nuclear atoms.

The fountain of jewels activated

At the beginning of our story we hear "The fountain of jewels activated" from the story, "The Fountain of Jewels" (see sidebar.) At the close of our story we conclude with the second portion of that piece, "triumphant upon arrival!" Love prevails.

Our ears tingled

Structurally speaking, this is what Spiraling Artist recording teams refer to in the studio as a "float." "Float" is a name we give to pieces that are unmeasured. Usually our floats open with low notes and expand upward. In this delicate and tender "float" the music starts high and trickles down, delivering the blessings to the ears who listen.

with every heartbeat

This song was originally "Terpsichore," which I wrote in the late 1980s for Isadora Duncan dancer Mary Sano with Tim Witter playing tabla. In this new revised version we didn't have tabla so we took turns playing the steady heartbeat. In the story "The Fountain of Jewels," the beings on Venus learned how to synchronize their heartbeats with the Earth peoples', in an effort to create empathy.

listening with our ancestors.

This is an improvisation on a ground bass line popular in the Baroque Era, evoking the musical ancestry of the neoclassical/new age genre.

our peaceful uprising continues

This track features the progression we started exploring in the prequel album, *Echappees Etheriques*. We start out in D, carrying the ear to an overtone we call the "pivot note" that leads to a new tonic, a major third above.

flowing directly to love.

A lyrical piece in F sharp major, where the last song finished. When I listen to this, I am reminded of "in the Loving", the core music at the heart of *Echappees Etheriques*. Just as "in the Loving" has a simple upward three-note theme, "flowing directly to love" has a simple downward three-note theme. If this song had lyrics, it would be someone whispering, "I love you." In connection to the story "The Fountain of Jewels," this is about learning how to flow directly to love, bypassing other emotional options.

We heard Earth weeping,

This track opens with an awesome sound of a large gong, compliments of my friend Paul Kaye who started a collection of sacred sound instruments this year at Peace Awareness Labyrinth and Gardens. In this track we hear Earth weeping, even though we have escaped into the surrounding ethers. Earth is weeping because of the deep ecological problems she is experiencing.

remembering the Emerald.

This track is dedicated to Avon Mattison, founder of Pathways to Peace and initiator of the International Day of Peace each September 21, the day the United Nations convenes with a minute of silence. At the time of the Harmonic Convergence in 1987, these opening notes were inspired. The same notes are the intro to the PSA, Minute of Silence. In this version we open and close with the 11-note theme that relates to the Story of the Emerald.

In the bigger picture

This piece is another "Float." Relating back to the French Baroque time of Louis Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau, dance suites began with "unmeasured preludes." "Unmeasured" takes us out of regular physical time and offers a sense of relief from gravity. Our "floats" pieces on both albums represent our way of navigating throughout the ethers, like in a flying dream.

with our timeless elders

This arrangement is a ground bass C-minor progression that Maksim likes. We jammed on it. It follows the C Major unmeasured "float", iIn the bigger picture," just as the Baroque composers would follow an unmeasured prelude with a measured piece in a related key.

we are whole together

In this progression, the whole tone scale spirals upward. We are whole together, expanding on the wonderful thought of all being connected. There is an allusion to the Fountain of Jewels.

living in harmonious worlds,

This tune is originally a dance piece by Baroque composer George Frederick Telemann. Laura and I share a background of playing as dance accompanists. This is one she likes to use in her dance music jobs. Laura brought this tune to a session as an idea to improvise on.

particles in space

In 1983 (the year the movie, "The Day After," was released), I attended an informational program put on by volunteers of a non-profit peace organization, "Beyond War". The eye-opening program included information about nuclear weapons around the planet and how many times over the

planet Earth could be destroyed. Nuclear bombs are traumatic to visit as a thought.

At the close of the program, cards were passed out to each person in the room to sign up as a volunteer to help the cause in whatever way possible. On the card I saw a variety of skills that do not fit with what I could offer, so I wrote in an extra box to check, "I will write songs". Not long after that, I was asked by the Bay Area United Nations Association and Interfaith Council to provide music for an event. They did not have a piano at the venue so I decided to make a recording, "Music for Peace." "Particles in Space" was one of the pieces. I consulted with a scientist friend about the nature of the atom, while writing the lyrics.

I so well remember a day in physics class at Nutley High School when we discussed the uncertainty of how electrons stay in place. Particles in Space lyrics are about the possibility that the energy that exists in the very center of every atom, holding all of matter together, is love. "And the enemies, working every day to try and split us all apart, now before they do, let us come together and respond, love will be our center and our bond." I have always loved this song and its message, and decided to include on our 2017 album. In light of the fact that the nuclear armaments situation is again in the news, a mere 25 years after the cold war ended, this song is a reminder to hold love as our basis of civilization and humanity.

returning home

Our intentions on all of the pieces are to lift the listener up in as many ways as possible. Harmonically, this piece starts out in E-Flat major, and at the end celebrates arriving in B-Flat major, a perfect fifth higher. "Returning home" reminds me of the question, "where is home?" Although we are creatures of the Emerald, we are also creatures of the ethers. Home is where the heart is, in the bigger picture, loving all of life in all the universes, no matter where you are.

riding on waves of gold,

This track is another "float", a float in D Major, which to me is gold in color. We are riding on the waves, returning the love, expanding it to all beings.
LISTEN:

triumphant upon arrival!

Love prevails.