

# MUSIC STORIES

## *DREAMS and the Quintette Concorde*

*This is a cool story of  
'International Intrigue'  
'How to get to Carnegie Hall?' — 'PRACTICE!'  
and  
Effortlessly getting revenge on a bunch of bullies*

### The Commission

During my first year at SIU, the faculty woodwind quintet was getting a lot of support from the university. They were being underwritten as a *famous music ensemble* for several concerts in the US and Europe as a way of advertising the university and the School of Music hoping to attract future students. They even pretentiously renamed themselves *THE NEW AMERICAN WOODWIND QUINTET*. This particular quintet of musicians was chosen partially because they were loud personalities on our faculty, always grumbling and whining about this or that. The administration wanted to shut them up for a while. I became part of their orbit when, one day in early Spring, the quintet's horn player asked me to lunch. While chomping on my Chinese food, he asked me if I would like to *compose* a brand new piece for *THE NEW AMERICAN WOODWIND QUINTET*, which they would premiere a year later in Carnegie Hall! Of course I was very interested. I was interested musically, because I had never written for WWQ, and for what a Carnegie Hall performance could do to enhance my career. I accepted the offer from *THE NEW AMERICAN WOODWIND QUINTET*, and went to work writing a piece for woodwind quintet. I eventually titled DREAMS, only my 12<sup>th</sup> major work as a modern composer.

Unfortunately, the horn player was NOT speaking for the ensemble but was winging his offer on his own. He was a loud-mouthed blowhard and had been over-reaching his authority quite a bit in his rank as a new Assistant Professor. He was a lively, perhaps a well-intentioned fellow, but he bypassed and snubbed many of his colleagues and superiors in his energetic attempts to push his own career agenda. More than probably any other discipline, a music faculty is a tight knit group, always working together to perform concerts. Even teaching students is a group affair, with each student being affected by most of the entire faculty. Although the horn player's personal ambition may be considered energetic and admirable, snubbing his colleagues was an obvious faux pas to anyone with a brain, which apparently he didn't have! In fact, a few years later the guy would be voted down for tenure by the majority of the music faculty, causing a division within our faculty – not to mention a lawsuit

where many of us had to go and testify in court. In fact, the horn player had already been denied tenure at a couple of other universities. Nobody knew that. When our Chair made calls during his hiring process, somebody lied about his *chronic "upstart" problem* in order to get rid of him! Ahhh academia. But I knew nothing of this. I was as green as they come, and was only interested in having my music performed at Carnegie Hall.

Skip ahead several months. DREAMS was nearly finished. Soon I would hand it to the players so they would have ample time to rehearse it before the Carnegie premiere in Spring. Just before the start of the Fall semester there was a faculty retreat with coffee, breakfast and lunch, etc. All 31 faculty were there, sitting at a huge table. We discussed various issues facing our department that year. Also, each professor was asked to give a little synopsis of his/her current research activities. When my turn came, I had a lot to say. Research was why I went into academia, unlike most of my colleagues, who were "teachers." I quickly mentioned several recent and upcoming projects and performances of my compositions, concluding with my excitement about the invitation/commission from the Woodwind Quintet to compose for their upcoming Carnegie Hall concert. I wanted to do so, because, in the several months since the horn player had made the offer, none of the four other members of the woodwind quintet had mentioned or acknowledged my composing for their group. I had been a little concerned that they didn't even know — thus, this was quite a bold move on my part. But I was right – the other four WWQers didn't even know, and were undoubtedly shocked to hear my "news." However, they remained stoic.

Most of these five guys were a squirrely, devious, whiny bunch of musicians. They were lead by the flutest, a heighth-challenged full professor from Texas, who liked arguing and talking tough during faculty meetings; the oboist, was also a full professor, who liked to bad-mouth all of his colleagues while pretending to be a fair-minded everybody's friend sort of fellow; the clarinet was new like me - we were pals, but he had not mentioned the commission to me either, which I thought was strange; the bassoonist was a dapper life-time Associate Professor, who despite his pleasant appearance was a very angry, negative fellow – in addition to carrying a 44 Magnum in his car's glove compartment, he eventually would just leave his second wife for Idaho where rumor had it that he joined the disgruntled American under-militia. When I made my statement about being asked to compose for the quintet's Carnegie Hall debut, those four guys must have each started seething inside — but said nothing. And the horn player was undoubtedly oblivious to it all

### The Rejection

The commission turned out to be a disaster. I composed the piece, created the score and five parts, gave it to the musicians, and they didn't play it in Carnegie Hall. There was one "rehearsal" where they read through my modern, difficult music, with me conducting the pulse for them. It sounded awful of course, and there was little discussion. After much time passed, I learned through someone that the group would not be premiering my new composition in New York. I had spent a half-year composing for nothing. Their tour came and went. A trial run of their Carnegie repertoire in St. Louis was a disaster as only two people were in the audience. (Didn't these guys even have one friend each in nearby St. Louis?) The Carnegie concert was met with similar disinterest. The reviews from the two concerts were so blah that the upper administration of the university were beginning to wonder why they were sponsoring such a crew. *THE NEW AMERICAN WOODWIND QUINTET* fellows actually blamed the upper administration for their failure to promote it. In the months following their sponsored European "tour," I heard stories about how some of these five guys were incompatible and at loggerheads during their travels — and I heard these stories from the five guys!!! These cretins slighted, snubbed, insulted, and bad-mouthed their colleagues, the upper administration, and even each other! The five of them were simply a 'piece of work'.

Well eventually the university stopped supporting them. The assistance after all was supposed to be seed money, like all research funding, and they were expected to make the investment pay off. What should have happened was those supported concerts should have spawned concerts supported by external sources that would keep SIU's name in the headlines. But of course they did nothing to continue to promote *THE NEW AMERICAN WOODWIND QUINTET* – they couldn't even get a few friends to attend that St. Louis concert. Within the next year, *THE NEW AMERICAN WOODWIND QUINTET* fizzled and disbanded. In retrospect I should be thankful they didn't perform my piece, because they would have done a lousy job, and I'm sure I would have received the blame for ruining their ensemble! My own good manners, assisted by my wife's insistence that I should just keep my mouth shut, was the best way for me respond to this situation. I just went about my business as a modern composer. I continued to compose and promote my music, as best I could. However, I had this piece, *DREAMS*, for woodwind quintet. Mmmmm? I sent the score – cold – to a few quintets that I knew of but didn't expect much. In a phone conversation with my pal composer/cellist Tom Flaherty, I told him all about the debacle. He suggested that I send the score it to a guy he knew in New York. I did it hoping for the best but expecting nothing.

Meeting My Friends in Communist Romania

I finished DREAMS in Fall 1984 so there would be plenty of time for the faculty creeps to learn and play it in the Spring of 1985 at Carnegie. But they didn't. Of the groups to whom I sent the score a few responded politely, and I never heard from the guy in NYC. DREAMS sat on the shelf. Three years later, during the Fall of 1987 I was able to disperse another copy of the score – this time internationally. A contingent of academics from Romania were coming to the USA, and, because of a chance connection with our Chancellor, the dapper Al Sommit, they would spend a few days at SIU. This was a couple years before the Romanians would revolt against their Communist government and lynch/execute their President, Nicolai Ceausescu and his wife. Since the end of World War II Romania was a Communist satellite, and this move was spawned by the downfall of the Soviet Union. In the mid-1980s, Al had been traveling and had met up with the dude who ran the national television station in Bucharest. They hit it off and thus the distinguished visit from the Romanians. The contingent of Romanians that traveled to SIU that Fall included the head of the musicians union, composer Ulpui Vlad. The administrators didn't know what to do with him, so I was called in to meet with him in order to discuss music – ha ha ha – what the hell did the upper administrators know? Ulpui and I met at a banquet, speaking through interpreters. At that banquet, there was a young Romanian woman who had defected several years before and for some reason was hiding out in Carbondale. She had not only been invited to the banquet, but at some point gave a brief speech and then played something on the piano. She was quite emotional in her speech. It was very flowery, and she was nearly in tears. What she played on the piano was childish. She couldn't really play the piano. I think she was playing a Romanian folk song or maybe an anthem. She did so with great bravura and passion. She seemed a little nuts. It was quite strange, and I was embarrassed for her and for everyone in the room. It was a screwy evening, but Nancy and I got to go out on a date from our kids. During the Romanian's visit, Ulpui and I met and hung out in the company of both an interpreter and a government official – just to make sure we didn't pass official military secrets! There were twice as many government officials as visitors on this trip. I gather this was SOP for Communism. The officials were always looking suspicious. Ulpui was great guy. He gave me several of his scores, hoping to get something performed in the U.S.A., and I reciprocated by giving him several of mine. At the last minute, I threw DREAMS into the stack of scores I gave him. I really presumed that nothing would happen with these scores. After all, I certainly didn't have the resources to get Ulpui's stuff performed. But I figured that my scores might end up in some library in Bucharest, and my work would hence be immortalized in Eastern Europe. Actually, the fall of the USSR enabled me to meet several Eastern European musicians/composers. It created friendships with Latvian composers Valdas Silverus and Petrus Plakadus. In addition, my participation in the International Composers

Institute in Austria, which also took place around this time, allowed me to meet other Eastern European composers, as well as those from Western Europe. It was very interesting to me, not only politically and personally, but musically. These guys, being suppressed for their entire musical lives, were real musicians. They were talented and skilled, of course, much more than me, but their pipeline to organized sound was considerably more acute and personal than mine or anyone I had ever met. Music was, in fact, all they had or ever had. As kids these guys had no TV, no books, — no food either. But they had music. It was an eye opener, and anything that happened to my career because of these friendships paled in comparison to witnessing their relationship with music. It is powerful and significant.

Ulpiu and the Romanians came and went, and time went on. DREAMS was forgotten. I had struck out in all my attempts to get the thing performed. I tried. At this point in my career, I was happy that just about everything I had written had been performed at least once, so one “failure” was OK. I was of the opinion that composing the stuff was my vocation, and if performances didn’t come off, tough. Charles Ives didn’t hear most of his major works performed, and he didn’t even care. The String Quartet that I spent nearly my entire time in Paris composing has never been performed – well it has, but that performance was such a disaster that I’m still waiting for the *real* premiere! Such is the life a composer.

### The First World Premiere of DREAMS

Flash ahead to Fall 1988, approximately three years after the “*New American Woodwind Quintet*” DIDN’T premiere my music in Carnegie Hall. In the three years that DREAMS was accruing dust on the shelf I was on to many other things, a dozen new pieces, including my 1<sup>st</sup> piano sonata and it’s premiere in Vienna (Austria). By this time, the faculty ww quintet was barely a quintet, with no more support from the university they maybe were doing one concert per year, and all five of them were constantly bellyaching and spreading their comical pretentiousness in their wake.

One evening during the following March, about 5-6 months after the Romanian’s visit, Nancy answered the phone – back when folks only had one phone and shared it. She called upstairs for me. When I came down, Nancy was looking disturbed and confused. She handed the phone to me. The woman on the line – back when there were “lines” – began speaking a mile-a-minute with a thick foreign accent. I had no idea who it was. But then, because of something she said, I realized it was the crazy Romanian woman who had behaved so emotionally and played the piano at the banquet with the Romanians. She was again speaking very emotionally, something about a “miracle.” Eventually, I was understanding what she was telling me: My music

had recently been premiered in Romania with “great success.” What Music? When? Where? By Who? She didn’t seem to know any details and was more focused on what a grand event it had been, and how wonderful it was that our two countries were joining together for such a wonderful event! Huh? It seemed that the woman had been telling me that DREAMS had just been premiered by musicians in Bucharest in a concert at the American Library, and it had been a live broadcast on Romanian National Radio! Huh?

I eventually got off the phone. This information seemed like the ranting of a crazy woman. I simply didn’t believe it. It was true that I gave Ulpiu Vlad the DREAMS score, but just the score, i.e. without the parts. It would have been impossible to perform, unless they hired someone to write out an entire set of parts. That would have been a huge undertaking and seemed quite unlikely to me. However, the next day at the university I was told that the performance did take place. It was verified by the Chair of my department who learned about it from Chuck Classic, some Associate Chancellor for *international horse-shit*, who had it verified by a Romanian Professor in another College. But I still didn’t believe it. I wanted to, but it just didn’t make sense. But the administrators wanted it to have happened, patting themselves on the back for being so wonderful. I heard that the name of the ensemble was *Quintette Concorde*. They were very good musicians and had performed all over the world. Was there a recording? Yes, of course. They will send it to me. They have performed the piece several times since the premiere. They are still performing it! They just took it on the road – to Tokyo!

Hogwash! I still didn’t believe it, but I went along with it – didn’t want to call my colleagues and other administrators a bunch of liars. My skepticism seemed to have validity, because I never did receive the recording. Because of all the pretense and paranoia that had accompanied the Romanian’s visit, I had a right to be skeptical. Only hearing the performance would have made me believe that DREAMS had been performed in Eastern Europe.

### The Second World Premiere of DREAMS

A year later, one day in Fall 1989, there was more news about DREAMS. I went down to the Faculty lounge to retrieve my mail. One of the items was an inter-campus envelope from somebody in the English Department. Professor Manny Schoenhorn was a New Yorker, living in Carbondale. I had heard he was rather an eccentric fellow, but I’d never met him. He was a neighbor to my best friend, Steve, and Manny’s wife was a Jazz singer – a good one. I opened Manny’s communiqué. In the envelope was a little note and a newspaper clipping. The clipping seemed to be an advertisement of some sort, and the note was a strange little thing with some goofy stickers attached. The stickers made no sense – they were silly – ahhhhh — eccentric. The note scribbled in

pen simply said, "Hey Stemper, is this you?" I looked back at the clipping. It was an announcement of an upcoming concert in New York, with the names of the pieces with composers. The concert was dated March 1989, four or five months into the future – and the venue was Carnegie Hall. I looked a little closer and there listed in concert order was

*The Sylvan Winds*  
DREAMS (1984) ————— F. Stemper (b. 1951)  
*Woodwind Quintet*

Well, I immediately thought HOAX!! Damn it. How did this guy do this? Why did he do it. I went up to my office and immediately looked up Manny's office phone over in the English Department. I needed to get to the bottom of this now. First the Bucharest folly, and now this crap. Damn it.

So I called Manny. I asked him about the clipping.

He simply said, "I don't know. I'm from New York and still get the TIMES. I saw this, and wanted to know if it was you. Is it?"

I told him that I did write a piece called DREAMS, but so far it hasn't been performed. "Is that the one that Underwood and your so-called "colleagues" asked you to write and then never performed it?"

"Yeah——Hey, how did you..."

"Everybody knows about it, Stemper."

Well, I wondered about this. It clearly wasn't a hoax. Well Maybe it was an errant advertisement that had changed. I presumed that, if this group was going to play my music in Carnegie Hall, they would have contacted me to at least ask permission. (Permission – HA!) But I hadn't heard from anybody, just from a stranger and an honest-to-goodness clipping about DREAMS in the New York Times!!

I needed to investigate further. Somehow, I found out about *The Sylvan Winds*, and got a phone number of their bassoonist/Business Manager, Svetlana—something. I called her that evening, while Nancy was putting kids to bed — there was lots of laughing, squealing, and crying in the background. I told Svetlana who I was, and immediately she responded:

"Ahhh, yes. We've been meaning to call you."

It was true. The Sylvan Winds was going to play DREAMS in Carnegie Hall. How damn ironic. Ya know, ya work like crazy, crawling along with your career, and then this happens. DREAMS had been buried, but all of a sudden some NYC musicians decide to take a chance on it, and what was supposed to happen in the first place was actually going to happen. My piece would be premiered in NYC's world famous Carnegie Hall, and the performers had to be 50 times more capable of a good performance the New

*American Woodwind Quintet*. Talk about pretense. Those five dudes deserved this irony: and I wouldn't say a word to them, I'd just wait for the news of their slap in the face to trickle down to them – one by one. Ahhh – so that's what Ronny Reagan meant by the *Trickle Down Effect*. Life was good.

Back to the phone call, Svetlana had obviously created a plan for me. She had lots of questions: "Is that OK with you that we perform it? Will you be able to come to the performance? Will you be able to come to NYC early enough to help us rehearse during our final rehearsals? We have a grant from New York State that can help you with your travel expenses. It helped that you have a degree from Stony Brook. Oh yeah, one more question: Will this performance be the World Premiere?"

? Yes – was it the World Premiere? I told her the encapsulated version of what may be or may not have been the World Premiere in Bucharest! We decided to wait until the program deadline to make a final ruling.

Then Svetlana said, "But for sure it will be the American Continent Premiere – right?" That's right, and then told her that I'd been told that the Quintette Concorde had premiered the piece elsewhere in Europe, and as distant as Tokyo! She was duly impressed — but not nearly as impressed as I was!

### Trouble In Romania

That Christmas I was feeling pretty good about the Carnegie Hall performance that would take place in a couple of months. But on Christmas day there was news from Romania – but not about DREAMS. The folks had revolted against their communist leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu. Then they executed him and his wife. The execution was rather brutal and Romania seemed to be in chaos. I wondered if the people I knew over there were OK, i.e. Ulpiu Vlad. That was scary stuff. But this international intrigue also made me even more dubious of the DREAMS premiere. Within all that turmoil it was hard to believe that such a musical event could take place. I was pretty sure that the upcoming performance in NYC would be its first one.

Not too long before the NYC Sylvan Winds performance, I got a call from Lee Hyla. He wasn't calling about my Carnegie premiere, of course, he was calling about the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of and the WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS *premiere* airing of the 1964 heavyweight championship between the Sonny Liston and Cassius Clay! I mean a New York performance was significant, but – first things first. Anyway, we did talk about my upcoming trip to NYC, and he offered me a place to stay. When I got to New York, my pal Mark Cannon picked me up at Laguardia and took me to Lee's. After saying hello I went straight to my first rehearsal with the Sylvan Winds – up in a Central Park West apartment. The players all arrived when I did. It was interesting listening to them talk about their incredibly busy lives as free-lancing musicians in this huge metropolis. Boy

– hustle hustle hustle. They were making a good living, but it was a robust life. After that I made my way back to Lee's where that old gang of mine, classmates from Stony Brook met up for Lee's "famous pepperoni pizza. It was a great time. Michael Bushnell, Jim Puglease, and a few others, reliving our days of around 10 years before. Now it's been 40 years ago!

Finally, I got to hear DREAMS. And I got to hear it in Carnegie Hall. Unfortunately, it wasn't a terrific performance of my music. The piece is in three parts: 1) a series of strange ethereal chords that built tension; 2) a middle section of zaney, rhythmically active "cartoon" music, that released the tension from section 1; and 3) a final section that returned to the chordal section with some changes including less tension and finality. The middle section lacked the zip that was needed. The performers either didn't get it or played it safe, making for a subdued reading. Oh well.

Incidentally, they also wanted me to give a short talk before it's performance, which I did. *Frankie Stemper addresses the public in Carnegie Hall*. That came off well too. I had a few jokes, that got laughs, and after the talk as I was walking offstage, the oboist told the audience – "there will be a test after the concert folks." So I guess I did a good job: i.e., I came off as an intellectual academic egghead creative genius like I was supposed to, as well as a tall Pollack. I had tried to get more verification of the Bucharest performance, but there was no new information. I still thought it was bogus. So, just to be sure *The Sylvan Winds* used the "American Continent Premiere" version in the program.

The subdued performance made me wonder even more about the Romanian "premiere." If I could only get my hands on that recording. Maybe those guys got it right. But maybe those guys don't even exist. It took me another three years before I would learn first hand about the Bucharest premiere, **the WORLD PREMIERE**. I would finally get verification of the first performance of DREAMS not by a recording sent in the mail, or correspondence with Romanians, a even a copy of the original program, or more rhetoric from university administrators. I would finally learn about it from the players themselves in a small town in southern Germany. You can't make this stuff up, folks.

During the Summer of 1991, I spent a month in Austria at the *Viktorsberg International Composers Project*. It was the first of two consecutive Summers – one month in the Austrian Alps each time. On almost the last night of the first Summer, I read in the Austrian Newspaper, that there was a concert about two hours from Viktorsberg that grabbed my interest. It was a concert in a Church in a small German town of Renaissance music, arranged for woodwind quintet. It was to be performed by a Romanian group called the *Quintette Concorde*! That caught my attention. Could it be? Could this be the same group. I was excited about getting back home and thus

had a lot of energy. I decided to take a chance. It could be a waste of time, but at least I'd have a nice drive, another adventure, and hear an interesting concert. The Drive was nice, although driving my tiny Fiat on the Autobahn was scary. The small town was also cool, and I had a little time to look around by myself before the concert. How such a small town could have such a huge church is amazing – but that's Europe. The concert was interesting, and the performers were excellent and sounded ethereal in that huge cavernous church – which by the way was packed. That's Europe. After the concert I just wanted to go back to Viktorsberg. But I forced myself to find the players. I got myself backstage, and then to the Green Room. There were many people in the green room, and some were speaking German, but many were speaking a language that I had never heard. It seemed to be a cross between Italian and Russian. They were speaking Romanian. I tried to get through the door, but in addition to many people standing around there were a couple of guys who seemed to be guards blocking just anyone from entering the room. Ahhh, I remembered the paranoia when the Romanians visited Carbondale. They probably were actual guards, something akin to the KGB. Way back in the room, I saw the performers in their tuxedos discussing the concert with people from the audience. As I came through the door to the Green Room, one of the guards stopped me by putting his hand on my chest and asked me something in what I presumed was Romanian. He was serious and wasn't going to let me in. I started responding in German, flumbersome about, and then just gave him my name. He repeated it, "Franck—Stempier" a couple of times and then motioned me to wait at the door while he walked to the back of the room. The other "guard" put his hand up to hold me at the threshold of the room. We both watched the first guard as he walked back to the performers. He interrupted the oboist, who was in mid-conversation with several older gentlemen. He said something to the oboist, and as he did he pointed toward me. The oboist stopped his conversation and stared at the guard with a look of disbelief. He asked the guard something. The guard responded with, "Franck—Stempier." With a furrowed brow the oboist repeated my name, "Franck—Stempier." This caught the attention of two of the other performers. One of them questioned: "Franck—Stempier?" The oboist said something to the guard who then pointed back at me. By now the final two members of the quintet had noticed the others and left their conversations to join the others. The guard pointed at me, and they all looked toward me at the door. The room had quieted down noticeably. There was a brief moment when I thought my journey had been a mistake. Then I heard one of the performers say my name again to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> member of the woodwind quintet. "Franck—Stempier." All five of them, seemingly in unison repeated, "Franck—Stempier," and the room seemed to explode! Then the five performers pushed the guard aside and came rushing toward me with huge smiles on their faces. What a moment this was in my life. Those guys were so happy to see

me. Immediately, the six of us were fast friends, laughing and carrying on, and "DREAMS" was our point of reference. They had been as much in the dark about me as I was about them. They spoke no English, and I spoke no Romanian, but we all spoke some German. That didn't matter. It was a grand reunion!

We *talked animatedly* for a while, and then the oboist told me I had to come out with them, to eat and drink German beer. I did so. We had a wild time. Romanians know how to drink. We went to a Gasthaus of some sort and had food and beer. I was sitting in the middle of the quintet, at a big table that easily had room for a dozen. There were several Romanians, including the "KGB" guys, who, as it turned out were actually pals with the others. Probably the KGB guys' job was to accompany this same group of musicians on all of their tours. And now that Communism had been ousted from Romania, these guys still had that job – out of habit – but weren't taking it very seriously. The paranoia that I had seen in Carbondale, during Ulpriu Vlad's and the others' visit, was gone.

#### Epilogue:

Although he had probably ten years on me, the horn player and I arrived at SIU in 1983 as new Assistant Professors. He already had a couple of assistant professor gigs before SIU, which he screwed up – although none of us knew it at the time. So he went up for/requested tenure after only four years, claiming that his experience prior to SIU was a prerequisite for him to do such a thing. He was right. However, I had no experience but ALSO went up for/requested tenure after only four years. I did so because the Chair wanted me to. I had had a lot of successes as a composer, and the comp program was thriving under me. I had a pretty good career ahead of me and had almost since I arrived been trying to get a better job at a better university – especially one in a large metropolitan area. The Chair knew this, and was even helping me in my quest. He was, too! But like a good administrator he wanted me tenured ASAP so I'd have a tougher time leaving SIUC for a better place. So I went up early. The problem with going up is that if you do, and you are voted down, you get only one additional year on your contract and then you're out of a job. So going up was a gamble and a bit scary. But our fourth child was on the way and the extra Associate Professor money was needed.

Well, as seen above, the horn player was voted out and, after an unsuccessful year of trying to convince everyone to change their minds – including fighting the damn thing in court, he left for god knows where. We never heard about him again. Probably selling tin roofs or something.

Me, on the other hand was more than successful in my quest for tenure. In fact, it was a unanimous POSITIVE vote, and then just a few years later I went up for Full Professor and received a unanimous vote for that notch as well. Naaaaa.

And — because of my connection with Romanian musicians and composers, my career has experienced a lot of activity with them, and through our respective visits to each other's country.