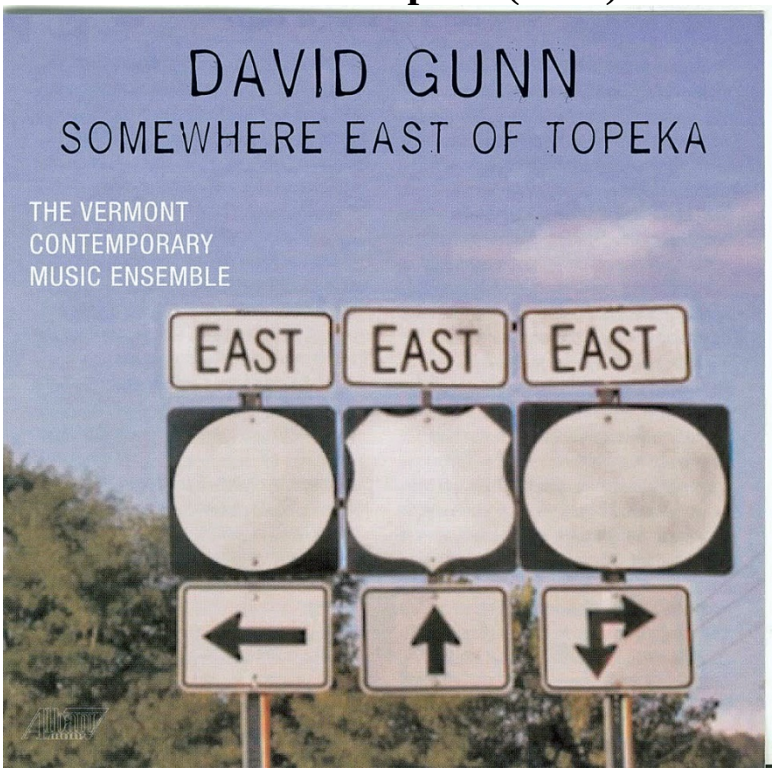
Somewhere East of Topeka (1997)



Cowbellies. Metrically marked *Andante with a full udder*, this bovine blues follows the multiple-stomached digestive process of man's best friend. Its spare counterpoint features stretto and call-and-response development.

Katmandon't. The baritone sax plays a crucial role in this short set of rondo-like variations in 9/8 time, with a couple of detours in 4/4.

Going Like Sixty. A gentle piano motif in C major introduces this tribute to the number 60, after which spirited melodic fragments in meters of 4/4, 7/16 and 11/16 propel the piece to the C minor finish line.

The Help Me Rondo. Once upon a time, the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble asked me to write a piece that played off the Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations," however, the Turtle Island String Quartet beat me to it. Instead, I recast the Boys' "Help Me Rhonda." There's a theatrical aspect to the performance: Midway through the fugato section, the percussionist drops his music and calls for help. The preoccupied musicians ignore him, but he recovers in time to rejoin them at the piano for a glissando and full-stride romp.

Dance of the Hasidic Chigger Hecklers is the first movement of "**A Song, a Dance and a Spizder**," which I wrote for the New Music Across America series. It's a relaxed, klezmer-tinged *something* in (mostly) 9/8 time.

Not the Right Balloon is the set's *Spizder*, a word that one dictionary defines as "a nearsighted duck in a cactus factory, from the German verb *spizden*, to back hurriedly away from prickly vegetable matter." It is a story-song whose post-psychedelic verbal imagery is contrasted by an accompaniment rather dotty about the 11/16 time signature.

Do Aliens Wear Sombreros, the song of the set, features thick harmonies and jagged rhythms. The "alien activity" section employs a Whining Cicada With Blinking Eyes Keyring, erstwhile product of the Archie McPhee Company, to faithfully reproduce the sound of the aliens.

A touch of the klezmer also pervades the oh-so brief **Somewhere East of Topeka**, whose Bach-like harmonic direction helps excuse its intrinsic virus music sensibility. The title identifies the place where a muffler once fell off of my car.

Out of Cahoots is a lopsided barroom waltz in 5/8 time for two pianos that features the whole-tone scale.

Hunting Tuna. This bluesy variation on Justin Morgan's "Huntington" was composed for the bicentennial celebration of Stowe, Vermont. Various changing time signatures give the piece a pleasantly out-of-kilter feeling. Wrote one reviewer, "it's as if Holst tripped over Copland on the way toward a New Orleans funeral."

Missing Inn March. In March of 1996, the composer along with Dennis Báthory-Kitsz, co-hosts of the weekly nonpop radio show Kalvos & Damian's New Music Bazaar, were scheduled to interview composers in Europe. Both wrote pieces to be performed in their absence. Neither was played, and The Missing Inn March makes its debut here. For a march, I have to admit that it's nearly unmarchable.

Billions of Brazilians. Though short of the number of Brazilians required for exact performance specifications by rather a lot, the piece had its debut in an extended version with a hall full of musicians during American Music Week in 1991.

Its initial South-of-the-Equator ambiance is swiftly compromised by unlikely whole-tone melodies spun together with street-organ tunesmithing and a certain familiar melody not the composer's own.

Originally written as the "carousel spinning demoniacally backwards" motif for a theatrical production of Ray Bradbury's Something Wicked This Way Comes, **Out of the Dark** is a fractured conversation in whole tones among clarinet, violin and keyboard synthesizer. The elusive harmonies suggest klezmer until they don't.

Fossick is a kind of perpetual motion piece for violin and clarinet presented as a short-attention-span version of pulse minimalism. Themes are swapped, a little counterpoint occurs, and then, abruptly, it's over.

Running Lights. Six different time signatures keep the piece's driving rhythms honest, and it's the closest I've come yet to writing a legitimately minimalist tune.

Khartoumaraca. Notwithstanding its sometimes jagged melodic lines, this gentle trio for clarinet, marimba and cello has a strong relationship to the opening Cowbellies, bringing the cycle of early works on this recording to a close.

The Third Highway (2019)



The Greek mathematician Nicomedes was famous for his treatise “On Conchoid Lines” which contains his discovery of the conchoid curve that he used to solve certain mathematical problems. It also helped the composer get from a whole-tone scale universe, which is where **The Conchoid of Nicomedes** begins life, to one firmly rooted in A minor. Later, the piano introduces a gently lyrical melody. But before the piece can catch its breath, it’s off to the whole-tone scale races again which culminates in a final dash to the finish line.

The phrase “400 owls attempting to outwit a giant badger in the rain” first appeared in a story in which I described what it sounded like to shuffle a deck of cards for a game called whiskers six-draw in a saloon in Klegmore, New Mexico, at ten past three in the afternoon. **In the forest, 400 owls discover a giant badger—It’s raining**, a multi-themed jazz fantasy in which an alternately lyrical and rhythmic clarinet is propelled by driving piano motifs, is its musical equivalent.

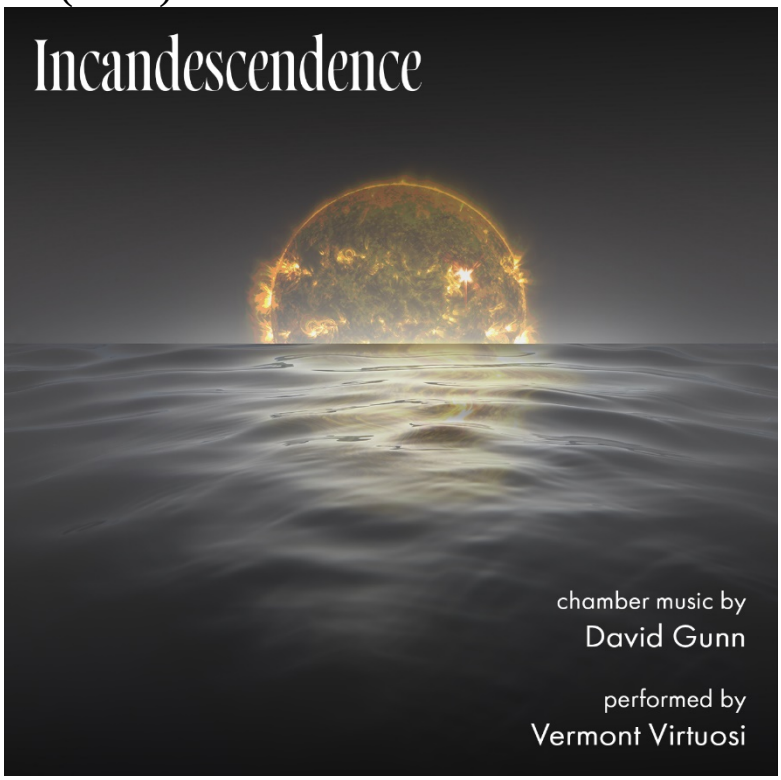
Long before the computer was a personal one, I typed some stream of consciousness text on a manual typewriter, one line of which was “Chilling shock crystals lodged themselves in Bellimar’s garbled brain.” I swapped “visions” for the garbled brain, *et voilà*: **Les visions de Bellimar**, a tune that wends a lyrical, sensual path from D minor to C minor, as the viola provides a warm counterpoint to the moody and sometimes mysterious flute.

Euphonicum Tangenturis, which dubiously translates from Latin as “agreeable sounds going every which way,” starts off in the white key universe before veering off on one quirkily chromatic tangent after another. Jazzy melodies abound, too. At a bit past the halfway point, the tune pauses to regroup. There follows a slower introspective section based on a unison riff, then it’s off to the races again. By the time the instrumentalists reach the bristling-with-energy coda, musical order is restored. And, indeed, celebrated.

The Third Highway’s title implies that there exists a first highway. And a second. Well, where are they? Answer: I don’t know! Suffice it to say that the piece consists of a musical journey in which concert and alto flutes intermingle with violin and piano from hither (F major) to yon (F# major) during which they encounter fugato pathways and syncopated tonalities that change color as the macadamed miles pass. The trio is entirely in 4/4 time, though it’s not always apparent.

With a tempo marking of *Trending Sultrily*, **Forbidden Flute** begins life as a slowly descending four-note motif played by the flute. Other musical events follow, until driving rhythms in the piano turn the initial phrase into a technically challenging and dazzling tour de force that is not for the faint of lung.

Incandescendence (2025)



Incandescendence for string quartet, Ethel. *incandescence*, as spirited string playing, *descendants*, citing an theme from the Realm of the Four Parts America.

I wrote instruments featured in the New York-based **cloud takes all away**— The piece is part is "unsung drifters evidenced by the me, evoked clouds. and part *Incan* the feeling of the first imaginary musical themes drift cumulusly inhabitants of the down for the end-of- in pre-Columbian The second move-ment

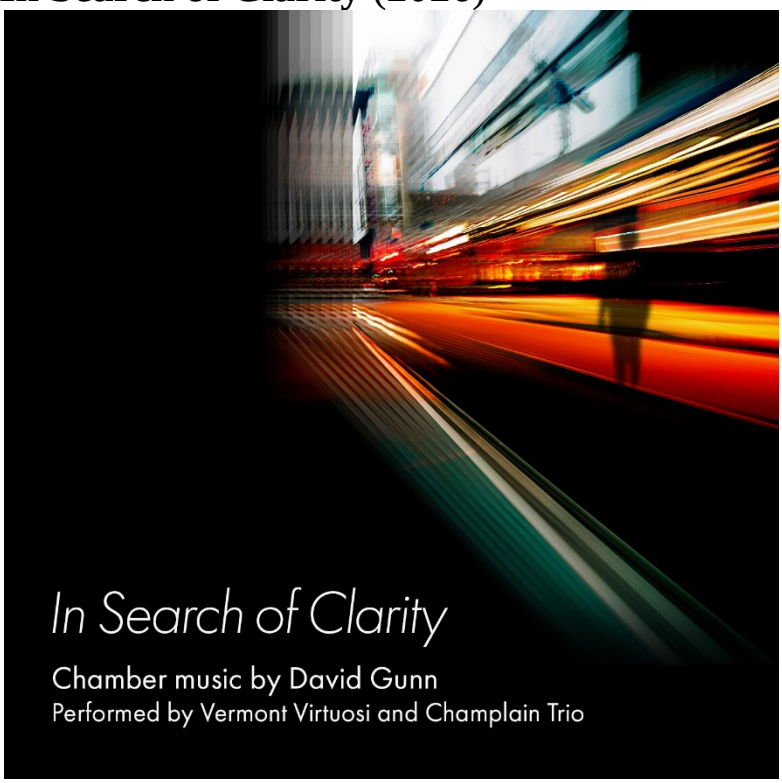
An anagram of the eight-note motif that **And by and by a** the first movement and flute and four strings— composer's whimsy. aloft," a phrase that, to minutes, the third Coincidentally, so does without pause, but movement, whose metrical change from along before slowing quickening of pace, one movement stop sign. that slackens only briefly begins by quoting an before plunging lickety-split to the final D major chord. The title is from Act 1, Scene 3, of The appears near the end of Two Gentlemen of Verona by W. Shakespeare. then subjecting it to the After about six movement begins you'll know it by the 4/4 to 5/4, along with a

Cesta domov, which is Slovak for "the way home," depicts a musician's journey through eastern Slovakia, though it just as easily mightn't. The clarinet's first four measures comprise the travel theme, which recurs throughout the piece. More than 84 percent of the piece—which is a quarter-hour long and half again as wide—is in 4/4 time, though a brief sojourn in the Kloptaň nature reserve yields a dozen measures in 13/16 time.

I wrote **Concord Dance** for Composers Concordance, a New York-based concert series. The original, never-performed version was scored for trumpet and three strings. Then I reconfigured it for four reed instruments. Retaining 75 percent of the original orchestration, this version awards thematic prevalence to the viola.

It's always ourselves we find in the sea at first resisted being titled. But because the first and last measures contain the note "C," I thought of "it's always ourselves …" which is the final line of "maggy and milly and molly and may," a poem by E. E. Cummings. Since the piece does indeed evoke images of the sea, I had a title, even if it does bark up the wrong homophonic tree.

In Search of Clarity (2026)



While a peregrination typically means an act of travel on foot, the second movement of **Prelude and Peregrination** takes place among three friendly instruments sitting amiably around an antique, burnished walnut table discussing the movement's harmonic progression from C major to E flat major. The Prelude's journey from C major to C minor is also observed. The first half of the Prelude is in 5/8 time; all other measures in both the Prelude and Peregrination are in 4/4 time.

Streaming Consciousness begins its musical odyssey in D minor and crosses the finish line thirteen minutes later in G major, having made the occasional foray along the way into various other keys. F sharp major, for example. Some of the piece's sinuous themes *could* suggest flowing streams to the listener, but assigning a consciousness to it should be left to a person better versed than the composer in musical psychoanalysis. The piece was commissioned by the Vermont Music Teachers Association.

As it is in real life, the search for clarity in **In Search of Clarity** is lengthy and varied. The first movement, Inquiry, begins its search in F minor and ends in A flat minor. Quietude begins in A minor and ends in B minor. And although Luminescence both begins and ends in C major, it spends many of the intervening measures sampling other keys. The entire piece is in 4/4 time, save for a 16-measure diversion in 7/8 a smidgen past the halfway mark in the final movement. I believe that clarity is ultimately achieved, but I'll leave it for the listeners to decide for themselves if they agree.

The music notation software version of **Along the Karakash** places the last chord at the 14 minute and 14 second mark. UNESCO's 1,414th World Heritage site is Xinjiang Tianshan, a mountain system in northwest China that includes the Karakash River, a waterway famous for white and greenish jade. The jade is borne downstream as river boulders and pebbles. Some of this quartet's melodies—especially the extended cello line that begins at the 9⅔-minute mark—are unabashedly riverine. Even pebbly.