



## THE BAND

Six highly skilled musicians, from six diverse musical and cultural backgrounds, combine their wealth of vast experience playing together for the first time bring into being a sound that is highly original. Each musician recognized the beginnings of a musical journey, the evolution of sound.

Weeks later the music is named "Aurora Consort" and the ensemble is performing for a live recording; one original tune, and several by Ralph Towner, David Friesen and Paul McCandless.

Summer 2004 is spent writing and rehearsing brand new material, by early fall Aurora Consort had original material for a complete concert. With the growing audience, locally and internationally, a debut album begins. Highly acclaimed bassist David Friesen of Portland Oregon, quickly accepts an invitation to guest perform on this recording as does the pianist/keyboard player of the Paul Winter Consort, Jeff Holmes of Boston.

Aurora Consort's preview concert of November 14th, 2004 had Doug Tatum, Executive Director of the Folly Theater, present Aurora Consort at the historic music venue Plaza III in Kansas City. It has been host to many musical greats including Jay McShann, Claude "Fiddler" Williams, Wallace Roney and Danilo Perez.

The concert was a huge success and by December the recording of eleven original tracks and one cover was complete, to be released March 2005. Response to live concerts has been overwhelming with CD pre-sells occurring.

Preparing for a concert in Oklahoma on March 3rd the ensemble will play originals, select covers and some brand new material ensuring the evolution of the ensembles' sound.

While visiting her Mother in England in 2001 Aurora Consort's oboist had a dream that she won a Grammy and the name of the album was "Twelve Years in October". That is the name of their debut CD and it is on its way to acclaim.

Just for the record there are whisperings that Aurora Consort will open for the jazz pianist Jaques Loussier. Keep listening to the whispers and to Aurora Consort.

[www.auroraconsort.com](http://www.auroraconsort.com)

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## THE MUSICIANS (page 1 of 3)



**Natalie Twigg** *oboe, english horn*

*"... the dulcet sounds of award winning musician, Natalie Twigg"*

–THE BBC

*"Captivating"*

–THE LEICESTER MERCURY

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Natalie has played with musicians worldwide including Ravi Shankar and Paul McCandless. She has played for the British Royal family and in 2004 was commissioned to write and record a lullaby for the newly born Princess Catharina Amalia of the Dutch Royal family. She has been called to play with Led Zepplin, recorded for the BBC, Spanish television, Channel 4 (UK) and WGBH (USA).

Natalie has freelanced throughout Europe and America with orchestras, jazz, rock and chamber ensembles and performing solo recitals at venues including St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

At 18 she won a prestigious scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London where she studied for 5 years with highly acclaimed soloist Sarah Francis and the London Symphony's English hornist, Christine Pendrill.

In 2003 she founded "The Natalie Twigg Music Foundation" gifting personal lullabies to terminally ill children. During this time she recorded 80 traditional childrens songs for english language schools in Central and South America. Her CDs "Sea Whispers", "Lullabies for the Miracles of Life" and the "Sanctuary of Sound" are available from her website [peacepiper.com](http://peacepiper.com).

Currently Natalie is focusing on writing and performing with Aurora Consort. The group's first CD will feature her original compositions and inspired playing.



**Steve Rigazzi** *bass*

Steve is a unique musician whose career has essentially developed in reverse order from the norm and come full circle.

Until 1990, he was a completely self-taught musician who learned his craft on the job. Rigazzi sharpened his skills while backing many internationally known musicians such as Chet Baker, Jimmy Heath, Ed Shaughnessy and Chris Vadala. He would later study jazz bass with Cecil McBee in New York City.

In 1996, Rigazzi moved on to Kansas City, Missouri where he performs with pianist Joe Cartwright and vocalist Angela Hagenbach at such venues as Jazz in Marciac, France and Jazz Aspen as well as performing as guest artist and clinician for college and high school jazz festivals.



## THE MUSICIANS (page 2 of 3)



**Jake Blanton** *guitar*

*"...His playing is organic and wonderful, and he is able to distill many of the qualities that set this time apart from other eras in his playing, all while dealing with the harmonic language implied in the modern jazz tradition in a very advanced way."*

—PAT METHENY

Experimenting with piano, cello, bassoon, and bass from the age of ten, Jake discovered a love for the guitar, and jazz, in high school. While in high school he played in the school jazz ensemble for four years, performed with both small group and big band jazz ensembles at the local university, and wrote a composition which was performed by the Kansas City Symphony.

In 2001, Jake, along with pianist Roger Wilder, saxophonist Josh Sclar, bassist Gerald Spaits and drummer Todd Strait founded the Westport Art Ensemble – a jazz quintet with a strong focus on collective improvisation and original compositions. The WAE played to packed houses in Kansas City and in 2002 released their self-titled debut recording.

After relocating to New York in 2003, Jake is once again residing in Kansas City and you can catch him in town with such artists/groups as Angela Hagenbach, Sons of Brasil, The Bob Bowman Quartet, Barnaby Bright, Interstring, Coleen Cassidy, Stan Kessler's Television, Kathleen Holeman, The Brad Cox Ensemble and DaveStephens.



**Roger Wilder** *piano, keyboards*

Roger was born and raised in Rochester, N.Y. After receiving a Bachelor of Music from University of Miami in 1986, he continued to record and perform in South Florida, most notably in groups assembled to back Stanley Turrentine, Randy Brecker, Adam Nussbaum, and Chris Potter. He taught a jazz piano class and private lessons at Miami-Dade Community College from 1987 to 1991. In 1995, he and his wife moved to the New York City area for 5 years, where his activities included teaching, performing, and recording.

Five years ago, he settled in Kansas City, and he now performs with local musicians including the Aurora Consort, Angela Hagenbach, Sons of Brasil, Dan Thomas, Chris Burnett Quartet, and as a founding member of the Westport Art Ensemble.

Select Discography: Duffy Jackson: *Swing, Swing, Swing.* (Milestone/Fantasy); Phil Flanigan: *New York Toast.* (Philophile); Glenda Davenport: *Sophisticated Lady.*; Chuck Zeuren: *Why Not?* (Red); Jon Doty: *Until the Last Star is Out* (MP3.com); Westport Art Ensemble: *Westport Art Ensemble.* (Passit); Angela Hagenbach: *Poetry of Love.* (Amazon Records); Mike Metheny: *KC Potpourri.* (3 Valve); Dan Thomas: *City Scope.*; Aurora Consort: *Twelve Years in October.*

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## THE MUSICIANS (page 3 of 3)



### **Gary Helm** *percussion*

Gary is a well known musician in the Kansas City area for the past 25 years, specializing in percussion and electric bass. His talents as a conga player has allowed him the opportunity to tour the country in the early eighties with such Motown artists as Willie Hutch, who at the time, had the number 1 hit "Love Power." He has also had the pleasure of doing shows with Chaka Khan, the O'Jays and Teddy Pendergrass.

Returning to Kansas City in the late eighties he began to develop his skills as a Latin jazz artist playing with the Guacamole Band. His love for rhythm and blues led to gigs with Eight Ball and Baby LeRoy (two very popular local

Kansas City bands.)

In the early nineties he began working with the Grammy nominated Blue Riddim Band, now known as SDI (strategic dance initiative). Their specialty as a reggae and world beat band is a Kansas City favorite. Gary enjoys playing bass and percussion with SDI as well as my other current percussion gigs with Bird Flemings Traditional Music Society, (masters of samba), Sons of Brazil, and Musa Nova, featuring the beautiful and talented Angela Hagenbach. Also he has just finished a highly successful engagement at Plaza III with Slim Man.



### **Keith Kavanaugh** *drums*

Keith is a 1987 graduate of the Berklee College of Music in Boston where he studied drumset with Gary Chaffee and Joe Hunt, improvisational theory with Gary Burton, and ensemble performance with Herb Pomeroy, Donald Brown, George Garzone, Phil Wilson and many others.

He has performed with Diane Schuur, Phil Wilson, Joshua Breakstone, Scott Robinson and many musicians on the Kansas City jazz scene. He is a charter member of the Doug Talley Quartet which has kept its original personnel for ten years and produced three recordings.

In 1990 Keith graduated from Park University where he completed a degree in Painting and Graphic Design. He has paintings in the Sprint Corporation Art Collection, Heartland Spine and Specialty Hospital collection and many private collections, and has designed more than 100 CD packages for musicians from coast-to-coast. See his work at [keithkavanaugh.com](http://keithkavanaugh.com).

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## QUOTES

*“Energetic, peaceful and thoughtful... uplifting music played by the Aurora Consort. All the best.”*

– DAVID FRIESEN BASSIST, PORTLAND, OR

*“Aurora Consort’s got a brand new bag, and they won’t hesitate to open it up on anyone.”*

– DR. WAYNE E. GOINS DIRECTOR OF JAZZ, KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, MUSICAL DIRECTOR OF SWING CITY JAZZ, MANHATTAN ARTS CENTER

*“Truly wonderful and well arranged. I hate to use the word ‘wow’, but here it is appropriate”*

– CATHY OUDEMANS A & M RECORDS, LONDON, UK

*“All the best for the Aurora Consorts’ musical journeys!!”*

– BARBARA LAFITTE PRINCIPAL OBOIST, BOSTON BALLET ORCHESTRA

*“Keep Kookin’....”*

– GEORGE GARZONE SAXOPHONIST, NEW YORK, NY

*“I’m struck by the lightness of the original compositions and textures that you create without being fluffy. The oboe is such a wonderful voice in that ensemble and it makes me want to hear more.”*

– KRISTIN KORB BASSIST / VOCALIST

*“Rhythmically and melodically stunning!”*

– ANGELA HAGENBACH VOCALIST, KANSAS CITY, MO

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