



FRIENDS CENTER
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Fifth-month, 2006

Dear Friend,

On behalf of Friends Center and the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program at Guilford College, I am pleased to introduce to you the musical compilation *A Few Songs Occasioned*. This album represents the Senior capstone work of Quaker Leadership Scholar Jon Watts, who for the project received a national Clarence and Lilly Pickett Quaker Leadership Award. Jon created this body of work to bring together his musical, technical, and Quaker interests, and he did so in stunning fashion. After witnessing the profoundly positive impact Jon's work has had on the Quaker community at Guilford, I have felt moved to share the fruits of his labor with the wider Quaker world.

When Jon approached me in the fall of 2005 to suggest a project of original Quaker-themed music, I figured he would offer up a few "summer camp" or "pop" tunes that would be performed in a student coffeehouse and promptly be forgotten. Jon had other plans in mind, however. He wanted this project to push the limits of his own ability and knowledge. In the end, it did that for him and for me!

Jon did thorough research into the lives and writings of early Friends to come up with inspiration for his work. He conducted exhaustive interviews, read widely and deeply, and lived, breathed, and ate Early Friends until the musical inspiration began coming out of his thorough preparation. He built a sound studio in the basement of a local Friends meeting, recruited talented musicians from among the student body, and spent hours and hours during the fall and spring semesters of his senior year composing, directing, singing, playing, and producing.

As a culmination of all this work, Jon presented a stunning live concert on campus at which the various musicians he had assembled helped him interpret and perform his music. The auditorium was packed, and all were deeply moved by the experience of hearing the seven pieces distilled from Jon's creative mind and heart. In a powerful way, the concert created a mood and atmosphere that effectively conveyed the reality of the personalities and issues that were the subject of the music. George Fox, Solomon Eccles, and James Nayler came alive to us, and Jon's interpretive lyrics and score did far more than reiterate historical facts; they created a spiritual experience. Some attenders professed to having a profound spiritual awakening as a result!

Jon's CD, *A Few Songs Occasioned*, captures that mood well. In addition to offering up interesting insight into three fascinating characters, the songs are entertaining, catchy, and clever. They lead the listener not only into captivity to songs stuck in the head but also into contemplation of the commitment of those first Quakers.

I hope that Jon's music will inspire others to dig deep into the experience of early Friends and discover, as Jon did, deep resources for our lives today. I am proud to recommend his work and to claim him as a product of the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program at Guilford College.

Max L. Carter, director
Friends Center at Guilford College