



Paul Stephen Donn

June 22, 1936 - November 27, 2018

Paul Stephen Donn died November 27, 2018. He was born the second child of Sophie and Leon Donn in Beacon NY on June 22 1936. Paul moved to Austin TX in 1949 where he attended Austin High School. He went on to attend the University of Texas at Austin where he earned both undergraduate and masters degrees in mathematics. He lived many years in southern California where he worked for the University of California system. He also taught himself the art of piano tuning and instrument repair which was his primary occupation for most of his life. Paul was predeceased by his parents and sister Peggy Himelstein. He is survived by nephews Steve Himelstein of Porter Ranch California, Roger Himelstein of The Woodlands Texas and niece Carol Christensen of Austin Texas.

Comments



“ Paul shared so many concerts with me and the ACG community for so many years.

I could always count on him to give me smart, honest thoughts about what he had heard, because Paul cared so deeply and penetratingly about the art of music making and the precious miracle of beautiful tone.

I will miss seeing him tremendously, and I am very grateful for the many years of concerts we shared together.

Matt Hinsley

Matthew Hinsley - December 10, 2018 at 09:17 AM



“ Paul Donn was a part of my life for 15 years.

I met Paul at The Cactus Cafe in April 2003. It was a gathering of students looking to showcase talents to their peers. Most of the performers that night were just college kids. One after one, they would get up, sing their songs, then go back to chatting with their friends. The night was as ordinary as any other.

Then a gentleman, easily three times older than everyone else at the venue, got up to play. He looked slightly disheveled. Like a guy who was late for an appointment but didn't bring his materials. Or somebody running to catch the bus before it rolled away from the stop. Someone looking frantically for their glasses all the while they were wearing them.

He was carrying a flamenco guitar with wooden pegs. He took a moment to get settled. As soon as he was settled, he burst into a frenzy of notes and rhythms that challenged my understanding of the guitar, and what only one person could do with the instrument. How could one person be rhythm, lead, and percussion all at the same time?

He played a few songs that night. Each song more mesmerizing than the last. As the last note rang out, everybody in this place was literally screaming and pounding on tables in appreciation of his abilities on the guitar.

Over the next decade, I would witness this scenario would play out at almost every accessible music venue that showcased local talent. What the hell was that?!?! Who the hell was that?!?!

That was Paul Donn. That's who.

As he was leaving, I literally scrambled through tables and chairs in the dark room to talk with him.

That night we became acquaintances, but over time, we became friends. He was embedded in the Austin music scene, and somehow knew everyone. Or everyone knew him. Almost everyone involved in classical guitar knew him. Luthiers in the Mexican State of Paracho knew him. The guy got around.

Through Paul Donn, I met some incredibly amazing and talented people. Also, through Paul Donn, I also met some downright... 'unique' people. ("Free Spirits" Paul would call them.) I made the acquaintance of musicians that I would never have had the chance to meet or study with on my own.

I was connected to many top notch classical guitar players through Paul Donn. He was generous with his connections and never shied away from connecting people. While my study with those individuals, came and went, Paul remained a part of my life.

We hung out at music venues, poetry readings, greasy spoon diners, book stores

late into the night. The guy at 70 had more in him than people half his age.

Once, at one of these late night greasy spoon hangouts he pulled out his flamenco guitar while people were eating just started jamming. Florescent lighting/styrofoam cups be damned, have some Buleris with your cheeseburger and milkshake.

Paul was a part of my life through good times and plenty of bad times. We celebrated holidays together. Times of plenty, and times of scarcity. Whether anyone wants to admit it or not, the circle we kept was practically family. And like family, we disagreed & often fought. But I loved him, and will go on loving him.

I have no doubt that Paul is trading guitar licks right now with the likes of Camaron de la Isla & Paco de Lucia. Sabicas & Pepe Habichuela. And telling them how they're playing it wrong.

He was strange. But he was also magnificent. I will always love you Paul. Thanks for everything.

oldfriend - December 09, 2018 at 11:16 PM



“ Old Friend lit a candle in memory of Paul Stephen Donn



Old Friend - December 09, 2018 at 11:21 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Old Friend - December 09, 2018 at 10:10 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



December 09, 2018 at 10:09 AM



“ I met Paul about 10 years ago, when he befriended Pilar Andujar (a world-class Flamenco dancer/artist from Spain, living part-time in Austin). Anyway, Paul would sometimes provide us with a beautiful live guitar accompaniment for our Flamenco dance classes, gratis, when we were on 6th St. at Meneo Space, and later at the Townlake Y.

We kept in touch throughout the years from time to time, as he was always interested in being plugged in to the Austin Flamenco scene. I last saw him this July at Genoveva's Flamenco Festival after party at Barlata. He was so vibrant, and just beaming that evening. Flamenco was a part of his soul. He brought a couple of lady friends with him to share in this lively, captivating experience, and they became entranced, which delighted him even more. He seemed to sincerely enjoy sharing his love of Flamenco with those around him; I'm truly, deeply saddened by his passing.

Shared this with other Flamenco friends, but not sure if they can attend on such short notice; but I will be there for sure... wouldn't miss it for the world.

All My Love,
Kim Goodman

Kim Goodman - December 08, 2018 at 07:22 PM



“ To all the members of Paul Donn’s family, my heartfelt condolences for the loss of a noble man.

Paul possessed a special quality that allowed his friends to manifest their best selves.

At 10 days after his passing, I miss his gentle smile and his willingness to always listen to my incessant talking. Him and my dog Allegro were best buddies especially while playing tug-of-war and during nap time. We always found the best deals at Natural Grocers and enjoyed the Rice & Beans from Wheatsville. I don’t know why, but today I felt that his spirit is experiencing a newfound freedom.

Fly freely my dear and special friend!

I shall see you in the next life,

Daniela



Daniela - December 07, 2018 at 04:05 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Teresa Maijala - December 06, 2018 at 05:55 AM



“ This is so well done! Thank you for doing this.

Carol - December 06, 2018 at 10:18 AM



“ I met Paul at a raw/vegan potluck in Northwest Austin. He seemed to be slow to smile but quick to lend a hand and I enjoyed watching him visiting with friends. RIP, Paul.

Pamela W - January 10, 2019 at 08:48 PM