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Bio information: **CURLEW**

Title: **A BEAUTIFUL WESTERN SADDLE / THE HARDWOOD CD + DVD** (Cuneiform Rune 303-304)

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**FILE UNDER: JAZZ / PUNK-JAZZ / ROCK / ALT-POP**

“Curlew’s knotty, off-center melding of jazz, rock and blues is esoteric enough to be highly regarded among the experimental music cognoscenti—for which The Knitting Factory is ground zero—but it’s also catchy, funky and wry. If the right side of your brain had a foot, it’d be patting happily throughout these 10 tunes.” – *Jazz Times*

“The best of the unsigned, genre-busting downtown groups” – *The New York Times*

“Best CDs of the 90’s: 4 1/2 star reviews: Curlew: *A Beautiful Western Saddle*” – *Downbeat*

“Cartwright’s songs tap into some quintessential American soul...It’s an example of extraordinary artistry, and a singularly joyful one at that.” – *Boston Rock*

“The resulting album is nothing short of spectacular. Each track exists in a world of its own without any acknowledgement of the musical boundaries collapsing around it.” – *Exclaim!*

*A Beautiful Western Saddle / The Hardwood* is an extraordinary feast of cutting-edge American popular music: video documentation of **Curlew**, the best live band in North America during years (mid 1980-90s) when Downtown New York reigned as world capital of cutting edge music, and a reissue of Curlew’s most ambitious and critically acclaimed studio album. During the 1980s, Lower Manhattan was ground zero for creative popular music in North America and the seedbed for the most inventive and progressive popular music in the world. Young musicians of all stripes –jazz, rock, classical – flocked there from around the world. They gathered at watering holes like The Knitting Factory, where musical cultures and genres collided, cross-pollinated, and – in rare pairings of artistic perfection - struck artistic nuclear fission. The best genre-transcendent band to emerge from this fertile, primordial musical stew was **Curlew**, named after a common shorebird.

**Curlew** was founded in 1979 by **George Cartwright**, a saxophonist/composer who migrated from Midnight, Mississippi to NY’s lower East Side. Early members included such key figures of the NY – and international – rock and jazz avant garde scene as **John Zorn**, **Fred Frith (Henry Cow)**, **Bill Laswell (Material)**, and **Wayne Hortvitz**. But it was not until Curlew’s lineup (1985-1992) of fellow transplanted Southerners **Tom Cora** (cello) and **Davey Williams** (guitar), and Northern transplants **Pippin Barnett** (drums), and **Ann Rupel** (bass), that Cartwright had the ideal components to ignite his musical mix. Curlew packed and proceeded to burn up the floors of such Downtown clubs as **CBGBs**, the **Mudd Club**, and **The Knitting Factory**; toured world wide on both the avant jazz and rock circuits, and thrilled audiences and critics alike with its infectious, Southern-cured brew of punk-jazz/Downtown sound, roadhouse blues, and a cello that conjured European folk and classical musics as easily as Appalachiana. *Musician* called Curlew “a Southern band inside a New York sensibility”, while others described it as an instrumental jazz ensemble with rock sensibility—or the reverse. But Curlew was also much more: a group of highly attuned musicians who understood the fundamental chemistry, the shared resonance that underlay and united all musical genres. For Curlew, chamber music rooms and country dance/ beer halls, cellos and guitars resonated from the same **hardwood**.

*The New York Times* called Curlew "The best of the unsigned, genre-busting downtown groups". Along with such other groups as **Naked City**, **Ronald Shannon Jackson and the Decoding Society**, **James Blood Ulmer**, **Last Exit**, it helped to define the genre-busting 'Knitting Factory sound'. While commonplace today, the idea of pulling influences from multiple genres and indiscriminately combining them was radical when pioneered by the late-20<sup>th</sup> C. Downtown scene. Genre-bending kept major label recording contracts away from Curlew, but Curlew’s music helped pave the way for mainstream acceptance of **Medeski, Martin & Wood**, **Radiohead** and others to come. Likewise, **Tom Cora**’s use of cello in settings ranging from Curlew, to **Skeleton Crew**, to Holland’s punk band **The Ex** paved the way for **Yo Yo Ma**’s widespread popularity. But for the duration of its career, Curlew’s music was ahead of its time, and the band remained signed to independent labels with Cuneiform releasing 8 of its 9 recordings.

*A Beautiful Western Saddle*, the group's fifth album, was the last album by the Cartwright / Cora / Williams / Rupel / Barnett lineup, and also a marked a radical departure from the band's previous all-instrumental works. It was an album of songs, wonderfully sung by guest vocalist **Amy Denio**, and composed by Cartwright and his band members around poems written by Canadian poet and video artist **Paul Haines**, best known for his work with **Carla Bley** on the landmark “jazz-opera” *Escalator Over The Hill*, and *Tropic Appetites*. Cartwright met Haines through **Kip Hanrahan** in the 1970s, and began writing songs around Haines’ poetry. When Curlew was invited to perform at **The Knitting Factory** in 1989 as part of **New Music America**, Cartwright enlisted **Denio** as guest vocalist to bring these songs to life. A year later, Curlew and Denio recorded the studio album, *A Beautiful Western Saddle*. Asked recently where the album name came from, Cartwright recalled: “*Paul once said or wrote to me something about a present of a western saddle was on it’s way. Or something like that. I added ‘A Beautiful...’*” Haines’ words likewise inspired the remarkable, melodic and sometimes surreal songs that fill the album. *A Beautiful Western Saddle* brought the concept of the ‘art song’ into a whole new light. When originally released, it was greeted with international acclaim and was one of Cuneiform’s early successes. Out of print for some time, this reissue gives new audiences a chance to discover this landmark album from the late 20<sup>th</sup> C. Downtown music scene.

The second disc releases film footage of Curlew on DVD for the very first time. It includes the first-ever DVD release of Curlew’s live video, *The Hardwood*, which Cuneiform had long ago released on VHS. *The Hardwood* features an entire 80’ Curlew show from March 23, 1991 at the Knitting Factory’s first, Houston Street address. Shot by a four camera crew, and both remastered from the original video master files and sonically remastered, *The Hardwood* may be the best-quality video document ever made in the ‘old’ Knitting Factory’s notoriously crowded performance space. Depicting Curlew performing live with its most acclaimed lineup at the original Knitting Factory, *The Hardwood* is an essential document of one of the most vibrant and important scenes in late 20<sup>th</sup> C. American popular music.

[press release continued on verso...]

Also included on Disc 2 of Cuneiform's double-disc *A Beautiful Western Saddle/The Hardwood* is an hour of previously unreleased video footage of Curlew recorded in downtown Washington DC. Filmed at **DC Space** on December 9, 1991 by a local cable show, it depicts Curlew performing with Denio on their *Beautiful Western Saddle* tour. There are two 30 minute programs; one features Curlew and Denio doing songs from *A Beautiful Western Saddle*, while the second set features Curlew playing two extended instrumental works. Then located on Seventh St. NW (in a building now housing a Starbucks) and now long-gone, DC Space was the Capital City's center for art rock and other non-punk non-mainstream music. It was the venue of choice for Knitting Factory and international avant-garde artists playing in DC. This Washington video captures the energy of Curlew live on tour, while documenting for eternity a space that held a special place in DC's artistic heart.

– JEN, may 2010

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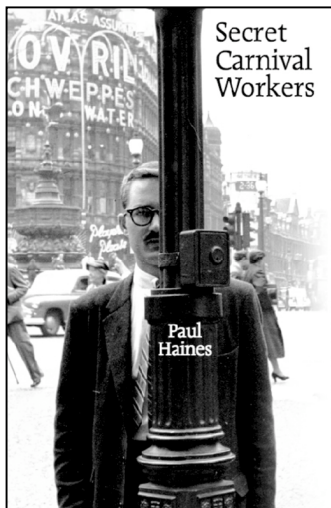
**Paul Haines'** daughter, **Emily Haines**, a musician who leads **Metric** and collaborates with **Broken Social Scene**, generously contributed her thoughts on the 2010 double disc release of **Curlew's** *A Beautiful Western Saddle / The Hardwood*

*"I'll always remember the day Paul played me Curlew's renditions of "Paint Me" and "Today". Listening with him demanded a singular focus and complete attentiveness to the sonic dimension. He was honored to have Curlew set his words to music on "A Beautiful Western Saddle", and he especially loved Amy Denio's voice on "The Prince". The title of a recently published collection of Paul's work, "Secret Carnival Workers", is taken from this poem. I know he would be thrilled about the release of this double re-issue, and wish he could be here to celebrate with George Cartwright and the band. Paul Haines lives on in the music."*

– Emily Haines, Canada, May 2010

www.ilovemetric.com

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### SECRET CARNIVAL WORKERS

In 2007, **Paul Haines'** *Secret Carnival Workers* was published by Coach House Books. Most of Haines' work had been unpublished; this book, edited by jazz journalist **Stuart Broomer** with **Emily Haines**, was the first to compile all of Haines' poetry, prose, jazz liner notes and other writings – influenced by jazz, Dada and the Surrealists – in one volume. It also included archival photographs, biographical information, and writings on Haines by Broomer and **Carla Bley**, **Roswell Rudd** and **Michael Snow**. It is an essential read for anyone interested in 20<sup>th</sup> C. literature and/or avant-garde jazz. The chapter "Paul Haines: Now Can You Tell Me", written by Broomer, is of particular interest regarding Haines' collaborations with Curlew. Broomer generously granted us permission to reprint excerpts from his section on "A Beautiful Western Saddle":

*"A Beautiful Western Saddle...*

*Curlew is a wonderful group, and in many ways they use A Beautiful Western Saddle... to reinvent both themselves and the idea of song. The sequence recalls a phrase Haines wrote over thirty years ago about Paul Bley: Curlew "begins by playing everything all over again for the first time." They play everything in the American songbook over again as a set of starting positions: country, rock, rhythm 'n' blues, gospel, a sweet chanting that might suggest the Holiness Movement, and some manic catterwauling that comes directly from Ayler and Hendrix.*

*The space that Curlew finds between their sounds--in the distinctions between what is thin and thick in the female voice, cello, tenor saxophone, and guitar--opens itself to Haines' language. The distinctive group texture--a continuous exchange of the smooth and the rough--meets Haines' language as could few others...*

*Curlew articulates the edge of Haines' work, the precision of his verbal outline. ... Haines has proceeded throughout the years to boil his poems down to... crystalline flashes in which image and meaning merge, sometimes as comic shards of the true light. ... for example, the series of miracles of THE PRINCE. ...*

*The record begins and ends in a kind of religious comedy, opening with a poem called "Let's Sit Right Down" that is performed with the unvarnished clarity of a camp meeting, with Davey Williams parodying an evangelical preacher. The final piece, "Paint Me: Dedicated to the President of the United States of America," is a violently truncated and surreal text--PAINT ME/ PAINT ME/ I'M A DOG PLAYING CARDS--that Curlew gives the significance, reverence, and depth of church music, suggesting an archbishop sitting for his portrait. The poem effects a new sense of attention as the trappings of a decaying recreation room merge with those of a cathedral."*

– @ Stuart Broomer, used here by his permission, from Paul Haines' *Secret Carnival Workers* (2007: Coach House Press; available on Amazon.com)

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### “BIRD ON A WIRE: CURLEW”

*“...Like its namesake, Curlew feeds on whatever seems handy. What comes out of its scavenging is quite unlike anything else... The band's music feels like mercury... It feels natural, integrated, inevitable – the sound of joy.”* – Gene Santoro,

Not long after *A Beautiful Western Saddle* and *The Hardwood* were originally released, **Gene Santoro** published an article on Curlew in the American magazine *The Nation* (March 22, 1993). Entitled “Bird on a Wire: Curlew”, the article is reprinted in Santoro's book: *Stir it Up: Musical Mixes from Roots to Jazz* (1997: Oxford University Press; pp.46-51). Discussing the band and such works as *A Beautiful Western Saddle*, *Bee*, *The Hardwood*, it is an insightful analysis of Curlew's role in late 20<sup>th</sup> C. popular music and an essential read.

## PROMOTIONAL PHOTO

Digital [High-Resolution] versions of this image are available for download on [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com) in the "Press" section.



### **BIOS for CURLEW BAND MEMBERS AND GUESTS:**

#### **GEORGE CARTWRIGHT - [www.georgecartwright.com](http://www.georgecartwright.com)**

*Bio info derived from above and: [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com) and [discogs.com](http://discogs.com)*

Mississippi native **George Cartwright**, a composer, saxophonist and improviser, has been an active and influential figure on the jazz world for over thirty years. Cartwright was born on Dec. 10, 1950 in Midnight, MS In 1977 Cartwright began studying under **Karl Berger** at his **Creative Music Studio** in Woodstock, NY beside artists like **Wadada Leo Smith** and **Oliver Lake**. He moved to New York City in 1979, began collaborating with numerous musicians, including **Bill Laswell**, and **Fred Frith**, and formed **Curlew**. Early in the 1980's, he released an LP of improvised duets with **Michael Lytle** entitled *Bright Bank Elewhale*. He was also a part of **New York Gong**, and released two LP's with **Meltable Snaps It** (with Lytle, **Christian Marclay**, **David Moss**, **Tom Cora**) before concentrating his focus on Curlew. Curlew released two albums before signing to Cuneiform in the late 1980's. Cuneiform subsequently released the band's *North America*, *Live in Berlin*, *Bee*, *Paradise*, *Fabulous Drop* and *A Beautiful Western Saddle* and a VHF video, *The Hardwood*. Cuneiform also released two of Cartwright's solo albums: *Dot* (1994) and *The Memphis Years* (2000), which documented Cartwright's move to Memphis. Cartwright also released solo albums on **Innova**: *The Ghostly Bee* (2005) and *A Tenacious Slew* (2007). Besides his solo work and work with Curlew, Cartwright is also known for his collaborations with numerous jazz and experimental artists, including **Ornette Coleman**, **David Thomas**, **Chris Stamey**, **Myra Melford**, **Kip Hanrahan**, **Alex Chilton**, **Bill Laswell**, **Sonny Sharrock**, **Fred Frith**, **Butch Morris**, **Jad Fair**, **The Box Tops**, **Samm Bennett**, **Paul Haines**, **Amy Denio**, **Kevin Norton**, **Ann Rupel**, **Robbie McCauley**, **Tom Varner**, **Mark Dresser**, **Carei Thomas**, **Davey Williams**, **Chris Cochrane**, **Michael Lytle**, and many others.

Cartwright earned a BA at **Mississippi State University**, and studied at **Jackson State University**, **Memphis State University**, the **University of Southern Mississippi** He also studied privately under **Jimmy Guiffre**, **Les Scott**, **Byard Lancaster**, and **Kalaparusha and Wilber Moreland**. Cartwright currently resides, records and frequently performs in St. Paul, Minnesota.

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#### **TOM CORA - [www.myspace.com/tomcora](http://www.myspace.com/tomcora)**

*Bio info derived from above and: [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com), [discogs.com](http://discogs.com), [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org). *The Villager*, <http://www.rarefaction.com/crewbios.html>, and *Exclaim!**

**Tom Cora**, born **Thomas Henry Corra**, was prominent on the international avant-garde rock and jazz scenes of the 1980's and 1990's as a cellist, composer and improviser. He was born September 14, 1953 in Yancey Mills, Virginia and grew up listening to gospel, blues, and country music. Cora began playing cello while at the **University of Virginia** and later studied with **Karl Berger**. Cora and **Cartwright** met at the **Creative Music Foundation** in Woodstock, NY, where Cora studied with bassist **Dave Holland**. During the 70s he gave public workshops and performances under the **CETA** program. In 1979 he moved to NYC and began collaborating with artists like **John Zorn**, **Eugene Chadbourne**, **Andrea Centazzo**, **Butch Morris** and especially **Fred Frith**, with whom he formed **Skeleton Crew**. Cora was a member of **Curlew** and **Nimal**, as well as other collaborations, including the **Chadbournes**, **Duck and Cover**, **Hansundtom**, **Roof**, and **Third Person**. Cora's work with the anarchist Dutch punk band **The Ex**, which included the albums *Scrabbling at the Lock* (1991) and *And the Weathermen Shrug Their Shoulders* (1993), brought him widespread acclaim on the international punk scene. In 1993 Cora produced *Vibraslaps* featuring vocalist **Catherine Jauniaux** and percussionist **Ikue Mori**.

An ever-present fixture on the **Knitting Factory** scene, Cora recorded, produced, mixed, or appeared on approximately 130 albums (a few released after his death), released by such labels as **Cuneiform**, **Ictus Records**, **Rift**, **Recommended Music**, **FMP**, **Sound Aspects Records**, **Ex Records**, **ReR Megacorp**, **Rarefaction**, **New Tone Records**, and **Knitting Factory Works**.

Cora died at the age of 44, on April 9, 1998, after battling melanoma. One month after his death, a benefit concert was held at the Knitting Factory featuring Frith, **Cartwright**, **Zeena Parkins** and others. In 1999 **Tzadik** released *Hallelujah, Anyway - Remembering Tom Cora*, a double CD memorial album that included Cora solo recordings and numerous collaborations (**Curlew**, **Third Person**, **John Zorn**, **Skeleton Crew**, **Carlos Zingaro**, **Richard Teitelbaum**, **the Ex** and more), and works contributed by numerous other musicians.

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#### **DAVEY WILLIAMS - [www.the-improvisor.com/transmuseq/davey/](http://www.the-improvisor.com/transmuseq/davey/) - [www.myspace.com/thedaveywilliams](http://www.myspace.com/thedaveywilliams)**

*Bio info derived from above and: [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com), [www.discogs.com](http://www.discogs.com), [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)*

**Davey Williams**, a guitarist, improviser and writer, was born in 1952 in Eutaw, Alabama. He began playing guitar at age 12, played in high school rock bands, and from the late 1960's to 1971, studied with Delta blues musician **Johnny Shines**. In the early 1970's, Williams played in the **University of Alabama B Jazz Ensemble** and in the **Salt & Pepper Soul Band** and began collaborating with **LaDonna Smith**. Williams founded the improv duo **Transmuseq** with Smith, which began releasing recordings in 1978. After touring the US and Europe in the late 1970's, Williams played in the blues band **Trains in Trouble** until 1986 when he joined Curlew. Williams recorded numerous albums with Curlew on Cuneiform throughout the 1990's including *Live in Berlin*, *A Beautiful Western Saddle*, and *Fabulous Drop*. Williams played with **Col. Bruce Hampton** and composed for **OK**, **Nurse** in the 1980s, and the early 90's brought Williams to the punk band **Fuzzy Suns** as well as the improv-trio **Say What!** Since then, Williams has actively collaborated with improvisers like **Jim Staley** and **Ikue Mori**, has recorded on over forty albums, and has made about fifteen hundred concert appearances. Williams' releases over the past decade include *Humdinger* (2001) and *Numb Right* (2002), both on **Megalon**. Williams has collaborated with numerous notable musicians such as **Min Tanaka**, **the Shaking Ray Levis**, **Gunter Christmann**, **Anne LeBaron**, **John Zorn**, **Eugene Chadbourne**, **Kramer**, **Roger Turner**, **Marcus Eichenberger/Philip Micol**, **Billy Jenkins**, and **Gustavo Matamoros**.

Besides his ongoing work as a musician, Williams has also been active as a writer. In 1981 Williams co-founded *The Improviser*, a journal of experimental and improvisational music. In the late 1980's, he wrote freelance music critiques for *The Birmingham News*. Since then, he has published articles on improvisation, surrealism and experimentalism in various journals, and published a humorous illustrated book on fried eggs: *Which Came First: the Fried Chicken or the Fried Egg?* Williams was on the **NEA's Interdisciplinary Arts** advisory board in the 1990's. Williams is currently located in Birmingham, Alabama.

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## ANN RUPEL

Bio info derived from [www.discogs.com](http://www.discogs.com), [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com), and *Bass Player*

Bassist **Ann Rupel** was born in Galveston, Texas in 1952 and raised in Wisconsin. Though she is known for her bass playing, she began on with classical piano, and played for twenty years before changing instruments. Rupel was active on the New York Downtown music scene in the 1980's and 1990's, performing as a member of bands **Curlew** and the No Wave bands **No Safety** and **V-Effect**. Rupel has appeared on albums with these bands and other artists; she performed on approximately 19 albums from 1983 to 2000. In 1983 Rupel played bass and organ and sang vocals on V-Effect's album *Stop These Songs*, released on **Rift** In 1989, No Safety's album *This Lost Leg* on **RecRec Music** of Switzerland featured Rupel on bass and vocals. Rupel is featured on numerous Curlew albums, including *A Beautiful Western Saddle* (1993), *Paradise* (1996), and *Fabulous Drop* (1998). Rupel played bass with Curlew on "Saint Dog", the track contributed to the memorial album *Hallelujah, Anyway—Remembering Tom Cora* released in 1999 by **Tzadik**. Most recently, Rupel appeared on bass and vocals on a Curlew track contributed to the benefit album entitled *For New Orleans: Benefit for the Musicians Village New Orleans Habitat* released on **Sugarfoot** in 2007.

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## JOHN PIPPIN BARNETT/PIPPIN BARNETT - [www.myspace.com/pippinbarnett](http://www.myspace.com/pippinbarnett)

Bio info derived from above and: [www.discogs.com/pippinbarnett](http://www.discogs.com/pippinbarnett), [allmusic.com/pippinbarnett](http://allmusic.com/pippinbarnett).

Drummer **John Pippin Barnett**, known as **Pippin Barnett**, was born in White Plains, New York and grew up in Nutley, New Jersey and Tokyo, Japan. Barnett was extremely active in the 1980's and 1990's releasing music in multiple jazz and rock bands that included **Curlew**, **Nimal (Momo Rossel, Tom Cora, Bratko Bibic)**, **Alchemical Rowdies**, and **Orthotonics**. In 1984 Barnett played drums on **Half Japanese's** *Sing No Evil*, released on **Drag City**. With Curlew, he released a number of albums on Cuneiform including *North America* (1986), *Live in Berlin* (1988), and *A Beautiful Western Saddle* (1993). He also released multiple albums with Nimal like *Nimal* (1987, **RecRec Music**), *Voix de Surface* (1990, **RecRec Music**), and *DisTanz* (1992, **Labelusines**). Barnett is featured on the tracks "Saint Dog," "Jim," and "Intenda" on the 1999 memorial album for *Hallelujah, Anyway—Remembering Tom Cora*, Barnett is currently located in Richmond, Virginia.

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## AMY DENIO - [www.amydenio.com](http://www.amydenio.com) - [www.myspace.com/deniomusic](http://www.myspace.com/deniomusic)

Bio info derived from above and: [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com), [www.discogs.com](http://www.discogs.com)

An active presence on the international avant-garde music scene, **Amy Denio** was born June 9, 1961 in Seattle, Washington, where she is now based. A vocalist, composer, and multi-instrumentalist (accordion, saxophone, clarinet, bass, and guitar), Denio studied music at **Colorado College** and **Hampshire College** in Amherst, MA in the 1980's. Denio has collaborated and recorded with countless artists, including **Kultur Shock**, **Francisco Lopez**, **Relache Ensemble**, **Fred Frith**, **Matt Cameron** (of **Soundgarden**), **Bill Frisell**, **Chris Cutler**, **Guy Klucevsek**, **Pauline Oliveros**, **Pale Nudes**, **Hoppy Kamiyama**, **Ronin**, **Chuck D's Fine Arts Militia**, and **Curlew**, and has been a band member of the **Tone Dogs**, **Danubians**, the **Tiptons Sax Quartet** and other groups. Denio formed her own record label, **Spoot Music**, and in 1986, released her debut album, *No Bones*; subsequent solo albums include *Birthing Chair Blues* (1991), *Greatest Hits* (1999) and *Tattoo (Unit Circle Rekkids 2000)*. Denio has performed around the world in an encyclopedic array of venues, from **Carnegie Hall**, **the Brooklyn Academy of Music**, and the **Seattle Opera House**, to prisons, schools and even on top of three Seattle Metro Busses. She has performed at numerous jazz and new music festivals, including **Moers**, **North Sea**, **Earshot** and more.

Denio has written soundtracks for dance, theater and film productions. She did soundtracks for *The Naked Proof*, a movie by **Jamie Hook** and for two award-winning **Thomas Edward** animated films: 'Pangaea's Brood' and 'Synchrony in Estrus'. Her soundtrack for **David Dorfman Dance's** "Sky Down" received the **Bessie Award for Composition**. For a 2006 performance in Naples, Italy, Denio and her Italian band **Quintetto alla Busara** collaborated with a French circus and artists from **Cirque du Soleil**. She has composed works on commission for the **Berkeley Symphony**, **Italian National Radio**, **New York Festival of Song**, **Die Knodel**, **Pat Graney Dance Company**, **Relache Ensemble**, and others and has received fellowships and grants from **NEA**, **Meet The Composer**, **Civitella Ranieri**, **Seattle Arts Commission**, and many more.

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## PAUL HAINES - [www.myspace.com/secretcarnivalworkers](http://www.myspace.com/secretcarnivalworkers) - [www.secretcarnivalworkers.com](http://www.secretcarnivalworkers.com) - [www.chbooks.com/biographies/paul-haines](http://www.chbooks.com/biographies/paul-haines)

Bio info derived from above and: [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com) A bio by Cuneiform appears here: <http://luckypsychichut.blogspot.com/2009/08/paul-haines-lyrics-set-to-music-1971.html>. See *Paul Haines' Secret Carnival Workers*, ed. by **Stuart Broomer**, for complete bio info.

Poet/writer and video artist **Paul Haines** was born in 1932 in Vassar, Michigan. He was stationed during the Korean War in Germany, and subsequently lived in Paris, New York, New Mexico, New Delhi, India, and Kensington, MD before settling in Ontario, Canada. From the 1960s onward, throughout his life, Haines was closely involved with NY's jazz avant-garde. He wrote liner notes for **Albert Ayler's** *Spiritual Unity* and other albums, and produced, recorded and/or videotaped concerts by **Steve Lacy**, **Roswell Rudd**, **Curlew** and other cutting-edge musicians, in addition to making video art about music. He also contributed writings to *Coda*, *Improjazz* and other magazines. He is best known, however, for collaborations in which his poems were set to music, and especially for his landmark works with **Carla Bley**: the 1971 boundary-breaking "jazz-opera" *Escalator Over The Hill*, and *Tropic Appetites*. Other notable albums featuring Haines' poems include **Curlew's** *A Beautiful Western Saddle* and **George Cartwright's** *The Memphis Years*, both on Cuneiform, and **Kip Hanrahan's** compilation *Darn It!*. Other musicians associated with Haines include **Evan Parker** and **Derek Bailey**, **John Tchicai**, **Alex Chilton (Big Star)**, **Jack Bruce (Cream)**, **Mary Margaret O'Hara**, **Michael Snow**, **John Oswald**, **Roswell Rudd**, **Michael Contact**, **Borneo Drummers**, **Melvin Gibbs**, **Gary Lucas**, **Robert Wyatt**, **Evan Parker**, **Carla Bley**, **John Tchicai**, **Paul Bley**, **Derek Bailey**, **Don Pullen**, and **Henry Threadgill**.

Haines died of heart failure in 2003. Cuneiform mailed out a biographical sketch/death notice that readers subsequently posted on various places online. The most comprehensive body of information both by and about Haines, however, is the book *Paul Haines, Secret Carnival Workers*, edited by **Stuart Broomer** and Haines' daughter **Emily** and published in 2007 by **Coach House Books** (available on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)).

## PRESS QUOTES:

### ***A BEAUTIFUL WESTERN SADDLE* (Cuneiform Rune 50) [1993]**

lineup: George Cartwright (saxophone), Davey Williams (guitar), Ann Rupel (bass), Tom Cora (cello), Pippin Barnett (drums); with Amy Denio (voice) and lyrics by Paul Haines

“Knitting Factory gospel? Jazz lieder? Improvisers on Broadway? Whatever you call it, it’s the most delightful hour of music I’ve heard all year...To start with, the melodies are gorgeous. Some of them...hark back to an American popular tradition from Stephen Foster to Stephen Sondheim, and they reflect the profound simplicity that has caused such tunes to be called “standards.” Other tunes tweak up the postmodern trends: “Song Sung Long”;...is like Ornette Coleman in reverse, and the repetition of “Peking Widow” is what Philip Glass would have written for Motown. The record is full of brilliant performances, too – extreme effects by musicians who use these extremes habitually... magnificent...”

– Michael Bloom, *The Boston Phoenix*, June 4, 1993

“Curlew is a wonderful group, and in many ways they use *A Beautiful Western Saddle*.. to re-invent both themselves and the idea of song. ..They play everything in the American songbook over again as a series of starting positions: country, rock, rhythm ‘n’ blues, gospel, a sweet chanting that might suggest the Holiness Movement, and some manic caterwauling that comes directly from Ayler and Hendrix...” – Stuart Broomer, *Coda* July/Aug. 1995

“Curlew is a pretty amazing creature, that rare band that combines rock and roll’s textural/rhythmic grate with jazz’s compositional and improvisational ambition and doesn’t absolutely suck...the fusion band for people who hate fusion. ...Rather than drool at length over this album, let me tell you that this is the first great album of 1993 in ANY genre. Give it your time and attention, you won’t be sorry.” – Bill Meyer, *Moe*, v.5, Spring 1993

“...A Beautiful Western Saddle...marries Curlew's recombinant joy with the unpredictably veering, darkly satiric poetry of Canadian Paul Haines.

It’s a match made in heaven... A friend once asked me why more downtown types don’t try to mix vocals nto what they do; Saddle makes a real case that more should..” – Gene Santoro, *The Nation*, March 22, 1993; reprinted in *String it Up: Musical Mixes from Roots to Jazz*, 1997

“...on *A Beautiful Western Saddle*, Curlew and Denio make the impossible sound almost easy. 4 stars” – Kevin Whitehead, *CD Review*, May 1993

“On *A Beautiful Western Saddle*, [Paul Haine’s] linguistic flair is made tuneful by the most happening avant-rock outfit making the scene, supplemented by the voice of Seattle’s Tone Dogs...The project takes Curlew’s offbeat mix of funk and kerpolunk into new territory, drawing out quieter and more singeable elements... **4 1/2 stars**” – John Corbett, *Down Beat*, June 1993

“Curlew...has made a career out of doing things no one else ever thought of. Now...they’ve done it again...”–Don Labriola *Buzz* #95

“...this remarkably cohesive recording possess some of the most marvelous melodies and charming lines heard in quite a while....Excellent.”

–ND 18, 1994

“This is a beautiful piece of work: Curlew, augmented by the vocals of Amy Denio, sets to music 14 poems by Paul Haines, who has collaborated in the past with Carla Bley... What sets this album apart from the previous ones is...here the union is complete. It sometimes feels like the actual sound of the instruments inspired not only the composition, but the words....moments of stunning beauty and ones that are completely believable...Here’s a tough marriage that rings with the thrill of a first date. Do it again.” – David Greenberg, *Creem*, 6/93

“...in embracing blatant “song” oriented structures...Curlew have crept much closer to what some people might call “pop,” and in this case it’s more than okay....it’s strictly a one-off...but a one-off with loads of preparation and thought, and absolutely sterling results... Yet another excellent one.”

– Peter Margasak, *Butt Rag*, #8, Spring 1993

“The resulting album is nothing short of spectacular. Each track exists in a world of its own without any acknowledgment of the musical boundaries collapsing around it. ...strong melodies exist in the wildest contexts throughout the album..”

– Ian Danzig, *Exclaim!*, June 1993

“...the crystalline vocal prowess of ...Amy Denio...transport Curlew’s sound beyond any comfortable known boundaries... Basically, it sounds as if the band is having a good grand time warpng every angle of pop music. And it works.”

– Sam Prestianni, *Daily Californian* April 30, 1993

“The year just started, and I think I already know what I’m going to choose for best record of 1993... The title of this record is *A Beautiful Western Saddle*, by Curlew. ...Curlew’s aesthetic is 180 degrees away from what seems to be the prevailing harsh and grating vibe of the [‘downtown’] scene ...there’s always a perceptible core of good humor, and never a dissonance just for the sake of dissonance. This music is tuneful, sprightly, full of joie de vivre, and you can dance to it...

...Cartwright’s songs tap into some quintessential American soul, from the opening hymn “Let’s Sit Right Down” (sung a cappella by the whole group..) to the sultry shuffle of “Human Weather Words,” where Denio stretches her notes out in heartrending cadenzas. The slow throb of “So much Influencing So Little” relates back to old country blues...I could go on about *A Beautiful Western Saddle* and the numerous delights it contains...But I’ll limit myself to saying that it’s everything a DIY record should be, a direct communication from the musicians to the listeners, and damn the marketing considerations. It’s an example of extraordinary artistry, and a singularly joyful one at that.”

– Michael Bloom, *Boston Rock*, #129, Feb. 1993

“Several buoyant tracks...lope along like selections from an imaginary Top 40. Other numbers suggest hale but zany jazz cabaret. Curlew is a graceful group of explorers on the boundaries between styles, and its concoctions retain the eager joy of pop-jazz adventures started 20 years ago.”

– Milo Miles, *The New York Times*, Sunday April 4, 1993

“You do not have to wear any particular pretension to “get” Curlew; you simply have to be able to accommodate their girth, the surprising quickness in which they navigate their heft, their humor....”  
– S Duda, *The Rocket*, May 29-June 12, 1996

*Boston Rock* Top 30 Albums of 1993: #16: Curlew: A Beautiful Western Saddle (Cuneiform)  
Editor’s Choice: Top Tens for 1993: Tristram Lozaw : Honorable Mention: Curlew: A Beautiful Western Saddle  
Critic’s Choice: Top Tens for 1993: Michael Bloom: #1: Curlew: A Beautiful Western Saddle “Generous, skewed jazz-pop-  
songwriting like you haven’t heard since *Escalator Over the Hill*. Luscious vocals by Amy Denio. Simply gorgeous.”

Coda Writers Choice for 1993: Stuart Broomer: Curlew: A Beautiful Western Saddle; Robert Hicks: Curlew: A Beautiful Western Saddle

*Down Beat*: **Best CDs of the ‘90s: 4 1/2 star reviews: Curlew: A Beautiful Western Saddle**  
**Downbeat’s 41<sup>st</sup> Annual International Critic’s Poll: 1994 : Electric Jazz Group TDWR: Curlew**

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**“BEE” (Cuneiform Rune 27) [1991]**

lineup: George Cartwright (saxophone), Davey Williams (guitar), Tom Cora (cello), Ann Rupel (bass), Pippin Barnett (drums)

“Curlew is an amazing band. .. where’s Manfred Eicher’s head, that he hasn’t signed these guys?” – *Camera Obscura*, 10/91

“Without a lick of compromise Curlew might be the maverick saviors, the group that can provide the swift kick to dead brains, the coffee fumes beneath the nose, the catalyst to gloss the earth with harmony, so on and so forth. Plain and simple, this group is titanic and nothing else will suffice.”  
–*Butt Rag*, #7

“These Knitting Factory veterans are part rock band, part free jazz provocateurs and part helium-inhaling jokesters ... If this is the direction “jazz” is going, then count me in.”  
– *Record Exchange Music Monitor*, 5/91

“[Curlew] pressurize their pop, R&B and free improv sources... It’s cerebral stuff your body can dig, made by an experimentalist ensemble that never, ever has a puss on its face.”  
– Jim Macnie, *Musician*, July 1991

“Curlew’s latest simply couldn’t have been done by anyone else, and that’s a big compliment in my book ... 12 sonic samples of crazy Southern genius... These guys have style, not just deep, but wide too, and if this isn’t a 90’s classic, I don’t know what is.” – Myles Boisen, *Freeway*, July-Sept. 1992

“Tightly organized sonic mayhem by a daring avant-jazz-thrash ensemble, featuring the delightfully oddball guitar work of Davey Williams.”  
– Bill Milkowski, *Guitar World*, Nov. 1991

“Curlew has been one of the most promising post-harmolodic ensembles ...but... more of an underground phenomenon than their music deserves... I could go on raving, but I’ll just say that...they can go head to head with Last Exit, Zorn, anyone. Any fans who like their music upbeat and aggressive would do well to seek this band out.”  
– Michael Davis, *Option*, #38

“Now if the Summer of Love had come to Motown instead of San Francisco, Curlew would’ve happened decades ago. Now, they’re just the band to introduce Middle America to the Knitting Factory aesthetic...purely exhilarating.”  
– *Boston Rock*, #112

“Curlew’s music accommodates the influence of speed metal, European classicism and urban funk by applying them to an advanced jazz rock framework.... it’s receptive, intellectually exacting, multi-directional yet secure in its own identity. Seek it out, the long term rewards are considerable.”  
– Tony Herrington, *The Wire*, Aug. 1991

“The group’s internal chemistry from this album borders on the telepathic”  
– Gene Santoro, *The Nation*, March 22, 1993, reprinted in *Stiring it Up: Musical Mixes from Roots to Jazz*, 1997

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**THE HARDWOOD (Cuneiform Rune 47) VHS video [1992]**

lineup: George Cartwright (saxophone), Davey Williams (guitar), Ann Rupel (bass), Tom Cora (cello), Pippin Barnett (drums)

“Curlew is a terrific group which churns out smokin’ fusion jazz of the sort which could only come from Lower Manhattan...this band has chops to spare... They swerve and careen from the lyrically melodic to R&B funk to the frenetic and dissonant without missing a beat, all the while making it sound logical and inevitable....”  
– Dean Suzuki, *Option*, #50, 5+6 /93

“Curlew’s knotty, off-center melding of jazz, rock and blues is esoteric enough to be highly regarded among the experimental music cognoscenti – for which The Knitting Factory is ground zero – but it’s also catchy, funky and wry. If the right side of your brain had a foot, it’d be patting happily thorough these 10 tunes.”  
– Bill Shoemaker, *Jazz Times*, April 1993

“...11 numbers that deftly utilize an ear-grabbing front line mix ...[with] a minimum of camera tricks, making it easy to concentrate on the music.”  
– Zan Stewart, *Downbeat*, Aug. 1993