

A Conversation with Gwynneth Haynes
by Frank Goodman (1/2007, Puremusic.com)

It all started on Myspace. You see her on somebody's site, you think, wow, she's interesting, and you go to her site. You see the pop surrealist album cover--it's great, but you've seen it before...oh, I think it came in the mail and fell thru the huge cracks where a lot of my life could have occurred. You don't mention that last bit, but you send her a letter (a comment, they call it in Myspace, a message that posts publicly on their page) and ask her to send you some music, which she does, but it also ignites a small volley of notes (a message they call it on Myspace--these are privately exchanged) that immediately have the unmistakable air of pan-global enlightenment and magnanimity that is near impossible to fake, even if one attempted, something to which the unenlightened would scarcely aspire.

And so you become friends as they call it on Myspace, and then Friends, with a capital F, because nobody in your whole life is talking to you as nicely and as upliftingly as this radiant creature is, so why wouldn't you make someone like that your friend.

And then the CD arrives where you're hanging out in South Beach, and it's so amazing, wow...dramatic rock, little on the glam side, two things I don't much listen to normally, but am now enjoying greatly. The lyrics are very smart, the tracks very musical, and it's all very Portland, which suits me no little bit.

So, when you turn a corner and are short a female interview, you think, my friend. Her album's great, how fortuitous. When you're open to a friend, open to a record, and your life is actually occurring in the cracks where it might have fallen previously, remarkable synchronicities spring into confluence.

So you call, and she's just like that on the phone, and it does no less than restore your faith in the wonder of woman and of people and of new friends, and, of all things, in Myspace. Myspace, yourspace is what you make it. I'm making more of it after meeting her, and I'm spreading it around. Behold the exultant wonder of Sophe Lux, and of Gwynneth Haynes, all she seems to be and more, and the centerpiece of an amazing musical group taking Portland by storm with a new theatrical flair that we will believe will turn you on in yourspace. Check out the clips on the Listen page after you share our conversation, and buy their great new disc, *Waking The Mystics*....

Gwynneth Haynes: Hello?

Puremusic: Hello, Gwenny, this is Frank calling.

GH: [laughs] Hi Frank, how are you?

PM: [laughs] I'm--

GH: Happy birthday!

PM: Ah, thank you. Happy New Year. Yeah. I really feel like 2007 is really special and is going to be a great year. I think it probably will be for your band as well, and I just feel a really good one coming.

GH: Oh, thank you. I feel good, too. I feel optimistic about a lot of things, and the state of the world, too.

PM: Really?

GH: Yeah, I really do. Maybe it's easier to feel that way in this tiny little island of Portland, Oregon, that is so kind of isolated.

PM: It's a beautiful island. I love Portland.

GH: Yeah. Green, and green in philosophy and an outlook that I think that--I don't know, I feel some hope about the political status of the world, and a change in consciousness. So I hope I'm right.

PM: It's funny how it feels like you and I are old friends already.

GH: Isn't that funny? I like it. I can sense it even in your voice.

PM: [laughs]

GH: It's kind of a nice familiarity and comfort.

PM: Even before I heard a note of your music I'd already been irretrievably charmed by you in your correspondence--

GH: Oh!

PM: --in a very interesting domain called MySpace.

[laughter]

GH: A crazy world we live in, isn't it? But miraculous, too. I mean, that's the beautiful thing that I've been noticing on MySpace, is that every now and then there's this connection. And thank you for that, because I really feel that kindred connection to you, too. There's something actually compelling about your picture and your eyes. And I was like, "Okay, this is somebody for me to connect with."

And then you look at MySpace and it's not this horrible machine of impersonal technology and shameless self-promotion, it's actually a place to make some real connections with kindred spirits or real people. And there have been some amazingly

beautiful correspondences. One of the delightful ones has been connecting with you and I'm so excited to actually talk to you and hear your voice. What begins as a virtual connection can lead to a real connection. This impersonal reality has the potential to become personal, intimate. That's amazing to me.

PM: I agree totally. And I'm happy to be speaking a little bit about MySpace, because I wanted to do that with you, because that's literally where we connected.

GH: Right.

PM: And at first I thought--I kind of messed around with it a time or two, a year ago, maybe three or four, five times, and came away each time thinking, well, I think you have to like be in your twenties or something to navigate this thing.

GH: Right.

PM: But it was just a matter of kind of getting my names and different ID things straight. And finally when I started walking through it correctly, I started to see the funny things that it could be and also very recently with people like yourself and a few other significant artists, it's like, oh, okay, well, say what you want about MySpace, I would not have met Gwynneth Haynes otherwise, or I mightn't have, and so God bless MySpace if it's going to connect me to people of substance and artists of repute, well, use it right. I mean, I'd thought that, this is just like a meat market for the younger set, is that the deal?

GH: Right.

PM: And that's cool if that's what it is, then that's not appropriate. But obviously it's whatever you want it to be, and whatever you make it, just like the rest of life.

GH: Yeah. And I like so much how it permits each person to have a space and a vessel to express their individuality. I think that's really important in this time, especially in the randomness of sort of the personality of the world. It's really nice for people to have a place to say, "This is me, and these are my pictures, and this is my identity."

PM: Absolutely.

GH: And that's really great, giving people a vehicle for expression of any kind is really important.

PM: Because if the music industry is going to fall apart, as it apparently is--

GH: Right! It's going to crash and burn.

PM: --then the indies have to have a way to present themselves to the potential audience, to market themselves. And it's slowly starting to emerge that a paradigm may arise. It had

better. And being from Nashville, being from a record town, I know the atmosphere of a town full of people that are just literally trying to protect their jobs.

GH: Right. But you're right, it's definitely slowly being encroached upon by a very powerful presence of people taking these decisions into their own hands about what kind of music they like. And like you said, the internet is, and MySpace is an incredible testament to that, that people will not be sort of controlled by those couple of people who are making decisions out there about music. It's bigger than that, and it's very interesting.

PM: And more and more, webzines like Puremusic and many others will become important as vehicles for finding out what's out there.

GH: Right. So I appreciate you for being part of this--you're part of this revolution for change. I looked at some of your articles, and one thing that I really appreciate about you is the personal sensitivity that you give to your work. I mean, you treat artists like people. It's not just this superficial thing, you go into the humanity of the musicians.

PM: Thanks Gwenny. As indies, we just don't have to do it the way some of our predecessors have done.

GH: Right.

PM: We're not tethered by some of the standard principles.

So, I think you're fantastic, and I want to talk about your record.

GH: Okay.

PM: Is this your first record, or have there been others before it?

GH: There was one before. This is my first record with my band. My first record before that was called *Plastic Apple*, and it was released in 2003. And it was when I was more of a singer/songwriter artist.

PM: Oh, I've got to get that, too, because I want to know that side of you.

GH: Right. I want to get that to you. It has a full-band sound because we invited in people and did it at Jackpot. It was co-produced by Larry Crane of Jackpot Studios. And John Moen, now with the Decemberists, played drums--a sweet, fun, funny guy. And Larry and I just kind of brought the songs to life. So I'll have to send that to you.

PM: Absolutely, I want to get up with that.

GH: Yeah.

PM: But this record, *Waking the Mystics*, is really an amazing record. I mean, it's not the easiest record in the world to walk into.

GH: No.

PM: But once I got far enough inside I felt, okay, I see the neighborhood I'm in now.

GH: Wow.

PM: And this is really a wonderful bunch of sounds and songs and players. So I want to find out all about it. Where does the name come from?

GH: Well, it comes from Sophia, which some people have associated with the female part of the trinity, or before some editing by Christian forefathers that Sophia was originally part of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But she's associated with wisdom.

PM: Yeah, she got boxed out by the early Christian policy makers.

GH: She got boxed right out.

PM: That wasn't working.

GH: Sorry, you know, honey, we really appreciate you, but can you go up in the kitchen?

And she's in a lot of the mystical traditions, you see her in Gnosticism, you see her in the Hebrew Kabbalah, you see her a little bit in the Bible in Proverbs, like they talk about "wisdom is a woman"--which is kind of an interesting way of looking at it. So she represents Sophe--

PM: Is that the actual quote, "wisdom is a woman"?

GH: I think so--or it might be--

PM: Oh, I'm stealing that right away. Let me write that down before I forget. I'm stealing that.

GH: Steal that from the Bible right now. [laughs]

PM: Amateurs borrow, you know what they say. Professionals steal.

GH: But yeah, so a lot of the concept right now that we've been living in an age of such intense concentration of masculine energy and masculine consciousness, the sort of pendulum has been sort of tightly wound around this very masculine thing. And the concept about Sophia is that she's sleeping in matter, and she has to be reawakened. And part of the mystical concept is that the celestial Sophia is to connect people with their own wisdom, with creativity, with imagination.

PM: And the "Lux" part of the name?

GH: I think the direct translation, it's from physics, the SI unit of illumination, but it's also a word for light.

PM: Right, light. That's what I associate it with.

GH: Yeah. So it's kind of--if you put it together, it's like light of Sophia, or light of what Sophia represents. And it's not something that--I don't want it to sound pretentious, it's just the love the wisdom, the love of the light of wisdom, the love for the search of wisdom and creativity and imagination. That's sort of the sentiment behind it.

PM: Works for me. You are the principle songwriter, producer, and the center point of the initiative, right? It's your vision most of all.

GH: Right, right.

PM: Give us a sense of your human and musical origins, if you would.

GH: Okay. Did you say human?

PM: Yeah.

GH: I like that, that's interesting. I was raised in southern California, in the epitome of a Jewish artsy family. My first job was making television commercials at age six. My brother is a film director--I was his first actress. And he was always putting me in plays and theatricals and movies from the time I was about six. And we were the kids--like in the Billy Crystal movies, where like the kids are performing for their Jewish relatives, that was us. We did that.

PM: Wow, that was you.

GH: Yeah. We did Vaudeville skits for Christmas. That's what we'd do every day after school, we'd get together and play and do plays. And so there was always imagination, there was always art. My grandma was a classical musician and abstract artist, and she'd take me to the symphony once a month. So I was deeply entrenched in classical music, too, from the time I was really little. We'd go to the Hollywood Bowl. I've got these great memories of just being at the Hollywood Bowl and listening to like a beautiful Beethoven sonata, and looking at the stars.

PM: So few children have that in their background.

GH: Oh, my God, I was so blessed. I'm so lucky. And I went to an amazing school for children, which was a very free spirited kind of find your own self-expression.

PM: What was that called?

GH: This woman was named Virginia Rothman. And she was this amazing kind of woman Einstein--she even looked like a female Einstein. She was just crazy, wonderful, and kind of wild. And she just supported the concept in each child that you can create whatever you are created, and that there is no wrong or right, truth can be blue, truth can be orange, there's no drawing in the lines. And with that, you instilled in each child a sense of courage about their creativity and their self as a creator, a little creating being. And it was one of the most nourishing experiences of my formative years.

PM: And were your folks musically inclined?

GH: Well, my dad actually was a DJ. And he was in a band in high school. And then he married my mom, and then he didn't do that anymore. But he loves music. And he and I love music together. I mean, we really bond around music a lot. My mom is a visual artist and an actress, so more of the theatrical... So that was it, and then I went to a real progressive liberal arts high school, did lots of performance art. Then I went to New York and studied painting and theater. I started writing music at fourteen, and would play my guitar on the sidewalks of L.A., people walking by.

[laughter]

GH: And I was like a little vagabond with my sidekick Alita Pierce. She was the first girl I would do songs with.

PM: And what would she do? Would she sing--

GH: She was really great. She was an amazing songwriter. And she was probably influenced by--we were influenced by like Peter Gabriel and the Talking Heads and David Bowie, and Joni Mitchell.

PM: So, very much children of the '80s, yeah.

GH: Yeah, yeah. We were growing up in the '80s, and just loving that whole rich musical--I think there was a lot of rich music going on in that time.

PM: Absolutely. Someone was just saying they were kind of backpedaling the '80s, but I think the '80s had incredible music.

[Matthew Ryan expressed similar feelings in his interview in this issue.]

GH: I know. People kind of forget, right? Like Kate Bush, I think she--

PM: A huge influence, I would say.

GH: Yeah. And high school, like maybe '86, I discovered *The Dreaming*. And I think that album was probably one of the most stunning masterworks I've ever come across.

PM: Amazing work, yeah.

GH: Brian Eno was a huge influence. I'm quite taken with Brian Eno's work from *Here Come the Warm Jets* to his collaborations with David Byrne, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*--very kind of playful avant-garde stuff. Then I did have a big Nirvana phase. After the '80s got into the '90s I was having my Nirvana, Sonic Youth moment, discovered the Velvet Underground, that kind of thing.

PM: Yeah, that's important for balance.

GH: Yeah, I think it is, because it's not a pretty--I mean, even Kate Bush was such an intense edge, you definitely have to get into--you need to discover dissonance and anger to also find your power as a musician. And I've always loved Tom Waits, Radiohead, Beck, Shannon Wright. Of course, Elliott Smith was a huge influence--I think he's one of our greater songwriters of the last decade.

PM: Yeah, truly important.

GH: Really important in returning us to that integration of beauty and edginess with beautiful construction.

PM: Yes. Johnny Thunders once told my brother Bill, he said, "You got to have the beauty...and the terror." [You'll have to imagine Johnny Thunders saying it.]

[laughter]

GH: I love that! Oh, that's great. That's great. That's a beautiful concept.

PM: So when you first started writing music--

GH: Yes.

PM: --how did this come out first? You said at first you were more on the singer/songwriter-y side--well, you started writing quite young, in your mid-teens.

GH: Right. Yeah, I would say that the reviews of that were saying that it was reminiscent of P.J. Harvey and Cat Power, maybe with touches of Natalie Merchant.

PM: Ah.

GH: I know, it's kind of different.

PM: Yeah, right. Where this is a lot more Freddie Mercury than Natalie Merchant.

GH: [laughs] Right, exactly, a different expression.

PM: That's how multifaceted you are. And it's easy to see that you've just begun to sing, so there's no telling where Gwenny Haynes is headed.

GH: Yeah. I think we're all multifaceted, it's just what you tap into at any particular time as an artist. Artists, it's just whatever is authentic at that particular evolution and your time as a songwriter. I feel like they've all been in there for a long time, these songs, it's just recently it was the time for the Freddie Mercury part.

PM: Yeah. And of course, whatever we say about artists would equally apply to people-- at any time you can become anybody.

GH: Exactly, anybody.

PM: You might wake up somebody else than you were yesterday on any given day if you just allow it to be so.

GH: Exactly. I mean, it's the pluralistic psyche, we're all multifaceted, very rich in who we are inside, the many different archetypes inside of us.

PM: So before I lead us to some degree out of your upbringing and into the band, I notice that you are indeed the sister of screenwriter/director Todd Haynes, who did *Far From Heaven*.

GH: Yeah.

PM: What an incredible movie that was. He must be a hell of a guy.

GH: He's an incredible guy! He's an incredible guy! Did you see *Velvet Goldmine*?

PM: See which one?

GH: You've got to see *Velvet Goldmine*, too. It's about--

PM: Oh, I've never seen that movie. He did that, too?

GH: Oh, it's just beautiful! Yeah!

PM: Because I've heard that's a fantastic movie. [In fact, later, my brother reminded me he's been trying to get me to watch it for years, it's one of his favorite movies...]

GH: Oh, it's so fun and indeed, I mean, *Far From Heaven* is absolutely gorgeous.

PM: Oh, I was in love with that movie.

GH: Cinematic perfection. He's a painter, you can just tell. He is an amazing--actually, he is literally an amazing painter. But you can see in each of his shots, like the art direction in *Far From Heaven* was beautiful paintings, frame by frame. I'm so glad you appreciated it, because I do, too. I'm very proud of him.

PM: Oh, that was a remarkable film. But it was so subtle that a lot of people didn't really realize how great it was. And I read somewhere that the cinematography was true to the period that it concerned.

GH: Yes. And Douglas Sirk, one of the filmmakers who did that melodrama style with those super saturated colors, was definitely one of his big influences in how he chose to shoot it.

PM: Are you and your brother Todd close, and is he a fan of Sophie Lux?

GH: Yeah, actually, he is. He's amazing. He came and visited me in Portland, and realized he was ready for a change. He moved to Portland five years ago.

PM: Oh, he lives in town.

GH: Yeah. And he ended up moving here, bought a house. And he's been working on his Bob Dylan film right now.

PM: What?

GH: Unbelievable. Yeah. You haven't heard about it? Oh, my God!

PM: He's working on a Bob Dylan film?

GH: Oh, my God. This is the first time anyone has been permitted to have the rights to Bob Dylan's--to do it.

PM: Oh, my God.

GH: Yeah, I know.

PM: But Bob is not going to appear, someone is going to play him, is that right?

GH: Yes. It's really not going to be a bio-flick. Now, this is the amazing concept about this film: because Bob Dylan is this ever elusive, mercurial character, he's always changing expressions, and you never know what's going to happen, right?

PM: More and more so.

GH: Yeah. And so Todd chose to have six different Dylans. He starts off with the first one, whose name is Woody, and he's this adorable little African American kid who's

eleven years old--now, he's the fake, he's playing Bob Dylan impersonating Woody Guthrie as an eleven year-old African American kid. So they're tying in the Civil Rights. Right? So he's the first one. The second one is Christian Bale, who did the folk version. You're going to trip out on the third one. The third is Cate Blanchett playing the gone electric *Blonde On Blonde/Don't Look Back* Dylan.

Richard Gere plays the last one, who's the older cowboy sort of version of Bob. Heath Ledger is playing the one in between the two. I can't remember what his name is. But it's amazing. We just saw it--my parents were over for Christmas, and we just saw some of the rough footage. They're editing right now.

PM: Holy jeez.

GH: It's a mind blower, yeah.

PM: That's incredible. Thanks for sharing that with us.

GH: I know! You've got to see that, it's really exciting.

PM: And I'm going to the Velvet Goldmine, too.

GH: You got to see *Velvet Goldmine*. It's a real treat.

PM: What a talented family you come from.

GH: Oh, God, it's amazing, and so fun. I look up to him. He's my big brother. He was somebody who probably helped me find my artistic self, too, in my life, because he came out of the womb drawing and painting, and a little artist. I mean, immediately knew what he was, who he was, really great.

PM: So let's talk, please, about the band. Let's cover the players.

GH: Yeah.

PM: It's hard to cover them briefly. But let's say like who they are and what they do, and to some degree what they're like, for lack of an apt phrase.

GH: Okay. And we've had a couple of changes. I have a new drummer, so the drummer who's on the album is not with us now. But you would like me to talk about the people on the album, is that right?

PM: Yeah.

GH: Okay. Because they're all amazing. So the drummer on the album is Scott Appleman. And he's this incredibly sweet, wonderful, very talented and very capable drummer. And he's just been an absolute pleasure to work with. And he's been playing

music for, I think, fifteen years. I think he's been in on that--was in the indie touring circuit, and just has this beautiful attitude. The guitarist, Twayn Williams is just kind of a frickin' genius. I play rhythm guitar and a little bit of lead guitar, but most of the guitar, ninety percent of the guitar on the album is Twayn, and lap steel. He's just this amazing person with kind of an interest in--like he can do a Robert Fripp impersonation, or emulate David Gilmore or Adrian Belew very credibly. He's been influenced by the experimental guitarists and Brian Eno, etc.

PM: Yeah, he's right up your alley.

GH: Yeah, yeah. And he just gets the music. Erika Miller is the bass player, and she's fabulous; so sensitive to the pocket, and she sings incredible harmonies. She just finds these really interesting places to go in the songs, which just always astound me. And then there is Kelly Goodwin on keyboards, synthesizers and accordion. She's another sort of freak of nature, just born with this really strange gift; she's totally self-taught and intuitive, but can sort of hear anything and play anything. She has like a little mp3 player in her brain.

[laughter]

PM: How did you find these people? How did you put it together?

GH: Well, the amazing thing is that *The Portland Mercury* is the place where you go if you want to find a band or if you want to--

PM: Oh, it's like that. [*The Portland Mercury* is the big alternative weekly newspaper in Portland.]

GH: But it's just been one of those--it was one of those things, it was just an absolute blessing. Portland is filled with musicians. You've probably heard about that.

PM: Yeah. I've been there a few times, and yeah, saw that it was.

GH: Uh-huh.

PM: Yeah, I have a niece there, and once in a while go out there, yeah. In fact, an old buddy of mine is the artist relations for Audix microphones, and I should connect you guys. He's in Portland as well.

GH: Right, we should connect. I actually was told I should get an Audix for performance.

PM: So but it's the Mercury that helped you find these people and kind of pull it together. That's an amazing resource.

GH: It is amazing. And it feels just unbelievably blessed. And in addition to the *Mercury*, there were obviously unseen forces at work bringing us together, because there's a very deep connection, and there's a lot of love and a lot of spiritual connection in the band. We're old friends, too, yeah.

PM: Would you say that the music that you're doing live and on this record is to any degree representative of a scene that's arising in Portland?

GH: I don't know, I don't think so. I don't think it's happening here yet; the theatrical stuff is sort of new. There's still a little bit of holding onto the indie moment of just a couple minutes ago that's still pervasive, that sort of dissonance and the lingerings of the influences of Sonic Youth, with some new pop formations set into the structure. There's a lot of that going on, and not really the theatrical element yet. It's still a little bit--almost shocking for people. But when people see it in performance, they surrender immediately.

PM: And it's a great town, Portland, to be launching yourselves in. They can probably handle a deeper theatrical rock band a lot better than a town like Nashville could, and one's gestation and launching period is everything in a band.

GH: Yes.

PM: One music friend of mine from Portland who was familiar with the band called it--and he liked it--he said to me, "That's like gypsy psychedelia." So I thought I'd ask you if that term has any resonance for you?

GH: Gypsy psychedelia, I kind of like it. I think it's kind of fun. And I would say carnival in there, carnival psychedelica. It's sort of a gypsy carnival psychedelica.

PM: That's an excellent and very ambitious video for the opening song, "Target Market" on your CD.

GH: [laughs] Oh, I'm so happy--yeah, some friends put that together, made that for us.

PM: I mean, how difficult--and if I may ask--expensive was that to pull off?

GH: Ah, well, I'm so blessed. One thing that is amazing about living in Portland is it's a very DIY town. It's a very do-it-yourself--the economy is not as lavish as cities like LA, probably not as lavish as Nashville, in terms of the music industry, probably not as big as New York, in terms of the music industry. So people do a lot more homemade stuff here.

And so the video was really a product of my dear friend Tanya Smith, enlisting her friend Greg Arden and Saul Burbridge, who work at Wil Vinton Studios, which is an animation studio. They do commercials and animation. It's sort of known as a little bit of an art house production company. And these guys are avant-garde filmmakers on the side. And they had the knowledge of how to take this concept of "Target Market" and the idea of it all, and create a tiny little set in their house. That was all an interior set that they hand

built. And the part where I'm looking in the mirror is animated. They just know all these amazing tricks. And so it cost me, basically, supplies. They did it for free.

PM: Wow.

GH: I know. [laughs] And so that's one of the blessings of living in a town like Portland. And they're totally brilliant and ingenious in knowing how to translate that. Saul works at a gift shop part time. That's where the dress came from, and it's just everybody pitching in, and honing their crafts, a collaborative effort in every aspect.

PM: Let's talk about the incredibly cool painting on the cover--

GH: Ah!

PM: --and the disc of *Waking the Mystics*, and about the artist, Marion Peck.

GH: Yes. I love Marion Peck. [www.marionpeck.com]

PM: We want to know all about her.

GH: Ah! Well, I was initially drawn to the works of Mark Ryden who you might know.

PM: I know his name, but not his work, truly.

GH: Well, both Mark Ryden and Marion Peck are part of this art movement called Pop Surrealism, which has been surfacing kind of in the last couple of years. I was looking at an issue of this magazine *Juxtapoz*, and saw the Mr. Bunny picture in this article, which wasn't covering Marion Peck, it was covering Mark Ryden. And Mark Ryden is actually her boyfriend. And he's a massively successful pop surrealist in a similar vein. And I initially wanted his works, but he doesn't really license his works.

PM: Right. He's too big.

GH: Yeah, he's too big. He said no to Courtney Love.

PM: Oh, wow!

GH: Yeah, I know. And he's obsessed with her, and he said no to her, so that was interesting. But then I somehow got back to Marion Peck, and then called up their agent and did a licensing deal. And I feel so blessed to have it, because it fits so well for me with the music and what we're about.

PM: I love her painting, "The Evil Snowman." Do you know that one?

GH: Oh, yeah! She's really--she has an amazing imagination.

PM: Well, what, if I may ask, are you reading lately, and to whom are you listening?

GH: Okay. I'm probably--my reading list--I'm a huge Nietzsche fan. I've always been drawn to Nietzsche's work. And he's so funny because a lot of people think of him as sort of a big macho philosopher who's an atheist, and that's really all wrong. He's actually more a neo-pagan romanticist.

PM: [laughs]

GH: He was an amazing composer. He was a poet. He wrote music. And he really loved--remember he also wrote, "I can only believe in a God that dances." He's more like a Sufi if you read *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Zarathustra Records is my record company. So I love Friedrich Nietzsche. He's probably one of my good pals, in terms of my spiritual inspiration.

PM: I've never heard him called a Sufi before.

GH: I know!

[laughter]

GH: I wrote my masters thesis on Nietzsche. And I read a lot of Rumi, speaking of Sufis.

PM: Ah.

GH: I'm a huge Rumi fan. He's a great--just so funny, so he can be so bawdy and earthy and funny, and then so spiritual and lofty, and so sentimental, and then so tough. And that's kind of what I like in a writer.

PM: It's like Hendrix, there will never be another Rumi.

GH: Exactly! There will never be another Rumi. So all those places he goes, I just so appreciate. I'm a big spiritual seeker, so I'm always reading some sort of spiritual text.

PM: So you would call yourself a spiritual person?

GH: I can't get enough of it. I'm probably one of the most spiritual people I know. It's all about that search for meaning. I've started studying mystics, the Mystical Kabbalah. When I lived in Los Angeles, I studied Gnosticism, and I studied Mystical Kabbalah, and I studied all kinds of forms of spirituality, Esoteric Christianity. I'm very interested in the real authentic concept of Jesus, the Gnostic Gospels, Nag Hammadi works, that sort of thing. *A Course in Miracles*, I'm really into that work. I do like some of the eastern stuff, too. I mean, in Hinduism, I like a lot of the philosophies. I like the Bhagavad-Gita, and I like some of the Hindu chants. And I appreciate a lot of the concepts of Buddhism, especially when applied to psychology and experience: detachment, letting go of stuff. [laughs] Letting go of attachments to people and to things working out the way that we

think we want them to. And I think that fear of separation is an amazing concept in spirituality that I'm trying to understand in the context of *A Course in Miracles*.

PM: Fear of separation.

GH: Yeah. Well, the fear that we're separated from God, or the illusion that we're separated from God, one of the greatest causes of suffering, according to this text. And I think it's true.

PM: You're just a lightweight through and through.

[laughter]

GH: Yeah. That's it. I'm always always reading, always learning, always wondering about stuff.

PM: Well, I love ending on that note. I knew you were a spiritual person. And that's part of our connection. I have a wonderful niece with two kids in Portland, and I can't wait to meet you in person sometime when I pay her a visit next.

GH: Oh, I would love to. How often do you get here?

PM: Not often enough, but the reasons continue to mount, and you're my new significant reason. I want to see the band. I wish you all the luck you deserve with *Waking the Mystics*. And we certainly consider you a most flamboyant breath of fresh air and a huge talent.

GH: Oh, thank you so much for everything, for believing in the music and appreciating it, and taking the time to talk to me on your birthday, and ring in the new year, it's certainly a blessing. I feel pretty privileged to be able to talk to you. It's been lovely.