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BCI Benefit a Success

In a benefit performance for BCI, the internationally acclaimed Paul Winter Consort played for an enthralled crowd in Austin, Texas, on October 9th--a major fundraiser commemorating BCI's 10th Anniversary. Monies raised from the concert and an accompanying silent auction will help fund essential educational and conservation work. The event also helped to raise community awareness of BCI and the benefits of the city's huge Congress Avenue Bridge bat population.

In some 24 years of playing and recording, Paul Winter and his music have been special to those who care about animals and preservation of the earth's last wild places. The Consort's innovative style draws from the traditions of jazz, classical, sacred, and world musics, often weaving into it the sounds of our endangered environment--the howls of wolves, the songs of whales, or the calls of birds. And, for the first time--bats! One of the highlights of the concert was an improvised song inspired by the sounds of echolocating bats and the soft beating of thousands of wings as they emerge at dusk to feed.

Paul Winter has long had an interest in bats, beginning in 1975 when he moved his Connecticut recording studio into a converted horse barn, which is home to about 1,500 little brown bats. "I've observed and respected bats for 15 years, and it gives me great pleasure to lend my music to the cause of preserving and expanding their habitats and existence," Winter said.

The day after the concert, BCI treated Winter to a special visit to Bracken Cave, where some 20 million Mexican free-tailed bats put on their best show for him. Fascinated by the spectacle, Winter now hopes to do more with the sounds of bats in his music.

Over the years, the Paul Winter Consort has performed benefit concerts for a number of environmental and wildlife conservation groups. BCI is proud that they have now added bats to their repertoire. Principal underwriters for the concert were the W. Alton Jones Foundation, Futura Communications (printers of *BATS*), Sunbelt Travel, and Dr. Sue Ellen Young.

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