



# *Gary Paul Hermus: Biography*

Author, essayist, three-time New Mexico music award winner and 8-time nominee, winner of the Xtreme Folk Scene award for his songwriting, Gary Paul is a compelling storyteller, an intelligent, insightful songwriter, and a masterful performer. Accompanying himself with deceptively subtle guitar work, he combines his experiences of life on the road with the traditions of his years in the Northeast and filters them through a New Mexican lens to present a travelogue of the American landscape; from acoustic blues, traditional folk and Celtic influences straight through to bebop and gospel.

Growing up in the slums of Brooklyn, NY did not mean a lack of exposure to music, theater & poetry. Piano lessons at age 5 taught him a love for melody. Summers on his grandparent's farm taught him to love bucolic settings & bluegrass, but it was around Boy Scout council fires that he grew to love storytelling.

His first successful foray into storytelling on paper was in June, 1965, when he won the New York City Junior High School Narrative Writing Contest for his short story, "*A Day at The Beach*," about a family seaside outing gone wrong.

Music and theater were the parallel tracks for Gary Paul. He played rock guitar in his teens while studying acting at NYC's High School of Performing Arts. It was drama by day & music by night at well-known New York hot spots of the day. After high school he studied acting at HB Studios, appearing Off-Off Broadway, while playing the Greenwich Village folk scene, appearing at The Bitter End, The Village Gaslight, Folk City & elsewhere. He even studied photography with veteran photographer Osbert Charles.

But to make ends meet, Gary Paul played fender bass on club dates, learning the American songbook, & the unique styles of Caribbean & South American music. He studied with famed Latin bassist, Victor Venegas, ragtime guitar and banjo with Jack Baker, and lap slide with Pat Victor. As a bassist, he played with many New York-based bands in styles ranging from contemporary folk to bluegrass, Brazilo-Cuban fusion, world music, country, and classic rock, all while working by day with the developmentally disabled; completing a B.A. in Psychology, & Masters degrees in Public Administration & Computer Science.

In 2002 he focused on original songs at small clubs, open mikes, coffeehouses, Folk Festivals & cable TV shows throughout the Northeast, as well as internet radio. Then came the 2006 Xtreme Folk Scene Song Contest win & a triumphant appearance at XFest. His debut CD, "*Sid's Gaseteria*," was released in 2007 on the Big Moose Music label.

Now a resident of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Gary Paul performs both as a solo artist and as an accompanist on bass for others, including the Electronica group Chill-Factor 5. Gary is a member of Folk Alliance International and many of its regional chapters. He is a founding member of the SWRFA New Mexico subcommittee. He is also the past Western Representative to the Executive Board of Local 1000, the North American Traveling Musicians Union having been a member of the American Federation of Musicians since 1966. His Sophomore CD, "*American Road*," was released in March 2018 on the Storm Canyon Music label, with digital distribution through Electron Farm Records. It debuted 38 on the Folk DJ Charts.

Member of the Author's Guild and the New Mexico Book Association, Gary's first novel, *The Port Edgerton Chronicles*, was published in February 2023. His second novel, *FINDING HOME: The Port Edgerton Chronicles Volume II*, is slated for publication in the Spring of 2025. He also has a fantasy/magical realism novel currently in developmental editing. In addition, since the onset of the COVID pandemic, he has been posting monthly installments of his project, "Road Warrior: A Memoir of a Life in Music."