SPARKS A-FLYIN'
WINTER 2020-2021 edition no. 4

Welcome to the fourth issue of our quarterly newsletter -- I hope it finds you and your loved ones safe in this rollercoaster time, hanging in there for vaccines and better times in 2021. With how the flow of time has been upended, it's hard in some ways to believe my album was officially released a year ago Feb. 4 – it's the SPARKSversary!

I'm very grateful with how much visibility and impact the album has been able to have so far despite a pandemic and I'm excited to share these latest bits of good news:

- *SPARKS* is in the running for recognition from the **2021 New Mexico Music Awards** that will be announced this spring. Yeah, I know I live in Texas, but I'm eligible because the album was recorded at a New Mexico studio (15 minutes away!). The number of entries they get is more than I guessed, but still a lot fewer than the GRAMMYs get, so I like my chances!

- *SPARKS* violinist extraordinaire **Amalia Kelter Zeitlin** got her master's degree this past December – congrats, Amalia!

- The lyric of "One-Way Train" was selected by Albuquerque Poet Laureate Mary Oishi for inclusion in a 2021 **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA) "Big Read" event

I am gradually learning more about how to do better classes and concerts online – so many technical and artistic considerations to learn! I enjoyed performing some music from the album for Rice University's Chabad for an online Hanukkah event. Meanwhile, if you have a friend who is eclectic in their musical or Jewish tastes, let them know the album is available via many options from major platforms, and that from the album website https://larrylesser.com/sparks they'll find links to browse the lyrics, stream the music, and learn more about the project. A project that tries to transcend denomination (if not faith) can hopefully be that much more appreciated at a time our country remains so divided politically.

Take care,
Larry