



The New York Flute Club Newsletter

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The Mystery of the Far East Comes to the NYFC on Sunday, November 22

BY JAMES R. SCHLEFER

On Sunday, November 22, the New York Flute Club concert series will explore the mysteries of the Far East. Patricia Spencer, flute, and James Schlefer, shakuhachi, will perform traditional and modern music for the Japanese vertical flute, and Western music influenced by that Japanese tradition. The concert, at CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St., NYC, will begin at 5:30 p.m.

The *shakuhachi* is an end-blown bamboo flute with five finger-holes, originating in China, but known in Japan for over 1200 years. It is the only musical instrument associated with Zen Buddhism. The repertoire of music for the *shakuhachi* consists of Zen pieces, called *Honkyoku* and played solo, and ensemble concert pieces, called *Gaikyoku* and played together with *sangen* (*shamisen*) and *koto*.

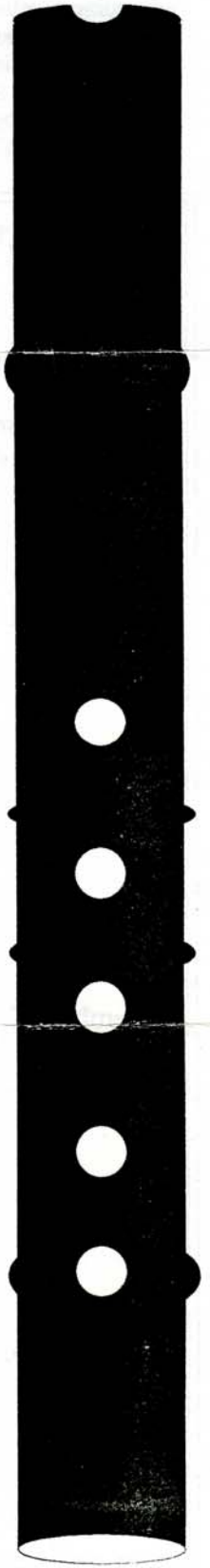
Honkyoku is ancient Zen music that was played by priests of the Fuke sect as part of Zen Buddhist ritual. Playing or hearing this music produces a similar effect to sitting in Zen meditation. Many *shakuhachi*-playing monks called *komusō* wandered about Japan playing *Honkyoku* in the Edo Period; they hoped to strike the one perfect sound which would enlighten the world. While some *Honkyoku* were brought from China, others were developed in Japan, and were passed secretly from teacher to student at various temples of the Fuke sect. At the time of the Meiji Restoration, the Fuke sect was abolished, however, and the *Honkyoku* tradition was in danger of extinction.

Shortly after the turn of this century, Jin Nyodo began to walk the length and breadth of Japan, visiting the temples and learning all the *Hokkyoku* he could find. He collected and preserved these by developing a notation system, and by teaching the playing techniques to his students. Of perhaps one hundred and fifty original *Honkyoku*, there are only about eighty which have been preserved.

In the tradition of the *Shakuhachi*, *Honkyoku* are considered to express the original spiritual voice of the bamboo; these pieces are more religious than musical in nature. Correctly speaking, one does not perform *Honkyoku* for an audience, since the intention of the piece is not to entertain, but rather to raise the consciousness of the player and listener to a higher level. In general, *Honkyoku* music is rather abstract and arrhythmic, and is concerned more with breathing and meditation than with the elements of music as an art form. ♦

James R. Schlefer received his B.F.A. in flute from the City College of New York and his M.A. in musicology from the CUNY Graduate Center, where he specialized in the music of this century.

*Since 1978, Mr. Schlefer has been a student of Ronnie Nyogetsu Seldin in the Ki-Sui-An dojo. The dojo teaches traditional performance in the Kinko-Ryu of both *Honkyoku* (Zen meditation music) and *Gaikyoku* (traditional trio ensemble music for *shakuhachi*, *koto* and *shamisen*). He performs frequently with the New York Sankyokukai and the Hibiki Performing Arts Group. In August of 1991, Mr. Schlefer was awarded a Jun-shi-han master's license and given the Japanese name Hyoraku, meaning "as the essence of music."*



De Lorenzo Lives Again!

The National Flute Association has just published a new, revised edition of a classic work in the flute literature, Leonardo De Lorenzo's *My Complete Story of the Flute*. This new edition includes not only the original 1951 book, but also the three privately published appendix booklets, and, for the first time, an index. The volume has a biographical introduction by Susan Berdahl and a bibliographic

essay by NYFC president Nancy Toff. Written by a former principal flutist of the New York Philharmonic and professor at Eastman (he was Julius Baker's teacher for a year!), the book is a gold mine of New York flute lore. There are biographies of Samuel Baron, Georges Barrère, Frances Blaisdell, Arthur Lora, Frederick Wilkins, and John Wummer – and plenty of delightful trivia.

The book lists for \$34.95 (paperback) and \$49.95 (hardcover), but is available at a 15% discount from the NFA. To order, send your check for \$30 (paperback) or \$42.50 (hardcover), plus \$3.50 per book for shipping and handling, to The National Flute Association, P.O. Box 800597, Santa Clarita, CA 91380-0597. ♦

New Book by Local Flutist

California Institute of the Arts announces the publication of *New Music Across America*. Edited by flutist Iris Brooks (former editor of *EAR Magazine*), the book is a compilation of essays and photographs from 16 cities exploring the path of new music for today and tomorrow.

The book includes a short history (written by Brooks) of the New Music America festival since its inception in New York's The Kitchen in 1979. Using the Festival as a framework, the book includes all the cities hosting the New Music Across America festival. Essay topics include "Sound Art" (Toronto) by Gayle Young, the editor of *Musicworks*, and "Improvisation" (Chicago) by Howard Mandel, known for his jazz journalism and commentary on National Public Radio.

As a musician, Brooks, a Rockland County resident, specializes in contemporary and world flute music and has performed internationally in Egypt, Iceland, Japan, Canada, Bali, and throughout Europe. Currently, she serves on the Board of Directors for the New Music America Festival.

New Music Across America is published by Cal Arts in conjunction with High Performance Books. Individual copies may be ordered from High Performance at (310) 315-9383. The cost of the book is \$14.95, plus postage and handling.

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The NYFC 1993 competition will be held on **Saturday, March 20**. The required piece is J.S. Bach's C Major Sonata, 1st movement. For more info, contact Peggy Schecter, (201) 746-4134.

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Hot Tip: We've been told that **Musical Score Distributors**, 611 Broadway, room 615, NYC (212-475-0270), is a great source for hard-to-find contemporary flute music...

Flute Happenings

Dates for the Flute Happenings calendar should be submitted to **Bob Avery**, P.O. Box 764, Hewitt, NJ 07421, (201)728-7269. For insertion in the December newsletter, please send in all events notices by November 23. If it's flute-related, we want to hear about it!

Concerts

- November 14, Sat.
7:30 p.m. Fundraising concert and dance for Tibetan Refugees; Loeb Center, NYU, 566 Laguardia Place (by West 4th St.); Among the performers will be the internationally renowned Tibetan flutist, Nawang Khechog, and Russian guitarist Yuri Naumov; cultural blend of music will range from eastern influenced American rock to eastern; Tickets are \$10. For tickets and other information, please contact Tom Weiss, (212) 334-9847 or (212) 425-5051, ext. 3707.
- November 16, Mon.
8:00 p.m. Bart Feller (first flutist with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra), Kathleen Nester, flute, and Linda Mark, piano; St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 69th and Broadway, NYC; Works by Haydn, Dahl, W.F. Bach, Hindemith, Martinu, and the NY premiere of Rob Maggio's *Fluano Pianute*; Admission is FREE.
- November 15, Sun.
2:00 p.m. NYFC member Barli Nugent with the Aspen Wind Quintet; New School Concerts, 66 West 12th St., NYC; Works by Milhaud, Carter and Janacek; For info, call (212) 229-5689.