



The New York Flute Club

N E W S L E T T E R

Presenting Michael Parloff!

Interview by Don Bailey

Our interview series continues this month with a conversation with Michael Parloff, the Club's guest artist at CAMI Hall on Sunday, December 13, 1998, at 5:30 pm. I visited Michael at his home in Ridgewood Park, NJ. Over lunch we discussed his childhood and the events leading to his winning one of the most coveted flute positions in the world.

Well, Michael, we might as well start at the beginning. Where are you from?

I'm from Bethesda, MD, which is near Washington, DC. My father is a retired psychiatric researcher who worked at the National Institutes of Health.

You had no interest in being a psychiatrist?

My father is quite eminent in his field. In addition to his research he had a private practice, and he taught at the University of Maryland and the Washington School of Psychiatry. I had no desire to compete with that. Of course, I suspect that he would have preferred that I consider a more stable, less risky career. Many of his friends and colleagues were amateur musicians. Some of them were pretty good for amateurs, and I remember a point came when he said, "Look at my colleagues, they're all researchers and scientists, and they play instruments too." Well, even though these were wonderful, erudite people who also enjoyed music, I knew pretty well by about age 15 that I had a different set of musical aspirations than they did.

To play flute?

Well, to be a musician, at least. I was primarily a flute player, but I had other musical interests, as well. I wasn't very good, but I played piano in the high school jazz band. I liked jazz, and I did a lot of arranging for the band. Plus, I played in a Blood, Sweat & Tears-type group, and I did the arrangements for them. But even though I was always arranging and composing - at a low level, of course - flute was my main emphasis.

How old were you when you actually started the flute?

I was seven. It's one of those stories (smiling). I can still remember it. There was a televised musical production of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* that had adapted music from the *Peer Gynt Suite*. There was something about the image of this colorful guy playing a transverse flute coupled with the beautiful music of Grieg. It just

captured my childish fancy. I started to pester my folks to get me a flute, and I guess they thought I'd get it out of my system. But here it is 39 years later, and they're still waiting. (laughing)

At age seven, was there a band program to keep you motivated?

No, I was too young to be in the band, but I played the flute because I wanted to. A lot of my friends, when they got to the 4th grade or so, had instruments forced on them, but I actually wanted to do it.

Did you take lessons right away?

Yes. My mother took me to the local music and arts studio, and they put a flute up to my face and determined that I was properly configured - two lips, lungs, fingers and all the rest, so they assigned me to Burt Kester, a very nice man. Now there's an interesting coincidence involving Burt. At that time he was also learning to play the bassoon. When I joined the Met in 1977, the second flutist, Mary Ann Archer, who joined the orchestra the same year I did, knew Burt. Mary Ann is from Virginia and had been playing with the Norfolk Symphony. The bassoon player there was Burt Kester. When she told him about the results of the audition, he was flabbergasted to learn that the fat little 7-year old he'd taught 17 years before was playing principal flute at the Met.

So, when did you begin what most of us would call the "normal" band scene?

Well, I was always in the school bands and the orchestras. They weren't very advanced, but there was a youth orchestra in the area that was more serious and had some good student musicians. I still know some of them. Nadine Asin, piccolo at the Met, was in this



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Michael Parloff

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group when I was there.

Were you still studying privately in high school?

By the time I got to high school I was studying with William Montgomery, the head of the woodwind faculty at the University of Maryland. Bill had studied at Curtis with Kincaid and was also a Moyse aficionado - he's a very bright, very energetic man, a fine musician and teacher, and a good administrator. He gave recitals in the Washington area and had a particular bent for contemporary music which, I think, he passed down to me. In addition, I was still interested in jazz, and I found a fellow who was a jazz musician and composer of pedagogical piano music who happened to live just down the block. I took theory lessons from him and he became important to me, as well. As a gag, I wrote a kazoo concerto in high school and played it in one of the assemblies. Well, (laughing) this gave me my requisite 15 minutes of high school fame. My yearbook was full of pictures of kazoos.

Was your jazz limited to the piano and composing, or did you play jazz flute, too?

While I was more a classical player, my jazz playing was mostly on flute. But when I went to Juilliard I met people who were "real" composers and "real" jazz musicians. I played in a jazz quartet with a fine guitarist named Leon Atkinson. Leon was more into the jazz world than the classical, and when he gave a Town Hall concert he invited me to play with him. I found myself standing on stage with guys like Ron Carter, Miles Davis' bass player, and at that point I said, "If I'm going to do this for real, I'd better get serious, because I'm not really qualified to be up here." But instead, I made the decision to focus more in the classical area.

What a great balance it must be to play both.

I still enjoy jazz, and I listen to the jazz station when I'm in the car. I guess it's sort of a well-kept secret at this point.

Well, (laughing) not anymore.....

What sent you to Juilliard?

Again, by the time I was about 15, I knew I wanted to be a musician, so I applied to a bunch of music schools. Juilliard was one of them, and I knew the city pretty well since my uncles were in the theatrical world. I came up often when I was a kid.

You make it sound so easy.

You applied to some schools, and Bingo...

Well, Bill Montgomery, being the thorough guy

that he is, helped me prepare.

Your family was supportive I guess, but they weren't musicians, were they?

Not my immediate family, but I've got enough musical uncles on both sides to say that I came by musical talent legitimately. My father had a brother who died long before I was born who was a child prodigy on the violin. My mother came from a very musically and theatrically inclined family. She played piano for fun when I was young. One of her brothers, Jay Harnick, is a show director and producer who has a nationally organized children's theater institution; their offices are in Town Hall. My mother's other brother, Sheldon Harnick, is a violinist and the lyricist of *Fiddler On the Roof*, *Fiorello*, and *The Rothschilds*. I didn't grow up in the immediate company of these relatives, but I suppose it's understandable that I came to be interested in music.

Who was your flute teacher at Juilliard?

The flute teachers were Julius Baker and Arthur Lora. I studied with Lora, although I always admired Baker, and we get along splendidly. Lora was the principal flutist in Toscanini's NBC Orchestra and at the Met. Some of my parts, *Lohengrin* for instance, have his signature with the date 1938.

So you inherited his position.

Yes, it's interesting.

What was your Juilliard experience like?

I was always interested in composition and theory, and I was particularly impressed with Vincent Persichetti and Robert Starer, both of whom taught music theory at Juilliard. I hung around a lot of the composers, and my last year there I was a graduate theory assistant for composer Lester Trimble. While there were teachers who were inspiring, I think of equal importance was the quality of the students that I was rubbing shoulders with. You found yourself pulling yourself up to their level, which was so high. In the flute department there was Trudy Kane (now the Met's other principal flutist), Nadine Asin, and Carol Wincenc was there for her last year when I entered. Anne Diener Giles was there, as were Ransom Wilson, Renée Siebert, Becky Troxler, and others. When you're surrounded by flute players like these you have to reach for a standard that's higher than you might otherwise.

The level in the other instrumental departments was similarly high. I played for two years in what was then called the "Theater" Orchestra, and the conductor was Jimmy

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Aurèle Nicolet

Flute Fair Update

Aurèle Nicolet, Guest Artist

Combining intriguing events and superb flute playing with a chance to see friends and shop for flute stuff, the New York Flute Fair promises to be a wonderful way to spend a day.

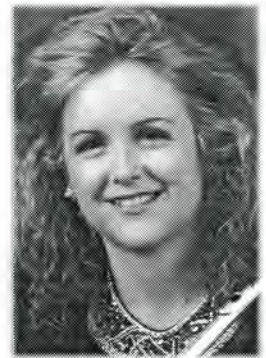
Scheduled for Saturday, February 6, 1999 at the Union Theological Seminary, located at 100 Claremont Avenue, the Fair's special guest artist will be Aurèle Nicolet. The distinguished Swiss flutist, eminent teacher and former solo flutist with the Berlin Philharmonic, will present a master class in the afternoon. We've heard that Nicolet generated an extraordinary level of esprit de corps amongst the professionals, as well as the students and amateurs in attendance at a class sponsored by the Greater Boston Flute Club last month. Monsieur Nicolet will also present a solo recital, with repertoire ranging from Bach to Takemitsu.

Last year's new event, the Young Artist Flute Choir Championship, has evolved into this year's non-competitive Flute Ensemble Showcase. (*See below*)

There will be two ever-popular Flute Choir Reading sessions, as well as both rounds of the annual NYFC Competition. Displays by over 40 exhibitors enable you to see the very latest in flute design, new music, books, CDs and other items.

Watch your mailbox for the January Newsletter with more details about this great event!

Anyone interested in playing in the master class should contact Bärli Nugent (877-6489 or Barliflute@aol.com) for further information.



Bärli Nugent

NEW! Student Flute Ensemble Showcase

Come and play your favorite piece!

As part of the New York Flute Club's plan to provide more events and opportunities for student flutists, the 1999 NYFC Flute Fair will feature a **Flute Ensemble Showcase**. This will be a special opportunity for the Club to present groups of four or more student flutists in performance.

To participate in this inaugural event, please meet the following criteria:

1. Groups must be made up of at least four flutists.
2. Each member must be no older than 18 or a senior in high school. There is no minimum age limit.
3. Each participant must pay \$15 which includes admittance to the Fair.
4. Deadline for SIGN-UP AND SUBMITTING performance selections and timings is: **January 15, 1999.**

We hope this showcase event will be a fun, no-pressure (It's not a competition, whew!) good opportunity for young players to experience and enjoy the camaraderie of ensemble playing. This is a wonderful way for teachers to bring their students to the Fair as participants, not simply spectators.

We look forward to your entries - the more the merrier!

For more information please contact:
Elly Ball (914)241-7953 or email: Ball5555@msn.com
Stefani Starin(914)358-2759 or email: Starin@spyral.net

FLUTE FAIR 1999 PROGRAM IDEAS SOUGHT

We are now accepting suggestions for workshops, lectures and other events for this year's Flute Fair. As our Fair visitorship comprises students, children & parents, adult amateurs, teachers and performers, we seek ideas that will serve one or more of those groups. All submissions must be in writing and will be seriously considered. Please explain your concept clearly, and include details of space & equipment needs, colleagues who will assist you, etc. Bear in mind that sessions generally vary in length from 45 minutes to 1-1/2 hours. Because the Fair is in February this year (February 6, 1999), six weeks earlier than last year, all submissions must be received by December 1, 1998. They will be screened by the Flute Fair Steering Team and then approved by the full Board of the Club. Please send to Bärli Nugent, 66 West 77th Street, New York, NY 10024 or email at Barliflute@aol.com.

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

December 4, 1998

Friday, 8:00 pm

Suc Ann Kahn presents FOUR FLUTE TRIOS, Beethoven's Serenade in D, Roussel's Trio, Martinu's Trio, and Debussy's Sonata with Mannes College faculty members. Mannes College Concert Hall, 150 W. 85th Street. Free admission.

December 5, 1998

Saturday, 8:00 pm

Amy Ziegelbaum with pianist Laura Leon-Cohen at the Heckscher Museum of Art in a program of American music and art. Info, call 516-351-3250.

December 6, 1998

Sunday, 8:00 pm

Carol Wincenc performing in a tribute to John Corigliano's 60th birthday. Irish folk song settings with Robert White. 92nd Street Y.

December 7, 1998

Monday, 1-3 pm

Patricia Spencer - Masterclass, guest of Professor Bernard Z. Goldberg Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College Room 366, Gershwin Building Travel directions/information: 718-951-5792 or email: davidl@brooklyn.cuny.edu

December 9, 1998

Wednesday, 7:30 pm

Michael Laderman with pianist Colette Valentine. Washington Square United Methodist Church, 133 W. 4th St. Works by Taffanel, Fields (American premiere), Martin, Riegger, and Reinecke. \$12, \$6 for students/seniors. Info, call 212-254-6555, email: piper@interport.net, or the church at 212-777-2528.

PHLUTISTS, PHILANTHROPEERS, PRINTERS

The NYFC is priming a bit these days, and our printing costs are escalating. We wonder if within our membership there are printing professionals who can contribute their services. Please call Don Bailey at 212-877-6440 if you would like to help.

The Archives are on vacation until the January issue.



Patricia Spencer

Note from the President

by Patricia Spencer

As we prepare to celebrate the 90th Birthday of Elliott Carter—lauded by critic Andrew Porter as the "greatest living composer"—it is exciting to reflect on his role as a major dynamic force in American music for more than half a century. Among his awards are two Pulitzer Prizes, Guggenheim fellowships, the Brandeis Creative Arts Award, the Sibelius Medal, the Critics Circle Award, the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the National Medal of Arts. At an early age he was introduced to Charles Ives, with whom he attended concerts and discussed not only musical ideas but also transcendentalism. Another important influence was Nadia Boulanger, with whom he studied from 1932-35, after graduating from Harvard. His extensive writings on new music, found in the periodical "Modern Music" and in several published collections, have had a significant impact in shaping American musical thought. Together with Ives he developed a compositional method of "continual variation"—to supplant formal expectations, to keep the listener caught up in the moment-to-moment evolution of the music. Another characteristic technique is his incorporation of an almost inconceivably detailed knowledge of the sound and playing technique of the instruments for which he is writing, allowing this knowledge to help shape the musical material. Carter's compositions include stage, orchestral, choral and vocal works, and a rich and varied collection of chamber and instrumental works.

Flutists may rejoice in the chamber music Mr. Carter has given our instrument. The following annotated list is provided with the goal of encouraging adventurous flutists to explore these fascinating works. Bulleted (•) compositions will be performed in Michael Parloff's concert on December 13, 1998.

Canon for 4 (1984), for flute, bass clarinet, violin, cello. (Boosey & Hawkes HPS0984,

ENB0259) Virtuoso but lyrical, this 4-minute piece opens with bristling energy, then continues with a long stretch of slow, hauntingly beautiful sustained lines. It was written for Sir William Glock on his retirement as Director of the English Bath Festival.

Canon for 3, for three treble instruments. (Associated Music Publishers/G. Schirmer) The instruments can be three flutes, or flute with clarinet, or oboe, or trumpet. (Bb parts are provided.) A short canon suitable for beginning to intermediate levels, sure to delight more advanced players as well.

Eight Etudes and a Fantasy, for flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. (Associated Music Publishers/G. Schirmer) This extended quartet abounds in the jazzy rhythms and harmonies of Mr. Carter's earlier styles. Tackling the entire work requires advanced players, but it is possible to explore some of the movements with a group of intermediate level.

• *Enchanted Preludes* (1988), for flute and cello. (Boosey & Hawkes HPS1121) This virtuosic 6-minute duet was described in the NY Times as a work with "a lighthearted air, offering exquisite conversation between flute ... and cello."

Esprit rude/Esprit doux (1985), for flute and clarinet. (Boosey & Hawkes ENB0251) Bubbling with vivacity (and virtuosity), this 4-and-a-half minute duo sometimes sounds like a quartet at least: the accent patterns and groupings within each part make the single parts sound like multiple voices. The work was written for Pierre Boulez's 60th birthday.

Esprit rude/Esprit doux II, (1995) for flute, clarinet, and marimba. (Boosey & Hawkes ENB0436) Written for Pierre Boulez's 70th birthday, this can either be played as a continuation of the previous work, or as a short piece that stands on its own.

• *Scrivo in vento* (1991), for solo flute. (Boosey & Hawkes WFB0132) A 6-minute work written for and dedicated to "the wonderful flutist and friend, Robert Aitken," writes Mr. Carter. The title ("I write on the wind") is taken from a poem by Petrarch:

CLASSIFIEDS

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Members may advertise in this section for \$10 for up to 320 characters/spaces. Your ad must be submitted by hard copy, email or fax - no exceptions. Name and phone number are required. Deadline is the same as for newsletter submissions. Ads must be paid for in advance. Make checks payable to the New York Flute Club and mail to the newsletter editor.

• *Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Cello and Harpsichord* (1952). (Associated Music Publishers/G. Schirmer) This 16-minute quartet uses a readily available Baroque combination in a fresh and unpredictable manner. Mr. Carter writes: "It seemed very important to have the harpsichord speak in a new voice, expressing characters unfamiliar to its extensive Baroque repertoire." (The Writings of Elliott Carter, ed. Else and Kurt Stone) The rhapsodic first movement of this demanding work could be played by advanced intermediate players with good chamber music skills.

Triple Duo (1982), for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion. (Boosey & Hawkes HPS0982, study score) A 20-minute

work, vastly complex (requiring a conductor in most instances), the Triple Duo explodes with different moods, colors, characters, intensities. Mr. Carter writes that each of the duos (flute/clarinet, violin/cello, and piano/percussion) "has its own repertory of ideas and moods. This free fantasy involves various contrasts, conflicts and reconciliations between the three duos."

• *Woodwind Quintet* (1948) (Associated Music Publishers/G. Schirmer) In the words of Michael Parloff (see interview elsewhere in this Newsletter), the quintet is "charming . . . jaunty, even jazzy, tonal for the most part." This substantial work is approachable for advanced students with good chamber music skills.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY OF CHAMBER WORKS WITH FLUTE BY ELLIOTT CARTER

Woodwind Quintet

Arnold Quintet. Stradivarius #33304.

Aulos Wind Quintet. Koch Schwann #311532.

Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet. Bis #952

Sierra Wind Quintet. Cambria Records #1091.

Westwood Wind Quintet. Crystal Records #752.

Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Cello and Harpsichord

Rembrandt Chamber Players, 20th Century Baroque. Sandra Morgan, Robert Morgan, Barbara Haffner, David Schrader. Cedille Records #90000 011.

Elliott Carter. Paul Jacobs, Harvey Sollberger, Joel Krosnick, Charles Kuskin WEA/Elektra/Nonesuch #79183.

Triple Duo

New York New Music Ensemble. Jayn Rosenfeld, Jean Kopperud, Linda Quan, Chris Finckel, James Winn, Daniel Druckman. Conducted by Robert Black. GM Recordings #2047. Fires of London. Wergo #6278.



Elliott Carter

Canon for 4

Da Capo Chamber Players, Chamber Works by George Perle and Elliott Carter. Patricia Spencer, Laura Flax, Joel Lester, André Emelianoff. GM Recordings #GM202CD.

Esprit rude/Esprit doux

Da Capo Chamber Players, Chamber Works by George Perle and Elliott Carter. Patricia Spencer, Laura Flax. GM Recordings #GM202CD. Philippe Racine, Ernesto Molinari. BMG/ECM #21391

Enchanted Preludes

Da Capo Chamber Players, Chamber Works by George Perle and Elliott Carter. Patricia Spencer, André Emelianoff. GM Recordings #GM202CD.

Eight Compositions by Elliott Carter. Harvey Sollberger, Fred Sherry. Bridge Records #9044

Scrivo in vento

Eight Compositions by Elliott Carter. Harvey Sollberger. Bridge Records #9044. The Now and Present Flute. Patricia Spencer. Neuma #450-88.

CD SURVEY

For a possible article on "The Life-Altering Experience of Producing a Compact Disc", I would like to survey the membership for those who have recorded/produced a CD of music featuring the flute within the past three years. To be included in this possible feature, please send information about your CD to the editor by mail or email.

NEW
LOCATION

THE NEW YORK FLUTE CLUB FLUTE FAIR

Saturday, February 6, 1999

at

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

100 CLAREMONT AVENUE

(between 120th & 122nd Streets)

CALLING ALL PACKRATS

We are still trying to assemble a full run of New York Flute Club programs for our archives at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Over the last several years, we have made substantial progress in filling in the holes, but there are some surprising gaps, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. If you have any old flute club programs, or know of anyone else who might, please contact the archivist, Nancy Toff, at (212) 772-1343 or by e-mail at net@oup-usa.org. Thanks for your help.

Michael Parloff

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Conlon who is now the head of the Paris Opera. The orchestra was full of people who went on to become very well known in the music world. The two concertmasters were Phil Setzer of the Emerson String Quartet (who'll be playing with me on the 13th at CAMI) and Ida Kavafian who just retired from the Beaux Arts Trio. The principal violist was Guillermo Figueroa, the City Ballet's current concertmaster, and Yo Yo Ma played principal cello for a while. The principal trumpet was Phil Smith who now occupies that position in the Philharmonic. Renée Siebert, Nadine Asin and I were the flute players. It was a phenomenally good orchestra to be a part of, and I look back and realize how fortunate I was at that stage of my development to be around all these great players.

(Laughing) Did anyone from that orchestra NOT succeed?

(Diplomatically) Well, I don't remember, but there were a lot of good people. The standards of admittance were high and still are. Another thing about going to Juilliard back then - there were no dormitories. The apartment situation in New York wasn't so insane then, and students could take apartments each season fairly easily, so I had lots of roommates. I remember one of them was a student in the Juilliard acting department. John Houston was the head of the department then. I would go to some of the theater productions and come home reeling because the quality was so high. Now I realize that the actors who were my roommate's colleagues were Kevin Kline, Robin Williams, Christopher Reeves, and William Hurt.

Michael, can you imagine the party you could throw?

(Laughing) Well we did, and these people would show up but they weren't famous then. I just thought, "Gee, what an interesting, amusing bunch of people." I realize now retrospectively that it was just a very rich environment to be a part of.

How long did you attend Juilliard?

I was at Juilliard for four years until 1974. Then I was very curious to see what "Real Life" was going to be about.

(Laughing) So, did this mean you played jazz flute in the subways?

No, I was finished with that. I taught and freelanced for three years. Gradually the freelance engagements became higher in quality, although I did a lot of amusing things. I played in a backup group for Chet Atkins, the country guitarist once, and I went on tour in a backup orchestra for a rock keyboard player named Rick Wakeman. I did my fair share of gigs here and there, but things gradually improved, and by the time I came to the Met I was playing principal flute in Loren Glickman's contracted freelance orchestra for the Stuttgart Ballet which was in residence at the Met. So, I was actually at the Met the summer of the audition. But it was not an easy period those three years. I remember feeling frustrated about not having a steady job.

Were you ever so frustrated that you wanted to quit?

Oh yes. It was that frustrating. I think all of us feel at some point that we'll have to stop living this particular kind of life.

Were you taking auditions during that lean period?

Yes, I have my own roster of audition war stories to tell like everybody else. Fortunately that period didn't go on too long. My first couple of experiences were real debacles. I remember when Galway

left the Berlin Philharmonic around 1975; there was a very small advertisement in the union newspaper that only a few of us saw. I had applied and forgotten all about it, and one day they called me for the audition which was to be the following day at Carnegie Hall. I showed up, not really knowing what would be on it. I brought my Mozart Concerto. I was surprised to learn that European orchestras, and the Berlin Philharmonic in particular, audition with the entire orchestra out there. As in my worst nightmare, there they all were with Herbert Von Karajan, and I didn't even know what I'd be playing. I kept pinching myself, hoping to wake up.

Were you behind a screen?

Oh no. Gosh no! (laughing) So I learned really quickly that there was stuff you needed to know at auditions.

So, how did you do anyway?

(Laughing). I didn't get the job, but it makes a good story.

Was the Met your first position?

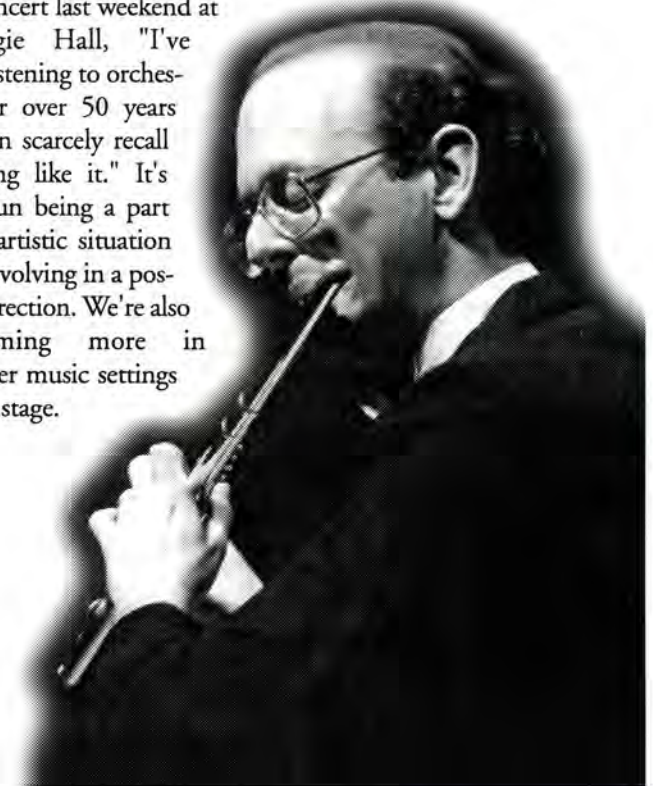
Yes, my first and I guess my last (smiling).

Not a bad start, Michael

Well, I can't complain.

Was an opera orchestra of more interest to you at the time than a career on the stage in a symphony?

I didn't audition for the Met specifically because I wanted to play opera. It was a good position that was available. I think to a degree you are molded by your experiences, but I don't think it's been a limiting experience for me - quite the contrary, in fact. The Met orchestra has evolved tremendously in the time I've been there, to the point now where it's now an exceptionally fine concert orchestra as well. It's becoming analogous to the Vienna Philharmonic, which is essentially the Vienna State Opera Orchestra in disguise. They perform and record both kinds of music. We're moving in that same direction and tour often, and the reception has been very good. Bernard Holland reviewed our concert last weekend at Carnegie Hall, "I've been listening to orchestras for over 50 years and can scarcely recall anything like it." It's been fun being a part of an artistic situation that's evolving in a positive direction. We're also performing more in chamber music settings on the stage.



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Michael Parloff

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On December 6, for instance, Dawn Upshaw, James Levine, others and I will be performing Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* at Weill Hall.

Do you have to intentionally switch gears when you play on the stage versus in the pit?

I don't think so. I play on the stage enough so that it's familiar territory.

Do you have to think differently about projection or volume?

Well, the thing about playing in an opera orchestra is that it demands a wide range of dynamics and styles. If you're playing a prelude, overture, or an orchestral tutti you have to project at a symphonic level of intensity and volume. And if you're playing along with Cecilia Bartoli, for example, you might have to play at a literal whisper, so you must cultivate this very wide range of dynamics which are required on a nightly basis. It also requires great rhythmic flexibility because a lot of what's done instinctively by sopranos and tenors is not really written into the parts.

(Laughing) You mean they don't know how to count?

(Diplomatically, again) Oh, the best of them have tremendous rhythm. Bartoli, for instance, is an astonishing musician.

What about pitch placement or vibrato when playing with voices?

Well, if you're playing unison or 3rds with a singer, it's sort of like long-range chamber music. You can't see them so you have to listen very carefully. You learn to match the quality of the sound that they're producing. If you're playing in unison, you instinctively reduce the presence of your sound which includes pulling out a degree of your vibrato simply so you don't conflict with them. It would certainly be in bad taste for the flute player to try to drown out Pavarotti, for example.

Do you ever think about what you would have done had you lost the Met audition?

I try not to (laughing). I probably would have continued taking auditions. I know several very successful players who took numerous auditions before winning. I think it sometimes takes people a certain amount of time to hit their stride when auditioning. It becomes like an athletic event. I think at certain times in your life you're more geared towards that than at others. It becomes harder to take auditions. I mean, what's being asked from you at auditions is not necessarily what will be asked of you in the actual situation. For example, you'll have eight bars to prove yourself, and precision and concentration is important, but there's something strange about taking eight bars out of a 40-minute masterpiece and focusing so much laser-like attention on it. The Scherzo from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suddenly becomes like the 50-yard dash and the *Firebird* becomes like some kind of a crazy slalom. And people begin to play, of necessity I think, in sort of an a-contextual way. And after you've played *Firebird* enough in an orchestra, you realize that this stuff which you're breaking your neck to learn and play absolutely accurately at the audition is not even heard. It's like a pure audition piece, and the way you would play dynamics, rhythm and tempos at an audition are different than what you would play in context. Plus, if you've played them in context enough, it becomes a peculiar exercise to try to go back and play them out of context.

Do you remember the audition itself?

Oh yes, there were 2 or 3 rounds, opera repertoire only. I had to play the second act solo from *Manon Lescaut*, *Rosenkavalier's* first act cadenza which is very hard, the Entr'acte to the third act of *Carmen*, the third act Nile Scene solo from *Aida*, the *Falstaff* cadenza, and other standard fare. 100 people auditioned. The thing that's so interesting about the Met auditions is that they were and still are done entirely behind screens, including the last round. So the audition committee doesn't know whom they're hiring. Whoever staggers out from behind the screen will be taking the job. I think it's a great system, and the quality of the orchestra reflects the effectiveness of it. What you end up with often might be players otherwise considered too young and too inexperienced, or too old and too molded. We've had both, and for the most part it works out not only musically, but also personally for some reason. About ten years ago there was an opening for harp, and I was on the committee. At the end, this young French girl came from behind the screen - she was still a student at Curtis, and some people might have wondered if she was up to the job. Well, not only was she up to the job, but Marie-Pierre Langlamet is now principal harp in the Berlin Philharmonic. She might never have been given the chance had the audition not been behind a screen.

(Laughing) But what if the person behind the screen turns out to be a crack addict or someone who never bathes.

Hmm, actually that's not such an unusual question. But, it takes tremendous discipline to win an audition these days. So many people want the job and standards have to be so high that it's hard to imagine a crack addict would have that kind of discipline. It's not impossible, however. On the other hand I don't really think that orchestras which audition differently have any premium on well-adjusted people. While the behind-the-screen method is certainly risky, I'm convinced that it has proved itself over and over again.

Is there anything else you'd like to say about your audition for the Met?

Well, I remember what it meant to me at the time. I remember the stomachache I had after I played, even though I knew that I had played well. It was like a mythic moment for me; I realized those last 15 minutes were going to have a lot of impact on the rest of my life.

Did your teacher, Mr. Lora, encourage you and help you prepare for that day?

No, I had not been studying with Mr. Lora for a quite few years at that point, and, interestingly, he had come out a completely different milieu. He never took an audition in his life. In his world, Toscanini would say, "Take this man and put him in this chair." Of course, if he got tired of him, he'd say, "Take this man OUT of this chair and take him out back and SHOOT him. (laughing) It was a different world entirely. Consequently, Mr. Lora did not encourage or prepare me for the realities of the present audition system.

Do you share responsibilities at the Met?

Yes. All of the principal positions at the Met are occupied by two players; seven shows a week plus all rehearsals for the duration of the season would be too much for one player. Trudy Kane is the other principal flutist. She and I actually came in as principals the same year, although she had won the second flute position the year

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Michael Parloff

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before. It was an interesting time, because the orchestra was changing demographically. Suddenly the flute section went from players in their mid-to-late 50's and early 60's to a flute section where everybody was in their early and mid -20's. It was quite an adjustment for many of the older players, particularly because so many young women were now occupying principal positions. This was a completely unfamiliar situation for the old guard.

What can you say about collaborating with the same players for such a long period?

Well, I like the people I work with. Some orchestras may have reputations for being combative or even surly, but, perhaps because the Met spends so much of its time in a supportive role, I've never found this to be the case. It's a good bunch of people. Both principal oboists live within five minutes of my house, and we often commute into town together. There really isn't anyone that I don't get along with. If I need to work out some intonation, or discuss phrasing, I really don't have a problem discussing these with the section. My personality isn't that of a "boss." But when necessary, I'll rehearse with my colleagues to work through difficult passages before the performance. Some people have lists of rules

about how to get along with colleagues and conductors: don't stare at people while they're playing their solos, don't cross your legs, and so on. But I really think the "golden rule" is sufficient in most situations. Sensitivity is a good thing.

What's a typical performance day for you?

It varies from week to week. The Met gives seven performances a week, but out of that we are only contractually required to play four. Since Trudy and I have the same job description it means that

on an average I play 3 or 4 shows a week. Of course, operas are long. For example, tonight I'm playing *Figaro* from 8 until midnight. Last night I played *Aida* from 8 until midnight, and during the day yesterday there was a rehearsal of *Traviata* from 11 in the morning until 3. The day before I rehearsed from 11 to 2:30 and played *Tosca* from 8 until 11:15, and the day before that was a Carnegie Hall concert. Tomorrow we rehearse from 11 to 4 for this Sunday's Pavarotti 30th Anniversary Gala. So, it's a lot of work. We often joke that playing in the Met Orchestra can bear a surprising resemblance to working for a living. (laughing)

When do you practice? Do you have a routine or something that you absolutely MUST do every day?

I practice every morning. I'm a believer in having a regimen. I practice tone, intonation, scales, and articulations in some form everyday. Otherwise, I think playing in an orchestra over the long term would be destructive because you can't always hear yourself clearly. It's really important to return to the basics everyday. When I teach, I try to emphasize this, as well. I've figured out how to get as much variety packed into my limited warm-up time as I can.

Do you take time off? Occasionally I've taken a week off, but I'm not comfortable taking too much time off. I've never taken a month off.

Any things you can't eat before you play?

Hmm, I actually have a very unhealthy routine (smiles). I drink coffee and have a peanut butter

cookie before almost every opera. This jump-starts my motor and I can get through the first hour and a half without any problem. I generally don't drink coffee before recitals, though, because it tends to dry out my mouth. Other than that I don't really have any problems with foods.

MICHAEL PARLOFF, *flutist*
DECEMBER 13, 1998 AT 5:30
CAMI HALL
165 W. 57TH STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

A RECITAL TO HONOR ELLIOTT CARTER'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

WOODWIND QUINTET (1948) - Elliott Carter
SCRIVO E VENTO FOR SOLO FLUTE (1995) - Elliott Carter
ENCHANTED PRELUDES FOR FLUTE & CELLO (1988) - Elliott Carter
PROMENADES FOR FLUTE, VIOLIN, HARPSICHORD (1940)- Bohuslav Martinu
SONATA IN B MINOR FOR FLUTE AND HARPSICHORD - Johann Sebastian Bach
QUARTET FOR FLUTE, OBOE, CELLO, AND HARPSICHORD (1952) - Elliott Carter

Michael Parloff: Principal Flutist; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
John Ferrillo: Principal Oboist; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
Ricardo Morales: Principal Clarinetist; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
Whitney Crockett: Principal Bassoonist; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
Joseph Anderer: Hornist; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, St. Luke's Ensemble
Fred Sherry: Cellist, Lincoln Center Chamber Society
(and well-known 20th Century Music advocate)
Philip Setzer: Violinist; Founding member, Emerson String Quartet
Gerald Ranck: Harpsichordist; One of NYC's top harpsichordists

One of New York City's most versatile musicians, Michael Parloff has been Principal Flutist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra since 1977. A 1974 graduate of The Juilliard School, Mr. Parloff appears regularly as recitalist and concerto soloist throughout North America, Europe, and Japan. In recent seasons his New York City appearances have included recitals at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, concerto appearances at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and chamber music performances at The Morgan Library. Michael Parloff has collaborated in New York solo and chamber concerts with such noted artists as James Galway, James Levine, Peter Serkin, Julius Baker, Jean-Pierre Rampal, and Thomas Hampson. Highly respected as a teacher, Michael Parloff has presented masterclasses at major conservatories and university music schools in the United States and abroad. He has been a member of the flute faculty of Manhattan School of Music since 1985. During the summers Mr. Parloff has participated in a variety of music festivals, including Marlboro, Grand Tetons, Chautauqua, Waterloo, Monadnock, and Crested Butte. He has been a featured soloist in concerts on board the *Vistafjord* cruise ship in tours of Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea countries. Mr. Parloff has recorded extensively with the Metropolitan Opera for Deutsche Grammophon, Sony Classical, London, and Philips. His solo CD *The Flute Album* surveys 200 years of classic repertoire for the instrument.

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Michael Parloff

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I doubt if you get nervous before performances.

I wouldn't say that I never get nervous, but I think I've learned from experience how to coexist with the occasional adrenaline buzz and not to give it any more importance than it deserves. I think nerves result largely from being unprepared or unfamiliar with a situation. Now, after 22 years of playing *Aida*, I've a fairly good idea that I'll survive the experience. I've also played enough recitals to be reasonably comfortable in those settings, too. There are times, of course when the adrenaline buzz is more intense than others. For example, if we're doing a telecast and playing the Entr'acte to the third act of *Carmen*, or the mad scene from *Lucia*, I can't pretend that when the camera focuses on me that I'm not more on the edge of my seat than usual.

What kind of flute do you play?

It's a silver .014 tubing Brannen Cooper with a silver headjoint by David Williams. I used to play a gold flute, but I found that for my style of playing silver was better.

Would you like to talk about your teaching?

I teach privately and I've taught at Manhattan School of Music since 1985. I like teaching; I've had some very good students.

Would you ever tell a student to give it up?

Well, I'm not the type to lie to people about their possibilities, and there are some that I might not encourage to continue, but thankfully the students I accept at MSM are serious about the flute and this situation rarely occurs. I wouldn't want to discourage anyone from pursuing their dreams, but it would be irresponsible to delude them by supporting their dreams if they're unrealistic.

Do you think it's harder today to develop a career in music than when you started?

I think it's always been difficult to have a career in music; there has always been a herd of flute players at the auditions. It's a very competitive environment, and the positions that pay a living wage are few. On the other hand, I've had many students who have constructed interesting and creative careers. There are all kinds of ways to have a career in music.

Do you play piccolo?

When necessary, I play piccolo. At the Met I play a little second picc in *Carmen*, or in *Peter Grimes*. December 6, I'll play flute and piccolo in *Pierrot Lunaire*.

Let's talk about your upcoming Flute Club concert

I've been interested in contemporary music ever since high school, and I'm an admirer of Carter's music. With his birthday occurring

two days before the concert, I decided to structure the program around his music. It will be an interesting program, and I have some terrific musicians performing with me. It's not an all-Carter program, though. I don't pigeonhole myself into any particular area of expertise, and I don't consider myself a contemporary music specialist or a baroque music specialist. I like to play whatever is of interest to me, so I've included some Bach, some Martinu, some solo, and some chamber works simply because I think it makes a more interesting concert.

Tell me about your family.

Well, you've met my wife Inmo, who is a beautiful Korean cellist; we've been married for _____ ?? (laughing), and we have a 13 year-old son, Eugene, who's a football player - he's already 6'3."

Any regrets or unfilled aspirations? Would you do it all differently?

No, I don't think I would do it differently, although I would like to do more solo and chamber music recording in the future. Probably

the only thing you don't get to do playing in the Met Orchestra that you would be able to do as a principal chair player in a symphonic orchestra is play concertos with the orchestra regularly. (That said, Levine has been featuring members of the orchestra in concertos more frequently in recent seasons.) I've performed a fair number of concertos with other orchestras, and I would like to do more in the future.

Well Michael, that about does it for this interview. It's been great talking with you. Is there anything else you would like to say to the members of the New York Flute Club?

Oh, I might say "Don't believe your publicity." If you have a title, a job, or a position - don't think to yourself that that's the end. We shouldn't identify so strongly with

the symbols in our lives that they keep us from growing and pursuing other kinds of activities. People who say, "I am THIS" run the risk of sticking themselves in that spot and never evolving. A few days ago I went to hear James Galway play at Carnegie Hall. I remembered that about 20 years ago, the first concert he played in New York was an all Bach concert - all the sonatas. His recent concert was also all Bach, only this time his collaborators were playing on original instruments, and he played the whole evening in a light, historically-informed manner with lilting phrasing and virtually no vibrato. He basically divested himself of this great calling card, the Galway sound, and played in an incredibly intimate way. I was so impressed that he was going beyond what it is that he knows will work. He was taking a risk with an audience that expected one thing, and he was giving them another. I think there's a lot to learn from that. I would prefer people not think of me as just an "opera musician", but as a musician with eclectic tastes who plays a lot of opera. If they come to this concert on the 13th, they'll see what I mean.



THE 1998-99 CONCERT SEASON

October 11, 1998 *Sunday, 5:30 pm*

Marco Granados, flute;
AMERIGO ENSEMBLE:
Wind quintets plus some special Venezuelan favorites for flute, guitar, cuatro, and bass.

November 22, 1998 *Sunday, 5:30 pm*

Renée Siebert, flute. Works by Bach, Poulenc, Deak, Fauré and Beethoven.



December 13, 1998
Sunday, 5:30 pm
Michael Parloff, flute
See program inside.

February 6, 1999 *Saturday, 9:00 am - 8:00 pm*

Flute Fair
Guest Artist, **Aurèle Nicolet**
Union Theological Seminary.

February 28, 1999 *Sunday, 5:30 pm*

Nadine Asin & Carol Wincenc

March 14, 1999 *Sunday, 5:30 pm*

Memorial Concert for Robert Lehman
John Solum, Richard Wyton,
historical flutes

April 18, 1999 *Sunday, 5:30 pm*

1999 NYFC Competition Winners

May 23, 1999 *Sunday, 3:00 pm*

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Kaplan Space at Carnegie Hall

*All programs at CAMI Hall, 165 West 57th Street,
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The New York Flute Club

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From The Editor



Don Bailey

Well members, here we are again. This is getting to be fun! Diane and I hope you enjoy this issue as much as we have enjoyed preparing it. I would like to take this opportunity to tell my fellow board members how much I appreciate all their extra efforts in supporting me with this newsletter. So much scrambling and footwork (you should see some of our footwork) goes on behind the scenes here. I simply COULD NOT produce this without their help. A special thanks goes to Rana Boland for her help with the mailing.



Diane L. Goodwin

This issue is full. The interviews continue with a close-up on Michael Parloff, our next guest artist. I was very pleased to receive Patricia Spencer's article about Elliott Carter which ties in nicely with Michael's programming. We're hoping Mr. Carter himself will attend the performance. Also inside these pages Bärli Nugent talks about the upcoming February Flute Fair (say THAT three times in a row), and Elly Ball and Stefani Starin invite young members to participate in the Flute Ensemble Showcase – our first!

So, fellow flute aficionados (that's not easy to say either), put your flutes down, grab your reading glasses, pour your beverage of choice, and have a nice read. See you on December 13th at CAMI Hall. Happy Holidays!