



The New York Flute Club NEWSLETTER

December 2000

Into the Millennium: The "Best of the New"



Interviews by Cathy Comrie

In Concert

Into the Millennium: The "Best of the New"

December 10, 2000

Sunday 5:30 pm

CAMI Hall

165 West 57th Street

Program

Afterlight

Patti Monson, flute

Robert Dick (b. 1950)

None but the Lonely Flute

Jayn Rosenfeld, flute

Milton Babbitt (b. 1916)

Emily's Images

Janet Arms, flute;

Jenny Undercofler, piano

Vivian Fine (1913–2000)

Aurelian Echoes

*Gen Shinkai and Koaki Fujimoto,
alto flute and flute*

Harvey Sollberger (b. 1938)

East Wind

Ulla Suokko, flute

Shulamit Ran (b. 1949)

Introduction and the Ground

(from Three Figures and a Ground)

Alan Cox, flute;

Jenny Undercofler, piano

Stephen Jaffe (b. 1954)

Piccolo Play

Stephanie Mortimore, piccolo;

Jenny Undercofler, piano

Thea Musgrave (b. 1928)

Program subject to change



Thea Musgrave

Piccolo Play (1989)

CC: Can you give us some background information on Piccolo Play?

TM: The first thing to know is that I shamelessly pinched the title from Couperin. Each title is the name of somebody or something who is the protagonist, played by the piccolo. The pianist provides the setting for the piccolo player, so it has a dramatic aspect. In general that's what the piece is about.

CC: Are there any aspects of the style of this piece that would be useful to the first-time performer or listener to know?

TM: Go for the drama, the music. Play with plenty of articulation and wonderful phrasing...that kind of thing.

CC: Has the way you write for the flute changed in any way over the past 20 years?

TM: Probably, but I wouldn't know how.

CC: Do you enjoy composing for the flute?

TM: Of course...I've composed a lot for the flute.

CC: What inspires you to write for the flute? Do you compose for people you know?

TM: Yes. First I wrote for people in Britain, and later on for Patricia Spencer and Robert Willoughby. Then there's a [1998] piece for three flutes and percussion [*Voices from the Ancient World*] which [was commissioned by] the *Scottish Flute Trio*, and which the *Three Flute Moms* did in a concert here...and they were wonderful.



Milton Babbitt

None But the Lonely Flute (1991)

CC: Can you give us some background information on

None But the Lonely Flute?

MB: That's an easy question. I wrote it for the flutist Dorothy Stone because she asked me to. I usually write pieces for friends and colleagues if they ask me, particularly if it's a solo piece and doesn't require much preparation of materials. So I wrote it for her because I wanted to, I liked her flute playing, and I liked her husband [Stephen Moskol, a conductor whom I had known for a long time. That was all the incentive I needed.

CC: What would be most useful for the first-time performer of this piece to know about your music?

MB: The people who ask me to write music usually know me, and usually know a great deal about my music. I usually tell them virtually nothing. They take the piece, and their questions are

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THE NEW YORK FLUTE CLUB INC. 2000–2001

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From the President:

To Champion the New

by Patricia Spencer

The challenge to seek out and champion the classics of our own time, to respond to and reinforce the creative musical currents around us, is one of the most exciting responsibilities facing the performer. In choosing to present the upcoming program, *Into the Millennium: The "Best of the New,"* featuring highlights from recent repertoire, the New York Flute Club is joining in this excitement and

continuing in the footsteps of our founder, Georges Barrère—well-known for his active role in performing the composers of his time.

Exciting as it was, the logistics of organizing such a program seemed daunting at first. How could we possibly define which pieces to include? Many flutists, not to mention composers, would be sure to disagree totally with our choices! What is the date range of "recent"? Should we have an instrumentation limit? (What about concertos?) The program committee (Katherine Fink, Svjetlana Kabalin, and myself) opted to consider pieces written after September 1, 1980, and to consider instrumentation of flute and piano, solo flute, or flute in small ensembles (but not woodwind quintets). The "best of the new" was loosely defined to mean a piece that might become a mainstay of the repertoire, or that was a landmark work in some sense. We knew from the start that, given the wealth of material to choose from, we couldn't possibly present or even list all the appropriate choices! Further, we agreed that final program choices would be made with programming considerations in mind: which pieces would provide variety? which styles might interact well? Thus our choices are not intended to reflect a hierarchical judgment, but rather to form a vivid and well-balanced program.

Perhaps the most daunting step—how to generate our "selections" list? We invited suggestions from board members plus an additional eight flutists with extensive new music experience: Ardith Bondi, Cathy Comrie, Darla Dixon, Susan Friedlander, Jennifer Higdon, Rochelle Itzen, Sue Ann Kahn, Gerardo Levy, Patti Monson, Bärli Nugent, Tara Helen O'Connor, Susan Palma-Nidel, Judith Pearce, Jayn Rosenfeld, Rie Schmidt, Michele Smith, Stefani Starin, Nancy Toff, Jan Vinci, and Patricia Zuber. Although we have tried to make this process both rigorous and inclusive, we know that any such process is subjective, and that we have inevitably omitted works that others would have included and vice versa. Nevertheless, we are pleased with our choices, and hope you enjoy them!

A special thank-you goes to Katherine Fink for spearheading this program. The idea for a program such as this had been discussed in the past—but it has been her commitment and terrific organizational follow-through that have now made it possible.

Pieces suggested for *Into the Millennium* program:

Milton Babbitt, <i>None But the Lonely Flute</i>	Peter Schickele, <i>Spring Serenade</i>
Elizabeth Brown, <i>Trillium</i>	Gary Schocker, <i>Sonata or In the Air or Airborne</i>
Elliott Carter, <i>Scrivo in vento</i>	Harvey Sollberger, <i>Quodlibetudes or Life Study or Aurelian Echoes</i>
Robert Dick, <i>Afterlight</i>	Karlheinz Stockhausen, <i>Katbinkas Gesang als Luzifers Requiem</i>
Dean Drummond, <i>Precious Metals</i>	Toru Takemitsu, <i>Itinerant or Voice</i>
Sofia Gubaidulina, <i>Sonatina</i>	Ushio Torikai, <i>Air 4</i> □
Vivian Fine, <i>Emily's Images</i>	
Jennifer Higdon, <i>Rapid Fire or Steeley Pause</i>	
Katherine Hoover, <i>Kokopeli</i>	
Stephen Jaffe, <i>Three Figures and a Ground</i>	
Meyer Kupferman, <i>O Harlequin</i>	
John Anthony Lennon, <i>Echolalia</i>	
Lowell Liebermann, <i>Sonata</i>	
Steve Mackey, <i>Humble River</i>	
Nicholas Maw, <i>Night Thoughts</i>	
Thea Musgrave, <i>Narcissus and Piccolo Play</i>	
Shulamit Ran, <i>East Wind</i>	

Deadlines for Flute Happenings Column

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Mail Date</i>
January 2001	12/28/00	01/15/01
February 2001	01/25/01	02/12/01
March 2001	02/08/01	02/26/01
April 2001	03/22/01	04/09/01
May 2001	04/19/01	05/07/01

Member Profile

Patti Monson

NYFC Member
since c. 1991



Employment:

Flutist/private teacher/chamber music coach. Soloist and chamber musician with groups such as the *Sequitur New Music Ensemble* and *Bang On a Can*, and with festivals such as Lincoln Center (summer), Houston Contemporary Arts, Sonic Boom, Spoleto, Bach Aria, and Norfolk. Masterclass teacher, with this year's schedule including ones at the Lake Placid Institute for the Arts (August 2000), and Manhattan School of Music (January 2001).

Most recent recital/performance:

A solo recital at Merkin Concert Hall on October 24th, featuring contemporary flute works of Steve Reich, Martin Bresnick, Kaija Saariaho, Harold Meltzer, Jennifer Higdon and Robert Dick. [For a glowing review and program description, see Allan Kozinn's *NY Times* review, October 28, 2000, p. B19.]

Career highlight(s): Working with some of today's most prominent composers, and having pieces written for her by some of them. Being flutist for the *Sequitur New Music Ensemble* and *The Curiously Strong Wind Quintet*. Being invited to give masterclasses on extended techniques and contemporary repertoire; having some wonderful colleagues and students. The release of her first solo disk "Conspirare" (CRI 867), with three more CDs to follow—Randy Wolf's *Where The Wild Things Are* (CRI), *Vermont Counterpoint* with Steve Reich (Nonesuch), and Takemitsu's *Masque* for two flutes with Laura Gilbert (Koch International).

Current flute: Wm. S. Haynes #46860 (solid silver with B-foot) used with an Albert Cooper gold headjoint.

Influential flute teachers: Thomas Nyfenger, Robert Dick, Samuel Baron, Judith Mendenhall, and Bonita Boyd.

High School: Westlake High School in Westlake Village, CA.

Degrees: B.M. [Performance, Eastman School of Music, '84]; M.M. [Performance, Yale School of Music, '91]. Upon graduation from Yale, first recipient of the Thomas Nyfenger Memorial Award for outstanding woodwind performance.

Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishment(s):

Feeling like an appreciated and needed flutist in New York City. Adopting circular breathing into her playing, and learning how to play Robert Dick's *Piece in Gamelan Style*, a piece which requires improvisation during performance.

Favorite practice routines: Her favorite practice session would be all of a free day, with a pot of good coffee and lots of time to think. Her typical routine (most days) is a couple of hours beginning with some favorite vocalises in the form of scales and thirds. Then she goes to the Moyse *Grandes Liaisons* stretches, Andersen's Op. 33 or 15, or the Bach partitas (from the violin part, humming the bottom line when there's counterpoint—a skill she began developing as a kid, on flute duets). She might also choose a warm-up of multiphonics—composed or made up.

Interests/hobbies: Traveling and reading (especially travel literature); bicycling, bead work, and spending time with her two cats. She also likes to listen to a lot of concerts.

Advice for NYFC members: Be connected with the composers living around you. Seek out projects with them—ask them to write for you. Understand the sound world that exists in the year 2000—there are so many possibilities! □

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

DECEMBER

December 4, 2000

Monday 8:00 pm

Sue Ann Kahn in a recital with pianist Andrew Willis. Program to include music of Poulenc, Martinu, Denisov, Kupferman, and Schickele.

• *The Concert Hall, Mannes College of Music, 150 West 85th St.* • Free admission.

December 9, 2000

Saturday 5:00 pm

The ensemble *Tritonis* performing as part of the Juilliard Faculty Concert Series. **Jan Vinci**, flute, Joel Brown, guitar, Ann Alton (Juilliard faculty), cello, in works by Niccolò Paganini, Vivian Fine, Robert Delfausse, Dana Wilson, Astor Piazzolla.

• *Paul Hall, the Juilliard School, 65th Street and Broadway, NY, NY* • Free admission.

FLUTE FAIR

Proposals

To: New York Flute Club Members

From: The Flute Fair Program Committee

Our next Flute Fair will be dedicated to the memory of Jean-Pierre Rampal. We welcome any and all ideas, but are especially interested in proposals for one to one-and-a-half-hour presentations and workshops. Send written suggestions **by DECEMBER 1, 2000** to:

Svjatana Kabalin, *Coordinator Flute Fair 2001*

444 Central Park West #9H

New York, NY 10025

212/222-3569 (fax)

svjkabalin@worldnet.att.net

Alternatively, you may contact any of the Flute Fair Program Committee members: Pryor Dodge, Marya Martin, or Patricia Spencer.

CLASSIFIED

New CD—"Sound and Repercussion"

Contemporary compositions for solo flute merging the traditions of European modernism and world folk music. Works of Matthus, Takemitsu, Arnaoudov, Vali, and Yun performed by flutist **Linda Wetherill** in a recording praised by Fanfare. Order from www.amazon.com or contact Linda Wetherill at Muzarte@msn.com.

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Into the Millennium

(Cont'd from page 1)

about probable misprints or lack of clarity in my handwriting. I'm not attempting to avoid the question, but that's what it usually becomes. And when we get together, [the questions might concern] matters such as intonation and articulation. General things about the musical composition, yes, I have talked to them about that. But my musical syntax hasn't really changed for a long time. My interpretation of that syntax and my instantiation of it changes with every piece, and I like to think that each piece is singular and represents a different construal of my syntax. I might get some questions at rehearsal about how I have realized what is known to be my musical syntax or grammar, but the main questions usually deal with details of balance, particularly dynamic balance and rhythmic questions.

CC: *What does the listener need to know?*

MB: The most important thing for the listener is to know and have had experience with the tradition from which I come. The whole musical tradition. I don't just mean Schoenberg,

[although] knowing the Schoenberg 4th quartet could be very useful. If they knew Brahms very well, I would hope they'd be able to extrapolate from that too. Above all, I would hope that they can hear, that they can hear relations, and that they have a memory. After all, musical structure is in the memory of the beholder. And if they have a memory, they'll at least begin to see that something is related to something else or get some sense of the reach and the range of the references. And, I hope, the richness of relatedness.

CC: *Would you say that your music is "pure" music...*

MB: Well I'd like to think that it was as pure as it could possibly be. I don't think programmatically, of course. I begin with the materials of music—with the pitches, with durational relationships, with dynamics—all of these. And then it begins to emerge for me, with themes usually, or things of that kind. Some conception of a whole growing out of details that will create that whole.

CC: *So then the performer just needs to do everything you've written on the page?*

MB: Well, yes, but we know what *that* means. And the performers usually do [too]. I realize I've written things that were difficult to perform, particularly for those lacking a certain experience with contemporary music. But I've yet to write a piece that couldn't be performed. I've had pieces that weren't performed [right away, although they] were eventually performed later. But the flute piece hasn't given anyone any trouble.

CC: *Has the way you compose for the flute changed over the past 20 years and if so how?*

MB: It would be dishonest of me to say "No," because I'm simply not sure. I have been very, very fortunate—I've dealt with the best flute players in the world, certainly the ones who've played the most demanding contemporary music. After all, I began my life with the flute with Harvey Sollberger. He could do anything, and lots of things that nobody else could do. I wrote a piece for him called *Groupwise* in which he played the three different kinds of flutes. We never had a problem. I learned I could do things I never guessed I could do. I can write a very, very high D_♭ pianissimo and he can play it. I doubt a lot of people are

learning to do those things. When I began working with Harvey, he was very much alone. I don't want to say he was the only one, I didn't know them all. I learned a great deal from Harvey Sollberger. Not about what I didn't do right, but what I could still do beyond what I had done.



Harvey Sollberger

Aurelian Echos
(1989)

CC: *Can you give us some background information on Aurelian Echos and what aspects of your*

compositional style would be most useful for the first-time listener or performer of this piece to know?

HS: The piece was composed in the fall of 1989, while I was resident composer at the American Academy in Rome. It very much grew out of my Roman experience. It was written in a small baroque chapel in the shadow of the Academy building itself. I heard from my chapel all the sounds of Rome—traffic, horns honking. In fact, they would have major traffic jams under my nose at certain hours of the day. I also heard church bells ringing. Certain aspects of these things worked themselves into the composition. If I had to say anything more about it, I would say in a certain sense the piece might be seen as a sort of latter day Bicinium. You may recall the Bicinia were Renaissance duets—instrumental pieces written for wind instruments, sometimes string instruments. Otherwise, I just remember that there are a lot of canons in the piece. It's quite contrapuntal and, I think, quite challenging [both] rhythmically and from the point of view of endurance. Two players have to be playing constantly for a good while.

CC: *And it picks up a great deal of speed as it goes.*

HS: That's right. And little aspects of my Roman experience entered in toward the end, where the alto flute plays a particular tune I heard in my studio from the church of San Pietro in Montorio, just a little down the hill from the Academy. It's unique because it's lower than anything else in the

MEMBER PERSPECTIVES

YOUR "Into the Millennium" choices

IN HER "From the President" this month, Patricia Spencer describes the thinking of the people who selected the *Into the Millennium* program. What do you think of their efforts? What would be on *your* ideal program featuring "the best of the new" flute repertoire written in the past 20 years—keeping in mind balance and performer availability? Let us know.

Readers are invited both to submit paragraph-long responses to an existing query, or to submit discussion-provoking new queries for either the general membership or a specific NYFC member. Responses and new questions can be sent by email to saenger@us.ibm.com.

piece, and it's articulated by the alto flute with key clicks. And then at the very end there's an alternation between two tones sliding down glissando-ing at the same time, which is an imitation of a Roman police car (with the Doppler effect). I was having fun with the piece, and part of the fun was building those aspects of experience into the work.

CC: Has the way you compose for the flute changed over the past 20 years?

HS: Twenty years ago, and even before that, I was very interested in exploring a range of sounds or "voices" that have lain dormant within the flute and been ignored (I think) by the bulk of flutists and flute literature up to the present day. The flute, as every instrument, has its own sort of stereotyped persona. Just as the trumpet is seen as a martial instrument, very masculine; the viola is sort of sensitive brooding fellow; it's sort of fun to think in terms of these stereotypes. The flute is certainly seen as a lyrical, pastoral, sweet, gentle, bucolic and even feminine instrument, even though in this day and age maybe that association would be resisted. But when I was growing up [in Iowa] as the only boy flutist for hundreds of miles around, I got a lot of ribbing, and it was obvious, in my cohorts' eyes, that I would have been more masculine had I played the French horn or the clarinet. But I stuck to it anyway. I think Luciano Berio's *Sequenza* opened my ears when I was quite young, 20 or 21, to the fact that the flute had, latent within it, a very wide range of voices and manners that had barely been touched upon here-to-fore. In Berio's hands, the flute could be a screaming, spitting, wildcat; it could be angry; it could be peremptory; it could be sexual. *Sequenza*, I think, embodied a lot of non-kosher things for the flute up to then, and I have to say that it sort of turned the flute world on its ear. I can't imagine a piece today doing the same thing that *Sequenza* did in the sense of causing people to really perk up their ears. Some became threatened and angry by it, and others were provoked and had their curiosity piqued to move further in that direction. Certainly, that was the impetus for me, as a flutist to start exploring some of these neglected personae that were latent in the instrument. A lot of that came through extended techniques—exploration of a whole range of things that are now sort of now taken for granted...

CC: Like Riding the Wind...

HS: For me, that was the high water mark of my involvement with those techniques. Trying to integrate them in a coherent, integral way into the discourse of the music so that they were not just extraneous effects pasted onto standard flute playing, but rather that there was a kind of permeability between the standard playing and the extended playing. So, in a way, you stop making distinctions because it was all on a continuum and quite gradual. And I think if I'd look at my writing for flute today, I'm writing more for the standard approach to playing the instrument than I did 20 and 25 years ago. It's not that I've lost interest in newer effects... I just don't feel the urgency of really aggressively pursuing them as was necessary for me in the 1970's... I think part of getting older and maturing as a composer involves discovering that you can do things that you need to do expressively without being as complicated as you were when you were a young buck kicking up a storm. In other words, you learn to use your powers more wisely and maybe not to waste them and spend them as much as a young person who has so much ahead of him or her.

I think the flute piece that is the most straightforward is the *Killapata/Chaskapata*, a flute choir piece written for the National Flute Association flute choir [in 1983]. I was trying to write a piece that was really interesting and musically engaging, but without being able to take for granted that I'd be working with experienced, mature players. That was a great kind of exercise—a real challenge and a rewarding one. In a way, when you have too many player friends such as yourself, it's easy to just fall into writing what amounts to virtuoso music. But at the same time, sometimes less is more. I think of Milton's *None But the Lonely Flute*. That is a piece that has its rhythmic complexities and certainly challenges in terms of getting around the flute nimbly—doing a lot of different dynamic things. But basically he's working with the standard flute and the standard way of playing the flute, except for a few places where there are some key clicks. In coming back to how I've changed—maybe I'm trying to do more with less—in terms of not feeling that I need to [always] use the full spectrum of timbral variety that is there.

Shulamit Ran

East Wind (1987)



CC: Can you give us some background information on East Wind?

SR: The piece was commissioned by the National Flute Association for their convention of 1988—I wrote the piece in 1987. And this was specifically for the Young Artist's Competition, for the semifinals, which meant that the piece had a kind of sextuple premiere—I got to hear it for the first time done by six different people with six different interpretations. This was very exciting, very interesting for me. It was my first working relationship with the NFA, which continued this summer with the concerto [*Voices*, premiered by Patricia Spencer].

CC: Was there any inspiration to the piece—where does the name East Wind come from?

SR: I suppose I invent my titles in the same way that I invent a piece of music. I never know what I'm going to call a piece until I'm about four fifths of the way through—that's usually when lightning strikes. In some way, the title alludes to a kind of wind that I'm familiar with in my part of the world—Israel, the Middle East—where you sometimes have these very strong winds that can just overpower everything for a little while, and then it's perfectly still. These qualities of volatility and unexpectedness in the piece just seemed to suggest this particular title. And the title connects with the piece's [vaguely] Middle Eastern harmonic and melodic language.

CC: What aspects of your compositional style would be most useful for the first-time performer or listener to know?

SR: It's hard to say. There are a lot of technical issues that have to be overcome in preparing the piece—it's quite demanding, both in terms of passage work and extreme high pitches, great extremes of register, rhythmic diversity. But I have to say that the level of instrumental playing in general, and flute playing in particular, is so high that I've enjoyed many excellent performances of this piece—here as

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Into the Millennium

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well as abroad. There's a lot of great flute playing going around. I know that ultimately, it's not the technical difficulty that I would want to concern myself with—of course it's a given that people have to be able to play the notes and the rhythms and feel comfortable with that.

Beyond that, if there's one word that I would want a player to summon in their minds in approaching the piece it would be "ecstatic." That's a quality that I would very much want to be present in performing the piece, and maybe that word can somehow act as a hook for a person getting into the piece...abandon, ecstasy and expressivity. It's all too easy to become totally enmeshed with technical, cerebral issues—you can talk about pitch cells and things like that, but ultimately I'm hoping that maybe a descriptive word such as ecstatic can penetrate the spirit in which the piece has to be played.

CC: What else would you want the performer to know?

SR: A good performer of the piece will need to be aware that one thing this piece is about is powerful extremes of character, as embodied in the very beginning of the piece, where there is a *sfz* grace note that goes into a *pp* long note that then crescendos into a flurry that has a *ff*. Another thing that may be helpful is the image of a shakuhachi—while I was not consciously thinking of it when I was composing, everyone who's played the piece with the shakuhachi in mind seemed to do very well.

There is also a great deal of structural clarity in the piece that I would want a performer to be aware of. I see the piece as having very clear demarcations. Almost a series of what I think of as three waves. Each one of which goes back to the starting point of the piece, but each wave becoming more elaborate and more fully developed than the previous one. And that sense of structure and clarity makes a great deal of difference if the player has an understanding of where those points are in the piece. It's not just some kind of wild, stream of consciousness type piece, although there is that element, too. It should sound as though you are

improvising on the spot, but at the same time there is a great deal of careful architectural planning going on in the piece. [Shulamit reads the following from her own program notes.] "East Wind's central image from within its ornamented, inflected, winding, twisting, at times convoluted lines, a gentle melody gradually emerges..."

I think it's important, because when the piece is just winding down to a close, there is this very, very simple melody which has really been the main subject of the piece throughout. More than anything else, I would want the player and the listener at that point to say "Ah-ha, that's what the piece was about all the time." The whole piece, rather than starting from the building block and gradually building from there, actually starts from a quite developed statement of that essential idea, and only at the end do you get the distilled essence of it.

CC: Has the way you composed for the flute changed in any way over the past 20 years, and if so how?

SR: The flute has always been one of the instruments that I "express myself" through, again and again. The flute was actually the very first instrument that I wrote for. When I was 12, I decided it was time to branch off, to get away from sounds that I could produce myself, namely on the piano, or singing, vocalizing, speaking...When I decided it was time to write music that would be played by others, it was the flute that I chose. So the very, very first piece that I wrote for "non-Ran" instrumental capabilities was the *Sonatina for Two Flutes*. So it's an instrument that's always been close to my heart, and over the years, I've certainly written quite a bit for it. With *East Wind* in '87 [for solo flute], something did change in my approach to the instrument—somehow I got a sense the unique voice of the flute. On one hand, there is the virtuosic flute—that's something this century has seen a lot of, writing that is very difficult for the instrument. But on the other hand, the flute has a certain kind of expressivity and sensuousness. Again the word ecstatic comes to mind. So while I've used the flute in various ways in the past, the [more expressive] approach seems to have started with *East Wind*.

Vivian Fine

Emily's Images (1987)



We were not able to speak with Vivian Fine as she passed away earlier this year at age 86.

Written in 1987, *Emily's Images* was inspired by reading through an index of first lines of poems by Emily Dickinson. Each short movement is based on the first line of a poem. Fine has explained that the musical form is a series of free variations with no overtly stated theme; the musical ideas themselves are the subject of the variation processes. Many subtle and surprising connections exist among movements. As an example, the notes of *The Robin is a Gabriel* (the lone movement for solo flute) are a rhythmically transposed version of *A Spider Sewed at Night*, beginning in the second bar. The canon between piano and flute in *The Leaves like Women Interchange* employs those same notes in yet another rhythmic and octave transposition.

Robert Dick

Afterlight (1973/84)



CC: Can you give us any background information on the work, and what aspects of your

compositional style would be most useful for the first-time listener or performer of this piece to know?

RD: *Afterlight* was strongly influenced by Edgard Varèse's music, so the flutist must be familiar with Varèse's works—not just *Density 21.5*, but at least a half dozen other of his pieces. And the flutist must do some listening to my music as well. *Afterlight* was not created in a vacuum aesthetically, and cannot be realized successfully in such a vacuum. Listening lets in the needed knowledge and spiritual air. I hope the flutist will listen to my solo works (as found on the CDs *The Other Flute*, *Venturi Shadows*, *Ladder 5 of Escape* and *Worlds of IF*) and some of my ensemble music, particularly that written for the group *New Winds*.

CDs include *Digging It Harder from Afar* and *Potion* (both on Les Disques Victo).

My music is no different from anyone else's in that the key to understanding the style is to place a given piece, in this case *Afterlight*, into the musical perspective of the composer's works.

CC: Has the way you compose for the flute changed in any way over the last 20 years, and if so, how?

RD: Over the last 20 years I have expanded the musical possibilities of sound for the flute in a radical manner, and have put these discoveries to musical use. The sound palette has grown, as has the sense of multilayers of sound and rhythm. The difference between *Afterlight* and *Piece in Gamelan Style*, which was created five years later, is pretty huge in this respect. *Flames Must Encircle Sides* is also a quantum leap forward from *Afterlight*, both aesthetically and technically.

I have also composed a lot of teaching music for flute, including the two volumes of etudes, *Flying Lessons*, *Lookout* and *Fish Are Jumping*. In these pieces, especially *Lookout* and *Fish Are Jumping*, I have embraced tonality and modality and use rock and Blues as a stylistic base—something I was only dreaming about at the time I composed *Afterlight*.

And lastly, at the time *Afterlight* was created, I only had a regular concert ("C") flute. Since then I have worked with flutes of all sizes—bass flutes in both C and F, alto flute (openhole), piccolos in both C and A \flat and contrabass flute. My music for these wonderful instruments explores their characters in many ways.

In all, *Afterlight* is a meaningful introduction to my music and to the world of flute music that uses extended techniques. *Afterlight* is not about these techniques. As in all my music, they are there for musical purpose—there is a reason for every note I write. It is truly, deeply gratifying that *Afterlight* has been played by many flutists over the years. It should be played with a sense of power, expansiveness and control. In spirit, it's really "the view from the highest mountain."

Patti Monson on the music of Robert Dick

We asked Patti Monson to tell us what she might say to a flutist new to Robert Dick's music and compositional style.

ROBERT DICK'S MUSIC is an idiom all by itself. It is a music we either truly love—or just appreciate—and often feel ill-equipped to learn. Yet we are fascinated. As one slowly begins to discover his world, to strike out and perform one of his pieces, we realize that the music changes within our minds, changes the way we think about sound, musical content... and the flute. The music itself has developed and expanded from the fluent use of a completely different language and fingering system. The phrases and gestures have roots in other music which have existed for decades—centuries.

Robert Dick is an authority on the variety of Asian flute music, is deeply influenced by the jazz and rock and roll of his generation, and has leaped to the levels of the great artists in improvisation. The development and fusion of these sounds, regardless of their historical roots, change through the spectrum of natural and synthetic sounds that Robert's ears are exposed to—animal sounds, steel guitars, bansurys, whammy bars, juke boxes and jazz grooves. And, as his influences and improvisations are paired and married, his compositions and style change to be what they will be in the moment. Perhaps the degree of improvisation has taken his music farther away from us—i.e. you can't purchase a printed copy of *Piece in Gamelan Style* or *Lapis Blues*. But, if you do seek to learn these pieces (by ear and by studying with Robert), you are transported back to the traditions of our aural art, and you feel possessed with the freedom of those possibilities—truly understanding how Robert has added to the flute repertoire like no one else. He has, occasionally, found our Boehm flute limiting, and sought needed sounds he couldn't find, and has made a variety of modifications to the flute(s). Perhaps his changes will become a 'non-Boehm' instrument someday—but, fortunately for us, it will always be a flute. □



Stephen Jaffe

Three Figures and a Ground (1987)

CC: Can you give us some background on this piece and what aspects of your compositional style would be most useful for the first-time listener or performer to know?

SJ: To players becoming acquainted with *Three Figures and A Ground*, I would first of all recommend the excellent recording by Patricia Spencer and Linda Hall (*The Now and Present Flute*, Neuma 450-88).

It is a beautifully played rendition, warmly engineered by Judith Sherman. A second recording by Christine Gustavson and Lisa Emeheniser Logan is in the works.

Many flutists have played the fourth movement, *Introduction and the Ground*, as a separate piece. I have encouraged this, as a shorter version is a more approachable, yet still substantial addition to a flute recital. The whole piece lasts 18 minutes, and the *Introduction and the Ground* is about a third of that. In the performance of the entire piece, the listener has the experience of three rather compact figures opening out into a more lyrical fourth, like our surprise at a beautiful bloom. But the bloom is also beautiful in its own right. In the whole combination you get (i) an even greater variety of expression, and (ii) a clever, hard-edged side, as well as the more lyrical one.

CC: Have you changed the way you compose for the flute since 1987?

SJ: I don't know...soon I'll be composing a new, small piece for flute, guitar, and percussion—this will be the chance to assess how I feel the flute as a soloist. Another factor bound to exert influence will be my recent interest in composing concertos (for oboe, 1996; violin, 2000; and cello, 2002), even though I have a strong sense of chamber music and concerto as different.

What I would like listeners to experience in my music is a sense of exploration, a freshness and a rightness, and a feeling of substance.

Another piece which flutists might take an interest in is *Offering*, written for the Aureole Trio and Mallarme Chamber Players (flute, harp, viola) in 1997.

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Cathy Comrie is on the faculty of the DePaul University Community Music School in Chicago, IL, and performs with the NY-based new music ensemble Catapult. □

2000–2001 Concert Season

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December 2000



From the Editor:

Greetings! The December concert, *Into the Millennium*, features “the best of the new”—seven contemporary pieces selected from flute repertoire written in the past twenty years. The selection wasn’t easy—see Patricia Spencer’s “From the President” on p. 2—but it seems to have gone more smoothly than November’s presidential election. Still, the process seemed to take longer than anticipated. So I am very grateful to Cathy Comrie for her fast turn-around-time interviews, and to the composers for their generosity in taking the time to share their thoughts with her on such short notice. Peggy Karp is also thanked for the photo of her mother Vivian Fine (on p. 6), express-mailed to us two days before press time.

So many composer thoughts were shared, in fact, that our “Members Perspectives” column had to be squeezed down to a single question (What program would *you* have picked for the “best of the new?”) even though I was finally in possession of a record number of responses (two) to October’s question on finding a place to practice. Well, as Robert Dick says, “*Sic Bisquitus Disintegrat*” [English translation: That’s the way the cookie crumbles], one of the many things I learned over the course of several last-minute fact-checking forays on the Internet for this newsletter issue. (I also got to see Harvey Sollberger’s “Tempietto of San Pietro” in Montorio, a truly charming building, well worth the few mouse clicks it takes to check out for those of you who have not seen it in person.) So look for the those “Member Perspectives” responses in a future issue.

Patti Monson is this month’s Member Profile subject. When I scanned the “favorite practice routines” entry for ideas on what I might add to my own 25-minute daily practice sessions, I was impressed to learn that *as a kid* Patti played flute duets by humming and playing at the same time. If she could do it as a kid...maybe I could do it as an adult. Well, I tried—but succeeded only in amusing my 10-year-old flute-playing daughter.

Anyway, I’m really looking forward to December’s concert, and hope to see you there.

Best regards,

Katherine Saenger
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