



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

October 2001

Chen Tao: Traditional Chinese Music

Interview by Ann Cecil Sterman

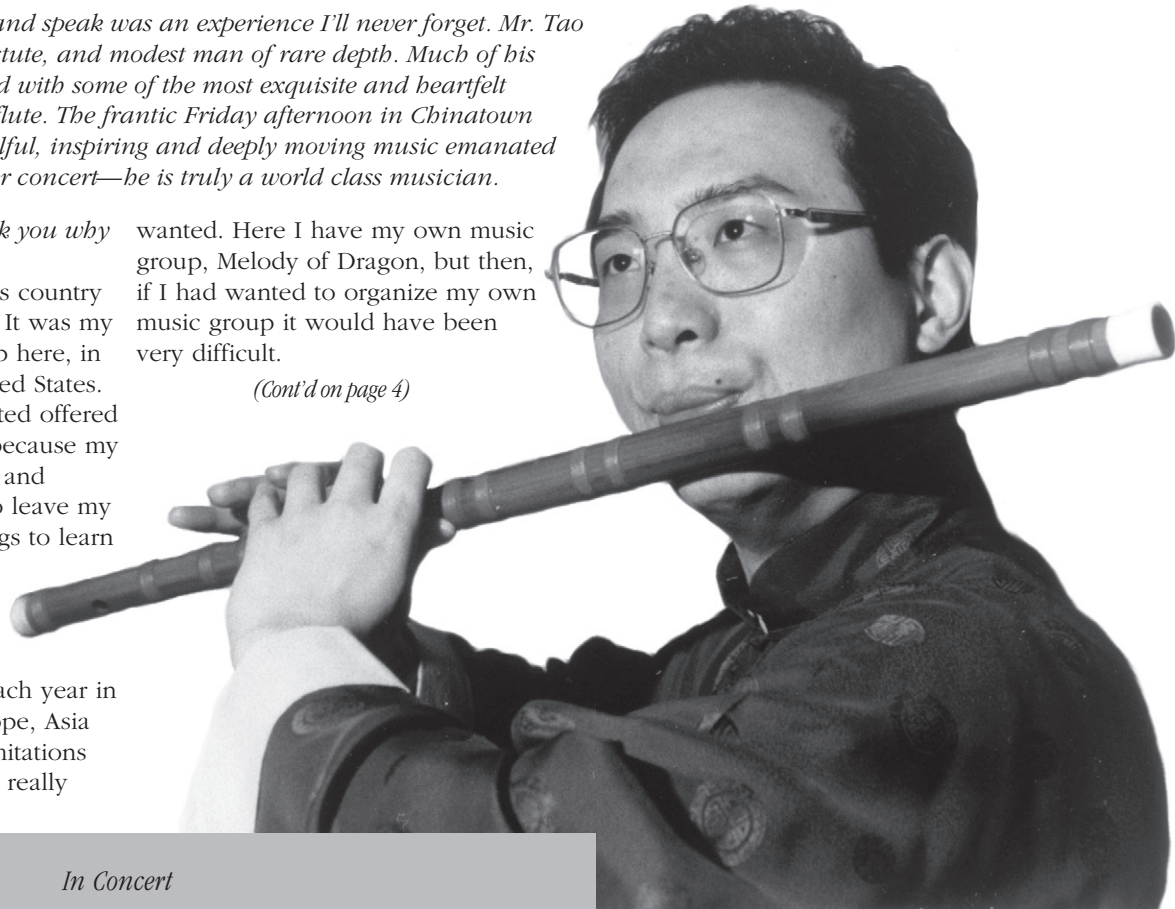
Listening to Chen Tao play and speak was an experience I'll never forget. Mr. Tao is a very bumble, happy, astute, and modest man of rare depth. Much of his conversation was illustrated with some of the most exquisite and heartfelt flute playing I've heard on any flute. The frantic Friday afternoon in Chinatown seemed a world away as the soulful, inspiring and deeply moving music emanated from him. Don't miss his October concert—he is truly a world class musician.

ANN CECIL STERMAN: Can I ask you why you came to America?

CHEN TAO: Sure. I came to this country in 1993, almost eight years ago. It was my second time. During my first trip here, in 1985, we toured the whole United States. Many of the universities we visited offered me scholarships, but I refused because my major study is the Chinese flute and Chinese culture. I didn't want to leave my country—I still had a lot of things to learn in China. But by 1993, though I was still a student and a teacher (at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing), I was spending six months of each year in different countries, touring Europe, Asia and America. But there were limitations [keeping] me from doing what I really

wanted. Here I have my own music group, Melody of Dragon, but then, if I had wanted to organize my own music group it would have been very difficult.

(Cont'd on page 4)



In Concert

CHEN TAO, flutist
with Melody of Dragon
Sunday, **October 21, 2001**, 5:30 pm
CAMI Hall, 165 West 57th Street

Program

- Trip to Gusu Jiang Xianwei
- Hang Up the Red Lanterns Er-Ren-Tai Music
- The Partridge in Flight Hunan Folk Music
- The Embroidered Purse of the South Inner Mongolian Folk Music
- Three, Five, Seven (San Wu Qi) from Zhejiang Opera
- Night Mooring at Maple Bridge Chen Tao
- Spring Comes to the Hsiang River Ning Bao-Sheng
- Melody of Chu Chen Tao
- New Song of the Herdsmen Jiang Guang-Yi
- Birds Amid Tree Shadows Liu Guan-Yue

The NYFC is grateful to the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York for co-sponsoring this concert. Program subject to change

YOU ARE INVITED to a **Pre-Concert Ensemble Gathering** on Sunday, October 21, 2001 at the Kaplan Space at Carnegie Hall, from 3–5pm, prior to the 5:30pm recital by Chen Tao at CAMI Hall.

CONTACT PATRICIA ZUBER if you plan to attend: 201-750-7989 or zuberflute@earthlink.net.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Meet Chen Tao 1
Interview by Ann Cecil Sterman
- From the President 2
NYFC—A Beacon of Light
- Member Profile 3
Rebecca Abrams Sayles
- James Hosmer (1911–2001) 4
90th Birthday Gathering
- A Website Is Born! 5
by Nancy Toff

Announcements

- Pre-Concert Ensemble Gathering 1
- Dues Reminder 2
- Dues Reduction for Seniors 3
- Flute Happenings 3
- Announcements 4
- Call for Composer Nominations 4



**THE NEW YORK FLUTE CLUB INC.
2001-2002**

Board of Directors

Jan Vinci, *President*
 Patricia Spencer, *First Vice President*
 Ardith Bondi, *Second Vice President*
 Svyetlana Kabalin, *Recording Secretary*
 Michele Smith, *Membership Secretary*
 Donna-Mari Fieldsa-Fowler, *Treasurer*

Darla Dixon
 Katherine Fink
 Susan Friedlander
 Rochelle Itzen
 Sue Ann Kahn
 Bärli Nugent
 Rie Schmidt
 Nancy Toff
 Patricia Zuber

Advisory Board

Julius Baker Gerardo Levy
 Jeanne Baxtresser Laurence Libin
 Harold Jones Marya Martin

Past Presidents

Georges Barrère	1920-1944
John Wummer	1944-1947
Milton Wittgenstein	1947-1952
Mildred Hunt Wummer	1952-1955
Frederick Wilkins	1955-1957
Harry H. Moskovitz	1957-1960
Paige Brook	1960-1963
Mildred Hunt Wummer	1963-1964
Maurice S. Rosen	1964-1967
Harry H. Moskovitz	1967-1970
Paige Brook	1970-1973
Eleanor Lawrence	1973-1976
Harold Jones	1976-1979
Eleanor Lawrence	1979-1982
Paige Brook	1982-1983
John Solum	1983-1986
Eleanor Lawrence	1986-1989
Sue Ann Kahn	1989-1992
Nancy Toff	1992-1995
Rie Schmidt	1995-1998
Patricia Spencer	1998-2001

Newsletter

Katherine Saenger, *Editor*
 115 Underhill Road
 Ossining, NY 10562
 (914) 762-8582
 klsaenger@yahoo.com

Alice Barmore, *Layout/Production*
 125 Christopher St., #4H
 New York, NY 10014
 (212) 675-9706
 abarmore@compuserve.com

www.nyfluteclub.org

NYFC: A Beacon of Light

by Jan Vinci



From the President

Dear Members:
 As I begin my presidency of the New York Flute Club, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation for the opportunity to serve you.

Reflecting on the recent tragedy that has affected so many people from around the world, the New York Flute Club board wishes to express its sincerest condolences and deepest sympathy to members who may have lost relatives, friends, or loved ones. In this time of uncertainty, I hope that music can help comfort and heal your souls. I truly believe that despite the despicable crimes against humanity, this time in history will be forever viewed as one in which

people embrace, unite and reach out to all who contribute to the well-being of our world; may the NYFC, in its own way, serve as a vehicle to help achieve that state.

One mission of the flute club, set forth by our founder Georges Barrère, is to educate and expose its members to programming of a diverse nature. I look forward to October 21 when we, as a club, will have a chance to experience and learn from the creative music of Chen Tao and ensemble members of Melody of Dragon. It will be an opportunity to rejoice in the diversity of our world, and to open our hearts and minds to the positive power of music.

I eagerly await the chance to meet and work with you. Last year, as recording secretary, I viewed firsthand the abundant enthusiasm and true dedication of the board and so many club members. As I mentioned in my September letter, the board made a very tough decision not to present a Flute Fair this year in order to complete several significant projects. One in particular is a retrospective CD of recordings of Samuel Baron. If you would like to volunteer your services to help with that project or others, or if you have ideas for future events or projects, please feel free to email me at janvinci@aol.com, or call me at 718-651-4179. At this time, I would also like to encourage members to participate in club performance opportunities such as the Ensemble Program, the Fall Ensemble Gathering, master classes and the NYFC Competition.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank all those who contribute to the life of our organization. This summer, along with the help of many, Nancy Toff expertly created our new exciting online home, www.nyfluteclub.org. Ardith Bondi is doing a tremendous job of organizing the Samuel Baron CD project. Kathy Saenger and Alice Barmore continue to creatively produce our treasured Newsletter. To all the Program Coordinators on the board, thank you for taking on the huge responsibility of ensuring a successful concert season. The club sends its well-wishes to our fellow member and friend Calvin Mercer who has been ill. We hope to see his smiling face and warm presence at our concerts soon. And, to the many people who serve in an array of capacities throughout the year, the club sincerely appreciates your numerous contributions.

To all, be safe. May our club serve as a beacon of light which heals the soul and nurtures goodness. □

Dues Reminder/Membership Information

To be included in the 2001-2002 Membership Directory, dues must be paid by **OCTOBER 31** (Barrère's birthday). Dues can be sent directly with identifying information (name, address, phone, email) to:

Michele Smith, Membership Secretary; Park West Finance Station;
 Box 20613; NY, NY 10025-1515 — 718-399-1842/smithm@NYPHIL.org

Member Profile

Rebecca Abrams Sayles

NYFC Member since the mid-80s and 2001

Employment:

Director of Development, Hoff-Barthelson Music School, Scarsdale, NY



Most recent recital/performances:

Sunday, May 20, 2001 in a NYFC concert at the Bloomingdale House of Music, performing the Reicha Quartet (Op. 12); Sunday, November 21, 1999 in the New Rochelle Public Library's "Music, Wine, and Cheese" series, performing trios for two flutes and cello by Mozart and Haydn.

Career highlights: As a teenager, summer study at the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music, Bennington College Flute Seminar (with Sue Ann Kahn and Samuel Baron), Tanglewood Young Artists Instrumental Program, and L'Académie d'Eté de Nice (with Jean-Pierre Rampal and Alain Marion). Being coached by composer Leon Kirchner and violinist Lynn Chang as an undergraduate in Harvard's "Music 180." Business Manager and co-principal flutist, Bach Society Orchestra (1980-84); co-principal flutist, Columbia University Orchestra (1990-91). Premiering Otto Luening's "Three Canons for Two Flutes" at Carnegie Recital Hall (now Weill Recital Hall) in a concert presented by Composers Concordance on May 3, 1985.

Current flute: Wm. S. Haynes (circa 1926) silver handmade French model.

Influential flute teachers: David Barg, Deborah Carter, Randolph Bowman, and Sue Ann Kahn.

High School: Friends Select School (K-12) in Philadelphia, PA

Degrees: A.B. cum laude (Sociology, Harvard College, '84), where she won the David McCord Prize for outstanding achievement in the arts; M.A. (International Education, Columbia University Teachers College, '91), where she combined international studies with a concentration in arts education.

Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishments: As a flutist, winning Lansdowne (PA) Symphony Concerto Competition at age 16; being a Presidential Scholars in the Arts finalist in 1980. As a sociologist, publishing papers such as "Why Did Quakers in Early America Disapprove of Music?" [*The American Music Teacher* (June/July 1980)]; "Harmony and Discord: The Social Structure of a Symphony Orchestra" [*Abstracts from Conference on Social Theory, Politics, and the Arts* (1984)]; "Cultural Development in an Immigrant Community: Arts Education Through the Settlement Movement" [*The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 23:1 (Spring 1993)]. Raising money professionally for the past 15 years to benefit artists and the arts.

Favorite Practice Routines: Learning Suzuki violin with her 6-year-old daughter (a wonderful refresher in ear training!). For her own flute playing, she always goes back to Andersen and Maquarre.

Interests/hobbies: Playing chamber music, travel, spending time with her husband and two daughters, ages six and nine.

Advice for NYFC members: Read *Kincaidiana* by John Krell. Buy lots of inexpensive and interesting flute music in Eastern Europe. Dance! □

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

OCTOBER

October 11, 2001

Thursday 8:00 pm

Linda Wetherill will perform the New York premiere of Joel Thome's *Star Forms* for solo flute and world sounds.

• SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music Recital Hall, Purchase, NY • Admission is free • Info, call 917-861-4528.

October 15, 2001

Monday 8:00 pm

The Washington Square Contemporary Music Society offers a concert including flutists **Jayn Rosenfeld** and **Patricia Spencer**, performing George Perle's classic *Monody I* (for solo flute), Arthur Kreiger's *Close Encounters* for flute and tape (1997 NFA commission for the Young Artist competition), plus works by Sean Carson, Brian Fennelly, Louis Karchin, Laura Schwendinger, Edward Smaldone, and Virgil Thompson.

• Merkin Concert Hall, 129 West 67th Street • Tickets \$10, \$5 students/seniors • Info, call 212-998-8303.

October 20, 2001

Saturday 8:30 pm

Song and Dance of the 20th Century, a program by the award-winning ensemble Serenade, featuring **Michelle LaPorte**, flutist and Gerry Saulter, guitarist. Music of Piazzolla, Machado and Pujol in world premiere arrangements for flute, guitar and percussion; additional works by Bozza, Domeniconi, Rodrigo, Moyse and Almeida.

• Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, 7th Avenue at 57th Street, New York, NY. • Tickets (with some proceeds planned for donation to the NY State World Trade Center Relief Fund) are \$20 and \$10 w/student ID, Carnegie Charge at 212-247-7800 or www.carnegiehall.org.

October 26, 2001

Friday 8:00 pm

Linda Wetherill will perform the world premiere of the chamber concerto *Forbidden Colors* by Dary John Mizelle.

• SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music Recital Hall, Purchase, NY • Admission is free • Info, call 917-861-4528.

October 28, 2001

Sunday 3:00 pm

Patricia Harper, flutist, continues her annual "Women in Music" concert series with *Women on the Cutting Edge*. Works of Shulamit Ran, Augusta Read Thomas, and the premiere of Elizabeth Walton Vercoe's *Angel Shadows*.

• Evans Hall, Conn. College, New London, CT • Admission is charged • Info: 860-439-2720.

(Cont'd on next page)

Dues	
Regular	\$50
Student	\$35
Senior Citizen	\$35
Contributing	\$75
Sustaining	\$125
Patron	\$200
Life Member	\$1,000

Attention All Senior Citizens!

The NYFC board is pleased to announce a new membership dues rate for senior citizens of \$35. Those that have already paid \$50 for this year's dues may request a refund of \$15, or donate it to the club as a contribution. □

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

(Cont'd from previous page)

NOVEMBER

November 12, 2001

Monday 8:00 pm

UpTown Flutes, with NYFC members **Carla Auld, Elise Carter, Patricia Davila, Karen Demsey, Jeanne Fessenden, John McMurtery, Carol Shansky, Virginia Schulze-Johnson, Rebecca Vega** and guest artist Merynda Adams, harpist, in recital. Works by Fauré, MacMichael, Schocker, Berlioz, Ibert, Hoover, Scott, Griffes/Ben-Meir.

• Kirby Theatre, Drew University, Madison, NJ • \$10 donation at door; free for Drew students/faculty • Info, call 973-408-3428.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Annual Skidmore Flute Ensemble Festival with guest artist **Julius Baker** will be held on Saturday, November 17, 2001 at the Filene Building at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY. Ten flute ensembles and 250 flutists from around the Northeast will gather for ensemble coachings/workshops (9 am), "Conversations with Julius Baker" (1 pm), a masterclass (2:30 pm), and a flute ensemble concert (5 pm). General admission is \$5, students/seniors \$2. Info, contact **Jan Vinci** at 718-651-4179 or janvinci@aol.com.

Call for COMPOSER NOMINATIONS

In 2001–2002, the NYFC will be selecting another composer to write a commissioned work to enhance the flute repertoire. To nominate a composer, send a cassette tape of a recent work, a brief resume of the composer, and a signed note of nomination to:

Sue Ann Kahn,
Commissioning Committee
New York Flute Club
Park West Finance Station
P.O. Box 20613
New York, NY 10025-1515

Deadline for submissions:

November 15, 2001

For additional information, contact Sue Ann Kahn:

212-675-1932 or
kahns@newschool.edu

James Hosmer

(1911–2001)



THE CLUB IS SAD TO REPORT the death of our longtime member and friend James Hosmer, who died at his home in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, on September 21. Over Memorial Day weekend, Nancy Toff, Ardith Bondi, and Pat Spencer drove to suburban Philadelphia to visit Jim, a Club stalwart for more than sixty years, on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Jim had a distinguished career as a flutist with the Indianapolis Symphony and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and is perhaps best known to New York Flute Club members for the inimitably charming membership-renewal letters that he wrote during the many years he served as our financial secretary. □ *Photo courtesy of Nancy Toff*

(Cont'd from page 1)

ACS: *The government wouldn't let you do it?*

CT: Right. I did a lot of so-called contemporary music there with Zhou Long and my best friend Tan Dun [who wrote the music to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*]. We were classmates in China. We borrowed a lot of Western music theory for composition.

ACS: *Using Western harmonies with Chinese melodies?*

CT: Yes—but also we also used Chinese instruments in combination with Western instruments. At that time only a few people were doing it. The government doesn't support you in doing that.

ACS: *You have to stay traditional?*

CT: Right. At that time I wanted to come here, but I actually had several choices. I could have gone to Europe, Singapore, Hong Kong; many places, except Taiwan. I chose here because New York City is the "melting pot" where different cultures combine. I really wanted to promote Chinese culture and introduce it along with the music to Western people.

ACS: *Do you want to introduce both traditional and new music?*

CT: Yes, both. Since I came to the United States I've done a lot of contemporary music. I work with Melody of China and every year we have a contemporary concert in an American concert hall. Tan Dun and Zhou Long still write a lot of pieces for me to play with Western

musicians. A few years ago I did a piece called *Metal, Stone, Silk, Bamboo* with the Manhattan School of Music and we made a CD. Also, every year I do a program called "Teach China," for the China Institute, for American teachers.

ACS: *What instruments are in your group?*

CT: Erhu, pipa, hammered dulcimer, ruan (the moon-like instrument), played by my wife. She also plays the zither. We have the hammer dulcimer. If we can present my whole group, we have a large repertoire. We can do a classical or folk and traditional program. On my own I can only do [some] traditional music.

ACS: *Did you learn English in China?*

CT: Actually I never had the chance to learn English in China or the U.S. because I never had a chance to go to school. I just read the paper by myself, talked with people, listened to the radio, and watched the TV. When I was very young, six or seven years old, I was selected to learn Russian. The government wanted very young people to train in Russian for eight or ten years so they could send us to study, or to the border as spies.

ACS: *Spies?*

CT: Yeah they wanted me to do that. When I went to the music college in Beijing, we didn't have other language lessons. We didn't have English. So we just learned music theory. Every student had to learn the piano so I played piano for over ten years. I also learned composition, Western

music theory, Western music history, Chinese history, and Chinese music history.

ACS: *You learned both traditions in depth.*

CT: Yes.

ACS: *How does musical training differ in China and America?*

CT: Basically it's the same, [except] for the individual lessons. For the traditional Chinese instruments—20 or 30 years ago—they taught us one by one, orally. They didn't have any theory and we learned the instrument from generation to generation. But right now things have changed because we've borrowed Western teaching methods.

ACS: *So its an oral tradition, like Taiji and Qigong.*

CT: Yes! Things are gradually changed. That's the difference right now.

ACS: *Would you tell us a little about these beautiful instruments?*

CT: Usually they can be divided into two different types, the qudi and the bangdi. Each flute has its own key. Usually we call the C and the D flute the qudi and the F, G, A, we call the bangdi. Do you know why we call them qudi and the bangdi?

ACS: *No, please tell us.*

CT: During the Ming Dynasty [1368–1644 CE] the opera was very popular in China. The Beijing Opera is in the north of China and the Kun Opera is in the south. In the Kun Opera, the leading accompanying instrument is the flute. When accompanying singers we use a C or D flute. The opera is called the Kunqu, so we take one of those words, qu, and combine it with the word di (meaning "flute"): qudi. In the north of China the local opera is called Bang Tse Shi. There the flute is also a leading accompanying instrument but they use the smaller flute, in G or F. Combining the words we get bangdi. If you say to the Chinese you play the qudi, they know you're playing southern style. If you say bangdi, they know it's northern.

Different styles use different techniques. In the southern style the most important thing is the breathing. We don't use much tonguing. [*Plays very long melodies in one breath.*] Only Chinese flutes have membranes. In India, Japan and North America they also use bamboo but none of these flutes have the membrane which is material you can peel from inside cut bamboo. (We do not have to use membrane—we can just use tape). I can adjust it so that it's tight or loose. If I

(Cont'd on next page)



A Website is Born!

by Nancy Toff, Webmaster

The New York Flute Club is delighted to announce the birth of its website, www.nyfluteclub.org, at 4:52 pm, EDT, on August 11, 2001. This baby has 23 pages, is full of useful information, and is growing rapidly. It includes information on membership, the concert season, publications and recordings, the young artist competition, the commissioning program, ensemble program, community outreach, history and archives, and much more. There are e-mail hotlinks to the officer or coordinator responsible for each activity, making it easy to stay in touch with the club. The site includes a printable membership form, a printable application form for the competition, and an ensemble program questionnaire that can be printed out and mailed or filled out online.

All of our corporate members, whose donations help make our programs possible, are listed, along with links to their websites. More "bells and whistles" (not to mention flutes) will be added in future months. These enhancements include:


- A portrait gallery of past presidents
- Photos and biographies of the year's concert performers, and concert programs and press releases as they become available
- Photos of past flute fairs and other special events
- A selection of interesting material from our archives (photos, programs, etc.).

We hope to post a database of past concerts, but to do so we need a volunteer who can help set up a Microsoft Access database. If you can help, please contact me at info@nyfluteclub.org. Suggestions for other features are also welcome; please send them to the same address.

Special thanks to the following people for their invaluable help in getting this project going:

- Pat Spencer, for finding us our web designer and host, Karl Strieby of K-C-P.com
- Karl Strieby, for being a saint, and the best-humored techie I've ever dealt with
- Alice Barmore, for her eagle eye, keen design sense, and scanning of graphics
- Jan Vinci and Pat Spencer for lots of useful feedback on the test site. □

www.nyfluteclub.org



THE NEW YORK FLUTE CLUB, INC.
FOUNDED 1920 BY GEORGES BARRÈRE

The New York Flute Club

Welcome

- Home
- Board of Directors
- Membership
- Concerts
- The New York Flute Fair
- Newsletter
- Young Artist Competition
- Ensemble Program
- Publications, Recordings & Exhibitions
- Commissions
- Community Outreach
- History & Archives
- Corporate Sponsors
- Contributions
- Contact Us

Founded in 1920 by eminent flutist Georges Barrère, composer Lamar Stringfield, and a group of their associates, The New York Flute Club is the oldest such organization in the United States.


Barrère's idea in starting the Club was to provide a common meeting ground for professional, student, and amateur; a place where less experienced players could hear new and unusual music for the flute as well as the classic repertory played by fine artists; a place where all might find performance opportunities helpful to the development of their own talents.

Today, the Club sponsors:

- a professional concert series,
- an ensemble program,
- a young artist competition,
- a community outreach program,
- commissions of new music for flute, and
- a variety of publications and recordings.

We welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions about the Club or this website. Please contact us at: info@nyfluteclub.org

The New York Flute Club
Park West Finance Station
P.O. Box 20613
New York, NY 10025-1515



GEORGES BARRÈRE
FOUNDER

(Cont'd from previous page)

tighten it: [Plays—sound has less buzz.] In the southern style of playing we use breathing control, changing tone colors, and ornaments. [Mr. Tao plays a long melody unornamented and then repeats it with ornaments.] Northern style uses flutter tonguing techniques, slide sounds [glissandi] and fingering techniques. [He plays a fast passage with flutter tonguing and glissandi.]

In ancient China different flutes had different purposes. Now this is the vertical flute, the xiao. It is without a membrane. It was played in the Court by women, and has a special name: Ya Yue—“Refined Music.” They didn’t use the horizontal flute because it’s really loud and was used for outdoor and military music. This is for indoors. [The small one is louder than the longer one.]

ACS: Do the northern people speak more loudly, too?

CT: Yeah. When the southern people speak to each other the volume is very soft. Northern people speak more loudly because there are many mountains there. In the south of China, instead of mountains, there are many rivers and trees. I think that’s why the music is different. This is the bawu, an instrument of the [Yi and Miao] minority people from Yunan in the far south of China. It has a reed. The sound is very special. [Mr. Tao’s embouchure completely covers the hole which is bordered by two reeds.] This one is only played by young boys in Yunan province when they are trying to date girls.

ACS: Who makes your flutes?

CT: I bought them from a private maker in China twenty years ago. He used to work in an instrument factory in Shanghai. The most experienced makers are now on their own.

ACS: How long do the flutes last?

CT: It depends on the weather. They can crack. But usually they can last for at least 50 years.

ACS: What are these holes near the end for?

CT: These four holes are to adjust the sound. If the high notes are not easy to play, we use a knife to cut out some of the bamboo so they speak more easily.

Karen Ivanyi: I always thought they were to hang tassels!

CT: Some people hang tassels, but we just use them to adjust the sound.



ACS: If a student learns the flute, do they learn all the styles?

CT: Basically you start from the south (big flute), play the long notes, and learn how to breathe. Later if you want to learn different techniques, you learn northern style. You learn horizontal flute first then go to vertical flute.

KI: Do the instruments improve with age?

CT: Yeah! You have to play them. This one is cracked, but it doesn’t matter. This was made in 1981 but the sound is better than from a new one.

ACS: Did you meet Karajan when you were in Germany?

CT: Yeah. In 1985. I went to West Berlin for the Oriental Horizon Festival. Seiji Ozawa was there, too. Karajan came to my concert.

ACS: He loved you.

CT: Yeah.

ACS: What did you do with the BBC orchestra?

CT: That was 1989. We played contemporary music with the BBC symphony orchestra.

ACS: Is it easy to play in tune with Western orchestras?

CT: Its easy. When I was in China we used same pitch—442. I tune at 441. If I want to go a little higher I turn out, and if I want to go lower I turn it a little bit in.

ACS: And that changes the color but it doesn’t matter.

CT: No. [plays at two distinctly different pitches with no real color change] It’s easy for me to change the pitch, but it’s not for everybody, because when you even turn just a little bit you need more breathing control—otherwise you get a mess.

ACS: Do you play the xun?

CT: This year I went to Paris to play Tan Dun’s xun piece [Orchestral Theatre I: Xun] with the Lyon Orchestra. You know it’s a clay instrument.

ACS: We have one at home—it’s one of the most beautiful sounds I know.

CT: Really? You have one? Yes, it’s beautiful. I will play one piece on it at the concert. In 1986 I was first to bring that instrument out of China. I had been invited by the Asia Society, and I gave them one.

ACS: You represent Chinese Buddhist musicians.

CT: Yes, I was a member of the Chinese Buddhist musicians. We learned Buddhist music from the monks. Their music is preserved generation by generation, and dates back to the Ming Dynasty. It’s only played in the temple. They never play outside the temple and they only teach the monks. When I was teaching at the Central Conservatorium of Music, many of us went to the temple to learn from the monks who were already in the 27th generation of their music. The oldest monk was 97 years old but [more importantly], the youngest one was 75 years old. So we learned. Later we took it to Europe.

ACS: Did you take the monks, too?

CT: Yeah! All the monks.

ACS: Is it in any way similar to Tibetan Buddhist music?

CT: We called it the Jing Tse Hwa Se—“Beijing Temple music.” Tse Hwa is the temple name, and Jing means Beijing. It’s different from the music of Tibet. They have the long horns. We only have the guanzi (a long double reed instrument), xun, and mouth organ, all doubled—so six players. Also we have nine small gongs, played with small hammers, each at a different pitch. We call them Ju Luin Law. They go over one octave. We have two gong players and a drummer.

ACS: Do you practice Buddhism?

CT: No, we just learned the music. We felt that we should preserve this music as musicians—otherwise we’ll lose it. We used a tape recorder and wrote it down.

ACS: And then put it in the Conservatorium Library?

CT: Right, in the Conservatorium Library.

ACS: Do you go back to China often?

CT: No, no. In eight years, I’ve been too busy to go back there.

ACS: How did the cultural revolution affect musicians?

CT: There were good things for Chinese music during the cultural revolution, and also there were very bad things for Chinese

music. The good were that there was no entertainment aside from music—except for eight movies. Only EIGHT movies!

ACS: *Approved by the government...*

CT: Yeah.

ACS: *For the whole ten years?*

CT: For all ten years. So people learned instruments like dizi or fiddle to pass their leisure time and that was a good thing. When the Cultural Revolution [1966–76] started I was only two years old. So in 1976, when I went to Shanghai (where I was born) to audition for the Central Conservatory in Beijing, there were 2000 flute players in Shanghai alone auditioning. In the whole of China there were only six [openings], and they selected me out of everyone!

Previously many students played Western instruments like violin or Western flute but during the Cultural Revolution they could not continue them. They could not even refer to anything Western. So the first time I went to the Conservatory and heard Beethoven's 5th, I fell asleep! A lot of students did! We hadn't heard that kind of music before! When I went to the Central Conservatory I played my flute eight hours a day but after two years I started to learn the piano. I found something I never knew before—I really liked the piano, and I enjoyed Western music and Western orchestras. So I started playing piano six hours a day, followed by two hours of flute. Two years before I graduated, though, I turned back to my [original] instrument again, because I found that the way to express your feelings—your mind, your everything—is the same.

ACS: *It doesn't matter what you play...*

CT: It doesn't matter, you use the piano, you use the flute. For me, Chinese culture and music is in my blood so I returned to that particularly.

ACS: *Do you still play piano?*

CT: I don't have time to touch the piano.

ACS: *Can your Western students in New York sound Chinese?*

CT: One of them, Michael Fedderer, studied for three years and he can play very well on the Chinese style. He understands about Chinese. He speaks it and he lived there six years. That's why he can play. Marsha Baxter, a flute teacher at Columbia University, learned from me for two years. She's very good. But you have to go to China.

KI: *You have to experience the music in China, itself.*

CT: I told my students in China that if you want to really play Western music you have to go to America or Europe and you have to drink coffee. You have to eat bread. You cannot drink tea or eat Chinese food. If you want to experience the different culture you have to live there. It's the same with China. I first learned southern style, but the conservatory was in Beijing, so I learned northern style, too. Musicians that live only in the north or south can never play the style of the other.

ACS: *Where will you play next?*

CT: I'm going to Montreal in December. I will play Zhou Long's piece, *Metal, Stone, Silk, Bamboo*, and Tan Dun's *Crouching Tiger*.

ACS: *Are you on the movie soundtrack?*

CT: I'm not in the movie because Tan Dun was [on a budget] and recorded the movie in Shanghai, but I will play the piece this year. In September and November of next year we will play at the Mahler Festival in Germany.

ACS: *Do you practice Taiji and Qigong?*

CT: I don't play Taiji but as for Qigong, I think I practice Qigong on the Chinese flute every day.

ACS: *The breathing.*

CT: The breathing and also I have spoken to Qigong masters and the breathing is the same. The theory is the same.

ACS: *On what soundtracks do you appear?*

CT: On the ones made in New York, *Seven Years in Tibet* and *The Corruptor*, when I played with the New York Philharmonic. I also played on the Channel 13 documentaries, *Under the Red Flag* and *The Voice of China*.

ACS: *What mindset does a Western student have to adopt to become proficient in the Chinese flute?*

CT: American students ask me questions that are totally different. American students ask questions with a lot of detail. Chinese students don't ask about detail at all. You see, in Chinese painting, there are always high mountains, rivers, and trees, but the people are very tiny. So the Chinese people—philosophers, musicians, and artists—think about the whole universe. The whole nature, the

whole society, the whole country. Chinese people think nature, country and family are more important than the individual. In Western music they write down all the details, but in Chinese music they never write down the details. Just the simple tune. So that's why we teach students orally, generation by generation.

ACS: *Are Western students frustrating?*

CT: No. I think it's very difficult to learn Chinese music because the details are not [obvious]. You have to learn a lot about the north and the south, gain a lot of experience and only then can you know how to play a piece. For Western music you can play quite well just by following the written music. But for Chinese music you cannot.

ACS: *What if someone listened to lots of CDs?*

CT: That's not enough. You can have a lot of CDs but you cannot learn from them alone. If you had a Kun Opera CD and the written music, and I wrote in all the details, it wouldn't sound right. I don't know why. You'd have to go to the Kun Opera and play with them, not just for two or three days—two or three MONTHS, otherwise you cannot know.

ACS: *You're promoting new music written by yourself and friends. Do you play the flute differently for the new music?*

CT: Yeah. It's different techniques. I use a longer instrument, the bass qudi, like this—[Plays lots of bent tones, covers hole and blows, slap fingerings, beautiful melody, wide variety of tone colors.]

ACS: *Which do you prefer playing?*

CT: I prefer the traditional music. I want to introduce the American people to Chinese culture. Contemporary music—it's not the best of Chinese music. For the October concert I will play a lot of traditional pieces.

ACS: *Are you named after the philosophy?*

CT: The translation to English sounds the same but my name means "wave on the sea."

Ann Cecil Sterman recently returned from Australia where she performed a series of lecture demonstrations on the aesthetics, criticism and evolution of modern flute sounds at the University of Melbourne's Victorian College of the Arts.

Acknowledgment: ACS thanks Karen Ivanyi for her assistance. □



The New York Flute Club
Park West Finance Station
P.O. Box 20613
New York, NY 10025-1515



October 2001 concert

CHEN TAO—Traditional Chinese Music

October 21, 2001 • Sunday 5:30 pm • CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th (across from Carnegie Hall)

With members of Melody of Dragon, Chen Tao will perform Hunan Folk Music, Er-Ren-Tai Music, and music from Zhejiang Opera, along with compositions by Jiang Xian-Wei, Feng Zi-Chuen, Chen Tao, and others.

2001–2002 Concert Season

October 21, 2001 • Sunday 5:30 pm
CHEN TAO—Traditional Chinese Music

November 18, 2001 • Sunday 5:30 pm
JIM WALKER, flute

December 9, 2001 • Sunday 5:30 pm
NOW, HEAR THIS!—*Great New Music*

January 20, 2002 • Sunday 5:30 pm
WOODWIND TREASURES *from Georges Barrère's Library*—featuring The Sylvan Winds, Borealis Wind Quintet and friends

February 17, 2002 • Sunday 5:30 pm
ELEANOR LAWRENCE MEMORIAL TRIBUTE
with guest artists William Bennett, William Montgomery, and others

March 24, 2002 • Sunday 5:30 pm
MARY KAY FINK, flute and piccolo

April 28, 2002 • Sunday 5:30 pm
2002 NYFC COMPETITION WINNERS

May 19, 2002 • Sunday 4:00 pm
NYFC ENSEMBLE PROGRAM
Kaplan Space at Carnegie Hall

Concerts are at CAMI Hall, 165 West 57th Street (across from Carnegie Hall), unless otherwise noted. All programs are subject to change. Tickets \$10, only at the door; free to members. For more information, visit the NYFC website at www.nyfluteclub.org or call (212) 799-0448.



From the Editor

We start the NYFC's 2001-2002 season amidst a landscape much changed—both physically and mentally—since our last Newsletter. I still find myself involuntarily categorizing the routine events of everyday life by whether they occurred before or after 8:47 am on Tuesday September 11, 2001. An example from this newsletter: Ann Cecil Sterman's interview with Chen Tao took place in Chinatown on the Friday before September 11, and she sent the finished interview to me by email on the Friday after September 11.

NYFC President Jan Vinci touches on these current events in her *From the President*, and leaves us with some reasons for optimism. Elsewhere in this Newsletter we have a profile of NYFC member Rebecca Sayles, and a birth announcement of our NYFC website (www.nyfluteclub.org). As this issue goes to press, we are sad to report the September 21 death of James Hosmer, a longtime member of the NYFC. He celebrated his 90th birthday in May (see photo on p. 4); an obituary will appear in November.

Content-wise, this should be an exciting and invigorating year for the Newsletter, and you'll probably see some new columns in the coming months. Member Perspectives will continue as a column, but be occasional rather than regular. Readers with ideas for articles or Member Profile subjects should let me know.

Hope to see you all at the Chen Tao concert on October 21, 2001. And if Ann's interview leaves you wanting more information about Chinese flutes, music, and culture (or color photos of the instruments Chen Tao will be playing) check out some of the websites that I discovered during a weekend of sorting out the preferred spellings of all those Chinese instrument names: www.presser.com/zhou.html, www.chinesepipa.com/nature.html, www.melodyofchina.com, and www.chinainstitute.org.

Regards,
Katherine Saenger (klsaenger@yahoo.com)