



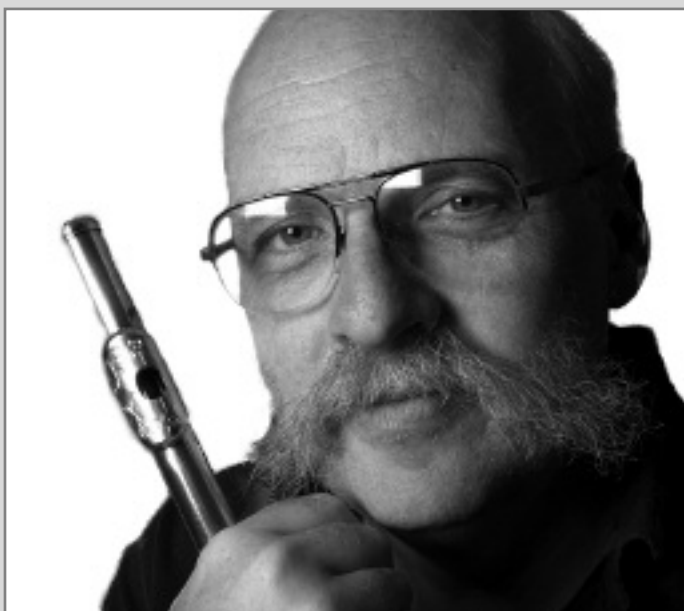
# The New York Flute Club

## NEWSLETTER

March 2008

### ROBERT LANGEVIN: TRADITION IN ACTION

*Interview by Ann Cecil-Sterman*



#### *In Concert*

#### **Robert Langevin, flute**

Jonathan Feldman, piano

Sunday, **March 30, 2008**, 5:30 pm

#### *LaGuardia Concert Hall*

*LaGuardia High School of Music & Art  
and Performing Arts*

*100 Amsterdam Avenue (at 65th Street)*

Sonate en Concert	Jean-Michel Damase (b. 1928)
Four Pieces, Op. 10	Jacques Hétu (b. 1938)
Sequenza I	Luciano Berio (1925–2003)
Sonata in D Major, Op. 36	Gabriel Pierné (1863–1937)

*Program subject to change*

**T**his lunchtime interview took place in January at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall. Mr. Langevin, principal flutist of the New York Philharmonic since 2000, appeared at stage door seven minutes early wearing a bright red shirt, eagerly shook my hand with a big, warm smile, then turned and almost ran up five long flights of stairs. When we got to the top he realized he'd left his keys downstairs, apologized in his beautiful French accent, and promptly ran back down, returning in Olympic time. We sat down in his practice room and I saw he clearly wasn't the slightest bit out of breath. Already I was riveted.

**ANN CECIL-STERMAN:** *It's been a long time since you did a concert for the Flute Club. What will you be playing?*

**ROBERT LANGEVIN:** I want to do the Berio *Sequenza*. This year is its 50th anniversary and it is probably the most important piece for flute that has been written in the last 50 years. It was the first of the sequenzas he wrote, and it influenced a lot of composers. A few years before he died, he rewrote the piece in traditional notation, apparently because he was not happy with what some people were doing with it in his original [unconventional] notation. I'm playing the piece from the first version, because I think it is more in the spirit of the piece, more spontaneous, instead of being something that is calculated.

I also want to do a piece by the Quebec composer, Jacques Hétu. This year he will be 70. It was written in 1965, and is 12-tone, but very lyrical. He is one of the most-performed composers in Canada and I like

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his music very much. Although some pieces sound dated after 20 years, this one doesn't. Audiences enjoy it, and I think that [for] a concert geared mainly to flutists, it's interesting to play pieces that are maybe not so well known to flute players.

**ACS:** *What are you listening to at the moment?*

**RL:** I'm listening to [pieces the Philharmonic is]

*(Cont'd on page 4)*



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# Flute Fair 2008

*by David Wechsler*



**From the President**

It is March, and that means it's time for the New York Flute Fair! What started out as an experiment in the not so distant past has become an institution. We have bounced around to a lot of different locations since we started. Our first fair (in 1994) was at the Society for Ethical Culture on West 64th Street and Central Park West. We had Jean-Pierre Rampal as our guest artist, and it was just a wonderful event all around. Ethical has a wonderful concert hall, but it didn't have enough other space for our needs. After a second year at Ethical (1995, guest artist Paula Robison), we

moved uptown to Union Theological Seminary (1997, "Flutists of the Philharmonic"), and then across the street to Riverside Church (1998, guest of honor Julius Baker). Then back to the Union Theological Seminary for a few years, and then downtown to LaGuardia High School for a few years. Last year, because LaGuardia wasn't available, we were back at Union, but now we are back to LaGuardia again! LaGuardia is really an excellent place to have our annual flute fair. It has two terrific concert halls, very good pianos, plus lots of other rooms for the other activities that take place at the fair. It is also a stone's throw from Lincoln Center, and all those nice restaurants and cafés.

This year I am happy to say we have Robert Langevin, the principal flutist of the New York Philharmonic, as our guest artist. He will give a masterclass and will perform the closing recital. In addition to Mr. Langevin, we have workshops on the flute business and the Internet, free improvisation, Japanese shakuhachi flute, the Feldenkrais method, and much more. We will hear the winners of our new Young Musicians Contest for flute players up to the age of 17, an exciting endeavor that we hope will become a permanent part of the flute fair, along with our traditional Young Artist Competition finals. And of course, what has been one of my favorite things about the flute fair—the exhibits. When I was the exhibits chair, I used to arrive early and help get all the vendors settled in. After that, I loved trying all the instruments early in the morning before Peter, Petrouchka, and Till arrived. The exhibitors have two big rooms in the basement, so there is lots of room to spread out. And it's always nice to see old friends, and to make some new ones. I hope to see you there!

## **NEW YORK FLUTE FAIR 2008: OUT OF THIS WORLD!**

*Sijetlana Kabalin and Jayn Rosenfeld, Flute Fair Co-Chairs*  
**Sunday, March 30, 2008 • LaGuardia High School**  
**100 Amsterdam Avenue (at 65th Street), NYC.**

Flute Fair Guest Artist:

**Robert Langevin**

**OUT OF THIS WORLD** events to include masterclass and concert by guest artist Robert Langevin, African and Japanese flute concerts, transcription concert "By Special Arrangement," Unwritten Music (improvisation how-to), Feldenkrais (higher performance levels with less effort!), plus Young Artist Competition finals, Young Musicians Contest winners' recital, ensembles gathering, and instrument and music exhibits and sales.

**Please check [www.nyfluteclub.org](http://www.nyfluteclub.org) for detailed information and updates.**

## Member Profile

### John Romeri II

NYFC member since 2007

NYFC Corporate Sponsor Coordinator



**Employment:** Freelance flutist, flute teacher at the Ethical Culture grade school in Manhattan, and (since September 2007) acting substitute principal flute with the Harrisburg Symphony.

**Recent performance(s):** In November 2007, a flute recital with pianist Kathy Tagg as part of the Crescendo Concert Series in St. Louis, MO; on March 2, 2008, a flute and organ recital with his father (also John Romeri) at a church in Detroit, MI; and, coming soon (date TBA), a flute recital at Trinity Wall Street.

**Career highlight(s):** Most fun: performing operatic and symphonic works with the AIMS Festival Orchestra in Graz, Austria, while becoming acquainted with stunning Austrian concert halls and great Austrian/German food and beer (summer 2007). Most lucrative: subbing in the Broadway production of *Beauty and the Beast* (fall 2006 to summer 2007). Most memorable: performing the solo violin part of Dvorak's *Romance* (on flute!) with the Chamber Orchestra of the St. Louis Symphony with his father standing next to him, conducting (April 2006).

**Current flute(s):** A silver Nagahara (B foot, with 0.016" tubing, c. 1998), a 14 k gold-body Nagahara (with silver keys and B foot, c. 2006), and a Burkart piccolo (c. 2000).

**Influential flute teachers:** On flute: in addition to his students ("It's amazing what they have taught me about myself!"), his first teacher Paulette DiNardo (late '80s), followed by Wendy Kummer and St. Louis Symphony flutists Jan Gippo and Jacob Berg

(before college), Dr. Mary Posses and William Bennett (in college), Judith Mendenhall (as a master's student at Mannes), and Keith Underwood (two post-graduate years). In composition (while in college): Chen Yi, James Mobberley, and Paul Rudy.

**High School:** Chaminade College Preparatory High School in St. Louis, MO.

**Degrees:** BM in flute performance and music composition (University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2002); MM in flute performance (Mannes College of Music, 2004).

**Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishment(s):** His enviable good luck in being able to financially survive solely as a musician since his 2002 arrival in NYC, a city he shares with "an unbelievable number of incredible flute players."

**Favorite practice routines:** John says, "My practice routines change constantly—they have to, or I'll go insane. If I'm preparing for auditions, I won't touch my flute without a tuner or metronome. I also try to record myself as much as possible—it can be extremely depressing, but very helpful." In addition to Taffanel and Gaubert's *Daily Exercises*, Andersen etudes, and Moyses's tonal studies, he does lots of sightreading for technical and mental flexibility (for example, Bach's solo violin sonatas and partitas).

**Other interests:** Family (nieces and a nephew), travel, and food—eating it, cooking it, dreaming it. He says, "I guess it's the Italian in me, or the poor musician in me, that forced me to learn cheap and healthy cooking skills... though I soon anticipate a need for a stronger interest in exercise."

**Advice for NYFC members:** We live in NYC, where there are hundreds of concerts every week. Go experience! Inspiring or disappointing, live performances present a tremendous learning opportunity.

## FLUTE HAPPENINGS

FREE to current NYFC members, this section lists upcoming performances by members; flute-related contests, auditions, and masterclasses organized/sponsored by members; and brief descriptions of members' new recordings, sheet music, and books. Send submissions to the Newsletter Editor.

### MARCH '08

MAR 8

Saturday 8:00 pm

The Palisades Virtuosi with **MARGARET SWINCHOSKI**, flute, will perform "The Women Speak II," a program of works by women composers, including a world premiere by Gwyneth Walker. Also on view: paintings by Leslie Montana.

• Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, 113 Cottage Place, Ridgewood, NJ. • Admission: \$20 general, \$15 students/seniors.

MAR 13

Thursday 6:30 pm

The Sylvan Winds with **SVJETLANA KABALIN**, flute, will perform "Viva L'Italia," a program including Berio's *Opus Zoo*, Rota's *Petite Offrande Musicale*, and wind quintets by Respighi, Cambini, and Ghedini.

• Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò at New York University, 24 West 12th Street, NYC. • Admission is free.

MAR 30

Sunday 8:30 am to 6:00 pm

14th Annual Flute Choir Day, with guest artist **KATHERINE HOOVER** (composer of *Kokopeli*), for all flutists, all levels, ages 8 to 80.

• Drew University, 36 Madison Ave, Madison, NJ. • Admission: \$70. • Info, visit [www.uptownflutes.com](http://www.uptownflutes.com) and follow link to Flute Choir Day.

MAR 31

Monday 8:00 pm

**KEITH BONNER**, flute, Setsuko Otake-Akizawa, oboe, Shari Hoffman, clarinet, Sara Della Posta, French horn, Stephen Wisner, bassoon, and Anna Vinnitsky, piano, perform chamber music of Francis Poulenc, John Harbison, Stephen Wisner, and Alberto Ginastera.

• Special Music School, Goodman House, 129 West 67th Street, NYC. • Admission is free, \$10 suggested donation. • Info, call 212-501-3303.

### APRIL '08

APR 5

Saturday 3:00 to 5:30 pm

A masterclass for advanced high school students with Laura Gilbert.

• The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island, 38 Old Country Road, Garden City, NY. • Admission: \$80 for participants (application deadline March 10), \$20 (at the door) or \$15 (preregistered) for auditors. • Info, email [Laurenzavlunov@gmail.com](mailto:Laurenzavlunov@gmail.com) or visit <http://lauragilbertmasterclass.googlepages.com>.

# FLUTE HAPPENINGS

## APRIL '08

APR  
5

Saturday 8:00 pm

**SUE ANN KAHN**, flute, in recital with guitarists Frederic Hand and William Anderson, will perform music by Mozart, Ibert, Hand, Stephen Jaffe, and Allen Shawn.

• Mannes College of Music Concert Hall, 150 West 85th Street, NYC. • Admission is free.

APR  
6

Sunday 2:00 pm

**PAMELA SKLAR**, flute, Matthew Goeke, cello, and Ivanka Petrovik, piano, will perform music by Gaubert, Hovhanness, and Bach.

• Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, 152 East 34th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$20 general, \$15 Murray Hill residents, \$10 students. • Info, call 212-685-3177.

APR  
8

Tuesday 8:00 pm

The Sylvan Winds with **SVJETLANA KABALIN**, flute, will perform music for winds and harpsichord by Eric Goldberg, Andrew Thomas, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Thomas Adès, Irwin Bazelon, Vaclav Nelhybel, and Elliott Carter.

• Christ & St. Stephen's Church, 120 West 69th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$20.

APR  
13

Sunday 3:00 pm

The Legacy Duo with **MARGARET SWINCHOSKI**, flute, and Emily Mitchell, harp, will perform "The Art of the Dance," a program of dance music from around the world including works by Piazzolla, Fauré, Shankar, Albeniz, and Ravel.

• Live @ the Arts Exchange, 31 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY. • Admission: \$15 general, \$10 students/seniors. • Box Office, call 914-428-4220 x223; info, visit [www.westarts.com](http://www.westarts.com).

APR  
15

Tuesday 8:00 pm

**LAUREN ZAVLUNOV**, flute, and Barbara Lee, piano, will perform works by Clarke, Muczynski, and others.

• Saint Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Avenue (at 54th Street), NYC. • Admission: \$10 suggested donation. • Info, visit <http://laurenzavlunov.googlepages.com>.

APR  
23

Wednesday 7:00 to 9:00 pm

"A Walk in the Woods," the last of four 2007-2008 Diller-Quaile Paula Robison masterclasses. Repertoire: Saint-Saens, *Volière*; Olivier Messiaen, *Le Merle Noir*; Eugène Bozza, *Image*; Arthur Honegger, *Danse de la Chèvre*.

• Diller-Quaile School of Music, 24 East 95th Street, NYC. • Info, call 212-369-1484 x26, email [ejanzen@diller-quaile.org](mailto:ejanzen@diller-quaile.org), or visit [www.diller-quaile.org](http://www.diller-quaile.org).

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Robert Langevin (cont'd from page 1)

doing next year that I'm not familiar with. I always look forward to discovering new pieces. There's a tone poem by Dvorak called *The Golden Spinning Wheel*, the de Falla *La Vida Breve*, and Bartok's *The Wooden Prince* ballet—a piece I've always wanted to play; a ballet from Verdi's *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, and a concert version of [Strauss's] *Electra*. We're also doing two pieces by Messiaen—*Oiseaux Exotiques* and *L'Ascension*, a piece I haven't yet heard; Scriabin's Second Symphony—a really beautiful piece which I didn't know, and Martinu's Symphony No. 4—a piece I have yet to find a recording of.

ACS: *So your listening is guided by the demands of your job . . .*

RL: Well, not always. But I try to listen to things I don't know, if possible, and get the music ahead of time to work on it. Once I've done that, I can listen to other things—chamber music or singers.

ACS: *Do you like the season as dense as this?*

RL: Yes, oh yes. On the one hand, it's a lot of work, but the work is always interesting and challenging. Some orchestras will play maybe two weeks of subscription concerts and then there will be pops concerts, or education, or outreach, things that are much lighter. But with us, we have around 35 weeks of subscription, week after week, plus tours. So it's always very intense.

ACS: *But you thrive on it.*

RL: Yes, I do. It's hard to keep the [momentum] in other orchestras when you play two really great weeks and then you play with lesser conductors and less interesting programs—it's a seesaw. With us, most of our guest conductors are really very good.

ACS: *It's hard to imagine a "lesser conductor" being placed in front of the New York Philharmonic!*

RL: That's true, and if that happens once, usually the person is not invited back.

ACS: *Don't let me interrupt your lunch. Did you make it yourself?*

RL: Actually, my wife did.

ACS: *Is she a musician too?*

RL: She used to be. She played piccolo in the Montreal Symphony, but she stopped playing when we moved to the states 14 years ago.

ACS: *In 1992 I was in Osaka, in Japan,*

*and heard a rehearsal of the Montreal Symphony. Were you there?*

RL: Yes, I was in the orchestra until '93.

ACS: *I found it fascinating that the orchestral manager gave 15 minutes of instruction in French, and then she repeated all that instruction in about 90 seconds in English!*

RL: [laughter] Yeah, I guess French needs more words than English. That's why English is used for business, because it's so efficient.

ACS: *But there's so much humanity and poetry missing from English.*

RL: Every language has its own characteristics. Romance languages like French and Italian are so singing and poetic, whereas German and English are so much more businesslike. Puccini sung in German just doesn't work!

ACS: *Is there a Canadian flute lineage?*

RL: There certainly were people before me, [but] the common practice was that you would go to Europe after you finished studying at the conservatory in Montreal.

There has always been a close connection with France, and the French school of flute playing was prevalent. When I was a student, Rampal would come maybe once a year to Montreal. He really was the only soloist and famous flute player we were in contact with.

ACS: *Do the Canadians aspire to the French School?*

RL: Oh yes, there's always been a very strong connection with the French school of playing, especially in Quebec. Because we spoke French, we would go study with French players. All the great soloists came from the French school of flute playing.

ACS: *Gaubert, Barrere, Moyse, Laurent, Dufrene . . .*

RL: Yes, right. And so on. And Joseph Rampal, the father of Jean-Pierre. I studied with, among others, Maxence Larrieu, who was a student of Joseph Rampal, and to this day he doesn't say he is from the French school, he says he is from the Rampal school, and that's Joseph Rampal, who taught in Marseilles at the Conservatoire. And starting with his son, all these people studied with him in this incredible school of playing. Nowadays there are people in Japan who studied with Rampal, and teach that school in Japan and in other countries all over the world.

ACS: *I love Larrieu's playing—we have many of his recordings! Do you see yourself as responsible for maintaining that school of playing?*

RL: Well, you know, we always take from our teachers. I don't think we can escape that...And it's only natural to transmit what we've learned from our teachers. In fact, when Maxence Larrieu came to give masterclasses at Juilliard—I had not seen him in a while, and certainly not heard him teach in many years—I [found myself] thinking, "That's what I say to students" not realizing that I probably got it from him. After a while, it becomes so much a part of you that you forget where you got it. I suppose that, in a way, I can't escape passing that on; for me, that school of playing is what I really like.

ACS: *Do you require that your students listen to those old recordings?*

RL: I would like them to—I think they're important for the students to hear. [But it's] very difficult to find them, except for some of the Rampal recordings. [However, while] hearing recordings is great, there's nothing like the live performance. When I was studying with Larrieu, we each had our lesson, but we could always stay and listen to other people's lessons afterwards. I would stay, for the rest of the afternoon, mainly to hear him play and demonstrate.

Nowadays you don't find this really personal, beautiful sound that often. People play with incredible technique, but the colors and personality are a little bit put aside sometimes. The flute makers won't be happy to hear it, but part of it is that the instruments nowadays are much easier to play than the older instruments. If the instrument is too easy to play, it's difficult to do different colors. What happens is that everybody who plays that instrument sounds the same, whereas with older instruments where you have to work more, it's more difficult, and if you are out of shape, it really sounds like it.

ACS: *What do you play?*

RL: It's a Brannen silver flute from 1983.

ACS: *You don't consider that very modern?*

RL: Well, it's the modern scale, but it was toward the beginning of what Brannen was doing. If I compare now with the newer ones, there's a big difference. They're not made the same. Also the old-fashioned felt pads [are great]. I find the synthetic pads sound brighter, and

some repairmen have confirmed that this is true, that it's not just my imagination.

ACS: *Do you think there are still national styles of flute playing?*

RL: Yes. It's funny—a few months ago I was on a panel of the Maxence Larrieu international competition in Nice, and I heard many people, and many French people, say, "Oh, there's not really a French school any more." Still, I think if you [put] two Americans and two French behind a screen, you wouldn't have trouble noticing a difference—in sound, very much, and in style also.

ACS: *How do you characterize the American style?*

RL: I think the American players technically are very advanced, and they are very good at difficult music, new techniques, and so are the European players for that matter. But in the competition, in the first round, they have to play four pieces, all solo flute, not even with piano, in four very different styles: a Baroque piece, Mercadante—which is *bel canto*, Rivier—which is, of course, 20th century impressionistic, and a [new] piece. The American players, [while] technically very well prepared, would play all four styles with the same sound. With the European players, Baroque music [was more likely to] really sound like Baroque music.

That's something I realized a few years ago with my own students. I know my students can play these extended techniques pieces so well they could probably teach me things. But with Baroque and Classical style, even Mozart, they have trouble. The music of our time we live in, [so] stylistically we know what to do. With Baroque and Classical period music, there is very much less written in the music—what you see is only a skeleton. If you only play what's written in a slow movement from a Loeillet or Albinoni or a Vivaldi sonata, it's not very interesting. I encourage my students to read books and listen to a lot of recordings on original instruments—not to copy it, but to get the style. When I was a student I found Baroque music very difficult to play, too; [my own understanding] only came after a long time of listening to recordings just to get familiar with that language. And it really is a different language. I figure that because the kids do the 20th and 21st century music so well, I'll try to concentrate more on that earlier period, because it is so important.

ACS: *That's fascinating. Is your downbeat at 1:30? It's 1:25 now. I'm sorry to be taking all your lunchtime.*

RL: Oh no, I'm happy to discuss these things.

ACS: *In your last interview with NYFC Newsletter [November 2000], you created a big stir by saying that you love to take time off.*

RL: Oh, really? [laughs]

ACS: *Yes, and people were fascinated—going eight weeks without practicing! And you had a wonderful reason for doing it; that you would relax and come back very refreshed. Of course, Rampal always took a month off.*

RL: I once heard him say that he had played a recital after taking a month off, and he thought he sounded better. And you know, I noticed the same thing too. This past summer we had six weeks off from the orchestra. When we play a lot, you don't realize it, but muscles after a while can get tense. When I pick up the instrument after whatever time I've stopped, it sounds better because it's more relaxed. It takes maybe four or five days for the fingers to get back into shape, but sound-wise I think it's really good. Ideally if I could, I would stop eight weeks every summer and four weeks every winter. Unfortunately, I don't have that time. The one time I stopped eight weeks, it was just before I started with the Philharmonic, because of the way the schedule [worked out with] vacation due from the other orchestra. You get back and you're so eager and rested.

Of course, being a musician is not like working on an assembly line; the mind, I think, is important. I thought my first season with the Philharmonic, after having eight weeks off, was the season I enjoyed the most, and I think a big part of it is because I was really rested. Not that I don't enjoy it, but there have been summers in the last few years when I've had only two or three weeks off, and you start the season again and you're still tired. If you start tired in September and the season goes until the end of July, it's very difficult. And also as an aside, to make the muscles relax in the fingers may prevent some problems like tendonitis and things like that. Fortunately, I've never had it, but when I was in Montreal I knew string players who said they would not stop playing one single day, even during vacation,

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Robert Langevin (cont'd from page 5)

because they were afraid of losing calculus. Maybe they can't stop for a long time, but fortunately we don't have that problem.

*ACS: I wanted to ask you about stress. As principal flute in a very major orchestra, it's a stressful job. How do you cope with that?*

RL: Well, you know, I don't find it stressful because I really try to take time every day to practice for myself. I feel that if I can do my warm-up routine and if I have time to learn what I'm playing; if I'm prepared, then I don't feel stressed. That's why I always try to spend a few months preparing right when the season comes out, which is usually in January or February. So when the next season starts, or when I go on vacation in the summer, I know that I have worked on all these things and I can play them. It's a kind of psychology thing; if you know you can play, then you can go on vacation with a rested mind. And when the season starts, it comes week after week, but if it's something you have worked on a few months prior, usually in four or five days it comes back. So you can manage that way. And it may also have to do with music directors; maybe in the days when they were real dictators, when music directors could fire musicians on the spot, I'm sure it was a lot worse. But here we are really blessed with Lorin Maazel, because as music director he is so wonderful. He is so relaxed himself as a person; he is one of the very few conductors I've seen who has complete confidence in himself. And because of that, he will trust the musicians. It's the conductors who don't have confidence in themselves who don't trust the players—they are nervous and they make everyone else nervous. You really can sense that. But Maazel is so much in control; he knows every score he conducts, from memory, inside out. He hears everything, it's amazing. When I first came to the states I went to Pittsburgh and he was music director there.

*ACS: Lucky!*

RL: Yes, I had come from working with a conductor whose name I won't mention, who was always very nervous and often unprepared. Somebody like Maazel, who is the total opposite, is amazing! We did "cold recordings" with him, where we opened the page and it

was "Take 1," [without] a rehearsal. Most orchestras will perform a piece before recording it. With him, everybody feels the duty to come prepared, because he is prepared. It makes for a very efficient way of working. And it's funny, because some critics, especially in the *New York Times*, put him down for all sorts of reasons, probably because he doesn't do a lot of choreography or he doesn't look like he's in pain all the time. [Laughter]

*ACS: You have a reputation for being a true gentleman and a mensch. And you have a reputation for not being pushy. Have you managed to get to the top of your profession being that type of gentleman the whole time, or have you had to be tough at points?*



RL: No, I think I was always the same. I suppose you could say that I never had much ambition, but my goal when I was a student was to be able to find work playing the flute, no matter what kind of work it was. I thought that if you were able to make a living playing music, that would be wonderful. I thought people who could do that were very lucky. When you're a student, you always wonder, "Will I be able to do that?" You don't know, and my one dream was to get a job in the Montreal Symphony; that was my one dream. And I was lucky; when I was 24 I got a job with the Montreal Symphony.

*ACS: You consider that lucky? You worked hard.*

RL: Of course I did, but I guess I'm lucky it happened, because there are some people to whom it never happens. So that was really my one dream, and I

had to audition many times. For the position I finally won, they had five different auditions over three years. I wasn't able to do all of them, because at the time I was studying in Europe. I remember the first one. I was still a student in Montreal, I was 19 then, and my teacher said, "You know, you should take this audition just for the experience, to see how it works." And the irony is that it's probably the only audition in my life I wasn't nervous for, because I walked in and I saw this screen, which I didn't even know would be there. I couldn't see anybody and I thought, "Wow, this is no problem. Nobody can see me." Of course, I wasn't ready; I didn't know what I was doing there in a lot of those excerpts. But I kept working, and five years later I was finally able to win it. It was an international audition; there were 60-odd players, it was behind screens, it was over two days. It was like it is at the Met, one of the very few orchestras where it's behind a screen all the way. They don't see who you are.

*ACS: Genuinely anonymous.*

RL: Yes. [To prepare,] I listened to a lot of excerpts on recordings. [You have] to play in a way that makes them believe you have experience. If you really know the context of a certain solo, you can play it well even [if you've] never performed it with an orchestra.

I personally think the screen all the way is great, because it avoids any kind of [politics]. It doesn't matter how young or how old you are, or what sex or race, it is just how the person plays. And when it's behind a screen, all you have to listen with is your ears; you can't say, "Oh yes he's good, but he's very young" or "I'm not sure if he'll be able to do that." The Met has been very successful in audition procedures because they always hire somebody. Some orchestras will hold three or four auditions and [still] not fill a position. I know of one orchestra that had two auditions with two finalists, four different people, and it still hasn't hired anybody. Any of the four people would be capable of the job. And you have a probation period anyway. A teacher [once] said to me that you learn the most the first year in your first job, and it's true. I've seen that [myself] with students who have gotten jobs; you try to tell them things, but it's nothing like being in the job. And after a year, [their] weak points have improved dramatically. Somebody who

is talented and willing to work will inevitably improve when surrounded with [great] players. I know in the Philharmonic we have hired very young players who were basically just out of school. These people have grown and developed and are such great players [now] that I'm glad [we] took the risk, because it really paid off.

*ACS: Does there need to be a cap on enrollment in institutions, given the diminishing number of jobs available?*

RL: I know Juilliard has a cap for the winds; in each class—flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn—there's a limit of 12 students.

*ACS: Which is lower than it used to be?*

RL: I've heard that when Julie Baker was teaching he had 25 students, so either there wasn't a cap or it was higher. I don't know if there should be caps, because I think naturally the selection will make itself; the better players will be able to make a living, and those who can't will go into something else [and be the public that will] go to classical music concerts. I think schools should be realistic and not accept people who do not have a certain amount of talent, but [I

wouldn't want] to prevent somebody who really loves it from studying.

*ACS: How's your tennis?*

RL: It's not bad. I try to play tennis once a week, but it's not always possible.

*ACS: You went up those stairs pretty fast.*

RL: Well, I run every day, so I try to keep in shape.

*ACS: If you were not a flute player, what would you be?*

RL: When I was a kid, what I really wanted to be was a baseball player. If I had had my wish, I would have been a baseball player until the age of 40 or whenever you need to retire as an athlete, and then be a musician from then on. Of course, you can't do that, but if it were possible, that's what I would have liked to do.

*ACS: Fascinating. But I'm sorry; you haven't eaten your lunch. And it is so European, to make your own lunch and bring it. That's what we do in Australia.*

RL: On days when we have a morning rehearsal and a concert, I'll bring my dinner, too. It saves you so much time, and you eat better food, too. If you go into a restaurant, you don't know how long it's

going to take. That's the kind of thing that creates stress if you have a concert. This way, I eat it whenever I have the time, and if I don't finish now, I'll eat it during intermission this afternoon.

*ACS: Thank you so much.*

RL: My pleasure.

*It was 1:32 pm. I could hear the orchestra tuning up. Mr. Langevin wasn't the slightest bit perturbed. He ran down all five flights with me to make sure I didn't get lost in the warren and turned and ran back up get his flute and to catch the end of the A. □*

*Ann Cecil-Sterman studied with Julius Baker and Jean-Pierre Rampal. Her April performances include a tour to Oberlin, Boston, and Wilmington with the Avian Ensemble, and premiere performances with the MCCE ensemble.*

*Acknowledgment: Carol Jensen is thanked for transcribing the interview.*

Flute Happenings Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Mail date
April 2008	3/13/08	4/10/08
May 2008	4/3/08	5/1/08

APR 24

Thursday 7:00 to 9:00 pm

"Performance Anxiety from Inside Out," a workshop for flutists and other musicians with **HELEN SPIELMAN**.

• 92nd Street Y, Lexington Avenue at 92nd St, NYC. • Admission \$35; tickets, visit [www.92y.org](http://www.92y.org); • Info, email [hbs@email.unc.edu](mailto:hbs@email.unc.edu).

APR 27

Sunday 3:00 pm

"An April Fool's Concert," with **MARGARET SWINCHOSKI**, flute, in music for assorted instruments (including glass harmonica and theremin) and voice by Rossini (with the flutist singing in the "Cat" duet), Beethoven, Gershwin, and Vanhal.

• Bronxville Women's Club, 135 Midland Avenue, Bronxville, NY. • Info, call 914-337-3252 or email [info@bronxvillewomensclub.org](mailto:info@bronxvillewomensclub.org).

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Acclaimed PERFORMANCE ANXIETY COACH Helen Spielman, MA, is available in NYC for private sessions April 25–26. Enhance confidence, joy, and freedom on stage. Info, [www.unc.edu/~hbs](http://www.unc.edu/~hbs); to schedule, [hbs@email.unc.edu](mailto:hbs@email.unc.edu) or 919-929-4520.

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ENSEMBLES PROGRAM UPDATE

by Annette Baron

The NYFC Ensembles Program had the third get-together of the 2007—2008 season at the Brooklyn home of Elinor Gipfel on Sunday, February 10th. The event was attended by Terence Hannigan, Harry Hassell, Nneka Landrum, Herb Waldren, and Elinor Gipfel. The group played trios by Quantz and Luigi Gianella. Harry Hassell, an experienced professional, doubled as conductor.



*L to R: Nneka Landrum, Elinor Gipfel, Terence Hannigan, and Herb Waldren. Photo by Harry Hassell.*

The last informal get-together before the dress rehearsal for the May 18th concert will be held at the home of Ilene Fischer at 200 Chambers Street, Apartment 28A, NYC, on Sunday, March 23, 2008 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Please RSVP to Irene at [hotshedoc@aol.com](mailto:hotshedoc@aol.com) AND to Annette Baron, Ensembles Coordinator at [EnsemblesNYFC@aol.com](mailto:EnsemblesNYFC@aol.com).





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



## March 30, 2008 concert

Sunday, 5:30 pm • LaGuardia High School, 100 Amsterdam Avenue (at 65th Street)

## Robert Langevin, flute

### 88<sup>th</sup> Season

#### 2007–2008 Concerts

**October 7, 2007** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
 PAUL EDMUND-DAVIES, flute, and LINDA MARK, piano

**November 18, 2007** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
 PALISADES VIRTUOSI, MARGARET SWINCHOSKI, flute

**December 16, 2007** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
 CHRISTINE POTTER, alto and bass flute  
*Holiday reception*

**January 27, 2008** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
 KATHERINE KEMLER, flute

**February 24, 2008** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
 GREG PATTILLO, the beatbox flutist

**March 30, 2008** • Sunday, all day  
 FLUTE FAIR 2008—ROBERT LANGEVIN, flute  
 LaGuardia High School

**April 27, 2008** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
 2008 NYFC COMPETITION WINNERS

**May 18, 2008** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
 ANNUAL MEETING & ENSEMBLE CONCERT  
 Greenwich House Music School

*All concerts and events (except as noted) at Yamaha Piano Salon, 689 Fifth Avenue (entrance between Fifth and Madison on 54th Street). All dates and programs subject to change. Tickets \$10, only at the door; free to members. For more information, visit the NYFC website at [www.nyfluteclub.org](http://www.nyfluteclub.org) or call 732-257-9082.*



#### From the Editor

**Greetings!** March is Flute Fair month. Our guest artist is Robert Langevin, since 2000 the principal flutist with the New York Philharmonic and a Juilliard School faculty member. Ann Cecil-Sterman's interview touches on Mr. Langevin's upcoming Flute Fair recital, his thoughts on the French school of playing and symphony auditions, and how to deal with stress (be very well prepared and take long vacations!). My favorite part: learning of his surprise on hearing a teaching voice so much like his own when auditing a recent masterclass **fiven** by his former teacher, Maxence Larrieu...a sure sign (to me, at least) that the French tradition is alive and well.

Dave Wechsler's "From the President" topic this month is...you guessed it: New York Flute Fair 2008. He recalls some of the early ones and their various locations. But remember, *this* year's Fair is at LaGuardia High School.

John Romeri, a young professional flutist relatively new to the New York music scene, is this month's Member Profile subject. The results of his efforts as the NYFC's corporate sponsor coordinator should be on display in the Flute Fair exhibit halls—drop by to check them out and you will be sure to run into him in person.

All for now. Hope to see you at the fair.

Best regards,

*Katherine Saenger (klsaenger@yahoo.com)*