



# The New York Flute Club

## NEWSLETTER

November 2008

### PETER BLOOM: LIVING HISTORY FLUTIST



*Interview by Andrew Serman*

**P**eter Bloom, the Boston flutist specializing in performing on his large collection of early American-made flutes, will be bringing some highlights of his flute collection to the NYFC this November for a concert of music from 19th-century New York. His recital will include a selection of music that appeared in New York City on concert programs of the day, anecdotes about the virtuoso flutists who performed those concerts, and performances of the pieces on a wide variety of flutes, all made in or near NY during the same time. Though I am a collector myself, I have never known much about the flute makers or early players of NY. This interview, conducted by phone, gave me an introduction to both, as well as to the very charming and erudite Peter Bloom himself.

*ANDREW SERMAN: How did you come to be giving this unique recital here?*

**PETER BLOOM:** Last year I did a lot of consulting for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, on their instrument collection, and I did a lecture on the flutes of Alfred Badger. Somehow the word got out that

*(Cont'd on page 4)*

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#### *In Concert*

#### **Peter Bloom, Flute**

The Flute in 19th Century New York

Sunday, **November 23, 2008**, 5:30 pm

*Yamaha Piano Salon, 689 Fifth Avenue*

(entrance on 54th Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues)

#### **The Ante-Bellum Years (conical flutes)**

Variations on a Favorite Air  
 Waltzes for the Flute "To the Amateurs of New York"  
 Concertino, Op. 100, c. 1840  
 Salute to New York "A Song for the Flute"  
 Studies on Taste and Style Composed Expressly for the Boehm Flute "To Philip Ernst"

F. Egan (fl. c. 1820-1840)  
 J. L. Downe (fl. c. 1825-1850)  
 Anton Bernard Fürstenau (1792-1852)  
 Louis Drouet Jr. (1792-1873)  
 Louis Drouet Jr.

#### **The Post-Bellum Years (cylinder flutes)**

Danse des Mouchérons "December 25, 1873 To Henry Clay Wysham"  
 Wind-Song  
 Il Balen: Air and Variation (1876; air from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* of 1853)  
 Etude in B Major (from 24 Studies dedicated to Heinrich Gantenberg)  
 Nocturne

Sidney Lanier (1842-1881)  
 Sidney Lanier  
 Sidney Lanier  
 William Schade (1850-1930)  
 William Schade/P.H. Bloom

*Program subject to change*

*Mr. Bloom will play the entire program on historical flutes by the New York makers Alfred G. Badger, Gustave Bebrle, James W. Hoey, Allen R. Jollie, William R. Meinell, Charles Monzani, and Edward Riley. He will be glad to show the instruments to interested audience members after the concert.*



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# The Flute in Gotham

by Nancy Toff



American flute making as well as of concert life.

We know that the flute was played in NY from colonial days, first by amateurs, and by the mid-17th century by professionals as well. By 1800, some fifty musicians in NY were able to eke out a living through some combination of teaching, selling music, and playing in theater orchestras and subscription concerts. An increasing number emigrated from Europe; some time after 1830, Philip Ernst, for example, left Germany to settle in NY, where he was one of the first flutists to adopt the Boehm system. The French flutist Louis Drouet met Ernst during a concert tour to NY in 1854, and the next year dedicated a set of etudes to him. John Kyle, Ernst's colleague in the first incarnation of the NY Philharmonic (1842), was the first successful American-born flutist. The late 19th century saw the rise of William Schade, an American, and one of the great flutists in the German tradition, Carl Wehner, a Boehm student whom Theodore Thomas invited to NY to become first flute of the Philharmonic in 1886.

The flute dealers and makers who served this increasingly demanding clientele followed much the same pattern: The 1760s and '70s saw the arrival in NY of professionally trained European instrument makers, among them Gottlieb Wolhaupter, the first flute maker documented in the United States. In 1783, John Jacob Astor arrived in the U.S. with a consignment of seven flutes from his brother George, the London flutemaker; he turned his instrument business over to colleagues when he found the fur business more profitable. After the revolution, other Europeans immigrated to escape restrictive trade guilds and expand their businesses. Typically, the shops were owned by master craftsmen who employed family members and one or more journeymen or apprentices. As NY-made instruments improved in quality in the early 19th century, imports declined.

The founding fathers of the American flutemaking industry, George Catlin of Hartford and Edward Riley Sr. of NY, spawned a veritable dynasty of flute craftsmen, among them John Meacham and Sylvanus Pond, who first worked for Catlin and later moved their business to NY. Another Catlin descendant, Asa Hopkins, was one of several makers who set up shop in Litchfield, Connecticut (also known as Fluteville). Riley came to NY from London about 1805; two of his workmen, John Firth and William Hall, each married the boss's daughters. Ultimately these men came together to form the NY firm of Firth, Hall & Pond, which in turn bought out some of the Litchfield shops and lasted until 1847, becoming one of the largest music merchandisers in the United States.

The Boehm flute arrived in NY around 1845 and was adopted by both Philip Ernst and John Kyle. It was through Kyle's patronage that the Connecticut-born Alfred G. Badger, a Catlin "grandson," began manufacturing the Boehm flute here. More German makers came after that, among them William R. Meinell, who worked in the heavily-German Yorkville neighborhood (and made flute collector Dayton C. Miller's first flute), and Arthur Gemeinhardt, who began on 10th Street in 1905 and soon moved to Yorkville as well. (For those who are interested, several of us are working on a detailed genealogy of American flute makers.)

Peter Bloom's program reflects the symbiotic relationships between these early NY performers and flute makers. His concert illustrates the salutary results of historical curiosity, instrument collecting, and musicological sleuthing—not to mention fine musicianship. This is historically informed performance at its best.

\* *This is New York*, 1949.

## Member Profile

Karen Demsey

*NYFC Member since 1995*



**Employment:** Full-time professor of flute and music history at William Paterson University in Wayne, NJ; member of UpTown Flutes and various chamber ensembles.

**Recent performances:** An UpTown Flutes concert at Drew University in February 2008, and an April 2008 recital at the Donnell Library with Ann Roggen, viola; David Demsey, saxophone; Nelson Padgett, piano.

**Career highlight(s):** Performing with UpTown Flutes at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (2002) and the 2003 NFA convention in Washington, DC; recording her flute and marimba CD, *Recollections of the Inland Sea* (Capstone Records), with percussionist Greg Giannascoli; being a guest faculty performer at the Eastman School of Music (2001 and 2002); and performing at the Nanjing Arts Institute in China as part of an exchange program with William Paterson University music faculty and students (October 2008).

**Current flute(s):** She's played a Haynes for two decades, and still owns one, but currently plays an Emmanuel flute (No. 22), a Weissman piccolo, a DeFord alto c. 1970, and a bass flute previously owned by noted NY woodwind artist Albert Regni.

**Influential flute teachers:** Bonita Boyd (during high school and again as a master's student); Susan Heath, Claude Monteux, and Murray Panitz (as an undergraduate); and James Scott and Bart Feller (during doctoral studies).

**High school:** Eastridge and Penfield High Schools in Rochester, NY; Prep Division, Eastman School of Music, grades 5-12.

**Degree(s):** BM in performance (University of Maine, 1977), MM in music education (Eastman School of Music, 1989), and DMA in performance (Rutgers University, 1996).

**Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishments:** As a performer: commissioning and premiering new works for flute and marimba and for flute ensemble, including two works for UpTown Flutes by Peter Bacchus; her three CDs with Uptown Flutes, on which she has recorded the Bacchus pieces and UK composer Andrew Downes's Sonata for Eight Solo Flutes. As a teacher: researching successful and innovative "best practices" in the college applied teaching studio for a book to be completed during a spring 2009 sabbatical leave.

**Favorite practice routines:** Karen says, "Singing and playing simultaneously is central to my warm-up, my practice, and my relationship with the flute. It addresses all issues at once: breathing, intonation, tone, muscle strength without tension, and expression. Until recently, I often received blank looks when I asked new students about it, but thanks to the efforts of Robert Dick and others, singing and playing is now mainstream. My students are always amazed at their 'before' and 'after' sound; the tone is rich, resonant, full of life."

**Other interests:** Family history and travel.

**Advice for NYFC members:** "Let go of preconceived notions that improvisation is something belonging to a small group of trained professionals and incorporate improvisation into your daily playing. Start with long tones on a pentatonic scale or a Dorian mode; when you become comfortable with that, branch out with other scales, or elaborate on familiar tunes. Follow where your ear and intuition lead. The main goal is to enjoy making it up as you go along, like a child making up songs in the back seat of the car on long trips."

## 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.

### NOVEMBER '08

Nov  
6

Thursday 1:30 pm

The OMNI Ensemble, with **DAVID WECHSLER**, flute, will perform Elliott Carter's Cello Sonata, Olivier Messiaen's *Le Merle Noir*, Louise Farrenc's Trio for flute, cello and piano, and flute sonatas by Joseph Bodin de Boismortier.

- Center for the Performing Arts at the College of Staten Island, 2800 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island. • Admission is free.
- Info, call 718 859-8649

Nov  
6

Thursday 8:00 pm

**ROBERT DICK** celebrates 50 years of playing the flute! Presented by the Pro Musicis Foundation, the program includes high points of his solo flute compositions, including the world premiere of *Air is the Heaviest Metal*, his flute and piano duo *Life Concert*, and a special interview with Eugenia Zukerman.

- Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, 154 West 57th Street, NYC. • Admission: tickets are \$20.

Nov  
7

Friday 8:00 pm

The OMNI Ensemble, with **DAVID WECHSLER**, flute, in the program of November 6.

- Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Avenue (at Lincoln Place) in Park Slope, Brooklyn. • Admission: \$15 general, \$10 students/seniors. • Info and ticket reservations, call 718 859-8649.

Nov  
12

Wednesday noon

Femmes Four, a flute quartet with **AMY ZIEGELBAUM**, Lauren Ausubel, Anna Povich de Mayor, and Helen Richman, flutes, will perform music by Leo Kraft, Edward Smaldone, Mikael Karlsson, and Allen Brings.

- LeFrak Concert Hall, Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College, NY.
- Admission is free.



Peter Bloom (cont'd from page 1)

I was an expert on Badger flutes, which I was not, of course, but I got a call from Andras Adorjan in Germany, asking if I would write the Badger article for their soon to be published *Lexikon der Flöte*. So I did, then Nancy Toff heard about it, which led to an invitation to play and talk at the NYFC.

AS: And Badger was perhaps the most well known of the American flute makers before Haynes, is that right? And he worked here in NY?

PB: Yes, that's right. His flutes are really superb. But I'll be starting the concert at an earlier time frame, in the 1820s, around the time that American slavery ended in NYC. That's about the time that flute making began there in earnest, [about two decades before Boehm's 1847 "modern" cylindrical flute, and the "Big Switch" that followed]. But these guys not only made flutes, they were publishing music too, for virtuosos and amateurs. It was the only way you could have a "record" of what the traveling virtuosos were playing in concert—there was no sound recording or even radio at that time, so everyone interested, even amateurs, would buy the music, and try to learn it.

AS: Interesting! Were the flute makers publishing their own compositions too, as we know Boehm did?

PB: No. There was a lot of printed music coming into NY from Europe, from composers such as Drouet, Fürstenau, Nicholson, even in the 1820s, but what I'm talking about was music mostly being written on this side of the pond. For example, I'm planning to start my NYFC recital with a set of variations on "God Save the King," written by a fellow named Egan, who was a composer from Kingston, Jamaica. There was active trade and interaction between NY and the Islands at that time.

AS: How interesting. Do we know anything about Egan?

PB: Not much. He was an organist, an organ tuner, and repairman in Kingston, and was also the publisher of a book of lithographs of black Jamaican culture, but I don't know if he himself was white, black, or mixed. His variations were published in NY by Riley around the 1820s.

Of course, in Europe variations on "God Save the King" were common in the day; Nicholson, the great English flutist, made his career playing his [own] version, and Drouet and Fürstenau all played some version.

AS: Would it be fair at all to say that flute playing through most of the 19th century had flashy, trashy, variation-type music as a mainstay, which led to Taffanel's later promotion of music for the flute that was as serious as that of the best violin or piano repertoire?

with foreign-born talent. There were other virtuosos from Europe touring America as well.

AS: So when we say that you're giving a recital of music from the flute world of NY in the 19th century, I was a bit wrong in thinking that this was all a homegrown scene having yet to be influenced by the Europeans...

PB: It started in a big way with Graupner, who had played oboe in Haydn's own Esterhazy orchestra in the 1790s, and came to Boston shortly after that, and boy, people followed him very quickly.

AS: Tell us more about what you'll be playing on in November.

PB: Sure. The Egan I'll be playing on a flute by Riley, who was making flutes on Chatham Street in downtown NYC in the 1820s. It's a one-key flute. After that, I'll play on an 1837 eight-key Allen Jollie flute something from a set of 1840s waltzes by J.L. Downe that was dedicated "To the amateurs of New York."

AS: So the Jollie flute would be conical, like a piccolo today, tapering toward the foot?

PB: Yes, it has ring keys, like clarinets do, and an ivory bushing on the blowhole.

AS: How would you describe the sound?

PB: Depends on who's playing it, and what they're trying to get out of it.

AS: I love that answer, it's open to the player.

PB: You have to read what Tulou says a conical flute should sound like, and what Nicholson says it should sound like, and it's a totally different ideal, and in fact, if you try their different approaches, as they described them, you can kind of go toward those ideals as you play. It's wild.

AS: So would you say that they are very flexible-playing flutes?

PB: Yes. [Getting back to] Drouet, he played regularly at the Crystal Palace [an exhibition hall in existence from 1853-1858, adjacent to today's Bryant Park]. He was considered French, but he was actually born in Holland, and spent his career for the most part in London, where he stood for the view "opposing" Nicholson's. Nicholson was the pop star of the day, and Irish flute players today still follow his



PB: Well, you could say that, but trashy stuff is always a mainstay (laughing)... however, there wasn't the line between pop and classical stuff that we have today.

AS: That's a very important point, isn't it?

PB: I think that a lot of these variation pieces get a bum rap—it was a way to experience the glories of the opera in another setting, an instrumental setting. By the way, did you know that the great Louis Drouet, one of Europe's preeminent flutists of the 19th century and known to us for his etudes, lived in Manhattan for four years, in the 1850s? During that time, of course, his style and abilities became well known in NY, became a part of the NY musical world, which has always been filled with immigrants, very comfortable

style of flute playing. Drouet was a much more sophisticated player, with greater diversity of sound and color, types of articulation and expression. He also played a more diverse repertoire. There was something transcendent in his approach. The Nicholson approach was much more worldly. I'll play this part of the concert on an eight-key flute by James Hoey, a NY maker, working on lower Broadway, near Maiden Lane, in the 1850s.

Badger, by the way, the most famous of the NY flute makers, could have tossed a stone from his shop to the site of the World Trade towers.

*AS: And that would have been so close to the water at that time, before any of the extensive landfill additions to Manhattan were made, such as Battery Park City.*

*PB: Right, but listen to this: Badger lived in Brooklyn at that time, and he commuted every day on the ferry from Peck's slip [right around the time] Walt Whitman wrote his famous 1854 poem "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." I would be willing to bet that they rubbed elbows at least once.*

*AS: What a wonderful connection! And that is a truly great American poem. Whitman celebrates a special American-style universalism, where you have a mix of people—working class, elites, everyone—thrown together on the way to work.*

*PB: It makes my hair stand on end. Amazing. The whole idea of his Brooklyn ferry poem is "you see this now through me."*

*AS: And that's what you'll be doing, in a way, by playing music of this time on precisely appropriate flutes, here in the city where that happened. But how should we listen, accustomed as we are to shiny silver flutes with shiny modern sounds? How do we listen to early historic flutes? Do we go in blankly, with an open mind, or do we need to know something that will open doors for us?*

*PB: I'm reminded of a story of a competition in Belgium for early music performance, some years ago, and one of the judges was Frans Brüggen, the great baroque flute player. He insisted that they include on the jury a shakuhachi player, who knew nothing of European flute history or the fusses that might be made about style and historical authenticity. According to the story, the shakuhachi player came down with the same opinions as the others on the jury, he just listened to the sound.... It's not about what you learn in school....*

*AS: Okay, let me turn that question on its head. Would it be possible for a carefully*

*trained modern flutist to have a harder time listening to a concert of historical instruments than, say, a shakuhachi player who is coming from an entirely different set of expectations?*

*PB: It depends on their level of curiosity. I think it's all open.*

After Drouet's *Salute to New York*, to be played on the 8-key Hoey, we get to the Big Switch. I'll play a few of the *Studies in Style and Taste*, composed by Drouet expressly for the Boehm flute, in 1855, for the great NY flutist Philip Ernst. I'll use an early style flute by Badger for this, if it's in good playing condition that day, made around 1850. It is one of the earliest full Boehm system American flutes, made in the ring key, conical style.

*AS: Okay, so this model of flute has a complete set of Boehm keys, but in the ring key style, which means it looks a little like a sideways clarinet. And by conical you mean that it tapers toward the foot joint, like a piccolo does, so the bore actually gets smaller as you get toward the end of the instrument.*

*PB: Right. You've got to have a taper somewhere, and on these, instead of having a headjoint taper, there is a body taper. They are really just a big piccolo, and some of the playing quirks are the same, like in the upper register, they tend not to be sharp, but rather a bit flat....*

*AS: So, this Badger is a switch to Boehm system, but to an early conical version having much the same acoustics as the earlier flutes.*

*PB: Right.*

*AS: When did the first "modern style" flute get to America, one with a full size cylindrical bore and a full set of Boehm keys, that a flutist of today would be able to just pick up and play?*

*PB: [Cylindrical] Boehm system flutes came to America very, very quickly after their introduction in Europe in 1847, with Ernst being the main importer. The first one was probably imported from the Godfroy shop [in France] by a violinist in NY who was importing string instruments; we have a copy of his ad in the *New York Tribune*.*

*AS: And who was the first American maker of these flutes?*

*PB: Badger, I think, shortly after 1847. [Editor's note: Badger had an advantage over the makers in England and France, since Boehm's patents did not apply in the U.S.]*

(Cont'd on page 6)

## FLUTE HAPPENINGS

### NOVEMBER '08

Nov  
15

Saturday 8:00 pm

The Palisades Virtuosi with **MARGARET SWINCHOSKI**, flute, will perform "West Meets East," a program of Asian and Asian-influenced works including the world premiere of a commissioned trio by the ASCAP award-winning composer Sunbin Kim and works by Maurice Ravel, Tan Dun, Maria Grenfell, Godfrey Schroth, and Dan Ikuma.

- Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, 113 Cottage Place, Ridgewood, NJ. • Admission: \$20 general, \$15 students/seniors.
- Info, visit [www.palisadesvirtuosi.org](http://www.palisadesvirtuosi.org).

Nov  
23

Sunday 3:00 pm

**CARLA AULD** will perform works of Hoover, Pujol, Sierra, Merlin, and Beaser in a flute and guitar recital with Ana Maria Rosado.

- New Jersey City University, Ingalls Recital Hall, 2039 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, NJ. • Admission is free. • Info, call 201-200-3151 or 201-200-2099.

### DECEMBER '08

Dec  
4

Thursday Noon

The "Music at Noon" series presents a Christmastime flute and harp recital with **CARLA AULD** and Merynda Adams.

- Morristown United Methodist Church, 50 Park Place, Morristown, NJ. • Admission is free. • Info, call 973-538-2132.

Dec  
5

Friday 7:30 pm

**PATRICIA (DAVILA) LAZZARA**, flute, and Kimberly DeRosa, harp, will perform a program of holiday music and more.

- Don Bosco High School, 492 North Franklin Turnpike, Ramsey, NJ. • Admission: \$20.
- Info, call Toni Cecere at 201-327-8003 x188 or visit [www.donboscoprep.com/arts](http://www.donboscoprep.com/arts).

Dec  
6

Saturday 3:00 pm

**UPTOWN FLUTES** will perform a program of holiday classics and more.

- New Jersey Eastern Star Homes, 111 Finderne Avenue, Bridgewater, NJ. • Admission is free. • Info, call Diane Baldwin at 908-722-4140.



Peter Bloom (cont'd from page 5)

AS: Let's talk about the Badger flutes a bit. I've never owned one, but I've seen a few, and they're exquisitely made, and usually have a crest, like a coat of arms, on the bead joint or the top of the body.

PB: Yes, they're beautifully made. Badger had a whole firm, with a foreman and workers, in a building that also had jewelers and engravers, right there in his building. There were people making retractable pencils from gold, and engravers of bank note plates....

AS: His flutes are heavy, unlike the French flutes, which were really trying to be absolutely as light as possible...

PB: Yes, they were seamed tubes, but heavier than the French flutes.... It had something to do with the American industrial aesthetic of the time—make something that would last, and would stay in adjustment very well, something physically sturdy. The Badger flutes I'll be playing with came with two head joints. One is made from thinned wood with a raised lip plate, like was done a bit in London, and the other is silver, with a barrel lip assembly. The embouchures are cut differently: one is more square, producing maybe a larger sound, and the other is more oval, producing a rounder sound.

AS: Did Badger play the flute well enough to know fine points of sound color, and so forth?

PB: Badger probably played some, but he certainly wasn't playing concerto repertoire or anything. He was fascinated with making flutes as a child. At 17 or 18 he went off to apprentice with a flute maker in Albany, then had a partnership making instruments in Buffalo, before coming to NY. But the great makers, like Badger, enjoyed being around players and liked the challenges the players brought to them.

AS: Just like much later, at the height of flute making in France, when Taffanel and that circle of players were at the makers' shops quite a bit. I was wondering... was there American innovation in flute design, or was it mostly copying the flutes arriving from Europe?

PB: Innovation, absolutely! You look at the number of patents granted, for American flute making, so many ideas, and many of them very good. The pinless mechanism, for example....

AS: I've always wondered about that, because we hear about the pinless mechanism that the Brannen shop advertises as such a modern innovation, but I have an alto flute made by George Haynes, the brother of William Haynes, and this flute was built in NYC in the 1920s, with a pinless mechanism.

PB: Yup. American stuff, from the early 20th century. George Haynes, by the way, was working in NY, more or less, from

PB: (laughing) I can't think of a day I haven't!

AS: I'm very curious about how and why you began collecting vintage flutes.

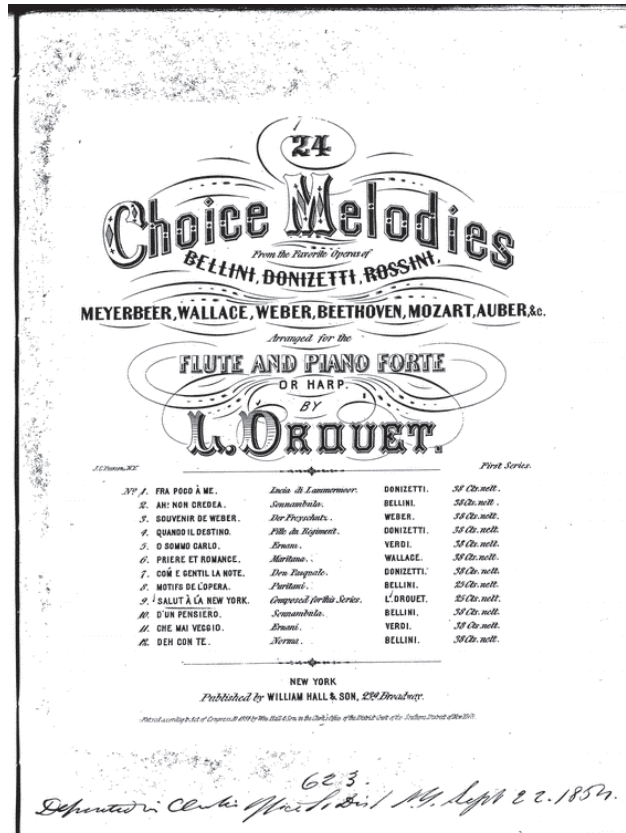
PB: I think it's a passion for pawn shops, back in my early days. A passion for looking at old instruments. I used to love to go to Ponte's [on West 48th Street] in NY. Look at that stuff! I just fell in love with the crazy things I would see, ever since I was in college.

AS: Are you playing with piano in the NY recital?

PB: Maybe not, since some of these instruments are at differing pitches from each other and some of these pieces have accompaniment parts that are less than fully interesting. [Incidentally,] we worry today about pitch rising, and it indeed is a big problem, but there was a time when it was much, much higher. Early Steinway pitch was 460! The conductor Theodore Thomas [1835-1905, the first conductor of the Chicago Symphony] worked to bring American pitch down.

AS: Another question about listening. Listening to historic instruments is a kind of listening back, we might say; we'll be hearing something that Walt Whitman might have heard in his NY. Does this relate to what might be called listening to the side, to other types of music from around the world that may be happening even now, like shakubachi, or the Indian bansuri, the Arabic ney, the Chinese dizi, even the Armenian duduk, and so forth?

PB: The duduk, I love it! I own one, but I can't play it yet! It's an amazing sound. But I don't know, a listener can just come to this concert, and enjoy what they enjoy from it. We're all working as hard as we can, playing the kinds of music that we play. I don't follow the Early Music Police or anything like that. It's music, there are no laws. What am I going to follow but my inner ear? Years ago, I played a Mozart concerto with my [modern] conservatory orchestra using a Baroque flute at modern pitch. I had a great time playing that concert, but a friend said to me, "Yes, beautiful, but you know that isn't how it's supposed to sound." It took me so many years to become free from that comment. There is no "supposed to." The instrument tells you how it wants to be played, and perhaps it's not to all tastes. Historical knowledge is for information, not rules. After all, every historical book is full of



Manuscript image from Library of Congress

1905 through 1930. Top of the line instruments. There was a Boston maker named Christensen, who split off from Haynes about the same time as Powell did, and developed a whole system of making ribless flutes, which normally would be characteristic of a cheap flute, but these were wonderful.

AS: Can you tell us how big your personal flute collection is?

PB: Hmm... In what I play on daily, I've got a [modern] gold Dave Williams flute, a Rudall Carte alto flute, from the 1950s, probably made by Albert Cooper when he was with Rudall Carte, and a modern bass flute. In terms of the early stuff, maybe somewhere shy of a hundred flutes....

AS: Have you ever lost a flute, at home, just not known where in the world one of them was?

talk about the other great players who are labeled as "charlatans," so we know there were a lot of different things going on!

AS: *Is there any possibility of modern new music for historic instruments?*

PB: Absolutely, and it is being written. There are composers writing, and there are new pieces for traverso, for example, that just wouldn't work on modern flute. Also, there are people improvising on early flutes.

AS: *Is there a growing movement for "original instrument" use in music for the period we're talking about, around both sides of the Civil War, similar to what is well established for Baroque music?*

PB: I hope so. You know, we Americans have a strain of self-loathing, of putting down our own musical traditions as inferior to Europe's. We shouldn't think that way. There's a lot here. We have tremendous resources we haven't dug into yet. It's in our own attics and pawn shops. There was a lot going on here; look at the 19th-century concert programs. Being patriotic can include bringing our musical traditions to the fore. Look at jazz—it carries everything American within it. When you look at American-made instruments, you see such classical depth and beauty. It means that great things were definitely going on here, or it would have been impossible to make these wonderful flutes. It couldn't have happened without a thriving culture around them.

AS: *When you're not searching for a lost flute at home, what else gets your attention?...Any hobbies?*

PB: Oh, my days are spent trying to learn how to play these things! When I'm not playing flute, I'm thinking about playing flute.... Of course, I'm a little nervous about coming to NY, as a Red Sox fan, but unfortunately I think it's safe this year, since neither team is going anywhere... So that's a hint. But mostly, I'd rather practice, or play a performance somewhere.

AS: *Peter Bloom, thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I feel a new respect for the early flute traditions of NY, which I had barely known about. It will be wonderful to hear them, and you, at your November concert.*

Musician and flute collector **Andrew Sterman** ([www.andreusterman.com](http://www.andreusterman.com)) performs and teaches in New York and internationally.

## TRAFFIC ADVISORY

To avoid getting caught in traffic on concert days, please visit the NYC Department of Transportation's weekend traffic advisory site:  
[www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/wkndtraf.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/wkndtraf.shtml)

## Flute Happenings Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Mail date
December 2008	10/30/08	11/27/08
January 2009	12/11/08	1/8/09
February 2009	1/8/09	2/5/09
March 2009	1/29/09	2/26/09
April 2009	3/12/09	4/9/08
May 2009	4/16/09	5/14/09

## CLASSIFIED

**FOR SALE:** Weissman cork-joint piccolo with ebony body, exotic wood head, and silver keys. Excellent playing condition, \$3500. Call Virginia Schulze-Johnson at 484-663-3674.

## ENSEMBLES PROGRAM UPDATE

by *Annette Baron*

The first get-together of the season was held on Sunday, October 19th at Shetler Studios in midtown Manhattan. Sixteen NYFC members attended and played selections by Oscar and Hammerstein, and works of composers Rimsky-Korsakov, Mozart, Smetana, Jack Jordan, and a traditional piece arranged by Ann Cameron Pearce.

**Next Ensembles Program Get Together**  
**Sunday, December 7th, 2008**  
**1:00 to 3:00 pm**

Shetler Studios, (Penthouse 4)  
244 West 54th Street (between Broadway and 8th Avenue)  
RSVP to **Annette Baron**, Ensembles Coordinator, [ensemblesnyc@aol.com](mailto:ensemblesnyc@aol.com).

## ALEXA STILL MASTERCLASS REPORT



Four people played at the masterclass on Saturday October 11:

- Gloria Yun: Reinecke, Concerto in D major, 3rd movement
- Kimberly O'Hare: Taffanel, Fantaisie on Themes from *Der Freischutz*
- Erica Chung: Karg-Elert, Sonata Appassionata
- Elizabeth Saller: Nielsen, Concerto, 1st movement

Karla Moe and Jeanne Wilson were kind enough to share their impressions:

Alexa Still gave a thought-provoking masterclass filled with information, insight, wit and inspiration. She had four students under her tutelage, and each was given her very individual, undivided attention. With one student, she spoke of how the vibrato changes the embouchure; with another, she gave advice on the difference in producing a volume of sound for playing a concerto in a large hall, as opposed to a sonata with piano in a smaller hall. The third student was given advice about hand position, and the fourth student was encouraged to play musical lines with a smoothness and beautiful sound connecting all of the notes.—KM

The students were all enthusiastic and receptive to her ideas. As a teacher, I liked the way Alexa zeroed in on one major aspect of each student's playing and addressed that: i.e. tone projection, color, pitch control and how best to pull off a potentially "boring" piece with an audience.—JW



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



## November 23, 2008 concert

Sunday, 5:30 pm • Yamaha Piano Salon, 689 Fifth Avenue (at 54th Street)

Peter Bloom, *The Flute in 19th Century New York*

## 89<sup>th</sup> Season

### 2008 -2009 Concerts

**October 12, 2008** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
ALEXA STILL (Masterclass Oct. 11)

**November 23, 2008** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
PETER H. BLOOM, *The Flute in 19th Century New York*

**December 14, 2008** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
BONITA BOYD

**January 25, 2009** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
JEAN-LOUIS BEAUMADIER, piccolo

**February 22, 2009** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
JIM WALKER, jazz and classical artist

**March 15, 2009** • Sunday, all day  
FLUTE FAIR 2009  
MATHIEU DUFOUR, guest artist  
LaGuardia High School (to be confirmed)

**April 26, 2009** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
2009 NYFC COMPETITION WINNERS

**May 31, 2009** • Sunday, 5:00 pm  
ANNUAL MEETING & ENSEMBLE CONCERT

*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!** This month we will have a lecture/recital by Peter Bloom on the flutes of mid-19th century New York. Andrew Serman, himself a flutist and collector, did the interview. Their lively conversation swept me up into the “living history” of the era and led me to search the Internet for more about the topics they covered. I learned that the manuscript for Walt Whitman’s “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” can be found in the digital collections of the NY Public Library ([www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org)), that the 1850s Crystal Palace was located adjacent to what is now Bryant Park (but what was then the Croton Distributing Reservoir, the terminus of the first Croton Aqueduct, completed in 1842), and that the manuscript for Drouet’s “Salut à New York” (located by Nancy Toff on a Library

of Congress website a few clicks away from [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)\*) is available for free download. And I learned from the interview that the downside of being a collector owning more flutes than you can count: it’s often hard to find the one you want when you want it.

Nancy Toff gives an overview of this era of flute playing and flute making in her “From the President,” and she promises more on this topic at some future date. Until then, she suggests taking a look at Nancy Groce’s *Musical Instrument Makers of New York: A Directory of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Urban Craftsmen* (Pendragon, 1991).

This month’s profile subject is Karen Demsey, a New Jersey-based university flute teacher and UpTown Flutes member. She had a lot of interesting advice on improvisation and singing, and I’m hoping that she’ll give us a preview of her recent research on the characteristics of successful flute studios sometime this spring.

Anyway, all for now. See you soon.

Best regards,

Katherine Saenger ([klsaenger@yahoo.com](mailto:klsaenger@yahoo.com))

\* <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mussmhtml/mussmhome.html>, click “search authors” and then Drouet and Salut.