



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

April 2009

2009 COMPETITION WINNERS



Winners
(clockwise from top)
Emi Ferguson, Enrico Sartori, Gloria Yun, and
Adam Eccleston III.

1st Emi Ferguson (b. 1987)
Born in Japan and raised in London and Boston, Emi Ferguson now resides in NYC. She has played principal flute with the Juilliard Orchestra, the New Juilliard Ensemble, and the Arcos Chamber Orchestra. Also a performer on the baroque flute (traverso) and a composer, Ms. Ferguson is currently in an accelerated BM/MM program with Carol Wincenc at the Juilliard School and studying epidemiology at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health.

2nd Adam Eccleston III (b. 1986)
A native of Brooklyn, Adam Eccleston moved to Bad Kreuznach, Germany, at age 10 and began his musical training at age 12. He has studied with Thaddeus Watson (at the Frankfurt Hochschule für Musik), William Bennett, Eric Lamb, and Sir James and Lady Galway. Mr. Eccleston is a 2008 graduate of SUNY Purchase,

where he studied with Tara Helen O'Connor, and is now a master's student with Paula Robison at the New England Conservatory of Music.

3rd Enrico Sartori (b. 1982)
Born in Turin, Italy, Enrico Sartori earned a bachelor's degree at the Conservatorio G. Verdi of Turin (Italy) in 2001, and a master's degree at Yale University in 2005 as a student of Ransom Wilson. He was principal flute at the Academy of the Teatro alla Scala of Milan in 2003, and made his Carnegie Hall debut as a winner of the Artist International Competition in January 2009. Currently he is pursuing a DMA with Carol Wincenc at SUNY Stony Brook.

3rd Gloria Yun (b. 1989)
Gloria Yun began her flute studies in middle school with Wendy Stern. A graduate of the Mannes College Preparatory Division and winner of their 2006 Concerto Competition, Ms. Yun has performed in master classes with Linda Toote, Emily Beynon, Alexa Still, and Paula Robison. Currently a sophomore at the Mannes College of Music, Ms. Yun is studying with Sue Ann Kahn.

In Concert

WINNERS OF THE 2009 YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION

Sunday, April 26, 2009, 5:30 pm
Yamaha Piano Salon, 689 Fifth Avenue
(entrance on 54th Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues)

Enrico Sartori, flute; Dianne Frazer, piano
Sonata
The Swiss Shepherd

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)
Francesco Morlacchi (1784-1841)

Gloria Yun, flute; Dianne Frazer, piano
Les Folies D'Espagne
Concertino, Op. 107

Marin Marais (1656-1728)
Cecile Chaminade (1857-1944)

Adam Eccleston III, flute; Dianne Frazer, piano
First Sonata

Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959)

Emi Ferguson, flute; Steve Beck, piano
Fantaisie
Three Romances, Op. 94
Sonatina '05

Georges Hüe (1858-1948)
Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Emi Ferguson (b. 1987)

Program subject to change

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Newsletter

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

Lauren Zavulunov, Designer
 1108 Quail Ridge Drive
 Plainsboro, NJ 08536
 516-317-2413
 laurenzavulunov@gmail.com

www.nyfluteclub.org

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Remembering Frances Blaisdell

by Nancy Toff



On March 11, the flute world lost one of its towering figures: Frances Blaisdell, legendary flutist, beloved teacher, mother to us all. Frances was 97 and was still teaching at Stanford University in December (36 years after she accepted an interim one-year appointment there).

A protégée of Georges Barrère at Juilliard, Frances was part of the New York Flute Club for 80 of its 89 years, since 1928, and she exemplified the French connection that we celebrated at our flute fair with the magnificent performance of Mathieu Dufour. How appropriate that Mathieu chose two of her signature pieces as encores: Gluck’s *Dance of the Blessed Spirits* and Debussy’s *Syrinx*.

I first met Frances not in the New York area, as one might expect—she was still teaching here during my last years of high school—but in China in 1987, when we were fellow members of the National Flute Association’s cultural exchange delegation; she was the oldest member and I was the youngest. Exactly how we became immediate and close friends I don’t know, but we did—and it was a friendship we both treasured. Together we spent many hours poring over her scrapbooks and photographs, and I felt like a kid in a candy shop as she provided a version of history that could not be found in books or libraries. She took equal pleasure in introducing me to the natural wonders of her adopted state, taking me to walk the beaches of Carmel and hike through Muir Woods and Yosemite (she was in her 80s at the time).

From her modest suggestion that we republish Barrère’s *Nocturne* and flute-and-piano arrangements to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his death (*The Barrère Album*, G. Schirmer, 1994) came the flute club’s Barrère exhibition in 1994 and then my full-length biography—which was the research opportunity of a lifetime. Over the 13 years of research and writing, Frances was my constant advisor, cheerleader, and fact provider. She exulted with me over every Eureka moment, filled in missing pieces, and gave me character references when potential interviewees called to check on my bona fides.

Frances was the model of graceful aging, with the largest personal phone directory in the flute world. When AT&T introduced unlimited flat-rate service, she must have been one of the first customers to sign up, and she checked in regularly with scores of students and friends. A standard greeting at flute club concerts is, “Have you spoken with Frances recently?” And the answer was nearly always, “Oh, yes, she’s doing great.”

Frances forged a trailblazing career as one of the first women flutists to break into the New York musical world—as a student at the Institute of Musical Art and Juilliard, then as soloist, chamber musician, member of Phil Spitalny’s All-Girls Band, principal flutist of the New York City Ballet, and the first woman wind player in the New York Philharmonic (as “extra man” in the early 1960s). Over 60 years, several generations of young flutists benefited from her insightful, demanding, but loving teaching at the Manhattan School of Music, Mannes, NYU, and Stanford. And many more of us had the privilege of enjoying her friendship and generosity.

Many people have said, in the days since her death, that they thought Frances would live forever. And so she will, not just in the history books, but in the example of optimism and openmindedness she set for us all and by acts of kindness that will influence our lives for years to come. Much more than a master musician, she was the person we all aspire to be.

Tributes to Frances Blaisdell will be published in this newsletter and in the NFA’s *Flutist Quarterly* in coming months, and there will be a celebration of her life at the NFA convention in August. If you would like to contribute stories or photos, or for further information, please contact Nancy Toff at nancy.toff@oup.com.

Member Profile

Mark Weinstein

NYFC member
since 1997



Employment: Professor in the educational foundations department of Montclair State University's College of Education and Social Services.

A recent recital/performance: A November 2008 gig with his Jazz Trio Brasil (flute, guitar, and percussion) at the jazz club/restaurant Trumpets in Montclair, NJ.

Career highlight(s): As a flutist: being voted Best Latin Jazz Flutist of 2007 on the Latin Jazz Corner and having his album *Algo Mas* on the Jazzweek (www.jazzweek.com) jazz and world radio charts for 26 weeks as hit No. 1. As a jazz trombonist (in the 1960s): playing with Herbie Mann, Cal Tjader, and Eddie Palmieri. For more details, visit www.jazzfluteweinstein.com, www.myspace.com/markweinstein, or www.jazzfluteweinstein.blogspot.com/.

Current flute(s): An Aurumite Powell, a Sankyo alto, and a Yamaha bass.

Influential flute teachers: Mark started on the flute at age 34 and is basically self-taught. He's studied for short periods of time with various teachers, including Harvey Estrin (who showed him a basic practicing routine), Peggy Schecter (who worked on his sound), and Jill Allen (with whom he played Jamey Aebersold records and discussed playing jazz on flute).

High school: Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn, NY.

Degrees: BA in music/philosophy [Brooklyn College, 1962], MA in philosophy [CCNY, 1971], and PhD in philoso-

phy (logic and philosophy of science) [CUNY, 1976].

Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishment(s): The quantity of his CDs (15 since 1996, when he started recording) and their high quality (his many jazz CDs—Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, Latin Jazz, and Straight-Ahead, mostly on the Jazzheads label—consistently receive strong reviews on the web and in magazines). He is also pleased to have played and recorded in various genres with some of the greatest musicians around.

Favorite practice routines: Mark says, "My daily routine—about 3 hours in length—begins with a first octave trill exercise that Harvey Estrin showed me to loosen my hands and chops, followed by a slow series of long tones in the first octave. Then harmonics—octaves starting on B and all the way down to low B and then building up to as many harmonics as I can reach on the lowest notes, slurring up and down as if I were playing a brass instrument. Then Moyse, *De la Sonorité*, pages 6-9 (Nos. 3 and 4), a selection from pages 11-14 (No. 2); then page 15 and two selections from pages 16-22. I play a first octave tonguing exercise; one, two, and three octave scales, major and minor, in 12 keys, with varied articulations. Then Maquarre, *Daily Exercises*, pages 4-9, 14-17, and a triad exercise from pages 18-19. After 30 years of play-along Jamey Aebersold records, I rarely feel the need to practice jazz, but when I feel the need I run through his *Giant Steps* CD, which has advanced tunes in all 12 keys."

Other interests: His day job, which includes teaching in a graduate education department, research (in the philosophy of education and methods of inquiry), and writing papers (on logic and argumentation theory) for academic journals.

Advice for NYFC members: Don't be afraid to improvise.

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.

APRIL '09

April
11

Saturday 7:30 pm

Sonus ensemble with **LAURA FALZON**, flute, Emily Ondracek, violin, Erik Peterson, viola, Adrian Daurrov, cello, Munir Nurettin Beken, ud, performing *Memories in Sound*—a concert featuring two New York premieres of works by Turkish composer and ud virtuoso Münir Nurettin Beken.

- Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A West 13th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$15 general, \$10 students/seniors. • Info, email anstac@verizon.net.

April
19

Sunday 4:00 pm

Ringwood Friends of Music presents "Tribute to Mendelssohn," a program of diverse chamber music including works for flute and piano played by **CARLA AULD**, flute.

- Ringwood Presbyterian Church, 145 Carle-tondale Road, Ringwood, NJ. • Info, call the Ringwood Friends of Music at 973-962-7431.

April
24

Friday 8:00 pm

The OMNI Ensemble with **DAVID WECHSLER**, flute, will perform Dimitri Shostakovich's Piano Quintet, George Crumb's *Vox Balanae*, Philip Glass's *Serenade* for solo flute, and Four Pieces by Michael Rose.

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

April
26

Sunday 5:00 pm

"Beauty in America," a program of works by Hoover, Giammarino, Beaser, O'Connor, Amram, and Schocker performed by flutist **CARLA AULD** with orchestra.

- Victoria Theater at the NJ Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark, NJ. • Admission is \$50. • Info, call 973-694-0100.

Flute Happenings Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Mail date
May 2009	4/16/09	5/14/09

Improvisation (n): the act of making stuff up

by Jane Rigler

At first glance, improvisation might seem to embody both a frivolous kind of act that might happen in garage-band jamming sessions and a highly sophisticated art form only bestowed upon the highest echelon of jazz and world musicians. While the defiantly simple definition of the title above—the act of making stuff up—might seem too trivial for some, too vague for others, it encompasses the essence of improvisation and leaves to our imagination the complex conglomeration of a million “acts” happening all at once: listening, decision making, playing, acknowledging, observing, letting go, analyzing, giving, taking, imitating, etc....

“Historically, it predates any other music—mankind’s first musical performance couldn’t have been anything other than a free improvisation...”¹

–Derek Bailey

Historians tell us that improvisation during performances used to be a part of Western European musical tradition and that audiences knew the basic rules for improvising within the context of the styles of the time. During the late 20th century, ethnomusicologists, musicologists, and other scholars of music continually pointed out how improvisation is still built into the traditions of Flamenco, North Indian, Jazz, Gospel, Persian, Asian, and most African musical styles, to name just a few. So what happened to Western European classical music? Why has the tradition of improvisation diminished to the point where most classical players are never exposed to improvising unless it is within a “jamming” session or jazz setting? Rather than review the extensive scholarly literature on this subject, I’d like to use this short article to point out that free improvisation can be experienced, heard, performed, and appreciated almost anywhere, by anyone (both highly experienced professionals as well as beginners), and that you, the reader, might just come a little closer to your own personal epiphany of experiencing free improvisation.

Lately many scholars, often themselves free improvisers, have written about free improvisation. They’ve asked and

answered their own versions of the basic question: What is “free improvisation”? One definition could be that it embodies not just one style, but all styles (perhaps too many, as Bailey points out). In free improvising settings, an environment can be created in which musicians of any genre may play together, each one using his/her own set of skills and experiences to generate a group piece in the spirit of nonhierarchical collaboration. By saying “free” we are not adhering to just one set of rules, we are incorporating all of them, but the first and foremost is listening and giving space to everyone in the group. This might seem a recipe for chaos, but professional improvisers play, listen, talk, record, think, eat and dream about how to create these kinds of environments where music, in its purest form, can be created across all genres.

As the guitarist Fred Frith puts it:

When you [improvise] with other people, then all kinds of social aspects come into play, and mostly the qualities that make a good improviser are not dissimilar to the ones that I appreciate in my friends: being a good listener, sensitivity to your social surroundings, being there when you’re needed, but knowing how to step back too; knowing when to be supportive, when to be assertive, when your opinion is valuable, when to just go along with something, when to insist! Patience. Tolerance. Openness.²

You can catch a glimpse of this spirit of openness documented in the film *Touch the Sound* (directed by Thomas Riedelsheimer) where Fred Frith and the percussionist Evelyn Glennie explore space, vibration, resonance, instruments, music, and sound in various environments. That film is just the tip of the iceberg of a recent burst of interest in documenting and researching the effects of free improvisation on the mind and our evolution as creative beings. The mistake in listening to this kind of music begins when we value or judge it according to the same criteria we use for listening to any other music. This is not

composition. There is no time to rethink and correct “mistakes.” It’s happening now, in this instant, and any other moment would be completely different. In this music, silence and inactivity are used with the same depth of intensity and intention as are the sounds; **STRUCTURE IS CREATED IN REAL TIME**. With this in mind, the experienced free-improvising audience rides along on the sonic wave with the musicians, and is, in fact, contributing to the creation of the music on a deeper level than in a composed music concert setting. Neither the musicians nor the audience know where the music will go; it could be equally ecstatic or disastrous!

The benefits of learning to freely improvise are many. Scholars agree that students of improvisation can experience an expansion of listening skills, a rise in self-confidence, heightened communication, an opening of one’s imagination, more objective perspectives, a greater degree of tolerance and patience, a breakdown of barriers and limitations, and deeper musical interpretation and critical thinking (to name just a few!).

Teaching improvisation, however, causes many challenges for today’s music professors, since the criteria for evaluating students cannot be codified or “graded” in the same way as other courses. The process of teaching and learning improvisation is as collaborative as the process of doing it. How do you evaluate improvisation? How is a student evaluated on his/her progress in improvisation?

George Lewis ran into these issues with his own teaching:

Students challenged me to come up with fixed criteria for judgment. My position was that such criteria were unrealistic in this creative context, just as they are in other pedagogical contexts where musicality is being evaluated. It was necessary to keep in mind that in this course, which was devoted to a form of music-making which was utterly new to most of the students, placed the students on the edge of creativity in a radi-

cal way. This allowed journals to be graded—for depth of expressive content. My evaluation procedure with regard to the improvisation exercises attempted to frame “quality,” not only with regard to the more intangible factor of whether or not I found the audible results to be interesting, but as to the thoroughness of engagement with the assignment itself.³

With regard to the students who take courses in improvisation, Ursel Schlicht states:

One of the challenges of teaching improvisation is that the majority of students do not realize advanced improvisational skills require a set of technical abilities quite different from those practiced in notation-based music education. Improvisers need a range of communication skills largely underdeveloped in training that focuses on Western classical music.⁴

So in learning how to improvise and in teaching improvisation, there is a constant interaction between the participants’ level of engagement, quality and depth of insight, expansion of expression, and willingness to listen with open ears and an open heart. This would seem to be some of the same “criteria” for any audience and performer(s) relationship in any free improvisation concert as well.

Listening to free improvisation might also be an act of “making stuff up.” For the act of listening necessitates the same tolerance, letting go, patience, and, among other acts, knowing “when to just go along with something,” which Fred Frith cites as desirable when *playing* a free improvisation. As an active listener of free improvisation, we are giving in to the moment, trusting the musicians, the music, the process and oneself, creating an interweaving connection between the observer, the musician, the music, and personal life experiences.

This connection creates a kind of trust that opens the door to an extensive exchange of ideas about ways and philosophies of life. Ursel Schlicht⁵ notes Thomas Mann’s 1918 description of the connection between real-life experience and art: “The important thing for me, then, is not the ‘work,’ but my life. Life

is not the means for the achievement of an aesthetic ideal of perfection; on the contrary, the work is an ethical symbol of life.”⁴

Perhaps there is something not so frivolous after all about that garage-band jam session. Perhaps there is something not so extraordinary about the jazz musician able to riff any new sound. Perhaps, that innate talent to express ourselves is just barely bursting at the tips of our fingers as we take out our instruments and begin to blow. The possibilities of personal expression are limitless, and in your hands, you hold the perfect tool: the flute.

Try this out for fun—alone, or even better, with another musician: Create a five-note motif that you can play and memorize (so don’t make it too difficult!), picking five notes, in any order, using any rhythms that you like. Play and repeat your motif, creating a space for silence between each repetition. Then, if applicable, listen to the motifs of the other musicians with whom you’re playing. Continue repeating your motif without *trying* to change it, listening for the subtle differences in dynamics, rhythm, tone and timbre that occur naturally. Don’t try to make music, just listen to the phrase as it is. Then *gradually let* some changes happen. For example, explore changes in the quality of your breath. Explore other articulations. Maybe stretch one note longer than the others. But only allow ONE change to happen at a time so you can keep track of the changes. Follow each change or difference as if you’re a scientist following natural changes in a living research subject. How did the phrase begin? How did it end, what happened in-between the notes? Become an expert in your motif and the motifs of the others by listening deeply.

Another improvisation game is to design your own personal limitations. For example, create a piece that explores “staccato fast notes.” No long notes allowed! No slurring! What you play can only be staccato and fast. Add in silences and surprises. Make a one-minute piece out of this and time yourself. Be strict with the time. Then, create

(cont’d on page 7)

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

APRIL '09

April
27

Monday 8:00 pm

The New York New Music Ensemble with **JAYN ROSENFELD**, flute, will perform world premieres by Chou Wen-Chung and John Harbison, as well as Chou’s *Cursive* for flute and piano.

• Merkin Concert Hall, 129 West 67th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$20 general, \$15 students/seniors. • Info, call 212-633-6260.

MAY '09

May
6

Wednesday 8:00 pm

KATHLEEN NESTOR, flute, will perform Mozart’s G Major Flute Concerto and Arturo Rodriguez’s *Canto de la Noche* (for alto recorder and strings) with the Centre Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Scott Jackson Wiley.

• Saint Peter’s Church, 619 Lexington Avenue (at 54th Street), NYC. • Admission is free.

May
11

Monday 7:30 pm

Concert Piece by Allen Brings to be performed by Femmes Four (**AMY ZIEGELBAUM**, Helen Richman, Anna Povich de Mayor, Lauren Ausubel, flutes) on a contemporary composers’ program presented by the eastern chapter of the National Association of Composers (NAC-USA).

• Christ & St. Stephens Church, 120 West 69th Street, NYC. • Admission: donation at door. • Info, call 212-787-2755.

May
17

Sunday 2:00 - 4:00 pm

A masterclass intended for serious students and advanced amateurs, by **JAYN ROSENFELD**, flute, and Bernard Rose, piano.

• Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow Street, NYC. • Admission: \$40 participants, \$20 auditors. • Info, call 212-633-6260.

May
17

Sunday 3:00 pm

Serenades, Sonatas, and Interludes: music for two flutes and piano by Schickele, Shocker, Ewazen, Bach, and Ibert, played by **AMY ZIEGELBAUM** and Lauren Ausubel, flutes, and Laura Leon, piano.

• Christ & St. Stephens Church, 120 West 69th Street, NYC. • Admission: donation at door. • Info, call 212-787-2755.

Piccolo Questions for Mindy Kaufman

by Katherine Saenger

Photo: Chris Lee



As second flutist of Collegium Westchester, a semiprofessional orchestra in Westchester County, I am regularly asked to play some challenging and/or exposed piccolo parts on very short notice. The combination of terror and exhilaration I feel usually fades between concerts, as does my motivation to organize my piccolo questions and find an expert to answer them. But after surviving an October performance of Bartok's Romanian Dances and subsequently being charmed by Jean-Louis Beaumadier's NYFC piccolo recital in January, the time was right. Mindy Kaufman, piccolo player with the New York Philharmonic since 1979, was kind enough to answer. Readers with their own responses to these questions on the pleasures, challenges, and tricks of playing and teaching the piccolo are invited to contact me at klsaenger@yahoo.com for a possible future article on the same topic.

KATHERINE SAENGER: How did you get to be a good piccolo player? What difficulties did you have in the beginning and how did you overcome them?

MINDY KAUFMAN: I was a horrible piccolo player when I was in college [at the Eastman School of Music]. Really! I couldn't sustain high notes, and kept buzzing when I got above a high E or so. But eventually I developed the muscles necessary to control the piccolo. I think the most important thing is to use good taste and not to blast. My first job was with the Rochester Philharmonic. I played mostly second flute, but had to play piccolo now and then. My first big part was in the *Nutcracker*. There's a very high piccolo part in the second flute part, a G to A, very soft, and I was petrified. Also, I was 19 years old! But eventually I was able to play it.

KS: What pieces do you find most enjoyable to play on piccolo? or the scariest? Any examples of favorite extended passages where the piccolo part is harmonic rather than showy?

MK: Most enjoyable—*Mother Goose*, *Daphnis*, *La Gazza Ladra*, and most mid-register solos. Scariest solo—Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. Harmonic, rather than showy—the slow movement of Vivaldi piccolo concerto in C major. I have not explored the piccolo as a solo instrument, although I do like a lot of the Damaré solos, those turn-of-the-century virtuosic showpieces. They emphasize the prettier side of the piccolo, rather than the extreme registers.

KS: Any pieces that routinely require some type of cheating because they are unplayable as written?

MK: I can't trill high G to A. I play a G to Ab trill, and in 30 years, not one conductor has ever said anything! I trill fast to disguise it.

KS: What type of piccolo do you play? How hard would it be to find another one as good? And how much of your ability to play softly in the high register (a challenge for many) is due to the instrument and how much is due to your expertise?

MK: I love my Burkart piccolo [Custom, c. 1997]. It makes life easy. A lot of my ease with the piccolo is due to this instrument. Their instruments are very consistent, so I would not be heartbroken if I had to find another one. About a year ago, I bought a different headjoint from Burkart called the Clarion style, and I'm really happy with it because it has a very sweet sound, but is still easy to play, especially in the high register.

KS: Do you use different piccolos for different pieces? Or is one piccolo good for everything?

MK: I'm a one instrument gal. I prefer to deal with the problems and make one instrument work. I would hate to forget that a particular passage is in a certain piece, and then have the wrong instrument with me.

KS: Do experienced flutists come to you for coaching on the piccolo? Is there any advice that seems to work for everyone?

MK: I have taught students, professionals, and doublers. What I have found to be most common is that they need to move the mouthpiece of the piccolo slightly closer to the airstream than they would on the flute. This is because you need to shorten the distance to the embouchure hole. It's almost like magic. Once you do that, the high notes pop out so much easier. I have seen immediate results when the students finally get that.

KS: Do you think private flute teachers should incorporate some piccolo teach-

ing in their lesson plans along with the orchestral excerpts?

MK: I think it's good for all flutists to have a basic knowledge and ability to play piccolo. For willing students, it can be a great opportunity. If you're able to play piccolo well, you will be much more in demand, both in chamber music, orchestral music, but also in commercial music such as films and jingles. If you're good, it can be a great way to break in. I've seen it happen. I think it's good to incorporate some piccolo into one's weekly lessons.

KS: Can you recommend practice routine that an in-shape flutist could do for a half hour every day for a week that would get them in shape for a piccolo? What do YOU do to keep in shape on the piccolo?

MK: I don't think one needs to practice the piccolo a lot. Fifteen to 30 minutes a day, consistently, would do wonders. I like an exercise by John Krell that I found in *The Instrumentalist* 30 years ago. It's a series of scales and arpeggios that diminuendo as you get higher, and crescendo as you get lower. Beyond that, I only practice the music I'm working on for piccolo, and of course, [on the flute] some flute rep and exercises as well.

KS: Thank you so much! I see a path to less terror and more enjoyment with my future piccolo playing....

Katherine Saenger, an amateur flutist and sometime piccolo player, is the editor of the NYFC Newsletter.

Flute Fair Thanks

A thank you to everyone who made our 2009 Flute Fair such a smashing success!

Congratulations to our 2009 Young Musicians Contest Winners



Participants in the Young Musicians Contest, left to right, on the day of New York Flute Fair 2009: Barbara Hopkins (judge), Amy Hersh (judge), Christen Sparago (winner ages 15-17), Chung Eun Chae (winner 12-14), Noelle Perrin (contest coordinator), Amy Zhang (winner, ages 9-11), Lucy Goeres (judge), and Nadira Novruzov (winner ages 6 and under).

Nadira Novruzov, age 6, performed the Allegretto from the *Carnival of Venice* by P. A. Genin. She lives in Manhattan and attends the Special Music School where she studies flute with Valerie Holmes. Nadira was awarded a blue ribbon in last year's Young Musicians Contest. She also enjoys playing recorder.

Amy Zhang, age 10, performed three movements from Johann Sebastian Bach's Suite in B Minor, BWV 1067. She has been studying flute with Noelle Perrin for six years. In 2008, she was awarded first prize in the New Jersey Music Teachers Association Young Musicians Competition and a blue ribbon in the NYFC Young Musicians Contest. She was also selected by audition to perform with the SAA Flute & Harp Choir at the 2008 Suzuki Association National Teachers Conference in Minneapolis. She attends the Cottage Lane Elementary School in Tappan, NY. She enjoys competitive swimming, attending flute workshops, and playing chamber music.

Chung Eun Chae, age 13, performed Georges Enesco's *Cantabile et Presto*. She attends the Juilliard Pre-College division as a student of Bradley Garner. In 2008, she was awarded first prize in the CTS Music Concours in Korea. Her 2007 accomplishments include first prize in the ICAG International Competition and



Young Musicians Contest winners Nadira Novruzov (left) and Amy Zhang.

gold prize in the 16th Seong-Jeong Music Concours. Ms. Chae attends the Professional Children's School.

Christen Sparago, age 15, performed two movements of Robert Muczynski's Sonata for flute and piano. She studies flute with Linda Chesis and performs with the New England Conservatory Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble. Ms. Sparago is also a member of the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. She attends the MacDuffie School in Wilbraham, Massachusetts.

Improvisation (cont'd from page 5)

another piece that exclusively involves super-low, loud notes. You can play them fast or slow, but only play in the low register, loudly! Make a one-minute piece out of it. Then test your ability to determine time, and make a three-minute piece out of it. Knowing how long one minute is is a vitally important part of improvisation. Time perception changes when you are nervous and on stage performing; it is not the same as when you are relaxed and practicing at home. So get comfortable with just how long/short one minute and three minutes are.

Practicing improvisation is extremely important, and it is not just about creating one-line melodies. The flute is capable of a lot more than that. Explore rhythmic patterns with your fingers and take advantage of the fact that you can create a rhythmic pattern (key clicks, for example) in your right hand that are different than the ones in your left. Start with three against two rhythms, for example: press the A key in duple meter, and the F key in triple. Become

a percussionist of the flute (I don't mean bang it up, wiseguy!). Use all your resources to discover your instrument and all the sounds it is capable of.

Improvisation must be practiced and rehearsed just like any other music. Even though it is about creating music now—in this moment, on the spot—it is not just “anything goes.” While you're making stuff up, it still has to be something worth expressing, worth sharing. What is the essence of good music to you? What are the elements of a beautiful, captivating, profound musical phrase? If you're practicing like a scientist, being an observer rather than a judge, you might find some of your answers surprising.

Use your life and your musical experiences to ride the wave of sound. Set your own limits, record yourself and a friend, and explore and unravel your own personal voice through free improvisation. But don't forget to listen to others and be inspired by the world, life, sounds, and reverberations that are enveloping you in every moment. This moment. Now.

1. Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992): 83.

2. Charity Chan, “An Interview with Fred Frith: The Teaching of Contemporary Improvisation,” *Critical Studies in Improvisation* 3, no. 2 (2007).

3. George E. Lewis, “Teaching Improvised Music: An Ethnographic Memoir,” in *Arcana: Musicians on Music*, ed. John Zorn (New York: Granary Books, 2000): 102.

4. Ursel Schlicht, “I Feel My True Colors Began to Show” Designing and Teaching a Course on Improvisation,” *Critical Studies in Improvisation* 3, no. 2 (2007).

Jane Rigler (www.janerigler.com), author of *The Vocalization of the Flute*, is active as a flutist, educator, composer, and free improviser.



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



April 26, 2009 concert

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

2009 NYFC Competition Winners

89th 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
Imani Winds with VALERIE COLEMAN, flute

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

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 or call 732-257-9082.



From the Editor

Greetings! Hope you all enjoyed last month's Flute Fair as much as I did. The Young Artist winners you will hear on April 26th are Emi Ferguson (1st place), Adam Eccleston (2nd place), and Enrico Sartori and Gloria Yun (tied for 3rd place). Congratulations to all!

Flute Fair photos (visit www.peterschaaf.com/proofs/flute-fair2009 for a preview) and a synopsis of John McMurtery's Flute Fair warm-up tips will be in our May issue.

In this month's "From the President," Nancy Toff warmly remembers Frances Blaisdell (1912–2009) as both a source of personal inspiration and as a firsthand link to an earlier era of New York flute playing. We hope to have several pages of

anecdotes and tributes in next month's newsletter (see p. 2 box for details on how to contribute). In the meantime, the interview with Frances that Barbara Highton Williams did for our April 2005 newsletter is posted at www.nyfluteclub.org.

We have two feature articles this month. The first is a long-planned (since Flute Fair 2008!) article by Jane Rigler on improvisation. She offers a perspective that is both academic and practical. Interested readers MUST check out the website cited in Refs. 2 and 4; it is terrific. For the second, I am indebted to Mindy Kaufman for her engaging and informative answers to my piccolo questions. Readers with their own questions (or answers) are invited to send them to me for follow-up articles on the same topic.

Mark Weinstein, a jazz flutist and education professor who did the Jim Walker interview for our February 2009 newsletter, is this month's member profile subject. I am STILL planning to check out the playing samples Mark has on his various websites; I hope that some readers will beat me to it!

Anyway, all for now. See you soon.

Best regards,

Katherine Saenger (klsaenger@yahoo.com)