



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

February 2020



The Met flute section c. 1955. L to R: James D. Politis, Harold Bennett, James Hosmer, and Fernando Morrone.

Sedje LeBlang

Meet the flutists of the Met Opera

Interview by Deirdre McArdle



Current Met Opera flutists (L to R): Seth Morris, Stephanie Mortimore, Koren McCaffrey, Maron Khoury, and Chelsea Knox.

The Met Flutists: A Genealogy

by Nancy Toff

Once upon a time, there was a limited number of flutists in New York City, and some of the top players did double duty as members of the Metropolitan Opera orchestra and the New York Symphony. In fact, the Symphony served as the house orches-

(Cont'd on page 4)

As chair of the 2020 Flute Fair, it has been an honor and a pleasure for me to get to know the flutists of the Metropolitan Opera over the course of the past few months. They have been gracious to me and generous with their contributions to the flute fair—performing together; giving masterclasses, round table conversations, and panels; and in agreeing to this interview. As their performance schedules did not allow for a time to actually get together, we settled on an informal Q & A via email.

DEIRDRE McARDLE: At what point in your life did you decide that you wanted to be a professional musician?

CHELSEA KNOX: When I was in middle school I sang with a professional children's choir, and after I started getting more serious about flute playing, I knew that was what I wanted to do for a career. After college I had a few brief detours as an ocarina-wielding Zelda impersonator, a J. Crew fitting room attendant, and a fulltime picture framer. There's no shame in needing to pay the bills while you get your musical career off the ground!

SETH MORRIS: As an undergrad, I started as a music education major and added performance halfway through. I had always considered the dual career path, but after performing *Symphonie Fantastique* with the university orchestra I knew I had to consider a performing career more seriously. The performance felt so alive and fun; I knew I wanted to experience that as often as possible.

MARON KHOURY: When I got into Curtis, I decided that I wanted to be a

(Cont'd on page 5)



In concert

Flutists of the Metropolitan Opera

Saturday, February 29, 2020, 5:30 pm

W83 Ministry Center (Flute Fair venue), 150 West 83rd Street, NYC

Program

- | | |
|---|--|
| Concerto in A Minor, Op. 15 | Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1691-1755) arr. Henner Eppel |
| Seth Morris, Stephanie Mortimore, Koren McCaffrey, and Maron Khoury | |
| Kaoru (1994) | Christopher Theofanidis (b. 1967) |
| Seth Morris and Maron Khoury | |
| Overture to the opera <i>Nabucco</i> | Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) arr. Joachim Linckelmann |
| Stephanie Mortimore, Maron Khoury, Koren McCaffrey, and Seth Morris | |
| Canonic Sonata No. 2 in E Minor, TWV 40:102 | Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) |
| Stephanie Mortimore and Koren McCaffrey | |
| Jour d'été à la montagne | Eugène Bozza (1905-1991) |
| Maron Khoury, Seth Morris, Koren McCaffrey, and Stephanie Mortimore | |
| Final Trio from <i>Der Rosenkavalier</i> | Richard Strauss (1864-1949) arr. Trudy Kane |
| Chelsea Knox, Maron Khoury, Stephanie Mortimore, and Seth Morris | |

Program subject to change

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 Jessica Yang, NYFC Social Media Chair

2020 VISION: A Next-Gen Flute Fair *by Nancy Toff*



From the President

I'm not much of a TV watcher, but one indulgence I often allow myself is *CBS Sunday Morning*, which provides a consistently upbeat view of human endeavor in the midst of a world torn by political, religious, racial, and economic divisions. This morning's theme was music, and I was particularly struck by two segments: the ebullient Gustavo Dudamel radiating energy in a high school orchestra in Trenton, and Zaza Kanto, an a cappella group of young boys singing on the streets of Madagascar and then making it to the big time.

I see much of the same enthusiasm among the adult members of the New York Flute Club, both professional and amateur, who appreciate the opportunities to be part of something historic and also a vibrant contemporary community.

Unfortunately we don't see enough of that energy among our flute students—because we're barely seeing the students at all, except when it comes time for competitions. What's wrong with this picture? Let's make sure that our students hear about the wealth of opportunities that await them at the flute fair.

Our education chair, Amy Appleton, is working hard to bring deserving NY-area students to the flute fair on scholarship, and we encourage all of you to bring your own students (take advantage of the special teacher-student discount) and to spread the word to music teachers in your area. If you know the music teachers in your local public or private schools or community music schools, please send them a flyer (contact flute fair chair Deirdre McArdle if you need extras) or just refer them to the NYFC website, where the flyer and registration forms are readily available for download or online registration.

Arts education is hardly at the top of the public agenda these days. It's up to the arts community itself to ensure our own preservation for the next generation. As Dudamel reminds us, "When ... an economic crisis [comes], the first thing that gets cut is art. Because art has been seen as entertainment, as something elitist. And it's not like that. Art has to be part of the fundamental education of a child. It's a transformation of the society." Help the New York Flute Club do its part by spreading the word.

Deirdre has designed this year's flute fair program to provide something for all ages and levels of flutists, with a core of activities for the youngest flutists from morning to early afternoon. Amy will host a special get-together for students (snacks included). There are separate flute choir reading sessions for kids and adults (the former led by our new Young Musicians Contest coordinator, Caroline Sonett-Assor, the latter by Jayn Rosenfeld), and workshops on audition and competition preparation, whistle tones, pain prevention, and much more. The exhibits are open all day, of course, and this is the perfect time for students, parents, and teachers to check out new instruments and music together.

Our centennial celebration of New York flutists continues with the participation of the entire Metropolitan Opera flute section, who will teach daytime classes and perform in the gala concert. Retired Met principal Trudy Kane returns as well. To bring us full circle, I'll give an illustrated lecture on the storied history of the club; in addition to playing some rare recordings, several of my esteemed colleagues will give live performances of works premiered at the club, both classics and rarities.

We look forward to welcoming you to our new venue—W83 Ministry Center—for our visionary 25th flute fair. Listen, play, shop, and be part of our historically informed but forward-looking flute community.

2020 Vision: Looking back, moving forward

Guest Artists: Seth Morris, Stephanie Mortimore, Koren McCaffrey, Maron Khoury, and Chelsea Knox, flutists of the Metropolitan Opera



Concerts · Workshops · Presentations · Exhibits · Competition
Saturday, February 29, 2020 • 8:30 am-8:00 pm
W83 Ministry Center (150 West 83rd Street, NYC)

Visit www.nyfluteclub.org/concerts-events-and-more/flute-fair for info, updates, and pre-registration

Member Profile

Xiao “Lester”
Yu

NYFC member since
2019



Employment: Cybersecurity researcher at NEC Laboratories America.

A recent recital/performance: The NYFC's “100 Flutes for 100 Years” concert at Governors Island on September 15, 2019.

Career highlight(s): As a (non-professional) flutist: performing with the Shanghai Academy Flute Ensemble (40 flutists ranging from amateur to professional) for its 2009 and 2010 seasons, in repertoire including Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 (1st mv.), Dvorák's Symphony No. 8 (3rd mv.), Rossini's *Semiramide Overture*, Mozart's Divertimento in D Major, K. 136, and Debussy's *Petite Suite*. As a (volunteer) music administrator: organizing several concerts and competitions during 2010 for the third festival of the Asia Flutists Federation. As a (career) computer scientist: his current job, in which he develops tools to defend cyberspace against criminals and security breaches (“Our goal is to predict criminal acts before they happen, just like “The Machine” in the science fiction crime drama *Person of Interest*.”).

Current flute: A 14k gold Muramatsu with in-line G, B foot, and C# trill, played with its original engraved head joint (“It was my dream flute ever since I came across one at a flute fair more than 10 years ago, and it took me nearly the same amount of time to make my dream come true.”).

Influential flute teachers: The late Ying Pang, principal flutist of Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra (“He was a major influence on my tone development and would always tell me to imagine my embouchure as the shape of a diamond and focus on the core of the sound until it was loud and clear.”) and Sir James Galway (through recordings, concerts, and masterclasses): “Galway was my childhood idol since age 10,

when I was given his *Italian Flute Concertos* CD by a friend of my parents. I met Galway several times, most memorably at a 2013 concert he gave at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, when I was a visiting student there. During a casual intermission chat we laughed with Lady Jeanne Galway about how a guy who used to live in Shanghai ended up in such a small town in the middle of nowhere.”

High school: Weiyu High School in Shanghai, China.

Degrees: BS in software engineering (East China Normal University, 2008), MS in computer software and theory (East China Normal University, 2011), and Ph.D. in computer science (North Carolina State University, 2018).

Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishment(s): Earning a Ph.D. after nearly a quarter-century of education; traveling overseas to a land far from home to pursue a new and different life; still being able to play music while maintaining a non-musical and stressful career.

Favorite practice routines: When he's really busy with his “day job,” Xiao just does a maintenance routine consisting of (1) long tones (with vibrato) of major and minor arpeggios and (2) major and minor scales (tonguing and slurring). When he has more time, he likes to add selected pieces from Marcel Moyse's *De la Sonorité* and/or a “technical passage of the day” selected from either his repertoire or music he's happened to encounter online (a recent favorite being a version of D.J. Okawari's *Flower Dance* that happens to be especially good for practicing octaves).

Other interests: After his recent relocation to Princeton, NJ from Raleigh, NC, Xiao enjoys spending his weekend time in New York City. Favorite activities include wandering around to explore new restaurants and historic places, attending concerts at Lincoln Center (“The Mostly Mozart Festival this past summer was truly amazing!”), hanging out with friends, and (of course!) playing in the NYFC ensemble.

Advice for NYFC members: Don't let a busy life diminish your passion in music. Just start playing, now.

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

FEBRUARY '20

Feb. 23 Sunday 5:00 pm

CAROL WINCENC performing world premieres by Robert Sirota (*Dancing With the Angels*, for fl, va, and harp) and Sato Matsui (*Goldenrod*, with pianist Bryan Wagorn). Also on the program: music of Debussy, Messiaen, and J.S. Bach.

• Merkin Concert Hall, 129 West 67th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$40. • Info, visit kaufmanmusiccenter.org/mch.

Feb. 24 Monday 8:00 pm

The Sylvan Winds, with **SVJETLANA KABALIN**, flute, in Ladies First!, a program of works by female composers Jordyn Gallinek, Jessica Meyer, Valerie Coleman, Julia Wolfe, and Amanda Harberg.

• The Cell Theatre, 338 West 23rd Street, NYC. • Admission: : \$25 general, \$20 seniors/students, \$10 children (5-17). • Info, sylvanwinds.com, call 646-861-2253, or email sylvanwinds@att.net.

Feb. 27 Thursday 3:00 pm

The OMNI Ensemble with **DAVID WECHSLER**, flute, performing works by Schoenberg (*Pierrot Lunaire*), Martinu, Copland, and David Keberle.

• College of Staten Island Center for the Performing Arts, 1-P Recital Hall (1-P 120), 2800 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, NY. • Admission is free. • Info, visit theomniensemble.org or call 718-859-8649.

Feb. 29 Saturday 8:00 pm

The OMNI Ensemble with **DAVID WECHSLER**, flute, in the program of February 27.

• Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Avenue, Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY. • Admission: \$15 general, \$10 students/seniors. • Info, visit theomniensemble.org or call 718-859-8649.

MARCH '20

Mar. 6 Friday 7:00 pm

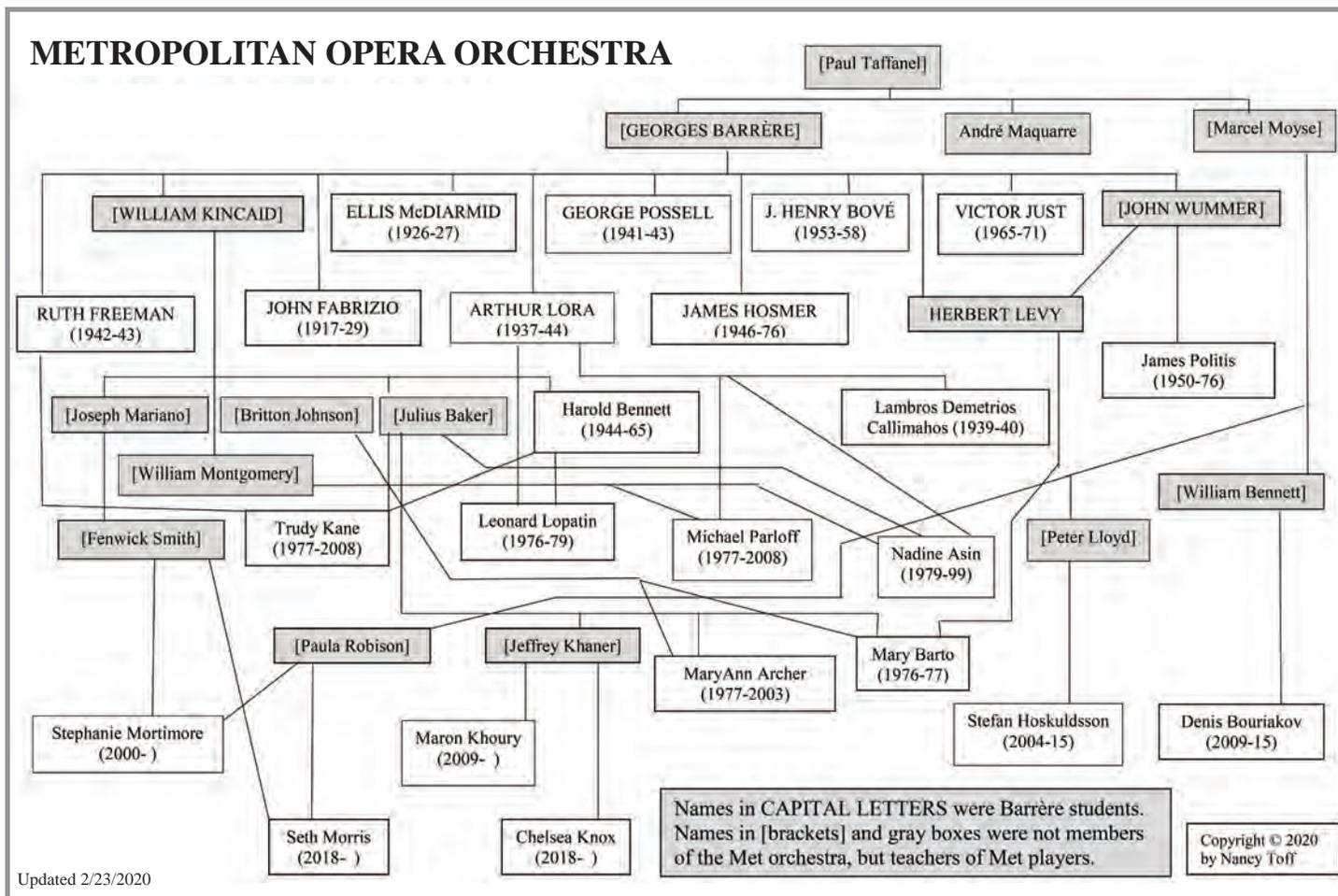
Bloomingtondale flute faculty member **RIE SCHMIDT**, assisted by flutists **KEITH UNDERWOOD** and **ELIZABETH BROWN**, will present a program of rarities for solo and duo flutes, including original and transcribed music from the Baroque period to the 21st century.

• David Greer Recital Hall, Bloomingtondale School of Music, 323 West 108th Street, NYC. • Admission is free. • Info, visit bsmny.org/event/flute-rarities/.

(Happenings cont'd on page 6)

Flute Happenings Deadlines

| Issue | Deadline | Mail Date |
|------------|------------|------------|
| March 2020 | 02/13/2020 | 03/16/2020 |
| April 2020 | 03/12/2020 | 04/13/2020 |
| May 2020 | 04/02/2020 | 05/04/2020 |



Met genealogy (cont'd from page 1)

tra for the Met Opera from 1884 to 1891, but there is little personnel information before 1909 in the Met archives. We also know that Carl Wehner, who served as principal flute of the New York Philharmonic, was in the Met from 1885-87, as were Otto Stoeckert and John H. Ickler.

Barrère himself had no official connection with the Met—though he had played fourth flute and piccolo in the Paris Opera before he came to New York, and his own teacher, Paul Taffanel, was principal flutist and later conductor of the Paris Opera. He did conduct once at the Met: a benefit for the French Flotilla Committee in January 1916, during the Great War, when he led not the Met itself but an orchestra of French musicians and the singers Emma Calvé, Yvette Guilbert, and Victor Maurel.

However, Barrère placed many students in the Met orchestra and no doubt prepared them well (he was known for telling his students, “You just sing.”). Barrère students began gaining seats in the flute section in the late 1910s: John Fabrizio (1917-29), Ellis McDiarmid (1926-27, also principal of the Sousa Band), Arthur Lora (1927-44), George Possell (1941-43), Ruth Freeman (1942-43), James Hosmer (1946-76), J. Henry Bové (1953-58), and Victor Just (1965-71).

Barrère was the pedagogical grandfather of many Met flutists. His student and Juilliard colleague Arthur Lora taught Michael Parloff (1977-2008), Lambros Demetrios Callimahos (1939-40), Leonard Lopatin (1977-79), and Nadine Asin (1979-99). Many were Barrère grandstudents, descended through Kincaid and Julius Baker, and great-grandstudents.

A large proportion of Met flutists have performed at the New York Flute Club over the years. When the Met flute

section last appeared at a flute fair, in 2014 (then Denis Bouriaikov, Stefán Höskuldsson, Maron Khoury, and Stephanie Mortimore), I traced that relationship (see “Met Flutists at the NYFC: A Long Tradition,” *NYFC Newsletter*, March 2014).

What is also gratifying is the number of winners of the NYFC competition (and its predecessor, the annual young artist concert) who have found their way to the Met: Trudy Kane (1968), Michael Parloff (1973), Chelsea Knox (2007). They have also found their way to the New York City Opera: Gerardo Levy (1961) and Janet Arms (1981).

Since our last “Day at the Opera,” in 2014, the two principals of the Met have left for other positions: Denis Bouriaikov, a native of Crimea, is now principal flute of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Stefán Höskuldsson, originally from Iceland, is principal of the Chicago Symphony. The Met’s current principals are Chelsea Knox (a former student of Jeff Khaner at Juilliard) and Seth Morris (who studied with Paula Robison and Fenwick Smith), both of whom came to the Met in 2018. They join Maron Anis Khoury, an Arab-Israeli who was also a Khaner student, and Stephanie Mortimore, with a Robison-Smith pedigree.

In the Paris Opera of the late 19th century, every flutist studied with Altès or Taffanel; at the Met, the Germans of the first generation gave way to the French tradition of Barrère’s American-born students. As in biological families, it’s complicated, but as we follow a complex web of pedagogical descent we can also see the diversification of the section: many women and a few new immigrants, British- and American-trained in the French tradition. With the arrival of the Met’s latest principals, we return to a complete section of Barrère “great-great-grandchildren.”

From the NYFC Newsletter Archives: Flutists of the Metropolitan Opera



More about the Met flutists can be found in the last 20 years of NYFC Newsletters (all online). Definitely worth a visit! —Katherine Saenger

Group interviews

- *The Flute in Opera: Three Inside Views* (Katherine Fink interviews Bart Feller, Trudy Kane, and Michael Parloff, March 2004)
- *Denis Bouriakov and Stefán Höskuldsson: New Met Flutists* (Interview by Patricia Zuber, October 2009)
- *A Round Table with the Met Flutists* (Summary of video interview by Michael Parloff, March 2014)

Michael Parloff

- *Presenting Michael Parloff* (Interview by Don Bailey, December 1998)

Stephanie Mortimore

- *Meet Stephanie Mortimore* (Interview by Dorothy Wu, November 2002)

Maron Khoury

- *Maron Khoury: New Met Flutist* (Interview by Patricia Zuber, February 2012)

Frequent subs

- *Eleanor Lawrence: Life as a Flutist* (Article by Merilee Johnson, February 2002)
- *Katherine Fink: Keeping Passion and Intellect through the 4,000th Show* (Interview by Jeanne Wilson, February 2015)
- *Music for Flute and Percussion: Patricia and Gregory Zuber* (Interview by Stefani Starin, February 2006)



Met flutists (cont'd from page 1)

professional; I was 14 years old.

STEPHANIE MORTIMORE: I originally thought I wanted to major in music education. I had an amazing choir director in high school, and I wanted to be just like him. But then I spent a year as a foreign exchange student in Geneva, Switzerland. Kids start to specialize earlier there, and I was in a high school class with all musicians. We got music theory in school and were allowed to take lessons at the Conservatoire de Genève. I had a great flute teacher, Isabelle Giraud, and it was then that I decided to major in performance. Weirdly, I actually toyed with being a voice major, but I think flute was the right choice. It's so funny I landed where I did at the Met!

KOREN McCAFFREY: My parents were devoted classical music listeners who made clear that my priorities were to be academics, flute, and everything else, in that order. After a year in the flute studio at the University of Michigan and a summer at the Aspen Music Festival, I decided flute would be my focus. It fulfilled my love of music, satisfied my competitive side, and gave me the chance to join a profession devoted to beauty and genius.

DM: Was the flute your first instrument?

CK: I started out playing Irish tin whistle and singing in my church choir.

SeM: My first musical experience was singing in the children's choir at my church; by the time I was 10, I knew I wanted to join the band but wasn't sure which instrument to pick. After testing

many, the flute was the only one I could actually make a sound on, so I went with it!
MK: I started on piano at age eight. At some point I dabbled with violin.

StM: I started out on piano at the age of six and also sang in a children's choir. I started flute at age 12 and became serious about the piccolo as an undergrad at DePaul, where I studied with Mary Stolper, an amazing teacher and piccoloist. I was fortunate to be allowed to take piccolo lessons as an independent study in addition to my weekly flute lessons.

KM: Growing up, I spent my summers in Dublin, Ireland, where my parents are from. My older cousins played the recorder, and the summer I turned four I begged my mother to buy one for me. She found a recorder teacher who also taught Suzuki flute, and when I was six, I made the switch.

DM: What do you look for in an instrument?

CK: I want my flute to be my voice, so I'm looking for ease, warmth, clarity, and flexibility.

SeM: The main factor I focus on when selecting an instrument is tone. I listen for the ability to produce a variety of colors and pay attention to the ease with which I can create them.

MK: I look for an instrument I can play comfortably. I find the B to be a low note on most flutes. So, I look for a flute that isn't shrill on the high notes or flat on other notes like the B, C, C# and D.

StM: Buying wooden instruments is a challenge because they change over time and a brand-new piccolo is not broken in yet. You can really only make an educated guess as to how good a new instrument will be, so it's great if you can find a quality used instrument or if the flute maker is willing to part with their demo.

When shopping, I look for a piccolo that has a lot of flexibility and a clear, ringing but warm tone from the top to the bottom of the instrument. When I test a piccolo, I always check how loud I can play in all registers without "hitting the wall" (meaning it won't play any louder without the sound distorting), and how soft I can play with ring in the sound. I check to see how it responds to articulation as well in all registers. In addition to trying the headjoint that comes with the instrument, I test piccolos with my own headjoint whenever possible. I would never purchase an instrument without playing it in an orchestral setting first (in my case, in the pit) or with another colleague if the orchestral setting isn't available. I advise strongly against the wave-style headjoints which often have a quicker response but lack dynamic and tonal flexibility and often are brighter and don't blend as well. Students should try to buy an instrument they can grow into instead of the one that is the easiest to play now. For this reason, it's very helpful to have an experienced teacher help you choose a new instrument.

KM: I always look for instruments on which I can create the most beautiful version of my own sound, with warmth, depth, and an evenness in timbre throughout all the registers. The feeling and understanding of an instrument on day one and in year 20, however, might be completely different, because it takes time to explore the depths and capabilities of a flute or a piccolo and to learn how to achieve the sound you are looking for.

DM: Do you stick to one instrument or does it depend on the repertoire?

CK: I stick to one flute—my silver Yamaha 877 with a 14k gold headjoint.

(Cont'd on page 6)

Happenings (cont'd from page 3)

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

MARCH '20

Mar. 19 Thursday 3:00 pm

The OMNI Ensemble with **DAVID WECHSLER**, flute, and guest artist Rebecca Pechefsky, harpsichord, performing works by C.P.E. Bach, W.A. Mozart, Mark Janello, Antonio Soler, and David Wechsler.

• College of Staten Island Center for the Performing Arts, 1-P Recital Hall (1-P 120), 2800 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, NY. • Admission: is free. • Info, visit theomniensemble.org or call 718-859-8649.

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• Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Avenue, Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY. • Admission: \$15 general, \$10 students/seniors. • Info, visit theomniensemble.org or call 718-859-8649.

CLASSIFIED

NEWLY PUBLISHED: J.S. Bach's 15 Three-part Inventions arranged for 3 flutes by William Giannone. Set of parts \$15.95. Available from the Flute Center of NY (Rose Music, flutesheetmusic.com, 212/307-9737) onsite or at the flute fair.

Met flutists (cont'd from page 5)

SeM: I play everything on my Haynes and focus on altering my sound and musical approach depending on the music and its stylistic demands.

MK: In the orchestra, I stick to playing my current instrument—the Haynes. For solos I almost always use my Yamaha K-model, the same instrument I used at my audition. No instrument is perfect, but our skills can sometimes make up for our instruments' weak spots.

StM: I tend to stick to one of each, a Powell grenadilla piccolo with gold keys and an Emanuel silver flute with a Lafin headjoint.

KM: I stick to one flute and one piccolo if at all possible. Given the Met's rotating wind section, the broad repertoire, the technical difficulty of many pieces, and the fact that some operas require me to switch between flute and piccolo during the same performance, I find it works best for me if at least the instruments stay constant.

DM: Conventional wisdom holds that mistakes are our greatest teacher. Would you care to comment?

CK: If something isn't working musically, I now try to ask myself if there is more I could do by playing to convey my ideas and get other people excited about them.



MK: Playing opera, the worst mistake you can do is to play in a rest, when no one's playing. But we'll always make mistakes—the question is how to minimize them!

DM: What kind of music do you listen to?
CK: Everything! Parliament Funkadelic on the turntable right now.

MK: It's very random. I listen to opera, but often like to improvise on the piano.
StM: I'm an opera lover, of course. I also really enjoy baroque music, and I'm a huge Queen fan!

KM: I listen to a lot of classical music and opera, though I also have a soft spot for Top 40 and a lot from the '80s and early '90s.

DM: What is your favorite opera to play?

CK: There are so many I haven't played yet! Ask me again in a few years.

SeM: My favorite opera is *Peter Grimes* by Benjamin Britten; I love the textures and layering of music throughout the orchestra. Like Wagner, Britten treats the orchestra as a main character helping portray mood, atmosphere, and context to what is happening on stage.

MK: There're too many! If I had to pick one it'd be *Turandot*.

StM: So many! A few stand-outs: *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.

KM: I love the breadth of the repertoire at the Met—in a single week I might play Berg, Puccini, Strauss, and Mozart. Personally, I give the edge to Wagner. I simply find his music breathtaking.

DM: How does working with singers inform your ensemble playing?

CK: You always have to be listening and adjusting. New casts come in without rehearsal time so you can never go on auto-pilot and that keeps things exciting.

SeM: I find that I'm even more attentive to multiple musical voices. Singers can be unpredictable from one performance to the next, so we constantly have an ear towards the stage; as such, our playing must be very flexible and fluid. There is a heightened sense of collaboration which really helps create a sense that the orchestra is an enlarged chamber ensemble.

MK: Singers focus not only on singing, but playing the character as well (and some do this better than others). When I prepare a piece to record or play at a solo recital, it's important to go into depth about its character and its message. In pieces like *Peter and the Wolf* or *Carnival of the Animals*, we know we're playing a bird! But what about *Daphnis* or Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*?

StM: I wouldn't say it informs my ensemble playing as much as it informs my solo playing. The expression is so huge in vo-

cal music! Listening to great opera singers has really increased my own sense of line, color and expression. A lot of what I learned about ensemble playing has come from studying with Fenwick Smith who taught me how to play second flute (it's actually harder than playing principal flute in some ways!) and from my now-former colleagues at the Met, especially Michael Parloff and Trudy Kane. I was so lucky to join the Met when they were there and to learn from them by osmosis. They both had so much experience and I had so little!

KM: Accompanying, and ideally complementing, the soloists requires extraordinary sensitivity to changes in tempo, pitch, and dynamics, and the flexibility to adjust immediately to the soloist as needed. The singer's lead informs how I phrase particular passages, how and when I take breaths, and of course my own intonation, tempo, and dynamics. And because soloists are human beings, these aspects of their singing can vary from performance to performance, and even between rehearsal and performance.

DM: What advice can you offer to readers who are taking auditions?

CK: Remember why you are taking an audition in the first place. Hopefully it's because you love to play, and you love the repertoire you're auditioning with. If the music is your priority auditions are a lot more enjoyable.

SeM: Trust in your preparation and your musical voice. It's easy to second-guess yourself after absorbing numerous interpretations from recordings and opinions from teachers and peers, but at the end of the day, *you* are the artist, and it's your musicianship and ability that is being presented in front of the panel.

MK: You should absolutely take auditions you think you're capable of winning. Focus on playing your absolute best. Trust your own instincts on what your absolute best is. And if you think a certain passage is difficult, practice!

There're times in auditions when they know in advance whom they'll select. Nonetheless, play your absolute best—at least if you don't win the audition, you win your pride.

StM: Really analyze your practice sessions every day. What are you struggling with? What is easy for you? This may sound obvious but practice the hard stuff and let the rest go! You don't need to play through every measure of every excerpt every day.

One particular exercise I recommend has to do with first note accuracy. Everyone knows what happens to the entire excerpt if you splat the first note. But for me, if I am happy with my first note, generally I relax and the whole excerpt goes well. To do this exercise, number all your excerpts and write them on slips of paper and put them in a bowl. Then draw numbers randomly and (this

(Cont'd on next page)

is where it gets interesting) play ONLY the first note of the excerpt. If you are successful, take the number out of the bowl. If not, back in it goes. Do this until you get all the numbers out of the bowl. Break for lunch. Repeat. Spend a whole day doing this and only this and you will increase your accuracy tenfold or more!

KM: The most helpful thing I have found is to play excerpts for as many people as possible. At a certain point, there is diminishing utility to playing the same two measures over and over in a room by yourself, so it is incredibly helpful to get the perspective of others.

DM: *What did you say to yourself as you walked out onto the stage at the Met for the preliminary audition?*

CK: I had just seen *Der Rosenkavalier* a few days before the audition and I was telling myself I really wanted to be able to play that someday. I watched the final trio on my phone a few times before I went in. This season I had the chance to play it with Simon Rattle conducting and it was a dream fulfilled!

SeM: I just want to play my best in this round.

MK: My semifinal and final rounds were the same day. On the way to the audition I slipped and fell 180 degrees on my backpack. I was worried I broke my instruments. After I played my semifinal round I thought, "There's no way I'm winning this job." I packed, ate my sandwich, and I was ready to leave. Right then they announced the finalists. It was just two of us. Right then, I knew I was likely to win!

DM: *Do you have a set practice regimen?*

CK: My favorite warmups are long tones and singing while playing. Before each show I'll run through the part to refresh it and work on specific sections for pitch

and technique. On days with no shows you'll find me preparing the next opera. There are usually five to eight in rotation so as a newer member of the orchestra it can be a lot to juggle.

SeM: The only thing that is set playing-wise on performance days is not to practice too much, but I always include at least a warm-up. On any given week, we have four to six different operas being rehearsed and performed; with that much variety, I usually try to brush up on the opera being performed that evening. On non-performance days, I try to catch up on life (I'm still trying to find the right work/life balance) and/or start looking ahead to new repertoire later in the season.

MK: On my performance days I focus solely on my parts, doing long tones with a tuner and a metronome. I used to practice Andersen etudes a lot and will soon be working on a new CD project.

StM: A lot of my practicing has to happen around being a mom, so it is really day-to-day in term of my regimen. Because I don't have tons of time, I really have to be efficient. So I work on the hard stuff and trust that the other stuff will be there when I need it.

KM: Performances, rehearsals, my daughter, and various other demands have forced me to use my practice time very efficiently. Some shows require dedicated work on difficult or exposed passages, and warm-up prior to a performance. Otherwise, I will work on the operas I am rehearsing—again, spending time on the passages I know will be most difficult. The rest is mind over matter!

DM: *What is your opinion about taking time away from the instrument?*

CK: I'm all for it. Life is about balance and happy music making is easiest when

you're not mentally burned out or physically exhausted.

SeM: It is essential. During the season, I try to take a day off each week if possible; having a small break has been incredibly beneficial both physically and mentally. In the summer I usually take off two whole weeks. It's vital to push the reset button and start again with a fresh perspective.

StM: It's so important to take time away from the instrument and recharge! It doesn't even have to be a lot of time.

KM: You need time away for your physical and mental well-being, but I make sure that I have built in enough time after my time off to get back to playing at my peak before my next rehearsal or performance.

DM: *Playing opera has unique challenges. What has been the biggest one for you?*

CK: Patience. Singers love to take time and that's often where the magic happens. Waiting for the tension and release can be such a fine line but it's exciting when it really works.

StM: The schedule is really hard, especially with having a family. The hours are long, and operas run late into the evening, but I still have to get up early to get my son to school in the morning. And unlike with most symphonic jobs, there is no regularity to the weekly schedule, so I have to create a lot of systems in my life to maintain some sort of structure for myself and for my family.

KM: Determining where my part fits into the overall picture, in particular, when to play in the background and when to bring out a solo line, has been one of the more challenging things I have had to develop as a player. Fortunately, I have had very talented and experienced colleagues who provided guidance and helped me to navigate this issue!

DM: *Thanks so much!* □

NYFC ENSEMBLES PROGRAM

UPDATE

Thirty NYFC flutists (26 returning and 4 new) met at Studios 353 on West 48th Street on Saturday, January 25. Co-directors Denise Koncelik and Mark Vickers led the group through repertoire planned for the coming season. As a special treat, NYFC member Bill Giannone conducted J.S. Bach's *Sinfonia No. 1* (BWV 787) in his own recently published arrangement for three flutes.

Answers to the intermission question ("Tell us something that you haven't yet done, but would really like to") indicated a strong interest in foreign travel, with three in the group hoping to go on an African safari. Other responses included acting in a play, riding in a hot air balloon, getting married, and becoming a grandparent.

All members of the NY Flute Club are welcome to participate. Questions? Contact Denise or Mark directly at ensembles@nyfluteclub.org. The next two rehearsal dates, all 2:00–4:00 pm at Studios 353, 353 West 48th Street (between 8th and 9th Avenues), are

Saturday, February 22, 2020 and
Sunday, March 22, 2020.



Denise Koncelik



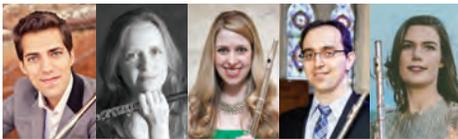
Mark Vickers



Participants at the January 22 NYFC Ensemble rehearsal. New attendees include Tiffany Lee (1), Ngan-Wu Vincci (2), Elise Cetera (3), and Bill Giannone (4). Photos: Brian Klasewitz



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



February 29, 2020 Flute Fair

Saturday, all day • W83 Ministry Center, 150 West 83rd Street, NYC

Flutists of the Metropolitan Opera

100th Season

2019- 2020 Concerts

October 20, 2019 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
The Legacy of Samuel Baron

November 17, 2019 • Sunday, 8:00 pm
GALA CENTENNIAL CONCERT*
Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th Street, NYC

December 15, 2019 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
Flutists of the New York Philharmonic

January 12, 2020 • Sunday, 5:00 pm
Flutists of the New York City Ballet: Scott
Kemsley, Tanya Witek, and Laura Conwesser

February 29, 2020 • Saturday, all day
FLUTE FAIR with Flutists of the MET Opera
W83 Ministry Center, 150 W. 83rd Street, NYC

March 29, 2020 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
Flutists & Friends of the American Ballet Theatre

April 19, 2020 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
Competition Winners Concert (pre-concert
masterclass/mini-recital with Paula Robison)

May 17, 2020 • Sunday, time TBA
Annual Meeting & Ensemble Concert
Pearl Studios, 500 8th Avenue, NYC

Except as noted, all regular concerts will take place at Engelman Recital Hall, Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Avenue (entrance on 25th Street). All dates and programs subject to change. Tickets \$25, students and seniors \$15, only at the door; free to members. For more information, visit the NYFC website at www.nyfluteclub.org.



From the Editor

Greetings! February is Flute Fair month and Flute Fair program chair Deirdre McArdle has not only organized this year's flute fair ("2020 Vision: Looking Back and Moving Forward"), but has also provided a fascinating interview of the five Met Opera flutists who will be appearing as guest artists for the day. Seth Morris, Stephanie Mortimore, Koren McCaffrey, Maron Khoury, and Chelsea Knox reflect on their audition experiences, the challenges of playing with the Met, what they look for in the instruments they play (something to keep in mind when you visit the exhibits at the Flute Fair...), and what they have learned from the singers with whom they perform. Nancy Toff provides some historical background on the last 100 years of Met flutists, supplementing a March 2014 *NYFC Newsletter* article appearing in conjunction with the Met Flutists' last Flute Fair appearance.

In this month's From the President (p. 2), Nancy discusses the outreach efforts needed to lay a firm foundation for the Club's next 100 years and her hopes for attracting a larger number of students to the myriad offerings of the NYFC. She also provides a few more details on her Flute Fair presentation (eagerly anticipated by those of us who missed an earlier version of it at this past summer's NFA convention): an illustrated lecture on the history of the Club, complete with live performances of selected works from her list of NYFC premieres.

Xiao (Lester) Yu, another one of the newer participants in the NYFC's ensembles program, is this month's member profile subject. I enjoyed learning about his day job in cybersecurity, the repertoire he has played with the Shanghai Academy Flute Ensemble, and his 2013 encounter with Sir James Galway.

Hope to see you at the fair! And don't forget to preregister (visit nyfluteclub.org for details), sign up as a volunteer (email volunteers@nyfluteclub.org), or bring some flute-related items for the NYFC table and tag sale (for questions, email nancy.toff@oup.com).

All for now. Best regards,
Katherine Saenger (klsaenger@yahoo.com)