



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

Chamber Music Concert to Reflect America's Rich, Varied Heritage

By Nancy Toff

Chamber music is a potent symbol of democracy, cooperation, and respect. The Flute Club's February concert program highlights these values in the context of our country's 250th year and the historic achievements of our composers and performers.

When Jayn Rosenfeld and I set out to organize this concert, we thought first about historical contributions to the repertoire, and especially about important pieces that are not often played. We thought about the role of immigration in American music. But we also wanted to spotlight the spirit of



Sylvan Winds, one of many groups playing Feb. 8, will be performing a Ruth Crawford-Seeger quintet.

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Flutists Invited to Apply For March 22 Competition

Flutists ages 18 to 27 are eligible to apply for the annual New York Flute Club Competition. The 2026 competition will be held on Sunday March 22, with applications for entry due by Feb. 27, 2026.

Repertoire requirements include playing the first movement of *Joueurs de Flûte* by Albert Roussel and then a contrasting piece of the entrant's choice.

The preliminary round will be held at the Manhattan School of Music (130 Claremont Ave.), with the final round held at the New York Flute Fair later the same day at the Allen-Stevenson School. The winners receive a monetary award and perform in

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2025-2026

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From the President



A New Year With New Celebrations

The start of 2026 was stellar. Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington's mastery class offered insights and techniques we can all use in our daily pursuit of meaningful music-making, and her recital

"Flute Songs for Prayer and Reflection" was a captivating and memorable experience.

Ragan Whiteside was showcased in an online event on Jan. 8, soon to be followed by one with Joan Tower Jan. 29. To ensure you don't miss such consummate artists during their live Zoom sessions, subscribe to our YouTube channel to receive notifications when events are available for you to enjoy: @newyorkfluteclub9657.

Next comes our extravaganza, "A Celebration of American Chamber Music," on Feb. 8. Curated by Nancy Toff and Jayn Rosenfeld, it brings together a program of music celebrating multiple flutes as well as collaborations with woodwinds and strings. The roster of musicians is incredible, and we invite you to spend some time with the artists at a post-concert reception.

Finally, registration is open for our Young Musicians Contest (applications due Feb. 1, contest March 1) and the New York Flute Club Competition (applications due Feb. 27, competition March 22). Please check nyfluteclub.org for details.

Stay warm!

~Lish

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Cordova-Arrington Offers Tips, Shares Inspirations



Clockwise from top left: Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington with Nia Foster, with Simone McPartling, and with Dahye Annie Jung.

During her Jan. 11 mastery class, University of Oregon flute professor Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington told Nia Foster to “be a detective for the finger that is the culprit” when you tackle a glitch. For Simone McPartling, who played *Memory* by Chen Yi, she suggested experimenting with the push and pull of phrasing. “Sometimes you have to do the wrong thing to figure out the right thing,” Cordova-Arrington said.

With Annie Jung, who played Valerie Coleman’s *Danza de la Mariposa*, Cordova-Arrington had a phrasing tip, noting that monarch butterflies travel across the ocean and they don’t stop at bar lines. She also spoke about minimizing movement of embouchure, saying: “Set it and forget it.”



Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington, flute, and Min Young Kang, piano, performed a concert of “Flute Songs for Prayer and Reflection” on Jan. 11 that included *Moonlit Waters* by Lawren Brianna Ware, some traditional hymns arranged by Marianne Kim, Sonatine by Walter Giesecking, Telemann’s Sonata in F minor and Widor’s Suite, Op. 34.

Photos: Lisa Vickery

More Than 20 Performers to Participate In American Chamber Music Concert

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collaboration, mentorship, and support for new music that the New York Flute Club has represented for more than a century.

The program opens with Flute Force, one of the first professional flute ensembles, a quartet that has flourished, with various personnel, since 1981 and has commissioned many significant contributions to the ensemble repertoire. One of them is Joseph Schwantner's *Silver Halo*, written to commemorate its 25th anniversary in 2007. In addition to multiple flutes, the piece employs energy chimes—a small metal bar played with a plastic mallet that creates a bell-like sound, and the piece has spatial aspects as well. Flute Force will also play *Travelogue*, a 1995 work by Elizabeth Brown, a former member of the ensemble. Inspired by the composer's family trips in Alabama, it employs microtonal trills and progressions, wheezy overblown tremolos, and a Doppler effect of falling pitch (to imitate cars passing by in the other direction).

Walter Piston is to American 20th century composition what Georges Barrère was to flute playing.

Next comes a classic of the woodwind repertory, the *Three Pieces* for flute, clarinet, and bassoon by Walter Piston. Piston is to American 20th century composition what Flute Club founder Georges Barrère was to flute playing; after graduating from Harvard in 1924 he studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger in the 1920s and returned to the United States in 1926, joining the faculty at Harvard, where he taught several generations of composers (among them Leonard Bernstein, Elliott Carter, Daniel Pinkham, and John Harbison). A curious note: Prior to attending Harvard, he played violin in various ensembles led by Georges Longy, the principal oboist of the Boston Symphony whose woodwind ensemble competed with Barrère's. During World

War I he played sax in the Navy band.

Piston wrote the neo-classical woodwind trio, his first published work, in the Paris years, and it was premiered there—by Gaston Blanquart (a Taffanel student and Barrère colleague in Paris), clarinetist

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Bonnie McAlvin Quartet, the Club's 217th Premiere

I first met Bonnie McAlvin, composer, flutist, and colleague of Robert Dick, at Robert's Flute Club concert in January 2024.

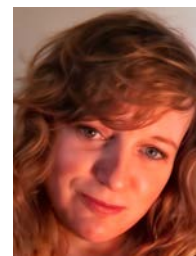
Talking about new repertoire for flutists, we bemoaned the paucity of accessible contemporary works for flute quartet.

Her immediate response was simply, "I will write a piece."

She said she likes it when people need music.

When she heard that high-level flutists would be performing her new work, she upped the difficulty slightly, but promised it was still in the realm of the playable. After she hears the first performance, she may do some revising, but then will make the music available to Flute Club members who are interested.

The piece has a few extended techniques, mainly multiphonics based on harmonics. It contains some "reflections" of human voices, according to Bonnie. And there are quotes from other pieces of music, which are not too obvious (the rhythms are altered); the listener may have to go on a "hunting expedition."



**Composer
Bonnie
McAlvin**

—Jayn Rosenfeld

Feb. 8 Concert to Include More Than 20 Performers

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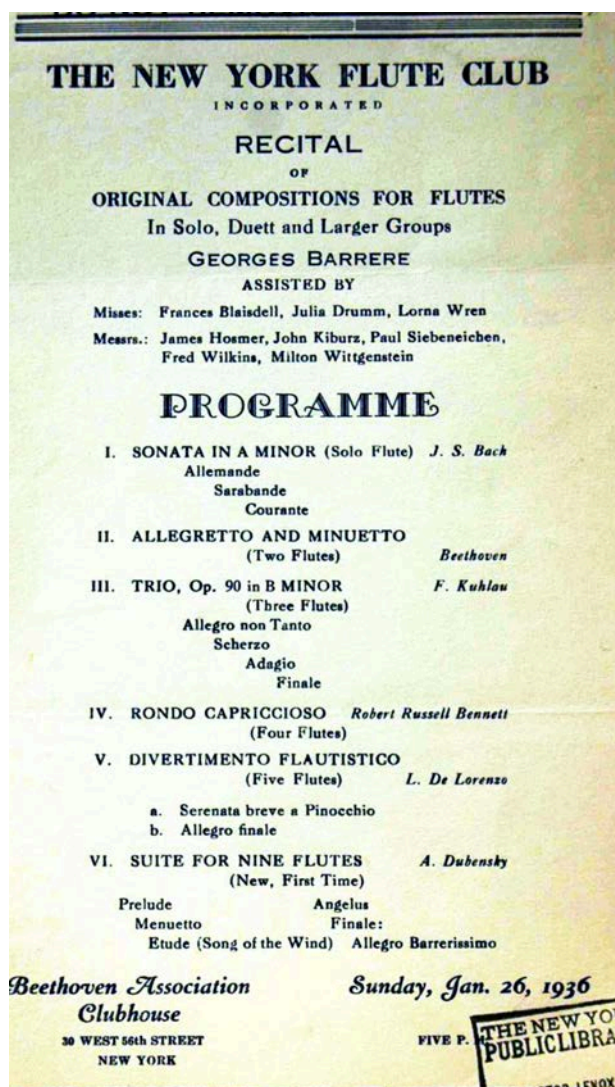
Louis Coste, and bassoonist Gustave Dhérin on a program of the Société Nationale, an organization committed to the promotion of new French music, on May 8, 1926. The first recording was made by Barrère, Fred Van Amburgh, and Angel Del Busto in 1935 for the New Music Quarterly label. The piece is Stravinsky-esque, showing influences of Hindemith as well. But as Piston himself later said, “Certainly Hindemith had something to do with it... but it may sound corny, but Bach had a great deal more to do with it.”

The first half of the program closes with a world premiere, a flute quartet by New York-based flutist-composer Bonnie McAlvin. As a performer, she is a multiphonic specialist. Her compositions, mostly for flute, also include major film scores. The performers are a new-generation quartet of Tara O'Connor's graduate students at the Yale School of Music.

Virgil Thomson's *Serenade for flute and violin* (1935) a set of five miniatures, is dedicated to Yvonne de Casa Fuerte, a violinist and composer who founded the new music society La Sérénade in Paris. It was premiered by Carleton Sprague Smith (chief of the music division of the New York Public Library, and the power behind its American music collection) and Ruth Kemper, at a concert of the WPA-Federal Music Project in New York on Nov. 13, 1935.

Thomson graduated from Harvard in 1923 and also went to Paris to study with Boulanger; he lived in Paris from 1925 to 1940. Many people remember him best as the longtime music critic of the *New York Herald Tribune* and as a resident of the fabled Chelsea Hotel, but he produced a catalog of hundreds of compositions. In 1943, he wrote a sonata for solo flute, which is included on the NYFC's 1976 LP *The Flute in American Music*, performed by Harry Moskovitz.

Aaron J. Kernis represents a younger generation of modernist composers, whose composition teachers included John Adams, Jacob Druckman, Morton Subotnick, and Charles Wuorinen. He has won both the Pulitzer Prize and the Grawemeyer Award. *Delicate Songs* (1988) displays his compositional skills on an intimate level in a virtuosic scoring for flute, violin, and cello.



One of the pieces in the Feb. 8 concert will be Arcady Dubensky's *Suite for Nine Flutes*, which was premiered by Georges Barrère and his students and colleagues in 1936.

A pianist and composer mentored in Chicago by Henry Cowell, Ruth Crawford-Seeger studied in New York with Charles Seeger, despite the latter's hesitation about the talents of other women composers he had taught. She then became his wife and collaborator on such works as *Tradition and Experiment in (the New) Music*. Her early, modernist works were performed by the International Society for Contemporary Music in Chicago and at the Copland-Sessions Concerts in New York. Beginning in the 1930s Crawford-Seeger also worked at the

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American Chamber Music

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American Folklife Center, transcribing field recordings, and became an authority on American traditional music.

She wrote the Suite for Wind Quintet in 1952 for a competition of the Washington chapter of the National Association for American Composers and Conductors—which she won. It represents her return to modernist composition after a gap of decades, but it would be her last work; she died a year later.

We close this concert with the tuneful Suite for Nine Flutes by Arcady Dubensky. A Russian-born

violinist, Dubensky left that country at the time of the Russian Revolution, joining the New York Symphony, where he was Barrère's colleague, and then the New York Philharmonic.

This piece was premiered at the New York Flute Club on Jan. 26, 1936, by Barrère and eight of his students and colleagues—Frances Blaisdell, Julia Drumm, Lorna Wren, James Hosmer, John Kiburz, Paul Siebeneichen, Fred Wilkins, and Milton Wittgenstein. Played on its ninetieth anniversary, it aptly represents the joyful spirit of community for which the Flute Club was founded, a collaborative spirit it continues to inspire.

A Celebration of American Chamber Music

Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Allen-Stevenson School, 132 E. 78th St.

Program

Silver Halo (2007).....Joseph Schwantner (b. 1943)
Flute Force: Kathleen Nester, flute and energy chimes; Sheryl Henze, piccolo and energy chimes; Rie Schmidt, flute and alto flute; Wendy Stern, flute and bass flute

Travelogue for flute quartet (1995)Elizabeth Brown (b. 1953)
Flute Force: Rie Schmidt, Wendy Stern, Sheryl Henze, Kathleen Nester

Three Pieces for flute, clarinet, and bassoon (1925)Walter Piston (1894-1976)
Reva Youngstein, flute; Daniel Spitzer, clarinet; Lisa Alexander, bassoon

Quartet for Flutes (2025)Bonnie McAlvin (b. 1976)
World premiere
Matthew Ober, flute and piccolo; Rafael Méndez, flute; Carter Reynolds, flute; Ben Smith, bass flute

INTERMISSION

Serenade for flute and violin (1935)Virgil Thomson (1896-1989)
Bart Feller, flute; Thierry de Lucas, violin

Delicate Songs (1988).....Aaron J. Kernis (b. 1960)
Bart Feller, flute; Thierry de Lucas, violin; Angelique Montes, cello

Suite for Wind Quintet (1952).....Ruth Crawford-Seeger (1901-1953)
Sylvan Winds: Isabel Lepanto Gleicher, flute; Kathy Halvorson, oboe; Kristina Teuschler, clarinet; Gina Cuffari, bassoon; Zohar Schondorf, horn

Suite for Nine Flutes (1936)*.....Arcady Dubensky (1890-1966)
Isabel Lepanto Gleicher, piccolo; Bart Feller, Rie Schmidt, Matthew Ober, Reva Youngstein, Carter Reynolds, Svjetlana Kabalin, and Rafael Méndez, flutes; Ben Smith, alto flute

**Premiered by Georges Barrère and students, New York Flute Club, Jan. 26, 1936*

Program curated by Jayn Rosenfeld and Nancy Toff

John Ragusa on Blues, Jazz and How Not to Play

John Ragusa, a genre-defying multi-instrumentalist known for his expressive, original and fearless flute playing, will present a live online lecture-demonstration session via Zoom for the Flute Club on Thursday March 26 at 7 p.m.

Ragusa, who lives in New York City, plays a wide range of instruments including concert, alto, bass, and piccolo flutes, along with pennywhistles, wood flutes, harmonica, pocket trumpet, jaw harp, didgeridoo, and even the conch shell. He is known for pushing sonic boundaries and transforming his instruments into storytelling tools.

Ragusa is half of the award-winning duo Mulebone, and a longtime member of Grammy-winning Alison Brown's Quintet. For over two decades, he has toured and recorded with acclaimed Nashville singer-songwriter Beth Nielsen Chapman and regularly collaborates with Grammy-nominated pianist and Spyro Gyra co-founder Jeremy Wall in their duo Riverrun. He has also performed as an accompanist for author Deepak Chopra and has been a featured performer with the Buglisi Dance Theatre 9/11 Memorial "Table of Silence" at Lincoln Center since its inception.

During the Zoom session, Ragusa plans to talk about his background and his collaborations, along with his approach to practicing and how he



Flutist John Ragusa will lead a Zoom program on Thursday March 26 at 7 p.m.

improvises on modes based on major scales and especially melodic minor scales.

He also will share his thoughts on how not to play the flute, that is, playing with just one sound or one approach, emphasizing that the flute has a fluid and adaptive voice. He says he will also discuss the art of listening and the magic of collaboration.

Click [this link](https://www.nyfluteclub.org) for access to the Zoom event, or go through www.nyfluteclub.org.



Coordinator Sought for New Flute-Loan Program

The Club is setting up a Flute Loan Program, and needs someone to oversee the selection of recipients and the distribution of flutes.

This is an occasional job, when the flutes are available. We need to find teachers and appropriate students, 5th grade through graduate school, and deliver a flute now and then.

Please reach out to Jinni Rock-Bailey or Jayn Rosenfeld, co-chairs of the Education Committee, if you can help.

Flutists Invited to Apply for March 22 Competition

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the Competition Winners Recital on [Sunday, April 12, 2026](#) at 5:30 pm. The first-place prize winner will receive \$1,500, second-place brings a prize of \$750 and \$500 goes to the third-place winner.

All entrants must be members of the New York Flute Club. If you are not currently a Club member, you may [join or renew](#) online. The membership fee is \$85 regular and \$40 for full-time students. (If this is prohibitive and prevents your entry, please email kaoruhin@gmail.com.) Complete and submit the NYFC Competition [application](#) online. The deadline is Feb. 27, 2026.

The competition fee is \$25, which includes entrance to the [2026 New York Flute Fair](#). You must



[Kaoru Hinata](#)
Competition
Coordinator

provide and pay for your own accompanist for all stages of the competition.

Winners must be available to perform at the New York Flute Club's Competition Winners Concert on Sunday, April 12, 2026, at 5:30 pm. The Club will provide \$300 to the 1st-prize winner for their pianist expenses and \$150 each to the 2nd and 3rd prize winners for the April 12 recital.

For more details and the online application, please go to www.nyfluteclub.org.

The NYFC Competition has been recognizing rising artists for more than four decades. Previous winners have gone on to distinguished solo careers and positions in major orchestras, and they teach in top conservatories and colleges.

Applications for Young Musicians Contest Due Feb. 1

The annual Young Musicians Contest will take place on Sunday, March 1, 2026, at the School for Strings, 419 West 54th St. in Manhattan.

First held in 2008, the contest is designed to foster the development of young flutists by exposing them to a healthy competitive environment and allowing them to receive constructive comments from professional flutists.

The contest is divided into four age groups for students playing the Western concert flute (Boehm flute in C): ages 8 and under, 9 to 11, 12 to 14, and 15 to 18 (in the last category, students must currently be in high school or the home schooling equivalent).

Students who play non-Western flutes (e.g., pan flute, African harmonic flute, Chinese bamboo flute, shakuhachi) will be judged separately by judges who have experience with the student's instrument. This year, regular applications for the Young Musicians Contest are due Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026.

Winners will be announced on or before Sunday, March 8, 2026. Winners will perform at the New York Flute Club's annual Flute Fair on Sunday, March 22.

Contestants can choose which piece they want to play on competition day. Memorization is not required.

For students who study with a private flute teacher, their teacher must be a 2025-2026 NYFC member. If a teacher is not a member, they must join or renew before the applicant submits the contest application. Contestants and teachers do not have to be based in the NYC area.

The entrance fee is \$45. There is no charge for performing with the pianist at the contest or Flute Fair performances, but there is a \$30 per half hour charge for any rehearsals with the pianist.

Previous winners are not eligible to compete in the same age category.

Proof of age: A copy of your birth certificate, passport, Real ID, or driver's license is required as proof of eligible age. Please upload a picture of your proof of age in the online application.

Online application: Your online application (no more than one per contestant) must be submitted no later than Feb. 1, 2026. Payment is by PayPal. Please include the student's name in the "instructions to merchant" box on the PayPal transaction.

2025-2026 Events

IN-PERSON CONCERTS

Sunday, Oct. 5, 2025, 5:30 p.m.: Robert Langevin, Church of Christ and Saint Stephen's, 120 West 69th Street, New York

Sunday Nov. 9, 3:30 p.m. mastery class and 5:30 p.m. concert with **Néstor Torres**

Sunday Dec. 7, 3:30 p.m. mastery class and 5:30 p.m. concert with **Rachel Blumenthal**

Date change: Sunday Jan. 11, 2026, 3:30 p.m. mastery class, 5:30 p.m. concert with **Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington**

Sunday Feb. 8, 5:30 p.m.: A Celebration of American Chamber Music with Flute Force, Bart Feller, Reva Youngstein, Sylvan Winds and other performers; world premiere by Bonnie McAlvin

Sunday March 22 all day: New York Flute Fair, with guest artist **Jennifer Grim**

Sunday April 12: Winners of the New York Flute Club Competition, 5:30 p.m. at Church of Christ and St. Stephen's, 120 West 69th St.

Unless otherwise indicated, all concerts take place at 5:30 p.m. at the Allen-Stevenson School, 132 East 78th St. in Manhattan. Admission is free to NYFC members and their 2-4 member guests, depending on membership level. Non-members: \$25 general, \$15 full-time students (with ID) and seniors (65+)



ONLINE PROGRAMS

Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom link.

Oct. 16, 2025: Samuel Baron's recordings of American music, with commentary by his colleagues. Hosted by **Tara Helen O'Connor**.

Nov. 13: Flutes of the World with **Tereasa Payne**

Dec. 4: An evening with flutist, multi-instrumentalist and composer **David Amram**

Jan. 8, 2026: Ragan Whiteside, soul jazz flutist (I Just Wanna Play series)

Jan. 29: The Flute Works of **Joan Tower**. Music and interviews with Joan Tower, **Lisa Bost-Sandberg**, **Patricia Spencer**, and **Carol Wincenc**.

March 26: John Ragusa, improvisational flutist, on jazz and blues (I Just Wanna Play series)

April 16: Flutes and Flutemakers in Early New York, with **Wendell Dobbs**, **Nancy Groce** and

Michael Lynn. The instruments, flutemakers, flutists, and composers who promoted the flute, with music of Foster, Riley, and others.

All dates and programs subject to change. For more information about the New York Flute Club, including competitions, ensemble programs, education, and membership, please visit www.nyfluteclub.org

Flute Happenings Elsewhere

The OMNI Ensemble, with music director/flutist David Wechsler, will be performing a free concert on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. at the College of Staten Island. On Saturday Feb. 21, 8:00 p.m., the OMNI Ensemble will perform at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. Tickets at the Brooklyn Conservatory are \$25.00, \$15.00 for students and senior citizens.



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