



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

Storm King Flutes Headed This Way

By William Giannone and Lisa Vickery

The musicians of Storm King Flutes love a good military march, but when they are doing their own thing on their own time they enjoy diving into the realms of contemporary, Classical, Baroque, and Impressionist composers and beyond.

Storm King Flutes is made up of five active-duty members of the U.S. Army, stationed at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. They all play in the West Point Band. But as Storm King Flutes, the group comes together, off-duty, to share their artistry with the wider community and stretch beyond their normal daily repertoire.

On Nov. 15, Storm King Flutes will perform a concert for the New York Flute Club at Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church, 152 West 66th St., at 5:30 p.m., as part of the club's in-person monthly concert series. A mastery class will precede the concert at 3:30 p.m. and last one hour.

Don't come to Storm King's NYFC concert expecting to hear Sousa marches. The group instead will be performing music from contemporary, living composers including Gary Schocker and Amanda Harberg as well as classical pieces by Schumann, C.P.E. Bach, and Debussy.

Storm King Flutes in a way is an alter-ego ensemble for these West Point Band members.

"This is a unique opportunity to play music we love to play," said Ashley Mendeke, one of the members of Storm King Flutes. In the day-to-day playing as part of the West Point Band, "a large part of our job is based on the academic calendar, [so] our repertoire overlaps quite a bit," she said.

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How Much Do You Know About Chinese Flutes?



On Nov. 5, tune in online via Zoom to hear about Chinese flutes with Hong-Da Chin, an international flutes expert as well as composer (and badminton enthusiast). Please turn to page 4 for more information.

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2026-2027

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From the President



Up Next, West Point To East Asia

The 107th season began with a fascinating online session featuring Wendy Stern and Zara Lawler, who shared their experiences as Suzuki educators and what they

knew about Suzuki Flute Method founder Toshio Takahashi.

Emi Ferguson and pianist Hilda Huang highlighted the importance of storytelling, connection, and creativity in their captivating recital on Nov. 18, and Ferguson brought out nuances in the mastery class performers' interpretation of J.S. Bach and Telemann.

November showcases two events that you and your students will enjoy. First, Hong-Da Chin, a modern flutist/composer and Chinese instrument specialist, will demonstrate several Chinese wind instruments online (Nov. 5). This is a special event where you can ask questions about learning these instruments and the specialized techniques involved in playing them.

Our in-person event on Nov. 15 features Storm King Flutes: Evan Curatolo, Ashley Mendeke, Torin Olsen, Katrina Owens, and Heath White, all active-duty flutists at West Point. Known for their ensemble precision and musicality, their mastery class and recital will provide an opportunity to meet with them outside of their seasonal tours and summer concert series.

See you soon!

~Lish

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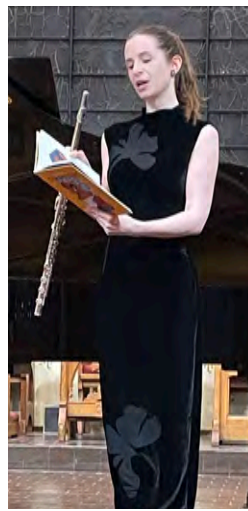
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With Emi Ferguson Comes Music and Poetry

Charismatic flutist, singer and composer Emi Ferguson performed for the NYFC on Sunday Oct. 18, presenting a program that melded genre-spanning folk songs, spirituals, and Franz Schubert. Seemingly disparate composers were connected by themes of nature and “art songs.” “I am on a mission for more people to know about Harry Burleigh,” Ferguson said of the African American composer Harry Burleigh. She even read a section about him from a book she wrote on American composers (photo below, middle of the page). She performed the concert—which included Schubert’s *Introduction and Variations on Trockne Blumen*—with Hilda Huang on piano (photo to the right). A mastery class preceded the recital.



Counterclockwise from top left: During the mastery class, Emi Ferguson told Jocylin Braun to have her sound reach beyond the stage. “Take up the space,” she said. Ferguson turned around Kelly Aguilar’s stand for her Bach Partita so she could feel the intimacy of the piece. As Sydney Weiler played a lively Telemann Fantasia, Ferguson said, “Think that you’re a fiddler.”

Photos: Lisa Vickery

Explore Chinese Flutes With “Ancient Sounds, New Possibilities”

By Lish Lindsey

This past April, I toured as a Japanese ryūteki (dragon flute) performer for the East Asian Music in the Contemporary World Initiative project, which brought together North American-based musicians specializing in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean traditional instruments.

I met Hong-Da Chin at our welcome meeting and was thrilled to learn he was a modern flutist and composer. I knew he was a dizi performer and educator. Dizi is one of the most beautiful, charismatic, and graceful keyless flutes, so I looked forward to collaborating with him in our large ensemble pieces and hearing his solo work.



Malaysian flutist and composer Hong-Da Chin will demonstrate a variety of Chinese flutes for NYFC members via Zoom on Nov. 5.

Listening backstage to Chin’s stunning solo dizi performances reminded me how flutes across cultures are similar, but how the dizi’s timbre, function, and character make it unique.

When Nancy Toff and Mindy Kaufman began programming for the NYFC’s 2026-’27 online series, I felt Chin would be a wonderful guest because of his experience with both Chinese woodwinds and modern flute playing, and because learning more about flutes we

may not experience in our studies can enhance how we play our instruments as well as our understanding of the music that we study, teach, and perform.

Please join the free Zoom event, [Ancient Sounds, New Possibilities: Exploring Chinese Wind Instruments](#), on Thursday, Nov. 5 at 7:00 p.m. Chin will discuss and perform on several Chinese instruments, including the dizi, xiao, xun, and bawu, and answer your questions about these heritage flutes.

About Hong-Da Chin

Malaysian composer Hong-Da Chin immerses himself in a musical world where cultural elements are intertwined and interwoven in his music. Cultural inspirations from Malaysia can often be heard in Chin’s music. Chin’s dizi (Chinese bamboo flute) solo *Poem Recitation* was selected as a music composition featured at the Northern Illinois University World Symposium in 2025. He was also a winner of the Bent Frequency 2022 Call for Scores and a finalist of the ASU Gammage Beyond and ASU Symphony Orchestra Commission Competition in 2018.

Chin’s music has been performed around the world. The musicians that have performed his works include the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Chinese Orchestra, Camerata Nova Woodwind Quintet, No Exit New Music Ensemble, Music From China, New Thread Quartet, and Cleveland Chamber Symphony.

In addition to his work as a composer, Chin is an internationally renowned Chinese flute musician specializing in contemporary music. He has performed at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Asia Society, and Symphony Space in New York, the Kennedy Center and the Smithsonian in Washington D.C., Jay Pritzker Pavilion at Millennium Park and the Art Institute in Chicago, among others places.

Chin earned a Doctor of Musical Arts from Bowling Green State University in December 2017, studying with Marilyn Shrude and Mikel Kuehn. Chin teaches composition and music theory at Western Illinois University, and a member of the ADJ•ective Composers’ Collective and the Society of Malaysian Contemporary Composers.

Beyond his musical activities, Chin is an avid badminton player.

Storm King Flutes Headed This Way



Members of Storm King Flutes, from left to right: Torin Olsen, Katrina Owens, Evan Curatolo, Ashley Mendeke, and Heath White. They will perform live on Sunday, Nov. 15 at 152 West 66th St. in Manhattan.

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For the Flute Club, she said, everyone in Storm King picked something they wanted to play. As a result, the program will be a mix of solo, duo, trio and quintet music. It will open with a new piece written for five—yes, five—piccolos. That piece, *Cuigear*, by Gareth McLearnon, is pronounced “cougar” and is Gaelic for a group of five, in this case five piccolos.

Other pieces on the program include Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* and a suite by Gustav Holst.

The group is named after Storm King Mountain, Mendeke said, adding, “It’s a nod to the area surrounding West Point and the Hudson Highlands.”

“This is a unique opportunity to play music we love to play.”

And how exactly will a group of five professionals jointly teach one mastery class?

Mendeke said that Storm King members have held mastery classes before, but usually with just two of them at a time. So she concedes that five professionals chiming in will be unusual.

“Five different people means five different perspectives,” she said. But, she added, “Most likely one of us will take the lead,” and the others will offer their

support to the guidance given.

As with anyone in the military, Storm King’s members have had impressive training.

Evan Curatolo, who joined the West Point Band in August 2024, making him the newest member, holds a bachelor of music degree from the Eastman School of Music and a master of music degree from the Carnegie

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Storm King Flutes Headed This Way

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Mellon School of Music. His primary teachers included Bonita Boyd and Lorna McGhee.

Mendeke, who in addition to being in the West Point Band, is a member of The Hellcats, the field music element of the West Point Band, received her Bachelor's degrees in Flute Performance and Music Education at the University of North Texas. Her teachers included Mary Karen Clardy, Bart Feller, Tanya Witek, Janet Arms, and Mindy Kaufman.

The West Point Band's field music group, The Hellcats, includes bugles, piccolos, and drums, and serves as a showpiece for the U.S. Army and the U.S. Military Academy. As the Army's first and only remaining field music group, the Hellcats trace their heritage back to the American Revolution, when General George Washington established the garrison of West Point and appointed a fifer and drummer for signaling in camp, according to information on the West Point website. The modern-day Hellcat is handpicked through a selective audition process. A contemporary Hellcat is expected to perform with little to no notice at the largest media outlets in New York City and around the world.

Torin Olsen has been a member of the West Point Band since 2010. He has served as principal flute and piccolo in the band. Torin earned his bachelor of music degree from the University of Southern California and his master of music degree from Duquesne University. His teachers have included Robert Langevin and Jim Walker.

Katrina Owens (principal flute) joined the West Point Band in 2014. She completed degrees at the University of North Texas and George Mason University. She studied with Mary Karen Clardy and Judith Lapple.

Heath White is a piccolo player who is also in The Hellcats. He joined the West Point Band in 2016. White has a BME from the University of Nebraska and an MM from Indiana University. He studied with Thomas Robertello, Jasmine Choi and Jennifer Gunn.

Storm King Flutes

Sunday, Nov. 15, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church
152 West 66th Street, Manhattan

Program

Cuigear Gareth McLearnon (b. 1980)
Evan Curatolo, Ashley Mendeke, Torin Olsen,
Katrina Owens, Heath White,
piccolos

Echos Todd Goodman (b. 1977)
Torin Olsen, piccolo

Interlaced Ruth Morley (b. 1968)
Evan Curatolo and Torin Olsen, flutes
Katrina Owens, alto flute

Flame Gary Schocker (b. 1959)
Katrina Owens, flute; Jesse Goldberg, piano

Au delà du temps Yuko Uebayashi (b. 1958)
Ashley Mendeke and Heath White, flutes
Jesse Goldberg, piano

Sonata Amanda Harberg (b. 1973)
Ashley Mendeke, piccolo; Jesse Goldberg, piano

INTERMISSION

Scherzo No. 2 Robert Schumann (1810–1856)
arr. Trevor Wye

Sonata in A minor, Wq. 132 C.P.E. Bach (1714–1788)

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune C. Debussy (1862–1918)
arr. Nikolai Platonov
Evan Curatolo, flute; Jesse Goldberg, piano

First Suite in E-flat, Op. 28, No. 1
Gustav Holst (1874–1934) arr. T. Kamioka
Evan Curatolo, Ashley Mendeke, Torin Olsen, flutes
Katrina Owens, alto flute
Heath White, bass flute

Recital will be preceded by a mastery class at 3:30 p.m.

It's Time to Start Thinking about Flute Fair!

Our November concert with the Storm King Flutes will feature a composition by Gareth McLearnon, who just happens to be our guest artist for the Flute Fair in March, with the theme *Gathering in Gotham*. McLearnon is an internationally renowned and multi-award-winning flutist, composer, arranger and educator. He will present a concert at the Flute Fair on March 21 that will feature some of his own compositions, and his Flute Fair mastery class will include ensemble work. There will be many ways to participate in this highly collaborative Flute Fair. Watch your email for the official call for proposals. For more information, visit our [website](#).

**Mark Your Calendars:
Flute Fair, March 21**

Add Your Name to the NFA Flutists' Family Tree

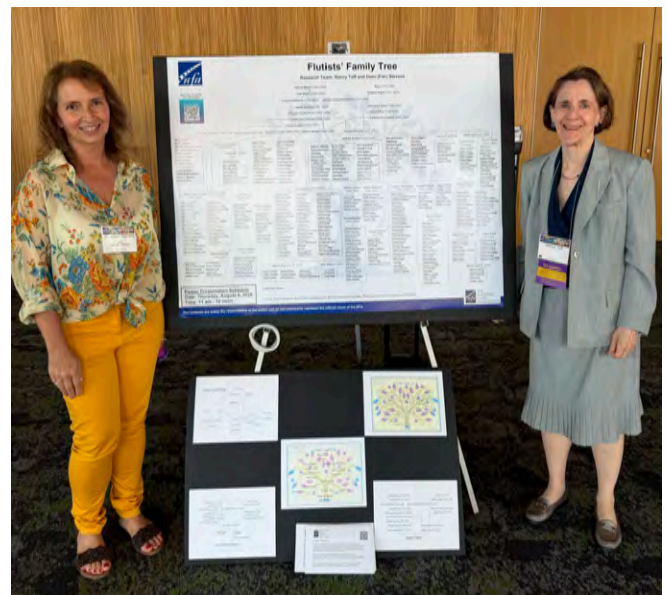
The National Flute Association is building a registry for any and all flutists in the United States, and it wants you to be a part of it.

In 2003, Demetra Baferos Fair, a doctoral student at Ohio State University, completed a document titled *Flutists' Family Tree: In Search of the American Flute School*. It is a valuable compilation of information on several thousand American flutists.

Now, in honor of the U.S. semiquincentennial, the NFA Research Committee, working with NFA archivist/historian Nancy Toff—and current NYFC board member and multi-term past president—is organizing an update and expansion of that database. The hope is that all NFA members will participate by filling in a simple form found through [this link](#). The form includes basics about name, address and contact information, as well as names of teachers with whom you have studied.

The NFA Research Committee demonstrated some of the work on this project in a poster session at the 2026 convention in Portland, Ore., but research is ongoing and contributions are welcome at any time.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, or would like to volunteer to work on the project (for example, researching published or online sources or if you have database programming experience), please write to the project at flutistsfamilytree@gmail.com.



Flutists' Family Tree researchers Demi (Fair) Stevens, left, and Nancy Toff presenting their database at the NFA 2026 convention.

The Flutists' Family Tree has about 9,000 entries so far, and the aim is to reach 15,000 by next summer's convention. So if 1,000 members each get five students or colleagues to participate, the project will reach its goal.

Ensemble Kicks Off the 2026-2027 Season



Kneeling left to right: Eddie Crawford, Elizabeth Doyle, Cristen Weiss, Laura Pologe, Kathy Saenger, Ambika Bansal, Lauren Baccarini, Heather Johnson, Bette Druck, Javad Yaramadi. Standing left to right: Elizabeth LaBarbera, Tracey Sydel, Gail Tishcoff, Doug Ramsdell, Gene Coleman, Karen Robbins, Sam Ostrowski, Prashant Kumar, Gwen Mandell, Judith Thoyer, Mark Vickers, Bill Giannone, Lester Yu, Lauren Kurtz (Nathan Kurtz), Stephen Josephs (Missing, Cora Riechert)

Photo: Brian Klasewitz

The NYFC Ensemble program has taken off for the 2026-27 season with 42 participants intending to play at some point this season.

On Saturday, Sept. 19, the ensemble held its first rehearsal, with 26 members (23 returning, a few of whom had been on hiatus, and three new) participating at Studios 353 in Manhattan.

Bill Giannone started the rehearsal with his arrangement of Faure's *Dolly Suite No. 1 Lullaby* followed with *Under the Double Eagle* (arr. Thurston).

Director Mark Vickers took over and rehearsed *Meditation on 'Abide with Me'* (arr. Via), *Bohemian Dance* (arr. Walter), *Fanfare 36* (Via), *The Marriage of Figaro* (arr. Barnaba), *The Skeleton Dance* (arr. Spencer), and *Una Fiesta de Canciones Folklóricas* (arr. Lombardo).

The icebreaker question was "What were your destinations for summer vacations?" Answers included heading to various places around the country while visiting friends and family, attending the NFA convention, an engagement, traveling to Italy to play chamber music, traveling to England to see family, and sitting in on some West Point Band rehearsals.

Rehearsals for the Ensemble are held monthly on Saturdays or Sundays at Studios 353, 353 W. 48th St. in Manhattan. To join the Ensemble you must be a current member of the NY Flute Club. No audition is required. We accept all levels of players. If you would like to participate, email Ensemble director Mark Vickers at ensembles@nyfluteclub.org.

Flute Happenings Elsewhere



Nov. 14, 8 p.m.: The **OMNI Ensemble** will be performing at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music in Park Slope. Music Director/Flutist David Wechsler will host an evening of music for flute, cello, harpsichord and tenor voice. Tickets at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music are \$25.00, \$15.00 for students and senior citizens. www.theomniensemble.org, or go to <https://omninov1426.eventbrite.com>. For reservations call 718-859-8649.

Nov. 24, 7:30 p.m.: **Christine Fish Moulton** and **Kristen Gygi** will perform the world premiere of a flute duet by Stefania de Kenessey. Also featuring the flute is Malcolm Arnold's Duo for Flute & Viola, and *Early Frost*, text by Robert Frost, music by Richard Auldon Clark. Manhattan Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, at Christ & St. Stephen's Church, 120 West 69th St. in Manhattan. No charge.

2026-2027 Events

IN-PERSON CONCERTS

Oct. 18, 2026, 5:30 p.m.: Emi Ferguson. Mastery class at 3:30 p.m. Christ & St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 120 West 69th St. in Manhattan

Nov. 15, 5:30 p.m.: Storm King Flutes. Mastery class at 3:30 p.m. Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church, 152 W 66th St. in Manhattan

Dec. 13, 5:30 p.m.: Brandon Patrick George. Mastery class at 3:30 p.m. Allen-Stevenson School, 132 East 78th St. in Manhattan.

Jan. 10, 2027, 5:30 p.m.: Chamber Concert celebrating flute and voice. Good Shepherd Faith Presbyterian Church

Feb. 28 5:30 p.m.: David Weiss. Mastery class at 3:30 p.m. Christ & St. Stephen's Church

March 21, all day: Annual Flute Fair. Allen-Stevenson School, with guest artist Gareth McLearnon

Date and venue TBA: NYFC Competition Winners

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. 8: Reverse Engineering the French School: How the Suzuki Philosophy Leads to Beautiful Playing and Teaching, with Zara Lawler and Wendy Stern

Nov. 5: Ancient Sounds, New Possibilities: Exploring Chinese Wind Instruments, with Hong-Da Chin

December or January: Interview with Ellen Taaffe Zwillich, with Michele Smith and Trudy Kane

Jan. 14: Jazz in Japan with Haruna Fukuzawa

Winter/spring; Tania León with Niurka Gonzalez, Marya Martin 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



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