

Scenes from Flute Fair 2018



In this issue

Ali Ryerson's Masterclass ..	3
Helen Valenza's Flutes	5
Extended Techniques.....	6
Learning How to Learn.....	7
Spring Guest Artist.....	8
Flutopia	9
Classified Ads.....	10

Rochester Flute Association

Mission

- ♪ To promote the enjoyment and appreciation of the flute.
- ♪ To assist members in achieving musical excellence.
- ♪ To facilitate an exchange of ideas among flutists, teachers, and flute enthusiasts.

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Newsletter Contributors

Joanna Bassett, Carolyn Garman, Sandy Lemmon, Pamela Mason, Elissa May Murphy, Diane Peters, Marjorie Roth

Photographs courtesy of Annette Farrington, Sally Ann Hart, Laura Lentz, Elissa May Murphy

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rfaonline.org

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From the Board

Rochester Flute Association

Statement of Activities Year-end as of August 31, 2018

2017-18

Revenues

Program	
Flute Fair	\$ 5,398
Spring Event	\$ -
Workshops, Others	\$ -
Grants	\$ -
Association	
Membership & Corporate Dues/Contributions	\$ 2,860
General Program Support	\$ 60

Total Revenues

\$ 8,318

Expenditures

Program	
Flute Fair	\$ 6,252
Spring Event	\$ -
Mock Solo Fest, Workshops, Others, FL Choir	\$ 795
Association	
Newsletter	\$ 772
Mission related (Commissions, instruments)	\$ -
Association Expenses	\$ 1,548

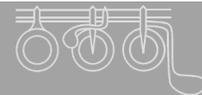
Total Expenses

\$ 9,367

Increase (Decrease) in Assets

\$ (1,049)

Please consider including the Rochester Flute Association in your charitable giving. We do our best to keep dues, ticket prices, and expenditures as low as possible, but costs continue to rise. With your help we can continue to bring quality "big city" flute events to our area of the state. We are truly grateful for all of our members. Wishing you a happy new year from all the volunteer members of the RFA Board!



Hearing Intention: Ali Ryerson Masterclass

by Dr. Marjorie Roth

Ali Ryerson's masterclass began with a friendly welcome from the artist and a reminder of the jazz flute big band reading session to be held at 2:00 p.m. Jazz improvisation tips will be forthcoming at that session!

The first masterclass performer was Nicole Page, a senior at Penfield High School and a student of Julie Oris-Heikkila at Nazareth College's Community Music Program. On piano for her performance of Cécile Chaminade's *Concertino* was Dr. Kevin Lieb, accompanist at Penfield High School and Music Director for Covenant United Methodist Church.

After Nicole played through the opening section of the piece, Ms. Ryerson stopped her to comment on her great technique and lovely tone, adding that it was important to keep the pitch up at the end of all those long phrases. She asked Nicole to think about the musical interpretation that lay behind the notes. As a jazz player, Ali thinks of music as being all about movement, momentum, and telling a story; so when she hears herself play she is always listening for the exchange of phrases, the "conversation" built into the music. Moreover, within the phrases there are important gestures to be discovered and exploited, little opportunities to play "give and take" with the metronomic time. These gestures help us create a sense of tension and release, and they greatly enhance the opportunity for individual expression. Ali encouraged Nicole to try moving things ahead a little or holding back a little within the phrasing—and most important of all to trust the pianist to respond and follow her expressive gestures. Because the nature of jazz is to play by ear, Ali speculated that jazz players might perhaps be a bit more sensitive to what everyone else is doing, and that classical players could benefit by a closer, more responsive listening

to the piano part. Reacting to your fellow players is important—that's half the fun of any piece! Music is more than the notation; it's what we do with the notation that counts. Nicole's second try from the beginning, with Ali conducting gently from the sidelines, was much more free and therefore much more interesting and exciting. Ali complimented her on really "finding the music" the second time around.

Nicole continued the piece starting at bar 15, giving Ali the opportunity to point out the expressive potential in dynamics and a more flexible approach to tension and release within phrases. Interestingly, she equated these musical aspects to stage make-up in theatre. That is, stage make-up may seem exaggerated up close, but on the actual

stage, under the lights, it looks perfectly natural. For the musician, then, the "stage make-up" of dynamics, articulation, and rubato can almost never be overdone. We should all think in terms of broadening our dynamic range, never being afraid to shout or to whisper. This gives us the chance to get the music across to the listener much more clearly and powerfully. Nicole repeated the section with more dynamic

contrast, and it was much improved. Encouraging her to take even more risks, Ali had Nicole exaggerate the *poco stringendo* of this section following the dynamic hints.

As she continued playing, experimenting with greater expression, Nicole noticed that increased expression caused a need for more air to avoid going flat. Ali counseled keeping the speed of the air consistent and strong, remarking that you could play the first 30 bars of this piece perfectly, but if you were flat at bar 31, that's what people would remember! Although large, deep breaths whenever possible would be ideal, Ali noted that the key to consistent support is mastering the art of small "air sips" along the way, as many as needed to keep pitch under control. She



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Flute Fair 2018

Ryerson Masterclass

(Continued from page 3)

also recommended marking breaths into the music, trusting nothing to chance. Nicole tried the phrase again, with “sips,” and the sound was much fuller.

After the opening section the music takes on a new character, and Ali suggested that Nicole think more like an actor when fixing an interpretation. This new tempo is more playful and adventurous, suggesting that the performer could experiment a bit. The low register, too, is really important when it comes to the character of this particular section. As for the triplet vs. duplet figures, what an opportunity for enhancing tension in the melodic line! And at bar 57 Ali suggests there be more of a conversation between the piano and the flute, as though they are responding to each other. Once again, Ali emphasized the theatrical possibilities of an effective interpretation. Don't be shy or too understated. Think “Stage make-up, stage make-up!” with each new “scene” in the music.

The second masterclass performer was Lauren Zwonik, a graduate student of Nina Assimakopoulos at West Virginia University. Her performance of Otkar Gordelli's *Concerto for Flute*, Opus 8 was accompanied by Dr. Leib.

Following Lauren's impressive performance of the piece, Ali commented on her beautiful sound and thoughtful interpretation. Also, she noted that although Lauren had the music in front of her, it was clear that most of the piece was memorized, and that fact was significant in the

effectiveness of Lauren's performance. We always play better when we are not reading with our eyes, primarily, but are instead listening with our “inner ears” first and foremost. Ali used the tune Happy Birthday as an example—we all know it, but we've probably never actively memorized it. We just “know it”. If we could all get to that stage of almost unconscious “knowing” with the classical repertoire, how much more naturally and expressively we would play! It's important to keep in mind that this is not a matter of memorizing for the sake of memorizing “technique”. It's more about memorizing the “music”—the whole

body/mind/sound experience. Classical players need to sing from the inside, in the same way that jazz players “sing” their improvisations. Ali noted, too, that in addition to giving us more freedom to express and respond, internalizing the music ends up solving a lot of technical problems.

Ali had Lauren experiment with her low register, asking her to “pop” those low notes a bit more beginning in bar 8. As for the challenging highest note arising at the end of a long phrase, Ali recommended “don't dread it; just love it!” Don't stress about it; practice it as a long tone, get friendly with it, and then don't shy from it in the context of the phrase. She recommends adding a slight tenuto on the high note, too, to give it some life and personality. Lauren tried these passages a second time, with much improvement.

On the subject of vibrato in the slow section and leading up to it, Ali

suggested using more of it. The next big fortissimo, too, can be enhanced greatly with increased vibrato speed. Also, she



asked Lauren to make more of the decrescendo as the line rises out of the syncopated gestures, being careful not to diminish the effect by letting the pitch drop at the end of the phrase. Other specific suggestions from Ali included not playing the three notes at bar 12 equally, dynamically, but rather leaning into them with the third note as the goal. More of a breath after the high G# after bar 13 would also be a good idea, as the player needs breath, and the listener needs a bit of a pause at this point. Finally, Ali suggested that high note of the 21-tuplet could be more effective if the performer made it seem like the true goal of the dramatic gesture.

All of this minute, technical advice must, of course, be an expression of the performer's soul and her response to the music. The bottom line in any performance, according to Ali, is the

(Continued on page 5)

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Ryerson Masterclass

(Continued from page 4)

musician's connection to the music itself. She complimented Lauren again on her sensitive performance of the concerto, and encouraged her to do even more in terms of getting her own very fine interpretation of the music out to the listener.

The moral of the story? At the close of her masterclass, Ali summed things up by saying that in the end it's all about hearing "intention;" your own, and that of your collaborative artists. It's about listening closely to your own inner musical voice, and sharing that voice with your fellow performers and listeners. And above all, never feel like you are boxed in, musically, when performing classical music. As a classically-trained flutist with a jazz career, we can trust Ali Ryerson when she tells us that the classical repertoire, if approached in the right frame of mind, can be just as free as jazz!

18th AND 19th CENTURY HISTORICAL FLUTES

by *Carolyn Griswold Garman*

Helen Valenza graduated from the Eastman School of Music with a performer's certificate in flute, having studied flute with Joseph Mariano and Frederik Wilkins and Baroque flute with Christopher Krueger and Stephen Preston. She has performed as a soloist with the Eastman Rochester Orchestra, Eastman Philharmonia, the Chautauqua Festival Orchestra, The Rochester Philharmonic on Ice Capades, several touring Broadway shows, and the Monroe County Band. Helen has been principal flutist with the Brighton Symphony for over 30 years, and she has performed on Baroque flute with the Genesee Early Music Society for 20 years. Helen brought 12 flutes from her vast collection which were placed on a table for us to view and her to demonstrate. The older ones were made in the 1700's. Several were made of ivory with gold attachments, others were made of various kinds of wood such as cocuswood, boxwood, or grenadilla. Helen said that you never force the air stream into a Baroque flute—the Baroque flute "lets it happen," while the modern flute "makes it happen." Only the last two flutes demonstrated were made of silver or silver with a gold lip plate. Helen said that modern pitch was not stabilized until well into the 20th century.



After telling us a bit about each flute, Helen played a piece of music on each one. Every flute had its own unique sound which I wish I could describe accurately. Many of the flutes had their own unique stories, too. Often Helen mentioned Sotheby's Auctions in London where she purchased flutes through a broker. On the other hand, she showed us one flute that had been bought at a pawn shop in New York City for \$4, talked down from \$5! This flute was circa 1820 and boxwood with ivory mounts and caps and one brass key. Helen stated that this flute was "much more naive than the European flutes."

Helen's sense of humor was sprinkled throughout the talk. Some of her stories reflected the ongoing rivalries between the French and the English. For example, she showed us an English flute that was deliberately made to have louder sounds than the French. One of her flutes arrived in a cardboard box in 10 pieces. This ended up being two flutes when assembled. I haven't mentioned the glass flutes. Helen said it was OK to pick up the glass flutes, but of course none of us did!

The most elaborate flute was made of ivory. Its body was carved in stylized foliate design and with a gilded flower cap and eight gilded keys, ornately carved in an acanthus pattern. When Helen was finished and after answering questions, most of us remained to surround the demonstration table, see the flutes up close, and to ask more questions. We kept her so long that many of us, including myself, missed the next event. This was an unforgettable program.

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Flute Fair 2018

Extending Flutists' Technical Horizons

by Pamela Mason

The Rochester Flute Association's annual Flute Fair provided flute enthusiasts, students, educators, and performers an opportunity to learn the innovations commonly found in modern flute music. Laura Lentz, Brittany Trotter, and Hannah Porter Occeña each presented pieces featured at the 2014-2016 Flute New Music Consortium Composition Contests.

Lentz performed Kay He's *On the Pivot of an Abandoned Carousel* for flute and electronics. The electronics, provided by computer programming, require 600 MB of free disk space on one's laptop, but allow for an interesting sensory experience. As noted in He's program notes: "The flute and electronics overlap so the audience cannot determine what is real and what is not." Lentz skillfully recreated the composer's musical display of a distorted memory of a slowly collapsing carousel. She utilized such techniques as flutter tonguing, light beat-boxing, alternate fingerings, wind tones, and singing while playing. The flute's timbre, used to imitate the carnival organ that was once a "signature of the carnival," intertwines with the electronics in such a way that the human brain has difficulty

discerning it from some of the timbral changes present in the electroacoustic accompaniment.

Brittany Trotter demonstrated her mastery of a large range of extended techniques in her performance of *On a Poem by Miho*

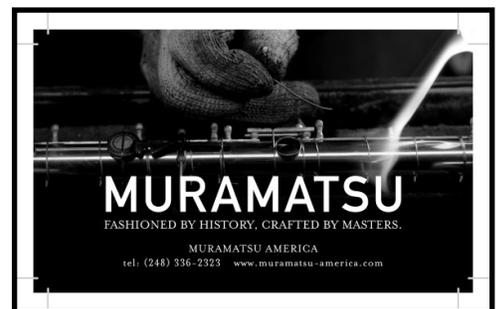
Nonaka: Harvard Square by Shawn Okpebholo. The only one of the three performances without accompaniment, this piece fully exposed the intricacies of modern flute performances. The audience got a taste of techniques that are lesser-known in student flutist circles, such as the jet whistle (which is essentially what flutists do when they blow air through their embouchure hole to warm the flute, except with a harder thrust of air) and the tongue ram. Trotter transitioned smoothly between the variety of styles and techniques present in Okpebholo's piece.

Finally, Hannah Porter Occeña presented Bekah Simms' *Skinscapes*, which was premiered in early 2018. In March, Occeña was awarded a prize for best performance at the FNMC Flute Artists Competition; she demonstrated why she won when she performed for listeners at the RFA Flute Fair. This piece was representative of tattoo art, with the rhythm imitating the rhythm of a tattoo needle as it turns one's old skin into new art. Like Kay He's composition, Simms composed *Skinscapes* as a work for flute and electronics.

All three performers provided pointers for playing extended techniques, and Lentz and Occeña gave advice for playing with electronic media. Occeña, for example, wrote in



her handout about studying the electronic track to help interpret how certain techniques should be performed, especially when the player cannot confer with the piece's composer. Lentz mentioned the challenges in finding the correct equipment and positioning for performance. Trotter's handout provided tips on playing the techniques, as well as examples from other pieces such as the music of British composer Ian Clarke. If you are seeking more opportunities to perform in today's music world, or if you simply want to sharpen your flute-playing abilities with different methods of playing, 21st century music and extended techniques are the way to go. These knowledgeable women performed remarkably, giving Flute Fair listeners memorable performances toward which to strive.





Learning How to Learn

by Elissa May Murphy

Ever get that feeling of frustration during a practice session? I am sure we've all been there. For some, this may extend to such heights of physical and mental exhaustion. For others, this may result in giving up and packing the flute away. Sound familiar?

I had the pleasure of listening to Christine Moulton's workshop to learn more about how to learn. She begins by proclaiming, "What a student discovers about himself is just as important, if not more so, than simply performing a piece correctly." It is all a matter of differentiating *how* we learn versus *what* we learn. This allows for us to embrace the full practice experience. How can we accomplish this in our own practice? This method of practice leads by example as meditative. It is all about the study of ourselves. It is self-awareness by way of the effort we bring forth, patience through the difficult sections, pure focus, a gentle approach, and letting go. Let's break this down...

Effort: Practice, without a doubt, makes progress. Without practicing regularly, how are we able to move onward and upward? Many concepts can be recycled throughout our studies, but these concepts that are brought to our attention over and over again do not replace our firsthand experiences in the practice room.

Focus: "In music we have a wonderful opportunity to develop focus—a fine tuned, laser-sharp concentration that is enhanced by practicing the exercises and paying attention." After expressing this, we all played a one-octave B-flat scale in unison. Moulton then asked, "What was going on in your mind when playing that scale?" The results were astonishing, "I couldn't get through the scale in one breath that time," "My tone was fuzzy," "Did everyone else hear how flat I was," "I should have fixed my posture," "I didn't change notes in time between these notes like I was supposed to," and the list went on and on.

Awareness: Be awake. Be aware. Most importantly, be able to respond to change without resistance. Notice what

your breath is doing, how your air stream is working, dissect your musical phrases. Be fully present in each moment.

Patience: Easier said than done, right? "Patience in music practice is exercising faith and making a commitment to the learning process of 'once more.'" Each time you repeat an exercise, you are on a path of discovering: whether it be a balance of effort and flow, coordinated movement, breath, etc., you are starting anew and being patient in each moment.

Gentleness: Typically, in the thick of hashing out a new passage, we tend to shower ourselves with criticism. We may lose our focus and become super judgmental of ourselves. This could lead to having minimal patience. We

may start losing focus, which could possibly segue to over-exerting ourselves, working too hard and becoming frustrated. Acknowledging our strengths and recognizing our weaknesses without adding pressure on ourselves will make for a more gentle experience.

Letting Go: Lastly, opening up or letting go is not an easy task. Remove any denials you have of

your abilities. Acknowledge your fears and frustrations. Commit to facing them through gentle awareness. Relax your body. Relax your mind. Open up. Let go.

Music is a life-long practice. It is the practice of learning how to learn or resting in beginner's mind, moment to moment. It is the practice of the student who, frustrated and angry at not getting "it," starts to walk out the door, returns to the instrument and makes a gentle vow, "I'll try once more."

These concepts will certainly not go away during our lifetime. We should all continue to learn how to learn in order to continue to be open to new ideas that could benefit our musical experiences for years to come.

For future study: "Taijiquan: Learning How to Learn" by Linda Lehrhaupt, Ph.D. in the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, vol. 2 no. 1 (January 1993).





Resonance: A Weekend in the Finger Lakes with Carol Wincenc and Paul Schliffer With Russel Hall, Annie Schliffer, and Casey Sokol

by Diane Peters

The Rochester Folk Art Guild hosted a weekend flute retreat with flutists Carol Wincenc and Paul Schliffer, September 14-16, 2018, at beautiful East Hill Farm in Middlesex, New York. Held in the Guild's Meeting Hall surrounded by the open fields of East Hill Farm, the weekend was devoted to the theme of "Resonance."

This was not an ordinary masterclass, but offered a blend of flutistic technique, body work for musicians, and inspiration. Participants came from all ages and backgrounds, including high school, flutists preparing for college and professional auditions, adult amateurs, and professionals. The weekend was infused with a spirit of support and collegiality, whether exploring collaborative improvisatory exercises with Casey Sokol of York University, or conversing over shared vegetarian meals.

The days began early with meditation in the Meeting Hall, followed by yoga with Annie Schliffer,

Iyengar yoga teacher (and ceramic artist at the Guild). Retreat participants had the opportunity to participate in open coaching sessions with Carol and Paul, playing Bach sonata slow movements as well as pieces of their choosing. Carol shared her personal favorite warm-up and breathing exercises, and led the group through the Marcel Moyse *24 Little Melodic Studies*. Russell Hall, teacher at Cleveland Institute of Music, introduced the Feldenkrais Method®, demonstrating ways to identify and reduce tension through gentle body movements.

In addition to classes, everyone enjoyed free time for practicing, swimming in the pond, and small group or private sessions with Carol, Paul, Casey, Russell, Annie, accompanist Hisako Hiratsuka, and Rosa Jang, Carol's assistant.

The weekend was capped by a soirée on Sunday afternoon featuring solos by Carol and Paul accompanied by Hisako, virtuosic flute duos and trios with Carol, Paul and Rosa, *The Girl from Ipanema* performed by Michael McCann and Bill Buchman, an ethereal piano improvisation by Casey Sokol, and finally the entire group playing Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus* and Faure's *Cantique de Jean Racine* arranged for flute choir.

This was the first of what will hopefully become an annual event. The proposed dates for 2019 are September 19-22, beginning Thursday evening and ending Sunday by noon. If you are interested in participating, you may send an email to folkartguild@gmail.com to be added to the contact list. To learn more about the Rochester Folk Art Guild, visit <http://www.folkartguild.org/>.

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WHERE IS IT? French Road Elementary School

WHO'S IT FOR? Flute students ages 7—14

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Join Us in Salt Lake City!

by Joanna Bassett

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If you have enjoyed the camaraderie and eye-opening experiences of our local Flute Fair, I would like to invite you to join me and others from Rochester at the National Flute Association's annual convention next August 1-4, 2019 in majestic Salt Lake City, Utah.

The NFA has grown out of local flute clubs similar to ours...and vice versa!

I have a vivid memory of our first gathering of flute teachers in Rochester in my living room in 1995, where we each offered a reason why we thought it might be good to create something together. We brainstormed about inviting guest artists for recitals, holding masterclasses so our students could learn from renowned teachers, holding members' recitals, having forums for teachers to learn from each other, and organizing flute choir reading sessions. In 23 years, you have done all this, and more!

The RFA has so much of which to be proud:

- * a FREE annual pre-solo festival for students to play for a friendly flute teacher
- * our signature event—Flute Fair—is a favorite of exhibitors for our friendly community
- * an annual Flute Camp in cooperation with The Hochstein School which has enjoyed record enrollment for the past two years and has added a popular Junior Flute Camp
- * two scholarships for Flute Camp (one initiated and sustained by Alleen Fraser, and another by Steven Finley and FluteFX)
- * two flute scholarships, for a school-aged student and an adult
- * annual competitions, members' recitals, RFA flute choir, and
- * life-long friendships

Rochester is ranked #2 in the country for volunteerism, and the RFA is a good example of this. My thanks and admiration for the countless hours given by each of our volunteers—you make it seem so easy!

Imagine going to a Flute Fair for four days with 2,000-3,000 other flutists for non-stop concerts, workshops, masterclasses, and an exhibit hall with Baroque flutes, Native American flutes, piccolos and contrabass flutes, and every brand of C flute you can imagine! As exciting as that sounds, my favorite part of the national convention is the friendships developed over the years. Highlights for me have been the 2006 convention in Pittsburgh, where a group of 13 RFA flutists performed Steve Reich's *Vermont Counterpoint* on an evening Gala Concert, and the many years when we've held "Rochester dinners" together.

I would love to see many Rochester friends at the convention next summer, or in 2020 in Dallas, Texas! The heart of my flute club membership belongs with the RFA—and the journey continues!

Joanna Bassett was the founding president of the RFA, Program Chair for the 2015 National Flute Association Convention in Washington, D.C., and is President of the Board of Directors of the NFA from 2018 to 2020.

To join the NFA visit:

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2018 RFA Performance Competition Winners Diana Clem, Chloe Engin, Daniel Carlo, Yidi Song





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