



## Harvey Sollberger: 80th Birthday Celebration The New York Flute Club, October 21, 2018

### PROGRAM NOTES AND TEXTS by Harvey Sollberger

*New Millennium Memo III* for solo flute (2000, 2015) is the third version of a work the flutist Claire Chase commissioned for her senior recital in 2000 at the Oberlin Conservatory. In my program notes at that time, I wrote:

“*New Millennium Memo* is just that, an accumulation of notations, sketches, and jottings gathered together on the cusp of something new and held in place by the (considerable) gravity of a flute and its player. Symbolizing, perhaps, the pace of life at the end of the last millennium, *NMM* begins rapidly, with a loose-limbed, disjointed melody presented in several bursts. Out of this flux and flow, first one note – an F – then several others, A, B, and C are highlighted to form a stable constellation. Others are proposed as well, as the music settles into alternating moods of a lyrical, erratic, and ritualistic/processional nature. This expansion achieves closure, finally, at the prepared arrival of the flute’s two lowest – and previously unheard – notes (middle C and the B a semitone lower). From here things pick up, and the music ends on the threshold of a return to full speed, positioning itself to head off comet-like into distant regions after its brief sojourn among us. . . . This is the best and most heartfelt offering I can make to its dedicatee, Claire Chase, at the start of what I expect will be her long and distinguished career. Here’s to the future!”

This evening’s version of the piece incorporates a short poem written by Franco Arminio. I will perform it in the original Italian. Its English translation is below:

Any point anywhere is a point of departure.  
For instance, at nine in the morning  
you can go to a distant town and listen to  
what a postman, a bricklayer, an old man in ill-health  
are saying in the bar.  
You start by paying attention  
to ordinary life, since the center is there,  
the heart is there.  
Don’t be afraid to go  
where no one else goes. Put your trust  
in the glory of things that lie outside, unnoticed.  
In this way, a day,  
any old day,  
will become your splendor.

*Life Study* was composed in 1982 for the Jubal Trio, who will perform it this evening. Composed during a period of stress and illness in my life, the final notes of *LS* were written as I was recovering at St. Luke’s Hospital on upper Amsterdam Avenue. As a perceived experience, *LS* is characterized by its cinematic and dreamlike qualities: think of it as a surreal film “screened” solely in the medium of sound. It quotes freely from various musical and literary sources that were important to me at the time. Its “goal” or “point of arrival”, is the final poem, isolated phonetic elements of which vie with each other at the music’s very start as if struggling to come into existence. After quite a long journey, these elements “earn” their coalescence at the work’s conclusion. The sharp “knife that saves the life” is, of course the surgeon’s blade.

*Life Study* texts in order of their appearance. The bracketed translations are not used in the music. Note, too, that phonemes and textual fragments from the last poem (“It is difficult to say...”) are interspersed throughout the opening of *Life Study*.

Le greygnour bien que nature Fist a lo hume En ce folz monde Fu le don dont pris(t) faconde, Prist en ly sens et mesure.	[The greatest good that nature Gave to man In this crazy world Was the gift of grace And sense and measure.]
–Matheus de Perusio (14th century), “Le greygnour bien” translation by Harvey Sollberger	

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, che la dritta via era smarrita.	[Midway this way of life we’re bound upon, I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
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Ahi quanto a dir qual era e’ cosa dura esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte che nel pensier rinova la paura!	Where the right road was wholly lost and gone.
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Ay me! How hard to speak of it - that  
rude  
mere breath  
Of memory stirs the old fear in the  
blood!

–Dante (1265-1321), *The Inferno*, translation by Dorothy L. Sayers

In the world are millions and millions of men, and each man, with a few exceptions, believes himself to be at the center, a small number of his more or less necessary planets careering around him in an orderly manner, some morning stars singing together, more distant galaxies shining like dust in any stray sunbeam of his attention. Since this is true not of one man or two, but of ever so many, it is hard to imagine what life must be like.

–Howard Nemerov (1920-1991) *Angel and Stone*

Eros, builder of cities!

–W.H. Auden (1907-1973), “In Memory of Sigmund Freud”

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come:  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

—William Shakespeare (1561-1616), Sonnet 116

The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbance of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. It may be that in this respect precisely the present time deserves a special interest. Men have gained control over the forces of nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating one another to the last man. They know this, and hence comes a large part of their current unrest, their unhappiness and their mood of anxiety. And now it is to be expected that the other of the two “Heavenly Powers,” eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary.

—Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), *Civilization and Its Discontents*

It is difficult to say what must be said, at times.  
To sing it, too, is no great help, but some.  
For the dream diminished dies uneasy, lingers,  
As into daylight sleepers wake  
To find that love's outlived its year or five,  
That self expended in its flight  
May crash in thicket or in darkest night.

And this is difficult to say, but has to be, at times.  
To sing the way it is, too, is no great help, but some.  
For song engrafting sound and word,  
With luck soars beyond what's merely heard,  
To touch the dream and passing there  
Mend heart's empty, dead despair.

So it is difficult to say, at times, what must be said.  
To sing it, too, no great help, but some.  
And must be done.

My song's begun.  
Sharp is the knife that saves the life!  
My song's begun.  
Sharp is the knife that saves the life!

—Harvey Sollberger (b. 1938)

*A Winter's Tale* (2017-2018) was composed during the winter of 2017-18. I enjoy the winters of northeast Iowa, where I live because of their somber, uniform days. One day follows another and before you know it a month or several have passed. You might as well be living in Norway. This was the context in which I'd begin work on it each day. It began innocently enough as a simple duet to play with my student, fourteen-year-old Mya. Then something, the weather perhaps, pushed it/me further. The score bears the epithet, “just

another flute duet.” I mean and meant that ironically, while proceeding, instead, on the assumption that a “mere” flute duet could very well contain just as rich a “world” as Mahler—in a conversation with Sibelius --envisioned the ideal symphony as having. I took this idea so seriously that after composing *AWT*, I did something I'd never done before: I wrote an essay explaining how I'd written the piece and why I'd made the choices I had—insofar as that can be articulated—in composing it. When the score is sold by the American Composers Alliance, the essay will be included.

Finally, *AWT* manifests some of my recent interest in creating a kind of “decentered” music, a music of the moment that omits certain of the narrative conventions found in most music. Imagine, then, a music in which any particular moment can be “placed” in a variety of ways so as to be capable of functioning equally well at the beginning, middle or end of a performance; that is, a “flexible” music where “beginning,” “middle,” and “end” are not fixed but are, rather, interchangeable. Such non-rhetorical music surely has to create a new form of rhetoric (or meta-rhetoric) in pursuit of its decentered ends. The test of such flexible form music lies ultimately in hearing a number of its possible versions and comparing and evaluating them. I look forward to exploring these manifold possibilities with my flutist colleagues in the future. For now, I'll say only that, like points on a circle, there are twelve possible starting and stopping points in *AWT*. We'll be hearing one of those twelve possible versions tonight.

**Symphony “Breath”** began its life in 2016 as *À même rive*” which I composed for Pierre-Yves Artaud's Orchestre Français de Flûtes. Pierre-Yves and his musicians performed *À même rive* in Paris in 2016 and 2017. Subsequently, I've considerably revised and extended the piece and, in keeping with its rebirth, bestowed a new title on it. Why a “symphony”? Well, in truth, I never thought I'd write a symphony. No particular reason, it just never entered my head. But on considering Gustav Mahler's claim to Jan Sibelius that a symphony should encompass the world, or at least a world of possibilities, it began to dawn on me that perhaps this 24-flute “monster,” with its length, content, and range of expression (as well as logistic challenges — just try getting four contrabass flutes and four bass flutes together in one place) might meet those criteria. This takes me back to the previous piece - “just another flute duet.” Why, indeed, shouldn't a piece for 24 flutes be as capable of scaling symphonic heights as a work for symphony orchestra? “It's not the medium, dummy, it's the MESSAGE.” I think I get it. I think I finally get it. So enjoy the Symphony, and let me know what you think.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Mezzo soprano **Constance Beavon** is a winner of three international competitions and has performed the great oratorio and orchestral song literature with the symphony orchestras of Montreal, Houston, Baltimore, Arkansas, University of Chicago and many others. Her opera performances in Geneva, Chicago, and New York, and her appearances in international festivals in Paris, Rome, Taranto, Spoleto, Norway and Zimbabwe included some of the more than 50 world premieres of works written for her and added to her archive of more than 40 recordings. As a recitalist, she created programs combining her expertise in art history with music for Pittsburgh's Frick Museum and the Chicago Art Institute. She holds degrees from Pomona College, New York University, and Columbia University. Ms. Beavon was a member of the Jubal Trio from 1981 to 1988. She has also produced short films about the international activism of women and serves on the boards of Musica Viva|NY and the Protimos Foundation.

**Sue Ann Kahn** was a founding member of the Waverly Wind Quintet, Bach's Uncle, The League of Composers Chamber Players, and the Naumburg Award-winning Jubal Trio, with whom she won the Naumburg Chamber Music Award; in 2009 she co-founded the League of Composers Orchestra. She has commissioned and premiered works of many American composers, including George Rochberg, Joseph Schwantner, Don Freund, Harvey Sollberger, Alba Potes, Peter Schickele, Ursula Mamluk, Allen Shawn, and George Crumb, and has recorded for CRI, Musical Heritage, MMG, Vox-Candide, New World, and Albany. A former faculty member at Bennington College, Ms. Kahn taught flute and chamber music at Mannes College of Music for more than 15 years and directed its Pre-College Program. She is on the faculty of the Music Performance Program at Columbia and the Chamber Music Conference. Ms. Kahn was president of the National Flute Association in 2005.

**Susan Jolles**, harpist, has enjoyed a long and varied career as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral player, teacher, and arranger. A founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning Jubal Trio, she also appears with daughter, Renee, a violinist, as the Jolles Duo. Ms. Jolles is a member of the American Composers Orchestra, Musica Viva, Queens Symphony Orchestra, the Little Orchestra Society, and the Encores Orchestra, and is associate harpist with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Past affiliations include the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, the Group for Contemporary Music, the New York Chamber Symphony, and the Juilliard Ensemble. She has an extensive discography of a full range of musical genres including classical, klezmer, jazz, cabaret and Broadway, recording with such diverse artists as Giora Feidman, Kenny Garrett, James Galway, Barbara Cook, and Laurel Zuckler. Ms. Jolles teaches harp, chamber music, and orchestral repertory at the Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes College of Music.

**Jayn Rosenfeld** has had a long career starting in the 1960s. She played first flute in Leopold Stokowski's American Symphony Orchestra and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and has been part of many chamber groups, including the New York New Music Ensemble (flutist and executive director), the New York Camerata, L'Ensemble, Manchester Music Festival, Millstone Trio, and Richardson Chamber Players. She continues to teach flute at Princeton University and privately in New York, and she runs a monthly flute sight-reading chamber ensemble.

**Patricia Spencer**, flutist of the Da Capo Chamber Players, enjoys a career marked by historic highlights: the New York premiere of the Elliott Carter's *Flute Concerto*; US premieres of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Kathinkas Gesang als Luzifers Requiem* (staged scene for solo flute and electronic sounds) and Thea Musgrave's *Narcissus* (for flute and digital delay); the Chinese premiere of Ge Gan-ru's flute concerto, *Fairy Lady "Meng Jiang,"* and the world premiere of Shulamit Ran's flute concerto, *Voices*. Ms. Spencer's has solo CDs on the Neuma label and many chamber music CDs with the Da Capo Chamber Players. Dozens of composers have written flute works for her. Ms. Spencer's teachers include Robert Willoughby, Josef Marx, Marcel Moyse, and David Berman; she has studied Alexander technique with June Ekman. She teaches flute and chamber music at Bard College/Conservatory and Hofstra University.

**Nicole Camacho** is an improviser and composer-performer currently creating with technologist Drake Andersen as part of a flute and electronics duo called Bit Flip Radio. She teaches K-5 music at Heketi Community Charter School in the South Bronx.

**Susan Deaver** is on the music faculty at LIU Post, Stony Brook University, and Manhattan School of Music Precollege. She received her DMA. in flute performance from Manhattan School of Music and wrote her doctoral thesis on the Group for Contemporary Music, which was co-founded by Harvey Sollberger in 1962.

Flutist, physicist, and retired teacher educator **William Egnatoff**, from Kingston, Ontario, plays in several chamber ensembles and flute choirs. He studied with Marcel Moyse, repairs flutes, studies how they work, and is documenting the teaching and life of Canadian flutist-composer Robert Aitken.

Originally from Santa Monica, California, **Francesca Ferrara** earned a Master of Music degree in contemporary performance from Manhattan School of Music, where she was a student of Tara O'Connor. As an advocate for new music, she has premiered more than 70 new works and is the flutist for the New York City based ensemble Amalgama.

**Isabel Gleicher** is a member of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), new music sinfonietta Ensemble Echappe, SoundMind woodwind quintet, and ShoutHouse. With a focus in contemporary music, she has premiered works by Missy Mazzoli, John Zorn, and Beat Furrer, among others.

**Lauren Godfrey** received her bachelor's degree in music performance from Bucknell University. After graduating, she moved to Vienna, Austria and toured throughout Europe with the TU Orchester and the Wiener Bläserphilharmonie. She now lives in State College, PA, working in technology at Penn State and performing with the Toot-in-Common flute choir led by Judy Moore.

**Don Hulbert** is a freelance musician in New York who has given world premieres of works by Louis Andriessen, Kirk Nurock, and Gerald Busby. His teachers include Harold Bennett, Carol Wincenc, Samuel Baron, John Solum, Sandra Miller, Robert Dick, and Patricia Spencer. He has served as a board member of the NYFC.

**Svetlana Kabalin** is flutist and artistic director of the Sylvan Winds. She has served as principal flute of the New Philharmonic of New Jersey, New Jersey Ballet, and Paper Mill Playhouse Orchestras and the Stamford, Jupiter, and Queens Symphony Orchestras.

**Mindy Kaufman** joined the New York Philharmonic as solo piccolo in 1979 after playing for three years with the Rochester Philharmonic. She received a bachelor of music from the Eastman School of Music and studied with Walfrid Kujala, James Galway, and Bonita Boyd. Ms. Kaufman performed with the Milwaukee Symphony for one season as principal flute.

**Amy Kempton** graduated from the New England Conservatory. Her major teachers include Wallace Mann, Lois Schaefer, Beatrice Chauncey, Robert Mols, Arthur Lora, and Robert Willoughby. She recently retired from a 40-year career as a music educator in the Great Neck Public Schools.

**Samantha Marshall** is an international performer, speaker, and writer. She graduated this spring from the Mannes School of Music, where she received the Founders Award. She is currently freelancing in New York City.

**Bärli Nugent** is the assistant dean, director of chamber music, and a member of the Graduate Studies faculty at the Juilliard School. She was artist-faculty with the Aspen Music Festival and School and flutist of the Naumburg Award-winning Aspen Wind Quintet.

**Tara Helen O'Connor**, an Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient and two-time Grammy nominee, is a season artist of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She regularly participates in the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Music@Menlo, Spoleto Festival USA, and Chamber Music Northwest and has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, Koch International, CMS Studio Recordings, and Bridge Records.

**Ginevra Petrucci** performs extensively as a soloist as well as in chamber groups and as a visiting professor in Europe, the USA, China, and Japan working with internationally renowned artists. She is principal flute of the Chamber Orchestra of New York. [www.ginevrapetrucci.com](http://www.ginevrapetrucci.com)

**Stefanie Proulx** is a flutist and teacher in the greater New York City area, specializing in contemporary music. She is currently in the Contemporary Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music, studying with Tara Helen O'Connor, and performs in a flute duo with Teresa Diaz in New York and Baja California, Mexico.

**Susan Rotholz** is active in solo, chamber music, orchestral and multi-genre performing. She teaches at Vassar College, Columbia University MPP, Queens College ACSM, and the Manhattan School of Music Pre-College. Ms. Rotholz has recorded the complete Bach flute sonatas and solo partita with Kenneth Cooper and *American Tapestry: Beaser, Muczynski, Copland and Lieberman Sonatas* with Margaret Kampmeier (Bridge).

**Debra Schild** is a former public school music educator. She performs with the Sound Symphony and Sonevole and has been a member of the NFA Professional Flute Choir multiple times since 2011.

**Stefani Starin** has commissioned, performed, and recorded dozens of pieces written for her. Her teaching career spans more than 40 years and includes music schools, conservatories, and private students.

**Jessica Taskov** is an active NYC-based flutist. Her 2018 engagements include performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Nashville Symphony, the Broadway national tour of *An American in Paris*, and various solo and chamber performances.

**Jacqueline Traish** is completing her professional studies diploma at Mannes School of Music with Judith Mendenhall. From symphonies and pit orchestras, to contemporary ensembles and world premieres, to teaching students of all ages across NYC, she has an active career as a performing musician and educator.

**Joshua Weinberg** is a Manhattan-based flutist, harpist, and composer and is currently studying for his MM in contemporary flute at Manhattan School of Music with Tara Helen O'Connor. [www.joshua-weinberg.com](http://www.joshua-weinberg.com)

**Aawa White**, from Melbourne, Australia, studied with Mardi McCullea at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and received her master's degree in contemporary performance at the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with Tara Helen O'Connor.