



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

March 2003

A Conversation With Robert Aitken

Interview by Patti Monson



PHOTO: JOHN SHAW

In Concert

ROBERT AITKEN, flute
Colette Valentine, piano

Saturday, March 29, 2003,
5:30 pm

Union Theological Seminary
100 Claremont Avenue
(between 120th and 122nd Streets)

Program

Plainsong for flute alone
(1977) Robert Aitken

Paris-Yangana-Paris for solo
flute (1984) Diego Luzuriaga

Scrivo in Vento for flute
alone (1991) Elliott Carter

Ghosts and Gargoyles
(2001) Henry Brant

*Spatial Soliloquies for solo flute,
with flute octet and jazz drummer*
New York premiere

Fantasie über Mutterseelenallein
von Albert Braun, Op.41
..... Albert Franz Doppler

Gute Nacht, Die Taubenpost
..... Franz Schubert
arr. Theobald Boehm

Fantasie-Sonate, Op. 117
..... Max Meyer-Olbersleben

Program subject to change.

Patti Monson spoke with Robert Aitken by phone in January.

PATTI MONSON: *Could you tell us about some of your most recent compositions?*

ROBERT AITKEN: The last work [*Shadows V*, a concerto for flute and strings, 1999] was a commission for the Chamber Orchestra of Neuchâtel [Switzerland]. They specifically wanted a work related to native peoples. At first I had little interest in doing exactly that, but eventually I became fascinated with the idea. I think it came off rather well. It is not an imitation of western Indian music but the inspiration for the work came from what I had learned about the music several years ago. It is quite a long piece, some 22 minutes in length, [but it] seems to hold the attention of the audience.

I like to think that all of my pieces take the listener somewhere he or she has not been before, and when the piece is over, they suddenly wake up and find themselves in the concert hall. These works are called “shadows” and once again do not imitate music from other cultures, but just show glimpses of this music from time to time.

Shadows IV: My Song [for 2 flutes and ad libitum ensemble of oboe, bassoon, violin and cello, 1994] involves playing first on the footjoint, then the middle section, followed by the footjoint and the middle section together, in the end-blown shakuhachi manner and finally the entire flute is put together, but no real traditional flute tones are produced. There is an optional accompaniment to the piece but so far I have not been pleased with the result. I hope sometime soon to make an accompaniment which can be performed by any number of instruments. All I need is time. *Monodie* [1983] for flute and mixed chorus is played from time to time. I wish there were more works for flute and choir as it is a marvelous sound and choirs are

often looking for works to play with instruments besides piano. Then there are my two [1977] solo flute pieces *Plainsong* and *Icicle* which are quite often played, and may in fact become contemporary flute classics. From time to time *Plainsong* is a required piece in flute contests and *Icicle* is often a required work for entrance to French music schools.

Of course extended techniques are used in all these pieces, but in an unpretentious, rather natural way. I hope that all are playable on every flute. Of course one runs into trouble if a composition is intended for a flute with B foot and the flutist does not have one. But I am really not very upset if a practical solution is found, or another note is played instead.

(Cont'd on page 4)



NYFC Flute Fair 2003

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2003

9:00 am–7:00 pm

Union Theological Seminary

RAFFLE!

Details on Page 4.

IN THIS ISSUE

A Conversation with
Robert Aitken 1
Interview by Patti Monson

From the President 2
*United Flutists Behind the
2003 Flute Fair*

Member Profile 3
Stefani Starin

Henry Brant on the Birth of
Angels and Devils 5
Interview by Nancy Toff

Announcements

Flute Happenings 3
Member Announcements 4
Flute Fair Update/Raffle 4



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2002–2003

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The United Flutists Behind the 2003 Flute Fair

by Jayn Rosenfeld



From the President

Dear Friends:

We are all looking forward to the 2003 Flute Fair, and I wonder if you can imagine the amount of planning, organization and cooperation that goes into the orderly unfolding of one day. It feels like we have had to mobilize the powers of a United Nations, let's call it the United Flutists. I for one feel enormous pride in the intelligence and generosity of our board and other volunteers. Let me count the ways.

Kathy Fink: Kathy is the Program Chair for the Fair. She took the job and ran with it, creating a basic plan in the fall, that she fine-tuned as performers and presenters revealed their availability and interests. She has consistently finished her work ahead of schedule. Unbelievable.

Ardith Bondi, Svetlana Kabalin, Sue Ann Kahn, Bärli Nugent, Rie Schmidt, Nancy Toff, Jan Vinci: These board members with excellent memory for precedent have kept the history of flute fairs intact so that we do not have to reinvent the wheel. The commitment is just staggering; we are all very lucky. Do you know how many meetings, phone calls, emails? The many subjects of concern? the number of rooms, chairs and tables, coffee, parking, music teachers, insurance, badges, prizes, the DETAILS? You will see on the day (MARCH 29) how many jobs there are to do. Catch the walkie-talkies!

Michele Smith: Membership, registration, mailing. Cheerful when faced with time-consuming details, Michele has given what feels like hundreds of hours to the job.

Jim Blair: Jim is our new treasurer. He has collated past, present and future projected expenses in a professional way that gives us very clear fiscal expectations. This is important!

Rebecca Quigley: Her interest in industrial relations, manufacturers, publishers, etc. will enrich our exhibitions with a greater variety than ever.

Pat Zuber: We will have a knife-edge competition with the best of our regional young flutists, respectfully handled, and Pat has been organizing the best way to encourage the contestants for months. May the best one win!

Patricia Spencer: We are able to take advantage of Robert Aitken's insights, humor, and teaching experience in a masterclass setting organized by Pat. This is a three-way win: the flutists who play learn, the listeners hear a fascinating concert dissected and analyzed, and other young players receive inspiration and perhaps a clearer definition of future goals.

Stefani Starin: We will have an informal presentation of youngsters full of enthusiasm and (perhaps) not so much polish, but it is important to display the continuum of flutists from beginner to artist. It helps us all appreciate the challenges and the rewards.

Alex Lissé: We have profited from the skills of a *another* professional designer who also happens to play the flute. Our advance announcement and the program for the day wouldn't have happened without him.

Kathy Saenger, Alice Barmore and Rana Boland: Our Newsletter "eyes and ears" and our press contact. Enough said.

Laura George: Laura is reaching out to YOU to help us run the day quietly and smoothly. This takes quite a few people; no one gets payment or recompense; that's how it is with a club where people care.

If this encourages you to become one of the United Flutists, let me know.
See you on the 29th. □

Member Profile

Stefani Starin

NYFC member
since 1988



Employment:

Member of flute faculty at Juilliard's Music Advancement Program (MAP) and the Music Conservatory of Westchester; directing/performing with Newband (see details below); maintaining a private studio in Nyack, NY; various freelance jobs in music theater, dance, and church music.

A recent recital/performance: Playing with Newband (on both flute and Harry Partch string instruments) on January 19, 2003 as part of Great Events at Montclair State University, with a program including works by Harry Partch and husband Dean Drummond.

Career Highlights: Winning a Martha Baird Rockefeller grant to produce a recital at Merkin Concert Hall, and being a member of Affiliate Artists. Collaborating with some of the finest musicians and composers of our time in new music concerts and recordings (on eight different labels). As co-founder and co-director of Newband (www.newband.org), participating in the commissioning of new works by dozens of composers and performing these works throughout the U.S. and Europe. Reflecting on her concerts, she says, "While some are more memorable due to the challenges of the music or the circumstances (travel, fatigue, etc.), what stands out overall is how excited European audiences get listening to new music."

Current flutes: Brannen Eva Kingma quarter-tone flute, with angled C foot (she plays a B foot only when necessary) and a Dave Williams headjoint; Powell piccolo with Eldred Spell headjoint; Altus alto flute.

Influential flute teachers: She has studied with a myriad of teachers including Julius Baker, Jim Walker, Louis Moyse, Paula Robison, Harvey Sollberger, and Ann Giles. Most influential: Baker, who through osmosis inspired the beauty of tone production.

High school: Marlboro H.S. in Marlboro, NY.

Degrees: BFA (Marlboro College, VT); MFA (California Institute of the Arts); Orff certification with Danai Gagne, MA in music education (Lehman College of CUNY).

Most personally satisfying accomplishment(s): As a performer: being part of an ever-growing artform, surrounded by incredible musicians and composers. As a teacher: watching her students grow, a remarkable and ongoing experience that has contributed more to her growth as a flutist and human being than anything else (except, perhaps, the experience of being a parent!).

Favorite practice routine: Long tones including variations on dynamics, combinations of chromatic work, harmonics, and whistle tones; lots of Taffanel and Gaubert, with varying articulations and techniques that are required for the pieces she is performing; preparation of concert pieces and taking a peek at the pieces her more advanced students are working on.

Interests/hobbies: Jogging, yoga, gardening, reading, and volunteer arts advocate in the community and school her children attend. She lives with a musically collaborating husband/composer, two teenagers, and a dog and a cat.

Advice for NYFC members: Take care of your body. Find some sort of aerobic activity that keeps you in shape and that keeps you sensitive to your posture, breathing and stamina. Have mindful practice! □

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

MARCH '03

March
13-30

Thursday–Saturday 8:00 pm,
Sunday 3:00 pm

Michele Smith is playing the musical accompaniment (solo flute) for DADAnewyork's new theater piece *Cabaret Re-Voltaire III — Beautiful Absurdities*. Program also includes Joelle Wallach's *A Wreath of Silver Birds* and Jean Cocteau's *The Wedding Breakfast* with new music by Julie Harting.

• Theater for the New City, 115 First Avenue, NYC • Admission \$10 • Info, call 212-254-1109 or visit www.theaterforthenewcity.org.

March
22

Saturday 8:00 p.m.

Flutist **Sue Ann Kahn** presents "Dynamic Duos," a concert of duos for flute with piano, bassoon, or harp. Music by Bach, Czerny, Furstenau, Bozza, Copland, and the premiere of *Colloquy* for flute and harp by Wayne Peterson. Performers include Martin Kuuskmann, bassoon, and Susan Jolles, harp.

• Mannes College of Music, 150 West 85th Street, NYC • Admission is free.

APRIL '03

April
2

Wednesday 8:00 pm

The New York Wolpe Festival presents "Josef Marx and Stefan Wolpe: A Friendship in Music," with **Patricia Spencer**, flutist and curator; Susan Barrett, oboe; David Miller, bassoon; Anne Chamberlain, piano; David Holzman, piano; and others. Works by Stefan Wolpe, Isaac Nemiroff, Janitsch, Calvisius, Pleskow, and Wuorinen.

• Merkin Concert Hall, 129 West 67th Street, NYC
• Admission \$15, \$10 students/seniors • Info, call 212-501-3330 or visit www.patriciaspencerflute.com.

April
5

Saturday 8:00 pm

Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 will be performed under the direction of Steven Giammarino by **Carla Auld** and Miriam Lachenauer, flutes, Darryl Kubian, violin, and Marsha Tyshkov, harpsichord.

• Christ Episcopal Church, 400 Ramapo Avenue, Pompton Lakes, NJ • Admission \$12, \$10 seniors • Info, call 973-835-2207.

April
6

Sunday 4:00 pm

UpTown Flutes in a "Musical Series" concert performing works by Lowe, Burnette, Hiroshi, McMichael, and Barber.

• Presbyterian Church of Madison, 19 Green Avenue, Madison, NJ • Admission is \$15, \$12 in advance; \$10 seniors/students • Info, call 973-377-1600.

Flute Happenings Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Mail date
April 2003	03/20/03	04/12/03
May 2003	04/03/03	04/26/03

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Ninth Annual New Jersey Flute Choir Day will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2003 from 8:30 am to 6:00 pm at Drew University and Grace Episcopal Church in Madison, NJ. The event, directed by **Virginia Schulze-Johnson** with the assistance of **Patricia Davila**, will include seminars, flute choir readings, and concerts for players and teachers of all levels. Info, contact Virginia Schulze-Johnson at 973-408-3428 or VSchulze@drew.edu, or visit www.depts.drew.edu/music/beyond.

The **Jeanne Baxtresser International Flute Master Class** will be held at the Carnegie Mellon School of Music from June 21 to June 29, 2003. Masterclasses on repertoire will be taught by Ms. Baxtresser and guest artists Mathieu Dufour, Tim Hutchins, Renée Siebert, and Marina Piccinini; guest faculty will present lectures and workshops on contemporary/baroque flute techniques, preparation for auditions, effective practicing, stage presence, cognitive learning and teaching, and recording techniques. Advanced participants (high school through professional) and auditors of all levels are welcome. To request a brochure and application, please contact Jeanne Baxtresser Master Class, CMU School of Music #105, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, phone/fax 908-608-1325/1326, jbmclass@aol.com (email), or visit www.jeannebaxtresser.com.

AITKEN (cont'd from page 1)

Since I began to teach in Freiburg, I have trouble finding as much time to compose as I used to. This is partly because of the teaching, but also because I lose about 30 days a year in airplanes. In this amount of time, including the recovery and preparatory days, I could perhaps compose one piece a year or at least have a nice vacation. So even though my university degrees are in composition, I only write one piece every two or three years. However, it certainly is time for me to come up with another solo work for flute alone.

PM: Can you recommend some living Canadian composers and works of theirs that you feel should be played more in the United States?

RA: To recommend flute works by living Canadian composers is a bit tricky. As in most countries today, we have a lot of composers, and almost every composer has written something for flute. The Canadian Music Centre [www.musiccentre.ca or 416-961-6601] can provide lists and, of course, has library copies of the scores. The Centre can also provide a *Guidelist*

of Unaccompanied Flute Music by Canadian Composers compiled by a former student of mine, Kathryn Cernauskas. It describes and quotes from some 60 solo flute pieces which are graded according to difficulty.

Naturally, I have my favorite works, many of which were composed for me at a certain time in Canadian music history. [See the Centre's website for composer information and complete works list. —Ed.]

I consider R. Murray Schafer's flute concerto [c. 1984] to be the most successful and exciting concerto of our time. He has also composed a number of other pieces for flute. Peter Paul Koprowski, a Polish-born Canadian composer, has composed one of the few concerti we have with full orchestra—I mean triple winds, four horns, three trumpets, etc. I would describe it as contemporary romantic style and very effective [1982]. Both concerti are available on CD from CBC Records. John Weinzweig, who celebrates his 90th year this year, composed reputedly the first 12-tone work in Canada, *Divertimento No. 1* for flute and string orchestra [1946]. It actually won a prize at the 1948 Olympics, when prizes were given for music. This is still an important piece, and effective.

[From the solo flute repertoire we have] *Ansonie* [1979], a quarter-tone piece of Bruce Mather; *Envol* [1984] an exotic work with extensive use of harmonics and whistle tones by Gilles Tremblay; *Riffs* [1974], a jazz influenced piece in 12 movements by John Weinzweig and perhaps the most performed work for solo flute; and *Etching: The Volland Suite* [1964] by Harry Somers. These are all worth learning and very effective in concert. *Quatre Monodies* [1955] of Clermont Pépin is also a Canadian flute classic.

Among the younger composers with works for solo flute are Paul Steenhuisen, with *cette obscure clarté qui tombe des étoiles* for flute and CD accompaniment [2000], and *pomme de terre* for solo piccolo [1999]. Chris Paul Harman has a flute and piano piece in several movements [*Ringings: Variations for flute and piano*, 1989], and

(Cont'd on page 7)

NYFC Flute Fair 2003

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2003

9:00 am–7:00 pm

Union Theological Seminary

100 Claremont Avenue (between 120th–122nd Streets/Broadway–Riverside Drive)

RAFFLE!

WIN A LESSON
with New York
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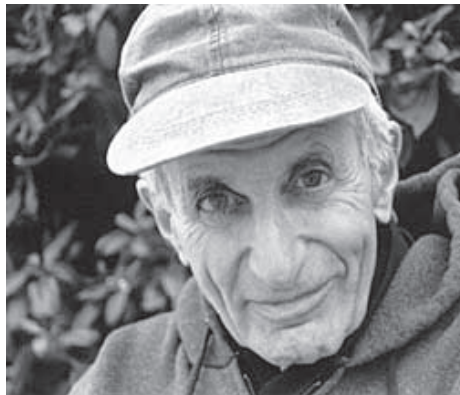
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Please check the NYFC website — www.nyfluteclub.org — for details and updates.

Henry Brant on the Birth of *Angels and Devils*

by Nancy Toff

In February 1995, I interviewed Henry Brant at his home in Santa Barbara, California, as part of the research for my biography of Georges Barrère. I talked with him about the premiere of *Angels and Devils* by Barrère and ten of his students, which took place at a concert of the Pan-American Association of Composers (PAAC) in Carnegie Chapter Hall (a small auditorium located in what is now the Kaplan Space) in New York City on February 6, 1933. The second performance, also by Barrère and sponsored by the PAAC, took place on December 11 of the same year at the New School for Social Research.



NANCY TOFF: Tell me how the performances came about, how you got Barrère to do it. Start from the beginning.

HENRY BRANT: Well, I arrived in New York in 1929 from Canada. And I heard about Barrère and I heard him play and right away I thought, Now what could be grander than if some day so great a player would play a piece that I would write? And it seemed to me that he wasn't just playing the flute, what he was doing competed easily with the best players on any instrument...so you weren't aware that this instrument had any limitations. I mentioned this to Barrère once and he said, "Yes, it has many, and we try to overcome them." And he advised me to be careful of the middle range of the flute. He said, "Everyone thinks that's so easy but it's the least expressive, it's the dead register, and we have to make it somehow equal to the others. It won't do that without help."

[Then around] 1931 I heard [one of] the first American performance[s] of the Stravinsky *Symphony of Psalms*, in Carnegie Hall. And the score at that time was not published; nobody knew what it looked like, but I was immediately struck by a place in the second movement where for two bars you hear five flutes playing something. And I thought, that's what I want. But is five flutes enough to make an orchestral texture? Well that's when I got the idea that I wanted an all-flute sound. [But we needed] low notes, and alto flutes were not easy to come by in those days. There were only a couple in town. Arthur Lora owned one; I don't know where the other one came from. And piccolos.... So I thought, I'm going to write this piece anyway, [even if] nothing will come of it.

[After I finished the first movement,] one of my teachers, Wallingford Riegger, said, Well, I'll write to Georges Barrère and tell him what you've done. I expected to hear nothing. And then I decided, very scared, [that] I would actually phone. And he said, yes, I got the letter. That's a piece which maybe we can perform, and I won't forget about it. So he encouraged me to copy the parts out. And then the great day came, and his class met at the Institute of Musical Art, where I was a student myself. Frances Blaisdell was entrusted with the solo part, and

he conducted. And that [was] the first time I heard the first movement, [in 1931]. And it more than realized what I'd hoped.

So I went so far as to ask him whether he would play it himself. And he said, we must find a way to do this. And so he and Salzedo and Riegger and Henry Cowell and some other people worked out this occasion there. And [he] said that I should conduct it myself. This was a scary thing for me, but he told the players, "He beats time, he's the

composer. I follow him, so you can do the same." And that's how it got to be first performed.

NT: That was the first concert, at Carnegie?

HB: Yes, and at that time *Angels and Devils* did not have the present introduction. It started at the second tempo, after this long unison passage, and it didn't have the coda either, the place where the thing tapers off, one player at a time. Then Barrère said, well now, you need a second movement, why don't you write another one, contrast it. So I wrote the second movement, and we played it. But at a later time I felt that...my attempts at burlesque and parody weren't very satisfactory. And Barrère himself said, well, the parody is perhaps in the audience seeing an ancient flute player play these unexpected things. So at a later time I rewrote the second movement in a style closer to what I really wanted. Every bar is there, but I changed the harmonies completely. The harmonic style [became] a lot more conservative—I was still studying with conservative teachers, and I thought there might be some there. I took out all the things that were like gags and replaced them. So it's the same piece, but with a different front end and a different ending.

NT: So the first performance only had one movement, then?

HB: It had the two movements, [but] the earlier version of the second movement, which was extremely difficult to play, besides. It had rhythms with hanging fourth note of a group of sixteenth by itself which we were supposed to try to get together—things like that. Then there was some talk of making a recording of it because the Henry Cowell *New Music* magazine had started a New Music series of recordings. But it never got anywhere. Wallingford Riegger [thought it could be done, but it would have been the first movement only, with lots of cuts]. So this great playing never got recorded.

NT: Now the second performance, the one that was at the New School, how did that happen?

HB: Well, [Barrère's] trio was [with] Salzedo [harp] and Britt [cello]. They were planning a concert, and they were also going

(Cont'd on next page)

THE PAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMPOSERS, INC.
STEINWAY HALL • NEW YORK
PRESENTS A CONCERT OF NORTH AND LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC
AT CARNEGIE CHAPTER HALL ADMISSIION \$1.00
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6th, at 8:30 PAN AMERICAN MEMBERS FREE

CO-OPERATING ARTISTS

JUDITH LITANTE, Soprano; MARGARET HAMILTON, pianist; GEORGES BARRÈRE, flutist; HENRY BRANT, conductor; RICHARD DONOVAN, conductor; G. V. MCGARRAMAN, flutist; STEFAN PECHA, oboist; DAVE WEBBER, clarinetist; CARL CRISTANO, hornist; ELIAS CARMAN, bassoonist; FREDERICK WILKINS, piccolist; CARL MOORE, piccolist; HARRY BAUGH, piccolist; VICTOR HARRIS, flutist; SARAH ROSSSELL, flutist; MILTON WITGENSTEIN, flutist; VALENTINE DIKE, flutist; ROBERT BOLLES, flutist; PAUL SIENEICHEN, alto flutist; JOHN PETRIE, alto flutist.

PROGRAM

- I.) SEXTET FOR WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS AND PIANO
Richard Donovan
Prelude
Andante Grazioso
Rondo
Margaret Hamilton and woodwind ensemble
- II.) AFTERGLOW (J. F. Cooper, jr.) Charles Ives
ANN STREET (Maurice Moriis) Charles Ives
LIKE A SICK EAGLE (Keats) Charles Ives
TOYS (Carl Ruggles) Carl Ruggles
MANANA ES DOMINGO F. Humberto Allende
COTON COLORADO P. Humberto Allende
COMARDE RANA P. Humberto Allende
SONG OF THE CHARLOTTE (Sereiras) Hector Villa-Lobos
Judith Litante and Henry Brant
- Intermission
- III.) IN COLOR (X. Villaurrutia) José Rolón
Judith Litante and Henry Brant
EL SEMBRADOR (C. Pellissier) José Rolón
Judith Litante with three woodwinds
AS IT FELL UPON A DAY (R. Barnefeld) Aaron Copland
Judith Litante with two woodwinds
- IV.) CONCERTO FOR FLUTE WITH ORCHESTRA OF TEN FLUTES
Henry Brant
I. Poem
II. Burlesque
Georges Barrère and ten flutes

NEXT CONCERT OF THE PAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION AT CARNEGIE CHAPTER HALL ON MARCH 6TH WILL INCLUDE THE MOST RECENT WORKS OF EDGAR VARESE, RUTH CRAWFORD, ADOLPH WEISS, AMARDO ROLDAN, CARLOS CHAVEZ, AND WILLIAM RUSSELL.

For its premiere in 1933, *Angels and Devils* was still known as Concerto for Flute With Orchestra of Ten Flutes.

to do Salzedo's new sonata for piano and harp. And Henry Cowell wanted to do something of Carl Ruggles. So Ruggles arranged his piece *Angels* [c. 1920, originally for six trumpets] for four flutes and two alto flutes. Barrère [was conducting] that, and then they figured, well, now, we've got Barrère, we've got these flutes, why don't we do *Angels and Devils*? So that's how that came about.

NT: And who conducted it?
HB: I did.

NT: Not Reiner?

HB: He was supposed to conduct *Angels and Devils*, [but he had] some conflict and couldn't do it. But I went to see him and he gave [me] some ideas on how to conduct it. I'd already conducted one performance, but I realized that somebody like that could tell me a lot of things I didn't know. I was reluctant, even with my one experience, to replace him. But he said, no, you do your best, and you'll know more about it after the second performance than you do after the first. So that was how that all came about.

Then I think nothing happened for about twenty years, absolutely nothing. I made one attempt to play it at the Institute of Musical Art, but they had no alto flutes and they actually played it with clarinets, if you can imagine such a thing. So it wasn't very satisfactory. Then I won an award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the award was a recording of a piece of chamber music up to thirteen players. So at that time the flute player whose playing I knew best was Fred Wilkins, who'd played in the original performance. So he took it very seriously. He said, well we're going to get the best people in town, and he did. And we played it in public a few times. And as far as caliber of supporting personnel and preparation, we've never had a performance equal to that [CRI-106 (1956) with Frederick Wilkins, solo flute, and Samuel Baron, Frances Blaisdell, Philip Dunigan, Harold Jones, Andrew Lolya, Claude Monteux, Harry Moskovitz, Murray Panitz, Lois Schaefer, and Kenneth Schmidt].

[But] it's not an easy piece. It needs an experienced conductor and a lot of work. And every time I do it now, I figure I can't do it in under two rehearsals. I can't even do it well. And this is true even sometimes when everybody's [already] played it. But [I can't] explain how I want it and how I think it ought to go until we do it together.

And the piece is so old now, three generations have played it, that it's treated as though the composer is dead. People "interpret" it, that is to say, [they] use different tempos and things like ritards

and accelerandos and stressing of things in phrases—even changing the articulation. [This] astounds me, because the music is published, in print. And so this gave me an insight into what it's like to be a dead composer. You can expect a lot of trouble as people think that without the composer around they can massacre the piece any way they want.

NT: Would you say that Barrère was a supporter of experimental music?

HB: Distinctly, yes.

NT: How so?

HB: He said that he would like to play a lot of experimental music and that it should be done but that the people who supported concerts and made them possible were so reactionary

that it would [be] dangerous to attempt it very often.

[I spoke with Henry Brant by phone in March 2003 and he added] Barrère...even thought it wouldn't be safe to play *Angels and Devils* for the Flute Club, they're so conservative....What I think now, after the experience of writing these two pieces [*Angels and Devils* and *Ghosts and Gargoyles*] is that the problem with the flute repertoire is [that] there is no flute repertoire. There's no great flute piece by any first class contemporary composer. There's the Hindemith Eight Pieces and a sonata, and the Poulenc sonata, but hardly heavyweight stuff. □

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Henry Brant was born in Montreal in 1913 of American parents and began to compose at the age of eight. In 1929 he moved to New York, where for the next 20 years he composed and conducted for radio, films, ballet and jazz groups. He taught at the Juilliard School and Columbia University (1947-55) and at Bennington College (1957-80). Since 1981 Brant has made his home in Santa Barbara, California.

In 1950 Brant began to write spatial music in which the planned positioning of the performers is an essential factor in the composing scheme. His spatial music now comprises a catalog of 112 works. Brant was awarded the 2002 Pulitzer Prize in Music for *Ice Field* (2001), a work for large orchestral groups and organ, premiered by the San Francisco Symphony with conductor Michael Tilson Thomas and the composer as organist. *Ghosts & Gargoyles* (2001), a concerto for flute solo with flute orchestra, had its world premiere in Toronto in May 2002, with Robert Aitken as the flute soloist. *Ghosts & Gargoyles* is a spatial sequel to *Angels & Devils* (1931)—the time interval between the compositions spanning 70 years of the composer's career.

For additional reading visit www.otherminds.org/shtml/Brantinterview.shtml.

AITKEN (cont'd from page 4)

Denis Dion has several pieces for flute and tape. John Celona's *Voce Mod* [1990–1991] is a very good piece for flute and computer.

PM: How do your conducting and composing integrate into your flute playing?

RA: I am not sure how conducting integrates into my flute playing.... [If anything,] the talent of a performing musician is of greater advantage to a conductor than the other way around. You need the same powers of observation to be a successful flutist or successful conductor. It is exactly the same musical demands—a very self-critical attitude and the ability to physically convey your concept of the music into the space of the concert hall.... I would suppose that conducting also heightens one's listening powers, as you are very focused and concentrated to shape the phrases to the best of your ability in addition to monitoring the ensemble, balance and intonation.

But if you do need to deal with extremely complex rhythms, as you do in the music of Stefan Wolpe, one becomes very aware of the tiniest note values and their relationships to each other. Of course trying to make others aware of these complications and thinking of ways to convey or conduct this also helps me in such situations, especially when performing complex chamber music or concerti [as a flutist].

Composition, however, is an entirely different matter. I think all performers should compose, or at least try to compose. After all, the traditional role of a musician was to be a composer, performer, teacher and, when required, a conductor, even though John Cage said that composing, performing and listening to music are not related. I believe composing music gives the performer an insight into how notes are put together to make a piece, and that this knowledge helps immensely when one is learning a new piece and seeking out an interpretation. The mystery of the music is taken away. The performer can really understand the piece as others might read a book. The harmony is understood in relationship to the shape and form of the

piece. It is easier to understand the intention of the composer and therefore convey this to the audience. I think a performer should play a piece for the public as if he is teaching it to them, and in order to do this he must understand how it is put together. It is not simply a lot of notes that you feel. If you play like that, you are in danger of distorting the work beyond recognition. It is like speaking a language with all the wrong accents. Composition and analysis are two of the most important subjects a performer should study.

PM: Can you comment on the trends of flute literature and where you see us stylistically in the future?

RA: To comment on today's flute literature or where we will be some years from now is impossible without considering music at large. The history of music (or of the world for that matter) is never linear. Something always happens to break its natural development. With World War I, the evolution of music in its serious romantic form was broken, resulting in a music of "Les Six" or a frivolous entertainment which then became attacked by "Les Cinq" with music of Jolivet and Messiaen who wanted to give back to music its ancient ritualistic, even religious responsibility.

The arts have always been cyclic: looking forward, then backwards. At the time of Mozart, a cycle took half a century, but today we have seen two cycles in fifty years. And now with improved communications we will probably see cycles of five years. In many cases, flute music seems to push the boundaries of possibility for a number of years and then through a certain frustration at not being able to go any farther or boredom from always tackling the same problems falls back in an eddy of conventionality. With composers like Heinz Holliger, Vinko Globokar, Helmut Lachenman, Brian Ferneyhough and to some extent Robert Dick and myself, the boundaries of flute possibilities have been pushed about as far as they can go at the moment and have already fallen back to a more conventional writing; but not without the absorption of many

new techniques which have now become accepted. As it is difficult to go further with the normal flute and we are a bit tired of the new extra musical sounds, most composers are playing around with forms of tonality again and certainly absorbing the influences of non-Western musical cultures. Thanks once again to improved communications, access to more authentic ethnic music has become simple.

The computer is, of course, opening up the possibilities of flute composition. Although the flute techniques are basically the same, the compositions themselves can provide a much larger sonic world. Works by Philippe Manoury, Marco Stroppa, etc., suggest exciting possibilities and new demands on the performer, but the technical development has basically stopped for the moment. This explains the need for quarter-tone flutes and other hybrid instruments which [can] produce some fascinating musical effects—but for a very limited number of composers and performers.

So at the moment, I feel we are marking time and enjoying the fruit of many different directions in composition—often especially composed and, idiomatically, only possible on the flute. □

Canadian composer and flutist Robert Aitken was born in Nova Scotia in 1939. He began formal composition studies at the University of British Columbia while he was principal flutist of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra in 1958–59. He then studied electronic music and composition at the University of Toronto from 1959–64, earning a B. Mus. (1961) and M. Mus. (1964) while serving as second flute in the CBC Symphony Orchestra.

Aitken's flute teachers have included Nicolas Fiore, Marcel Moyse (whom he considers to be his most significant teacher), Jean-Pierre Rampal, Severino Gazzeloni, André Jaunet, and Hubert Barwähser. Aitken has been professor of flute at the Hochschule für Musik, Freiburg, West Germany since 1988 and still reserves some time each year for composing.

Patti Monson is flutist for the New York new music ensemble Sequitur, and a frequent guest artist on several recital series dedicated to new music. She is currently director of the Manhattan School of Music contemporary ensemble Tactus.



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



March 2003 concert

Saturday 5:30 pm • Union Theological Seminary, 100 Claremont Avenue

ROBERT AITKEN

2003 Flute Fair guest artist Robert Aitken will give the New York premiere of Henry Brant's *Ghosts and Gargoyles* at the afternoon concert. Also at the Fair: the Young Artist Competition, lecture demonstrations, opportunities for young and amateur flutists, exhibits.

83rd Season

2002–2003 Concerts

October 27, 2002 • Sunday 5:30 pm
 ROBERT STALLMAN, flute

November 24, 2002 • Sunday 5:30 pm
 STEPHANIE MORTIMORE, flute and piccolo

December 15, 2002 • Sunday 5:30 pm
 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEW

January 12, 2003 • Sunday 5:30 pm
 ULLA SUOKKO, flute and theatre

February 23, 2003 • Sunday 5:30 pm
 ROBERT DICK, flutes

March 29, 2003 • Saturday 9:00 am–7:00 pm
 FLUTE FAIR with guest artist Robert Aitken.
 Union Theological Seminary, 100 Claremont Avenue

April 27, 2003 • Sunday 5:30 pm
 2003 NYFC COMPETITION WINNERS

May 11, 2003 • Sunday 4:00 pm
 2003 NYFC ENSEMBLE PROGRAM
 Kaplan Space at Carnegie Hall

Concerts are at CAMI Hall, 165 West 57th Street (across from Carnegie Hall), unless otherwise noted. All programs are subject to change. Tickets \$10, only at the door; free to members. For more information, visit the NYFC website at www.nyfluteclub.org or call (212) 799-0448.



From the Editor

Greetings! March is New York Flute Fair month! Kathy Fink and company have an exciting day planned around this year's guest artist, flutist/composer Robert Aitken (see p. 4 and www.nyfluteclub.org for details). Volunteer helpers are still welcome (see Jayn Rosenfeld's "United Flutists behind the 2003 Flute Fair" on p. 2).

Robert Aitken's flute fair recital will feature the New York premiere of Henry Brant's *Ghosts and Gargoyles* for soloist and eight accompanying flutists. (The world premiere, also with Aitken as soloist, took place in Toronto in May 2002.) Patti Monson spoke with Aitken about his composing career

and favorite Canadian composers in an interview that starts on p. 1.

Also in this issue are excerpts from a 1995 Nancy Toff interview with Henry Brant about early performances of his 1931 prequel to *Ghosts and Gargoyles*, the now-classic *Angels and Devils*. I enjoyed learning of Brant's empathy for dead composers who are no longer around to protect their music from abuse, and his opinion that Georges Barrère (1876–1944) supported experimental music but "[felt that] that the people who supported concerts and made them possible were so reactionary that it would [be] dangerous to attempt it very often." Readers may recall hearing a similar sentiment in last month's newsletter from Robert Dick.

Stefani Starin, a longtime advocate of experimental music, is this month's Member Profile subject (as well as the coordinator of the 2003 Flute Fair student flute ensembles showcase). If you miss the flute ensembles, you can still catch her later in the day at the lecture/demonstration she and Patti Monson will be giving on how to decode the mysteries of notation in contemporary flute literature.

All for now. Hope to see you at the fair. □

Katherine Saenger (klsaenger@yahoo.com)