



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

October 2004

A Q&A with the Borealis Wind Quintet



In Concert

THE BOREALIS WIND QUINTET

Sunday, **October 24, 2004**, 5:30 pm
CAMI Hall, 165 West 57th Street

Katherine Fink, *flute*; Tamar Wells, *oboe*; Kathryn Taylor, *clarinet*;
Daniel Culpepper, *French horn*; Wayne Hileman, *bassoon*

Suite, Op. 57	Charles Lefebvre (1843–1917)
Five at Play	Phillip Wharton <i>(commissioned by the Borealis Wind Quintet)</i> (b. 1967)
Roaring Fork Quintet for Wind Instruments	Eric Ewazen <i>(commissioned by the Borealis Wind Quintet)</i> (b. 1954)
Pastorale	Mrs. H.H.A. Beach (1867–1944)
Quintet, Op. 22	William Mathias (1934–1992)
Potpourri Fantastico on themes of Rossini's Barber of Seville	Giulio Briccialdi (1818–1881)

Program subject to change.

Interview by David Wechsler

I've known Kathy Fink, the Borealis Wind Quintet flutist, since 1984, when she joined the Brooklyn Philharmonic as principal flute. As music director of the OMNI Ensemble, I was curious to learn how other chamber groups handle the logistics of producing concerts, rehearsing, dealing with a core group and guest artists, picking a season repertoire, traveling, recording, and just the general care and feeding of a chamber

(Cont'd on page 9)



PHOTO: JONATHAN BRAHMS

Gerardo Levy: An 80th Birthday Tribute

A biography by Jonathan Brahms

Gerardo Levy was born Gerhard Levy in Berlin in 1924. His father was an accountant, his mother a nurse and a fine pianist. In 1938, learning of the Nazi persecution of Jews, his father spent their life savings to bribe corrupt officials for permission to leave Germany. Just two weeks before the infamous Kristallnacht, the family fled Europe by ship for sanctuary in Buenos Aires. At 14, Gerhard became Gerardo, and he has been Gerardo ever since, strongly and happily identified with the country that gave haven to his family.

(Cont'd on page 4)

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2004–2005

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Looking Ahead and Looking Back

by Jayn Rosenfeld



From the President

Dear Friends: The start of a new season is always a time of enthusiasm and momentum, and this year we have plenty of both. Our season is replete with wonderful flutists and programs, starting off with the Borealis Wind Quintet playing an absolutely fascinating and unhackneyed selection of unusual chamber music. Our Flute Fair in March will be double-barreled in intention, covering the achievements and pedagogical heritage of our founder, Georges Barrère, in masterclasses and talks, and in musical programs covering Barrère performance highlights and premieres. Our Young Artists Competition, our Ensemble Program, our Outreach Program at LaGuardia High School, and our extremely active recording projects will all roll out during the year and you will hear more about them here.

This month we offer a special 80th birthday salute to Gerardo Levy, a longtime member of the Club, the Board, the Advisory Board, the New York City Opera Orchestra, and the New York flute world. Our appreciation of the musical and personal history of this fine flutist and teacher deepens our sense of connection with our past as a Club and our group experience as a vibrant musical community. Congratulations, Gerardo! And all due thanks to Jonathan Brahms, student and friend of Gerardo's, who suggested this project and helped with its execution.

Since we last spoke, I have had two extraordinary flute experiences which I would like to touch on briefly. One was performing in Beijing, China with the New York New Music Ensemble. We played at the Central Conservatory, in its first ever Beijing Modern Music Festival, to a full house of mainly students. The fervor of their desire to hear our music, and to exhibit their own growth and development, was literally inspiring. And we ate very, very well. The other experience, less far afield, was the NFA Flute Convention in Nashville. It seems to me that the level of flute playing is absolutely rising—the integration of technique and interpretation among the performers was astounding. I am hoping that we will be able to bring some of the Europeans I heard to New York to play at the Club in 2005-06.

I want to take this opportunity to salute departing Board Members and welcome new ones. Difficult as it is to replace good people, we have done so; Robert Langevin, Sue Ann Kahn (who leaves to become president of the National Flute Association), Nadine Asin, and George Kimmel are making way for Patti Monson, Fred Marcusa, Seth Rosenthal and Don Hulbert, who has assumed the large job of membership secretary. We say farewell and thank you to the retirees, and a warm welcome and another hearty thank you to the new volunteers. □

Dues Reminder: To be included in the 2004–2005 Membership Directory, dues must be paid by OCTOBER 31 (Barrère's birthday). Send dues (regular \$50, student/senior \$35, contributing \$75) with name, address, phone, and email directly to:

Don Hulbert, Membership Secretary; Park West Finance Station, Box 20613;
 New York, NY 10025-1515; don.hulbert@verizon.net; 212-316-3321

Corrections: Please update the information in the 2004–2005 "About the New York Flute Club" brochure mailed to you last month to reflect the following:

- Don Hulbert, Membership Secretary, phone number: 212-316-3321
- Nancy Toff, Archivist and Webmaster, email address: nancy.toff@oup.com
- Patricia Zuber, Young Artist Competition, email address: zuber.flute@verizon.net

Update: 2004 NYFC Young Artist Competition winner Leonie Wall joins the Toronto Symphony Orchestra as second flute/piccolo this fall after a year of graduate study at the New England Conservatory with Jeanne Baxtresser.

And don't miss the annual Fall Ensembles Gathering information on p. 7!

Member Profile

Gene Coleman

Initial membership
1965, current member
since 1977



Employment:

Adjunct professor in film studies at New York Institute of Technology, NYC; producer, on-air operations, at WNYE-TV Channel 25, NYC.

A recent recital/performance:

Guest flutist with the NY Jazz Flutet, in a performance at the Cornelia Street Cafe, NYC, in December 2003.

Career highlights: Playing with the Sun Ra Solar Arkestra (late '60s through mid-'70s) and the Jazz Flute Orchestra (mid- to late-'90s). Seeing his composition *Naiiregin Ecaps* (1970) recognized with a place in the files of the Dartmouth Electronic Music Studio Library at Dartmouth College.

Current flutes: Powell silver C flute French model with B foot, Haynes wooden piccolo, Miyazawa silver alto flute, Armstrong bass flute with sterling silver head joint.

Influential flute teachers: John Jackson, Harold Jones, Hubert Laws, Eric Dolphy. Gene feels very fortunate in having had Eric Dolphy both as a neighbor and first private flute teacher when beginning flute studies in high school; Dolphy's music continues to be an influence and a source of inspiration. Other learning experiences: theory and harmony studies at the Extension Division of the Juilliard School of Music.

High school:

Boys High School (now Boys & Girls High School) in Brooklyn, NY.

Degrees: BA in media studies (Fordham University, 1994); MA in film (New York University, 1996).

Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishments: Just being able to play the flute. He knows that his lifelong love affair with this instrument is a lasting and true relationship even though there may have been rocky periods in the past when he strayed and even stopped playing.

Favorite practice routines: Gene tries to practice every day, even if only for 30 minutes. A good practice day for him would include four to six hours of work: a warm-up with long tones, playing through the harmonic overtone series; daily exercises from a collection that he is writing (major and minor scales involving intervals of thirds ascending and descending by seconds; chords involving patterns that ascend and descend chromatically), playing through all the different articulations; sight reading exercises (Robert Cavalley's *Melodious & Progressive Studies*, Sam Most's *Jazz Flute Conceptions*, Jim Snidero's *Jazz Conception*), and pieces that he is considering for performance.

Other interests: Spending time in his home studio becoming fluent in the computer digital processes of sound recording and editing. Listening to music, reading about media related subjects. He's an avid film fan and tries to see everything. His favorite pastime? Constructive daydreaming.

Advice for NYFC members: Be open to how your interest in flute playing and music can lead to new experiences. Gene says, "I have had referrals and offers to non-playing positions because of my flute playing. Seek out playing opportunities with a positive attitude. Remember: there are no small parts, just small musicians." □

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

FREE to current NYFC members, this section lists upcoming performances by members; flute-related contests, auditions, and masterclasses organized/sponsored by members; and brief descriptions of members' new recordings, sheet music, and books. Send submissions to the Newsletter Editor.

OCTOBER '04

OCT
18

Monday 7:30 pm

DAVID WECHSLER, flute, and Sylvia Kahan, piano, will perform a program of works by Handel, Schubert, Doppler, Hindemith, and Copland.

• Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue, NYC • Admission is free • Info, call 718/859-8649.

OCT
28

Thursday 8:00 pm

KATHLEEN NESTER, flute, will perform Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D, BWV 1050, by J. S. Bach, with Jon Kimura Parker, piano, Brennan Sweet, violin, and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

• Bergen Performing Arts Center, 30 North Van Brunt St., Englewood, NJ • Admission: \$18-\$58.

OCT
29

Friday 8:00 pm

See **KATHLEEN NESTER** program above for October 28.

• Richardson Auditorium, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ • Admission: \$47, \$58.

OCT
30

Saturday 8:00 pm

See **KATHLEEN NESTER** program above for October 28.

• Count Basie Theater, 99 Monmouth Street, Red Bank, NJ • Admission: \$18-\$58.

OCT
30

Saturday 8:00 pm

The OMNI Ensemble with **DAVID WECHSLER**, flute, will perform a program of works for flute, cello, and piano including Mozart's Trio in B \flat major, K. 502 (arr. by Jim Lahti), Bernstein's *Anniversaries* (arr. by Jim Lahti), and original works by D'Arcy Reynolds and Ned Rorem.

• Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Avenue, Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY • Admission: \$15 general, \$12 students/seniors • Info, call 718/859-8649.

OCT
31

Sunday 3:00 pm

See **KATHLEEN NESTER** program above for October 28.

• Community Theater, 100 South Street, Morristown, NJ • Info, call 973-539-8008.

Flute Happenings Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Mail date
November 2004	10/14/04	11/04/04
December 2004	11/04/04	11/26/04
January 2005	12/23/04	01/13/05
February 2005	01/13/05	02/03/05
March 2005	02/03/05	02/24/05
April 2005	03/10/05	03/31/05
May 2005	04/07/05	04/28/05

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

NOVEMBER '04

NOV
6

Saturday 8:00 pm

"Harpenflute," a program of music by Ravel, Taki, Debussy, and Gershwin, performed by **PAMELA SKLAR**, flute, and Lois Colin, harp.

• Albertson Church, 293 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich, CT • Admission: \$20 for NYFC members • Info, call 203-637-4615 or visit www.Albertsonchurch.org.

NOV
7

Sunday 1:00 pm

NJ Flute Society presents a recital with **BART FELLER** and Marie Kenote, flutes. Masterclass with both flutists to follow at 2:00 pm.

• Brothers Chapel at Drew University, Madison Avenue, Madison NJ • Info, call 201-529-2337.

NOV
7

Sunday 3:00 pm

LAURA KAREL GEORGE, flute, and Sandor Szabo, piano, will perform sonatas of Randall Svane (2003, world premiere) and Leon C. Karel (1947, NJ premiere) in the opening concert of the 2004-2005 Glen Ridge Community Concert Series. Additional works by composers/percussionists Darren Gage and Kimberly Burja.

• Glen Ridge Congregational Church, 195 Ridgewood Avenue, Glen Ridge, NJ • Admission: \$15 general, \$12 seniors, \$6 students • Info, call 973-743-5596.

NOV
11

Thursday 8:00 and 10:00 pm

Jazz flutist/composer **JAMIE BAUM** celebrates the release of her third CD, *Moving Forward, Standing Still* (Omni-Tone) performing her compositions for septet inspired by the jazz masters, as well as Stravinsky, Bartok and Ives.

• Sweet Rhythm Jazz Club, 88 7th Avenue South, between Grove & Bleecker Streets • Admission: \$15 music charge + \$10 minimum • Reservations suggested • Info, call 212-255-3626 or visit www.jamiebaum.com.

NOV
12

Friday 7:00 pm

UPTOWN FLUTES with the NJYS Flute Choir and Forum Concert and Play-Along. Audience bring flutes and stands.

• Presbyterian Church of Madison, 19 Green Avenue, Madison, NJ • Admission: \$10 general, \$5 students/seniors • Info, call 973-377-1600.

NOV
12

Friday 8:00 pm

"Hear for a Reason," a program of works by Young, Alwyn, Mortari, McMichael, Granados, and Schocker performed by **PATRICIA DAVILA**, flute, and Elaine Christy, harp.

• The Unitarian Society, 113 Cottage Place, Ridgewood, NJ • Admission: \$12 • Info, call 201-529-2337.



LEVY (cont'd from page 1)

Shortly after arrival, Gerardo began studying flute with Bruno Bragato, an Italian who played at the Teatro Colón. At the same time, Gerardo apprenticed as a pastry baker. Money for flute lessons was not easily come by, but fortunately, Signor Bragato agreed to accept the cakes that Gerardo had baked as payment.

Gerardo later apprenticed as a window dresser. However, his progress on the flute was so rapid that within three years he had his first job, playing in a "confiteria," a dessert shop. The group consisted of a string quartet, contrabass, flute, clarinet, trumpet, horn and trombone, led by the first violinist. From four-thirty to seven, six days a week, they played reductions of popular orchestral music. It was his first ensemble experience, providing him with an environment for developing intonation and balance. Gerardo played in the confiteria for three years.

World War II was raging and times were hard, especially for new arrivals. Gerardo learned Spanish quickly and adjusted more easily to his new country than his parents did. Although his father did not want him to become a musician, Gerardo's work as a flutist helped support the family, so he gave in to his son's wishes. However, there was a price—Gerardo's work prevented him from attending high school.

Within a short while, Gerardo was playing principal flute in several fine orchestras: Amigos de la Musica, Orqestre de Radio del Estado (State Radio Orchestra) and Orqestre Philharmonia. When his schedule permitted, he subbed at the Teatro Colón, playing operas with his teacher. He was the youngest ever to play there and was affectionately nicknamed "Piojito" ("Little Flea").

Many of the great musicians of the 20th century came to Buenos Aires to conduct. Gerardo considers himself fortunate to have played under Bernstein, Adolf and Fritz Busch, Copland, Dorati, Furtwängler, Ginastera, Hindemith, Erich Kleiber, Kletzki, Ormandy, Manuel Rosenthal and Villa-Lobos, all while he was a young man. Signed photographs of some of them adorn Gerardo's apartment.

It was through such a visit in 1954 that Gerardo and his close friend, clarinetist Efrain Guigui, met and played for Aaron Copland, then director of the Tanglewood Festival. He invited both Gerardo and Efrain to come to Tanglewood and arranged full scholarships for them. At 30, a seasoned professional with a solid career in his country's capital, Gerardo decided to study music formally. Following the summer at Tanglewood, he entered Boston University on full scholarship. He studied with Doriot Dwyer, then just beginning her career as principal flute of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. They were close in age and Gerardo had been an active professional longer than Ms. Dwyer, but he is still grateful to her for teaching him the Mariano approach to tone support. Despite not having attended high school, Gerardo graduated magna cum laude.

During his student years, Gerardo translated Spanish correspondence for Powell and Haynes. When the time came to select a new flute, he was rewarded with a special price. With the help of Ms. Dwyer and James Pappoutsakis, he chose a Haynes, which he still plays, using the same head joint that he chose then.

While a student, he played principal flute with the Springfield (Massachusetts) Symphony and in a woodwind quintet comprised of the orchestra's principal winds. The quintet was presented by the orchestra at Carnegie Recital Hall and garnered excellent reviews in the *New York Times*.

Gerardo then received a student fellowship to participate in the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico. That year, a flutist canceled, so Gerardo played second to Julius Baker and Murray Panitz the entire summer. They were so impressed that they encouraged him to relocate to New York, promising to help him become a freelancer. He did and they kept their word.

Gerardo was soon busy in New York. He substituted and then became member of the New York City Opera Orchestra, first alternating as principal with Lois Schaefer, who later won the Boston Symphony piccolo audition, then with

another arrival from distant shores, John Wion. He also played piccolo and second flute. He recorded for Vox and played in the Symphony of the Air, the Westchester Symphony and the New York City Ballet.

The New York City Opera and New York City Ballet are different companies, but share the New York State Theater. This unusual arrangement results in two alternating short seasons for both companies yearly. This enabled Gerardo to return to Buenos Aires and freelance between opera sessions. He eventually gave up his transcontinental commuting to Argentina for health reasons, because, in his own words, he found himself in “perpetual winter.”

In Buenos Aires, Gerardo performed as a soloist, in the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto, with Furtwängler at both podium and keyboard, and in Mozart’s Concerto for Flute and Harp, K. 299 and Concerto for Flute in G Major, K. 313. I have heard a recording of K. 313. It is artistic, virtuoso playing, and was met by a rapturous ovation. He also performed Nielsen’s Flute Concerto, there and with the Westchester Symphony.

Several consistent threads can be found throughout Gerardo’s career. He has always been attracted to new music. He worked with many composers and gave several notable premieres, among them the South American premiere of Berio’s *Sequenza*, Ginastera’s Duo for Flute and Oboe and fellow Argentinian and friend Mario Davidovsky’s *Synchronism No. 1* for Flute and Tape.

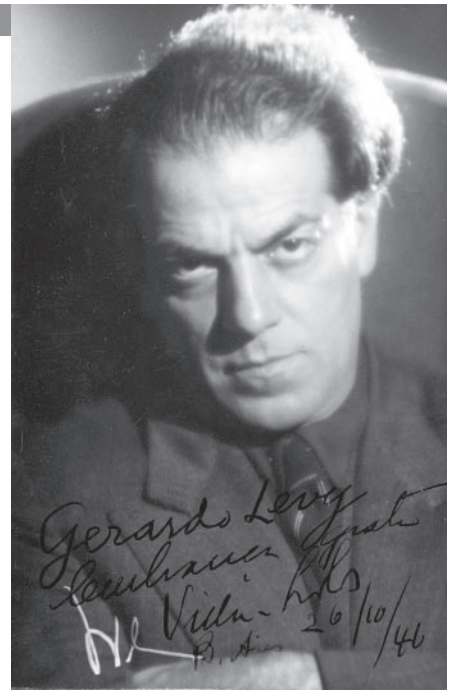
Gerardo is a veteran conductor, with two long-term commitments. Soon after arriving in New York, he founded the St. Cecilia Chamber Ensemble, a group of mixed winds, strings and brass, now in its 41st season. He still conducts several concerts yearly with some of its founding musicians. In addition, every summer, for about 25 years, he has conducted the orchestra and coached student chamber ensembles at the Siena Summer Session for Music and the Arts (SSMA) in Siena, Italy.

Finally, Gerardo teaches. He taught for many years at Sarah Lawrence College and New York University, as well as in his own studio. Several noted local players have benefited from studies with him. The foundation of his teaching is absolute adherence to the score, for he believes that spontaneity and artistry only arise in the context of the greatest discipline. He is enthusiastic and supportive, but demanding too, asking for maximum support, intense expression and a full, dark sound.

Soon to celebrate his 80th birthday on October 23rd, Gerardo has been continuously employed as a flutist for 62 years. It is the only work he has ever known. He still loves his work and remains eager to play, perform, conduct and teach. Now in his 41st season, he continues to play at the New York City Opera. He still receives invitations to perform and is happy to oblige, especially for new music. He practices daily from seven-thirty until nine in the morning. He takes his conducting with the utmost seriousness, studying a score until every detail is absorbed.

Gerardo welcomes students and visitors warmly to his apartment, which is decorated in old-world style and contains vast amounts of music. He has a puckish sense of humor and delights in multiple-language word plays, delivering them in a gruff but charming voice, in an accent that, like himself, is a unique blend of Europe, South America and New York. □

Jonathan Brahms has performed as a flutist in the US and abroad. He has taken a number of wonderful lessons with Gerardo and continues to seek and enjoy his guidance.



PHOTOS COURTESY GERARDO LEVY

Signed photographs of some of the 20th century’s great musicians adorn Gerardo’s apartment: (top) Heitor Villa-Lobos, (middle) Wilhelm Furtwängler, (bottom) Antal Dorati.

For Mr. Gerardo Levy, - with
kinds of all good wishes
Antal Dorati



Gerardo Levy

Selected Anecdotes

Livio Caroli, oboist, NYC Opera and American Ballet Theatre.

I remember well the first time I met Gerardo Levy. It was in 1964, in a spectacular castle in Cortona, Italy. He was the assigned coach in an international chamber music festival and I, an oboist, was scheduled to play the Mozart Oboe Quartet. Since I spoke virtually no language except Italian, I was apprehensive about playing with a French violinist, a German violist, and an American cellist. Not to worry. Gerardo addressed each of us in our own language, impeccable in his musical observations.

When I first came to the United States, in 1965, it was Gerardo who got me my first paying job. The Robert Shaw Chorale was scheduled to play 35 performances of the Messiah throughout the southern US, and just days before the tour was to start, the second oboe withdrew. A replacement could not be found. Gerardo suggested me to his friend, the contractor, and I got the job even though it took some finagling to get me into Local 802 in time. So it happened that some of my first English vocabulary came straight out of the Messiah and I began to use “despised” and “rejected” as my favorite adjectives.

Although I am an oboist, I learned from Gerardo the importance of breathing technique, and I was so impressed by his method that I suggested to my flutist brother [Enzo Caroli] in Italy that he study with Gerardo at an international festival outside Rome. My brother, now a distinguished soloist and teacher in Italy, claims he changed entirely his concept of producing sound as a result of studying with Gerardo.

It has been 40 years since I met Gerardo and I have many fond memories of playing alongside him at the New York City Opera and of playing under his baton at the St. Cecilia Chamber Ensemble. Both as flutist and conductor, he was al-

ways extremely prepared and delivered his musical ideas with great conviction.

Jayn Rosenfeld, president of the NYFC and flutist with the New York New Music Ensemble and Princeton Symphony Orchestra.

I met Gerardo in the early 1960s. I used to call him “Che” because he was from Argentina, a political sign of the times. We played together in a small and energetic orchestra called the Master Virtuosi of New York, and recorded the Cimarosa Concerto for Two Flutes. He was a generous and supportive colleague, giving me a much needed sense of musical direction. Specifically he taught me some of the basic tenets of breathing support, which he conveyed from his own teacher, Doriot Anthony Dwyer. I remember “Don’t blow so hard” being reduced to “Don’t blow.” It was a bit zen and inscrutable, but very, very useful when I was able to practice and consider the advice retrospectively during the following year which I spent in Florence, Italy (with my new husband, during the famous flood). When I toured South America in 1965 with the Robert Shaw Chorale, Gerardo was “home” in Buenos Aires and drove me around on his scooter, a great way to see a great city. I expect it is hard to imagine this dignified 80-year-old in younger years, but we all had them!

Susan Stewart Stolov, flutist and teacher now living in Ithaca, NY.

I first met Gerardo in 1966, when he became conductor of the St. Cecilia Chamber Ensemble. This was to be a group of musicians who would volunteer their time in an effort to learn and perform chamber music, giving about five concerts a year in NYC. Gerardo’s enthusiasm and expertise made him the ideal choice to become the director and conductor of this group. He was always the ultimate professional, always well-prepared and reliable. Only once was he ever unfamiliar with a work we were to perform. At a concert of wind music in the

Village during the time of the Vietnam war protests, it was the wish of the musicians to play Sousa’s *Liberty Bell* march as a prepared encore. Gerardo, never having studied in the American school system, was unfamiliar with the march, but cheerfully agreed to lead us. The concert was one of his most successful.

Gerardo, never one to flaunt his own accomplishments, was always very supportive and generous with efforts to help other flutists. I cannot recall any instance in which he expressed any unkind word regarding any other musician’s performance. And I am especially grateful to Gerardo for his support in introducing me to the appropriate freelance contacts.

Virginia Schulze-Johnson, NJ-based flutist and teacher.

As a doctoral student at NYU, I studied with Gerardo for about 3 years (completing a Ph.D. in performance in 1992). I improved considerably under his tutelage and have always enjoyed his friendship. He is a wonderful teacher and great player.

Miriam Lachenauer, freelance flutist and teacher, and principal flute with the Ridgewood (NJ) Symphony Orchestra.

I have known Gerardo for 10 years as a teacher, mentor and friend. During this time, I have become a better musician, more confident, able to hear and play the music the way I want it to sound...I love his descriptions during lessons and coachings. If a tempo is too slow he says his beard will grow before I finish. If it is really slow, he indicates that it would reach the floor before the end! I had always been told to make the music move forward, give it motion. I tried, and thought I was getting it, but still got the same comment. Gerardo told me to play passages as pickups to the peak of the phrase, a true “Aha” moment for me. Suddenly, what to do was no longer a mystery. When I played with the right spirit, I would hear the words, “I

can hear that you really like this piece.” Music to my ears.

I have continued to be a better musician and teacher because of my association with Gerardo Levy. I will always cherish it and be thankful to him for the rest of my musical life. Thank you Gerardo!

Petina Cole, freelance flutist and singer-songwriter who has studied with Gerardo full- and part-time since 1981.

Gerardo gave me the gift of flute playing as well as the gift of teaching. “Don’t practice things wrong,” he chided, “call me and play it over the phone,” a technique I use with my students today. “Sing your soul into the music,” he would say. “You have a big heart and so much feeling—pour it into your flute playing.” Nothing was more important to Gerardo than sound. “Sound is where the expression of the music lives. You can do nothing without a beautiful sound.”

His insistence on a centered tone drove me through an entire year of lessons on one note—low G. We studied Maquarre’s *Daily Exercises*, the classic repertoire and excerpts. Gerardo always reminded me of his own daily routine: “If I can keep doing it, so can you!” Perhaps his greatest contribution was to instill in me an admiration for living composers and a burning desire to perform their works. “A living composer can do you the most good. You can talk to them. And if you’re very lucky, one might write a piece for you” (as so many did for him). And this past spring Walter Skolnik did just that for me. A sonata for flute and piano in three movements to be debuted this coming holiday season.

Suzanne Gilcbrest, freelance flutist and member of the flute and chamber music faculty at New York University.

I first met Gerardo Levy in 1977 when I was a freshman at Sarah Lawrence College. I was not inter-

ested in pursuing a career in music at the time but it had always been an important part of my life and I wanted to continue studying. In fact, I had chosen Sarah Lawrence partially because of Gerardo’s reputation as a teacher. I still remember being in the music building to register for classes. I was told that Gerardo was in Italy and that I would not meet him until my first lesson. This all strikes me as very normal now, but at the time, this information was presented to me in a way that led me to believe that I was about to meet a formidable character. And Gerardo is that. Over the course of the years that I studied with him, I came to understand Gerardo as a man with great integrity who believes in doing everything it takes to be the best musician one possibly can. It is a belief he passes on to his students through his teaching and by his own example. I also came to understand that his bluntness and directness were motivated by the very same principles.

Meeting Gerardo that freshman year was a life-altering experience. Gerardo’s firm approach to teaching technique and his confidence in me (although I am sure he had his doubts on more than one occasion!) helped me gain confidence in myself and inspired me to work hard. His work ethic continues to have an influence on my own: I practice as much as I can regardless of how full a schedule I have, and I am always looking for new experiences and ways to stretch and grow as a musician, flutist, teacher and performer.

Gerardo insisted on nothing less than professionalism from all of us. He made it clear that he expected us to always be prepared, and that we had a right to expect it of ourselves as well as our colleagues. He had no tolerance for arrogance. And he would not let up on you until he believed that you were doing your best. He was never convinced by anything less than a completely honest performance. Perhaps the most important

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2004 ANNUAL
FALL Flute Ensemble
Gathering

Sunday, **OCTOBER 24**, 2004
2:00–4:00 pm

The Greenwich House Music School
46 Barrow Street (Christopher Street Station on the #1 train)

Purpose: To meet other flutists who are interested in forming ensembles to play together throughout the year.

Preparation: Please bring flutes and music that you would like to play.

Please let Rochelle Itzen know by OCTOBER 18 if you are coming:

Rochelle Itzen; 420 East 23rd Street, #10C; NY, NY 10010
212-982-2703 (phone) / 212-460-5823 (fax) / itzenflute@aol.com



LEVY (cont'd from previous page)

thing I learned from Gerardo was to always listen and think about what I am doing when I play...something we all should do, but often have trouble with. And my favorite Gerardo pun? "You have nothing Toulouse...Lautre!"

Karla Moe, freelance flutist and teacher, and sometime colleague of Gerardo's at the NYC Opera.

Many years ago, my flute and piccolo were stolen on the way to my first professional job. The next day I received a phone call from this man named Gerardo Levy. He had learned of my plight and called to commiserate with me. His compassion and empathy meant a great deal to me, especially coming from a fellow flutist I barely knew. Gerardo's sensitivity and heartfelt caring has never diminished throughout the years of our friendship.

Gerardo speaks five languages fluently (and is often the instigator in changing some of the more staid Italian libretti into a more suitable Italian limerick for the orchestra pit) and can sing along in German, Italian or Spanish as easily as English. He knows every word of the operas, and could play and even recite them in his sleep. One has the absolute impression that Gerardo is never just playing some notes of music, but always playing out of passion and understanding of the drama. He is reliving the drama of that opera every time he plays it.

When I first started playing with the NYC Opera, I remember sitting out in the house, and during performances when he was playing principal, hearing Gerardo's beautiful sound—so centered and free-floating, and so musical. Playing music put him on fire. His sound went right to your heart.

Gerardo has a great sense of fun. The first time I played at the opera, he was sitting on my left side. He would reach around my back and tap my right shoulder. I would turn to my right to see who was tapping my shoulder, and, of course,

it was Gerardo to my left. He still loves this little trick, and laughs like a kid whenever he can pull it off.

At the great age of 80, he continues to walk the 30 blocks home after most operas. He still goes to Siena, Italy, every summer and still welcomes new students and playing opportunities. It's impossible to think of Gerardo without thinking "flute" and "music" in the same breath. They make quite a trio. My life is blessed for having gotten to know this man. I love you, Gerardo, but I'm not falling for that tapping-on-the-shoulder thing anymore...

Laura George, freelance flutist and teacher.

I met Gerardo in the early 1970s when he was asked to coach a chamber ensemble I was in at that time. After the rehearsal he offered to show me how to work with my offset embouchure. I worked exclusively on embouchure and breath support with him for six months, returning for occasional coaching over the years.

I will always remember his tremendous patience, encouragement, kindness, and advice to stay humble. His brilliant teaching gave me far greater control over my breathing, tone, and pitch than I had previously.

I was fortunate to play in the section of the Westchester Symphony with Gerardo in the early 1980s. I heard him play so many great works, including Tchaikovsky's Fourth, Shostakovich's Fifth, Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloë*, and Mahler's First. He was always the consummate professional in every way: a great musician with vast experience whose love of playing was and is a constant inspiration. In addition, Gerardo is a true gentleman. Happy Birthday, Gerardo, and may you celebrate many more!

Bart Feller, principal flute, NYC Opera.

I met Gerardo when I began at the New York City Opera in the fall of 2003. He has been consistently

warm, supportive and encouraging of me there.

He knows the "core" operas so well that he is in the habit of whispering the next line to be sung right before the singers sing it. When I miscounted in the first act of *Madama Butterfly* last fall and got off a note too soon and left him stranded there, I apologized at the intermission. He smiled and said, "That's OK. I've been playing this opera a lot longer than you."

His musical life has been extraordinarily rich, and has included collaborations with many of the great musicians of the 20th century. I always enjoy hearing him speak about the great artists he has worked with, including Hindemith, Villa-Lobos, Carlos Kleiber, Copland and so many others. I wish him all the best on this milestone birthday. Bravo, maestro!!

Carla Auld, member of *I Due Flauti*, *Uptown Flutes*, and the *North Jersey Philharmonic*.

On the advice of a pianist at the Manhattan School of Music, a fellow countryman of Gerardo's, I began studying with Gerardo Levy during the early '90s when I was about four months pregnant with my first child. Prior to meeting Gerardo I had been studying with other teachers to regain and strengthen my ability to play, and to gain new skills. After having left serious flute playing for some time to work in another field, I was thrilled at the prospect of pursuing the passion I had denied myself for years.

While one former teacher's reaction to my pregnancy was steeped in horror ("Now what will happen to your musical career?"), Gerardo's was one of warmth, admiration and respect. In fact, he found the pregnancy the perfect time to discuss breathing issues. He vowed I would be thankful in the delivery room once the time arrived! And I was.

At times it was difficult arranging baby-sitting to study weekly in the city



BOREALIS (cont'd from page 1)

music group. I sent my questions by email to all the quintet members, and Kathy and the quintet distilled the answers and sent them back to me. [Editor's note: Readers interested in learning more about the individual quintet members—professional experience, adventures, and foibles—should visit the quintet's website at www.borealiswindquintet.com.]

DAVID WECHSLER: *When and how did the Borealis Wind Quintet get started?*

BOREALIS WIND QUINTET: We began in 1976, to satisfy a Juilliard chamber music requirement. We enjoyed it so much that we continued, creating concert venues and eventually getting engaged by JoAnne Rile Artist Management.

DW: *Are all of you the original personnel? If not, who has changed?*

KATHERINE FINK: Tamar Wells [oboe] and Kathryn Taylor [clarinet] are founding members, Wayne Hileman [bassoon] has been with us for 16

years, and Dan Culpepper [horn] for about 13. I joined the group after they left Juilliard and have been a steady member except for a four-year interim when Susan Rotholz and Diva Goodfriend-Koven took over.

DW: *Who does all the work concerning the day-to-day operation of the group?*

BWQ: We all pitch in. There are only two fixed jobs; Wayne is the book-keeper and Tamar is the manager's contact.

DW: *How do you run a rehearsal? Is there one person who functions as the director of the rehearsal?*

BWQ: There are several steps in the rehearsal process. We routinely read through new literature, and pieces that meet with 80% approval (sometimes there's one person who doesn't like the work) are added to the repertoire. We then learn our individual parts before the first general rehearsal on the new piece. We read through the piece a few times to get it in our ears and to get a feel for the form, pacing and balance. It is important to use a score in this process so that you understand how

your part relates to the whole. There isn't really one person who runs the rehearsal. We all have our favorite issues and everyone contributes. Some members have a special affinity for certain details and we rely on them to bring the rest of us up to the mark in those areas. It's a fantastic learning opportunity! In the beginning of our career together we had many more heated discussions regarding phrasing and tempi since we were still functioning as five individuals. After many years of musical bonding, we are now much more unified in our approach, and we function as a unit.

KF: We do have differences of opinion, but are able to try all the different approaches (without hostility) and ultimately find the interpretation that works best for all of us. You can't force colleagues to do it your way (although I DO keep trying!) and it is a great joy, actually, to integrate a new or different concept into your performance. If you truly respect your colleagues, you can grow beyond your own ideas and

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with Gerardo, but I managed for several years. In this time of dedication to baby and flute, Gerardo's infinite patience and guidance allowed me to overcome self-imposed limitations and areas of insecurity in my playing. Somehow I knew certain things shouldn't be so difficult to do. Basically, Gerardo gave me a makeover and I was thrilled with the results.

His style may be a little brusque for some, but I appreciated his candid, forthright nature and wonderful sense of humor. As an ensemble coach, Gerardo is impartial and strictly focused on making music. In his Spanish accent he says, "Swing it, baby." Being Latina also, I feel he is able to share another part of his personality with me, one that sometimes gets locked within culture differences, yet I know his zest for life and spicy personality are available to everyone who takes time to know this wonderful man and amazing musician.

Susan Lurie, freelance flutist and private teacher on the faculty of the 92nd Street Y Music School.

What can I say but SUPPORT! SUPPORT!! SUPPORT!!! Any flutist who has studied or played with Gerardo has heard those words countless times. Of course, one must make the music come alive, but if there is no tone there is nothing.

Gerardo has been the conductor of the St. Cecilia Chamber Ensemble since its inception 40 seasons ago. Its members are some of Gerardo's closest friends and colleagues from the New York City Ballet and Opera Orchestras, among others, and it is a testament to Gerardo as a musician and a person that so many of them have been in it since the beginning. I am one of the newer members, and I've been playing in the group for about 15 years. Gerardo has been incredibly supportive to me and has

suggested interesting repertoire, often works with challenging and beautiful flute parts: Doppler's *L'oiseau des bois* for flute and four French horns, Enesco's *Dixtour*, Reinecke's Octet, Gounod's *Petite Symphonie*, and Villa Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras* for flute and bassoon, to name just a few. His conducting is very spontaneous and inspiring and he is always extremely respectful of all the musicians.

Over the years, I have gotten to know Gerardo the man, as well as Gerardo the flutist, conductor and musician. He has a wonderful sense of humor, speaks several languages fluently, and can tell jokes in English, Spanish, German and Italian. Gerardo is always ready to get together for a Chinese meal or just a cup of coffee. He is a wonderful combination of old world charm and modern sensibilities. I have learned a great deal from Gerardo and feel very privileged and honored to be his friend. Happy Birthday Gerardo, and many more! □



BOREALIS (cont'd from previous page)

greatly increase your palette of colors and musical interpretations. More brains are better brains.

DW: Borealis has had professional management for a number of years. It seems to be a good and stable arrangement. Can you tell us about how you became involved with Rile? Do you have any advice for a group looking for management?

BWQ: We had won the Artists International Competition, and were invited to play in Carnegie Recital Hall twice by that organization. We were advised by a mentor in the management field to rent a hall in NYC and give a performance for management representatives. As a result, we were engaged by JoAnne Rile Artist Management, which had an opening for a woodwind quintet. We were marketable because we already had favorable *New York Times* reviews and had been an established ensemble for several years. The first step for a new group, however, is to provide a high quality press kit which must include good quality, professional photos, short bios, CDs, sample programs and reviews. If you don't have reviews, get a few recommendations from teachers or well known performers who know your group. If you don't have a CD, make a great demo with works demonstrating your typical program and style.

Each group has a distinct personality and should promote this in programming and presentation. You need to be very specific on what you want to offer and to find the most effective way to market your image. We are, after all, an entertainment product to the presenters and managers. Your manager needs to have a clear image in order to sell you.

KF: I'd like to add a comment regarding the relationship with a management. Having management is not a silver bullet for getting concerts. Responsibility for generating concerts lies with both the management and the performers. We provide contacts for the management so that they can build

better tours, we update our programming and presentation, provide new recordings and we also maintain a "no sub" policy. This can be tough if someone has been offered a plum gig in town, but it is necessary to maintain musical integrity and a good business relationship with the manager and the presenters. You have to maintain and respect your manager's credibility as well as your own. Of course, there are some circumstances such as illness or injury that allow legitimate substitution.

DW: Is there one person who functions as liaison between you and your manager, or does everyone speak to them?

BWQ: Tamar has been the liaison for a few years. It is too confusing for both management and Borealis to have more than one contact person for the day-to-day business. We have shifted this responsibility a few times over our career depending on personal time constraints or changes in the management staff which may affect the personal chemistry. We also meet altogether with the management regularly to discuss artistic direction, image and sales strategy. Sometimes we have had a different vision than the management for programming or presentation, but artists and managers work as a team and we rely on the wisdom, instincts and professional savvy of the Riles. For example, JoAnne Rile gets feedback on repertoire and audience reaction from the presenters; we then adjust the program to better suit our market. She has also protected our artistic integrity (when a presenter requests an unreasonable program) and made sure that the performance venues are excellent.

DW: Is Borealis a 501(c)3 (not for profit) with a board of directors, or are you guys in it for the money?

BWQ: We have been lucky to be with our manager for so long. This takes care of a lot of business that independent groups must deal with. We have used an umbrella organization for grants that require 501(c)3 status. There are advantages to both methods of operation. A board of directors can really help with fund raising, grant

writing and the business end of the operation. Chamber music rarely provides a full income and much of the money goes right back into the group for business expenses.

DW: Woodwind quintets require a special blend of instrumentalists because of the nature of the instruments. How have you overcome the problems of the various overtones, blending, etc.?

BWQ: We rely on each other for help with blending and balance and we often record our rehearsals and performances to study and review. We trust each other and are all willing to alter our pitch, dynamic and tone to get a better group sound. Flexibility is required of each player.

DW: Along that same vein of blending, are there any personality issues that lead to friction in the group?

BWQ: When you bring five excellent musicians together you can, of course, have friction and opposing viewpoints. A certain amount of questioning and challenging is necessary for a group to evolve and we use this in a productive way. We would not have stayed together if there were constant friction; it would not be worth the effort. Our personalities complement each other and we have a great camaraderie in the group. To function in a chamber group you have to disengage your ego and be willing to assimilate the style and approach that best represents the composition and the group personality. There are many ways to interpret music, so why limit yourself to only one way. On a personal level we are all very polite, considerate and non-judgmental. You have to be able to coexist for long periods of time in a minivan as you drive hundreds of miles across the country.

DW: There are many WWQ's out there. Every year one seems to win a local competition and get a Weill Hall debut, than you never hear from them again. Does this group do a particular thing or have a book that makes it stand out amongst other woodwind quintets?

BWQ: Hard work, dedication and flexibility are the key elements. You

can't expect the world to recognize your unique artistic genius and strew rose petals on your career path. You have to create performance opportunities, handle them with professional responsibility, give up better-paying jobs to maintain the group and be willing to adjust your attitude when necessary. The effort is tremendous, but the payoff is truly worthwhile.

KF: For me, the quintet is a musical safe haven, a family, and a source of boundless musical inspiration. Not to mention the unbelievable humor and fun that we share. Borealis has an unusually high compatibility quotient and we are truly friends.

DW: *What is the most exotic place you have ever traveled to play a concert?*

BWQ: Hmm, well, would you call Enid and Ada, Oklahoma, exotic? How about Sioux Falls in February? We travel mainly in the United States and really enjoy a familiarity with many different parts of the country. It has been awesome to see how varied and beautiful this country is. We always try to take in the local sights and to sample the regional cuisine. We particularly love the South and have searched out every kind of barbecue!

DW: *Any particularly memorable concert experiences?*

BWQ: The worst experience involved a piano that was literally falling apart during a performance. We were doing a sextet concert on tour with pianist Dag Aschatz and during the performance pieces of the piano were falling on the floor. Talk about bringing down the house! The most bizarre performance occurred early in our career when we had to perform on a floating platform in the middle of an Olympic-size pool. For the most part, our experiences have been wonderful.

DW: *I know that the personnel in this group are a busy bunch of musicians. How do you schedule time for concerts around all of your individual playing and teaching commitments throughout the year?*

BWQ: This can get very complicated. To create a tour, the management must

sell the group in a particular region, coordinate the dates of the various presenters there and then accommodate the artists' restrictions. We basically give Joanne our most important hold dates with the footnote that if something good comes along we'll cancel our other engagements to play with BWQ. Borealis is a priority for us. We have had to forfeit some of our in town gigs but it is always artistically worthwhile (even if we sometimes make less money).

DW: *Have you commissioned any new pieces; or many new pieces? Have they been recorded?*

BWQ: We commissioned and recorded Eric Ewazen's *Roaring Fork Quintet* and currently are greatly anticipating the completion of *Five at Play* by Phillip Wharton. Richard Price (former Borealis hornist) arranged a collection of opera arias for us which we have recorded. We also commissioned *Collage*, a work by Bob Brookmeyer.

DW: *Do you enjoy recording? If so, what do you prefer, standard repertoire or new works?*

BWQ: Our four recordings contain different types of repertoire. Our first recording was the *Arias for Winds*, and then came *Discoveries*, which has three new tonal works of Ewazen, John Steinmetz and Miguel del Aguila. Next came *Borealis Live*, which is an unedited concert, and the most recent is *A La Carte*, a collection of short classic favorites, Milhaud, Beach, Persichetti, Rota, and a new work by Joseph Turrin.

The recording process is very challenging on several levels. From a technical standpoint, a woodwind quintet is a nightmare with its multidirectional tone sources. Where do you put the mike in order to pick up all the instruments equally balanced? You need the very best recording engineer you can find! Then there is the problem of weather for the reed players, the intense physical stamina required for our demanding literature and the mental stamina required to keep the music vibrant throughout the sessions. We all expect to hear technically perfect recordings, and musicians and

engineers work very hard to produce that perfection, but the real challenge is to keep THE MUSIC in the music! It is a wildly demanding process.

DW: *How do you pick repertoire for a particular concert? Is it tailored to an individual concert venue, or you just play what you like?*

BWQ: We meet at the end of each season to choose repertoire for the following season. Some presenters have specific requests which we honor, if possible, and sometimes we are asked to perform a composition by a faculty member from the presenting university. For the most part, we give our manager the basic repertoire for the season and most presenters like to buy a set product. We need to have a stable repertoire on tour so that we aren't in a position to drive for six hours and play a different program (although we HAVE had to do that—NOT FUN).

Our formula for programming is much like a menu. We begin with something light and tasty, add some main dishes, an occasional palate cleanser and of course, a fabulous dessert! We do not do many transcriptions and always craft the program so that each piece enhances the next. We also consider historic connections of the composers.

DW: *What is the most gratifying thing about playing in a woodwind quintet, or for that matter, playing chamber music?*

BWQ: You get free music lessons from your fabulously talented colleagues! □

In addition to his work with the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra and OMNI Ensemble, David Wechsler plays principal flute with the Connecticut Grand Opera, is an active commercial musician in NYC, and is on the faculty of CUNY Staten Island.

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October 24, 2004 concert

Sunday 5:30 pm • CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th Street (across from Carnegie Hall)

BOREALIS WIND QUINTET

85th Season

2004–2005 Concerts

October 24, 2004 • Sunday 5:30 pm
BOREALIS WIND QUINTET

November 21, 2004 • Sunday 5:30 pm
MARCO GRANADOS, flute
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December 12, 2004 • Sunday 5:30 pm
KARL KRABER, flute
With Chamber Soloists of Austin

January 30, 2005 • Sunday 5:30 pm
CARLA REES, alto flute
Contemporary music and Boehm transcriptions

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From the Editor

Greetings! Hope you all had a good summer, and are ready for a new season of exciting NYFC concerts. I think we're set for interviews for the year, but if you have ideas for Member Perspectives questions, mini-articles, or Member Profile subjects (yourself or someone else), please let me know.

October's NYFC concert will be presented by the Borealis Wind Quintet (with our own Kathy Fink as flute player). If you're curious about the logistics of surviving as a chamber music group (or thinking of starting one yourself), David Wechsler's Q&A with the Borealis is a "must-read." My favorite

insight: free music lessons from your talented colleagues are an unavoidable (and usually welcome!) consequence of being in a small chamber music group.

This newsletter issue also honors flutist Gerardo Levy—a fixture on the New York flute scene for more than 40 years—on the occasion of his 80th birthday. The broad outlines of his career are covered in Jonathan Brahms's affectionate biography, and anecdotal tributes from Gerardo's many students and colleagues fill out the picture of a man who had this advice for us in his April 2001 Member Profile: "Practice lots, talk little, and stay humble."

Gene Coleman, a longtime NYFC member and a media professional with his own home recording studio, is this month's Member Profile subject. During our email correspondence I was fascinated to learn that he had fond memories of exploring jazz flute with my first private flute teacher, John Jackson, over thirty years ago. It's a small world.

Anyway, all for now. See you soon.

Best regards,

Katherine Saenger (klsaenger@yahoo.com)