



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

January 2013

Sooyun Kim: Wild Stallion to International Soloist

Interview by Bart Feller

Sooyun Kim studied with me for four years while she was in high school in the late 1990s. Since that time our paths have crossed infrequently. Doing this interview (by multiple emails over several weeks before and after the late October disaster of Hurricane Sandy) gave me a great chance to catch up on her many and varied activities.

BART FELLER: I thought I would start by asking you about your early musical experiences.

SOOYUN KIM: I started playing the piano when I was three years old. I gave my first concert on the piano when I was seven, playing the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 49, No. 2. I don't have much memory of how I played, but I do remember having a lot of fun performing on stage. As I got more serious about playing piano repertoire, it became very clear that my hands were not the most suitable size to play the piano (I can still hardly reach an octave).

When I was around nine, a flute teacher moved to our neighborhood and I started taking flute lessons with him. I think I was quite good at it from the get-go; my fingers were quite mobile from seven years of piano playing and I was already used to reading music. I gave my first performance a few months after I started playing the flute. I played the Handel Sonata in D Major; the following year, I played my first concerto, the Mozart D Major, with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra.

BF: Wow, that's a pretty nice first solo gig! Tell me more about your first teacher.

SK: Sang-Pil Park was an incredible pedagogue. He had an amazing sense about teaching very concrete foundations to young students. In each lesson, the first half of the hour was always spent on scales, long tone exercises and etudes.

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Photo: Lisa Mazzucco

In Concert

Sooyun Kim, flute

Juho Pohjonen, piano

Sunday, **January 13, 2013**, 5:30 pm

Engelman Recital Hall, Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Avenue
(entrance on East 25th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues)

Sonata in F Major for violin and piano, Op. 8	Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) (arr. Sooyun Kim)
Sonatine	Henri Dutilleux (b. 1916)
Masks for flute and glass chimes, Op. 3	Olivier Knussen (b. 1952)
Introduction and Variations on "Trockne Blumen," Op. 160, D. 802	Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Sonata No. 2 in E Minor for violin and piano, Op. 108	Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) (arr. Sooyun Kim)

Program subject to change

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The Underground Railroad and the Guggenheim Rotunda

by Wendy Stern



From the President

In 2009, inspired by the Make Music New York performance of Henry Brant's *Orbits* for 80 trombones, soprano, and organ, in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Zara Lawler (Flute Club member and former board member) started dreaming up ideas for a flute extravaganza. I know this because, at the time, she actually called me to share some of these thoughts. She didn't have a composer in mind, but she had a vision of a major flutistic event. So I was not surprised when Zara created *E Phuribus Flutum*, a work for 60 dancing flutists (premiered at the 2011 Make Music New York in Central Park and performed at the 2011 National Flute Association Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina). And when I heard that Zara was coordinating and directing an event with 104 flutists at the Guggenheim, I assumed she was finally bringing her original dream to fruition.

Instead, this was a wonderful turn of synchronicity. Independently, Charles Fabius, of Guggenheim Productions, wanted to produce a work for flutes on a similar scale to that of the trombones. His colleague, Howard Stokar, suggested the Italian composer Salvatore Sciarrino, whose 1997 composition was written for four flute soloists and 100 migrating flutists [*Il Cerchio Tagliato Dei Suoni* ("Cutting the Circle of Sounds")]. The New York Flute Club was contacted and Zara happily agreed to take on this project. She describes the evolution of her interest: "I had the idea to put on a huge flute event as part of Make Music New York. My original vision was of 100 flutists in a big open space, like a park, playing and moving in beautiful patterns. From above, we would look like a swirling sun, made of ever-widening circles of flutists; from ground level, we would be a forest of flutes, teeming with life. About a year later, I was cleaning out a box of old files [from 2000] and found a folder titled, "Ideas," and in it was a scrap of paper that said "flutists moving in the shape of a sun, in a park." So I guess the idea was not new to me in 2009! The irony is that this was not new to the world either, since *Il Cerchio Tagliato Dei Suoni* [was composed] just a few years before I wrote that first note to myself."

Composer Sciarrino describes his inspiration in his introductory program notes, translated by Jerrold Seigel (soloist Jayn Rosenfeld's husband): "I conceived the idea of a migration of sounds.... carried along by a sea of moving flutists. The sound of great masses is fascinating. Infinite examples can be found in nature, just think of birds, crickets, a crowded market, traffic, rain."

Il Cerchio Tagliato Dei Suoni received its US premiere in the rotunda of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum on Tuesday November 20, 2012. The four soloists, Jayn Rosenfeld, Claire Chase, Eric Lamb, and Kelli Kathman, surrounded the audience, and performed with intense concentration, artistry, and stamina in this 70-minute tour de force while the migranti ("migrating flutists") progressed through the audience, conjuring aural and visual images of the "circularity of time and space." Students played alongside teachers; amateurs shared their ideas with professionals; experienced flute and movement performers were mixed with novices. Our ranks ranged from six-year-old Sophie Malagraph to the celebrated Carol Wincenc. Flutists traveled from Zurich (Magda Schwerzmann), Phoenix (Elizabeth Buck), and Boulder (Chris Potter) to participate in this momentous event. A powerful aspect of this work was the keen sense of oneness that was created between the sound and the space, the performers and the audience, and, most of all, between one another. Steve Smith, in his November 21 review in the *New York Times*, called this work "aural theater... meant to be encountered and inhabited." Barbara Novick, an adult migranti, called it "a transcendental experience!" and went on to say, "I love the kind of bond it created in such a short period of time. Human nature is quite something."

On reflection, Zara wrote, "The composer's vision was that the migranti parts



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Photo: David Heald. © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York

(Cont'd on page 3)

Member Profile

Tanya
Dusevic
Witek

NYFC member
since 2009



Employment: Adjunct professor of flute and coordinator of chamber music, Montclair State University.

A recent recital/performance: A program at Weill Recital Hall featuring the flutists of MSU (January 2012); a program at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, PA, with the Lenape Chamber Ensemble, featuring the Bach Suite in B Minor and other baroque works (November 2012); and playing piccolo in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with Orpheus at Carnegie Hall (October 2012).

Career highlight(s): From her student days: winning the Juilliard Concerto Competition (in 1993, during her first semester at the school), which led to an Alice Tully Hall performance of the Lukas Foss's Renaissance Concerto with the composer in the audience; and winning the NFA's Young Artists' Competition (2nd prize, 1994) and a Fulbright grant in 1995. As a professional: performances with the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, New York City Ballet Orchestra, and Musicians from Marlboro tours.

Current flute: A silver Brannen (No. 4708) with 0.018 tubing and A=442, played with a 14k gold Lafin headjoint.

Influential flute teachers: Marian Zekulin (1980-85), Philippa Fitzgerald-Finch (1985-1993), Samuel Baron (masterclasses, 1988-1995), and Carol Wincenc (1991-2000).

High school: Sir Winston Churchill High School in Calgary, Canada.

Degrees: BMus (University of Calgary, 1993), MMus (Juilliard, 1995), DMA (Juilliard, 2000).

Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishment(s): Knowing that her work makes a difference. As a Juilliard student, she brought music into schools and other community venues as a recipient of Morse and Community Service fellowships; as a young professional, she worked for the educational programs of the New York Philharmonic, Lincoln Center Institute, and Carnegie Hall (check these institutions' websites for more information about some truly exciting programs—Ed.). Later, as a founding member of the Forest Hills Chamber Players, she worked with her violinist husband and colleagues to bring interactive performances to underserved adult audiences in Brooklyn and Queens. As a teacher, she enjoys finding opportunities for the MSU flute ensembles to perform outside the university—memorable examples including 2012 performances at the NY Flute Fair and Weill Recital Hall. Tanya says, "Now as a mother of two small children, I am enjoying the wealth of stimulating, engaging artistic experiences that New York City has to offer for children, this time as part of the audience! I understand the time and

FLUTE HAPPENINGS

JANUARY '13

Jan 8-10 Tuesday - Thursday all day

JEANNE BAXTRESSER and **SOO-KYUNG PARK** will present "The Confident Performer," masterclasses dedicated to giving flutists practice skills and mental preparation tools to enhance the experience of auditions and performing.

• Crowne Plaza Hotel, 401 South Van Brunt Street, Englewood, NJ. • Admission: three-day performer/auditor \$525/\$180; lower rates for single events. • Info, applications: email Soo-Kyung Park at skpmanagement@gmail.com.

Jasmine Choi's October NYFC concert has been rescheduled to February 10.

energy that goes into creating successful events, so I am especially appreciative when I can enjoy them with my family."

Favorite practice routines: Daily long tones, with full dynamic range; Reichert scale exercises.

Other interests: Spending time with her family—Annamaria (5), Lukas (3), and husband Krystof—doing things like picking apples, playing in the park, seeing a concert or play, going to piano or gymnastics, or visiting Elmo at Sesame Place.

Advice for NYFC members: Witnessing the way in which music can excite a community has been a motivating experience in my career. So find a niche for yourself and do something to make a positive impact on the world around you!

President (Cont'd from page 1)

were to be simple enough to be played even by beginners. I loved the thought that even people just learning to play the flute could participate in a meaningful way [along with the highly] skilled soloists. There was at least one of the migrants who had been playing the flute for less than a year! One of my favorite moments was when I realized, the evening of the show, that we had so many flutists in one room, and it was so QUIET. No one was playing *Daphnis* at the top of their lungs, or was in any way trying to outshine anyone else.... Having my own students AND my teacher, Carol Wincenc, performing together was a great way to feel knit right into the fabric of our community."

It is a really special moment when students become peers with their teachers. Students and teachers working together is just one topic in this month's interview of Sooyun Kim. She shares some of her experiences working with her teacher, Paula Robison, in performances of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and interviewer Bart Feller learns some things about her he never knew while teaching her as a high school student.



We do not have exactly an underground railroad, but we flutists have an amazing network of connections, evidenced in part by this incredible concrescence at the Guggenheim. As president, I feel a mission of the Flute Club is to highlight and strengthen these connections. Sometimes, it's as easy as serving cookies after a concert, but even though I love our concerts, I feel our club is more than just the concert-going experience; it is an opportunity to be part of an intertwined network of people who share a common thread in their interest in the flute. This sense of community is really important to me, and during my term as president I look forward to fostering it.

Photo: Andrew Kim



Interview (Cont'd from page 1)

BF: *That sounds extremely diligent. Did you come from a musical family?*

SK: There was always music in my family even though none of my family members are professional musicians. We used to live ten minutes (on foot) away from a performing arts center in Seoul (equivalent to Lincoln Center). My parents took me there at least twice a week to hear concerts. We got to hear some great flutists in concerts there; I heard the late Alain Marion, Julius Baker and Jean-Pierre Rampal, to name a few. I also had the privilege of playing for some of these masters. I remember when I played the second movement of the Poulenc sonata for Rampal, he said, "Oh sweetheart, just play like you are smoking a cigar!" I was only 11 years old! He then played a couple of phrases for me and I still remember the amazingly supple and transparent sound that came out of his flute!

BF: *What a great early aural memory for you to have! What about Alain Marion?*

SK: I met him when I was 11 years old. I played Demersseman's *Air varié et Polonaise* for him. After I had played he said, "I have never seen such a small girl with so much character! Your polonaise is so delicious!" At the time, I found it very amusing that music could be described in taste! He invited me to study with him at the Paris Conservatory, but shortly after our meeting he passed away.

BF: *What brought you to New York?*

SK: I was 14 years old when I moved to New York, but the move was not for musical reasons. My mom's family had

already been living in New York area for many years and she wanted to be closer to her sisters and mother. We used to come to visit them every summer in the years before we moved here. Altogether, counting the newborns, we have some 30 members in the family here now. Christmas and Thanksgivings are always fun and crowded!

BF: *Our paths first crossed when you came to me for coaching for the 1997 NFA high school soloist competition. And you went on to win the first prize!*

SK: I had just moved here from Korea. The fall after the competition I started at Juilliard pre-college and stayed for about a semester and a half. I am a proud Juilliard pre-college dropout! I absolutely hated going to school on Saturdays. Paula Robison used to call me "a wild stallion" when I first started studying with her and I guess I may have been a pretty wild pony then. Every Saturday, my parents would drop me off at the Juilliard lobby, and I immediately turned around and wandered around in town instead of going to my classes. Every Saturday I had the most fun a 15-year-old could ever have—going to the Tower Records and looking at the CDs, sitting around watching people by the beautiful fountain at the Lincoln Center Plaza, looking at dead dinosaurs at the Museum of Natural History, and the list goes on and on! Shortly after my second semester started, the dean of the school contacted my parents about my poor attendance record and I decided not to continue.

BF: *I never knew you played hokey from Juilliard—what a great story! But you*

decided to come back to me after leaving pre-college.

SK: After I made the decision to leave Juilliard, I knew I wanted to study with you even more! We had the most amazing time together for the next four years. I studied almost all of the standard repertoire and I really began to get a better idea about the art of flute playing; importance of intonation, colors and more in-depth understanding of scores. During this time, I won the Young Artists Auditions with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and played the Nielsen Concerto with the Symphony.

Paula Robison used to call me "a wild stallion" when I first started studying with her and I guess I may have been a pretty wild pony then. Every Saturday, my parents would drop me off at the Juilliard lobby, and I immediately turned around and wandered around in town instead of going to my classes.

BF: *I was very proud of you handling such a huge work like Nielsen with so much poise and confidence. Then you went on to study with Paula Robison at New England Conservatory. This summer she told us that in her many years of auditioning students there had only been a few times when she rushed out into the hallway to say, "You must come to us!" When you played at New England Conservatory she did just that.*

SK: I studied with her for my bachelor's and master's—about nine years. This was when I started developing my own voice in my playing.

BF: *Tell us some more about the competitions you have placed in.*

SK: While I was a student, I competed in several competitions. It was a great way to really understand how one needs to practice for high stress performance situations. I learned many pieces and I also learned how to practice a long list of repertoire. After much trial and error, I won the third prize at the 2010 ARD International Flute Competition in Munich, Germany. The required repertoire was extremely challenging. I

was literally memorizing the Penderecki concerto until five minutes before I was supposed to play!

The Munich ARD Competition is known for very challenging repertoire lists for all disciplines. (Every year, they rotate different instruments.) I prepared some 15 pieces for the competition and aside from the commissioned piece, I had to play everything from memory. There were too many notes to remember!

With so many pieces, time management is the most difficult part in the preparation; how much time to spend on each piece, how to keep every piece fresh, etc. Working around the clock, one always gets panicked by the lack of time. I have to always remind myself that I can actually get more things done than I think even in a very short amount of time if I am 100% focused. After I started working as a traveling musician, I began to understand why such a big list of repertoire is asked from these international competitions; it is preparing you for what is expected in real life situations! I am constantly bouncing around in between a huge list of repertoire all the time. Currently, I am working on music from J.S. Bach and Vivaldi all the way up to Charles Wuorinen. With so many hours spent in transit, and lack of sleep, I have to find time to practice. Over time, I developed a system in my practice to use a given amount of time as efficiently as possible. The most important thing that I have to remind myself is to only think about the music that is in front of me on the music stand at that moment. Living by day, hour, every minute and every second!

BF: Sooyun, do you want to discuss what a "controversial" player you were perceived to be, on the competition circuit? You told me many stories about some judges LOVING your playing, others HATING it, but no one feeling indifferent to it. Are you at peace with that now? Did you strive for that? Is it funny or strange to you that your playing could evoke such incredibly strong emotions?

SK: Music contests have many interesting aspects. They could be used as a very nice tool for young musicians and students. They challenge and motivate players and put them in high gear for concentrated preparations. However, I think it is very crucial to approach each competition with a healthy mentality. Too often, participants get too obsessed with the idea of competing against other players. The way I looked at competitions each time, it was always a competition with myself. Each competition and even

each round, I tried to play better than the previous performance, not to play better than other contestants. Now, I am not quite sure if this is the best method to "win" a prize at competitions. If you think about it, a prize at the end of a competition is a sweet thing, but it is not more than a nice glass of lemonade that quenches you in the very long marathon of your life as a musician.

Too often, participants get too obsessed with the idea of competing against other players. A prize at the end of a competition is a sweet thing, but it is not more than a nice glass of lemonade that quenches you in the very long marathon of your life as a musician.

Another interesting attraction about competitions for me was the incredibly educated audiences that I got to play for. Where else would you get ten or more internationally acclaimed flutists around the world to listen to you so attentively? Oftentimes in international competitions, the participants have opportunities to speak with jury members. It is a very interesting and humbling experience! I learned that musicians have no control over the audiences' perceptions. As Marcel Duchamp said, "Do less self-analysis and enjoy your work without worrying about opinions, your own as well as that of others."

BF: Tell us about your involvement with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

SK: I had the great privilege of joining the roster of their young artist program, CMS TWO, after auditions in 2007. At the completion of my three year residency, I was invited to join the Society as an Artist Member, for which I am extremely grateful.

BF: There is a very affecting Chamber Music of Lincoln Center video interview on the web (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BztImvN8JB4&feature=youtu.be_gdata_player) where you speak about your audition for that group. Could you tell us about it?

SK: Chamber Music Society of Lincoln

Center TWO auditions have many stages; after reviewing pretty comprehensive materials showing your background, repertoire, performance experiences along with demo recordings and DVDs submitted by applicants, the CMS invites 30 to 40 musicians back for two rounds of live auditions. My audition coincided with my residency at the Spoleto Festival, so I had to fly into NYC from Charleston just a day before my audition. I was already pretty overwhelmed both physically and mentally with a very tight schedule. In the morning of my final round of auditions, my grandmother, who was 93 years old at the time, passed away from cancer. Because I was one of the few wind players in the finals, I was the last person to play my audition in the evening. Of course, my emotions were going up and down every minute up until I had to go inside the audition room, but as soon as I entered the Rose Studio (where the audition was being held), I saw three amazing musicians sitting in there waiting for me to come in and join them in the Mozart D Major Flute Quartet. The sunniest and happiest piece of all! I think my grandmother was already in the room with all of us flapping her wings around—I played through the piece with David Finckel, Ani Kavafian, and Paul Neubauer as if we had been playing the piece every day for many years. As soon as I came out the audition, I went to the funeral home and saw my dead grandmother lying in a casket; beautiful and so peaceful as she had ever been. We buried her the next morning and I flew back to Charleston and played in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* that same night in Spoleto.

BF: You and Paula [Robison] have collaborated on numerous performances of Pierrot Lunaire [Arnold Schoenberg's 1912 setting of Albert Giraud poems for narrator, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano] over the years. Could you tell us about some of your favorites?

SK: Paula and I did our first performance of *Pierrot* during my last year at the New England Conservatory. That was Paula's first performance in the original German text. After I graduated, we were invited to play at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on the New Year's Eve, as that year on the new year's, we had a full moon! We had a great journey together learning the piece. Paula has been the great inspiration to me and she will always be. She is always studying, learning and searching! After the concert we celebrated the New Year's drinking absinthe together

Interview (Cont'd from page 5)

just like how Pierrot does; "Der Wein, den man mit Augen trinkt, Glebt Nachts der Mond in Wogen nieder..." (the wine that one drinks with the eyes, the moon spills nights into the waves...).

BF: What else have you been doing recently?

SK: Following my debut recital at the Louvre Museum in Paris in February 2011, I have become much more active in Europe. This past summer, I spent a few weeks curating and performing in a summer festival in Denmark with the Danish Chamber Players.



Sooyun Kim and Paula Robison, after a rehearsal for their December 2011 *Brandenburg Concerto* concerts with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Paula told us that "[Our] collaboration has been an unending joy. Sooyun is a unique artist with a vivid poetic sense who uses both her heart and her mind when she plays, and she is willing to take chances. That says it all for me."

BF: Any lessons learned from the management side of the music business?

SK: When they first asked me to curate their 2012 festival, I felt like a kid in a toy store. Very quickly, I realized I had no idea where to start. I asked our wonderful staff at the CMS Lincoln Center for help, and they walked me through what it's like to put together a season for a large group. I learned so much about how to build cohesive and interesting programs. Fuglsang is a magical place where Nielsen spent many summers working and composing. I felt so fortunate to have the opportunity to share wonderful music with these beautiful Danish musicians.

BF: I know you are incorporating more and more dance into your flute

performances. Performing *Oliver Knussen's Masks* during your residency with them must have been a highlight. How did this come about?

SK: I studied baroque dance with Melinda Sullivan, the ballet mistress of Boston Baroque, while I was a student at the New England Conservatory. She taught me how to read baroque dance notations. During the summer of 2011, I was invited by the Chamber Music Northwest Festival to give a premier performance of my own realization of the 18th-century *folias* that I choreographed to play along with Marais' *Folies d'Espagne* while dancing. I also wrote some percussion parts to make the piece sound more like an 18th-century band! *Masks* was a collaboration project between the Danish Chamber Players and the wonderful Tivoli Dance Troupe from the famous Tivoli Park in Copenhagen. I worked with their choreographer and the costume designer to create my own staging of this piece. It was tons of fun being a miming flute player!

BF: Please tell us about your Flute Club program.

SK: It includes two of the mature pieces in my repertoire along with some of the new additions that are bit more adventurous. (I should mention that earlier in January I will be joined by Paula Robison and pianist Steven Beck for an even more adventurous

program at the Stone in the East Village....) Some pieces on these two programs helped me mature as a flute player while others planted new seeds in my mind to open up more possibilities in my search as an artist. [Playing through this literature felt a bit like the musical equivalent of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*.]

I met Juho Pohjonen, my partner for the Flute Club recital, when we were both CMS TWO members. Later, while searching for the perfect pianist to collaborate with for my Louvre Museum recital, I heard him play a transcription for piano quintet of Mozart's A major piano concerto on one of the Society's concerts. As soon as I heard him play, I knew he was [the one].

Dutilleux's *Sonatine* and the Schubert *Variations* were two pieces on the Louvre Museum program. We've played them elsewhere after that concert. Each time, these pieces have been growing with us and we play them completely differently each time! We enjoy this spontaneity so much. Fauré's E Minor Sonata has been our project for quite some time. It is less known repertoire for violin and this is for a reason. Written pretty late in his life, the violin part looks almost like it should have been written for flute and it sounds great on the flute. I can't wait to see how it turns out at the concert. Grieg's F Major Sonata was written in the town of Rungsted, in Denmark, which is not too far away from Fuglsang, where I was this last year. The tunes are very pastoral and simple, yet extremely charming!

BF: This sounds great. We are looking forward to hearing you.

Bart Feller is principal flute of the New Jersey Symphony, New York City Opera, and Santa Fe Opera Orchestras. He is professor of flute at Rutgers University/Mason Gross School of the Arts and teaches in the pre-college division of the Juilliard School.

SAVE THE DATE!

Flute Fair 2013: Natural Expression

Sunday March 17 All Day
Guest Artist: Lorna McGhee, principal
flute of the Pittsburgh Symphony
The Lighthouse,
111 East 59th Street, NYC

Come for a day of flute-filled events, including a special 75th birthday celebration for composer-flutist Katherine Hoover, recitals, masterclasses, workshops, exhibits, an ensemble reading session, student ensembles concert, and the annual NYFC competition.

Visit the flute fair page at www.nyfluteclub.org for more info and event deadlines.

Flute Happenings Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Mail date
February 2013	12/27/2013	01/24/2013
March 2013	01/31/2013	02/28/2013
April 2013	03/07/2013	04/04/2013
May 2013	03/27/2013	04/24/2013

Four Students' Perspectives on Choosing a Teacher

by Rachel Susser



There often come times in our lives as student flutists when we are faced with the challenge of selecting a new teacher. Whether we are applying to school, moving to a new neighborhood (or our teacher is), or adjusting to changing needs and skills, the choice can be a daunting one. Many questions can come up during the teacher search and selection process.

What are my choices? How do I find out more about different teachers? With so many great teachers, especially in a place like New York City, how should I figure out what my priorities are? What makes for a “good fit”? In the attempt to examine these and other questions, in addition to reflecting upon my own experiences, I have asked some of my peers for their insight. Bo Lee, an undergraduate studying with Tadeu Coelho at University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Michael Alampi, a high school student from New Jersey who studies with Linda Chesis in the Manhattan School of Music Pre-College Division, and “Student 3,” an undergraduate who wished to remain anonymous, each offered distinct but valuable opinions.

There are many ways to find out about teachers, both in terms of who they are and what they are like. When I was in middle school and high school, my parents found local teachers for me by asking around. Once it came time to begin my college search, I was a bit overwhelmed; I did not know what schools were out there, let alone who the teachers were and what they were like. The Internet, word of mouth, school tours, masterclasses, and summer festivals can all be good starting places. With a list of names in hand, the next step is narrowing it down to just a handful of teachers. I knew that I wanted to go somewhere with strong academics in addition to music, and I had a general idea about the type of school and geographic location I wanted to end up in, so I used a school-based approach to narrow down this list. However, there are many other approaches. One of the big questions you can ask yourself is whether you would prefer to work with someone whose primary focus is teaching, or someone with a very active performance career. There are advantages and disadvantages to each, as explored by the peers whom I interviewed.

Teacher or Performer?

I think that there needs to be a balance of performance and teaching. If I had to choose one, I would say teaching. Every field—whether it be music or science—has experts who may not necessarily be the best teachers. I believe that teaching is so much more than being able to demonstrate technique or skill. It requires creativity, empathy, and a true desire to connect with one's students.—Student 3

At this stage in my flute playing, I was looking for someone who is consistently teaching students and has had a large amount of performing experience. My teacher has many students come in weekly with different repertoire so she is always coming across different problems that a student will face during difficult passages. I think later in my flute education I will want someone who plays in an orchestral setting weekly so I can learn from his or her experiences.—Michael

Once the list has been sufficiently narrowed down, an important next step is to take trial lessons, if possible. Unfortunately, this process can be costly, with transportation and logistical expenses amplifying lesson fees; only a few schools offer free trial lessons to prospective students, and flutists who are not applying to a school do not have a recruitment system of which they can take advantage. However, no matter what the outcome of an initial interaction with a specific teacher, experimenting can be

a great way to begin to get a better sense of what you are looking for in general. It can also be an interesting way to get a wide variety of opinions about your playing, as well as to note any patterns or differences among those opinions.

Try to record these lessons (with the teacher's permission, of course) so you can listen back later. Whether or not you have a recording device, it is good to keep a notebook (actual or digital) in which you can keep a record of your impressions. How did the teacher greet you and interact with you throughout the lesson? What did the teacher focus on? Was there anything about the lesson that made you feel particularly comfortable or uncomfortable? Did you leave feeling motivated and inspired, or weary and dejected? Would the teacher be willing and able to support you in whatever your goals may be? What did you definitely like, and what are you less sure about?

Personality

I try to find a teacher I can really click with. It is important to have someone who challenges me and cares about me.... You know it is a good fit between you and a teacher when you are leaving your lesson wanting to work harder for next week's lesson!—Michael

Qualities I think are important in a teacher are understanding, compassion, and patience, but also enough impatience. A personality trait I think is important is some form of obsessiveness. Obsessiveness creates a level or standard at which you try to maintain. I prefer an emphasis on expression because often technique can be fixed in a practice room.—Bo

Part of what makes selecting a teacher so difficult is there is no one teacher or even a set of traits that is best for every student. It is also challenging to gauge what we will want and need a year or two from now, since we are constantly growing and changing as musicians and as humans. As anxiety-producing as choosing a teacher can be, hopefully it can be first and foremost an opportunity to become better acquainted with yourself, your personal and professional goals, and your flute playing. And besides, if things just don't seem to be working out with a particular teacher, it is always possible to try someone new, and you will have a better idea of what you are looking for because of that experience.

With these thoughts in mind, I asked my three interviewees if they had any last advice for somebody who is going through the teacher selection process.

General Advice

I would advise someone to really know him- or herself before searching for a new teacher. For me, I knew that I had to have someone who would really push me. A nurturing environment can be wonderful if you are the type of person who can push yourself, but I knew I had to have a tough teacher.—Bo

People have different opinions about certain teachers. Don't always listen to what people say, but take it into consideration and form your own thoughts of that teacher once you take a lesson or play in a masterclass.—Michael

If I were to give advice, I would tell a student to take as many opportunities to get to know a teacher from an outside perspective before joining a studio, whether it be sitting in on masterclasses, or taking private lessons here or there. Also, I would recommend some soul-searching before committing to anything—think about your goals for your studies, your career, and your own personality traits. You cannot truly know if you would get along with somebody else if you do not know yourself! Once some of those things become clear to you, be honest with the teacher and have an open discussion.—Student 3

Please email comments or suggestions to Rachel at rs3092@barnard.edu.



The New York Flute Club
Park West Finance Station
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New York, NY 10025-1515



January 13, 2013 Concert

Sunday, 5:30 pm • Engelman Recital Hall, 55 Lexington Avenue (at 25th Street)
Sooyun Kim, flute

93rd Season 2012 - 2013 Concerts

October 14, 2012 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
PAUL FRIED, flute

November 4, 2012 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
JASMINE CHOI Rescheduled to February
(Hurricane Sandy)

December 16, 2012 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
IMMANUEL DAVIS, baroque and modern flute

January 13, 2013 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
SOOYUN KIM, flute

February 10, 2013 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
JASMINE CHOI, flute

March 17, 2013 • Sunday, all day
Flute Fair, guest artist LORNA MCGHEE,
The Lighthouse

April 21, 2013 • Sunday, 5:30 pm
Competition Winners Concert

May 11, 2013 • Saturday, 2 pm
Annual Meeting & Ensemble Concert,
Bloomingdale School of Music

All regular concerts will take place at Engelman Recital Hall, Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Avenue (entrance on 25th Street), on Sundays at 5:30 pm. All dates and programs subject to change. Tickets \$25, students and seniors \$15, only at the door; free to members. For more information, visit the NYFC website at www.nyfluteclub.org.



From the Editor

Happy New Year! January brings us a concert by flutist Sooyun Kim, now with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (though she may be more familiar to most of us as a winner of the 2005 NYFC Competition). Bart Feller, her high school flute teacher, did the interview. Highlights for me were her first person account of the ups and downs of playing hooky, the challenges of the competition circuit, and her interactions with her longtime teacher Paula Robison (now a colleague).

In this month's "From the President" Wendy Stern addresses connections and networking in the flute community—both showcased this past November in a remarkable performance at the Guggenheim Museum featuring 100-plus flutes. Those of you

who couldn't make it will especially enjoy Wendy's behind the scenes look at what it took to make this event happen.

How does one go about selecting a teacher? Rachel Susser interviews three of her student friends, all of whom provide some sound advice. It reminded me of my own late-1960s transition from a teacher picked by my parents to one (Harold Bennett) whom I had picked for myself. My selection process? Overhearing fellow flutists Howie Cohen and Lenny Lopatin comparing lesson notes during breaks in All-City High School Band rehearsals. Not very scientific, but it worked for me!

Flutist Tanya Dusevik Witek, a faculty member at Montclair State College, is our January member profile subject. I enjoyed learning about her recent Carnegie Hall performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony on piccolo, her community outreach activities, and how becoming a parent has broadened her concert experience (she now has a chance to see things from the audience side, not just the performer's side!).

Anyway, all for now. See you soon. Best regards,

Katherine Saenger
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