



# The New York Flute Club

## NEWSLETTER

December 2013

### Jamie Baum – Flutist? Composer? Busy!

*Interview by Paula Bing*

**W**hen asked to interview Jamie Baum, I was happy to do so, not only because of my own interest in jazz, but because I would have an opportunity to get to know her more as a person and artist. Jamie and I had spoken, but had not really crossed paths in NY personally or professionally. I thought of her as Jamie Baum, a flutist who played jazz. Listening to her new CD, *In This Life*, I began to hear her not only as a flutist, but as many others think of her—as a thoughtful, meticulous, and highly creative composer whose global musical experiences have contributed to her imagination and technical skills as a writer and improviser. Not surprisingly, her CD was featured by WBGO in October, major jazz periodicals have praised her work, NPR will air an interview soon, and her tour schedule is awesomely full.

Jamie's current musical incarnation, with her expanded septet, is influenced by years of travel (she's toured in 28 countries, including many in South Asia) and by the Pakistani singer/instrumentalist Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. On her CD, Jamie's flute paints rainbow shapes and colors, but does not dominate the musical canvas. A flute player who composes—or a composer who plays flute? Perhaps someone who places art above ego? I was eager to get to know Jamie, the person behind the complex bouquet of her music, and the single petals of each flute solo.

**PAULA BING:** You've been so busy lately, Jamie, it's hard to believe we're actually finding time to do this interview!

**JAMIE BAUM:** Yes, I have two grants due this week [in mid-November], with musical scores; and two tours this month with my septet, which I am booking and organizing. That is in addition to working on my compositions and teaching at the Manhattan School of Music [where's she's been a faculty member since 2006—Ed.].

**PB:** Was flute your first instrument?

**JB:** I didn't pick up flute till I was in junior high. But my mother played piano and started teaching me at age three. I played until age 13. Then I quit, and picked up flute and sax.

**PB:** So when did you first become seriously interested in music?

**JB:** Well, I graduated a year early from high school and went to the University of Vermont. It wasn't till I went to college

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*In Concert*

#### Jamie Baum, flute and members of the Jamie Baum Septet

Sunday, **December 15, 2013**, 5:30 pm

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

Preconcert workshop on "A Fear-Free Approach to Improvisation for the  
Classically Trained Flutist" at 4:00 pm.

Works from Jamie Baum's new CD, *In this Life*, and other selections to be announced.

*Program subject to change*

A holiday reception will follow the concert.

Jamie Baum's appearance is made possible in part through a grant from Altus Flutes.



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2013–2014

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Follow us on twitter @nyfluteclub  
Go to New York Flute Club on Facebook and hit the Like button to  
stay up to date on Club events. Members are invited to post and  
comment on the forum. —Nicole Camacho, NYFC Publicity Chair

## In This Life



From the  
President

by Wendy Stern

I had just keyed Jamie Baum's name into the search engine of the newsletter archives on our website and instantly came across her Member Profile (December 1999), as well as her interviews of Jim Walker (November 2001) and Dave Valentin and Andrea Brachfeld (October 2005), where she shared anecdotes about her musical influences and trailblazing rise as a female jazz artist (see Paula Bing's interview, in this issue, for more details). As I scrolled through these old newsletters, I realized I had stumbled upon a veritable time capsule, complete with humor...when did we stop using the word "snapshot"?; pathos...I reread Jan Vinci's moving column dealing with the tragedy of 9/11 ("NYFC: A Beacon of Light," October 2001); and general information, as I discovered in Pat Spencer's column discussing the process of commissioning composers and new compositions for the flute ("YES—Commission!," December 1999).

The commissioning column pertains to a timely area of interest, as the present NYFC will be reinstating a composition competition in honor of our upcoming 95th season. (The formal announcement will appear in the January newsletter.) Though much has changed in the world, these old newsletters had the ironic effect of making me realize that the mission of the Club has remained much the same over the years. Reading through these archived newsletters renewed my familiarity with the past, provided information I needed for the present, and revealed some synchronous connections with future. It amazed me that I was able to access all this information with just a few clicks at my computer. Because of the thorough and detailed input of key words and categories in the newsletter archives search engine (painstakingly entered by newsletter editor Kathy Saenger this summer), I now can eliminate one storage box from my cluttered closet.

Decluttering, organizing, and taking actual inventory of my music and CDs has been an ongoing fantasy of mine, and is revisited every year as a hopeful New Year's resolution. I am always curious about how others succeed in organizing and accessing their music, as my own system tends to have two basic categories: music organized on my shelves and music not yet put away...and unfortunately the latter pile always multiplies at an exponential rate. Last year, when Chris Potter was visiting me (she had flown in from New Mexico to take part in the 100-flute event at the Guggenheim), she subtly suggested that I might incorporate her method of organizing music, which involves an Excel file and computer access (like me, she has many categories of ensemble music in addition to her solo repertoire). My friend and colleague Elizabeth Brown has a very low-tech system for her own compositions, which requires a labeled manila folder for each piece of music, arranged in alphabetical order. If the actual music is too large for the folder, there is instead a piece of paper with the actual location of the music, creating only one place to initially search. Former board member Zara Lawler suggested a favorite book, *Getting Things Done*, by David Allen (considered an organizational guru by some—view his lectures on YouTube and decide for yourself).

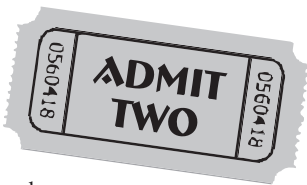
At one time, I decided that if I hadn't either played or taught a particular piece of music in five years, I would get rid of it. I amassed a huge pile of music and was all set to donate it. Then I decided to play through everything as a farewell gesture. As I rediscovered the music, piece by piece, each one went back into the save pile. Luckily, several Club members have been more successful in this regard—last month, Katherine Hoover donated several cartons of music from her library to the New York Flute Club in order to help raise money for the Education and Enrichment program. (The music will be sold at bargain prices at the Flute Fair on March 16, with all proceeds going into our E&E coffers.) If you are inspired to fine tune your music library, please contact me at [info@nyfluteclub.org](mailto:info@nyfluteclub.org) and I will arrange to have the music picked up. Maybe I will donate some music, too!

For me, holiday time is a chance to reflect and celebrate. Jamie Baum has chosen to do just that in her concert program which will feature selections from her most recent CD, *In This Life*. Prior to the concert, at 4:00 pm, she will present "A fear-free approach to improvisation" (bring your flutes!). Our annual Holiday reception will immediately follow the concert. Please email Jayn Rosenfeld (see p. 7) with the food items you would like to bring.



## Guest Ticketing

NYFC membership includes two guest admissions per concert (four for contributing members). If your guests will be attending without you, please email their names to Membership Secretary Lucy Goeres (lgoeres@nyc.rr.com) by the Saturday before the concert.



## Member Profile

Alexandra  
(Alix)  
Smith

NYFC member  
since 2011



**Employment:** High school student.

**A recent recital/performance:** A Flute Academy group recital at Oberlin Conservatory's Kulas Recital Hall on July 14, in which she played the Dutilleux Sonatine.

**Career highlight(s):** Playing principal with her high school's honors band and orchestra for the past two years, an experience that included playing the solo flute part in *Peter and the Wolf* (a high-pressure performance situation that "forced me to gain better control of my nerves and brought my attention to detail to an all-new high"); for the past two summers, attending the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Flute Workshop and the Oberlin Flute Academy during the summer (learning a tremendous amount from Linda Toote and Alexa Still); and, during the school year, participating in the New York Youth Symphony Chamber Program ("I'm in a piano trio with my two close pals Elvis Krajnak and Nick Anton, who have taught me a lot about balance, communication, jamming, and hacky sack [a footbag game]").

**Current flute:** An open-holed silver Muramatsu with a B foot.

**Influential flute teachers:** Jan MacDonald (from whom she learned about basic technique and ways for a busy fifth grader to squeeze in practice time) and Wendy Stern (who taught her about technique, musicality, sound, and effective practice, as well as how large and simultaneously small the flute world can be).

**High school:** Northport High School in Northport (on Long Island), NY.

**Degrees:** None yet (she's a senior in high school).

**Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishment(s):** Getting her black belt in Hakkoryu Jujutsu (August 2008), obtaining her driver's license (July 2013), and earning a place in the All-State (NY) Symphony Orchestra (for December 2013).

**Favorite practice routines:** Alix likes to rotate between Trevor Wye's books (Volumes 1-6), different Taffanel-Gaubert exercises, and *The Flutist's Vade Mecum* by Walfrid Kujala, depending on what she hears in her playing as the day progresses. She says, "I always love to end my practices with a performance of a piece I'm working on, and some notes of things to keep in mind during my next practice."

**Other interests:** "I don't have a passion for cooking, but I make up for it in my eating. Thankfully, however, I enjoy running and working out with my mother and friends." She also enjoys yoga, meditation, and reading; composing and improvising (between volunteer gigs as page turner at Sunday NYFC concerts); and hanging out with two special friends (for a combination of flute duets, adventures, and corny jokes).

**Advice for NYFC members:** Alix likes this wisdom from Lao Tzu: "If you are depressed you are living in the past. If you are anxious you are living in the future. If you are at peace you are living in the present." She says, "I think it's important to try to make the most of every moment you have because that is all you can control. If everyone tries to be generous, thoughtful, accepting, compassionate, and happy, eventually all of the other options will start to run out." And favorite advice she's received (perhaps more directly related to flute playing): "Keep your air moving," "Focus—really care about what you're doing," and "Know exactly where you're going with the music."

## Flute Fair 2014



### Program Ideas Due

Let us know what you think will stimulate and/or inspire; all ideas will be seriously considered by the Flute Fair Program Committee. Proposals must be in writing and clearly explained. Please email Wendy Stern at wstern9@gmail.com by **December 8, 2013**.

## FLUTE HAPPENINGS

December '13

Dec  
8

Sunday 12:15 - 3:15 pm  
(Masterclass 1)

Sunday 5:15 - 8:15 pm  
(Masterclass 2)

William Bennett is presenting a Masterclass Series. • Studios 353, 353 West 48th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$200 (allows entrance to all classes) performer, \$50 (single class) or \$125 (all three classes) auditor. • Info, registration: visit Mary-Ann Tu's website, masterclassesnyc.com.

Dec  
9

Monday 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

William Bennett Masterclass 3 • Bloomingdale School of Music, 323 West 108th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$200 (allows entrance to all classes) performer, \$50 (single class) or \$125 (all three classes) auditor. • Info, registration: visit Mary-Ann Tu's website, masterclassesnyc.com.

Dec  
17

Tuesday 8:00 pm

The Antara Ensemble, with **HAROLD JONES**, flute, will perform Ulysses Kay's Suite for flute and oboe in a program of mostly string music by Roussel, Handel, Halvorsen, Chausson, and Piazzolla. • Saint Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Avenue (at 54th Street), NYC. • Admission: \$25 general, \$20 students/seniors. • Info, visit antaraensemble.com or call 212-866-2545.

### Flute Happenings Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Mail date
January 2014	11/28/2013	12/27/2013
February 2014	12/19/2013	01/17/2014
March 2014	01/30/2014	02/28/2014
April 2014	03/13/2014	04/11/2014
May 2014	03/27/2014	04/25/2014

Interview (Cont'd from page 1)

that I got more into it. I met some jazz musicians and we'd go hear concerts in New York, and that was when I began to think more seriously about music. Even though I began taking flute lessons regularly at the university, I didn't think I was ready for a conservatory, so I took a year off and went to live in Paris. There, I studied flute with Michel Debost, principal flute in the Orchestre de Paris. He and his wife [Kathleen Chastain] had a big influence on me. Later, I studied there with George Alirol, who also played flute in the orchestra. I came back to the US and went to New England Conservatory for four years, where I studied with Robert Stallman, and got a dual bachelor's degree in jazz flute and composition [in the early '80s]. After that, I moved to New York and got my master's in jazz from the Manhattan School in 1999.

*PB: Were there any other influential musical mentors along the way?*

JB: Keith Underwood. I studied for some years with Keith in the late '90s, when I first moved to NY. We hit it off because he's an improviser as well as a classical musician. We had a lot of exploratory discussions about articulation and other things. At that time, he was just starting to get into "buzzing," as it related to sound production on the trumpet, and I was too.

*PB: Did Keith offer any input on your latest CD?*

JB: There is a very notey, high energy passage on one of the pieces, *Nusrat*, and I wanted to go back and do some overdubs. So I went back to Keith and he helped me with some alternate fingerings that many classical players might know, but as a jazz player, I didn't.

*PB: So how did that work out?*

JB: Great—using those gave the music energy and intensity and some interesting timbres as well.

*PB: You had mentioned that there was a time where you had some physical challenges that impacted your playing—an issue that I and many others have had as well. Did this elevate your consciousness about the use of the body in flute playing?*

JB: Maybe because I started so late, or maybe par for the course—as flute is one of the least ergonomically friendly instruments—I had developed tendonitis at times. The second time, I was at the Manhattan School. I was taking piano as well as flute, practicing lots of hours, composing on piano, and maybe not taking the breaks I should have.

*PB: Is there any advice you would offer to flutists in regard to healthy playing?*

JB: It's important to take breaks, do

stretching, and give yourself a rest when you need to. A physical therapist I saw at St. Luke's Roosevelt said most of the musicians she saw were not pit or orchestral musicians, who play on a consistent basis, but rather freelancers, whose work load comes and goes. For them, there are periods where the demands of playing are not as consistent. So, perhaps, strive for a certain consistency of practice, rather than extremes of playing or not.

Also, the stress of daily life in New York—it's so easy to get stressed out! Even washing the dishes, you can notice that your shoulders might be up to your ears. Try to be aware of the amount of tension you hold in your body—even in your breathing. After working with Keith, I began to be able to recognize these things even before they became problematic.

So you kind of have to have a "checklist" of key issues to watch for when you practice or play. Three years ago, I fractured my shoulder and tore a rotator cuff—and had oral surgery. The longer you play, the more you need to find ways of addressing this or that. I've been lucky. Keith has been really great for me in that way too.

*PB: We can get "bound up" playing flute! I often wish I had played drumset—the kinesthetics are so different. Was there ever an instrument that has fascinated you, but you never got around to—or still want to master? Has this influenced your writing in any way?*

JB: The guys in the band always tell me I have "trumpet envy."

*PB: That's funny!*

JB: Well, possibly because I fell "in love" with Miles [Davis]. I think I approach jazz more like a trumpet player than a flute player. When it came to transposing and learning, I always listened more for the trumpet. My husband plays drums, and I always loved the cello, too. Perhaps in another life...

*PB: Then why flute?*

JB: I always loved classical too, and flute seemed to offer such a wide range of options.

*PB: What flutists, classical, jazz or otherwise, have most influenced your flute playing?*

JB: Hubert Laws was a huge influence early on.



The Jamie Baum Septet

*PB: What did you take away from his playing?*

JB: He was one of the first jazz flutists to play with incredible sound and articulation. Before that, a lot of jazz flute players were doublers. Hubert's sound is so natural. And he's a generous, warm person, and that comes through in his playing. I also love Eric Dolphy, Roland Kirk, Jeremy Steig, James Moody, Lew Tabackin, and others.

*PB: You have received awards for composition from the International Jazz Composers Alliance and the Doris Duke/CMA New Works Creation and Presentation. Has playing flute inspired your creativity as a composer, or vice versa?*

JB: In general, as a jazz musician, I tend to write things I want to learn how to play. For example, if I want to get better at improvising in odd meters, I write something to give me that challenge. Though I am always aware of the range of the flute, I don't necessarily write what is flutistic, but more what I hear. And if it's challenging to play, I try to rise to that.



PB: *You seem, at this moment, to be in a particularly dynamic phase of your musical career—extensive touring and recording, WBGO featuring your CD in October, a very cool review in the New York City Jazz Record, and glowing press reviews for your CD, In This Life. One of your press releases describes the CD as “exciting, beguiling, memorable, warm, and multi-layered.” How did Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan influence your music?*

JB: The short answer is that his music touched me in the same way that listening to Miles and [John] Coltrane did when I first heard them. I was introduced to his music while I was on tour in India [about ten years ago]. He is also widely known in Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh. He came to prominence in the West in part because he collaborated with Western musicians—even being featured on a video with Michael Jackson.

PB: *You have said, “With great respect for their traditions and vast language, and without immersing myself in deep study, my goal was not to play or compose in these styles, but to have my travels and playing experiences inspire new ways of writing and improvising” and “I was touched viscerally by the sound of the tabla, bansuri flute, and vocal music.” How did your travels influence you musically?*

JB: As a State Department/Kennedy Center Jazz Ambassador, I had toured in South America [six weeks in 1999] and South Asia [five weeks in 2002]. Two of the most memorable opportunities to work and perform with local musicians were at a concert in Delhi with V.M. Bhatt, who plays Mohan Veena [a slide guitar named after its inventor], and others, and in a concert in Chennai with Karaikudi R. Mani, a master mridangam player, and his eight-piece ensemble. Not only did he compose a piece for us and his ensemble, but we also spent a day with him during which he told us about his life and approach to music. On later trips back to India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, I had several similar experiences that not only broadened my approach to improvising and composing, but touched me spiritually. It is true what they say about India and other parts of South Asia—it can be life changing.

PB: *What other musicians influenced you in your earlier years as a composer?*

JB: When I was younger, my mother played a lot of Frank Sinatra and big band music, and I grew to love it. I was also lucky that my parents took me to hear classical orchestra concerts. Later, [I worked with] Rich DeRosa at the Manhattan School, and Steve Jablonsky, then head of music at City College. We would go through scores of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in his basement. Other influences were Mike Stern and his wife

Lainie, and Richie Bierack and Dave Liebman. At NEC, one of my classes was run by George Russell. His early recordings were very influential. He wrote for larger ensembles, like octets—I loved his writing. Also influential were people like Jaki Byard and Gil Evans.

PB: *You've had your expanded septet for about 14 years now. Did you choose a larger ensemble rather than the more typical quartet because it allowed for more compositional possibilities?*

JB: [My realization of the] compositional possibilities for an ensemble larger than the typical jazz quartet was an outgrowth of my master's recital at MSM. It was the first time I presented the band. I really enjoyed writing for that instrumentation and felt I could do more. That's really where it all began. Today, we call the band a “septet plus.” On the concert we will have flute, trumpet, alto sax doubling clarinet, French horn, guitar, bass, piano, and drums.

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I think the essence of jazz is incorporating all the influences, making them your own, and finding your own personal voice—then expanding on it, always changing.

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PB: *After your opening flute solo in Nusrat, I thought you might be featuring yourself more on flute.*

JB: I guess what I would say is that in this particular project with my septet, it was more about my music and composing than myself as a soloist.

PB: *The penultimate cut, In Another Life, had some beautiful sounds, especially in the flute and guitar solos. Another cut I enjoyed very much was The Monkeys of the Gokarna Forest. The pianist, John Escreet, really captures the spirit of those monkeys in the playful angularity of his solos. What's the story behind it?*

JB: We were at a music festival in Nepal and were staying at a lodge in the Gokarna Forest in Katmandu. When we checked in, they told us everybody had to keep their doors and windows shut because of the monkeys. When we woke up the next morning, they were everywhere. You felt like you wanted to pet them, but it turned out they were not as sweet and cute as they appeared.

PB: *When you interviewed Jim Walker for*

*the NYFC Newsletter [November 2001], you asked him what made a great band. He said, “It takes an incredibly strong vision and determination by at least the leader... you've got to be hungry for it.” How do you feel about your band?*

JB: I've been very lucky to have great players work with me, who understand what I am going for and who really bring their own unique interpretation to the music...and knowing who you are writing for is a gift. The music wouldn't be the same without them, and it is so important to choose the right musicians...players who don't need to be told too much.

PB: *Jazz has been defined by some as “America's unique classical music,” both influenced by and having a huge impact on society. How would you define jazz today, particularly as it relates to you and your music?*

JB: It has similarities to classical music in that people want to play and hear Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart today because the music is important and here forever. Others want to play contemporary music and move those traditions forward—incorporating their present experiences. It's the same for jazz greats like Trane [John Coltrane], [Charlie “Bird”] Parker, [Duke] Ellington, or Miles. If you look back at these jazz icons, they never stayed in the same place. They never just played what came before, even though that was a big influence. All these icons looked to other cultures, or styles, to expand their music: Dizzy to Latin, Getz to Brazil and Bossa Nova, Trane to India, Miles to Rock. Even Bird recorded his music with strings, and was influenced by Stravinsky.

I think the essence of jazz is incorporating all the influences, making them your own, and finding your own personal voice—then expanding on it, always changing.

PB: *Leonard Bernstein once called music a metaphor—poetry in sound, the sum of meaning transcending all its parts. Since the poetic lyricism of Pakistani vocal virtuoso Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan so inspired you, this seems doubly apropos.*

JB: Yes.

PB: *For many in the Flute Club audience, your concert will have fresh and unexpected sounds, colors, and rhythms. Any hints for how they might have an even deeper listening experience?*

JB: Well, they could go to [www.sunnysiderecords.com](http://www.sunnysiderecords.com) and listen to some of the cuts on the CD. Go on YouTube and listen to Nusrat. Then they can make their own connections between what they hear and what I will be playing.

In general, hearing music is like looking at a piece of modern art—what it really comes down to is how it makes

(Cont'd on page 6)

MEMBER  
PERSPECTIVES*First crush:  
What made  
you fall in love  
with the flute?*

**Q** Our October 2013 Member Perspectives question, posed by NYFC president Wendy Stern, was inspired by the “First Crush” series that recently appeared in the *New York Times*. What were the defining incidents and influences that set you on a career path as a flutist? What made you fall in love with the flute? Four readers responded, with the responses making me think that a lot happens by chance!—Ed.

*From Paula Robison, solo flutist and founding member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center:*

**A** The Chaminade Concertino was probably the first “real piece” I studied as a young flutist. I was working with Arthur Hoberman. He adored French music, and he could see that it was a natural for me too. Later, Marcel Moyse opened the treasure chest of Chaminade’s colorations, elegance, sparkling and shining lightplay—they all still delight me every time I perform the Concertino. So my “first crush” turned into a lifelong relationship! I think it’s a masterpiece.

*From Jayn Rosenfeld, flute teacher and retired founding member of the New York New Music Ensemble:*

**A** My family was “musical,” and we were all expected to play instruments. My father played the violin and viola as a high-level amateur—his professional ambitions were abandoned in 1915, when WWI and his father’s poor health forced an end to his musical studies abroad in Belgium and brought him back home to Pittsfield, MA to run the family clothing store with his brother. Of my own three brothers, two played (violin and cello) and one rebelled. As the youngest, I felt (at age nine) that the string instruments were already “taken” and that flute was next on the list. At the time I had a young married cousin who was pregnant and played the flute,

and that made the whole package look attractive and grown-up. My cousin and her husband were my first teachers, and I suspect I was their first practice child.

*From Patricia Zuber, NYFC board member and freelance orchestral player:*

**A** It was love at first sight. Mr. Miller, my elementary school music teacher, came to my fifth grade class to demonstrate all the band instruments. The flute was definitely the best. It was so cool how Mr. Miller had to fiddle with the reed at the top of the instrument. And it was made of wood! Such a pretty, mellow sound. At my first lesson he gave me my school instrument and I told him there must be some mistake. The flute was long and black and it had a reed on top. He said that that was a clarinet and there were no more left. I said, “How will I ever be able to learn this? I can’t see my fingers when I play!”

Sometimes, I guess you just have to roll with life’s punches.

*From Gene Coleman, longtime NYFC member and adjunct professor of communications at NY Institute of Technology:*

**A** My first experience with the flute was not exactly a “first crush.” Flute was not my first choice of instrument when wanting to participate in my high school music band program—I wanted to play saxophone. But I noticed that students were given clarinets to learn and play before they could move on to saxophone, and I had no time for that. And besides, at that time, I did not particularly care for the clarinet. As the band needed flute players, and the flute and saxophone had similar fingering systems, my plan was to play the flute until I could get to saxophone, either through the band program or on my own. Well, needless to say, it did not take long for the flute to cast its magic spell and for me to become an all too willing victim. Also, at local neighborhood jazz sessions I was usually the only flute player present and therefore did not “threaten” any other musicians on the scene; I was more or less “welcomed” and given lots of encouragement from the start. Playing the saxophone was no longer an immediate concern. It wasn’t until several years later that I again started thinking about playing saxophone, while regarding flute, as I continue to do so today, as my primary instrument. So what may have started out as a “one night stand” has developed into a long and lasting love relationship.

*Interview (Cont’d from page 5)*

you feel, and that’s personal. And I will be saying something at the concert about each piece I play.

**PB:** Your CD says a lot about who you are, but it also reflects the blending of cultures and genres so much a part of today’s world. What advice would you give “classical” flutists in terms of skills they could be developing that might open them to new worlds of self expression?

**JB:** It’s important to be able to spend time, daily, away from reading music, to improvise—create your own musical ideas—without written music. Listen to recordings of different types of music. Put on a CD you like and try to play along. Also, try to get a better basic

understanding of theory so you can get a better picture of whatever you’re playing. This will help you as a musician—and help you feel more confident.

**PB:** Many teachers “teach how they have been taught.” Suzuki has a special certification, and jazz is an area that many find unfamiliar or intimidating. Yet, creativity is not confined to playing “jazz.” How can flute teachers eclectically expand their teaching to help students develop confidence and skills that facilitate more creativity and self expression, whether interpretive or improvisational?

**JB:** Teachers should try these same things! If they feel they can’t teach it, they should not feel threatened by encouraging their

students to explore. They could take a few lessons in improvisation and they’d feel more confident. It’s not as hard and scary as people think. To be a jazz player does take a lot of work and skills, but to play by ear is basic—something any complete musician should be able to do.

**PB:** I agree! This sounds like something we can learn more about at your 4 pm workshop, prior to the concert—how to be free of the “fear” of playing without notes. You are certainly a model of inspiration for all of us who look beyond the horizon of our standard flute literature, and for giving us another reason for practicing scales!

**JB:** Thank you.

PB: I know you are literally running to your next gig—but can you give me three words that would describe your music, your life, your dreams—ten years from now?

JB: VACATION—IN—TAHITI!!

PB: Touché, Jamie. See you on the 15th!

**Paula Bing**, flutist (Western and bamboo) and music education consultant, has

played for many ensembles, films, and recordings, including those of Spike Lee and Terrance Blanchard. She has trained teachers and artists for Jazz at Lincoln Center, Young Concert Artists International, the Lincoln Center Institute, and others. She teaches flute for Juilliard's Musical Advancement Program, and has written Arts Resource Handbook for Teachers of Special Needs Students (Libraries Unlimited, 2003).

## Holiday Refreshments

Post-concert refreshments are needed for December 15th. Please contact **Jayn Rosenfeld (212-633-6260, [jaynrosenfeld@gmail.com](mailto:jaynrosenfeld@gmail.com))** if you can bring something. Requested items include wine, soda, cheese, crackers, cookies, grapes, & other nibbles.



# Where are the Women?

by Rachel Susser  
NYFC Student Liaison

As many of you know, I am studying both music and computer science. In the latter, the question “Where are all the women?” is a hot topic of conversation, spurring training sessions, articles, books, discussion groups, research studies, and conferences. Most sources seem to indicate that the number of women in the field has been lingering in the 10-15% range for the past decade or so, which is either about the same as or a decline from previous decades. Though the classical music world does not have the financial clout that exists in engineering disciplines, I think we also need to have this conversation, and here’s why.

I’ll start with some numbers. In preparation for this article, I looked at the orchestra rosters for 25 orchestras, 14 of which are in the United States and all of which are considered among the best orchestras in the country and/or world. From this data, I looked at the musicians serving as either “principal,” “co-principal,” or “solo” flute within each ensemble. Thirteen out of the 36 flutists in this category (about 36%) are women. In the United States, this number is a little lower (about 31%), and in the “Big Five,” it drops yet again to 20%. In the ten orchestras ranked by *Gramophone* in 2008 as the best in the world (Royal Concertgebouw, Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Budapest Festival Orchestra, and Dresden Staatskapelle), only 24% of flute section leaders are female.

When I have brought up the “woman question” in casual conversation with various flutists, several of them have told me that it was a matter of discussion about 20 years ago but has been less important since then, probably due to the proliferation of blind auditions. So what are the numbers from the past 20 years? In these same 25 orchestras, of the principal positions won since 1993 (for which the flutist still holds the position today), the number of women getting and keeping jobs is somewhere between 17 and 31%. In the US, it’s 10-18%. Wait a second – is it just me, or does that show that the numbers have actually gotten worse, and not better, in my lifetime?

The story seems to get more complex as you look at it from different angles. For example, a 2010 doctoral dissertation by University of Iowa student Amy Louise Phelps\* shows that more than half of the flutists

in top American orchestras at the time of her research were women. She looked at the same US orchestras as I have, with the addition of the Minnesota Orchestra. It seems that, in general, far more than half of flutists in the States are women. For example, women make up about 70% of NYFC membership (though who knows, maybe women are statistically more likely to belong to organizations of this sort). Of the orchestras and summer festivals in which I have participated in the past eight years, almost every flute section I have been in has had exclusively women, and in the two (yes, only two) cases in which there have been men, they have never made up more than 50% of the section. Of course, any academic journal would scoff at these observations because there are many possible reasons for this numeric disparity, in particular the age gap between my cohort of students and those musicians serving in orchestras, as well as the nationalities of flutists in these studios compared to the nationalities of musicians winning jobs (maybe flute is seen more as a “masculine” instrument in other countries, whereas it is often seen as a “feminine” one here). But, in my opinion, these numbers are enough to raise suspicion and enough to call for more extensive research.

Unfortunately, in this article I propose more questions than answers. Why is the percentage of female flutist section leaders so much lower than the percentage of female flutist section members in these top orchestras? Is the issue about winning the jobs or keeping them? What is the gender ratio in conservatories around the world, and what is the ratio in people auditioning for these schools? What percentage of flutists auditioning for orchestral positions are women? Is this just an issue with flute, or with other instruments as well? (In one of the orchestras with which I perform, only 3 of the principals of all sections combined are women.) If women are getting principal jobs, but not keeping them, why do they leave? What does all of this mean for us as flutists and students? Perhaps most importantly, what will it take to start the conversation?

\* Phelps, Amy Louise. “Beyond auditions: gender discrimination in America’s top orchestras.” PhD dissertation, University of Iowa, 2010, p.71. <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/874>.







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



## December 15, 2013 Concert

Sunday, 5:30 pm • Engelman Recital Hall, 55 Lexington Avenue (at 25th Street)  
Jamie Baum, flute and members of the Jamie Baum Septet

### 94<sup>th</sup> Season 2013 - 2014 Concerts

**October 13, 2013** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
RAFFAELE TREVISANI, flute

**November 10, 2013** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
GERGELY ITTZEŠ, flute

**December 15, 2013** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
JAMIE BAUM, jazz flute

**January 12, 2014** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
FLUTE FORCE (flute quartet)

**February 2, 2014** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
IAN CLARKE, flute

**March 16, 2014** • Sunday, all day  
Flute Fair with Metropolitan Opera Flutists,  
The Lighthouse

**April 27, 2014** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
Competition Winners Concert

**May, 2014** • Venue/date TBA  
Annual Meeting & Ensemble Concert

*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](http://www.nyfluteclub.org).*



### From the Editor

**Greetings!** Our December concert will feature jazz flutist Jamie Baum, playing with her “septet plus” in a program of selections from her new CD, *In this Life*. Jamie will present a masterclass on “fear-free improvisation” before the concert, and a holiday reception will follow the concert. Paula Bing’s interview touches on Jamie’s somewhat roundabout path to becoming a jazz flute player and band leader, and how her extensive travels in South America and South Asia have influenced her thinking and composition. Most interesting to me were her thoughts on healthy playing (take breaks when you need them) and how she goes about composing (she tends to write things she wants to learn to play).

Wendy Stern’s “From the President” features a tour of the newsletter archives, where she managed to find some background material on Jamie Baum, as well as my favorite—and newly relevant—Pat Spencer column (“YES—Commission!”). She also shares some of the suggestions she has received for organizing and decluttering her music collection (as yet, still a perennial New Year’s resolution!).

This month NYFC student liaison Rachel Susser asks, “Where are the Women?” She wonders why the percentage of female flutist section heads in the major orchestras is so much lower than the percentage of female flutists in general. There are more questions than answers, but, for sure, things are better than they were when “girl flutist” Frances Blaisdell started out!

Alexandra (Alix) Smith, a Long Island high school senior and the page turner at several NYFC concerts, is this month’s member profile subject. In a first for our profile series, we have “getting a driver’s license” on the personally satisfying accomplishments list (a more traditional career highlight—we hope the first of many—was being the flute bird in *Peter and the Wolf*).

We have good news from on-leave *Newsletter* designer Naomi Ichikawa Healy: she and her husband are now the happy parents of a beautiful baby son, Kai Ichikawa Healy (birthweight 7 lb., 11 oz.), born on November 1. Mom and baby are doing well. Our interim designer, Meredith Norwood, started with our November issue (great job!) will continue until Naomi is back in the spring.

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

— Katherine Saenger ([klsaenger@yahoo.com](mailto:klsaenger@yahoo.com))