



# The New York Flute Club

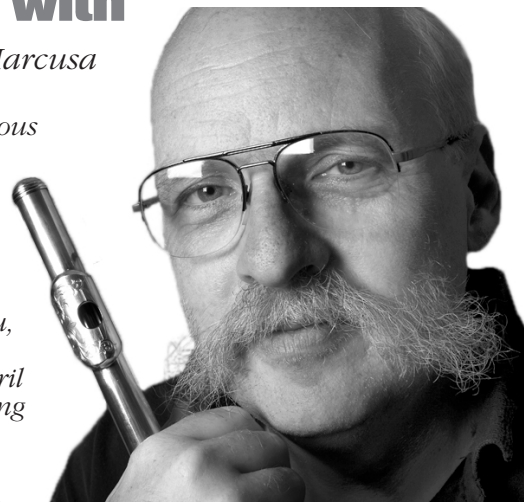
## NEWSLETTER

April 2018

### Robert Langevin: French Tradition with a Sense of Adventure

Interview by Fred Marcusa

*I have known Robert Langevin for some years as a premier flutist of enormous personal character and grace, with a warm and engaging manner. His flute playing reflects to me a French temperament with a precision and rigor of the world-class orchestral soloist he is. In light of our shared interest in sonority and its role in flute playing and teaching (as well the existence of prior Newsletter interviews\* covering his background and orchestral life), I focused this interview on three topics: what he thinks of the French school and his place in it; his relationship with his teacher, Maxence Larrieu, the French legend and last surviving student of Joseph Rampal (the others including Jean-Pierre Rampal [Joseph's son] and Alain Marion); and his April program. As always, Robert was extremely thoughtful and generous; following are the highlights of our discussion, conducted in mid-March via telephone and email while Robert was in China with the NY Philharmonic.*



**FRED MARCUSA:** How do you see yourself in the French school? And, more particularly, in the Joseph Rampal school?

**ROBERT LANGEVIN:** I feel that the golden age of the flute was the time of the direct descendants of Joseph Rampal: his son, Jean-Pierre; Alain Marion; and Maxence Larrieu. While I was not alive to hear Paul Taffanel and Philippe Gaubert, I believe that the second half of the 20th century represented the high point of flute playing. And, even today, many well-known and active players are descendants of those people. For me, the Joseph Rampal school represents the most natural way of playing the flute.

They believe that you should play with a normal amount of air. I heard that Georges Laurent would tell his students, "You should not blow into the flute more air than you use when you speak!" It becomes a very natural way of playing—the sound is never forced, never pushed, and the vibrato is like a singer's.

*\*See, for example, "NY Philharmonic's Robert Langevin Talks Shop with Colleagues Renée Siebert and Yoobin Son" [October 2016], Ann Cecil Serman's "Robert Langevin: Tradition in Action" [March 2008], and Jayn Rosenfeld's "Welcome M. Langevin!" [October 2000]. All are available via the Club's online newsletter archive (under the newsletter tab at nyfluteclub.org).*

I admire that school of playing so much and luckily grew up with it in Montreal, where my teacher at the conservatory [Conservatoire de musique du Québec à Montréal (CMM)] was Jean-Paul Major. He had studied with René Le Roy, who travelled from Paris every week or two to teach [at CMM]. Jean-Pierre Rampal (the one outside influence

*(Cont'd on page 4)*

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*In Concert*

#### Robert Langevin, flute

Linda Mark, piano • Amanda Harberg, piano

Sunday, April 8, 2018, 5:30 pm

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

#### Program

Sonata in C-sharp Minor (1904)	Mel Bonis (1858-1937)
Poem (1918)	Charles T. Griffes (1884-1920)
Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune (1894)	Claude Debussy (1862-1918) arr. Samazeuilh
with Linda Mark, piano	
Court Dances (2017)	Amanda Harberg (b. 1973)
with Amanda Harberg, piano	

*Program subject to change*



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2017–2018

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page to stay up to date on Club events.  
Nicole Camacho, NYFC Social Media Chair

## The Essence of the Flute

by Patricia Zuber



From the  
President

What is more important, technique or intonation? Read the articles in this newsletter and you'll have your answer. Neither. It all boils down to tone. It's the sound that is of utmost importance. Intonation and notes will follow. Robert Langevin keeps coming back to the point that it was Maxence Larrieu's sound that so influenced him, and Amanda Harberg speaks of Langevin's singing tone. This is, in my opinion, what is so primordial about the flute. Humans are drawn to a beautiful flute sound instinctively. It touches something inside us.

I am sorry that Maxence Larrieu will not be playing the April 8 recital as planned, but I am so happy that we will have the opportunity to hear one of his most accomplished pupils play for us with a sound that was influenced by the great teacher and performer. How lucky we are!

## NYFC ENSEMBLES PROGRAM

## UPDATE



The NYFC Ensemble flutists met at Studios 353 on Saturday, March 10, with 26 members in attendance (25 returning and one new). Co-directors Denise Koncelik and Mark Vickers led the group in a run-through of pieces being considered for the Annual Meeting concert in May. Lauren Klasewitz conducted the group in a reading of Michael Isaacson's *Sugarplums and Mistletoe*.

The answers to the intermission question, "Tell us the weirdest job you ever had" drew a wide range of answers—pony boy at the Bronx Zoo, sorter of sand grains according to size, concession stand operator at a Buddhist temple—but the hands-down favorite response was from Roger Brooks: stationed at a US army base in Germany, he once had to perform in a military band for the installation of a traffic light.

All members of the NY Flute Club are welcome to participate. Questions? Visit the ensembles page on the Club's website ([nyfluteclub.org](http://nyfluteclub.org), "Ensemble Program" under the "Concerts, Events, & More" tab). The ensemble's next performance will be at the NYFC's annual meeting on May 6th (Pearl Studios, 3:00 pm). The next rehearsals, at Studios 353, 353 West 48th Street (between 8th and 9th Avenues) will be on **Sunday, April 22, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.**



Denise Koncelik



Mark Vickers



Participants in the March 10, 2018 ensembles rehearsal. Photo: Brian Klasewitz

## Member Profile

Derek  
Cochran

NYFC Member since  
2017



**Employment:** Provider relations representative for a nationwide insurance carrier.

### A recent recital/performance:

Performing Gary Schocker's trio, *Flutes in the Garden*, with Denise Koncelik and Mark Vickers at the 2018 NY Flute Fair as well as pieces with the full NYFC Ensemble ("Being new to New York City—less than one year in residence—I haven't yet had many opportunities to perform, but I'm glad to be part of the group and I'm grateful for the opportunity to keep my chops in shape. But I am excited to say that in just a few weeks, I will be playing with Australian low-flute guru Peter Sheridan at the International Low Flute Festival in Washington, DC.").

**Career highlight(s):** Being principal piccolo and concertmaster for the Arizona-based Desert Echoes Flute Choir (2008-2017) and principal piccolo for the Arizona Wind Symphony (2002-2017); freelancing and doing pit work for Broadway shows coming to the metro Phoenix area—*Secret Garden*, *Addams Family*, *Wizard of Oz*, and *West Side Story*, among others; and, last but not least, performing eight times at various NFA conventions—his first was in 1998 (Phoenix) and his most recent was in 2016 (San Diego), with stops in Las Vegas, Anaheim, and Albuquerque in between.

**Current flute:** A gold Burkart, made to order in 2015 ("It's my dream flute!"). Derek also has "a brilliant P. Hammig piccolo."

**Influential flute teachers:** Jose Corral and Brian Gordon (of the Phoenix Symphony), Kelly Via

(piccolo with the Atlanta Ballet/Macon Symphony), Christine Erlander-Beard (at the University of Nebraska, Omaha), and masterclasses with Jim Walker (at USC).

**High school:** Corona del Sol High School in Tempe, Arizona.

**Degree(s):** Bachelor of music performance (Northern Arizona University, 2003).

**Most notable and/or personally satisfying accomplishment(s):** "I once played in tune with another piccolo player. If that wasn't enough, last year (2017) I had the good fortune to play in the orchestra for Neil Diamond's tour stop in Phoenix, AZ—it turned out to be his final tour. It was also embarrassing, because I missed one of my big entrances due to the fact I was too busy singing along to 'Sweet Caroline.'" Also notable, but less interesting: being on multiple recordings for Carl Fischer Music with his university's Wind Symphony.

**Favorite practice routines:** "Like most people, I often find myself short on time...so my favorite go-to warm-up is Terri Sanchez's *Epic Flute Warm-up*. (A free download is available at [www.theself-inspiredflutist.com/p/free-epic-warm-up.html](http://www.theself-inspiredflutist.com/p/free-epic-warm-up.html).) It's astounding how much difference this 10-minute exercise can do even when my lips don't want to cooperate."

**Other interests:** Getting acquainted with the NYC area ("I'm having a wonderful time trying out new restaurants and seeing the sights. Recently, I spent the weekend exploring the beaches in the Hamptons and getting to know Long Island.").

### Advice for NYFC members:

Derek likes this advice from Richard Branson, the English business magnate, investor, and philanthropist: If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes and then learn how to do it later!

## FLUTE HAPPENINGS

### MARCH '18

Mar. 28 Wednesday 7:30 pm

Young Concert Artists presents **ANTHONY TRIONFO**, flute, in a program of works by Fauré, J.S. Bach, Jolivet, Liebermann, Ian Clark, and Katherine Balch (YCA's 2017 composer-in-residence).

• Merkin Hall, 129 West 67th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$10-45. • Info, visit [kaufmanmusiccenter.org](http://kaufmanmusiccenter.org).

### APRIL '18

Apr. 3 Tuesday 8:00 pm

The Musicians of Lenox Hill, with **SOO-KYUNG PARK**, flute, will perform works by Roussel (Trio for flute, viola, and cello) and Paul Dukas (*La Plainte, au Loin, du Faune* and *Alla Gitana*).

• Temple Israel of the City of New York, 112 East 75th Street, NYC. • Admission is free (optional donation). • Info, visit [facebook.com/molhny](http://facebook.com/molhny).

Apr. 12 Thursday 6:30 pm

The 19-piece Japan Jazz Flute Big Band will perform jazz standards and Japanese classics on five flute types ranging from piccolo to contrabass. Performers to include founder **YUKO HOSHI**, local flutists **SANAE NAKAYAMA** and **KEITH UNDERWOOD**, and guest artist **ALI RYERSON**.

• The Nippon Club, 145 W 57th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$20 (\$15 with special friend discount available with advance RSVP to Sanae at [sanae.tripletta@gmail.com](mailto:sanae.tripletta@gmail.com)). • Info, visit [www.nipponclub.org](http://www.nipponclub.org) or call 212-581-2223.

Apr. 12 Thursday 8:00 pm

The Da Capo Chamber Players, with **PATRICIA SPENCER**, flute, celebrate Charles Wuorinen's 80th Year with a program of music by Charles Wuorinen, Jonathan Dawe (new work, world premiere), and David Fulmer.

• Merkin Concert Hall, Kaufman Music Center, 129 West 67th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$20 general, \$10 students/seniors. • Info, visit [www.dacapochamberplayers.org](http://www.dacapochamberplayers.org).

Apr. 29 Sunday 4:00 pm

Chelsea Musica, a quartet with Carolyn Pollak, oboe, **DENISE KONCELIK**, keyboard and flute, **KAREN ROBBINS**, flute, and Cara Tucker, bassoon, will present a spring program of chamber music by Purcell, Weelkes, Mozart, Vivaldi, J.S. Bach (arias written for singer and oboe d'amore), and Robert Perretti (a new work written for the ensemble).

• St. Peter's Chelsea, 346 West 20th Street, NYC. • Admission: \$10 suggested donation (all proceeds will benefit the Food Bank at St. Peter's). • Info, visit [www.chelseamusica.nyc](http://www.chelseamusica.nyc).



*Interview (cont'd from page 1)*

we had) gave a class each year at the CMM and played with a chamber orchestra, the Montreal Symphony, or in recital with Robert Veyron-Lacroix.

*FM: How did you come to study with Maxence Larrieu?*

RL: After graduating in May [1976] from the Montreal Conservatory, I went to two sessions of the Nice Academy, with Maxence Larrieu as my teacher. Everybody there was raving about Aurèle Nicolet's class in Freiburg, Germany. He was not quite of the same school, but had studied with Moyse at the Paris Conservatory. The audition for Nicolet's class was before the the Paris Conservatory audition. I auditioned for Nicolet's class and was accepted, so I never made it to Paris; I stayed two years and went to study with Maxence in Geneva, where he was teaching.

To this day, I would say he's my model player. That's why I hope we can bring him here to play. The entire New York flute community would benefit from hearing him—not only the students. He is the last living member of the group I mentioned earlier! After early afternoon lessons with him, I would always stay to listen to others' lessons and hear him demonstrate. It was an incredible experience—it made such an impression on me that the sound of him playing live is still something I have in my ear 40 years later.

*FM: Do you think others appreciate the French school playing as much as you do? You would think that if they did, they'd try harder to play that way.*

RL: I'm not sure how much awareness there is today of these players and their playing, especially among the younger players. That's why it would be wonderful if Maxence could present some masterclasses where people could understand directly what he represents. While the level of flute playing today is very high, concentration on beauty and color of sound of the Rampal school seems diminished.

This trend may not be limited to flute players. I recently spoke with Pinchas Zukerman, who made a similar remark about young violinists today not being as focused on sound as previous players have been. Maybe extraordinary sounds, colors, and subtleties have suffered because of the general emphasis on technique.

*FM: Whom do you consider descendants of the Rampal school today?*

RL: There are a lot of people. There are many in France, including, of course, Philippe Bernold, Patrick Gallois, Pierre Pierlot, and countless others. Jean-Pierre Rampal had students from all over the world, including Shigenori Kudo (a "Japanese Rampal"), Ransom Wilson, Robert Stallman, and Linda Chesis, among others.

*FM: When you play, do you consciously think about French sensibilities, sonorities, and techniques?*

RL: Since that's how I learned to play, I don't think about it. I feel this is the way I want to play.

*FM: Why did you want to study with Maxence Larrieu? Was it to learn about performance of French pieces?*

RL: The main reason I wanted to study with Maxence, in addition to admiring his playing generally, was my admiration for the way he played baroque and classical music stylistically, particularly the way he ornamented baroque music, one of the areas I found most difficult. Baroque music felt for me at the time so far away from the 20th century music I was playing, in which everything is written down, so you don't have to think much about adding to the music. Thus, a lot of the things I played for Maxence were baroque or classical. I do remember, however, playing the Jolivet concerto and other French pieces, but mostly my goal was to learn some of his secrets of playing in the baroque style.

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To me, Maxence Larrieu is still the model that I think of for...beauty of sound and color.

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*FM: Jean-Pierre Rampal once told me that he thought baroque music became popular after World War II in response to a widespread desire for order, after the disorder the war had created in people's lives.*

RL: I think that's true. Right after the Second World War, there was a renaissance of baroque music. In the first part of the 20th century, baroque music was not played very much. At that time people, played a lot of music written by the composers that were alive then.

*FM: Were there any recordings you particularly liked to listen to?*

RL: When I was a student, pretty much the only recordings we got were by Jean-Pierre Rampal. I had maybe 30 or 40 of them. Then I got some recordings of Maxence Larrieu, which were harder to find. I remember listening to two LPs of Vivaldi and Telemann trio sonatas, with truly beautiful playing. When I got to Europe, whatever Maxence recordings I could find, I would buy. I have a lot of his recordings of classical concertos by C.P.E. Bach, Stamitz, and Hoffmeister. And also his recording of Bach's flute sonatas with Rafael Puyana, which is truly beautiful. *[FM note: this is my favorite Bach sonata recording as well!]* Maxence recorded many baroque sonatas, including those of Leclair and the Couperin *Concert Royale No. 4*. I remember him telling me as a student that it was a shame that record companies were generally not very interested at the time in recording baroque music on modern instruments—they mainly wanted original instruments.

I'd say that I enjoy pretty much any recording by Maxence. After I returned to Montreal to play in the orchestra, I decided to practice and learn some baroque and classical concertos on my own, ones that I had not done with him. I would listen to his recordings and feel inspired and that, through listening to his recorded playing, I was still studying with him.

*FM: Were there particular routines you learned from him that you use today?*

RL: He would do the Moyse-style long tones, which I still do today. By the time I reached him, he was mostly teaching me repertoire, as he felt I had studied basics with other teachers.

*FM: Do you teach your own students explicitly things you've learned from him, or is everything combined in the way you play and teach?*

RL: After all these years I'm not so sure where things have come from. Some things, of course, I've developed on my own, based on the needs of the moment. For example, when I was a student of Nicolet, he had us work a lot on opening up the sound. As a student, I was never asked to practice softly; getting an open sound was always emphasized.

The first thing I noticed later when playing in an orchestra was that every time I was about to play, I would see the palm of the conductor's

hand. Because I had never practiced playing softly I decided that in my long-tone practice I would play forte, then piano right away—subito piano, which you encounter often in Beethoven symphonies. And it's terribly difficult to do. So I thought that if I incorporate this into my daily practice, it would become easier. That's the kind of thing I have students do, because I think it's important to practice at all dynamics, keeping the same intonation, whether you're playing piano or forte.

*FM: Do you play French music today differently than when you were younger?*

RL: Not consciously, but I'd have to listen to recordings I did 30 or 40 years to be sure.

*FM: Do other flutists today influence your conception of sound?*

RL: To me, Maxence Larrieu is still the model that I think of. While there are many excellent players today, I don't think that in general the sound quality is quite what it was for Maxence, Alain Marion, Jean-Pierre, and their generation. Technically, of course, today's players can do unbelievable things, but somehow the sound quality seems to have changed. Perhaps it has something to do with how instruments today are built. In any event, I don't think there is as conscious a concentration on sound. When I was a student, sound was a big preoccupation of teachers and students. Today, beauty of sound and color seem to have a less important place.

*FM: Do you think new (Cooper) scales and others affect sonority?*

RL: I don't think so, although the Cooper scale has made life easier for intonation. As a student I had an old scale flute with many out of tune notes I had to correct.

*FM: Do any of your students have views on old scale vs. new flutes?*

RL: I doubt if they have ever tried older Haynes or Powell flutes. When I was a student there were two choices: Haynes or Powell. Today, there are so many more and the quality is very good. So I don't think most of them have any interest in older instruments.

*FM: How did you select the pieces for your program on April 8?*

RL: About a year ago, I was asked to do an April 9, 2018 concert for the Lyric Chamber Music Society

series at the Kosciuszko Foundation, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the series. That is the day after the upcoming NYFC concert. In honor of the founder and artistic director, Joan Kretschmer, I decided to perform a program entirely by women composers, of which the Bonis Sonata (which I have wanted to perform for a while) would be on the program. Being a not-so-frequently heard piece, I thought it would be interesting to put it on the Flute Club program as well.



Robert Langevin's teacher, Maxence Larrieu

I met Amanda Harberg in the fall of 2016, when I took part in a chamber music concert with faculty members of the Manhattan School of Music, where a colleague performed one of her pieces, with the composer on piano. I really liked it and asked her if she had written anything for flute. She told me that she had been commissioned to write a flute piece by a consortium of flutists, so when the time came to program this all-women composers' recital, I remembered this conversation and got in touch with her to see how the piece was coming along. She said, "If you're interested, I'd love to get together with you to read through it when I'm done writing, as I may want to change some things." I told her I'd be happy to do it. So last June (2017), she started sending one movement at a time as she finished it. This way, when we got together I would not have to sightread it, which turned out to be a good thing as parts of the piece are challenging.

When you called to ask me to play the April 8 Flute Club concert, I called Amanda, and she agreed to play the piano with me on her piece.

Then I realized that 2018 is the 100th anniversary of both the Griffes Poem and Debussy's death. Thus, it seemed appropriate to program the Poem and the Faun. I think the program is balanced, with two women and two men composers, and two American and two French composers. To me this results in an interesting juxtaposition.

*FM: I had not heard the Bonis Sonata until recently. It is very good.*

RL: Yes. I first heard it (I always look for pieces I don't know) on a recording a few years ago. Mel Bonis was quite an extraordinary woman, whose classmates included Debussy and Gabriel Pierné. I read somewhere she was very much encouraged to compose by César Franck and I hear the sonata in the romantic tradition as much closer stylistically to Franck than Debussy, who was more modern.

*FM: How do you feel playing the Debussy as a solo piece, rather than with an orchestra?*

RL: I love doing it! I've played it a fair amount over the years. First of all, I think that the arrangement by Gustave Samazeuilh, which was made from Debussy's own version for two pianos, is wonderful. You have everything in that version! The flute plays not only the flute part, but sometimes the oboe, clarinet, or solo violin, and the piano takes care of the rest. I find I'm not missing anything from the music in that arrangement. I like the piece so much, I'm always happy to do it with piano. In a way, when you do it with piano, you're the conductor, so you can do it the way you really want!

*FM: Have you played Amanda Harberg's piece before?*

RL: No, this will be a premiere for me.

*FM: Can you describe the piece?*

RL: I had previously heard a slow movement of a piece she had written. She seems to have a real talent for writing lyrical, melodic music. Someone once said to me you judge the greatness of a composer by the slow movements. I think her slow movements are especially good. The two quick movements are more rhythmic. I'll probably say a few words at the concert and ask her what inspired her to write this particular piece in the way she did.

*FM: What do you want to do as a flutist, looking forward?*

RL: I'd like to keep discovering new pieces, both newly-written and older

(Cont'd on page 7)



## A Conversation with Composer Amanda Harberg

by Julietta Curenton

**JULIETTA CURENTON:** Robert Langevin will be performing your work, *Court Dances*, on his New York Flute Club recital. When asked about your piece, he complimented your great ability to write lyrical and melodic music. Talk about why writing tonal melodies is so essential in your writing even in a day when composers tend to base their pieces on contemporary extended techniques.

**AMANDA HARBERG:** That means a lot to me—coming from Robert, who is such a remarkable musician and for whom I have such great respect. For me, musical ideas are like alchemical reactions to personal experiences and are very much shaped by specific relationships with musicians like Robert.

While I also often compose music that is rhythmic and dance-like, melodic music has always been the most personal and profound form of expression for me. Melody has been at the heart of my approach to composing from as early on as I can remember. Thinking back, there was one crystallizing moment that really stands out.

I was 14 years old and struggling with Mozart's B-flat Sonata, KV 330. I was playing it quite badly and unable to make sense of it beyond the very superficial. Then suddenly, it seemed, I had a moment in which the phrases became meaningful, and the syntax of the writing became clear to me.

For the first time, I could see the meaning behind the contours of the lines, the rhythmic scansion, the symmetrical verses, the asymmetrical, and the cadential points. I saw that breathing at the ends of phrases was a reflection of our human need to breathe when talking, and how this need to breathe shapes the way that we speak, and by extension, shapes our very thoughts. I became aware of how the grammar of musical composition could be so linguistically expressive, and how melodic lines are language imbued with meaning and structure. This insight has influenced everything I've composed since then.

I'm very aware that we live in a time in which composers who write tonally melodic music are sometimes viewed as "unoriginal" or overly traditional. I think this is simply wrong minded. This kind of aesthetic peer pressure hasn't affected my approach to writing. For me, being original is not about creating a novel concept. Being original, for me, is about authentic expression. And, for me, writing melody is the most direct and meaningful way in which I express myself.

**JC:** Did Mr. Langevin's playing influence the writing process? If so, in what way?

**AH:** Yes, it did! I first met Robert in the fall of 2016 when we both played at a recital in New York City. Hearing him play that evening, I was deeply moved by the elegance and sensitivity of his playing, as well as by his glorious singing tone. And when I mentioned to him that I was writing a new flute piece, which had been commissioned by flutist Cobus du Toit, Robert generously offered to read through it with me once it

was further along. Playing through *Court Dances* with Robert at this early stage and hearing his feedback was very helpful in seeing what worked and what didn't work.

I thought about Robert's gorgeous cantabile playing when working on the slow movement, *Air de Cour*, which has a particularly singing and soulful quality. Later, hearing him play this movement really made time stand still. We also read through *Prayer*, and Robert helped me shape my approach to the final editing. It was an unforgettable reading that was so helpful and energizing for me!



**JC:** You are also a pianist and will be performing with Robert on his upcoming recital for the New York Flute Club. How does being a pianist affect how you compose and perform a work?

**AH:** Playing piano deepens my connection to the music. Plus it's fun! I love working with performers. People's personalities come through in their playing. I've been fortunate to work with a number of wonderful flutists on *Court Dances*, and it's been inspiring to hear the variety that they bring to my music through their own personal voices and different approaches. I sometimes fear that I make my piano writing a bit too difficult, and have been consciously trying to simplify it.

**JC:** You have written so much for the flute in the past few years including a work that I commissioned, *Feathers and Wax*. Do you prefer to write for woodwinds?

**AH:** These pieces wouldn't have been written without musicians like you, Julietta, who have commissioned them. Writing *Feathers and Wax* for you was a wonderful extension of our friendship, and without you the piece wouldn't exist!

Similarly, my friend Cobus du Toit spearheaded the *Court Dances* consortium. I didn't think I had *Court Dances* in me at the time, having just finished my wind quintet and being a bit exhausted amidst a very busy time. Without Cobus' energy I wouldn't have written it at all! This was also true for the Dorian Quintet, which commissioned my *Suite for Wind Quintet* last year. I feel that this is my best piece, and, again, it wouldn't have been composed without their energy and support.

I've been very fortunate to have these commissions, which have helped me to develop my voice in writing for woodwinds. I've always adored them. They can be so playful, agile, and singing. They offer so many textural possibilities. When I was growing up, I wanted to play all of the woodwinds and rented a different instrument each summer just to see what they felt

like to play. I felt an inexplicable energy coming from them—and I still do today. When I'm writing, I use my old closed-holed flute all the time to check phrasing and articulation to make sure that the writing feels good to play. I really feel like I'm in my element when writing for woodwinds, and would welcome the opportunity to write more for these great instruments.

*JC: Tell us more about upcoming commissions that involve the flute.*

AH: Right now I'm very excited about my new piccolo sonatina (I'll be working on the third movement later this afternoon!), commissioned by Regina Helcher Yost, which we will be premiering together at NFA this summer. After that I'll be composing a piece for flute and guitar commissioned by Jenny Cline for the Cline/Cuestas Duo. Also, my brand new piece, *Inner Latitudes*, for clarinet, violin, cello and piano commissioned for the Vandoren Emerging Artist Competition will be premiered this weekend in Indianapolis. Beyond that, I'm in early stages talks about writing a wind sextet for which I'll be the pianist. I also have an orchestra commission lined up

for the Bay Atlantic Symphony to be premiered in May 2019.

*JC: Where can we find your music?*

AH: Thank you for asking. Theodore Presser Company has sheet music available for a number of my flute and piano pieces, including *Feathers and Wax*, *Court Dances*, *Poem and Transformations* (commissioned by flutist Susan Glaser), and *Prayer*. The piccolo sonatina will be available from Presser later this year. Presser also carries my *Birding in the Palisades* (a trio for flute/piccolo, B-flat clarinet, piano and optional narrator, commissioned by Palisades Virtuosi), as well as my clarinet sonata (for clarinetist Benjamin Fingland). My Suite for Wind Quintet is available directly through me (Amandaharberg@gmail.com). And links to YouTube recordings of the pieces mentioned above can be found on my website (amandaharberg.com).

*Juilliard-trained flutist **Julietta Curenton** has performed in various ensembles, including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. She has known Amanda Harberg since 2012.*

## The flute sonata of Mel Bonis

When the Flute Club last encountered Mel Bonis (technically, Mme. Mélanie Bonis Domange), she was a supporting actor in the story of Amédée Hettich, the Paris Conservatoire voice professor who commissioned Gabriel Fauré to write a vocalise, later published as *Pièce* for flute and piano and played by Sarah Jackson at the Flute Club in 2017.

This year, Mel Bonis comes to the Club on her own steam, as her flute sonata appears on Robert Langevin's April recital. In my view, she is one of the great rediscoveries of the last two decades. Born in 1848, she studied harmony with Ernest Guiraud and organ with César Franck at the Paris Conservatory, winning first prize in harmony in 1880. Mel Bonis was a close friend of Jeanne Monchablon, flutist Louis Fleury's mother-in-law; his wife was the pianist Gabrielle Monchablon, and Mel Bonis was godmother to their daughter Antoinette.

The likely premiere of the work was a performance by Fleury with Mel Bonis herself at the piano, at a concert of the Société des Compositeurs at the Salle Pleyel, Paris on 25 February 1904. It was published by Demets in Paris in 1904 and reissued by Fortin (France) and Kossack (Germany) in 2000. Bienvenue à New York, Mme. Bonis!

—Nancy Toff



*Interview (cont'd from page 5)*

ones I don't know. Since I was a student I've had a predilection to discover for myself and others pieces that are good, but somehow have been neglected. I remember when I did my graduation recital at the conservatory in Montreal, two of the four pieces I played were premieres there, although not new pieces. I had heard the Devienne Concerto in E minor on a recording by Jean-Pierre Rampal a year earlier and knew I wanted to play it. I thought it was a really great piece that nobody in Quebec had ever played. A similar thing happened the summer before, in Orford in Quebec, when I heard Jolivet's *Chant de Linos* through an

open window. It was an amazing piece! I became the first person to play it back in Montreal, where none of the pianists knew it. Since then, of course, they have learned it and it has become very standard repertoire.

*FM: One last question: Jean-Pierre Rampal once said that "I won't teach you, but you can learn from me if you want to." What have you taught yourself, by watching Maxence?*

RL: The sound! I read something recently that impressed me on this point: "Emulating the style of someone you deeply admire is a natural instinct. It helps you to find your own style along the way." Listening

to him, to this day, has always been an inspiration. This has helped me in turn develop my own style, different from Maxence's, but with the same goal of a natural and luminous sound.

***Fred Marcusa** has had a diverse musical career as an orchestral and solo flutist, flute technician, and flute-industry advisor. A long-time partner in international corporate law at Kaye Scholer, LLP, he was named a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor by the president of France.*



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



April 8, 2018

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

Robert Langevin, flute

## 98<sup>th</sup> Season

### 2017 - 2018 Concerts

**September 17, 2017** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
NOBUTAKA SHIMIZU, flute

**October 15, 2017** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
R. CARLOS NAKAI, Native American flutes

**November 12, 2017** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
EMILY SKALA, flute

**January 21, 2018** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
MINDY KAUFMAN, flute and piccolo

**February 25, 2018** • Sunday, all day  
Flute Fair, guest artist KARL-HEINZ SCHÜTZ  
Columbia University Faculty House

**March 18, 2018** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
Competition Winners Concert

**April 8, 2018** • Sunday, 5:30 pm  
ROBERT LANGEVIN, flute

**May 6, 2018** • Sunday, 3:00 pm  
Annual Meeting & Ensemble Concert  
Pearl Studios, 500 Eighth Avenue, NYC

*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!** April brings us a concert by Robert Langevin, principal flute of the New York Philharmonic, in a program that includes a rarely heard flute sonata by Mel Bonis (a female student of César Franck) and a new work by Amanda Harberg (with the composer at the piano). NYFC board member Fred Marcusa, a longtime friend of Robert's, did the interview, which broadly explores Robert's connections with the French school of flute playing (exemplified by his teacher, Maxence Larrieu) and the role of sonority in flute playing and teaching. But my favorite parts were off-topic: learning about his interactions with Amanda and getting his take on which is more fun—playing *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* with piano or with an orchestra.

To supplement the interview, we have two related treats. In the first, composer Amanda Harberg chats with her flutist friend Julietta Curenton about the composition process and her interactions with Robert (p. 6). In the second, Nancy Toff tells us about the Mel Bonis sonata (p. 7); readers interested in learning a bit more about the composer can take a look at the article Nancy wrote for the January 2017 *Newsletter* in connection with a piece on Sarah Jackson's concert program. And a wonderful online bio of Mel Bonis—compelling, inspiring, and heart-breaking, all at the same time—can be found at [mel-bonis.com](http://mel-bonis.com).

In this month's "From the President" (p. 2), Pat Zuber tells that takeaway point of the interview (for her!) was that there is nothing more central to good flute playing than sonority.

Derek Cochran, a recent Arizona transplant who is a regular in the NYFC's ensembles program, is this month's member profile subject. I enjoyed learning about his many accomplishments (which include once playing in tune with another piccolo player) and about a new (to me) flute warm-up routine that really seems to work (and is available as a free download).

Special thanks are due to every one of this issue's contributors for getting their material to me on such a tight schedule—I think the ratio of "quality of content" to "turn-around-time for preparation" has probably just set a new record!

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

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