



The New York Flute Club

NEWSLETTER

March 2024

Flute Fair's Gedigian Prioritizes Playing From the Heart

Interview by Isabella Carucci

Marianne Gedigian, the headline performer and teacher at this year's Flute Fair, spoke to me about her multifaceted approach to leading what she calls a "mastery class," offered assurances to students preparing for college auditions, and shared her concerns about artificial intelligence bringing so-called perfection to performance.

"Mastery classes are a hybrid between a lesson—the detailing you might explore in a lesson with somebody—and a general framing of topics. This is so the entire body of listeners can feel involved, informed, and engaged," says Gedigian, who is professor of flute at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra for over a decade.



Photo: Chelsea Tanner

"It's all very individualized," she says. "Whoever is in front of me is getting my full attention, and I always look for what might help a student unlock a couple of crucial things. I might look for very specific concepts if they're at a very high level. Maybe, starting on the upper part of vibrato as we move through the notes in a legato phrase and how we make our finger connections."

"You work with the student at hand, and you take them in the day that they're having. I mean, sometimes we're having a great day in public, and sometimes we're not, and you want to try to help facilitate their best experience and enable them to play at their best level. This is while offering them, as I like to say, a portal into some new opportunities. I think it's important to engage the general public because it is a class and a public circumstance, and it also gives the player an opportunity to process some things without always feeling spoken at, spoken at, spoken at."

"As for the college audition process, the level of flute playing is so exceedingly high right now.... Sometimes, it's start-

(Cont'd on page 3)

Marianne Gedigian, flute

Eliza Chang, piano

Sunday, March 24, 2024 • 7:00pm

The Allen-Stevenson School, 132 E 78th St, NYC

Program

Sonata in F Minor, TWV 41:f1	Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)
Two Romantic Pieces, Op. 75, B. 150	Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) arr. Gedigian
The Conversation of Prayer for solo flute inspired by the Dylan Thomas poem of that name	Roxanna Panufnik (b. 1968)
Fantaisie, Op. 79	Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
Three Songs	William Grant Still (1895-1978) arr. Alexa Still
Sonata in D Major, Op. 94	Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Program subject to change

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Newsletter

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Find Your Role at the Flute Club

by Jayn Rosenfeld



From the President

Dear Friends, I am back in the saddle, temporarily, and there's a lot of galloping going on. We have an excellent, broad-ranging program of events for our spring season: concerts, Flutes Out Front, I Just Wanna Play, Flute Loan Program, Flute Teacher Outreach, Flute Student Outreach, Social Media Initiatives, and, of course, the jewel in the crown, the Flute Fair on March 24.

How would you like to be involved? Perhaps I can convince you that I need help by telling you what I'll have on my plate in the next few months.

First, there's the Programming Committee. We are choosing players for the Sunday night concerts for 2024-25, as well as the guest of honor for the 2025 Fair. When that is gently bubbling, we must find dates, venues, accompanists, and competition runners in order to create and enable a rewarding afternoon for our members and guests. Committee members include non-board members from Puerto Rico and the popular and ethnic music fields.

The Nominating Committee will fill coming board vacancies and is looking for non-board members with energy, imagination and—how shall I say?—new, youthful enthusiasm. The DEI—Diversity, Equity and Inclusion—Committee, runs the Thursday night and Saturday afternoon Zoom, and we have other initiatives as well, creating live events, always looking for a broader range of flutists, teachers, mentors, inspirers.

The other active committees in the Club right now are Social Media, Finance, Educational Outreach, Newsletter, Membership, and Industry Relations.

If it sounds ambitious and exhausting, you're getting the idea. A club full of energy, motivation, commitment, and love of the flute. What will your role be this year?

Congratulations to the Winners of the 2024 Young Musicians Contest

NYFC's 2024 Young Musicians Contest was held on Sunday, February 25th at the School for Strings in NYC. Many thanks to YMC coordinator **Caroline Sonett-Assor** and the judges. Congratulations to the winners, who will appear in recital at the NY Flute Fair on March 24th.



Age 8 and under:
Owen Power



Age 9-11:
Lucy Kessler



Age 12-14:
Ella (Dooeum) Cho and Mac Wong
(bamboo flute)



Age 15-18
Ellie Choi and Oriana Huang

(Gedigian interview, cont'd from page 1)

ing to feel like a professional audition, which I don't love, to be honest." But, "if you're invited to a live audition, if there has already been a screen round, you've already demonstrated that you have the potential to fit in. Even if somebody has an off day, you still can hear past that to recognize that potential in an individual."

She says the fundamental skill sets are the key to everything when applying to music school. "While I don't expect somebody to have all of them completely under control, it says a lot about somebody in terms of longevity in the field and possible success if they take the time to ensure they have a fluid vibrato between notes. It does take care to reflect on intonation, perhaps practicing with drones or recording themselves."

She adds, "I look for a well-rounded individual who is not allergic to academics.... We look for someone who wants to continue developing their brain because your brain is still developing at that place in life." Beyond that, "I think personal fit is a big deal because in a studio this small—we have seven this year—we have to have a fluid camaraderie here, too, and people who want to support one another while spurring everybody forward."

Our discussion later ventured into the question of where art is going in the age of artificial intelligence. "I hope we'll find our way in AI and other technological aspects to say, 'this is great for this,' but I still want a heart-to-heart and human contact," Gedigian says. "We have to value that, and we have to value failure, which we call failure, which I think is just exploration."

"That idea of perfection—I don't even know what it means. I can't even fathom what we mean when somebody says perfect. When we talk about the difference between us and AI, we think, what if we get replaced by AI and it can do everything without error? ... Sure, but where's the humanity, and where's the human experience of gathering together in a space, even if it's a very small audience or somebody's living room? These are actual human experiences, and I value those experiences. I value the art of live performance. I always promise to mess up in a recital because I refuse to play defensively, and I refuse to play

in a way that I won't make errors and won't be out of tune."

"It's live, it's action, and there's risk-taking. We should encourage students to feel that way, not just in their exploration or in their practice room but on stage. Having that feeling of connection from the stage, you'll feel it back from your audience. And honestly, I don't know if computers ever will really give us that feeling."

"I always promise to mess up in a recital because I refuse to play defensively"

Gedigian will be performing a concert that embraces a wide range of composers, from Baroque to contemporary. "I've always thought of programming as an expansive concept. I've performed many topic-specific and themed concerts, but I love doing comprehensive time and genre exploration," she says. "The audience gets to listen to different styles and periods, and I think that's just more fun and engaging for them."

Gedigian will be performing with pianist Eliza Chang. Chang is on the staff at the Shepherd School, but this will be their first performance together. "She is deeply steeped in violin and bassoon repertoire, so I deferred a lot to her in terms of her comfort level in programming. Specifically, what she might find fun and maybe some things that she's done before—that's where the Prokofiev came in."

"She heard me do the William Grant Still in the fall in a recital, and she loved that piece. So, a lot of the program was designed collaboratively."

In choosing a relatively traditional lineup, Gedigian said she expects there would be students there who may be working on some of these pieces currently. "As a student, it's fun to hear somebody whose name you might have heard previously just play some of these warhorses that we all connect with at some point," she says.

They will also present a piece by Roxanna Panufniks, a living composer. "This is a short piece based on a quote by Dylan Thomas, which I hope people will read. It's quite short, but it's

a powerful piece. I don't want to give anything away, but anything based on Dylan Thomas will be profound."

Performing the works of living composers is important to Gedigian. "I mean, hello, we're alive!" she says. "It's important in terms of propagating repertoire, endorsing living composers, expanding our repertoire, and hearing things that may not be typical of pieces we might normally listen to. It's also very important to recognize that those composers were typically from a certain population. And it's very important not just to include, I don't like the word include so much, but to have a program where belonging is key. We're taking a journey through time, and time includes now."

Looking ahead to the Flute Fair, "I'm excited to join the community there for the day," Gedigian says. "New York has always been a sacred place for me in many ways because it's an epicenter of some of the finest artistry and flute playing we have internationally. To come and play for a New York crowd is the equivalent of New York Fashion Week, right?"

"It's a gift to come and share music with everybody, share ideas in a class, and partner with the community. I hope people will come up and talk to me and tell me what they're doing. And as usual, I always promise to mess up something and then to be that resilience we've discussed today. To move on from it and say, this is what life looks like. Sometimes, we just have to go forward, best foot forward, and that's my motto: make the most of everything to the best of my abilities. I hope to share that with you that day."

Isabella Carucci, age 20, is the winner of the 2024 Solo Honors Competition and will perform Renaissance Concerto by Lukas Foss as a soloist with the Perryburg Symphony Orchestra in April. A student of Amy Porter, she studies flute performance and minors in writing at the University of Michigan. She is a substitute piccolo player for the Lima Symphony Orchestra and a Performing Arts EXCEerator fellow for her non-profit, the Flute Pedagogy Project.

Reinstalled WPA Mural Features NYFC Founder Georges Barrère

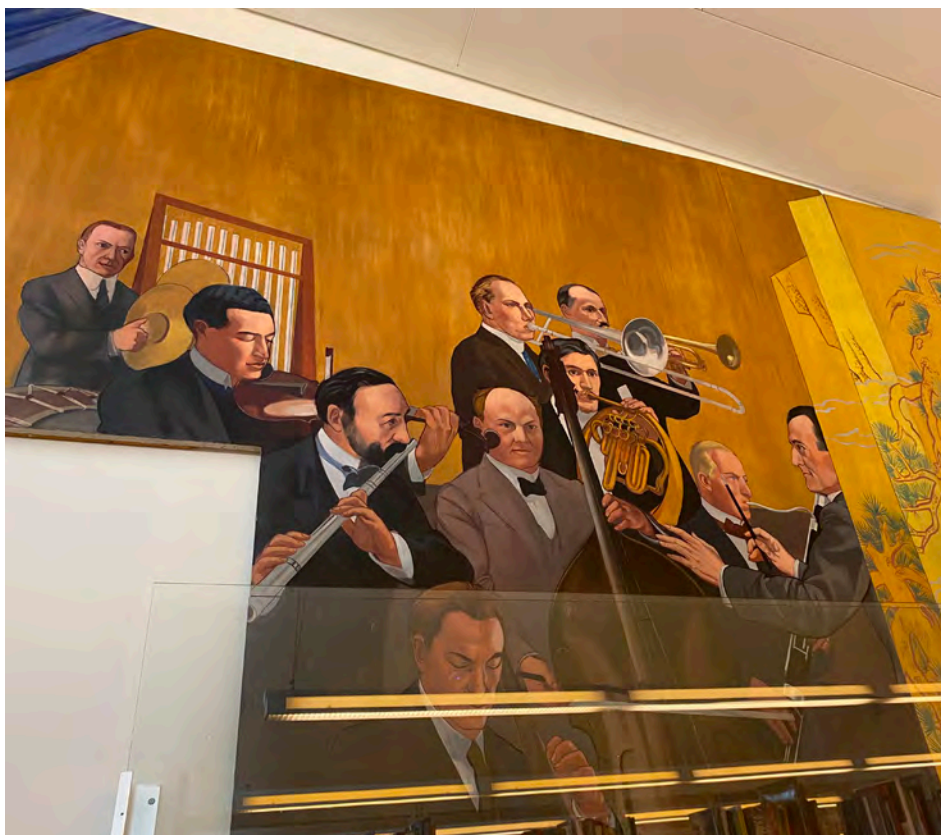
by Nancy Toff

In a long-ago Google search, I accidentally discovered that Georges Barrère made his way onto a WPA mural in Santa Monica, California—one of a series painted by Stanton Macdonald-Wright for the Santa Monica Public Library in 1934-35. The 2,000 square feet of murals documented the arts and sciences and were designed to accommodate the windows and other architectural features of the building.

When the old library was torn down, the murals were sent to the Smithsonian, and then in 2006 were reinstalled in the new downtown library. The oddly shaped mural of 1930s musicians, protected by Plexiglas, now adorns the arts shelves. Last fall, when I was in Los Angeles for a conference, I was able to drive out to Santa Monica to see and photograph the mural for myself.

The musicians shown are Hans Goettich, cymbals; Samuel Lifschey, viola; Georges Barrère, flute; Engelbert Roentgen, cello; Morris Tivin, double bass; R. Van der Elst, trombone; Carl Heinrich, trumpet; Josef Franzl, French horn; and Ugo Savolini, bassoon. All were members of the New York Symphony, but why they were chosen, we don't know. My guess is that all were photographed for *The Orchestra and Its Instruments* by Esther Singleton, published by the NYSO in 1917; the poses are nearly identical. Strangely, however, the conductor is Karl Muck of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, who never conducted the NYSO.

See <https://smpl.org/mural/history.htm> for the full story of the murals (but the video tour no longer works because its Flash software has been discontinued).



Flute Diaries

A student was traveling from Chicago to San Francisco for auditions when the flight attendant insisted on checking in the smallest carry-on bag at the gate. After the mother and daughter boarded, the flight attendant then noticed there was an issue with the ticket and they had to get on another flight. The mother assumed the bag would be transferred, but unfortunately, it wasn't. Inside that smallest carry-on was a 14K gold Powell flute without any lock.

They reached San Francisco at 11 pm Pacific Time, and for about an hour, they attempted to retrieve the bag. Eventually, the airline located it—in Boulder, Colorado—and ensured it would be on the first flight to San Francisco on Sunday morning. Although the carry-on didn't arrive first thing in the morning, the flute was still inside. The mother, student, and I, along with their family in Korea, couldn't rest until the flute was recovered and played without any issues. Remarkably, she used that flute for her San Francisco Conservatory audition, and all had a happy ending.

—Soo-Kyung Park

We invite you to share your flute-related memories in this new column in the newsletter, *Flute Diaries*. Send to: newsletters@nyfluteclub.org

FLUTE



HAPPENINGS

APRIL '24

Apr. 2 Tuesday, 7:30pm

The Musicians of Lenox Hill with **Soo-Kyung Park** present their *Annual Spring Chamber Music Concert*

Temple Israel of New York City
112 East 75th Street, NYC

Info: www.tinyc.org/molh

Admission: \$30
Free entry available online by using the code TINYC2024

Returning to Cuba to Make Flutes Sing

by Stephanie Jutt

I had always wanted to go to Cuba. Sure, I'd seen the Buena Vista Social Club films that showcased amazing Cuban musicians who were playing the traditional styles, and I had all their recordings. But it was the great classical composers—Ernesto Lecuona, Tania León, Leo Brouwer, and Ignacio Cervantes, among others—that I loved. I've had a long-abiding interest in music from South America and Mexico and my recordings include *Latin American and Spanish Masterpieces* and *Seducción*.

The Cuban embargo, the near impossibility for Cubans to travel abroad, and the on-again-off-again diplomatic relations have greatly impacted musicians there. I thought that if I could just get there, I could perhaps do some teaching and playing and help in some way. It was my plan to donate sheet music and flute-repair supplies to Cuban musicians.

Through mutual friends, I met the virtuoso Cuban flutist, Niurka González, during my first trip to Havana in 2018. With her encouragement, I returned in 2019 with two great friends, NY Philharmonic flutist Mindy Kaufman and Phil Unger, the owner of Flute Center of New York. In Havana, Mindy and I taught masterclasses and played a recital. Phil repaired what seemed like hundreds of flutes and trained Cuban student woodwind-repair technicians.

We were amazed by the student flutists and their high level of performance and training, especially considering the poor quality of flutes that they played. Phil donated a suitcase full of woodwind repair supplies and tools to the luthiers. Yamaha in Manhattan chipped in flute pads and other supplies. We were so inspired that Phil, Mindy, and I immediately began to collaborate with Niurka

to create a national flute competition. It was our hope to award instruments to the competition winners and improve the situation for Cuban flutists throughout the island.

After more than a year of planning, that competition—the Concurso Nacional de Flauta Roberto Ondina in Memoriam—took place in Havana in December 2023. It was named in honor of Roberto Ondina (1904-1963), who was the principal flutist of the Havana Philharmonic Orchestra and soloist of the National Symphony Orchestra for many years, as well as a distinguished flute professor. Ondina was perhaps the first black flutist to achieve prominence in classical music in Cuba. There is even a national postage stamp in his honor.

There were three age categories for the competition, and 41 flutists from all over the island of Cuba participated. The principal flutist of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Cuba, Zorimè Caturla, Mindy Kaufman, and I were the three judges. González was the organizer and publicist for the festival.

The competition had two rounds, and the nine winners performed a final recital in a beautiful concert hall on the final day. The prizes were new instruments, which are needed so desperately by students in Cuba. Ethan Lin of Burkart Flutes donated a new Burkart Resona flute for the top winner in the most advanced category, Jim Phelan donated a new professional-quality flute from Flutemakers of Australia, and Unger donated two alto flutes, a piccolo, and a step-up flute from his inventory at the Flute Center of New York.

Unger again sat at his bench for many, many hours each day and fixed flutes free of charge and taught several students of woodwind repair at the same time. The nine winners were ecstatic, and we're certain that it gave them a huge boost of confidence and optimism.



Phil Unger at his flute repair workbench in Cuba with a student.

Let me give you a feel for the final concert, which took place in a large church that had been converted into a performance space. Hundreds of excited friends and family members (I mean entire families – little kids, grandparents, parents, and cousins) with bouquets of flowers for the flutists arrived. One busload of students traveled from over 10 hours away, on the eastern end of Cuba, to participate in the competition. They were housed in a dormitory miles away from the venue, and their bus broke down on the way to the final concert. A large tropical storm had been threatening and the venue had to be moved at the last moment. We waited to begin the concert until the stranded students could be transported to the concert in several vans that were hastily commandeered. We couldn't start without them.

All the flutists were wildly applauded with whoops and yells of "Bravo!" After the nine winners performed, González invited prominent music teachers from all over Havana to present the winners with a long-stemmed rose and their new instruments. After the concert, there were tears, hugs, and a great sense of camaraderie that pervaded the whole week. Everyone was genuinely happy for the winners, even if they didn't win themselves, and the confluence of flutists for the first national competition created an excitement and hopefulness that inspired everyone.

We have plans to make the flute competition a biennial event and to invite other professional flutists to join us. Unger's goal is to collect a hundred flutes to give away to Cuban flutists, and if you would like to consider joining us in this effort, please get in touch with Phil Unger at the Flute Center of New York. Andale!



Left to right: Phil Unger, Niurka Gonzalez, Stephanie Jutt, Zorime Caturla, and Mindy Kaufman

NYFC Ensemble Update

Nineteen flutists met for the NY Flute Club Ensemble rehearsal on February 18th conducted by Denise Koncelik. We started with *The Flute Garden* and ended the rehearsal with *Reflections*, both by Ricky Lombardo. Other works included the Bach-Gounod *Ave Maria* arranged by member Bill Giannone, and *Red River Valley* by Kelly Via. *Fireworks* by New Yorker Daniel Dorff and part of Catherine McMichael's *A Gaelic Offering* were also rehearsed. The ice-breaker question was, "Who was your first (or favorite) music teacher?" The answers were interesting and varied: one member learned from his sister, many named their elementary school music teacher, several mentioned band and college instructors, and some famous flutists such as Julius Baker.

The monthly rehearsals are at Studios 353 at 353 West 48th Street, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm; the next rehearsal is on

Saturday, March 16, 2024

To join the ensemble:

- You must be a current member of the NY Flute Club.
- You must have proof of Covid-19 vaccination.
- No audition is required. We accept all levels of players.

If you'd like to participate, email Ensemble co-directors Denise Koncelik and Mark Vickers at ensembles@nyfluteclub.org.



Denise
Koncelik



Mark
Vickers



Left to right: Lee Koss, Chip Shelton, Lauren Kurtz, Gene Coleman, Lester Yu, Bill Giannone, Roger Brooks, Iona Aibel, Doug Ramsdell, Frances Lenci, Stephen Josephs, Catherine Xu, Javed Yaramadi, Sam Ostrowski, Laura Torff, Laura Pologe, Karen Robbins, Elizabeth Doyle, Denise Koncelik.

An Ode to the NYFC Ensemble

by Victoria Carchietta

During my initial meetings as a new member of the New York Flute Club's social media and newsletter committees, the ensemble program was a recurrent topic. I heard from committee chairs, volunteers, professional flutists, amateurs, retirees, and recent graduates about how remarkable the ensemble was.

I was told multiple times how the ensemble rehearsals are a beloved time carved out of the week for flute lovers to get together and share a passion they would not otherwise have the opportunity to indulge. Among everyone's hectic lives, in addition to the myriad of social turmoil affecting everyone, the ensemble is a two-hour-long peaceful oasis where none of those problems come along. **Ambika Bansal** is one member for whom this is especially true.

Ambika joined the ensemble just before the COVID-19 pandemic. She regularly

came to a few rehearsals and was loving the return to her beloved flute after focusing on her career as a teacher. Just before the ensemble concert she had been preparing for for weeks, her life forever changed and she was unable to perform.

Ambika was unexpectedly diagnosed with breast cancer. For the next year, in the midst of the pandemic, she was braving chemotherapy treatments. Cancer treatment consumed every aspect of her life, and she had little time or energy for much else, much less the flute.

After a year of turmoil, Ambika came out the other end cancer free. However, she now has to reconcile with this frightening period of her past and has to handle the long-term effects of chemotherapy and the fear of the disease returning.

Though so much in her life has changed, the flute ensemble has stayed constant. Now that she is able to return to the group, it is a space of bountiful peace and calm. Having dedicated time where Ambika can pursue a passion, make beautiful and healing music, and have a space where she doesn't have lingering thoughts of cancer is rare and appreciated.

Ambika was welcomed back with open arms and no judgment. The ensemble accepts her however she is feeling on that day on her road to full recovery. Any fatigue doesn't matter, just the fact she is there.

Ambika is just one member who makes up the loving, patient, understanding, and, most of all, fun ensemble. Whether you're looking for a hobby, a rare time away from stress, or a mixture of both, anyone is welcome at any ensemble rehearsal.

New York Flute Fair 2024

Focus Forward: On Track for Success

Sunday, March 24, 2024 | 9am-8pm

The Allen-Stevenson School | 132 East 78th Street, NYC

Pre-registration discounted fee is online only (nyfluteclub.org). Register now and save!

- NYFC member: \$50 (\$10 higher at the door)
- Non-member: \$70 (\$10 higher at the door)
- Full-time student: \$25 (\$5 higher at the door)
- Non-flutist family member attending with a full-time student: \$10
- Non-flutist guest: \$50 (\$10 higher at the door)
- Senior citizen, age 65+: \$25 (\$5 higher at the door)
- Teacher bringing 3 preregistered full-time students: \$40 (teacher must preregister)

Concerts | Masterclasses | Workshops | Lectures | ExhibitsGuest Artist ***Marianne Gedigian******Tag Sale and NYFC Table***

Visit the tag sale for bargains on used music, CDs, vintage LPs, artwork, and other flute-related items. The NYFC table sells CDs and publications by NYFC members and guest artists. Contributions are welcome—clean out your closets and bring us your duplicate Kuhlaus and the pieces you no longer play. NYFC members may sell up to 10 items at the NYFC table. Members wishing to sell items may bring them to the table beginning at 9:00 am and must collect unsold items by 5:00 pm. Contact Nancy Toff at nancy.toff@oup.com for more information.

Raffle

Win a lesson/career counseling session (your choice) with guest artist Marianne Gedigian. Tickets are \$10 for 1 ticket, \$25 for 3 tickets, and \$50 for 7 tickets. and can be purchased when you register online or at the fair.

***Did you know Marianne Gedigian is a published author?***

An 80+ page picture book published in 2015 written by Gedigian, illustrated by Patti Adams, and produced by Adam Workman

A flutist sets forth on their journey with the essentials: a metronome, a pencil, and a music stand. But, can they stay humble, passionate, and eager regardless of whatever challenges they encounter? Watch as an unexpected journey unfolds...



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



March 24, 2024 NY Flute Fair

Sunday, 9am-8pm • Allen-Stevenson School, 132 East 78th Street

Marianne Gedigian, Guest Artist

104th Season

2023-2024 Events

September 24, 2023 (FOF) • Sunday, 2:00 pm

Dennis Rendleman, flutist, dancer, conductor

October 15, 2023 (C) • Sunday, 5:30 pm

Adam Eccleston, Portland Symphony

November 5, 2023 (C) • Sunday, 5:30 pm

Borealis Wind Quintet

November 19, 2023 (FOF) • Sunday, 2:00 pm

Lawrence Liggins, flutist and educator

December 3, 2023 (C) • Sunday, 5:30 pm

Dominique Kim, 2021 NFA YA Comp. winner

January 21, 2024 (C) • Sunday, 5:30 pm

Carol Wincenc and the Gossamer Trio

January 28, 2024 (FOF) • Sunday, 2:00 pm

Haruna Fukazawa

February 4, 2024 (C) • Sunday, 5:30 pm

Michael Kofler, Munich Philharmonic

March 24, 2024 • Sunday, all day

NY Flute Fair, Marianne Gedigian, guest artist

April 18, 2024 (IJWP) • Thursday, 7:00 pm

Jinni Rock-Bailey, How to Start a Business in NY

April 28, 2024 (C) • Sunday, 5:30 pm

Winners of the 2024 NYFC Competition

May 19, 2024 (C) • Sunday, time TBA

Annual Meeting and Ensemble Program Concert

Additional events to be announced.

Unless otherwise noted, concerts (C), "Flutes Out Front" (FOF), and Flute Fair (FF) events will be in-person; "I Just Wanna Play!" (IJWP) events will be virtual. Details, visit nyfluteclub.org.