



# The New York Flute Club

## NEWSLETTER

## From East to West And Back Again, Cordova-Arrington Makes Connections

By Lisa Vickery

As the New York Flute Club's January guest artist, Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington will bring a program and approach to teaching influenced by her interactions with fellow musicians and a desire to build community.

Her mastery class and recital on Sunday Jan. 11—note date change—will include traditional classical compositions such as the Telemann Sonata in F Minor and the Suite, Op. 34, by Charles-Marie Widor, but also lesser-known pieces such as *Sonatine* by Walter Giesecking and *Moonlit Waters* by Lawren Brianna Ware.



January guest artist **Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington**

*Photo: Rachel Hadiashar.*

Cordova-Arrington's programming choices for the recital were in part inspired by some of her students at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, where she is the Assistant Professor of Flute. When she performs pieces that

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## Join an Online Conversation With Composer Joan Tower

By Nancy Toff

Joan Tower is, yes, a towering figure in American music, and the subject of the Flute Club's next online program, scheduled for Thursday Jan. 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Winner of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Grawemeyer Award, and three Grammy Awards, she was named Musical America's 2020 Composer

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2025-2026

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**From the President**



**Bye-Bye 2025;  
Hello, 2026!**

**T**he December snow arrived mid-month, and many of us found warmth and happiness by attending holiday musical events throughout the city.

Even though it was Nutcracker season, we were

fortunate to experience the artistry and creativity of New York City Ballet flutist Rachel Blumenthal through her mastery class and recital. Jayn Rosenfeld's interview with David Amram was a fascinating online event that will be available soon on our YouTube channel for those who missed it.

What's in store for 2026? Let's meet up in person on Sunday Jan. 11 for a mastery class and recital with Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington, assistant professor of flute at the University of Oregon and board co-chair of the Umoja Flute Institute. Online we will meet Jan. 8 with soul jazz flutist Ragan Whiteside and on Jan. 29 we will explore the music of Joan Tower through interviews and discussions with the composer herself along with Lisa Bost-Sandberg, Patricia Spencer, and Carol Wincenc.

Finally, don't forget to submit a proposal for Flute Fair 2026: From Dream to Reality with guest artist Jennifer Grim (March 22). Your workshops and lecture/performances are the heart of the fair. Visit [NYFluteClub.org](http://NYFluteClub.org) for details. Happy New Year!

Lish  
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# Photos From Rachel Blumenthal's Gig

Rachel Blumenthal, flutist with the New York City Ballet, took a break from her jammed *Nutcracker* season to teach a mastery class and perform for the NYFC on Dec. 7. Clockwise from top left: Blumenthal, left, reminded Zoe Hart not to rush the runs in Gaubert's *Fantasia*. Blumenthal and Isabella Carucci worked on Mozart and Debussy. The guest artist discussed vibrato with Bryce Cox. In the recital that followed the class, Blumenthal—joined by pianist Min Young Kang—played the Allegretto from Godard's *Suite de trios morceaux*, *Soliloquy* by Jake Heggie, Poulenc's flute sonata, Valerie Coleman's *Requiem Milonga* and Otar Taktakishvili's Sonata in C Major. She dedicated the performance of the Taktakishvili to Jeanne Baxtresser, one of her flute professors, and noted that her current NYC Ballet job puts her in Baxtresser's longtime stomping grounds at Lincoln Center.



Photos: Lisa Vickery

# Cordova-Arrington Works to Make Connections

*Continued from page 1*

some of her students are working on, she says, “I feel like I get the benefit of looking back on the time when I was learning the piece while also gaining fresh perspective from watching a student experience it for the first time.”

Cordova-Arrington says she first heard the Giesecking Sonatine played by Amy Porter, who was her flute professor at the University of Michigan. “I connected with the piece emotionally during college, in part because of its darker, more introspective nature,” she says. She immediately told Porter she wanted to learn the piece.

“Now I have fresh eyes playing it” for the Flute Club concert, she says, because one of her own students is working on it.

She says she chose *Moonlit Waters* because “the work invites deep interpretive listening, as the mysterious piano opening leaves the listener unsure of where the harmony will lead.” The listener imagines they are on this walk by a lake. “The middle becomes quite tumultuous,” she says, but at the end, “there is some redemption, and the moon is restored to its original beautiful image....It’s a good way to start an imaginative program.”

***“Until a student or a learner takes on an idea and embraces it, it’s not their own.”***

Also on the concert program are some selections from *My Lord, What a Morning* by Marianne Kim, a Chicago-based jazz arranger. “As an artist, I am becoming more open with my colleagues and students about the impact my faith has had on my artistic life,” saying that she grew up Catholic but with a father who was previously Baptist, and she attended a Quaker school.

Cordova-Arrington, originally from Philadelphia, was in a youth orchestra with Lish Lindsey, our Flute Club president. During her college years she lived in New York City when she was in Ensemble Connect, a two-year fellowship program for young professional classical musicians

## **Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington, flute Min Young Kang, piano**

Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026

3:30 p.m. mastery class

5:30 p.m. concert

Allen-Stevenson School

132 East 78th Street

### **Flute Songs for Prayer and Reflection**

Moonlit Waters.....Lawren Brianna Ware  
(b. 1994)

Sonata in F minor.....G.P. Telemann  
(1681-1767)

Sonatine.....Walter Giesecking  
(1895-1956)

The Old Rugged Cross.....G. Bennard  
(1873-1958)

Great Is Thy Faithfulness.....W. Runyan  
(1870-1957)

*Hymns arranged by Marianne Kim*

Suite, Op. 34.....Charles-Marie Widor  
(1844-1937)

through Carnegie Hall, the Juilliard School and the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the New York City Department of Education. Now she is on the West Coast, but luckily for the newsletter, she is an early riser who agreed to a recent 6:30 a.m. chat. Early mornings, she says, allow her to get a lot done before leaping into the day’s schedule with her husband and two young daughters and all the rest of her life and work.

After getting a Master’s in Music at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Cordova-Arrington completed her doctorate at the Eastman School of Music, studying with

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# Cordova-Arrington Makes Connections

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Bonita Boyd and earning an additional certificate in world music. As a recipient of a Fulbright grant, she studied with Andreas Blau, principal flutist of the Berlin Philharmonic. That led to performances with major orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, and Louisiana Philharmonic.

During the 3:30 p.m. mastery class preceding the concert, Cordova-Arrington says she wants to put the performers in the driver's seat.

Rather than suggest to the performers that they do this or that, she says she wants to "facilitate a discussion about what the performer would like to see in the piece."

"Until a student or a learner takes on an idea and embraces it, it's not their own," she says. "I love exploring what lies beneath the surface of a student's experience with a piece."

"Everyone who studies music brings preexisting knowledge, but we need to articulate—and sometimes even challenge—what we think we understand about a piece," she says.

To help students with verbalization, one of the tools that she uses at her university job is a wheel of musical expression that can be spun, like a carnival game. The idea came from a colleague, University of Oregon bassoon professor Steve Vacchi. Picture a pie-shaped wheel with the slices labeled with items such as Articulation, Phrasing, Pacing. She took his idea and redesigned it. "I have different pieces in the pie," such as What makes something musically expressive? What can help with a technical challenge?

For instance, spin the wheel on the pie. It lands on balance. How's the balance with the piano? "It can bring out questions. It's helpful for students to speak about expression." She then might suggest, "Try it three different ways. Which one did you like? Lots of experimentation."

During a lesson, she can ask: "What in this musical pie is not working for you?" "It's a great starting point for making musical decisions; it gives students the ability to make choices."

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## Building Bridges in Unity With Black Flutists

**J**acqueline Cordova-Arrington works to foster deep connections with other Black musicians and is a co-founder and co-chair of the Umoja Flute Institute, a nonprofit that came to being in 2021 following the murder of George Floyd, a Black man who died at the hands of police in Minneapolis, sparking a national reckoning over racial injustice.

She says that the flutist and composer Valerie Coleman contacted her and said she thought there was a need for Black flutists to come together and have a community. Coleman asked Cordova-Arrington if she could do it. "I felt anxious about taking on the task, balancing life with a newborn while navigating the COVID pandemic. Thankfully, Valerie, a trusted colleague and mentor, stepped in to help by connecting me with flutists who could lend their support."

The name of the nonprofit comes from Coleman's piece *Umoja*, which means unity.

The organization hosts regional meet-ups and other gatherings, organized an in-person summer event, led a commission project with composer and flutist Allison Loggins-Hull, and collaborates with the National Flute Association, where Cordova-Arrington serves on the board. The idea is to give Black flutists the tools they need to thrive at all levels of music making and to foster an international community, celebrating the musical contribution of artists of African descent and exposing flutists to diverse opportunities and experiences.

The institute "is incredibly important to me," says Cordova-Arrington, "because, as a Black flutist, it can often feel like you're operating in a silo. Umoja allows you to celebrate with others who have had similar lived experiences and to build meaningful community."

— Lisa Vickery

# Join a Conversation With Joan Tower

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of the Year. Since 1972 she has been the Asher Edelman Professor of Music at the Bard College Conservatory of Music. A major contributor to the modern flute repertoire, she has collaborated frequently with leading members of the New York flute community, who will join her in conversation with flutist-composer Lisa Bost-Sandberg. The event is part of the Flute Club's American music series.

In nearly any conversation with Tower, she will acknowledge her debt to flutists; there ought to be a Nobel Prize for flutists, she says, because they commission so much music. In this program, she will talk about four such works, and we'll hear most of them played by the original performers.



**Joan Tower listening to the premiere by Bard students of her *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman No. 5* during the pandemic, Dec. 11, 2020.**

*Photo: Tara Helen O'Connor*



**A 1980 flyer for the tenth anniversary concert by the Da Capo Chamber Players, a new-music ensemble founded in 1969 by Joan Tower, flutist Patricia Spencer, and violinist Joel Lester that continues today.**

In 1969, Tower, flutist Patricia Spencer, and violinist Joel Lester founded the Da Capo Chamber Players, a pioneering new-music ensemble that continues today. Tower, a pianist as well as composer, bridges those two worlds with care and intention. She has pointed out a “dangerous split” between the perspectives of composer and performer; prior to the 20th century, “composers and performers were interchangeable.”

In subsequent years, she says, performers spent more time developing technical skills and composers became more academically oriented, performing less. Tower’s goal is to reunite them. In a Bard class called Composition for Performers, she teaches the performers to think about “how the page comes to be at all. It makes them much more empathetic towards composers, because they (understand) how difficult it is to compose. A lot of those players are now playing new music as a result.”

Likewise, composers become considerate of performers; as the notes to her New World Records album state, “Tower’s compositions are characterized by an instrumental color and brilliance and by her writing which is both challenging and flattering to performers.”

The first piece on the program, *Petroushkates*, is a work for Pierrot ensemble that she wrote for Da Capo’s tenth anniversary. It is an homage to

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# Tower Conversation

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Stravinsky, based on the “Shrovetide Fair” music from *Pétrouchka*. Says Tower, “In an attempt to understand why figure skating, especially pair skating, was so beautiful and moving to me, I discovered a musical corollary I had been working on for a while—the idea of a seamless action. (Skating, of course, has no seams unless you stop!)”

*Hexachords* (1972) was written for Pat Spencer and reflects Da Capo’s support for twelve-tone composition in that period. According to the notes for one recording, “Prior to 1974, Tower utilized what she called ‘maps’ to outline the complex structures and procedures she employed in writing her music. The title *Hexachords* refers to that work’s ‘map,’ which is a six-note, unordered chromatic collection of pitches. The challenge of writing a work for unaccompanied flute is here met by ‘mapping’ a wide variety of contrasting colors, dynamics, and rhythms through all the instrument’s registers. *Hexachords* offers a virtuoso flutist the opportunity to show off her technique and imagination in following the directions indicated on Tower’s ‘map.’”

Tower has written several pieces for Carol Wincenc, beginning with *Snow Dreams* for flute and guitar in 1980. Next came the concerto, in 1989, which was commissioned and premiered by the American Composers Orchestra. The miniature *Valentine Trills* is one of 11 pieces Wincenc commissioned for a 1996 Valentine’s Day concert in Merkin Hall (and subsequently published in an album by Carl Fischer).

*Rising*, for flute and string quartet, is the fourth. Wincenc and the Juilliard Quartet premiered it in 2010. Tower wrote: “I have always been interested in how music can ‘go up.’...The main theme in *Rising* is an ascent motion using different kinds of scales—mostly octatonic or chromatic—and occasionally arpeggios. These upward motions are then put through different filters, packages of time and varying degrees of heat environments which interact with competing static and downward motions.”

In 2017, Tower reset *Rising* for flute and string orchestra. The conductor of the premiere, Philip Mann of the Texas Tech University Symphonic Orchestra, observed, “The uncommon

## Joan Tower’s Works for Flute (solo and chamber groups)

***Brimset*** (1965), 2fl, 2 perc  
***Movements*** (1968), fl, pf  
***Prelude for Five Players*** (1970), fl, ob (or vn), cl, bn (or vc), pf  
***Hexachords*** (1972; 2nd ed., 2021), fl  
***Amazon I*** (1977), fl, cl, vn, vc, pf  
***Petroushskates*** (1980) fl, cl, vn, vc, pf  
***Noon Dance*** (1982) fl (afl, picc), cl, perc, pf, vn, vc  
***Snow Dreams*** (1983) fl and guit  
***Concerto*** (1989) fl, orch  
***Valentine Trills*** (1996) fl  
***A Little Gift*** (2006) fl, cl  
***A Gift*** (2007), fl(picc), cl, bn, hn, pf  
***Rising*** (2009) fl, 2vn, va, vc  
***For Marianne*** (2010) fl  
***Looking Back*** (2018) fl, cl, vn, vc, pf  
***Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman No. 5*** (1993; arr. for 4 flutes by composer, 2020) 4fl  
***Rising*** (arr. by composer, 2017) fl, str orch  
***Into the Night*** (2022) fl, cl, vn, vc, pf, vibraphone

Additional information can be found at [NYFluteClub.org](http://NYFluteClub.org).

power and beauty of Tower’s *Rising* was a superlative match with its dedicatee, Carol Wincenc. Rarely have I encountered such a profoundly and energetically moving response from an audience in hearing the new or unfamiliar.”

Tower’s *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman No. 5*, which she arranged for four flutes from the original for trumpet quartet, was played at the Flute Club in December 2024. A takeoff on Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*, the piece honors bold, adventurous women.

The program on Jan. 29 promises a lively hour with four bold, adventurous, uncommon women who exemplify the best of composer-performer collaborations.

# Young Musicians Contest: Applications Due Feb. 1

The annual Young Musicians Contest will take place on Sunday, March 1, 2026, at the School for Strings, 419 West 54th Street in Manhattan.

First held in 2008, the contest is designed to foster the development of young flutists by exposing them to a healthy competitive environment and allowing them to receive constructive comments from professional flutists.

The contest is divided into four age groups for students playing the Western concert flute (Boehm flute in C): ages 8 and under, 9 to 11, 12 to 14, and 15 to 18 (in the last category, students must currently be in high school or the home schooling equivalent).

Students who play non-Western flutes (e.g., pan flute, African harmonic flute, Chinese bamboo flute, shakuhachi) will be judged separately by judges who have experience with the student's instrument. This year, regular applications for the Young Musicians Contest are due Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026.

Winners will be announced on or before Sunday, March 8, 2026. Winners will perform at the New York Flute Club's annual Flute Fair, scheduled for Sunday, March 22, 2026.

Contestants can choose which piece they want to play on competition day. Memorization is not required.

For students who study with a private flute teacher, their teacher must be a

2025-2026 NYFC member. If a teacher is not a member, they must join or renew before the applicant submits the contest application. Contestants and teachers do not have to be based in the NYC area.

The entrance fee is \$45. Contestants must be willing to perform in the winners' recital at the New York Flute Fair on Sunday March 22, 2026.

There is no charge for performing with the pianist at the contest or Flute Fair performances, but there is a \$30 per half hour charge for any rehearsals with the pianist.

Previous winners are not eligible to compete in the same age category.

Proof of age: A copy of your birth certificate, passport, Real ID, or driver's license is required as proof of eligible age. Please upload a picture of your proof of age in the online application.

Online application: Your online application (no more than one per contestant) must be submitted no later than Feb. 1, 2026. Payment is by PayPal. The application fee is \$45. Please include the student's name in the "instructions to merchant" box on the PayPal transaction. If you have a problem submitting online, please let us know.)

For more information, please contact contest coordinator Stephanie Pizza at [ymc@nyfluteclub.org](mailto:ymc@nyfluteclub.org).



## Calling All Flute Fair Proposals!

The Flute Club invites your ideas for workshops, lectures, recitals, panel discussions and more for NY Flute Fair 2026: *From Dream to Reality*.

Any programs that promise to inspire the students, parents, teachers, performers, professionals and amateurs will be seriously considered. The deadline has been extended to Jan. 8, 2026. For more details click [here](#) or go to [www.nyfluteclub.org](http://www.nyfluteclub.org).

The Flute Fair is Sunday March 22, 2026, at the Allen-Stevenson School.

## Ensemble Meets Arranger of Current Program Piece



**Kneeling left to right: Natalie Ward, Kathy Saenger, Danielle Schussel, Elizabeth LaBarbera. Standing left to right: James Marcus, Bette Druck, Stephen Josephs, Gail Tishcoff, Frances Lenci, Gene Coleman, Cora Riechert, Prashant Kumar, Sam Ostrowski, Lauren Kurtz (Nathan Kurtz), Lester Yu, Bill Giannone, Mark Vickers, composer Nina Siniakova, NYFC President Lish Lindsey.**  
Photo: Brian

On Sunday, Dec. 14 the ensemble held its fourth rehearsal, with 18 members participating at Studios 353 in Manhattan. Despite the morning snow making travel difficult, members persevered.

Bill Giannone started the rehearsal working on his arrangement of *Sheep May Safely Graze*. Director, Mark Vickers led the group through *Fantasy on "Amazing Grace"* (arr. Louke), *Flutes and Vegetables* (arr. Cohen), and a new piece, *Veloshki* (arr. Siniakova).

The excitement of the rehearsal was the attendance of composer Nina Siniakova, who detailed how she arrived at the work and shared her expectations on the performance of the arrangement, a two-movement work based on folk tunes from Belarus, country of her origin. Nina will return to work with the ensemble again before the piece is performed at the annual meeting and recital of the ensemble in May.

The icebreaker question was "What made you decide to play the flute?" Answers included process of elimination of other instruments, the band director saying more flute players were needed and fewer saxophones, the sound, and because it was the means to get to know a potential romantic partner.

The next rehearsal will be on Sunday Jan.17 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Studios 353 at 353 W. 48th St. To join the ensemble you must be a current member of the NY Flute Club. No audition is required. We accept all levels of players. If you would like to participate, email Ensemble director Mark Vickers at [ensembles@nyfluteclub.org](mailto:ensembles@nyfluteclub.org).

# 2025-2026 Events

## IN-PERSON CONCERTS

**Sunday, Oct. 5, 2025, 5:30 p.m.: Robert Langevin**, Church of Christ and Saint Stephen's, 120 West 69th Street, New York

**Sunday Nov. 9, 3:30 p.m.** mastery class and 5:30 p.m. concert with **Néstor Torres**

**Sunday Dec. 7, 3:30 p.m.** mastery class and 5:30 p.m. concert with **Rachel Blumenthal**

**Date change: Sunday Jan. 11, 2026, 3:30 p.m.** mastery class, 5:30 p.m. concert with **Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington**

**Sunday Feb. 8, 5:30 p.m.: American Chamber Music for Flute with Flute Force, Bart Feller, Reva Youngstein** and other performers; **world premiere by Bonnie McAlvin**

**Sunday March 22 all day: New York Flute Fair**, with guest artist **Jennifer Grim**

**April: Winners of the New York Flute Club Competition.** Exact date and place TBA

*Unless otherwise indicated, all concerts take place at 5:30 p.m. at the Allen-Stevenson School, 132 East 78th St. in Manhattan. Admission is free to NYFC members and their 2-4 member guests, depending on membership level. Non-members: \$25 general, \$15 full-time students (with ID) and seniors (65+)*



## ONLINE PROGRAMS

*Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom link.*

**Oct. 16, 2025: Samuel Baron's** recordings of American music, with commentary by his colleagues. Hosted by **Tara Helen O'Connor**.

**Nov. 13: Flutes of the World** with **Tereasa Payne**

**Dec. 4:** An evening with flutist, multi-instrumentalist and composer **David Amram**

**Jan. 8, 2026: Ragan Whiteside**, soul jazz flutist (I Just Wanna Play series)

**Jan. 29:** The Flute Works of **Joan Tower**. Music and interviews with Joan Tower, **Lisa Bost-Sandberg**, **Patricia Spencer**, and **Carol Wincenc**.

**March 26: John Ragusa**, improvisational flutist, on world flutes (I Just Wanna Play series)

**April 16: Flutes and Flutemakers in Early New York**, with **Wendell Dobbs**, **Nancy Groce** and

**Michael Lynn.** The instruments, flutemakers, flutists, and composers who promoted the flute, with music of Foster, Riley, and others.

*All dates and programs subject to change. For more information about the New York Flute Club, including competitions, ensemble programs, education, and membership, please visit [www.nyfluteclub.org](http://www.nyfluteclub.org)*

## Flute Happenings Elsewhere

**Jan. 8, 2026: Beyond Flute Group**, 6:00 p.m. Tompkins Square Library. 331 East 10th Street, Manhattan. Free. Beyond Flute Group is a five-piece jazz ensemble featuring Cheryl Pyle, Sylvain Leroux, Gene Coleman, Ras Burnett, and Ayumi Ishito.



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