



# Texas Flute Society

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THE  
**newsletter.**

**Fall 2015**

*Carolyn Keyes, Editor*



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## Letter from the President



Greetings and Happy Fall! I am pleased to announce that the 39th Annual Texas Flute Festival will take place from Thursday, May 19, 2016 through Saturday, May 21, 2016 on the campus of Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. Our fantastic guest artist line-up includes Gary Schocker, Nina Perlove, and Isabel Gleicher. In this issue of the newsletter, we will feature our first artist, Gary Schocker.

Gary Schocker is an accomplished musician of outstanding versatility. At age 15, he made his professional debut when he performed as soloist with the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He has won numerous competitions including the Young Concert Artists, the National Flute Association, the NY Flute Club and the East-West Artists. Often, he concertizes in duo with guitarist Jason Vieaux. Internationally, he has toured and taught in Colombia, Panama, Canada, Australia, Taiwan, Japan, Germany, France and Italy.

Schocker has composed sonatas and chamber music for most instruments of the orchestra. He also has written several musicals, including "Far From the Madding Crowd" and "The Awakening", which can be heard on Original Cast Recordings. Both shows were winners of the Global Search for New Musicals in the UK and were performed in Cardiff and at the Edinburgh Festival, as well as in New Zealand. In New York, they were winners of the ASCAP music theatre awards.

Schocker has won the International Clarinet Association's annual composition competition twice and the National Flute Association's annual Newly Published Music Award numerous times. Among artists who have played his compositions, James Galway gave the American premiere of "Green Places" with the New Jersey Symphony.

In 2008 Schocker was commissioned to write the required piece "Biwako Wind" for the International Flute Competition in Biwako, Japan for which he also served as judge.

Gary has private flute studios in NYC and Easton, PA where he dually resides. He is on the faculty at NYU. He performs on both Haynes and Powell flutes and head joints of David Williams (platinum) and David Chu (boxwood).

Keep reading below to get a more personal perspective from Mr. Schocker, and be sure to check out his events at our annual flute festival! Happy Practicing!

Brittany DeLaVergne

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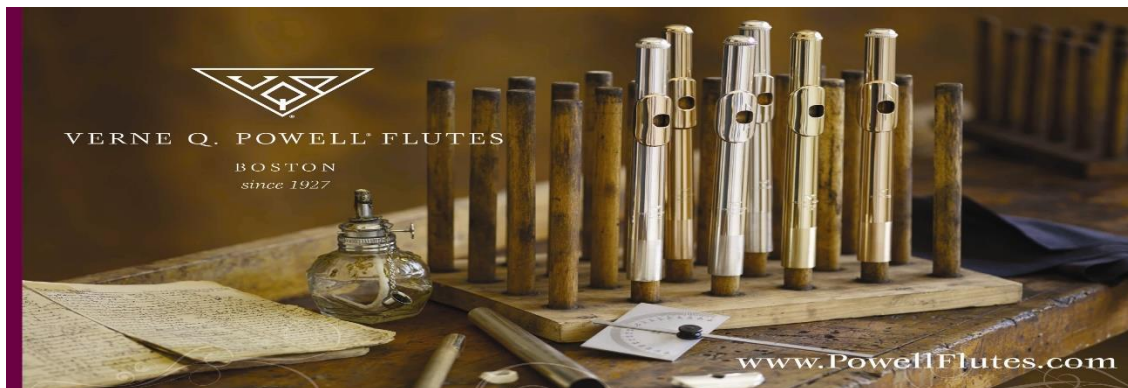
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## Upcoming Events!

Paul Edmund-Davies Interactive Flute Event  
November 7, 2015 6:00-8:00 PM,  
Custer Road United Methodist Church  
6601 Custer Rd, Plano, TX 75023

Astraios Chamber Music Presents The August Winds  
November 20, 2015 7:00-9:00 PM  
Frisco City Council Chambers 6101  
Frisco Square Blvd Frisco, TX 75034

**[CLICK FOR MORE EVENTS](#)**





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## 2016 Competition Information

Interested in performing in a masterclass with one of the Guest Artists at the 2016 Texas Flute Festival? A competition is held to select performers for each masterclass from the following categories - Junior High, High School, and College & Adult. Applications and requirements are available on the [TFS website](#) or by contacting the Masterclass Coordinator, Timothy Hagen at [tim@timothyhagen.com](mailto:tim@timothyhagen.com).

The **31st Annual Myrna W. Brown Artist Competition** is held in conjunction with the Texas Flute Festival May 19-21, 2016. This competition is open to anyone, and there is no age limit. Prizes are as follows: First Prize - \$1,200; Second - \$500; Third - \$250. Applications and requirements are available on the [TFS website](#) or by contacting the Myrna Brown Coordinator, Terri Sanchez at [terriflute@gmail.com](mailto:terriflute@gmail.com) or 972-746-1397.

The **5th Annual Donna Marie Haire Young Artist Competition** for school age flutists will be held in conjunction with the Texas Flute Festival on May 21, 2016. This competition is open to all school age flutists who will graduate high school during or after the 2015-2016

school year. Prizes are as follows: First - \$1,000 and Second - \$500. Applications and requirements are available on the [TFS website](#) or by contacting the Haire Competition Coordinator, Francesca Arnone at [Francesca\\_Arnone@baylor.edu](mailto:Francesca_Arnone@baylor.edu) or 254-710-6524.

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## Interview with Gary Schocker



**"Really music was always. And I don't know about the professional part. I have been lucky enough never to have had to work as anything else."**

*Gary Schocker*

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**What got you involved in music? Did you listen to it as a child? Was there a specific influence along those lines?**

I don't think I had much choice! My Dad was a teacher of almost every instrument and my bedroom shared a wall with his studio. I heard it constantly and could plunk tunes out on the piano before I could walk properly. I found an old article about my Dad in which the interviewer describes my picking records out by the label color for the things I wanted to hear. So I was thoroughly immersed. The Habenera from Carmen was my favorite and had a blue label, FYI.

### **Why did you choose to play the flute?**

Again, my Father wanted me to play flute in the West Point band as he had done during WW2. If Vietnam was still going strong I could avoid the call to combat.

### **Who were your teachers?**

After studying with my Dad, I went to a local teacher a few times called Lamar Funk. Yes, I love that name. He showed me that I had to raise the left index finger for the top octave d, which I was surprised about. After that I went for one lesson with Murray Panitz who was playing first chair for the Philadelphia Orchestra at that time. He advised me not to do music, that he had no time for me, and that I didn't have the requisite talent. Fortunately I went for a lesson with Julius Baker about 3 months later and he was immediately enthusiastic. He arranged my audition with the NY Phil after my second or third lesson and that led to a concerto performance on a nationally televised young peoples' concert. You can watch the performance at the museum of broadcasting, it's called "Young Performers" and Michael Tilson Thomas is conducting.

### **What musician has had the largest influence on your playing?**

My Dad was all about the music, but Baker was all about the tone. There were some confusing times, because I am always music first, and I thought since Baker was so famous I should play the way he did. I learned the value of a freely-delivered sound from Baker, and that has guided me always. I always practice with my production in mind, but then I try to forget all that when I play for people and just release the music as it is happening that day. After studying with Baker, I studied with Samuel Baron, who was analytical, unlike Baker. But his playing was not so nice to hear as Baker's, so again I was confused. Ultimately one needs everything: analysis, musical freedom and imagination, and physical clarity. I began to learn that much later.

**What is your favorite piece to play from the flute repertoire and why?**

That is not possible to answer. I am omnivorous, not a hummingbird...

**Who is your favorite composer? How did you get started in composing? Who and/or what has had the largest influence on your composing?**

Hard to choose favorites. Why is that important? I don't think a parent would be able to choose a favorite child, or maybe they could but would rather not say. Bach, Mozart, Faure are the three I most deeply identify with...People say I sound like Poulenc who I love, as well.

Composing was something I decided to do, rather than a parental directive. I wrote a few things as a child. My Tangos got orchestrated for dance orchestra through the amazing work of a guy called Goerge Grooby. He had been an arranger in NYC in the 30s, so they sound like old film pieces. Hearing my own music excited me. In high school I wrote three musicals and that was thrilling as well. Once I got to Juilliard all the



new music was unintelligible to me, and I disliked it. I focused for the next several years just on flute and piano.

**Describe the emergence of your style. Did you begin with a traditional classical background, or have you always explored several genres?**

Sort of continuing from above, I was very lucky to have had a friend who asked me to write a show when I was 24. It got me writing again, and I played and sang in the show called "Looking for Love." I also wrote "In Memoriam," my first adult classical piece, and that started me writing for the piano and then the flute. "Regrets and Resolutions" was my first commission, and getting paid to write was a nice new experience.

Composers rely upon commissions. The remuneration from music sales is never enough to live on, and I say that as the most published living composer for the flute.

**Describe your composition process. Do specific people, places, or situations inspire your compositions?**

Usually I get an idea about something; that is a melodic fragment. Typically I dismiss it and once that has happened I encourage myself to respect my idea enough to just see where it might go...Many pieces come from commissions, those are easy to write. I also write a lot for the harp now, and that is usually me walking by and randomly plucking something, then seeing where it might go.

**If you could identify the moment in your life when you knew that you wanted to be a professional musician, what would that moment be?**

Really music was always. And I don't know about the word professional. I have been lucky enough never to have had to work as anything else. But amateurs deserve more respect in this country. The main thing with music is self-expression, and the emphasis here seems to be on getting more attention, often resulting in LOUDER and FASTER. That is not what the flute is for me.

**What qualities do you think are most essential to musical excellence?**

Self-examination, patience, honesty, experimentation, trust, love.

**What qualities do you think are most essential in a chamber music relationship?**

Kindness, flexibility are helpful.

**Do you get nervous before a performance or a competition? What advice would you give to musicians who are nervous?**

Sometimes I get nervous. I don't think there are any magic tricks, just patience and acceptance. I find that thinking about what I have to do makes it worse. I do not warm up. I have been doing this every day all my life so it is just clutching at straws, which for me is a waste of time, and it feeds anxiety.

**Do you have any early career stories you would like to share?**

Gosh. Young Concert Artists got me a lot of dates and a manager. That was very helpful. I played the "Khachaturian Concerto" in Allentown when I was 14 which was my first concerto, and it was a thrill.

**You lead an active life as a performer, educator, and composer. How do you balance it all?**

I mostly compose now. I always believed I would be playing concerts but the travel and all the accompanying irritations are hard for me. And I don't like to push myself on people. Composing is done at home, and is amazingly fulfilling. Performing of course has its joys, but I think now it is full time self-promotion and I don't want that.

**What have you learned from music that has helped you in other areas of life? What is the most valuable lesson the flute (or music in general) has taught you?**

Flute performance has helped teach me self-acceptance and trust.

**If flute is your "first passion" in life, what would you say is your second? Do you pursue any other arts, such as writing, painting or crafts? What other interests or hobbies do you have outside of music?**

I love to play the harp and have practiced daily for 4 years. I love teaching, and learn so much from it. I am a gardener and cook and read all the time. And I walk up to 8 miles daily.

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## **The Sound of Seven**

*by Carolyn Keyes*

A car dealership is not the type of place one would expect to find musical inspiration. A few years ago I was sitting on a cold pleather sofa trying to

pass the time while my car was in the shop. It was early in the morning and the lobby was painfully quiet. My phone battery was low, and there seemed to be no other form of distraction nearby.

In a rare moment of clarity, I decided to try a listening exercise I had read about in a book a few days earlier: spending ten minutes writing down every sound I could hear. At first I thought I would run out of sounds in the first thirty seconds. I noted the intermittent hum of the beverage machine, the squeak of an office chair in another room, and the vacuous sound of my own boredom. Another minute passed and my ears sharpened. I heard the playful chatter of some sparrows in the shrub outside the window, the dress-shoe-clad footsteps of a man walking down a back hallway, and the hurried traffic in the distance. Soon I couldn't keep up with all of the sounds around me, so I began to focus on the details of each sound. I noticed subtle pitch changes as the vending machine cooler woke up or went back to rest. There was even a noticeable difference between the way the chair squeaked when the desk clerk moved to the left and the way it squeaked when he moved to the right.

Around this time, I heard a man come in from the shop and pick up the phone to call a customer. His tone was rhythmic and pointed, conveying his confidence in his findings. Then his voice changed ever so slightly. There was a small hitch in the regularity of his rhythm along with a softening of his tone and a rise in pitch. He was telling the customer how much the repairs were going to cost. I wondered if the person on the other end of the phone realized how much the repair man disliked this part of his job.

A few days later I was listening back to a practice session I had recorded on my phone. As my ears focused in, I realized that I could hear exactly how I was feeling about each passage. (This was to my own horror: My

audience should hear the excitement and joy of the music, not my concern with clean articulation!) I wondered what else had been audible over the years. With narcissistic curiosity, I listened back to several of my old recordings. Sure enough, I could hear a range of experiences in my playing from how I felt about a collaborator to how insecure I was about a given technique. It wasn't all negative though. In that experience I heard something I had never really heard before: I heard myself.

I began to wonder, at what point does one's personality become audible? Is it at a certain age? Does it happen at a certain level of proficiency? Or is it always there? At the time, my youngest flute student was a seven year-old boy who had been playing for about six months. (He was very bright and also studied piano. According to him, piano was much easier. He was playing a con-cert-o) He was playing his way through one of his melodies and I was listening to make sure he had the right rhythm and tongued at the right time. He was trying not to breathe after every note. I began to listen differently just for a few moments. What did HE sound like? Then I heard it: he sounded utterly unselfconscious, joyous, and innocent. He sounded seven!

Musicians and critics will never agree on how much of a performer's personality "should" come through, especially within classical music circles. However, I believe now that the essence of a performer is always there, whether they intend it or not. The best performers are those who learn to be present in the moment so that their intention and the musical intention are one; their feelings and life experiences fuse with those of the composer to create something unique in that moment. As performers and as teachers of performers, we work to overcome our difficulties and insecurities so that they do not compete with the music. How can we hope to address these things in ourselves or our students unless we are willing to listen deeply? It isn't easy. Much of what we project in our

playing isn't musically appropriate, and the sound of a student struggling through a passage isn't pleasant! Yet when I think about the way my student sounded that day, I can't tell you if the sound of seven was appropriate, but I can tell you that it was beautiful.

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