

# MUSIC FOR THE LOVE OF IT

APRIL 2003

## MAKING MUSIC IN ST. PETERSBURG

by Marjorie Gilbert



*My first experience playing chamber music was at the St. Petersburg Festival — and it really was a thrill. I performed with the violist from the St. Petersburg Philharmonic AND I WAS PETRIFIED — but she was such a terrific person, she gave me extra lessons free of charge. Although she spoke not one word of English, we communicated beautifully, using body and music language. She was so kind to me I took my earrings off*

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## LEARNING JAZZ BY EAR

by Garth Sundem

At the Port Townsend Jazz Workshop, the saxophonist Jeff Clayton discussed his early practice routine, “Man, I put on my cape, put on my sunglasses, stood in front of the mirror, and I was Cannonball.” He played recordings on the hi-fi and, in his twelve-year-old imagination, snuck into howling nightclubs, hopped onstage and blew the place down. We hear Cannonball’s influence in his playing — his articulation pops, his alto sound is huge and flexible, his fingers swing with precision and impeccable timing, and, oh yeah, his note-choice is good, too.

However, as much as he studied Cannonball Adderley, he will never actually be Cannonball; his ears couldn’t help being open to other influences — Sonny Rollins, Johnny Hodges, Phil Woods — and he, like all of us, brings his own experiences to any set of chord changes. Bud Shank, who sailed

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## THE HEARTSONG OF SIYO TANKA

by Jamie Haley

“I ain’t playin’ no darn flute at our wedding!” Tony declared vehemently.

“But it’s not a regular flute, hon,” I protested. “It’s an Eagle Head Courting Flute.” Native American men used to carve and play these instruments for their loves. There’s nothing sissy about it.”

“A flute’s a flute,” Tony argued. “I ain’t standin’ up in front of everybody, blowin’ in an oversized toothpick.”

“Okay. Fine. It was just a thought. See you later.”

I hung up the phone. Turning to the ordering information in *The Music Stand* catalogue, I phoned the company and ordered the flute. I had a year before the wedding to work my feminine wiles on my lovable, macho husband-to-be.

We had recently decided to symbolize our ethnic backgrounds in our wedding. One way to represent Tony’s Cherokee heritage was to forego the typical black and white tux. He would wear authentic Native American clothing in our wedding and I would wear the more traditional white gown.



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## THE IN BOX

### HOW DO MOTHERS MANAGE?

Editor,

How do mothers progress and manage to advance their abilities on the violin? I'm 46, but I left my violin under my bed for 25 years rather than work it into my life. I played for ten years as a child. Greatly inspired by Wayne Booth's book, *Amateurism and its Rivals — For the Love of It*, I got a teacher and have just loved the last two years of playing and falling in love with the violin. But, it's difficult raising children and dedicating time to music study. How do other mothers cope?

Susan Rudnicki  
Manhattan Beach, CA

### STILL WANTS A PRINT WORKSHOP GUIDE

Editor,

You asked in the December newsletter whether, in view of the workshop listings now available on your web site at [www.musicfortheloveofit.com](http://www.musicfortheloveofit.com), there is still a need for the printed edition of your European Workshop Guide. I hope you can keep it! That amount of material on a screen will never be properly read by anyone.

Geoff Piper  
Luxembourg

### TWO WAYS TO SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATION

*Little Kids Rock*, [www.littlekidsrock.org](http://www.littlekidsrock.org), brings free classes and instruments to schools in the San Francisco Bay Area, California, New Jersey, and Memphis, Tennessee. Children learn in their programs to compose, perform and record their own music. The *Rex Foundation*, [www.rexfoundation.org](http://www.rexfoundation.org), founded in 1983 by members and friends of the Grateful Dead, has announced a \$5,000 grant to *Little Kids Rock*. Persons interested in *Little Kids Rock* may contact Alison Neves at 415/948-1200, [alison@littlekidsrock.org](mailto:alison@littlekidsrock.org). Volunteer help and donations of cash, and instruments such as guitars, basses, drums, keyboards, amplifiers, microphones and recording equipment are especially welcome.

*Classics for Kids Foundation*, [www.classicsforkids.org](http://www.classicsforkids.org), has been providing fine stringed instruments to young people for several years to encourage their study of classical music. They are soliciting gifts of string instruments, appreciated securities, or cash. More information is available on their web site and they are ready to answer any questions you might have Contact Michael Reynolds, P.O. Box 1537, Bozeman, Montana 59715, (406)587-8183.

### MUSIC WEB SITE EXPANDED

Our site at [www.musicfortheloveofit.com](http://www.musicfortheloveofit.com) includes links to youth music camps and adult workshops worldwide.

## PRACTICE TIPS

by Kasia Bugaj

## A FEW STEPS TOWARDS EFFECTIVE PRACTICING

Musicians of all ages are usually very busy people. We are very proud whenever we can isolate those precious hours of practice time. Usually the instinct is to plow into the practicing. But is that the best idea? Would anyone in their right mind attempt to build a bridge without a detailed design and careful plan? Probably not.

Starting with a goal is a good idea (a piece of music, a list of orchestra excerpts, or a specific technique we are trying to acquire). The next step is to identify a time frame for whatever we are preparing and to plan a strategy within that time frame (what will I do this week, today, this month?). Each week I sit down and look over the schedule for the next seven days. How much time do I have each day and when? Often we do not have the luxury of picking the time of day we will practice, but when we do, it is worthwhile to figure out when we work best and for how long. Some people like to start practicing at 7:30 in the morning while others, like one of my college housemates, feel they do their best work between midnight and 5 AM.

My own concentration begins to dwindle anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour into my practicing. Then it's time for a short break. I usually begin with technique exercises to make sure "all the parts are working" and then move on to the repertoire. For me the best time to practice the basics is in the morning. I think of it as my equivalent of the morning jog. I try to do the more detailed technical solo work in the morning and early afternoon as well. As far as I am concerned, the mid-day could be eliminated in its entirety as a time of any potential productivity. The evening hours (and a little bit of fatigue) provide a less controlled atmosphere in which to practice larger sections of pieces, play through movements, and record (yes, record!) our play-throughs. Even though we listen when we play, we don't always actually hear what's coming out of our instruments. Complicated shifts and fingerings have a way of drawing our attention in other directions. A

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mini-disc recorder or tape player can allow us to become our own audience. It can take quite a bit of self-motivation to turn on the microphone, and then to actually listen to whatever was recorded. It can be unpleasant but recording our own practice is one of the most effective ways to fix things in our playing.

There is one more thing to consider while practicing: a practice log or chart. I use a sheet of paper, updated weekly, with the days of the week written across the top and my musical “things to do” down the side.

Occasionally I also list a specific amount of time that should be devoted to each item. I do this to avoid obsessively spending 40 minutes on a single shift only to realize that I hadn't touched a solo that is to be performed within a week. A practice log may seem elementary, but it is an excellent tool for monitoring practicing. It helps to keep track of practice time and how it was utilized. If something doesn't sound quite right and I am outraged as to why, the answer can usually be found in several blanks on a practice log.

There are as many practice habits as there are people practicing. Bobby McFerrin once said that “musicians are basically two people — they juggle control in one hand and surrender in the other.” As musicians we often gladly embrace the surrender but shy away from the control. But it is the control and the planning that allow us to comfortably surrender to the muses and let art happen.

*Katarzyna Bugaj received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Peabody Conservatory and is currently pursuing her Master of Music degree in viola performance from Western Michigan University. She is a member of several regional orchestras in Michigan.*

## ENSEMBLE TIPS by Ted Rust

# PLEASE DON'T SHOUT

Music remains clearly audible for many individuals long after losing the ability to follow ordinary speech, so that musicians experiencing hearing loss really can continue to perform at a very high level. Ensemble communication, however, can be a challenge when a member is deaf.

As amateurs we can afford to be open with each other, though we still have to respect people's feelings. We can ask for and offer help when we sense the need, without risking anyone's job. So assuming the problem is open for discussion, what can an ensemble do to maintain good communications despite hearing difficulties? Here are ten suggestions.

1. Be careful to include all members in all group discussions, and show appreciation for their ideas. The worst complication of deafness can be isolation.
  2. Periodically check with every member about their individual needs and concerns. If the deaf member uses a hearing aid, ask whether it can be used for both music and speech or has to be changed to different settings. If needed, routinely allow time for them to do so.
  3. Adjust the seating and music stands so that everyone's face and as many hands as possible are visible to the deaf member.
  4. Set tempos and signal downbeats with gestures.
  5. Illustrate musical suggestions musically: use your instrument.
  6. Speak little. But if you must, speak:
    - one at a time
    - expressively
    - at a moderate volume.
  7. If asked to repeat something, say it differently.
  8. Shouting never helps. It can be physically painful to a deaf person, and is upsetting to everyone.
  9. Allow ample time for tuning. Tune one at a time.
  10. Avoid giving unwanted help. The deaf member may work out an arrangement with a hearing “partner” on one side or the other who can see their part to point out whatever is under discussion, like starting points, expression marks or repeats, routinely, without being asked. Others should restrain themselves from chiming in.
- Looking back, I realize that every one of these practices will make for better communication in any musical ensemble even if you all hear perfectly. Perhaps the best approach to ensemble communication in general would be to assume every member is deaf.

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# SEVENTY-EIGHT RPMs

## Philologist Turns to Composition

James B. Kimberley

The majority of us look forward to retirement someday, if we haven't reached it already. It signifies an end to the upstream swim of life; it looks like a chance to stop worrying and enjoy our hobbies. But that daydream usually does not include going back to college as a freshman again.

That's exactly what Phil Walker, age 78, did. Having taught French literature at the University of California for many years, Phillip Walker, Ph.D., took his retirement plan and strode right to the admissions department of the same university and applied for admission as a freshman music major in quest of another bachelor's degree. He already had a bachelor's from Yale, and a master's too. He had another master's from the *Ecole Superieure* in Paris, and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), all in French. His publications and awards are extensive.

This writer "discovered" him and his work at the 2002 Santa Barbara Fourth of July picnic at the Courthouse Sunken Gardens. Amid the yackety-yak of thousands of inebriated picnickers and the saccharine sweetness of a dozen old patriotic warhorse songs, he debuted his original suite, *Land That I Love, O Land of the Free*, in commemoration of "9-11." It was performed by members of the Santa Barbara Symphony and had a quieting effect on everyone. It was the most beautiful new orchestral piece I had ever heard anywhere. In an age of skepticism and cynicism and loss of values, the compelling beauty of the work is what must count; thus *Land That I Love* rests on its own merits.

On my first visit to his home, he showed me videos of two of his more recent musical works for the dance. The first was called *The May Music Walk*, based on Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*). It depicted a fanciful vernal march in costume from the faculty club at UCSB all the way to the Pacific. The march was led by several young women dressed in white, and little pre-school flower girls scattering rose petals on the way. The music was Dr. Walker's, played in the background by a local high school ensemble. The poetry was Ovid's: "Ludite!" (*Have Fun*). The second video, called, *Dance in a Summer Garden*, reveals the soul of a poet. In a famous all-green garden in Santa Barbara, we saw beautiful young women dance a variety of movements called, "The Woods," "The Tree," "The Cactus," and "The Pool." The bucolic visuals called up the glory of summer, and the purposeful abdication of the burdens of the day.

Present-day adults aching to turn to composition can take the example of Dr. Philip Walker as effective inspi-

ration. Historically, composing music has been a tiring task that included preparing a score and individual parts. However, Dr. Walker uses modern tools and composes with a lot less of that drudgery by using an iMac to help speed things along, powered by *Finale*, and other music notation and composition software.

For all his many academic degrees, Dr. Walker seems proudest of his B.A. in music composition. He is not devoted, however, to the style of composition he sees being practiced at UCSB. In his music studio, he commented on the status of academic music today, saying "It is not good for music to be adopted by the universities. In their hands, music becomes like Esperanto. By that I mean, it may be technically correct, but, like Esperanto, it is loveless. Now, in the wake of "9-11" we need healing. One could also compare academic music with the poetry of sixteenth-century France: full of artful trickery such as palindromes and stanzas that split into two independent poems. When all is said and done, what is the point? It is entertaining but it lacks warmth. Remember what St. Paul said: 'If I have not love, I am a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal . . .'"

*James B. Kimberley is a frequent contributor to Music for the Love of It. A singer and jazz drummer, he lives in Santa Barbara, CA.*



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# INVITING TERMITES

by Deborah J. Beyer

The termites are coming!

I recently read that scientific studies have proved that homes in which loud music is played are more apt than others to be infested by termites. Although I hope for the best, I know in my heart that my new home is doomed. After all, I live with five children, most of them teenagers. There's no such thing as a day without loud music at my address. I'm sure every termite in the southwestern part of the state has packed his bag and is headed my way.

And every termite knows he won't be alone, as our home is a convenient landing pad for half the itinerant teenagers in town, not to mention (truthfully!) vans full of traveling rock bands who are just passing through. Somehow word has spread that our welcome mat is always out to those with a guitar and a musical bent. With my own children and these added passersby comes the music.

Although I have one older daughter who currently prefers nightclub dance music and rap, most of my children are into "alternative." That means an alternative to anything I listened to as a child — or anything with a melody line for that matter. On any given day, my house resounds with music ranging from recordings of grown men barking and demanding to know "who let the dogs out" to live punk rock band music in the basement.

I've actually witnessed a lead singer who screams into a microphone while wearing a gas mask. It all adds up to a veritable 24-hour-per-day dinner bell for termites.

Even as I worry about my floor joists, I know my days of loud music are numbered. My children are growing older, and two now spend the school year away at college. It's only a matter of time before the nest is empty. Even now, I have an occasional evening when the five kids are all out on dates or at school activities. Silence hangs over the house like a wet canvas tent. Sometimes, I play a Rob Zombie or Ataris CD just to drown out the sound of termites chewing. More often, I put on Bela Fleck, James Galway or Vivaldi. Although the music is usually quieter, it's still there. Can the termites still hear it? Are the trusses safe — momentarily?

"This is what it will be like when they've all moved out," I remind myself. Despite growing hope for the structure of my home, I find this is not a happy thought. I face issues — other than loud music — that I'll be forced to deal with in the near future. And they're of much greater magnitude.

But until that time, I still have hope. After all, I keep the Orkin phone number on my speed dial.

ST. PETERSBURG

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*my ears and put them on hers. Even though I am an insatiable traveler and yearned to drink in all of St. Petersburg, the truth is I was mesmerized by the total involvement of the students in their music and found myself similarly captivated. I would wolf my breakfast down and grab my music, almost jog over to the school and nearly run to the practice room. It was a compulsion, which I had not experienced before. So, I wrote this story.*



**My Teacher (Elena) with other students**

It's not every day that the Israeli army grants a soldier special leave to let him take part in a music festival. But that's how I met Victor Khaikin, a gifted young pianist from Tel-Aviv. This past July, we both participated in the *International Academy of Music Summer Festival* held in St. Petersburg, Russia. Here, Victor joined other youthful students who specifically came to the city where architecture is so inspiring that people say, using Goethe's phrase, that "frozen music" is built into the palaces and monuments.

This July 5-15, the Festival will again take place in majestic St. Petersburg, which will celebrate its 300th birthday. With the air bursting with music, dance, theater and fireworks, next summer is the ideal time to visit this gloriously haunting city and its treasure trove of sights.

The Festival is held at a Music Conservatory called the Ochtinsky Centre of Humanitarian and Aesthetic Education. Although the Conservatory's environs resemble a cow pasture with acres of untended grass fields, its location is only 20 minutes from downtown St. Petersburg. Even though their political and economic institutions collapsed, the Russians have kept up their musical tradition, and are even nourishing it today as young students flock there to bask in the sheer melodic feel of the place.

When I was there, I immediately recognized our good fortune to be so close to one of the world's premier cities. This was a city which Peter the Great, after moving the capital there from Moscow, intended would

surpass even Versailles in beauty. He hired European as well as Russian architects to dig canals, build roads, palaces, mansions, parks, monuments, museums (presently numbering 50), so that St. Petersburg ranks high among the world's major cities. Visitors walking along the Nevsky Prospekt (the main thoroughfare) cross some of St. Petersburg's 600 bridges that span the sinuous canals linking a multitude of islands, giving rise to the city's nickname, the Venice of the North.

It did not surprise me that this Festival attracted so many brilliant students. "Never did I anticipate this level of talent" said Festival Director Efrem Briskin of the International Academy of Music located in Westchester, New York. "My main problem was scheduling. How do I fit in so many outstanding students who want to perform non-stop?"

Even the most gifted students felt the intensity and rapid pace. Packed into a mere ten days, not only were there daily individual lessons and master classes, but also constant student and faculty recitals. One of my greatest pleasures was observing the musical mixing and matching. Almost fifty students coming from Russia and nine other countries were exposed to different musical traditions from a dream team of sixteen outstanding artists-teachers from multiple countries across the globe.

I was surprised to find that most of the students were under age thirty. The youngest was age nine. She was a thoroughly captivating Vietnamese child (shown below



with me in front of the Hermitage) whose attention we jealously vied for, as we watched her skip but not walk, bobbing her dark straight bangs in every direction, and lapping up Russian ice cream. This seemed to be everyone's favorite food except for two fourteen-year old American boys. We knew where to find them every night before they went to bed. They had become "addicted" to Russian borscht and pilmenyi (dumplings), and ritualistically munched out in the hotel restaurant, an easy thing to do since each floor had its own dining room.

For me, the Festival had started in the Helsinki airport en route to St. Petersburg where I overheard an eleven-year-old Korean boy being instructed: "If you wander off for a soda, be sure to take somebody with you." His crew cut, Reeboks, gym shorts and T-shirt identified him as "just another kid", as did his playful jabbing and giggling with the other teens in his group.

Two nights later, in the majestic Glinka Concert Hall of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, I watched this small boy step from the wings and approach the piano. What struck me was the way he gradually lowered his arms onto the keys. They landed ever so gently, like widely outstretched wings of a gliding bird touching ground. Could this be the same boy I had seen at the airport? With the skill and sensitivity of a very wise artist, his recital included chamber music — Schubert *Sonatina* — as well as solo pieces: a Haydn sonata, Ravel *Sonatina*, a Bach prelude and fugue, and Mendelssohn's *Rondo Capriccioso*. His name was Ji-Yong (with cap, below) and he had recently appeared as a soloist with Kurt Mazur at the New York Philharmonic, after winning their Young People Concert Auditions.



Ji-Yong wasn't the only prodigy I heard in St. Petersburg. A Hungarian student performed a Paganini composition so technically difficult that only one other person in the world has played it professionally. In addition, a magnificent recital featured a world touring Japanese violinist named Sayako Kusaka, who has won several international competitions, even earning a



medal from the President of Italy. In St. Petersburg, she was accompanied by a young Russian girl called Yana Reznik, living in New York City, who this year will perform as solo virtuoso pianist with major orchestras in Moscow, Budapest, Seville and New York City. (Yana and Sayako are shown here in front of their concert poster.)

An incredible sense of devotion was the common link binding the students. Incessant work in a short period of time meant really getting to understand each other, which was the key to making beautiful music together.

They did just that. In addition to the majestic Glinka Concert Hall, the students all performed at the aristocratic Scheremetev Palace, a castle that formerly belonged to a Russian count, and now has a permanent exhibition of musical instruments. Some concerts were also held at the Composers Union Concert Hall. The artistry and virtuosic abilities of solo as well as chamber music performers were so impressive that the Russian audiences stood up and cheered with the exuberance of a New York audience!

Musical performances at Festivals cost roughly \$10-15 for Americans and \$1 or \$2 for Russians. Taxis are easy to obtain, and are inexpensive especially if you bargain well. Mini-buses are also readily available, but speaking Russian is essential — which is not a problem if you take local guides.

Besides musical events, Russian dance performance is a must. For me, the icing on the cake was at the Mariinsky Theater, formerly the site of the Kirov Ballet, where we were taken for a performance of *Swan Lake*. Named after

the wife of Tsar Alexander II, the beauty of the theater deeply moved us. Few buildings in the world boast more magnificent decor: lustrous gilt, Italianate ceiling, and three-tiered bronze chandelier of a thousand crystal pendants.

Planned sightseeing every other day sparked our appreciation of the surrounding artistic environment. Our bus driver warned us of the “jam traffics” as we made our way along rivers and canals whose shores are set with gems of architecture and whose bridges are adorned with iron lions and Egyptian cast-iron sphinxes. A lengthy stop was made at the unique “Our Saviors-on-the-Spilt Blood” cathedral, a “precious piece of work” affording nine brightly painted domes and large-scale interior mosaics. Nearby, countless stalls were selling all manner of Russian wares from wooden dolls and lacquer boxes to floral scarves, clever toys and sparkling jewelry. Getting the students loaded back onto the buses was a chore.

We also visited the famous summer residence of the Russian emperors at Peterhof, known for the decorative sculptures, fountains, waterfall stairways and cascading water jets. One day, we drove to the royal residence of Catherine II (*the Great*) at Pushkin, site of the famous Amber Study ranked by connoisseurs among “treasures of the world.” Plundered by the Nazi soldiers during World War II, now the amber decoration of the Study has been almost completely restored. I was “blown away” by the fabulous Hermitage Art Museum and Winter Palace, personifying of the might of the Russian Empire and the supreme power of the ruling autocracy, where priceless treasures include the throne room of Peter the Great, masterpieces of the Renaissance, and countless halls with sumptuous interiors.

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Marjorie Gilbert with Linda Caigan in The Hermitage

Of all the sights in St. Petersburg, the bridges remain the stuff of legends. Although they are closed during the day, they open from 2:00-5:00 A.M. to allow big boats to pass under them. To view this is an adventure — especially during White Nights in July when the sun barely goes down. No one knows this better than several of our students who boarded a boat on a canal where they remained all night. As they saw the bridges open and the sunrise, one boy, as he recounted the story, commented, “the foggy drizzle bathed the city in yellow-orange hues. The atmosphere of the city lent an inspiration to the music, so that it changed my life. I never thought I could sit at a piano and practice 8 hours straight.”

It might be added that on another night, two determined American boys had prevailed on their piano teacher to take THEM to view the bridges at night. Thus, on the final Festival eve, the teacher did the honors and “didn’t get back till 5:00 A.M. because the kids kept eating and shopping.”

During the Festival, even I became obsessed with the desire to practice. I will always remember entering the Soviet style music building, obtaining the key to my practice room from the woman at the front desk wearing the babushka, and feeling the same excitement I saw in the young people as I placed my music on the stand. A knock at the door. “It’s my turn,” or “Sorry, I have the wrong room,” would interrupt. Where did the two hours go?

For me, the Festival was an unforgettable life experience. I am even going back this summer! For information about the International Academy of Music, call Efrem Briskin at 914-328-3479. All expenses excluding airfare are \$1700 per person, which is modest — especially during such an exciting time to visit St. Petersburg.

*Marjorie Gilbert, of Purchase, New York, is 65 years old, a tour guide at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, a traveler writer and an amateur pianist.*

## SIYO TANKA

continued from page 1



My recent issue of *The Music Stand* catalogue featured a new item — a beautiful wooden Native American flute. Playing a courting flute would be a striking highlight of our unusual wedding.

According to legend, the courting flute came to the Native Americans by way of a young man. He was in love with the daughter of a leader. Since the young man had no material wealth, he felt unworthy of the girl. As he wept miserably beneath a tree, the wind felt sorry for him and blew gently for comfort. A woodpecker above him pecked holes in a branch, through which the wind blew, demonstrating the instrument. The branch fell and the man was given the gift of the flute.

While he walked down the hill, a bull elk sang his love song to the cows. The man learned to play this love song on his flute. He hid behind the lodge of the girl he loved and played this song for four days. Encouraged when no one chased him away, he then hid in the bushes near the stream where his love was getting water. After playing his song, he declared his love for her. The song from his heart overwhelmed her, and she accepted his proposal of marriage. They became the first couple to come together because of the flute. He was known as “Flute Boy” or *Tayazo hoksine*.

Native American Courting Flutes, also called Flageolet, Love Flutes, or *Siyo Tanka*, are handcrafted wooden tube flutes. They are the only instruments indigenous exclusively to the United States. Traditionally, only young men carved and played courting flutes. It was believed that women were so powerful that a single touch could destroy the flute’s ability to win the heart of the suitor’s love. In recent years, elders of some tribes have allowed talented women to play courting flutes. Charles Littleleaf, a flute maker and player, gives one reason for this decision.

“If the Creator gives a woman the talent to play the flute, then who am I to say she shouldn’t play it?”

When a suitor decided to court an eligible girl, he hid outside her family’s tipi. He played music from his heart, declaring his love through his sweet-toned

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instrument. It was said that such melodies would attract even the most uninterested girl. To ensure success, some young men had their flutes blessed by holy men.

After a period of days or weeks, if the girl or her family did not discourage the young man, the courtship proceeded. The young man waited outside the tipi, wrapped in a two-toned courting blanket. If the girl came out to speak with him, he wrapped them both in the blanket and paraded around the village, symbolizing their engagement.

Sometimes, instead of hiding near a girl's tipi, a suitor concealed himself near where the girl was working, such as a riverbank. Hidden from her sight, he played songs for her whenever she was there. If the girl enjoyed the music, she returned. After days or weeks, the suitor revealed himself. The couple then announced their engagement with the blanket ceremony.

Courting Flutes can be plain or decorated. The sound block, also called the "saddle" or "bird" is secured by leather strips. Beads, feathers or other decorations can be attached to the strips. The block can be simple and square or can be carved into an animal shape such as a mystical bird or a horse, to evoke the mating passion of the animal. The "pipe body" or "variable tube" is the part of the flute with the finger holes. The flute can have an open or closed end called the "bell." An open end produces a harsher sound. A closed end produces a more mellow sound. Bells can be carved into a maker's or a player's "vision", such as an eagle or a hawk's head, with the beak partially closed.

Our flute was delivered in two weeks. I carefully opened the packaging and stared at the magnificent instrument. The smooth cedar body was about eighteen inches long. Splashes of yellow wove artistically through the wood grain. Wound around the simple squared sound block, attaching it to the flute, was a thin strip of soft leather. Red and black beads weighted both of the six-inch dangling leather ends. The bell of the instrument was carved into an eagle's head.

I lifted the elegant Eagle Head Flute to my lips, inhaling the spicy tang of new shoes in a cedar closet. The wood was slightly bitter but silky on my tongue. Gently blowing into the small, tapered mouthpiece produced a sweet, but haunting tone. As I experimented with the octave range, the resultant strains seemed reminiscent of rustling leaves, the wind whistling over tall grass and the plaintive call of a loon.

The accompanying information suggested bonding with the instrument for several hours in a private area, preferably outside. I couldn't find any information on the ability of the flute to bond with two people. I hoped this would be possible, since both my fiancée and I would be playing the flute in the wedding.

I perched on my favorite boulder in the woods behind my family's home and composed love songs. As a trained musician, I was soon able to embellish my melodies with trills and vibrato. Since my musical education had not come from a bull elk, I imagine that my songs sounded somewhat different than Flute Boy's.

The intent was the same, however. My pentatonic improvisations flowed through the trees, seeking the ears and heart they were meant for. I hoped that the effect would inspire Tony and change his mind about playing the instrument.

Later that evening, I visited my fiancée. Tony paused in his solo martial arts workout as I began to play the Courting Flute. Slowly I glided through the door and into the karate school, stopping in front of him. As in the legend of "Flute Boy," I poured my love into the mouthpiece and out through the eagle's beak. Our gazes locked as the music captured his spirit.

I lowered the flute. Silence descended.

"Well if it wasn't such a *manly* flute..." Tony began.

I laughed.

He would play it.

The ceremony took place in the Chapel in the Pines, at the Aqua Turf, in Southington, Connecticut. The chapel was rustic, with exposed beams and large windows. The view was of gardens, grass and a gently flowing brook. We adapted the traditional use of the Courting Flute for our wedding ceremony. Rather than having Tony play the flute for me, we played for each other.

My attendants and I crossed the long wooden bridge to the outside of the chapel. The Celtic Harp music ended and the organ processional began. When the last of my attendants had entered the chapel, the massive wooden doors were closed. Inside, a hush fell as Tony, impressively garbed in a decorated deerskin coat, beaded headband, medicine wheel and moccasins, began to play the Eagle Head Courting Flute. The notes of his Heartsong drifted down the aisle. His "Call" beckoned me to his side.

The immense doors opened. My father and I slowly processed during the "Bridal March." When we reached the altar, my father lifted my veil, kissed my cheek and put my right hand on Tony's right hand. I took *Siyo Tanka* and through it sang my "Acceptance," the eerie tones swelling and diminishing as my Heartsong merged with the echoes of his.

*Jamie Haley lives in Harwinton, CT. Further information on Courting Flutes is available on [www.pawnee.com/flutes/](http://www.pawnee.com/flutes/) and [www.spottedeagle.com/flutes.htm](http://www.spottedeagle.com/flutes.htm).*



Ornette Coleman at Bilsen, 1971.

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south from L.A. to practice flute, can't help having a different emotional approach than Archie Shepp, who grew up in New York City and was heavily influenced by the racial climate of the 60s.

Copying a hero doesn't affect our ability to produce an individual voice. Before Ornette Coleman burst onto the scene in 1959 with his album *Something Else!* he copped Charlie Parker licks with his quartet in Fort Worth. Sun Ra, director of the Arkestra and perhaps the most famous person ever to be born, got his start with Fletcher Henderson's big band. Miles Davis who, in his own words, "changed the music six times," played on be bop records in the 40s. Even the great innovator, John Coltrane, played clarinet in the U.S. Navy marching band and toured with rhythm and blues bands before finding his own voice.

Why are we drawn to jazz music, and what keeps us in the practice room? What are our goals, and how do we reach them? While some people want to swing, some want to wring every drop of emotion out of ballads, some are drawn toward free jazz, and some want to play jam-band funk, our jazz goals are actually less diverse than they may seem. We all have a model. At some point each of us heard a recording and said "I wanna play like that!" Better yet, at some point we went to a show — we got the image, we got the sound. It just felt right.

In fact, if you haven't already been inspired by the sound of jazz, put this article down right now and go buy some recordings! Try Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue*, or anything by Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, or Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz*, or big bands including Count Basie, Ellington, and Gil Evans. Try trio

recordings with Chick Corea or Bill Evans, or early 70s Keith Jarrett, or Kenny Garret's *Pursuance* (the real Kenny G), or Coltrane's *Giant Steps*. Try Cecil Taylor, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, or Karl Denson's *Tiny Universe*. Listen to singers like Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holliday. Buy new albums by Chris Potter, Dave Douglas, or Medeski, Martin, and Wood.

If you still haven't found anything you like, and if you still want to play jazz, your road is going to be difficult at best. How could you learn French without hearing it? How would you pronounce, *comment allez-vous* or *qu'est que se passe?* You can wear all the turtlenecks and berets you like, but if you never hear the language, you'll never be more than an American in French pajamas. For an aural illustration, learn the Sonny Rollins passage transcribed in Fig. 1. Only after you can play it on your instrument, listen to a recording. How does your interpretation differ from the real thing? In retrospect, which sounds more authentic?

Fig. 1. Sonny Rollins: "You Don't Know What Love Is" from the album *Saxophone Colossus*. Prestige PR7326

Let's assume you're hooked. Now, what to do about it? If there were a tried and true method to learning jazz, we'd all be on the program, right? Well, there is. Every great jazz musician has one thing in common. (No, it's not a drug problem.) They all learned the music by ear. Sure, players became well versed in music theory — Oliver Nelson, Jerry Coker, Bill Dobbins, and others wrote textbooks — but they only used theory to extend the reaches of what they could hear. Bill Dobbins in his book *Jazz Piano Harmony* writes, "Before any sound can be used in a creative and spontaneous manner while improvising, it must be thoroughly assimilated by the ears and the hands." Every great jazz musician from Jelly-Roll Morton to Wynton Marsalis came to the music through their ears, not their mind. By emulating the music that came before them, they were able to assimilate then innovate.

Transcription! The word conjures images of long-dead white guys hunched over manuscript paper, though for the purposes of jazz we'll be transcribing straight to an instrument without the paper in between. The bassist Chuck Israels says, "Whatever is written on the page stays on the page." In jazz, the elements that can't be expressed using Western notation are as important as the notes themselves.

That being said, many players jump on the transcription bandwagon at a point far past what their ears can handle. Sure, if the technique is there, they can ape Coltrane's *Giant Steps* solo or sail along with Dizzy Gillespie, but they are lost when it comes time to transfer the musical vocabulary to their own playing. True transcription requires memorizing not the notes but the underlying chord changes, interpretation, tone and rhythm, and a song's emotion.

Sound intimidating? It's not, really, if you pick the right starting point. Also, it's more fun than scrambling through theory while standing on the bandstand or playing yet another scale exercise. Wouldn't it be great if you could just close your eyes and let the music flow? Wouldn't it be wonderful to ditch that fake book?

Some musicians use transcription software or music technology to slow the music without changing its pitches. While this may be a useful tool in dissecting late Eric Dolphy, to get started we will need only a CD player and an instrument.

The first step in transcribing is to learn the tune. Start by listening to the melody until you can sing along with it in your head. Learn it on your instrument and play with the recording. Get solid enough with the timing that you can continue to repeat the melody even over the top of solos.

Next, learn the bass notes. Using older recordings is advantageous in that the bassist is likely to play near the root. Again, play the bass notes not only with the melody but also below each solo. Don't even think about writing anything down! Memorizing is tough, but once you've got it, the music will belong to you.

Once you are comfortable with the melody, apply the same listening techniques to the solo. Before using your instrument, learn the rhythm and be confident that you know the shape of each line and can predict the sequence of phrases. This might include listening to certain parts over and over. Remember, the notes are vehicles for expression, not an end unto themselves. In this step, learn the music along with the notes. As you dissect a solo's phrases and put them onto your instrument, learn timing, articulation, and the music's idiomatic quirks. Try to copy the tone even if your instrument differs from that of the solo. Again, don't write it down or it will forever stay on the page!

Work on the solo until you can play along with the recording, then continue practicing until you can play it alone. Try laying the solo over the tune's melody or over another soloist's choruses. If there are phrases you particularly like, learn them in all twelve keys and the chord changes over which they can be played.

When you're done, get out of your basement and perform! You did your homework; now trust the material to be there. Close your eyes, open your ears, and let all your influences flow freely!

Here's a list of recordings to get you started transcribing.

*Garth Sundem, M.M., has composed for the Henry Mancini Orchestra and has studied at Cornell University and with the bassist/composer Chuck Israels.*

#### RECOMMENDED JAZZ SOLOS FOR TRANSCRIBING BY EAR

<u>Artist/Instrument</u>	<u>Album (Artist is leader unless specified)</u>	<u>Song(s)</u>
Miles Davis/Trumpet	<i>Kind of Blue</i>	Freddie the Freeloader, So What, All Blues, Flamenco Sketches
Paul Desmond/Alto	Dave Brubeck: <i>Time Out</i>	Take Five
Chet Baker/ Trumpet	<i>The Best of Chet Baker Sings</i>	Just Friends, I Remember You, Time After Time, But Not For Me
Joe Zawinul/ Piano	Cannonball Adderley: <i>Mercy, Mercy, Mercy</i>	Mercy, Mercy, Mercy
Lou Donaldson/Tenor	Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers: <i>A Night at Birdland, Vol. I</i>	Wee Dot
Gerry Mulligan/Ben Webster , Bari /Alto	<i>Gerry Mulligan Meets Ben Webster</i>	Blues in B-flat
McCoy Tyner/Piano	John Coltrane: <i>My Favorite Things</i>	My Favorite Things
Dexter Gordon/Tenor	<i>Getting' Around</i>	Flick of a Trick, Manha De Carnaval
Bob Brookmeyer/ Trombone	<i>Out of this World</i>	Summertime, Some Day My Prince Will Come
Coleman Hawkins/ Tenor	<i>Body and Soul</i>	Body and Soul

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