

The 4th International Festival & Congress in Norway will take place at Rauland, arranged by Telemark University College, Institute of Folk Music and Folk Arts, and by Norsk Munnharpeforum. The dates are September 11th to 15th, 2002.



Pictorial Archive

Hello, I just found your amazing Jew's Harp Guild website and was very impressed with its scholarly content and talent level. I thought you'd be interested in a photo (top left) I have taken of Al Duba and Phil Hysell (me) presenting Dave Collins of WSAZ radio with an honorary harp (quite possibly the largest Jew's Harp in existence) from the National Jew's Harps Brotherhood (NJHPB). The photo was taken 1 Oct 1963 in Huntington, West Virginia USA while Al and I were students at Marshall University. Dave Collins had a radio show on which he would play a rather hot harp in the folksong heydays along with such tunes as "Mama Don't 'Low No Guitar Playin' Here" and "Tie Me Kangaroo Down". We would play along with Dave. He honored us in turn by inviting us to play along with him on the air on his radio program. Later, we were guests on the WSAZ TV show, "Saturday Night Jamboree". I have photos of that extravaganza also. Somewhere in my 'archives', I have tapes of Dave playing along and the other personalities' comments about such an unusual gathering of talent in the hills of West Virginia.

Phil Hysell- Louisville, Kentucky USA

<<<

[Here] is another photo of Al (center/sitting), myself (left/standing) and Dave Collins (right) on the air at WSAZ. You certainly have my permission to print the photos and story. The NJHPB was kind of a 'college thing' for us. As I recall, we didn't have lots of members, but we were certainly nationwide. I really never knew there was much of a Jew's Harp following at that time. I had always played the harp as a kid in the hills of West Virginia. My folks exposed me to the instrument early on and

apparently their folks played them before that. So, I assumed they were of Appalachian Mountain origin. I later learned, of course, they went well back further than that. It was mostly a fun thing for us and got us the attention we wanted. Our co-workers at the Cabell-Huntington Hospital, where we worked as accountants during our college years, thought us to be 'strange birds', so to speak. We made the most of it. Al and I have stayed in contact over all these years and still play our Jew's Harps on special occasions when we can get together. It's certainly an ice-breaker when you pull out a harp and play a tune. Most folks are completely enthralled to find that a recognizable tune can be coaxed from such a simple instrument. Of course, I've never seen some of the beautiful craftsmanship exhibited in some of those pictured on your site. I own four harps myself. My favorite is my small Austrian one. The three others are of English origin. I will photograph them and submit them to you.

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10

COUNCIL MOUNTAIN



A Word from the Executive Director

Dear Jew's Harp friends,

Hello and happy summer! My article will be shorter than usual this time. I don't have a lot of news. And with no festival this summer, I don't have as many items to go over with you.

Quite a few from the USA are planning to go to Norway for the 4th International Jew's Harp Congress in September. So far we know that Fred and Lois Crane, David and Ginnie Holt, and Dan Gossi are going. We hope they have a great time and bring home lots of memories to share with those of us who aren't going.

After 23 years in our mountain home, Bill and I are moving. We have sold our place and will spend the next month moving. We aren't sure yet where we'll settle, but we do have an "interim" plan. All Guild website, email, and post office addresses will remain the same.

We still plan to have a small festival/gathering of Jew's harpers next summer (2003) so if any of you have suggestions for a location, drop us a note so we can be thinking about it.

So until next time ... keep twangin'! - Janet Gohring - Executive Director, The Jew's Harp Guild

2002 ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The following officers were elected: Janet Gohring, Executive Director, Kathi Vinson, Secretary/Treasurer, Gordon Frazier, Board Member, Bill Gohring, Board Member, Denise Harrington, Board Member, Larry Hanks, Board Member, Mike Stiles, Board Member. The following received write-in votes: Rick Meyers 1 vote

CD Reviews by Frederick Crane

Originally published in VIM #10 - 2000. Used with permission.

In the year and a half since the last VIM, a nice bunch of CDs have reached me that have trumping throughout, or at least have important trump content. Collectively, they sharply point out the new directions that the trump has been taking, toward integration into a greater number of musical genres. Who would have thought that it was, as it now seems to be, infinitely adaptable?

ATS Records CD-0522 (2000). *Free Harpin': Maultrommelimprovisationen.* This CD rounds out the substantial selection of performances from the Third International Jew's Harp Congress/Festival, Molln 1998, begun with the double CD ATS Records CD-0513 (see VIM 9 (2000), 65-66). The record opens with the finale from Albrechtsberger's *Concertino in E Flat*, in the fine performance of Albin Paulus. It is too bad that the other movements were not included; as far as I know, this is the only Albrechtsberger trump work that has not yet had a complete recording. With one exception, the rest of the eleven tracks are improvisations by internationally mixed groups, in excellent live recordings. Most of the players are recognized as world-class greats. To summarize, there is some predominance of nonscalewise sounds; vocalisms and other instruments in addition to the trump are often heard. Everything works wonderfully! Order from the Österreichische Maultrommelverein or Paclax.

Navrang cdnavrang01. Navrang, *navraç* (2000). I want to be able to classify any music that I hear, and I can't do it with this CD. There is much variety, ostinato, drone, some Middle-Eastern sound, some rock backbeats, and some subdued, sweet moments. The music is certainly hip: kinetic is the word for most of it—it demands bodily motion. But the unity is there, perhaps in the instruments and personalities of the Hungarian band's three members. Of these, Áron Szilágyi plays doromb much of the time, and Oszi is also listed as player of dorombs, among other instruments. It's easy for me to forget to evaluate: it's a fine record! Order from Paclax.

GEMA no number. Preußisch Blau, *preußischblau* (2001). My first impression was of anarchy, but no. The 13 tracks differ greatly from one another, though each in itself is much unified in sounds and mood. That said, my comments will be anarchical. Tuvinish throat-singing. Quite a bit of minor—the shrutibox mostly plays a minor third; how does the trump adapt to minor?—I've never figured it out. Improvisation throughout, evidently. Moody.

Classic harmonica blues. It says that the sounds come from trump, mouth harmonica, shrutibox, and voice; the “also manipulated electronically” probably explains how we can hear the sounds of drums and other percussion. But some tracks are electronics-free. Tributes to the past? Track 9 is a pure throwback to the earliest concrete music, with “tape loop,” and a ghastly-movie-soundtrack mood. Later, is that a parody of the trump-loving Ennio Morricone? Gerd is the trump specialist, Sören the harmonica guy—two virtuosos who have worked out their own unique brand of music. They grow on you, and soon become an integral part of your trump world. See the Editor’s Notes for Preußisch Blau—words and photo. Order from Paclax.

CDTW 019. Lindsay Porteous, *The Art of the Trump* (2001). Lindsay “Twanger” Porteous is notable for his huge repertory of dance and traditional tunes from his native Scotland as well as England, Ireland, America, and many other parts of the world. He stands out also for the large number of instruments he plays—in addition to the various trumps he plays on all 27 tracks of this CD, I count 14 other instruments, not to mention diddling, liling, and throat singing. Nearly all the selections are overdubbed, with several channels apiece. Lindsay is at his best in the traditional dance tunes, lively, rhythmic, with nice bits of ornamentation. Lindsay has also issued several other CDs, and many cassettes; all of them have at least a little trumping. Order from Lindsay Porteous, Tron House, Culross, Fife KY12 8JG, Scotland.

MNF Records MNF-0129-2. DJ Crack, *Die Maultrommel* (2001?). My information is sketchy, but DJ Crack is evidently a prominent Düsseldorf-based Hip-Hop + R&B + Reggae group. The record consists of four different mixes (4 to 6 minutes long) of material that includes a persistently pulsing bass-drum sound, and much of the time variants and long repetitions of a short trump riff. House music, maybe, but what do I know?

Opus 111 OPS 30-122. Pierre Hamon, *Lucente stella*. Recorder-family instruments played by Hamon are featured in music from the Middle Ages, 20th-century Japan, and the Navajo. On two of the tracks, estampies from an Italian manuscript of c. 1400 in the British Library (Add. 29987), Hamon is joined by John Wright on trump. Essentially, John plays the entire pieces in unison with the flute, and at a breakneck speed with hardly a pause, for 7’38” and 6’51” respectively. Both play a free introduction to the second piece, and in the estampie proper, the trump abandons the melody briefly several times for accompaniment. All of both pieces are in minor (i.e., Dorian mode). Although the melodies are not what would be thought of as trumplike, John evidently follows them in virtuosic accuracy, as far as can be heard, anyway, as the trump is much softer than the flute. Order from Paclax.

Electric Fans, 4 *daze*. I am being much blessed/cursed with unclassifiable performing groups. I’ll go to the words of some members of Electric Fans, who have suggested “Afro-techno funk” and “the ancient sound of future phonky.” Now you know. The five players and two engineers who participated in this recording are international to the core, but based in Amsterdam since they made their start as a street band in 1997. It’s hard to speak authoritatively of foreground vs. background, but the trumps of Anthony Glass, and the marranzanu of Sicilian Luca Recupero on tracks 1 and 3, are prominent almost throughout, in a style more rhythmic than melodic, but ranging widely in pitch, and often plucking at superhigh speed, against drums, bass, vocals, and electronics all doing what comes naturally to them, recorded live and communicating high energy to the listener. Out of print.

Wergo SM 1620 2. Spiridon Shishigin, *Soul of Yakutia* (2000). How do you produce great work in any art, visual, verbal, aural, or whatever? Simply put, you master the material so that it is effortlessly available for your use, and then you give form to it, perhaps intuitively, perhaps with much conscious thought. My point of view is that that form must be communicable to the end user—reader, viewer, audience, listener. As one brought up in the Euro-American musical tradition, it is at first rather wrenching to accept the possibility of great music that doesn’t fit the approaches one is used to. Maybe the rhythms and metric patterns are familiar, but scalewise melody is replaced by a more abstract art of sounds. Such is the impact of the art of the Sakha khomus: not intrinsically based on scales, this art starts from a codified set of techniques that depend on control of hands, breathing, and subtle alterations of the area from lips to pharynx or possibly beyond. Each khomusist masters these techniques and adds personal ones; achieving mastery of these demands hard work over a long time; it is not easier than it is for the violin or piano. Improvisation gives form to the sound material in one’s palette. How do you recognize the greatness of a Shishigin improvisation? One can appreciate the technical mastery, and also the structure: just listen intently and keep your memory active. Try this sort of listening on track 3 of this CD, for instance. It starts out gently, and economically uses only a small set of rhythms and sounds, most strikingly a little chirp; it builds up by stages to a louder level, then dies down to let the end match the beginning. As to the selections as a whole, they mostly reflect the CD’s title, being vignettes out of Sakha traditions and environment. It’s program music; I’m a romantic who believes in it: go ahead—picture the tundra as you listen, or the white horse or the dancing shaman. One final point with regard to Spiridon’s art: he has taken part in the trend of the most recent years toward fusion, incorporating, in his case, European-style melody into his native tradition. This is his first solo CD. Order from Paclax.

(CD Reviews continued)

Nihon Koukin Kyoukai NKK003. *Mukkuri Hawehe/Sound of the Mukkuri: Jew's Harp and Vocal Music of the Ainu (2001)*. It is good to have a recording with a good sample of Ainu mukkuri playing. Seven women, each of whom we met at either the Yakutsk or Molln Congress, or both, play and sing on a total of 31 tracks. Fifteen of these are vocal ensembles, two with mukkuri. I was particularly interested to observe that many of these vocal pieces are canons—a form little known outside of Europe and Africa. Most of the mukkuri tracks are solos—the traditional way of playing—but there are three duos and one sextet. There is a common but not universal basic formula: slow plucks begin, and speed up; a regular beat and limited series of sounds comprise the large central part, after which the beats thin out again; there may be another slowing in the middle. The world over, a steady attack is the natural rhythm of the trumpet, but in areas where the instrument is “plucked” by a string, it is almost the only possible one. All the mukkuri pieces have programmatic titles (“A Bear with a Cub,” “Footsteps of the Spring”), though, as Tadagawa Leo’s notes explain, the “title” is actually the image the player had in mind while performing the piece. As it seems to me, these little mukkuri pieces put special demands on the listener for attentiveness: the “connoisseur” will follow the structure of each piece by retaining the set of sounds used, thus also appreciating the differences among pieces. Order from Nihon Koukin Kyoukai, 1-2-24, Midorigaoka, Ageo, Saitama 362-0015, Japan, or Paclax.

Etnisk Musikklubb EM3. Svein Westad, *Munnharper verden/The Jew's Harp World (2000)*. An exemplary record, very cleanly performed and recorded. And beautifully—it’s a cast of world-class players. But Svein is the central character. He plays munnharpe solos on 13 tracks, mostly traditional tunes in the distinctive Norwegian style, and is joined by other instruments on five tracks. John Wright, Trần Quang Hai, and Tadagawa Leo each have several solo tracks, and the last of the 29 tracks (totaling a generous 73 minutes) is a collective improvisation by the four stars, two with trumpets in D (not E), and two in A. The details are more complicated than that, but would add a page to this review. Everything is tiptop, and I particularly recommend this record. Order from Paclax.

Boox box BWM-B101. Nagane Aki, *Mon-o-lah (2001)*. I am used to rather restrained, no doubt strictly traditional Ainu mukkuri playing, so this record comes as something of a surprise. Ms. Nagane is not an Ainu but a Japanese living in Hokkaido. Her four purely solo tracks are not very far from tradition, as I know it for example from the NKK CD reviewed above, and perhaps even represent a style she found in use. Notably, she often speeds up and slows down the beat every few seconds. It is in the five instrumental ensemble tracks that Nagane most distinctly stretches tradition. These (4, 5, 8, 9, 16) all seem to be improvisations, in which she is joined by players of various Asian instruments (in no. 4 with two other trumpets). Here the beat may be free, the course of events rhapsodic. The effect is often gripping. In several tracks, members of the five-member group EPO sing. The overall variety is great. Order from Nihon Koukin Kyoukai or Paclax.

Mouth Music Press db3 2204. *The OddTones, We're Allowed*. The OddTones are Wayland Harman (trumps, clackamore [his invention]), Mark Poss (trumps, vocals), Michael Bruesch (guitars, mandolin, vocals), and all on numerous percussion and mouth-resonated instruments. Ten of the 17 tracks include trumpeting (and they call the instrument trump, bless their souls!). The notes make quite a point of the oddness of the music. Well—I’ve heard odd music in my time, even sought it out, and I have to say that I’ve heard a lot odder than this. What I hear is a personal concoction of a little bit of country and quite a bit of blues, with elements of jazz and world music. The trumpet aficionado will take much satisfaction in hearing the ways the trumpet is used—very few of them traditional; the tracks that feature the trumpet are memorable. I hope it won’t sound like faint praise if I say that this is very pleasant, listenable music throughout. It’s hot off the press, or whatever CDs come off of. Order from Mouth Music Press, PO

VIM NOTES

The VIM situation has changed a bit. Both Nos. 4 and 5 are now out of print. Nos. 1-3 and 6-9 are now \$10 each.

VIM no. 10 has just been printed. Nos. 10 and 11 are available by subscription, at the new rates below, including postage. I regret that somewhat increased printing costs and much increased postage, especially for overseas mailing, have made the higher subscription rates necessary.

U.S.A. and Canada \$20, All other countries \$25

Payments may be by international postal money order or by a check drawn on a US bank.
Many people send cash, which is cheaper, but there is a risk of loss in the mail.

VIM

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THE PLUCK-N-POST

Bulletin Board

Hi, here's a message from The Netherlands, announcing that the address of my Int. Jaw harp pages on the Internet has changed. Please transform your link(s) from
<http://www.zeelandnet.nl/paclax/jewsharp>
into the new url:

<http://site.zeelandnet.nl/paclax/jewsharp>

Within a few weeks my website will be completely reorganized, extended and actualized.

All the best, **Henk Postma**

Hello everybody on Jew's harp,

Here this e-mail to inform you that Antropodium starts a special website on which Jew's harp players from all over the world will be listed. It was a proposal by Tran Quang Hai to create a website of Jew's harpers around the world with their address, experience, music-style, e-mail address and more.

After a while that I have thought about it, I have decided to execute this job. But I need some help of the players who want to be at that list. Let me be clear : I don't ask money for it - it is a gesture of service by Foundation Antropodium on its specialized Jew's harp-website **www.antropodium.nl** **Phons Bakx**

Status of the NAJHF 1998-2000 Highlights CD

The artwork and final mix of this CD are complete. The final package should be off to the duplicators before this issue goes to print. I expect the CD to be available by mid to late July 2002. My apologies for the delay.
Mark Poss

A Brief Review of VIM No.10

By M. D. Poss

VIM No. 10 - 2002 marks the 20th anniversary of the first issue of this scholarly Trump journal edited by Dr. Frederick Crane [see CD Reviews, this issue]. As usual, Fred's deep interest in history and near flawless attention to detail prevail in this issue. It reads like a travelogue as the many learned contributors accent the articles with color photographs. Among the topics included are: The Hutsul in the Ukrainian Carpathians (Dallais, Weber, Briner, Liegme), The Mapuche of Patagonia (Pignocchi), Kyrgyzstan (Westad), Tokyo travel report (Bruhin).

Very striking in this issue is the khomus art produced by students at the Pokrovsk Secondary School No.1, in Pokrovsk, Sakha Republic (Yakutia) where Spiridon Shishigin is Director. The imagination and quality of the works are astounding! I was also touched deeply by the entries of the album dedicated to the Trump virtuoso Franz Koch (1761-1831) translated by Fred.

I have collected all the issues of VIM and refer to them often. It is unfortunate that some issues are now out of print (see VIM Notes, page 4). I urge anyone that has a interest in the history of this wonderful instrument to pluck up as many issues as you can. - M. D. Poss

Previous articles on VIM may be found at:

A review of VIMs 1 through 6:

PNP 4/98 - Volume 2 Issue 2 - Spring / Summer 1998
www.jewsharpguild.org/jhgnews7.html#vimreview

A review of VIM 9

PNP 10/2000 - Volume 4 Issue 3 - Autumn 2000

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THE PLUCK-N-POST

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