

# THE PLUCK-N-POST



Volume 3 Issue 3

PO Box 92 Sumpter, OR. 97877

Fall/ Winter 1999

## A Word from the Executive Director

### September 99

**Fall is in the air** and though my thoughts are turning to winter preparations here in the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon ... I'm still filled with memories of the 8th annual North American Jew's Harp Festival last month. Once

again, the festival was great. First of all, I'd like to thank the 41 people who volunteered and helped out with the festival. I don't have the space to mention each one ... but you know who you are and the sincerest thanks go out to each one of you. **WITHOUT OUR VOLUNTEERS THE FESTIVAL JUST WOULDN'T HAPPEN.** Special thanks goes to the members of the Richland Grange for letting us have the festival at their beautiful park and for serving food during the festival. They are a wonderful group of people and we appreciate them a bunch!

**We hosted 45 musicians** - the most we've ever had in attendance. Many were repeat performers but we were very happy with the number of new musicians. Special guests were Des VanDijk from Amsterdam, Matt Whyntie from Australia and Job Matusow from Utah. For full details on the festival, look for the special festival edition of PLUCK ... it should be mailed to all Guild members sometime after the first of the year.

**Job Matusow** (his group was formerly known as "Harvey Matusow's Jew's Harp Band") is re-releasing his album of 30 years ago, "The Fats and The Thins" (a very cool Jew's Harp album). Job has graciously offered 50% of the profits from this project to the Jew's Harp Guild. We'll be sure and let everyone know when this unique CD is available ... I'm sure you'll want one for your collection!



L-R: Melissa, Lena, Job @ NAJHF 99

**Wayland Harman**, who has been the festival MC since the beginning, regretfully resigned that position this year. We have very much appreciated Wayland's talents as MC, yet we also realize the job really limits his ability to take part and enjoy the festival as a musician. So, next year we hope to have several people share the job of MC. If you are interested in this, let us know.

**We still have Festival T shirts available** (in XL, XXL & XXXL only) for \$18 each (includes shipping). We will be offering a "Membership Renewal Special" for 2000: Get a year's membership and a '99 Festival T-shirt for \$20 (you'll save \$8). We'll be sending out a mailing in December with the Membership Renewal Forms and the Ballot for Election of Officers. We encourage you to write or email us if you have any suggestions or questions.

**Our website** gets better all the time, so check it out at [jewsharpguild.org](http://jewsharpguild.org). Webmaster, Mark Poss, is doing a super job there ... his newest "Discussion Group" is generating a lot of interest and unique conversation. Great job, Mark! Well, I think that's all for this time. I wish each one of you a great winter and happy harpin' !!

Yours in music, Janet Gohring

Executive Director The Jew's Harp Guild ♪

## What's Inside

### Pictorial Archive - Scacciapensiers

#### Bulletin Board

CDs, Playing Tips, Virtuosos,  
An Evening With Huun Huur Tu, more

#### BackBeat

Editor's Notes - Throat Singers of Tuva

#### Them Jaw Harpers

in the "Them Poem" style of Mason Williams.

Lyrics: Jules DeGiulio, 9/21/99

#### Pics from NAJHF 1999

## Scacciapensiers from the Pictorial Archive



↑PA18 – The Gordon Frazier Collection  
The Jew's Harp Guild Pictorial Archive  
↓PA86 – The Bill Gohring Collection



The Jew's Harp Guild Pictorial Archive needs photos of your favorite 'harps. Send (non-returnable) pics and info to:  
The Jew's Harp Guild Pictorial Archive: c/o Mark D. Poss  
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**Post Your Notes**

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## Virtuoso Jew's Harp

**From the JHG Discussion Group**

**Question:**

From: PL162@columbia.edu

Date: 10/7/99

Anyone have the address of any company etc where i can buy a virtuoso jew's harp?-Seems there is a company in the states that makes them--no web search so far successful. any help really is appreciated.

**Answer:**

From: Bill Gohring

Date: 10/20/99

When we were in Austria at the 3rd Int'l Congress last year, Manfred Russman told me that Franz Bernogger was the maker of the Virtuoso Jew's harp. Mr. Bernogger died in 1997, so that harp is no longer available (unfortunately). Mr. Bernogger was from Molln, Austria (where the Congress was held) ... and there are still three other makers who live there. Sepp Jofen (Horzing) and Franz Wimmer both make harps that are similar in shape to the Virtuoso and come tuned and are very nice harps. If you can read German, Phonx Bakx's Pamphlet #4 in the Cahier series contains an extensive interview with Franz Bernogger that Phons did not long before Franz died. As far as I know, this pamphlet is not available in English. Hope this helps! ψ

(Bulletin Board continued next page)

## The **PLUCK-N-POST** needs more contributors!

If you have ideas for articles, sketches, or pictures, etc. Please query the editor, Mark Poss, at (208) 466-6614 (10am-10pm MST) or 924 10<sup>th</sup>. Ave. N. - Nampa, ID. 83687

## An Evening With Huun Huur Tu

From: Patchnet@aol.com (JHG member Pat Chappelle, London, via the OddMusic E-mail list (oddmusic.com))

Hi Guy(s),

As part of a very extensive world tour, the Tuvan khoomei (overtone singing) band Huun Huur Tu visited Britain twice - once for a gig in London, and then a two-week residency at the annual arts festival in Edinburgh (which they're currently in the middle of), with trips to Australia and France sandwiched in between. This was their second visit here - I was lucky enough last time to see them backstage after a sell-out concert in London, where I purchased two khomus (jew's harps) - one from Anatoli Kuular, the band's main khomus player, and another from Michal Maltsev who was travelling with them as their interpreter. This brief meeting made up for having had my video camcorder confiscated during the performance, to be handed back to me at the end with the film wiped (I've a nice film now of the legs of two security personnel as they walked back to their office, the camera swinging by its strap!)

Anyway, my friend Michael Ormiston and I had become friendly with Michal during that visit (aided by copious quantities of wine, beer and, of course, vodka) - Michael, as I've mentioned previously, is the premier exponent of Mongolian-style khoomii singing in Britain, as well as being adept at myriad kinds of strung and blown instruments (if he had his own computer, I'd make sure he was on the oddlist) - so it was natural that on their return to London they opted to stay at Michael's house for their week in London. Michael took them shopping at our more esoteric music stores, and for the Friday night invited my wife Tessa and I, and a few other friends, round for some craic (as the Irish call it - for the uninitiated, that's craic pronounced crack, nothing to do with drugs but everything to do with socializing). Tessa brought her didj, and I my collection of jew's harps. While Michael cooked up some fab food, Anatoli and I checked out each other's instruments - he was very taken with a bamboo one I got from Lark In The Morning, and some others from Zoltan Szilagy, while I thought that a Vietnamese one, given him by a Frenchman in Lyons, was the best one I've ever played - I've tried contacting that guy but sadly with no reply so far. Then after the meal Anatoli and Alexei Sariglar (the band's percussionist) - the other two band members having crashed out earlier - joined in a jam with Michael, Tessa and myself, playing some traditional tunes from their repertoire, plus some of Michael's own compositions in obscure time signatures including a catchy little number in 23 (!). Michael was playing the saz, a kind of Turkish lute; Alexei played the igil (horse-head fiddle, similar to the Mongolian morin huur), a big drum called a dunggur, as well as various percussion including duyug (horse's hooves) and xapchyk (a rattle made from sheep's kneebones inside a bull's scrotum); as well as khomus, Anatoli played guitar and various instruments called amyrga - these are made from

reeds fashioned into long conical shapes, and by sucking them they produce sounds imitating young deer - at least that's the idea, I tried and got birdsong! Simon, who also lives in the house (and is the percussionist in Michael's band) provided extra rhythms while Tessa held the bassline on her (beautiful blood-wood) didj; and I twanged away on jew's harps and clacked away on my clackamore (which was also a hit with Alexei). Alexei, Anatoli and Michael sang khoomei. Particularly wonderful was a version of the traditional song "Kongurei", which I managed to video (and keep!), and which Michael subsequently got them to teach him - he tells me he has now worked up an improvisation around it on the kaen (Chinese mouth organ). We were supposed to leave by 11 pm because Tessa had to work the next day, but before we realized it, it was gone 2 o'clock! The few hours we lost, but the memory of a very magical evening I will always have.

Pat ψ

## North American Jew's Harp Festival 1997 Highlights CD

The CD features 20 of the best Public Domain, spontaneous music, or original composition performances of the 1997 festival. The CD was well accepted at the MolIn Congress.

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## Playing Tips

**Protect Your 'Harps** - Use small blocks of wood, with notches cut for the 'harp trigger(s), to protect your collection from damage. Several instruments may be held on a single block. A rubber band is used to secure them.

**All Thumbs** - Place the thumb of the hand holding the instrument lightly on the back of the reed near the frame. Apply a small amount of pressure here while plucking to adjust the pitch of the 'harp upwards. (**WARNING:** Damage to the instrument may occur if too much pressure is applied!) The sustain of the sound may be reduced significantly and the quality becomes more percussive. This is a great way to obtain a different sound, or to push a harp up slightly to tune with other instruments.

## Scacciapensieri Quest

Hi:

Has anyone an extra "Scacciapensieri" flat harp? I am interested in buying one. I lost the one I had and would like to replace it. If so please contact me at "F\_Bielman@yahoo.com".

Frank Bielman La Puente Ca. ♪

## Jaw Harp Odyssey

Name: Lena Stella Strayhorn

Date: 6/23/99

Greetings!

Having returned from a most fruitful pilgrimage, I look forward to enjoying the 1999 North American Jew's Harp Festival.

At the 1996 North American Jaw Harp Festival, I had the great pleasure of hearing and playing a Hmong brass "ncaas" jaw harp, presented by Ingrid Berkhout. Upon experiencing this amazing instrument, I became convinced of the need to travel to the spot where they were made, and to learn from those who produced such a perfect human creation.

After much research, I set out with a fellow jaw harp lover for Thailand, knowing only that I was searching for the Hmong harp...

This jaw harp odyssey led us over two years to Thailand, Laos, VietNam, India, and Indonesia. My traveling partner made incredible recordings of jaw harp masters we met along the way, and I made some photographs along our journey. Some of these recordings will be released on CD in the near future, and a book on our pilgrimage is in the making. Punk camel-drivers playing jaw harp under the stars in the dunes near Pakistan; the man with the longest mustache in the world, fine jaw harp player and son of a famous bandit, who showed us his father's saber during a night of jaw harps and whiskey in his cow-dung hut; heaven on earth at the border of China, where 12-year-old shaman girls sing the songs of fairies through their harps; an aged blind hermit holyman comes down the mountain to bestow magickal genggong songs on us in Indonesia...

I will have available for sale a few of the harps I collected, and I'll present some photographs.

The San Francisco Interstellar Jaw Harp Society has been dispersed to many parts of the earth over the past two years, so I can not provide an update on its activities. I can, however, note that I performed last week at a benefit show for Annie Sprinkle, a "post-porn goddess" who lost her houseboat in a fire. As I, bedecked in gold and carnelian, played a Hmong harp, my friend Wanda Lust wove a poetical tale of sensual adventure.

Love, Lena Stella Strayhorn ♪



**The Throat Singers of Tuva**, an article by Theodore C. Levin and Michael E. Edgerton, appeared in September 1999 issue of **Scientific American Magazine** and may be found online at: <http://www.sciam.com/1999/0999issue/0999levin.html> Levin has been conducting musical fieldwork in Central Asia since 1977 and, in 1987, became the first American allowed to study music in Tuva. Edgerton is a musical composer who has performed worldwide and is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Wisconsin Vocal Function Laboratory. Together they have written a technical article that does much to explain the remarkable singing technique in which a single vocalist produces two distinct tones simultaneously. Commonly called throat-singing in English, the local Tuvan term is *khöömeior khoomii*, from the Mongolian word for "throat."

Though the Jew's Harp (*khomus*) is briefly mentioned, the bulk of the article consist of information about the origins of the ancient traditional music of Tuva, (now officially called Tyva) an autonomous republic within Russia on its border with Mongolia. It also relays insights into the harmonic, acoustical and physical properties required to produce the sound. (Including: the source-filter model, vocal folds, vocal tract, formants) Much of this information is of great interest to the Jew's Harpist. I urge you to visit your local library periodical archives, or the online source (which has many fine links to great graphics, sound files and other pertinent information).

**Tuvan throat singer Kongar-Ol Ondar**, who performs under the name Ondar, and producer Ralph Leighton, recently appeared on WHYY's **FRESH AIR** with Terry Gross. Ondar's new CD is called "Back Tuva Future." Ralph Leighton is the associate producer and author of "Tuva or Bust." Topics covered include: The history of Tuvan throat singers, Ondar's life, introducing Tuvan singing to Americans... more.

[Transcripts are available from Federal Document Clearing House (Tran# 030301np.217 <Date: MARCH 03, 1999>) Secure order form located at <http://www.fdch.com/>. Customer Service department at 800-959-4228.]

The movie **Genghis Blues** with Ondar and Paul "Earthquake" Pena, is making the rounds in the USA. It's a "must see" for the Jew's Harpist!

Happy 'Harpin' ! – Mark ♪

**THEM JAW HARPERS** in the "Them Poem" style of Mason Williams. Lyrics: Jules DeGiulio, 9/21/99 with special thanks to Mason Williams  
Music & Arrangement: Jules DeGiulio: vocal, jawharp; Tom Sears: guitar; John Head: Harmonica; Larry Mitchel: banjo. As performed at NAJHF 1999

**How 'bout them Jaw Harpers  
Ain't they smart  
Twangin' them Jaw Harps  
With all they heart**

**Twangin' them Bilyeu's  
Pluckin' they Smith's  
Flickin' them Gengongs  
'Nuff to give their Moma's fits**

**Them ever Global Jaw Harpers  
Creatin' one very fine thing  
Sacred Vibrations to the Heavens  
With all their twangin'**

**This festival is wondrous  
Down home, even quaint  
Jaw Harpers, ever' one of 'em  
Is what they is and  
Ain't what they ain't**

[Full Blues Vamp here, whatever instruments are involved.]

**Call it a Jaw Harp  
Call it a Trump  
Scacciapensieri  
Don't be no chump**

**Just join with them Jaw Harpers  
A'buzzin' they brains  
Maybe we all are crazy  
Just a wee bit insane**

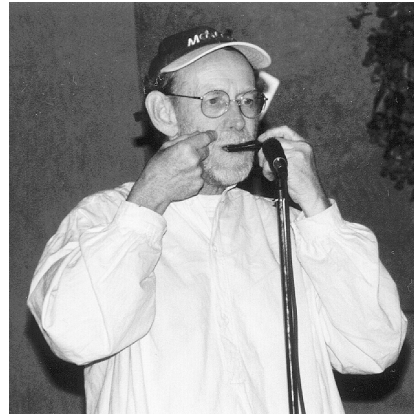
**But them ever buzzin' Jaw Harpers  
All around the globe  
Whether they're playin' Scrugs or Ives  
Always feel at home**

[Shorter vamp here]

**How to be a Jaw Harper  
What d'ya do with that thang?  
Press it up ag'in yer teeth and  
Just give it a twang!**

## NAJHF 1999

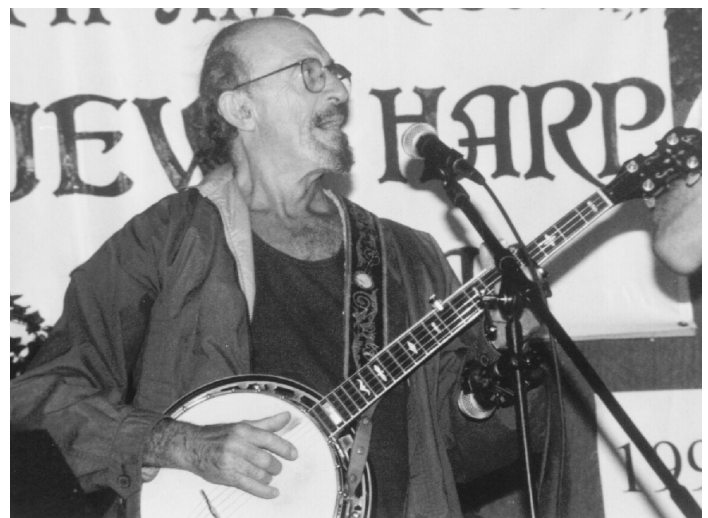
Here's a few pics from NAJHF '99. You'll see more in the annual "Festival Highlights" issue of PLUCK due out after the first of the year.



*Bill Gohring*



*The Stage (our best yet!)*



*Chuck Zyetz*

# PLUCK-N-POST

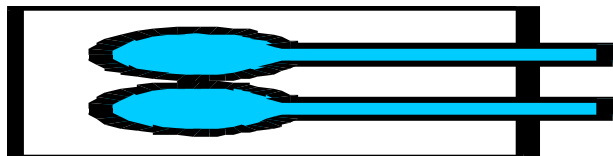
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THE PLUCK-N-POST is published by the Jew's Harp Guild, PO Box 92, Sumpter, OR. 97877 on a quarterly basis.

Subscriptions to this newsletter are available with JHG membership.

Information in this newsletter is also posted on the Jew's Harp Guild Website at: <http://www.jewsharpguild.org>

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