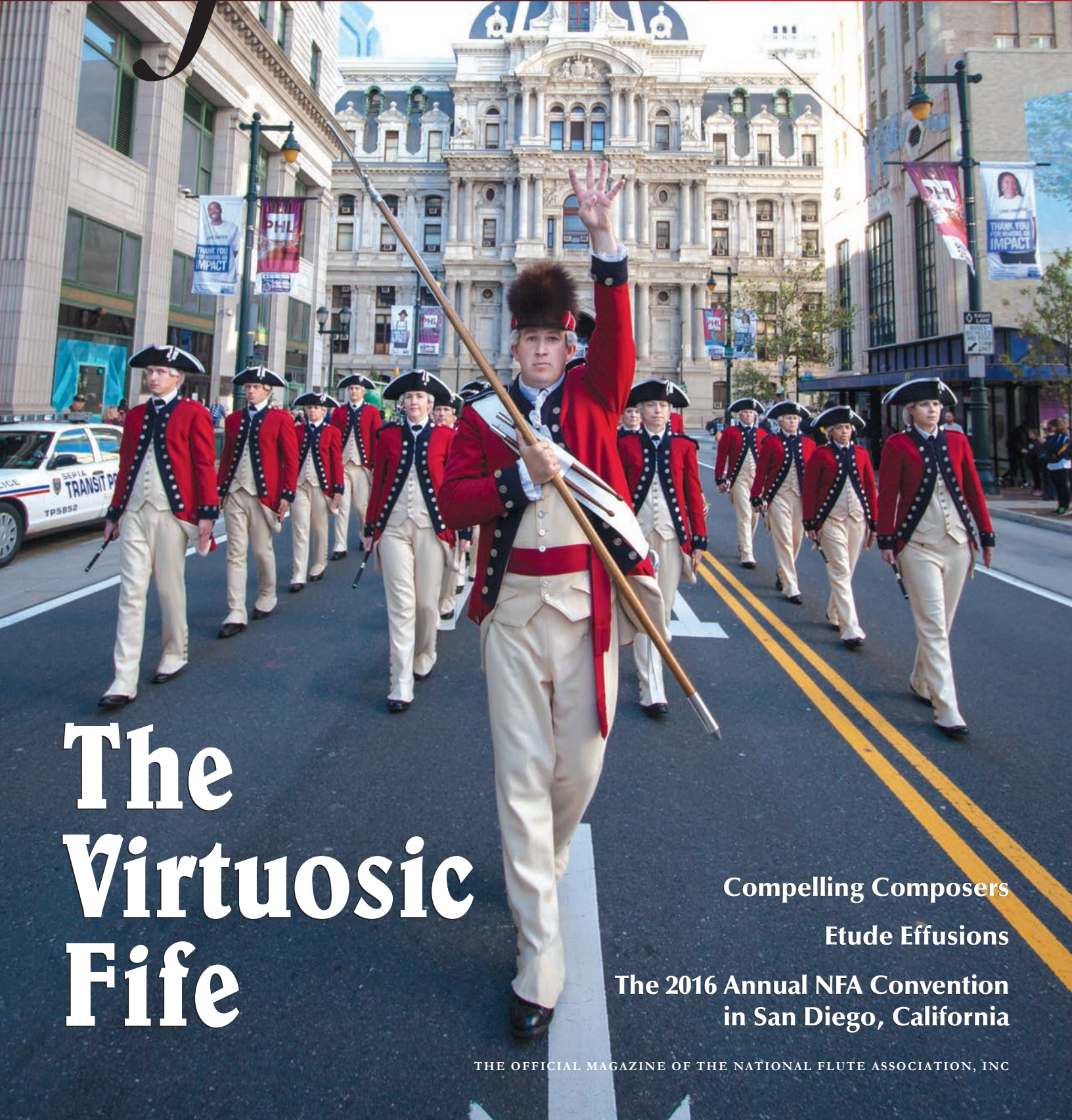


# THE FLUTIST

QUARTERLY



# The Virtuosic Fife

Compelling Composers

Etude Effusions

The 2016 Annual NFA Convention  
in San Diego, California

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Cover image: U.S. Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps marching in Philadelphia. Photo by the United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps.



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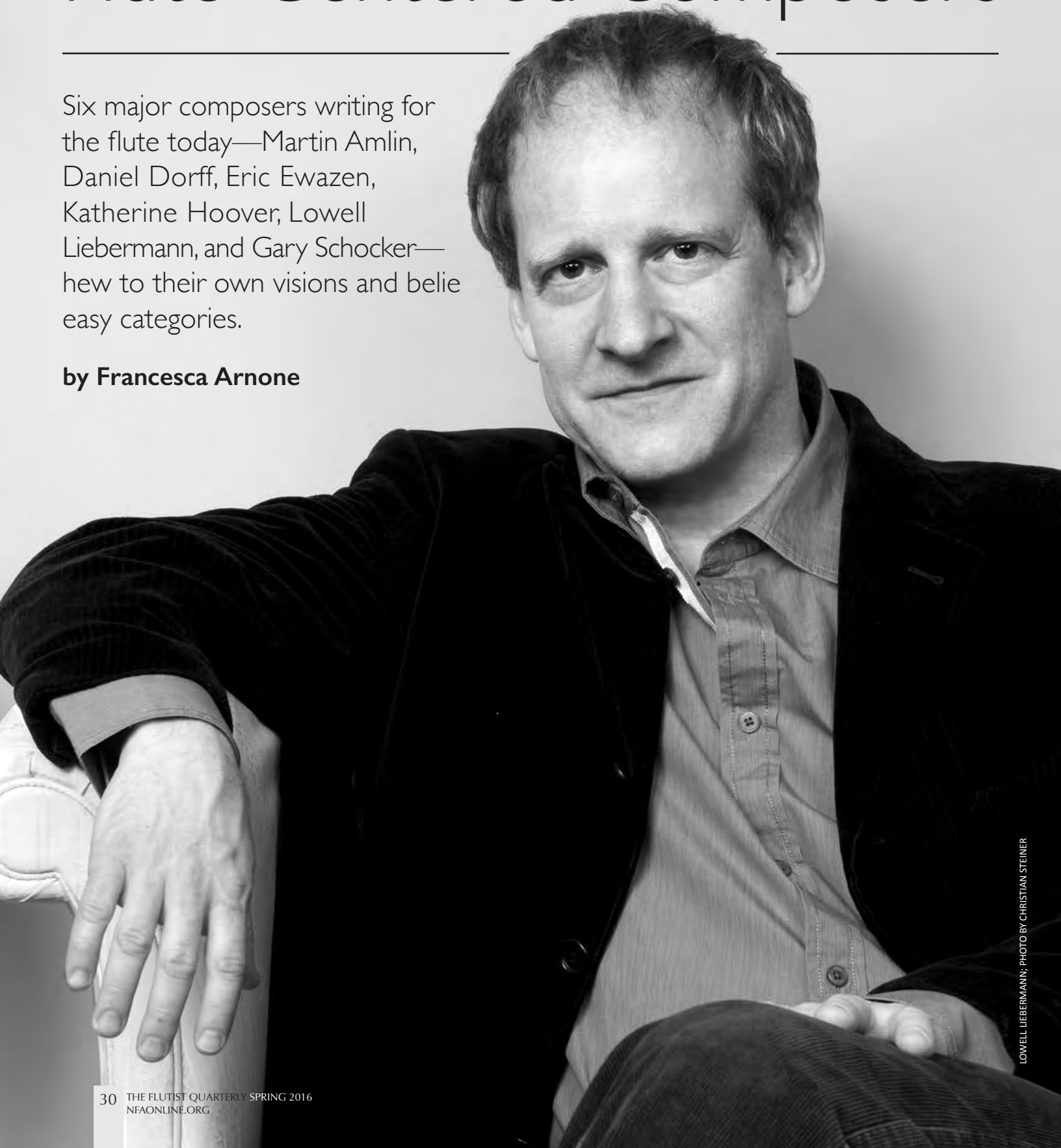
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# A Sampling of Compelling Flute-Centered Composers

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Six major composers writing for the flute today—Martin Amlin, Daniel Dorff, Eric Ewazen, Katherine Hoover, Lowell Liebermann, and Gary Schocker—hew to their own visions and belie easy categories.

by **Francesca Arnone**



LOWELL LIEBERMANN · PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN STEINER

Flute compositions range in as great a variety of styles, lengths, genres, and flavors as the musicians who play them. Despite this scope, our flute community enjoys the dedication of a number of mature, flute-centric contemporary composers who masterfully write *for* flutists, rather than for the perceived tastes of critics, other composers, or the cache of new trends.

Some consider themselves (or have been christened) neo-traditionalists; others are coined neo-romantics or new tonalists, and some admit simply to seeking balance and form. Although these composers' works feature compelling rhythms and harmonies, each present singing melodies, so valued by flutists. While it is a formidable task to narrow a "short list" of flute favorites, here's a glance at some of our most prolific living composers (in alphabetical order) who so ably capture the possibilities of our instrument.

## Martin Amlin

Born in 1953, Martin Amlin hails from Dallas and began composition lessons at a very young age. He studied with Nadia Boulanger at the Ecoles d'Art Américaines in Fontainebleau and L'Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, earned his undergraduate degree in piano and composition at Southern Methodist University, and took his graduate composition and doctoral piano performance degrees at Eastman. Although Boulanger was his primary influence, his other composition teachers included Adler, Schwantner, Velluci, and Benson. Currently chair and professor of composition at Boston University, he directs the Tanglewood Institute's Young Artist Program. He continues to perform as a pianist, most notably with Leone Buyse and as a member of the Webster Trio with Buyse and clarinetist Michael Webster.

Noted for complexity of rhythm (often with a perpetual motion and a "jazz" feel), a predilection for successive major and minor seventh chords, and a commitment to traditional compositional forms, Amlin's music is quite challenging yet lyrical and harmonically rich. Featuring the full range of the instrument, his compositions often present symmetry of rhythm, line, pitch, and form. Additionally, his compositional language has been described as still retaining its French accent, creating colors and textures invoking movement and gesture that shape lines forward.



Martin Amlin. His *Piccolo Sonata* premiered in 1997 at the NFA convention.

Although the sonata is one of Amlin's preferred forms, his first for flute was written in 1987. Almost 10 years later, he composed his *Piccolo Sonata*, premiered at the NFA's Chicago Convention 1997 by Zart Dombourian-Eby, with Amlin playing piano. In many ways, this work continues in the parameters set forth by his 1987 sonata, while still demonstrating the piccolo's ability to expressively sing throughout its range. Although the *Piccolo Sonata* begins with a 12-tone row, the piece surprisingly transcends this organization. Most listeners and even performers miss this serialism, just as many do when playing or hearing Martin's *Ballade*: The content transcends the compositional technique.

Amlin's works are published by Presser, and although he has written mixed small ensembles, the following is a list of his most prominent flute and piccolo compositions.

- Concerto for Flute/Piccolo and Orchestra (2013)
- *Ephemeropterae* (2008), solo piccolo
- Sonata No. 2 for Flute and Piano (2004)
- *Intrada for Two Flutes and Piano* (2003)
- *Sonatina Piccola* (1999)
- Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra (1999)
- Sonata for Piccolo and Piano (1997)
- Trio Sonatina for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano (1991)
- *Morceau de Concours for Flute and Piano* (1987)
- Sonata for Flute and Piano (1987)

## Daniel Dorff

Born in 1956 in New Rochelle, New York, Daniel Dorff began composing in the 11th grade. At the age of 18, he won the Aspen Music Festival's young composer award for his saxophone quartet. He studied composition with Siegmeister and with Brant, Crumb, Husa, Rochberg, Shapey, and Wernick at Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania, and studied saxophone with Rascher. Although his tastes are eclectic, his music has always been genuine and tonal.

While a college student, much of his writing was dismissed for not reflecting serialism and the avant-garde. "Many of my composition teachers commented that I was surprisingly honest in my music," he says. "I don't understand



Daniel Dorff composes, publishes, and promotes new works.

why they found this surprising or rare. I am expressing myself, not expressing them. That's why I do this as my life's work—for my sake, not for other composers' prejudices. I hope they're writing honestly, not trying to impress the media and their colleagues."<sup>1</sup>

By 1985, he was a full-time editor and publisher at Theodore Presser Company and as such was "marking up" the works of some of his former teachers, interestingly reversing some of his student experiences with these Presser composers. Currently vice president of Presser, Dorff shares his expertise in engraving and software notation through many lecture and advisement opportunities at universities, companies, and even Carnegie Hall.

A past NFA board member, Dorff is particularly devoted to helping the organization's community, which his compositional output reflects. Despite his corporate career demands, he remains committed to composition: "I've always created what I'm attracted to as if I were inventing a new place to enjoy a vacation, a new beautiful place to spend time, a new piece to enjoy playing or hearing."<sup>2</sup>

With traditional structures and a firm sense of tonality, Dorff's music can harken back to the rich traditions of the Romantic era—as demonstrated in the *Sonatine de Giverny*—or ignite an energetic but idiomatic showcase punctuated with jazzy snaps, as delivered in *FLASH!* Critic Todd Gorman notes Dorff's music as fresh and accessible, which could explain why musicians enjoy performing his works.

Selected works by Dorff, published by Presser, are listed here.

- *Cape May Breezes* (2015), wind quintet
- *Sonata (Three Lakes)* (2014), flute and piano
- *Woodland Reverie* (2011), solo flute
- *FLASH!* (2008), piccolo and piano
- *Sonatine de Giverny* (2000), piccolo and piano
- *The Year of the Rabbit* (1999), three C flutes and alto flute
- *Through a Misty Arch* (1986), flute ensemble
- *Three Romances for Flute and Clarinet* (1997)
- *August Idyll* (2006), solo flute
- *Nocturne Caprice* (2002), solo flute
- *9 Walks down 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue: Rondo Variations* (2004), flute and piano
- *April Whirlwind* (1997), flute and piano
- *Serenade To Eve, After Rodin* (1999), flute and guitar

## Eric Ewazen

While Amlin remains drawn to tonality and color through complex organization, and Dorff is faithfully committed to creating inviting music landscapes, Eric Ewazen, born in 1954, writes in an unabashedly, neo-romantic way to present tonal music in a personalized, lush language. His Eastern-European heritage exposed him to diverse musical styles while young, and he studied piano with a Baldwin Wallace Conservatory teacher beginning at age 5. As a high school junior, he began his first formal composition lessons and, like Amlin, attended Eastman to study with Schwantner, Benson, and Adler (but also Schuller).

After graduating, Ewazen earned his MM and DMA with Babbitt at Juilliard, where he has been on the faculty since 1980. Upon completing his studies, his compositional style changed dramatically, abandoning atonality in favor of highly melodic,



Eric Ewazen composes for brass and other instruments along with the flute.

tonal instrumental music. A long-established brass composer—largely due to the support he garnered from the American Brass Quintet and its members—he now writes for nearly all instruments and is much recorded.

Ewazen favors traditional forms, often writing first movements of multi-movement works in a type of sonata form. Repeated arpeggios either cascade gently or swirl enthusiastically in his compositions, while final movements fluctuate driving, intense meters with modal melodic material. Chromaticism and descending harmonic thirds increase the emotional, heightened expression. Belying the influence of his childhood's family music-making, his melodies can often be reminiscent of folk song, featuring a narrow range and invoking familiarity through repetition. The composer notes that his brass and wind writing is highly influenced by his already existing vocal works. This is very evident in his song-like second movements of basic melodic range, without considering ornaments.

Ewazen's Flute Concerto was written for and premiered by Julius Baker in 1988 and features four movements in a colorful kaleidoscope of vignettes ranging in mood, pacing, and gesture. One of the first significant trios for flute, horn, and piano, the Ballade, Pastorale, and Dance remains the mainstay in trio repertoire of this combination to which all others can be measured and features highly idiomatic writing for all instruments. Here the first movement of the trio presents sweeping tuneful lines; the second is chorale-like, written over the Christmas holidays and appropriately conjuring this atmosphere; and the third shifts compound triple meters, supporting a jaunty, narrow modal melody, and ends exuberantly.

In a similar vein, the Sonata No. 1 for Flute, written for Marya Martin in the tradition of the great Romantic sonatas, features a soaring flute melody in the first movement, a highly vocal second movement, and a technically exhilarating third movement. He writes that his Sonata No. 2 for Flute and Piano, composed for Sandra Lunte, also celebrates the 19th-century sonata structure and scheme.

Ewazen's flute works are published by Presser and Southern and also are self-published.

- Concerto for Flute (1988)
- Ballade, Pastorale, and Dance (1992–1993), flute, horn, and piano
- *Ali'i Suite* (1994), flute and piano
- *Roaring Fork Quintet for Wind Instruments* (1994), woodwind quintet
- *Cascadian Concerto for Woodwind Quintet and Piano* (2003)
- Sonata No. 1 for Flute and Piano (2011)
- *A Night in New Orleans for Solo Flute* (2015)
- *Harmony in Blue and Gold for Three Flutes and Alto Flute* (2008)
- Sonata No. 2 (2013), flute and piano
- *Wildflowers: A Trio for Piccolo (or Flute), Clarinet, and Piano* (2011, 2013)

## Katherine Hoover

Flutist, composer, theorist, and poet Katherine Hoover was born in 1937 in West Virginia but primarily grew up in the suburbs of Philadelphia, beginning to play first the flute at age 10 and then later the piano. Although not encouraged by her family to be a musician, she trained at Eastman and Manhattan School of Music, where she earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees in theory. At Eastman, she also received her performance certificate as a student of Mariano and during her Manhattan days traveled to Philadelphia to continue her flute studies with Kincaid.

Although Hoover began composing as an undergraduate, she did not make this interest public. Her composition classes at Eastman were discouraging, as she was the only woman in them, and although she later began a graduate degree in composition at Bryn Mawr, she was unable to pursue lessons with the young visiting composition professor.

In 1977, a successful concert of her compositions at New York City's Women's Inter-Art Center encouraged her to actively dedicate herself to composition. The following year, and with the support of the center, she established and directed the first of several festivals (Festival of Women's Music) to address the clear need to showcase women composers. Her personal struggles served as the impetus to help others, bringing attention to 55 contemporary and historical women composers.

While many of Hoover's compositions are instrumental, they frequently rely on extra-musical inspirations that create a story line or mood instilling an amalgam of cultures and eras. One of the first examples is her *Medieval Suite for Flute and Orchestra*, which references characters from Tuchmans' book, *A Distant Mirror*. "Kokopeli," "Winter Spirits," and "To Greet the Sun" are just three of her many flute works reflecting her research and interest in Native American cultures.

Unlike the other flute-focused composers described in this article, Hoover relies on simply writing what she hears rather than focusing on developing or following a particular structure or preconceived form when composing. At times her music has no key or meter signature, yet rhythm, harmony, and melody remain vital components in her works. She also uses modes, clusters, jazz-influenced harmonies, and recurring or developing motives to create her highly expressive personal style. Although largely self-taught, she often found inspiration through studying significant works of other 20th-century composers such as Hindemith and Bartok.

An outstanding flutist, Hoover has performed and recorded a number of her own compositions. Her flute works are significant



Katherine Hoover plays flute in addition to composing for it.

in number and quality, are highly innovative, and expertly encourage performers to broaden their scope of expression possible to the instrument. She is a former NFA board member and a 2016 NFA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.

Throughout her career, she has been adept at rising to and creating opportunities: She taught flute and theory at Manhattan School of Music and Columbia; founded her own company, Papagena Press, to publish her music; established a festival dedicated to programming music by women composers; and began conducting and recording her own works. She has remained dedicated to her personal vision and quest to create and realize music, and she models the perennial entrepreneurial spirit.

Selected works by Hoover, published by Papagena Press and distributed by Presser, are listed; they are for solo flute unless noted otherwise.

- "Kokopeli," op. 43 (1990)
- "Winter Spirits," op. 51 (1997)
- *Reflections, Op. 25: Variations on a Norwegian Chant* (1982)
- "To Greet the Sun" (2004)
- *Etudes for Flute* (2011)
- *Mountain and Mesa*, (2008), flute and piano
- *Masks, op. 56* (1998, commissioned by the NFA), flute and piano
- *Medieval Suite op. 18* (1981), flute and piano
- *Mariposas* (2001), four solo parts, six ensemble parts
- *Celebration* (2001), flute ensemble
- *Kyrie, Op. 55* (1998), flute ensemble
- *Three for Eight, op. 50* (1996), flute ensemble
- *Concertante Dragon Court* (flute ensemble) (2005)
- *Peace Is the Way* (flute ensemble) (2004)
- *Three Sketches* (2003, commissioned by the NFA), piccolo and piano
- *Summer Night, op. 34* (1985), flute, horn, and piano
- *Dances and Variations* (1996), flute and harp
- *Canyon Echoes, op. 45* (1991), flute and guitar
- *Two Preludes: I. Uptown & II. Out of Town* (2012), flute and marimba
- *Homage to Bartok, op. 7* (1975), wind quintet



Lowell Liebermann celebrates flutists' collective zeal for new works.

## Lowell Liebermann

Born in 1961 in New York City, Lowell Liebermann began piano lessons at age 10, followed by composition lessons at age 14. He earned his undergraduate through doctoral degrees from Juilliard, whose composition faculty boasted Carter, Babbit, Diamond, Sessions, and Persichetti. While at Juilliard, in contrast to Ewazen, Liebermann resisted composing in the style of his teachers. Struggling to remain true to his personal vision, he experienced pressure by his teachers and even student colleagues performing his works in composition forums to write works that sounded more contemporary.

Since then, the press has heralded him as the leader of the “new tonalists,” championing a forthright observance of the overtone series as being inescapable, and audiences and performers alike are drawn to his accessible writing. While some critics find little favor with his compositional style and use of traditional forms, he has earned significant commissions, residencies, and programming by some of the world’s greatest orchestras.

The piece that started it all is his Sonata for Flute and Piano, op. 23, commissioned by the Spoleto Festival Chamber Music Series for Paula Robison in 1987, which captured the attention of flutists around the world. The success of this sonata inspired a succession of other wind instrument commissions, including those by James Galway (Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, Op. 39), a consortium of U.S. orchestras (Concerto for Flute, Harp, and Orchestra, op. 48), and Jan Gippo (Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra, op. 50). While he observes that the flute concerto is perhaps one of his most tonal compositions (with the exception of the final movement), the tonality of the flute sonata is generally more blurred at times.

While showcasing lyrical lines, Liebermann enhances his music’s appeal by using traditional voice-leading, recognized forms, and unifying motivic coherence—yet while not necessarily progressing to expected harmonies. He dislikes being labeled a neo-romantic composer but rather considers his music to be more of the classical era than any other due to his demand for clarity and balance in his pieces. Liebermann

The piece that started it all is Lowell Liebermann’s Sonata for Flute and Piano, Op. 23, commissioned by the Spoleto Festival Chamber Music Series for Paula Robison in 1987, which captured the attention of flutists around the world.

notes that his composing process is very organic, permitting an overarching form to unfold out of the smallest kernel of an idea. When writing the flute sonata, for example, he says the first movement unfurled to reveal a long, extended dramatic movement, which then required just one contrasting movement to balance it.

Since completing his studies at Juilliard, Liebermann composes (primarily on commission), performs, and conducts, but does not teach. He notes that he frequently reviews the repertoire of a given instrument when preparing to write for it, rather than working with the artist who has initiated the commission: “In my mind, I’m still writing for the ideal performer who can do everything and anything.”<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, he writes for the ideal audience and writes what he would like to hear rather than attempting to write what may please us. He celebrates how flutists not only embrace but also eagerly seek new repertoire and is puzzled why other instrument communities do not seem to pursue this with similar zeal.

Selected works for flute and piccolo by Liebermann, published by Presser, are listed.

- Air for Flute and Orchestra, op.118 (2012)
- *Night Music*, Op. 109 (2009), flute, clarinet, and piano
- Air for Flute and Organ, op.106 (2008)
- Five Pieces from *Album for the Young*, op. 79 (2002), flute and piano
- Eight Pieces, op. 59 (1997), solo bass flute, alto flute, C flute or piccolo or in alternation at performer’s discretion)
- Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra, op.50 (1996)
- Concerto for Flute, Harp, and Orchestra, op. 48 (1995)
- Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, op. 39 (1992)
- *Soliloquy*, op. 44 (1993), solo flute
- Sonata, op. 56 (1996), flute and harp
- Sonata, op. 23 (1987), flute and piano
- Sonata, op. 25 (1988), flute and guitar

### Additional Flute-centered Composers

Robert Beaser  
Aaron Jay Kernis  
Libby Larsen  
Paul Moravec

John Rutter  
George Tsontakis  
Yuki Uebayashi  
Dan Welcher

## Gary Schocker

Born in 1959, Gary Schocker is an extremely accomplished and versatile musician who has developed his compositional craft to showcase works that are highly melodic and theatrically appealing. His strong ear was evident at a very young age, and he began piano lessons at age 3 with his father, who was not only a pianist and former piccoloist and harpist in the U.S. Military Band at West Point but also the most influential music figure in their hometown of Easton, Pennsylvania. Although they performed together throughout the community, Schocker was not taught how to read printed music until age 11, which reinforced his already formidably strong ear. His father also gave him flute lessons until he was able to work privately with Baker; Schocker later studied with him and Baron at the Juilliard School.

After experiencing great success as a soloist and in competitions, such as Young Concert Artists, and inspired by the success and positive response garnered by his first commissioned and published piece, *Regrets and Resolutions*, Schocker decided to pursue a career in composing. The craft allowed him to express his feelings in a highly personal way that he felt was unmatched when performing works by other composers.

Although Schocker is self-taught, his sharp ear and sense of personal awareness have led him to compose what he loves throughout his career. His music is peppered with humor, mercurial mood changes, and lyricism. While the flute and piano repertoire have influenced his composing, his tremendous versatility allows him to write in a wide variety of styles, harkening to different eras, cultures, and countries. Many people find traces of Poulenc in his writing, which he considers accurate. Although he notes his overarching style as being “eclectic, romantic, melodic and sometimes virtuosic—but never for the sake of showing off,” there is a persistent lyricism.<sup>4</sup> Schocker finds his large-scale sonatas to be introverted, complicated, and interesting with highly conversational writing between flute and piano.

“I require rubato, and heartily dislike metronomic playing,” Schocker says of his music in general. “The rhythmic impulse should never be pushed through the body by force.”<sup>5</sup>

While he writes what he feels is personally meaningful, Schocker has amassed an impressive and varied output for all orchestral instruments. Considering his long-standing relationship with the flute, it makes sense that music for this instrument reflects his most intimate expression: Today he is the most prolific living composer of flute music, ranging from solo to chamber music. Of his pedagogical pieces, he “has been instrumental in expanding and refining the literature of contemporary flute music for players of various levels.”<sup>6</sup> Recently he has experienced new vigor in playing and writing for the harp, which his father also played but Schocker never learned while young.

**Today, Gary Schocker is the most prolific living composer of flute music, ranging from solo to chamber music.**



Gary Schocker turned to composition after early success as a performer.

Following are only a few of this highly prolific composer's flute compositions, published by Presser and Falls House Press.

### Flute Solo

- *Blip, Blip, Blip* (2002)
- *Eight Etudes for Solo Flute* (2007)
- *Flute Forest* (2002)
- *Flutter and Flit* (2010)
- *Mozart Flute Concerti Cadenzas* (1995)
- *Short Stories* (1999; commissioned by the NFA)
- *Solosuite* (1996)
- *Telemann Fantasies and Phantoms* (2010), fantasies with second flute part
- *Ten Etudes for Solo Flute* (2000)

### Flute and Piano

- *Airborne* (1991), also for flute and string orchestra
- *Ambidextranata* (2005), one player
- *Arioso* (2005)
- *Concertino Italiano* (2015)
- *Conversations* (1993, 2006)
- *Dark Star* (2008)
- *Erev Shalom* (2000), also for flute and string orchestra
- *Figments* (2006)
- *Flame* (2011)
- *Green Places* (1992), also for flute and chamber orchestra and flute and wind ensemble
- *Jazzbird!* (2004)
- *Oomp! A Demented Waltz-Fantasy* (2010), flute and piano
- *Prelude, Theme and Free Associations* (2003)
- *Quirks* (2015)
- *Regrets and Resolutions* (1986), also for flute and chamber orchestra and flute and wind ensemble
- *Sonata for a Lost Planet* (2010), alto flute
- *Sonata No. 1* (1991) through *Sonata No. 8* (2013)
- *Sonatine* (2000)

## Compelling Composers

While the term “neo-traditionalist” may seem the most appropriate category for these composers and their shared compositional



traits, this term tends to be most closely associated with the reinventing of a country's traditional music, art, or customs in order to serve a contemporary social function.

While that is appropriate when considering the music of these six writers, perhaps the most significant common bond is that they each strive to serve their musical visions, creating what they simply must create. Challenging the need to organize or label any individual, flutists and piccoloists can continue to embrace these composers and their contributions to our community.



*Francesca Arnone has been an NFA member since her undergraduate days at Oberlin. She is on the editorial advisory board of The Flutist Quarterly and currently chairs the organization's Archives and Oral History Committee. See francescaarnone.com.*

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#### ENDNOTES

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