

Newsletter supplement

International Jew's Harp Society



PictureGallery SPECIAL

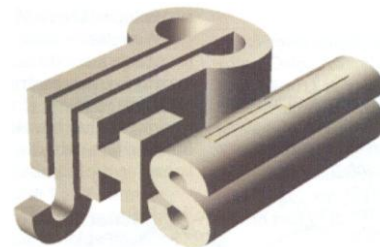
Sakha Republic
Vladimir Grigoriev
Alexey Shishigin
Nikolay Shishigin
Leo Tadagawa

Sicily
Leo Tadagawa

USA
Mark D Poss

December 2009
Winter
Issue 10 Supplement





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 USA

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(above)
Michael Wright,
Photograph by
Debbie Wright

Introduction

There is a saying in the UK that “it never rains but pours”, and coming from a country renowned for its downpours of rain, I know what I’m talking about!

I keep asking for photographs, and this time you have exceeded all expectations, so I thought as a preamble to the Newsletter 10 proper, I’d send you a small supplement of images from around the world – in fact Sakha, Sicily and the USA. Quite a spread.

My thanks go to Leo Tadagawa, Lucy Wright and Janet Gohring for the text and Leo, plus the NAJHF photographers, for the images.

Just in case you are wondering when you’ll get Newsletter 10 proper, we are likely to have exciting news about the gatherings in Kesketmet and Yakutsk, so are holding off sending it out until next month. In the meantime, enjoy a world trumping tour.

Michael Wright

International Jew’s Harp Society

Application for membership

New member Renewal

Name and address _____

E-mail address _____

The annual dues are US\$30.00 or EURO€20.00 and may be paid by bank or ebanking money transfer on the following accounts:

**IJHS account in EUROS, Philippe Dallais: INTERNATIONAL JEW’S HARP SOCIETY,
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 1002.95.66.3, IBAN CH0500766000100295663, BIC/SWIFT BCNNCH22**

**IJHS account in US-DOLLARS, Philippe Dallais: INTERNATIONAL JEW’S HARP SOCIETY
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 1002.95.65.8, IBAN CH4300766000100295658, BIC/SWIFT BCNNCH22;**

Paypal is available at

The amount may also be paid in cash, with a risk of loss in the mail. No personal cheques, please.
Please consider paying for more than one year – i.e. up to 2010 when there is the next congress.

I send payment in the amount of US\$ or EURO€ _____ to cover dues for the year(s) 200 _____

I am unable to send the dues, because of technical difficulties with exchange, or other good reason.

I send an additional amount of US\$ or EURO€ _____ as a subsidy for members not able to pay.

The Treasurer’s postal address is:

Philippe Dallais, Grand Rue 55, 2035 Corcelles, Switzerland. Tel: +41-(0)32-730-2266. E-mail: phidkat@bluewin.ch

Sakha Republic

Last summer, I visited Sakha-Yakutia to participate in several events strongly connected with the khomus.

The first event was the Khomus Makers' Forum and Competition, held in the capital Yakutsk from 24-27 June 2009 (*photographs 1-23*). The khomus produced by Sakha master makers are highly esteemed and known as the best Jew's harps in the world. The good makers are very important and indispensable since without a good instrument, it is impossible to create good music.

The event started with registration and a meeting at the entrance hall of the Khomus Museum and the International Jew's Harp Music Centre. There were makers whom I meet nearly every year, whom I haven't met for 18 years after the 2nd Congress, and whom I meet for the first time. Participants from Moscow, Irkutsk, France and Japan were there. After some orientation by Nikolai Shishigin, the director of the Khomus Museum, we were divided into two groups. One visited Ivan Khristoforov's workshop in Oktyomtsy, a village about 45km to southwest from Yakutsk, and the other visited Innokentii Gotovtsev's workshop in Namtsy, a town about 75km to north from Yakutsk. Khristoforov makes khomus from iron rod; on the other hand, Gotovtsev makes khomus from iron plates. The latter is rather a new method for making in Sakha khomus, allowing different kind of designs on the frame. I wanted to visit both of them, but unfortunately, as I had only one body.. I just decided to visit Gotovtsev for no particular reason. Life is a continuous selection.

After a welcoming ceremony of fire and a blessing song, Gotovtsev explained the process of khomus making, showing some tools and fragments of the work. Then he showed us several TV programs about him and treated us with Sakha national dishes.

The second day (25th) was a day with more works. In the morning at a hall of the Yakutsk National Gymnasium (Grammar School), the event started with a short concert by children's ensemble directed by German and Klavdia Khatylaevs, and some other musicians. Then came speeches by organizers, reports and presentations by Ivan Alexeyev (president of the Khomus Centre), Ksenofont Utkin (former director of the Khomus Museum), Nikolai Burtsev (chief judge of the competition, metal physicist) and others.

At two o'clock afternoon, the competition started. Invited musicians presented on stage the works by 27 makers. Some of the khomusists came together with the maker from their village, and others were just asked impromptu to the venue. Several makers played their instrument themselves. Among the masterpieces there were innovative ones like the electronic khomus by Ivan Khristoforov, Sakha khomus harps by Kojima Ryuji (Japan), Bernard Lalanne-Cassou (France) and Josef Jofen (Austria) were present, making the event international.

The judges were: Nikolai Burtsev, Ivan Alexeyev, Spiridon Shishigin (khomus-virtuoso), Semyon Ivanov (vice-president of the Khomus Centre), Ksenofont Utkin, Nikolai Potapov (traditional knife maker, jeweller), and Leo Tadagawa.

Criteria and questions for judges:

- If a not-so-good instrument was presented by a virtuoso player, what will be the judgment?
- All the instruments must be presented by one player (or a Jew's harp playing robot, maybe)?
- The Jew's harp is strongly connected not only to the respective culture's musical tastes, but also to the individual player's personal tastes. If, for instance, this kind of competition becomes really international, what will happen? For example, how does a judge from Sakha estimate the quality of a South Indian harp with rather "hard" tongue? It is clear that the instrument is good for South Indian music, but not for Sakha music. Though the Jew's harp exists nearly everywhere in the world, its production and playing does not have a global, common approach (like ice skating or synchronized swimming).

After the musical presentation, the works by master makers were left for checking by the judges. The next day (26th) in the morning, we had a round table at the library of the Gymnasium. The makers discussed in some depth how they would improve on the quality of the instrument. All the participating works were exhibited on a table nearby.

The results were announcement and the prize giving ceremony was held in the afternoon.

1st prize: Revorii Chemchoev (Vilyuiskii ulus)

2nd prize: Mikhail Maltsev (Vilyuiskii ulus)

3rd prize: Pyotr Osipov (Vilyuiskii ulus)

Best presentation award: Innokentii Gotovtsev (Namskii ulus)

Best performer among the makers: Roman Gotovtsev (Yakutsk)

After closing concert, participants danced the ohuokai circle dance and moved to the banquet at a balaghan traditional winter house in the garden of the Yaroslavskii Museum of Northern People History and Culture.

On Saturday 27th the khomus people were rather busy from the early morning, as they would have important role at the opening of Yhyakh - National Summer Solstice Festival that took place at Üs Khatyng (three birches) near Yakutsk (24-27). Ivan Alexeyev, Khomus Uibaan, and nine prominent khomusists were on the stage, standing near to the President of Sakha Republic. They proceeded to conduct 400 khomus players who were stood in the form of several radials symbolizing the ray of the sun and we enjoyed the sound and energy of khomus.

There were many different events everywhere in the venue which opened after this general introduction. Traditional sports and horserace, concerts and disco, restaurants and shopping stands... so many microphones and speakers. Luckily for the khomus people, they had venue across a wooden bridge, far from the centre of the festival,

The 1st Republican Contest "Khomus Kuo" – Miss Khomus Beauty Contest – was the main event in the afternoon (28-38). Eighteen participants competed showing their beauty and ability of khomus playing. Mariya Kulichkina, a student of medical institute in Yakutsk (who is Sagittarius), was chosen as the Khomus Kuo 2009. Later, Anna Savvina (Aquarius) who is

studying computer system of aviation now in Moscow became Khomus Kuo Internet 2009, by Internet voting.

At midnight, in the twilight of sunset, we went home leaving the people who were going to meet the rising sun at 3:00.

On Monday 29th at night, Ivan, Nikolai, Revo Budishtshev (vice-director of the Khomus Museum) and I went in a car to Vilyuisk to take part in the local Yhyakh - Summer Solstice Festival celebrating 375 years of the establishment of the town (40-55). This city is located some 600 km from Yakutsk, and it took more than 10 hours driving on a very dusty and dilapidated road. Unexpectedly, at the entrance of the city, a big signboard with a picture of beautiful young khomusist welcomed me under strong morning sunshine – I was happy, though so exhausted. You may have noticed that all three of the prizewinners of the khomus-making contest were from Vilyuiskii ulus. Vilyuisk is the capital of the province and it still has a strong blacksmith tradition. Avgustina Evseeva, a cultural worker, khomusist and the local organizer of the khomus events, and khomus makers Revorii and Mikhail was there to greet us.

The celebration took place from 1-4 July coinciding with a big “Spartakiada” sport event. The Summer Solstice Festival itself was much more the ideal comparing to the one in Yakutsk, which was rather urbanized. During the opening event of the Festival on 1st July, blacksmiths acted out their craft on stage with anvils and hammers made from cardboard, followed by 375 khomus players performing in the formation of khomus and directed by Ivan.

Next day (2nd), a khomus playing competition was held. It was planned to take place in the festival place, but the venue was changed to the Cultural House because of the serious mud caused by strong rain – of course nobody wanted to go to a muddy festival place in beautiful costume (56-63. About 30 musicians and groups took part. A young musical student, Nastya Neustroeva, won the Grand Prix. The first prizewinner was Marfa Badaeva, who was one of the participants of the 3rd Congress in Austria (1998), and the second prizewinner was Khristina Taskina; both are keepers of traditional style khomus playing “syia tardyy – moderate stroke.”

Between events, we visited Revorii’s and then Mikhail’s (who is a student of Revorii) workshops (65-69). We also visited a house of late Ivan Zakharov, who was a famous khomus maker and the teacher of Revorii. Actually, 18 years ago during the 2nd Congress, some participants (including myself), were invited to this very house to observe Zakharov’s khomus making process. Unfortunately, nobody from Zakharov’s family has inherited the art of making khomus. Nearly everything is kept in the Khomus Museum named after Zakharov in Vilyuisk, a museum with a huge khomus monument at the front.

So, these were some events I took part in Sakha Republic last summer. If somebody is planning to visit Sakha-Yakutia next summer, don’t miss the Khomus Kuo beauty contest – it is said that it’s an annual event. I wonder when and where the

international Miss (and Mister, probably) Jew’s Harp Contest will be held...

Leo Tadagawa

Key to photographs

- 01 The ground floor is supermarket; the first floor is sport shop. The Khomus Museum and the International Jew’s Harp Music Centre are located on the second floor.
- 02 The signboard of the Museum and Centre.
- 03 The Forum/Competition started with a meeting at the entrance hall of the Museum.
- 04-05 Visiting Innokentii Gotovtsev’s workshop in Namtsy.
- 06 Master makers participated in the Forum/Competition.
- 07 Makers, players and enthusiasts.
- 08 A player (left) tries to appeal all the good points of a *khomus* made by a maker (right).
- 09 Presentation of a sound analysis by Nikolai Burtsev.
- 10 Judges checking instruments.
- 11 Exhibition of the *khomus* made by participating makers.
- 12 *Khomus* by Revorii Chemchoev – the 1st prize.
- 13 *Khomus* by Mikhail Maltsev – the 2nd prize.
- 14 *Khomus* by Pyotr Osipov – the 3rd prize.
- 15 *Khomus* by Innokentii Gotovtsev – the best presentation prize.
- 16 *Koukin* by Kojima Ryuji (Japan) – probably the smallest iron harp in the world.
- 17 *Khomus* by Ivan Neustroev
- 18 The medals.
- 19-20 Round table.
- 21 (left to right) P. Osipov, R. Chemchoev and M. Maltsev
- 22 P. Osipov (standing, 2nd from left), Roman Gotovtsev (The best performer among the makers), R. Chemchoev and M. Maltsev and I. Gotovtsev with judges.
- 23 Revorii Chemchoev
- 24 Opening of *Yhyakh* the summer solstice festival.
- 25 400 *khomus* players at the opening.
- 26 Ivan Alexeyev and nine other prominent khomusists led them. (left to right) Anatolii Gogolev, Varya Stepanova, Natasha Fyodorova, Ivan Alexeyev, Albina Degtyaryova, Chemelina Fyodorova, Spiridon Shishigin, Georgii Ivanov. Nikolai Zhirkov and Dmitrii Krivoshapkin are not seen in the photograph.
- 27 *Ohuokai* circle dance at the end of opening.
- 28 “Khomus Kuo” Miss Khomus Beauty Contest
- 29 Mriya Kulichkina – Khomus Kuo 2009
- 30 Kristina Tolstyakova
- 31 Natalya Olesova
- 32 Anna Savvina – Khomus Kuo Internet 2009
- 33 Jew’s harp playing and beauty can stand at the same time.
- 34-36 I can draw, I can cook, and I can make handicrafts.
- 37 Beauty is important, but *khomus* playing is much more.
- 38 One of the candidates.
- 39 “Khomus Disco”; modern version of the *ohuokai* circle dance.
- 40 On the way to Vilyuisk. Note the emblem of Kyrgyzdai *nasleg* where Ivan Alexeyev (left) is from.
- 41 Leo at the entrance of Vilyuisk city.
- 42 A fence with *khomus* design. Vilyuisk.
- 43 Khomus guys at *Yhyakh* the summer solstice festival in Vilyuisk. (left to right) Nikolai Shishigin (director of the Khomus Museum), Leo, Revorii Chemchoev and Mikhail Maltsev (khomus makers), Ivan Alexeyev (director of the Khomus Centre), Revo Budishtshev (vice-director of the Khomus Museum).
- 44 The pole looks like a *khomus* very much...
- 45 Seen from rehearsal.
- 46 Tradition and modernity.
- 47-49 Young and old.
- 50 *khomus* players in the shape of a *khomus* at the opening.
- 51-52 Real blacksmiths acting as blacksmiths. More than half of them are khomus makers.
- 53 *Ohuokai* circle dance, of course.
- 54 Albina Degtyaryova and Olga Podluzhnaya
- 55 These guys don’t play the khomus, I’m sure.
- 56-58 Participants of the khomus music competition.
- 59-60 Nastya Neustroeva, the grand prix winner.
- 61 Prize giving ceremony.
- 62 Participants of the contest.
- 63 In the garden of late Ivan Zakharov’s, a famous khomus maker.
- 64 At Revorii Chemchoev’s workshop.
- 65 In front of a huge khomus monument, Khomus Museum in Vilyuisk.
- 66-67 With the bust of Ivan Zakharov.
- 68 Dancing khomusist in the Museum.

Khomus making competition



**National Summer Solstice Festival &
The 1st Republican Contest "Khomus Kuo"**



Yhyakh - Summer Solstice Festival



**Yhyakh – khomus playing competition
Workshop & other visits**



Sicily

The Third Marranzano World Festival, Catania, Italy
(31 October – 8 November)

It's always a great thing when a little bit of serendipity leads you on an unexpected journey. Having been out of touch with Luca Recupero for a couple of years, but remembering he was a loop pedal aficionado from his performance in Kecskemet in 2007, I dropped him an email in late September for some advice about using it with Jew's harps (my new pet project!), when he replied with an invite to the 3rd Marranzano World Festival (as well as some great looping info! Thanks, Luca!) it seemed like an offer too good to refuse. A few weeks later I found myself packing my Jew's harps in my rucksack in cold rainy England, and battling through customs ("what are these lethal weapons you're carrying?!") to step out into the glorious Sicilian sun.

While the marranzano is very much at the heart of the World Festival, held in the stunning and historic city of Catania between the 5th and 8th of November, each year another local instrument is given special focus. This year was the turn of the zampogna - the Sicilian bagpipe, a wonderful and iconic instrument with beautiful sounding, and many great players attended to share their music, including Sostene Puglisi, Pietro Cernuto, the great multi-instrumentalist Fabio Tricomi and the wonderful Giancarlo Parisi. Other drone instruments from around the globe also found their performance space; with the incredible Djalù Gurruiwiwi (from Arnhem Land, Australia on didjeridoo), Andrea Pisu on launeddas and old friend Vladiswar Nadishana on a variety of elemental instruments played skilfully and innovatively. Representing the Jew's harp were local players, Giorgio Maltese, Pippo Distefano, Puccio Castrogiovanni as well as the festival organiser, Luca Recupero, of course, and from the rest of the world, Nadishana, Leo Tadagawa and myself, Lucy Wright, representing Siberia, Japan and the UK-Ireland respectively. The Marranzano Nite, dedicated purely to our favourite little instrument on Friday evening at the Lomax arts centre had to be a personal highlight - and one of the most beautiful things for me was the way in which it was supported by those in attendance...a warm and generous audience which extended right out of the theatre, through the bar and out into the streets. The marranzano is clearly growing in popularity, thanks in no small part I'm certain, to the work of Luca to make the festival such a great event. His performance with the phenomenal Ipercussionici at Zo centre for contemporary culture was another real high point of the week!

The festival had a lovely relaxed atmosphere, full of spontaneous music-making and friendship and the programme of events across the city made for a wholly enjoyable festival, each venue perhaps more beautiful than the last! While the whole event was a pleasure, another highlight for me had to be the festival finale on Sunday evening, held in the gorgeous and atmospheric medieval courtyard of Chiostrò San Giuliano which began with a spirited "all in" from invited guests and ended with balletu

dancing, everyone picking up the steps to dance under the stars while the night slipped past.

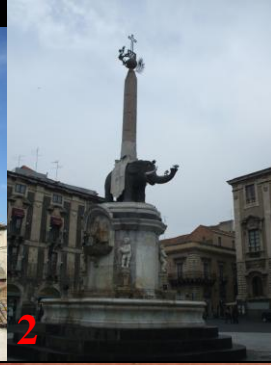
Jew's harp festivals are among the highlights of my life (more please!) providing the best opportunity to meet friends old and new (hello again, Leo!) hear some of the diversity of sounds and applications of the instrument across the world and really celebrate our shared love of the music and it was a real privilege to be able to go and play a few tunes and sing a song or two in Catania. Many thanks to Luca and everyone involved in making this such a festival such a success!

Lucy Wright

Photographs by Leo Tadagawa

- 01 Mt. Etna
- 02 The elephant on the Piazza Duomo, Catania
- 03 Castello Ursino where the musical instrument exhibition and the opening of Marranzano World Festival were held.
- 04-06 This third edition of the festival, besides Jew's harps, had a focus on *zampogna* (Sicilian bagpipe), and other drone aerophones around the globe.
- 07 A concert for students by Giancarlo Parisi (*zampogna cromatica*), Luca Recupero (*marranzanu*) and Carlo Condarelli (percussions).
- 08 The cake
- 09-10 Salvatore Vinci (*zampogna*) and his band at the opening concert.
- 11 Djalù Gurruiwiwi (*didjeridoo*) from Australia at the opening concert.
- 12 "Indian fig" (prickly pear) – yummy!
- 13 *Marranzano grandissimo* at Mr. Bafumo's souvenir shop
- 14 Australians strolling in Catania
- 15 Djalù Gurruiwiwi's workshop
- 16 Andrea Pisu (*launeddas* – bagpipe without a bag) from Sardinia
- 17 Fabio Tricomi's workshop
- 18 *Marranzanu* by Pippo Distefano
- 19 Tommaso Sollazo, Antonio and Nicola Cortazzo
- 20 A stage with *zampogna* and Clarinet Ensemble
- 21 Ipercussionici on stage
- 22 Wives and sisters of didjeridoo players
- 23 Emma – the youngest didjeridoo player in Italy
- 24 Different ways to call a friend
- 25 A session in courtyard
- 26 Lucy Wright from GB
- 27 Versaci Antonino, a young knife maker and promising successor of the art of traditional *marranzanu* making
- 28 Calogero Bennici on his *friscaletto triplo*
- 29 Session with Andrea Pisu (vo) and Nadishana (Siberia/Germany) on his *futujara*
- 30 Turi Coco – a *Marranzanu* maker
- 31 Salvatore Vinci
- 32 Tandem bagpiping
- 33 Festival's finale – Dancing on *zampogna* music
- 34 Where are your ice cream and comic book, Lucy?

Third Marranzano World Festival 1



Third Marranzano World Festival 2



USA

The 18th Annual

North American Jew's Harp Festival

From 'Pluck 'n' Post

(with thanks to Mark D Poss for permission to publish this article.)

Certainly one of the highlights of my year was attending the NAJHF in Bay City. This was the first festival I've been able to attend in 5 years and I had surely missed seeing all of my Jew's harp friends!

Unfortunately, my hubby, Bill, wasn't able to attend this year ... much to the disappointment of everyone, he was greatly missed. But my sister, Joanne, came to the festival with me and we had a great time singing and playing piano together.

The backdrop drawing that Neptune Chapotin created at last year's festival became the T shirt logo for this year. It is very beautiful and dramatic on the black T shirt. Neptune was also able to enlist some of his friends in India to make embroidered patches of the logo. We have a supply of the patches for sale ... and they will be included in the Guild's 2010 "incentive" to become a 'Top Twanger" member.

I was very impressed with the quality and quantity of Jew's harp players who performed at this year's festival: I hesitate to mention names in case I leave someone out... but it was great to hear all our 'regular' festival harpers (they know who they are). And what a joy to meet and hear Jew's harpers attending their first NAJHF: Jeff Greene (from New York City), Kenneth Dean (from Albuquerque, NM), Deidre Morgan (from Vancouver, BC), Gary Nunokowa (from Bellevue, WA), and several 'newbies' from Oregon. They all provided such a wide variety of entertaining performances that I almost burst from the sheer wonder of it all!

Of course, the festival wouldn't be the same without the "back up" and unusual instrument musicians who regularly attend and lend their musical expertise to accompany the Jew's harps ... folks like Jim Nelson, Gene Ralph, Joe Wrabeck, Curtis Chamberlain, Rob Hoffman and others who provide the "solid foundation" to our bands.

The new sound system and tiered spectator seating funded by the Bay City Arts Center were AWESOME ... as was Jim Nelson (who researched and purchased the new sound equipment AND spent hours on end at the mixing table ensuring we had the best sound possible). I don't know what we'd do without them! And did I mention the excellent FOOD provided by the BCAC? As always, it was delectable and most appreciated.

Of special interest was Deidre Morgan's presentation of her master's thesis presentation: "Organs and Bodies: The Jew's Harp and the Anthropology of Musical Instruments". You can access her thesis at the following website:

<https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/1559>

Deidre Morgan

My deepest thanks go to everyone who participated in making this year's festival unforgettable! I think it admirable that, despite all of our busy schedules, so many of us set aside this time to come together and have a twanging great weekend to share our love of this mystical little instrument. Some of us go to great extents to attend the festival, while some of us find our best efforts foiled (to see the related story of Sushil Gautam from India and all the articles on NAJHF go to:

<http://www.jewsharpguild.org/jhgnewsI.html>).

*Janet Gohring
Executive Director
NAJHA*

Selected photographs from NAJHF 2009 webpage

1. 2009 Group photo
2. Band scramble 1
3. Band scramble 3
4. Band scramble kids
5. Bruce and Jerry electro JH
6. Charles with harps and bows.
7. Classic jewsharp Record
8. Dan playing the mouthbow
9. Dan with jewsharp case
10. Dan's collection
11. Deidre - genggong workshop
12. Deirdre at the mike
13. Denise and Lisa Kendall
14. Fri nite jam
15. Gordon and Deirdre
16. JH mouth bow duet
17. JH still life - Storm drain
18. JH still life - hurricane lamp
19. JH still life - water jug
20. Ken Dean classical JH
21. Kids table 1
22. Marc and Gene JH guitar duet
23. Robert playing
24. Rob with contraption
25. Saw and harp
26. keep on playing

For all the full images taken at the festival go to:

<http://www.jewsharpguild.org/images/Fest2009/index.htm>

North American Jew's Harp Festival 1



North American Jew's Harp Festival 2

