

Newsletter of the International Jew's Harp Society



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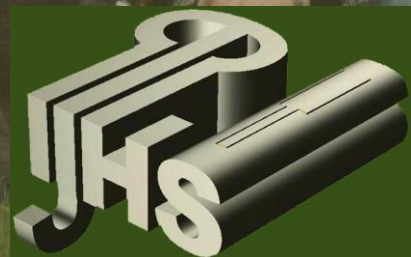
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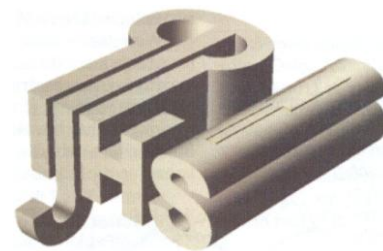
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Membership

December 2009
Autumn / Winter
Issue 10



Winter 2009

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Signed articles or news items represent the views of their authors only.

Cover: Setesdal Monument, photo by Tomas Wendelborg.



(above)
Michael Wight,
photo by Debbie Wright
(below)
Franz Kumpf



Editorial

A (very belated) Happy New Year to everyone and apologies for the late publication due to the various efforts being made to pull together the next International Congress.

The good news is that we have a bumper collection of articles and you should have already received a Newsletter 10 Supplement. It's always heart-warming for me how much trouble contributors make so that I can provide these Newsletters for you.

Apart from the usual Regional reports, I was delighted to receive an article from Bernhard Folkestad on the Jew's harp and gender – which I hope gets a discussion going. There is also an interview with that stalwart of the Khomus, Spiridon Shishigin, requested after it was brought to my attention that Fred's collection was due to be picked up for transport to the Khomus Museum in Yakutsk – I could not let the opportunity slip to ask some questions and get a report on the hand-over (and, if I'm not mistaken, a cracking good concert). I believe there is a possibility that our Yakut friends are going to be at the next North American Jew's harp Festival in Oregon, so I look forward to the report at the end of the year.

Needless to say, it is always a joy to get the news and photographs you send me, and there certainly seems to be a lot going on.

Thanks to all who contributed.

Michael Wright

BoardMatters

Dear friends,

It has taken quite a long time, but now decisions have been taken and we can give you information about the next International Jew's Harp Festivals. Yes, "Festivals" and not "Festival". But let me explain step by step.

Unfortunately the economic crisis has affected Hungary so seriously that Aron Szilagyi has not been able to obtain the basic funding needed for the organisation of an International Festival in Kecskemet, Hungary in July, 2010 as planned. We learned about this in December 2009.

In order to avoid a repetition of the experience made with the cancellation of the IJHF in Japan, we wanted to be absolutely sure about our decision before informing you, the members of the IJHS. Therefore I started to check out various possibilities, among others scaling down the expectations and expenses to a minimum.

At the same time I contacted our Yakutian friends who repeatedly asked to organize the next IJHF in Yakutsk in 2011, which is 20 years after the 2nd IJHF that also took place there. Such anniversaries are the precondition in Russia for obtaining maximum governmental support. In December 2009 I received the confirmation of the organisation of the next IJHF in Yakutia in 2011. In January 2010, Nikolay Shishigin (director of the Jew's Harp Museum in Yakutsk and brother of Spiridon Shishigin) wrote that they strongly asked us to organise a 6th IJHF in 2010, so that their IJHF in 2011 would be the 7th. After some communication on this issue I understood, that the number 7 is considered by the Yakutians as the luckiest number with mystic connotations and that all communication with governmental institutions



Bernhard Folkestad from the Munnharpe website: http://www.munnharpe.no/nmf_info_eng.html

regarding the funding of the festival is on behalf of the 7th IJHF. Any change would not only be unlucky but also would have to be explained in length to the funding organisations.

At the beginning of February 2010, Aron was still very hesitant in taking over the financial responsibility for an even down-sized 6th IJHF in September 2010. The ingenious idea for a solution came during the four fix of the Austrian Maultrommelverein on 16th February in Vienna: The 6th IJHF in Kecskemet could be at the same time a virtual world festival and a real Jew's harp Festival in Kecskemet! Aron Szilagyi in Kecskemet will organize a festival as big as possible, but will be at the same time the centre for moderating the global virtual event. There will be 24 or even 48 hours of non-stop Jew's harp music with musicians taking part online from all possible countries of the world; starting in Japan and Papua New Guinea, to Vietnam, China, India and Nepal, further to Tuva, Altay, Yakutia, Bashkortostan and Moscow, all of Central Europe and further to the USA and Brazil. The participants just need a good camera, a microphone and a PC. Aron will organize the schedule of performances, announce and explain, and at designated times the music will be sent live from Kecskemet. Thus most participants will not have to travel; they will need no visa, lodging or food. A few participants will travel physically to Kecskemet, possibly from neighbouring countries, plus Board Members or those who want to go there on his/her own expenses. This will be the first virtual IJHF and designated the 6th. I guess that the media will like this idea a lot. It will, indeed, be something very special!

(far right) Cover of Munnharpa Newsletter

drawing by 'Sven'.

The next "normal" IJHF with physical presence only will be in Yakutia in 2011. This will be the 7th IJHF, and I bet that you would not want to miss either festival, not the virtual Hungarian and not the Yakutian in the far east of Russia.

Dear friends, I hope you like this idea as much as we do.

Boing,
Franz Kumpl

PS: Dear computer experts, since the technical issues of this virtual IJHF will be challenging, we ask you to support us with the know-how to achieve it. You can send your ideas and contact details to me (franz.kumpl@aon.at), as I will be compiling the Program Committee.

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(right) Munnharpe players at Munnharpefestivalen, photo courtesy of Bernhard Folkestad

FeatureComment

Gender differences and the *munnharpa*

(Please note – A: in my contribution I use the Norwegian word 'munnharpa' when referring to the Jew's harp / trumpet; B: this is an excerpt from an article I wrote for our newsletter *Munnharpa* #18-19, with some recent updates)



Nr. 18 Årgang 5 2003



Meldingsblad for Norsk Munnharpeforum

While I was collecting folk music in Hamarøy and Steigen in North Norway I once showed up at a senior citizen meeting with a (chord-) zither I had made myself. There was much interest in my project, but plenty of laughter at my expense because I, as a man, was playing the zither and singing songs and ditties. The message was clear: that was a female occupation. Since then I have given much thought to the link between gender and the use of specific (folk-) instruments in the Norwegian tradition. Roughly, one may say that instruments used for public activities and ceremonies, e.g. the fiddle, the drum, the trumpet, belong to the male sphere.

Instruments played in the home were female instruments: the chord zither, the 'langeleik' [Norwegian dulcimer], and the harp. The instruments used on the mountain summer farms are more difficult to classify: the shepherds, often very small children, would play the willow flute, the lure, the ram's horn. Somewhat categorically one may say that the more public and prominent the use of the instrument was, the more common it was a male instrument. According to the gender roles the women played and sung in the home, while the man played in public. The guitar may serve as an example: there have been many competent female guitarists, but they used the instrument in a safe environment like the home or the mission society. The man, however, used the guitar at the public dances, or at the prayer meeting.

The process of equal status between the sexes has broken down the old, traditional divisions: women become champion fiddlers, while men play 'langeleiks' or harps in competitions. It is not possible to hear whether it is a man or woman who plays; it is not a question of a feminine or masculine playing technique; only a question of good or poor execution.

What about “our” instrument, the 'munharpe'? In Norway the munharpe has always been a melody instrument, used to accompany dancing. In other parts of the world it has been a 'sound effects' instrument; a part of religious rituals, or a means of communication. By and large the trump is *made* by men, be it in metal or wood. When it comes to the *use*, and the cultural interpretation of the playing or the instrument, there are differences based on gender:

- Around the Alps or among the Mapuche Indians in South America playing the *maultrommel / trompa* was a male thing: the men played the munharpe in connection with nightly visits and proposals. One believed that the women became more “accommodating” at the sound of the munharpe.
- In Hokkaido (e.g. among the Ainu) the playing of the *mukkuri* was/is a female occupation.
- In India the *morchang/morsing* can be a symbol of the unity between man and woman.
- In parts of Indonesia the tuning of the *genggong* is linked with gender: deeply tuned instruments are female, the high instruments symbolise the male principle.
- In Yakutia or Kyrgyzstan both sexes use the instrument: the *khomus* has a religious / shamanistic function, or are used to describe phenomena, almost in the same way as the Saami [Lapp] yoik.
- In regions of China the trump was used to communicate secret messages between young men and women.
- In Europe and North-America men played, and women listened.
- If you browse the Internet, the majority that write about, or play, the trump, are men.

If one turns to written sources in Norway, one finds only male executors on the munharpe [one notable exception was Berte Vidnes (1849-1889) from Vanylven “where the munharpe was more common than the fiddle”.] The men played to pass time, for dancing, to please their children, to entice the 'hulder' [wood nymph]. The women listened to their men playing. All the munharpe makers were, without exception, men. Still most of the players, teachers and competitors are men, as shown by the members' list of Norsk Munharpeforum: of 148 members only 21 are females (14%).

Why this distinction?

Physiologically men and women are different (have you heard that before?). Men have a bigger resonance chamber in their chests, respiratory passages, throats and heads than women. Adult women have bigger resonance chambers than boys (boy sopranos), although they sing in the same key / range. When playing trumps men will be able to use deeper tuned instruments than women; they can exploit the deeper register.

Accordingly, women will exploit a higher / wider range of high trumps. Most men will have no problems with

trumps in low D, whereas women will feel most comfortable with trumps tuned from F upwards.



This is also reflected in munharpe playing: when teaching munharpe to beginners, some children and women have problems hitting the note given by the (male) teacher = they hit the wrong octave.

However, this is not a set rule – please refer to point six below.

The physiological differences are gender based. I am curious, though, and want to know: are there differences *behind* the physical variants. Do women perceive the trump differently from men? Do they play the instrument for other reasons than men? Do women play in public? Why are women less visible than men? Is the munharpe a man's gadget? Are men more dominating? Is the board of Norsk Munharpeforum, or the job as editor of *Munharpa*, part of the 'old boys' network'?

Therefore I put together a simple questionnaire which I sent to all the female members of Norsk Munharpeforum: all together 15 [in 2003]. I enclosed a stamped envelope. In addition I put together a “control” group of fifteen male members. These guys were asked the same questions – enabling me to compare. All answers were anonymous; it is not possible to track down any of the informants.

These were the questions:

1. Why did you start playing the munharpe?
What attracted you to the instrument?
2. When / where do you play?
(For children, alone, with friends, etc)
3. What kind of music?
(Dance tunes, ditties, sounds, improvisation, etc)
4. Do you prefer to play alone, or in ensembles / groups?
5. How do you expand your repertoire?
(Learn more tunes?)
6. Do you favour a special tuning (around G)?
7. Do you perform in public? (Why not?)

(far right)
drawing by 'Sven'

(far right)
Drawing by 'Sven'.



(above) Fred Crane, photo courtesy of Spiridon Shishigin

(far right) Nikolay, Spiridon, Fred & Ivan photo courtesy of Spiridon Shishigin

8. What do you think is the reason for the imbalance between men and women in Norsk Munnharpeforum? (Membership, board, concerts?)
9. Other points?

As an example of common cultural codes: both I and my informants refer to the munnharpe as being the Norwegian, traditional, metal trump. Like me most of the informants have trumps in wood or bamboo, but we did not think of these at all.

This basic material is not comprehensive enough to allow firm conclusions, but some points may be worth mentioning:

- There is little difference between men and women when it comes to the actual handling of the instrument (i.e. playing)
- That women are less interested in the technical side of the munnharpe
- Women tend to have a lower profile than men = they do not want to expose themselves in public
- That women tend to give less preference to the munnharpe compared to home, work, children (can this be caused by the fact that the female informants are younger than the men of the 'control' group, and more preoccupied with family life?)
- That women ought to be seen and listened to; that female members ought to enter the arenas so far dominated by men: as teachers, artists, MCs, and lecturers
- Short listing of women to the board of the Norwegian Jew's Harp Forum ought to be self evident.

Practical angle:

- Munnharpe workshops for beginners: if there are many participants, and more than one teacher, at least one of these ought to be a female. Some women feel more comfortable with a female instructor, and male teachers should keep this in mind. Teachers should also be aware of the physiological differences between the sexes (and the age groups).
- In Norway all teaching is based on the use of munnharpes in the key of G. For women and children a munnharpe tuned to A may be better in the beginning.
- Playing should be judged and appraised on the basis of performance, and not on gender, age or looks!

Coda:

A sobering thought: Is it the playing dominated by men which has shaped the norm by which we (both men and women) judge the women's relationship to the trump? Do the women have to assume male attitudes and values in the munnharpe world, in the same way as they take over male values / behaviour in the world of economic life? Is this a territory that women have to conquer, and men give up? Does the focus on females, sex roles and music help to keep up and harden traditional opinions about women as somebody different? Or does this new knowledge help to change the traditions in the direction of more equality?

*Bernhard Folkestad
Honorary Secretary and Editor
Norwegian Jew's Harp Forum*

Spiridon Shishigin interview

At the end of November Fred and Lois Crane invited Ivan Alexeyev, Spiridon Shishigin, and Nikolay Shishigin to go to Mount Pleasant to collect Fred's extensive collection for the Khomus Museum in Yakutsk. Via email I interviewed Spiridon on the importance of the collection, how it would be displayed and other topics I thought you would be interested in. Misha Maltsev kindly translated for us, to whom we express our thanks.



MW: Tell me, Spiridon, in your opinion how important is this collection?

SS: 529 khomuses – it is one of the biggest collections of Jew's harps in the world. It is a priceless treasure, not just because it contains some of the most rare instruments, but also because it is a very generous act on the part of Frederick Crane, who dedicated all his life to varganology (*the study of Jew's harp*) and is the President of an International Jew's Harp Society. The act that is also wise and farseeing. I think that he made this step exclusively for the future development of the khomus music. With this, he demonstrated an example of unity around the idea, he increased the status of the museum in Yakutsk, he demonstrated to all, that he supports activities of an international centre (*I think he means the one in Yakutsk*). The people of Sakha accepted this gift with utmost gratitude and understands the responsibility for the revival and development of this ancient instrument worldwide (*in the world*)

MW: What does the museum plan to do with this collection? How will it be exhibited?

SS: Collection is now fully on the balance of the fund of Khomus museum in Yakutsk. We are preparing the booklet about this collection. 18th December there was a presentation and introduction of the Crane collection into the museum. With time, there will be a separate room in the museum that will house the Crane collection. Parts of collection will take part in the mobile exhibition that will tour the rural areas of our vast republic. For example in Khangalas region we have planned to organise the Days of Khomus music and the presentation of the Crane collection will take part in it.

MW: How many khomuses from the Crane collection will be exhibited?

SS: The museum plans to exhibit the collection fully. For the mobile exhibition only the most interesting khomuses will be selected.

MW: Who went to America with you?

SS: There were three of us: Ivan Alexeev-Khomus Uibaan Philology PhD, Yakutsk University professor

and the President of an International centre of Khomus music. There was Nikolai Shishigin, the director of the museum of Khomus, and me.

MW: What were you doing in America?

SS: The main goal was to transport the Crane collection to Yakutsk. We spent three days in his house, accepting and packing his gift. As always we used this chance to propagate khomus music: we played concerts in Harvard University in Boston and recorded our music for the Harvard library collection. We also played a concert in the house of America-Russian friendship. In Boston we were helped by Eduard Alexeev, a famous Soviet musicologist and a specialist in Siberian folklore, and his family.

In Washington we were guests of Marjorie Balzer, anthropologist and an expert on traditional Sakha culture, and played in her house as well. Balzer's family assisted us to get our visas very quickly and make this journey to Mount Pleasant.



(above) Albin Paulus, photo courtesy of Franz Kumpul



(right) In the capital, photo courtesy of Spiridon Shishigin

In Mount Pleasant we stayed in Frederick's house and were occupied with accepting and packing the collection. On the 2nd December we played in local college with Gordon Frazier and Larry Hanks, the American Jew's harpers. There, in front of the local people and the mayor of Mt Pleasant, we presented Crane with our national honours from the President of Sakha Republic – the medal "Civil Valour" and the golden badge "Honorary Citizen of Yakutsk".

(far right) Wolf Janscha, photo courtesy of Franz Kumpul



(right) Fred receives his honour, photo courtesy of Spiridon Shishigin

MW: Tell me more about your future events?

SS: The most important event is the International Congress and festival of Khomus music which we will organise in our republic in 2011. By that time the Crane collection will fully established itself in the best part of our khomus museum, as an example of selfless contribution to humankind, in his work in revival, preservation and development of this cross-cultural phenomenon, and this ancient art – the art of khomus playing.

Michael Wright

(For more photographs from this historic visit see [PictureGallery](#))

Argentina

Very sorry but my work has made it impossible for me to send anything this time. I will, though, have something for the next issue.

José Luis Pignocchi

Austria

Finally we have updated and technically improved our homepage. We kindly invite you to have a look at it and to install a link with your own homepage. The address is: www.maultrommelverein.at As you will realize, besides our nationally oriented objectives, we additionally try to act as a kind of intermediary for the growing amount of Jew's harp-related websites in Russia.

15th December, we started to meet at a public location (Café Concerto, Aeusserer Lerchenfelder Guertel 53, 1160 Vienna), which allows to open up our Maultrommelverein to guests, for informal meetings as well as for musical sessions and little concerts. In 2010 we will regularly meet at this location every third Tuesday each month, starting with 19th January. You are heartily welcome when you happen to be in Vienna!

Concerts and presentations:

- **Wolf Janscha** gave on 15th August an extraordinary Maultrommel-concert in the castle of Orth, Gmunden together with Synve Lundgren (vocal), Ismene Weiss (Hardangerfidel) and Kerstin Neubauer (guitar).



- The "**Mollner Maultrommler**", under the leadership of Manfred Russmann, gave several concerts in the frame of the festival, Linz – cultural city of Europe 2009 and played at the Bruckner Concert Hall in Linz on 5 December. In June they played in their hometown of Molln at the Hoisn-Haus, a renovated house of a historic Jew's harp maker, which serves now as museum and place for various events (<http://homepage.mac.com/tmanx/>). From 9th – 13th October, Manfred and Robert Russmann as well as Christoph Köpf gave some very successful concerts and workshops in Yokohama, Japan – perfectly organised by Leo Tadagawa. Among others, Manfred played together with local violinists for the first time in Japan the Concert in D major from Albrechtsberger. You may find more information at www.myspace.com/mollnermaultrommler
- In August we believe that **Simone Prein** was the first woman to play Albrechtsberger's Concert in D major. This happened at the International Festival of Old Music in Zell/Pram in August.

- **Albin Paulus** represented the Austrian Maultrommel at the Jew's harp Festival in Kecskemét/Hungary in September '09 - www.doromb.com. In a very active summer, Albin several times played concerts of Albrechtsberger at various festivals (Styriarte Graz, Festival Galuppi Venezia, a.o.), and with his band "Hotel Palindrone", he gave concerts at Folk Week Sidmouth (playing Maultrommel with Yann Falquet from Quebec), Ollin Kan (Portugal), and Moonlight Concerts Corinth (Greece).



(right) Hotel Palindrone with Albin Paulus, photo courtesy of Franz Kumpf

(far right) Steev Kindwald, from website

New CDs from Austria:

- The "LOOPING jaw harp orchestra" from **Ing LOOP** (Robert Koch) extended the sounds of the Maultrommel on their recently released CD "Elefant Road", trying hard to put an end to the dominance of guitar in popular music - www.myspace.com/ingloop
- **Wolf Janscha** on the CD "Sulfur" proves that he belongs to the absolutely best Jew's Harp players worldwide, impressing with extremely complex polyphonic compositions which nevertheless succeed in transmitting honest and deep emotions - <http://www.wolfsonium.com/mp3.html>

Workshops and others:

- All our musicians offer **workshops** and teach Maultrommel: Wolf Janscha (www.wolfsonium.com), Albin Paulus (pietsch@mdw.ac.at, www.albinpaulus.folx.org), Manfred Russmann (www.hoissn-haus.at) and Simone Prein (www.steirisches-volksliedwerk.at)
- In several **radio-features**, Robert Koch presented the Maultrommel from classic to folk music, pop, rock and jazz at www.woodroot-radio.eu (click "Sendersendung Maultrommeln" at Woodroot-Player)
- The musician and student Christian Hatzebichler from Moln is in the process of writing his **diploma thesis** about the Maultrommel, especially about the various approaches to the Maultrommel in modern times.

Franz Kumpf
chairman of Österreichischer Maultrommelverein

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Following are some interesting Maultrommel-sound from Vienna, produced by Robert Koch:

<http://www.myspace.com/ingloop>

<http://www.myspace.com/kadoing>

France

<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/journal/item/717/717>

I was in Japan this month and stayed at Leo Tadagawa's home for 4 days.

He played the Chinese kou xian Jew's harp for me . Here is the video clip to watch

http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1154/LEO_TADAGAWA_plays_the_Chinese_3_lamellas_Jews_harp_KOU_XIAN

--oOo--

http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1200/Steev_KINDWALD_played_an_iron_Jews_Harp

This is a video clip posted by Steev Kindwald on youtube.



http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1204/Techno_Music_with_an_iron_Jews_harp

http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1202/Jean_Jean_french_beatboxer_guimbarde_UP_YOUR_SOUND

Enjoy the techno music by a Jew's harp

--oOo--

http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1229/TRANQUANG_HAI_s_workshop_of_overtone_singing_Milan_12-13_september_2009

A video clip made by Adele for Accademia dello Spettacolo in Milan, Italy about Tran Quang Hai's workshop in Milan in September 2009.

Have a look at it .

ENJOY !

Tran Quang Hai

Germany

The Jew's Harp — Musical Instrument of Healing and Seduction

Dear Jew's harp players,

The Jew's harp is a universal instrument; along with money, passport, and keys, I always carry one in my pocket.

On Thanksgiving Day an American friend invited me to dinner for the traditional roast turkey. After we had all dined well, conversation on various topics started — the usual medley of people talking all at once after a feast. The discussions became a little heated, camps were formed, people took up positions, and began to distance themselves from one another — energy levels rose and then abated — everybody was tired. In such situations, invariably the host or hostess asks, would anyone like coffee? At that point I took my Jew's harp out of my pocket and played a piece to thank my hostess. At the end, the others applauded and perked up again. They were all interested in the instrument and

talk began again, but in a different direction. Thanks to the Jew's harp I had accomplished what I had intended — the energy of the company at table was transformed. I give such “performances” not only to entertain the guests, but also to free myself from situations in which I feel uncomfortable. Often I find such after-dinner conversations too non-committal and abstract — an intermezzo on the Jew's harp can change the atmosphere.

(far right)
Sulmonacinema
Festival,
photo courtesy of
Gerd Conradt

Recently, I watched Woody Allen's *Scoop* on television — I'm a great fan of his films. To my surprise there was a scene in which the Jew's harp was mentioned. Woody Allen is at a party and various people are curious to know what he is working on at the moment. “I'm learning to play the Jew's harp,” he replies indignantly to baffle his enquirers. It sounded as though the Jew's harp is only played by people who are a little crazy.

When I told my wife that I wanted to write a piece for the Newsletter, she said, “Darling, there's that song by Leonhard Cohen, in which he mentions it: “The rain falls down on last year's man, that's a Jew's harp on the table, that's a crayon in his hand.”

(far right)
Group photo with
George Clooney,
photo courtesy of
Gerd Conradt

Two nice examples of how popular the Jew's harp is. For the last two days a journalist has been visiting me who saw my photograph in the Jew's Harp Museum in Yakutsk. That gave her the idea to do a radio programme with me about the Jew's harp and the history of my involvement with the instrument. As a guest on the programme I invited Olaf Garbow — some of you will know him from the festival in Amsterdam. Olaf is blind and experiences the world through hearing and touch. I learn from him how to perceive more consciously the sounds of my everyday surroundings. He is a marvellous musician. He especially likes to play the Vietnamese *danmoi*. He is a good drummer, plays the flute, whistles, and sings — and he is a skilful masseur.

With the group MNO, from the middle of the alphabet, we have practised many pieces over recent months, but we ask ourselves for who we should make a CD of these. We hardly have time to listen to all the CDs that are around; why produce another one? When we play music together, we are happy; but when we start to talk about why we do it or what for, an atmosphere arises that isn't good. What we do as free, intuitive improvisation is difficult to press into a rigid form. Our musical backgrounds are very different. Lutz Glandien is a composer; he would like us to write compositions. He makes and plays monochords, plays the *mo qin* wonderfully. Sören Birke is a musical autodidact; a master on the mouth organ, and for some time now is fascinated by the *duduk*. I love musical experiments, *sprechgesang*, sounds, and the shamanistic aspect of music.

In Berlin there are 100–200 people who play the Jew's harp. At the moment we do not meet regularly as we used to do as the “Friends of the Jew's Harp” circle. At the same time one now meets the Jew's harp in many pieces by “pop” bands. And it is used increasingly in experimental music and at poetry slams.



For the past three years I have been a guest at the Italian film festival Sulmonacinema. This year there was a film section on the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1998, in which two of my films were screened. For the festival I filmed a short spot with George Clooney who was in Abruzzo to shoot a Hollywood-style thriller, *The American*.



Last year the festival showed a retrospective in memory of the documentary filmmaker Alberto Grifi. I knew Alberto well and on one evening I organised a homage for him. Alberto was a film anarchist. Draped in large red flag, I stood at the microphone and played my Jew's harp, for quite a long time. When I finished the audience was fascinated; form and content were in complete accord.

It would be really great if there were a lot of experimental performances at the International Festival in 2011.

Wishing you all a vigorous “twang” in 2010,

Gerd Conradt

Hungary Fourth Hungarian Jew's Harp Festival and Gathering Kecskemét Youth Centre 18-20 September 2009.

This was the fourth time when Jew's harp fans from all over Hungary gathered at the Hungarian Jew's Harp Festival in Kecskemét. The internationally acknowledged event was organized by the one-of-a-kind Leskowsky Collection of Musical Instruments celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The aim of the festival was to strengthen and rise the interest for one of the most ancient and multi-faceted instrument, provide an event where enthusiasts and interested people can meet, change ideas. There were workshops, concerts, an open stage, exhibition and mutual celebration of improvised music and traditional dances.

In addition, dear friends, I have to share this as this is what natural sounds can do to people. It's an unforgettable experience to make many thousands happy at a time only with a piece of metal in your mouth and 2 fellows with the most primitive instruments.

(far right)
Aylanmaa Damyran,
one of the members
of Tyva Kyzy on the
cha-khomus
(mouth bow)
Photo, Leo Tadagawa

Warm greetings to all of you from the building-up New York Jew's harp scene.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y53Ek_mzbzg
also visit
http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1221/Airst_2009_Sziget_festival_-_Didgeridoo_beatbox_Jews_harp_trio
Watch this video !

Szilagy Aron

different kinds of *khomus*, including *demir-khomus* (iron *khomus*), *kuluzun-khomus* (stringed bamboo *khomus*) and rare *cha-khomus* (mouth bow).



(above)
Rajashekar
Bhimachar
photo courtesy of
Rajashekar
Bhimachar

India

All India Radio, the official broadcast Corporation of India, features Indian Classical Music. Anyone who wants to feature in this programme has to take a audition test. Here the performer has to record his music, and later on this recording will be assessed a panel of experts who decides the performance is eligible to broadcast or not. If the artiste is eligible they will be marked under a Grade system (the starting grade is 'B') and the graded artistes will be invited to perform periodically on AIR. Performer can be upgraded from 'B' to 'B-high' or 'A' with the above said procedure. And the panel will have the rights to degrade if the performance is not satisfactory.

The artiste should perform for a minimum of 10 years in grade "A", after which he is eligible to take audition test for the highest grade "A-top". Here I am the FIRST and the only TOP graded artiste [Karnataka] in MORCHING, a rare achievement.

(Congratulations – ed.)
Rajashekar Bhimachar

(far right)
Otkun Dostay (Tuva)
and his own creation
koshkar-khomus
(Jew's harp with
ram's horn resonator)
Photo, Leo Tadagawa



The finale was a Japan premier of Albrechtsberger's Concert in D, by Manfred Russmann on the Jew's harps and Japanese musicians. It was a good occasion to reconsider that the Jew's harp is really a Eurasian instrument.

Japan

The concert "Jew's Harp – Sound Around EurAsia –", organized by Yokohama Museum of EurAsian Cultures and Nihon Koukin Kyokai (Japan Jew's Harp Association) was held on 12th October 2009.



(far right)
Manfred Russmann
(JH), Nagata Heihachi
(Mandora),
Shima Kanae (1st Vn),
Matsuda Asami
(2nd Vn) and
Watanabe Dangaku
(Vc) playing
Albrechtsberger's
Concert in D.
Photo, Leo Tadagawa

(right)
Mollner
Maultrommler
(and Leo Tadagawa)
in Japan



Leo Tadagawa

---oOo---

After Leo Tadagawa's introduction performance, "Mollner Maultrommler" gave a concert with traditional and modern songs from Austria.

From April to October, on 20 occasions, I have held a "Meeting of Jewsharp" in Hokkaido, Kanto, and Kansai. The style of the lecture meetings were to last 150 minutes (a performance of 30-60minutes and a lecture 90-120minutes), with an average of 30 people participating.

This was followed by "Cikap-say", a young female Ainu group performed a nice show with *mukkuri* and *upopo* (a traditional canon-type singing). "Tyva Kyzy", a female throat-singing group from Tuva demonstrated



(above & right)
'Meeting of Jewsharp'
Photographs courtesy of Hare Daisuke



The teaching material used was the "Textbook of Jewsharp" that I wrote (50page/colour), plus I used the photograph and the movie of the Jew's-harp-makers I have taken from around the world. Of course, the participants also perform on the Jew's harp, and the whole series were very successful and a very happy time was had by all.

Hare Daisuke

Nepal

A visit to a Nepali murchunga (Jew's harp) player in Ilam, Eastern Nepal.

In a village near Ilam in Eastern Nepal, I met Chandra Maya Rungmangma, one of the few remaining murchunga players in this region of the country. She is now 62 years old, wife of Nanda Bahadur Limbu from the Sangrumma village.

As we were seated outside their traditional farmhouse, overlooking the lush green paddy fields, groups of banana trees and bamboos, she told us about her memories from her youth with the murchunga and also the binayo, the Nepali bamboo Jew's harp with a string. When they were young, they used to gather in the morning or in the evening, some played and some danced to the tunes that we played. She recalls that with the murchunga, they could easily play about fifteen or sixteen tunes or songs before getting tired. However, while playing the binayo, they would get tired after only one tune. According to her, the Rai and other tribes used to play the murchunga or the binayo when they took their cattle to graze on the fields.



(right)
Binayo player in Nepal, courtesy of Sven Westad

Now, she can no longer easily play the murchunga and the binayo, since her tongue is getting stiff. I showed her a Norwegian murchunga, and at the first glance she commented that it was made with a fault, it had no tail. Besides, these instruments are too large for her. She needs the small Nepali murchunga to play properly. Nevertheless, she produced some nice tunes when I requested her to play. I asked her why she no longer had a murchunga. It was broken after some friends borrowed it from her, she replied. The binayo however, she keeps in a secret place. She even hesitated to show it to me!

Svein Westad

p.t. Music teacher, Nepal Music Centre, Kathmandu

The Netherlands

The URL's that follow are of the Jew's harp tradition of Java (Indonesia), the **KARINDING (RAKIT)**. This Jew's harp is made of special wood and at its (striking) end there is a thick piece of wood, which the player has to hit with his thumb or with his other fingers or even the whole hand. It is quite rare, and I never heard or saw them playing except by John Wright who explained me once about this special technique of this unique Jew's harp. I have read that this Jew's harp in a former tradition had a tubular piece of bamboo for amplifying the sound that was held by the player in his stabilizing hand, while the other end of the tubular lay on the floor. I think the tube must have measured 100 cm, or near that.

You can find three examples of them in John Wright's Catalogue of the "Guimbardes de Musée de l'Homme", and the numbers are 72, 73 and 74.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJpDpU9m4UU>

Karinding



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8P9pmFOFMA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvRFLgZfXOE>

This one shows how to make wooden Jew's harp, but it is not the KARINDING of Java as the three before - they are tuned like anklungs

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnAqWHgPzgY>

Mixed instruments

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJaGsktmm_c

A single very good player on the Karinding

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNdSb_wNTp0

Phons Bakx

---oOo---

I've went to a concert of Julia Charkova an Ayarkhaan 22nd November in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The afternoon started with an interview with Albina and Alexander of Ayarkhaan. They told us how they came into contact with this music, how they were experiencing it and how it plays a role in everyday Sakha life.

After this interview (and a break) Julia Charkova entered the stage in her Khakass costume and with her chatkhan, a Khakass zither. Julia is a good singer and her overtone singing sounds impressive. Too bad that some of the epic pieces she sang were a bit long for the inexperienced ear and lack of knowledge of Turkic-Mongol language. Although a traditional instrument she knew to evoke some very modern sounds out of her chatkhan.

After the break Ayarkhaan played some 17 pieces on Jew's harp and song. After every two or three songs the

two ladies of the group changed in yet another dazzling outfit. It appeared to me that some of the songs were pure techno as other pieces would not be misplaced in a gothic style of music, but nevertheless traditional. As a reprise all the performers of the evening joined together on the stage and here we saw Julia handle the Jew's harp as well, but in a very different and specific style.

All in all a well spent afternoon and I would like to express my thanks to the performers for the entertainment.

Harm J. Linsen

Norway

Summary of activities 2009, Norwegian Jew's Harp Forum

There are some 140 members in Norsk Munnharpeforum, most of them from Norway, but a pleasant crowd from overseas, as well.

We organise two major events each year, the first of which is the "smi-kurs" (how to forge a munnharpe from the beginning). This workshop is in May, and takes place in Gjøvik. There are three instructors, and only 12 participants, so everybody gets a hands-on-experience, and learn the basics. The second is the munnharpe festival in September, where people come together for a weekend of munnharpe workshops, lectures, late night jams and social activities.

There is a formidable double CD with Norwegian munnharpe recordings from 1938 till 2000 and a 60 page booklet; an instructional manual of how to play the munnharpe Norwegian style (melodic playing), with a CD; a quarterly newsletter (full English translation enclosed with each issue); and a regularly updated web site (www.munnharpe.no) in Norwegian and English. There is of course a lot of information shared via mail – please do not hesitate to contact us!

(right, & all far right)
Participants at the
munnharpe festival in
Gjøvik 18-20
September, 2009
photos by
Sigbjørn Solbakken



Jew's harp festival in Gjøvik, Norway, 18-20 September

This year's munnharpe festival was just the perfect compact games: workshops with focus on the melodic playing on the munnharpe, good food, late night jams, and loads of friendly bartering and give'n'take - everything within 500 metres.

There were people from all walks of life; from secondary form to pensioners, and they all got on very well together. Around 30 persons took part in workshops, but in addition there were participants who were there 'just for the hell of it'. There were workshops focusing on "absolute beginners", "advanced Norwegian traditional dances", and "tunes from the British Isles". The 'beginners' group was pretty crowded, but we were lucky to have so many teachers

that the ratio was only 1:4. I had very enthusiastic reports about how fabulous this workshop was!



What impressed (and pleased) me was the fact that there were several young 'death metal' musicians who wanted learn the munnharpe played the traditional way, and were NOT interested in a crossover attitude. "I make a clear distinction between heavy metal and traditional munnharpe playing - and I want to learn both – in separate compartments!"

Gjøvik has an enthusiastic community of music instrument builders, and people from eastern Norway congregate regularly to learn how to re-construct old Norwegian instruments. Some members of this group gave us a concert on Friday night – very enjoyable!



Saturday was busy – breakfast, workshops, annual meeting of the Norwegian Jew's Harp Forum, dinner, and concerts. The local organizers "Gjøvik Spelemannslag" [G. folk music band] catered for the food, which was fabulous, and the drinks [Norwegian prices on alcohol are prohibitive!] – a very enjoyable evening. Most people didn't go to bed before they suddenly realized it was well into Sunday morning!

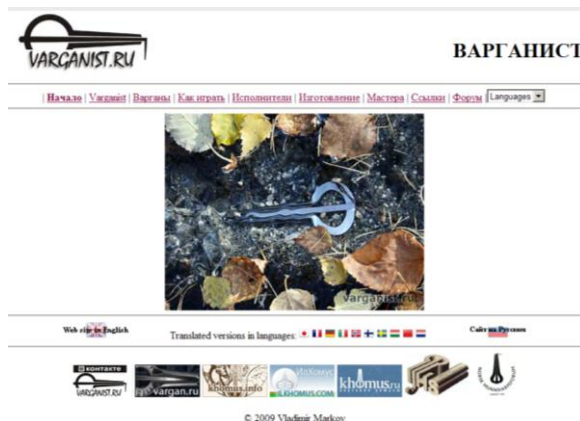
Bernhard Folkestad
Hon Sec Norwegian Jew's Harp Forum

Russia

I would like to inform you about the growing amount of Jew's harp-aficionados in Russia with numerous blogs and websites; you get a glimpse by checking the Russian links on the homepage of the Austrian Maultrommelverein <http://maultrommelverein.at/>. This recent development reflects the immense interest in the Jew's harp among ethnically Russian citizens (besides ethnically Turkic people from Yakutia, Altay, Tuva, and Bashkortostan of the Russian Federation). People like Aksentiy Beskrovniy (Moscow) and Vladimir Markov (Novosibirsk) run very professional websites. Aksentiy in December 2009 had organised the 1st Russian Conference on the Vargan in Moscow, he is deeply involved into research about the archaeological findings and the history of the Russian Vargan and he is in close contact with Russian Jew's harp makers whose instruments are excellent, although quite expensive (check the links at <http://maultrommelverein.at/> under "Schmiede"). There is also close and non-paternalistic cooperation between the "Russian" Russians and the representatives of ethnic groups within the Russian Federation like the Yakutians. Since nearly all information is in Russian language, I will try for the next Newsletter to provide a good overview in English. I think that this Russian interest in the Jew's harp in cities like Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Saratov or Novosibirsk is a good sign for the IJHF in Yakutia, Russian Federation.

Franz Kumpf

(far right)
The Wright Family at
Folklahoma, London
Folklahoma website



(right & below right)
Russian website
Home Pages



(far right)
Sam Lee and the
Gillie Boys at the
'Ballad of Britain'
Cecil Sharp House,
London.
Folklahoma website

Sakha Republic

See the IJHS Newsletter Supplement for a report and photographs. (Ed.)

UK

Well, from a personal point of view the last few months have continued as the rest of the year – very busy. The Gillie Boys were one of the support performers for the top Folk band in the UK, Waterson-Carthy – at The Ballad of Britain concert in London -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDhStH0C370&NR=1>

Sam Lee and the Gillie Boys - 'George Collins'



The Wright Family - have a sampler CD of six tracks available produced, designed and available direct from me, if anyone is interested. The recordings are those done at SOAS these last couple of years and pretty raw (though John has done a great job doing a basic remix) and two tracks were played on the BBC Radio 3 world music programme, 'Late Junction', by Verity Sharp at the end of November, followed by another from a new celebratory series by Topic Records 'A voice to the people', with tracks from the 1974 recording 'Lark in the Clear Air'. We've also had enquiries to play either together or as individuals at various concerts and events in 2010, with Lucy leading the way –

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNd_Py43LmQ&feature=sub

Wright Family of Jews Harpers- Reels



Perhaps the biggest UK event is 'Mouth Music Mayhem', a concert part of the Oxford Folk Festival Fringe, OFFShoot, on 9th March 2010, a truly eclectic gathering of traditional to avant-garde players, including improvised works and morris dancing. So it looks like we're in for a busy year – no complaints.

Finally, some potentially exciting news. The Digitisation School of Scottish Studies are intending to put their collection of Jew's harp players, including players talking about the instrument, online this coming summer. They have sent me what they have loaded so far www.tobarandualchais.co.uk (no Jew's harps yet).

Michael Wright

USA

The web gallery of NAJHF 2009 photos to the JHG site at: <http://www.jewsharpguild.org/images/Fest2009/index.htm> For a fuller report on the event, see the Newsletter supplement.

---oOo---

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, IL, often ask me play while for the visitors and school groups that come through.



(right)
Mike Anderson

Lincoln supposedly could play one song on the Jew's harp, although I have not seen the documentation on that fact. I use several different instruments ranging from mt. dulcimer to nose flute to Jew's harp and bones during the presentation. I can usually attract the attention of the desperately-trying-to-be-disinterested junior high and high school boys with the Jew's harp. Typically I demonstrate 4 or 5 harps from around the world playing and singing songs of the Civil War era.

Mike Anderson

Teaching Tips

Dear Friends,

Below are a whole series of workshop of overtone singing given in the united states .

It is useful for you to memorise all exercises I have taught at my workshops.

Watch these videos and you will learn a lot again

<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1244>

<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1243>

<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1242>

<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1241>

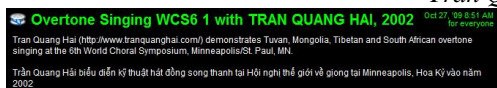
<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1239>

<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1237>

<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1236>

<http://tranquanghai.multiply.com/video/item/1234>

Tran Quang Hai



(right)
Tran Quang Hai
demonstrating throat-
singing techniques.
From website

(far right)
Unwanted Trio -
Irish Reels
Pitchfork website



WebWise

A call for an international Jew's harp web team. As you might have noticed there hasn't been much activity on the IJHS-web site after the quiet launch. Initially my thought was that if I'd put up a basic site and that the content would be contributed by itself. But of course that is a naive thought and we need to put in some more energy into this project.

I am willing to take on the task of web-editor as for strolling the web for fresh content, putting online submissions from members and so on but I might need some help to keep the train going.

As a first step I'd like to make a call for web-enthusiasts within the IJHS to form a core group to keep the website a vivid place. We can start making plans for further development and to make it more future proof. Please contact me on the address below.

In the mean time I am also looking for content, so if you have a link a concert or a Jew's harp related item that you would like to share with the world, please let me know. I can start filling the site with posts and events. It is much like our newsletter, without your input it will be of no use. (tip: you can put my email address into your mailing lists)

At the next International Jew's Harp Festival we should be able to present a vivid website that contributes to our society.

Something else that I had thought off today while visiting a concert of Ayarkhaan in Utrecht. I only knew that they were coming because I have my newsletters of some world music places in Holland. That made me think about the role of the board members of every country. I think that every board member should start an email list of members in their own country. If you are a Jew's harp act visiting e.g. Switzerland they should contact Philippe and he could send an email to all his Swiss members. That could be a nice practical role for the IJHS. Jew's harpists could use the IJHS to promote their performances to the "hard core" Jew's harp fans and the board members would have a nice role in keeping track on new Jew's harpists and collecting email addresses for their mailing lists.

I was just wondering if this could be worth a short article for the news letter of should we start a short discussion with Franz and Philippe?

Best regards,

Danibal

danibal@gmail.com

---oOo---

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nDk80_hSBI&feature=related

Unwanted Trio - Irish Reels

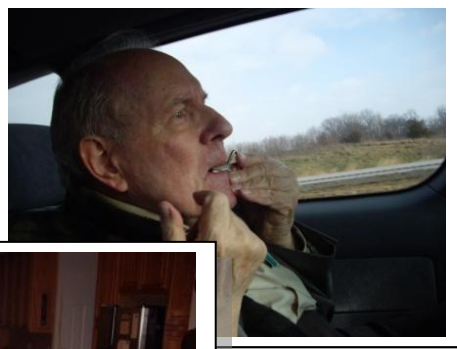


Rick Epping - found this on youtube

twangs LindsayPorteous

PictureGallery

A selection of photographs from the visit of Ivan Alexeyev, Spiridon Shishigin, and Nikolay Shishigin to the USA.



AndFinally...

Three items...

I found an article from the Dublin post (an American Dublin) from January 19th 1887.

<http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/ftaccess.cgi?id=7f000001&db=zLGN>

The item titled Film Selection (etc) contains a link to a very short piece of film from an American/Dutch (Van Leeuwen and Stirling) expedition into Asmat territory in 1926.

http://images.google.nl/imgres?imgurl=http://www.sil.si.edu/expeditions/1926/video/thumbnails/Stirling_1926_24.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.sil.si.edu/expeditions/1926/video/index.cfm&usq=ER2wOcUDpVGbydvj7YMO2L-3mMI=&h=240&w=320&sz=51&hl=nl&start=263&um=1&tbnid=UWapwrkSqgF6M:&tbnh=89&tbnw=118&prev=/images%3Fq%3Djew%2527s%2Bharp%26ndsp%3D20%26hl%3Dnl%26sa%3DN%26st%3D260%26um%3D1

The third shows that even Disney knows the Jew's harp, it's just taken from internet.

http://luchins.com/dickery/Donald_Duck_Jew-harp.jpg



Harm Linsen

---oOo---

IJHS Newsletter better than the Serpent Newsletter?

It is almost hard for me to imagine that somebody who is 'into' Jew's harps would also be aware of serpents, much less be familiar with my newsletter. But then I realized that I can probably easily count a bunch of people I know who play both serpent and Jew harp. What's REALLY scary is that there would be a newsletter for the Jew's harp. Somebody once told me that a serpent LOOKS like a birth control device, but that a Jew's harp can actually be used as one... whether inserted or simply played. I seem to recall reading a parody news headline that stated that certain European cities were capturing the pigeons and fitting them with little cardigan sweaters, since no self respecting female would mate with a male wearing one, thereby cutting down their pooping little population. My mother is trying to teach her cockatiel parrot to sing, and it refuses, but has instead learned to perfectly mimic the beeps made by the buttons on the microwave oven. Perhaps the authorities could teach pigeons to mimic the sound of Jew's harps, which would be cheaper than little cardigans all around...

Paul Schmidt

Editor – Serpent Newsletter

---oOo---

Obed Pickard online

(Response to a question on Obed Pickard – ed.)

The Pickard Family was a bit before my time... Obed died on 24th September 1954. There's not much I can find about what the family went on to do after that.

(Listen to Obed play on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erUIYQaO2EM>)

I've sent out a few feelers to others to see if they have more info other than what is currently available with a web search. I seem to remember watching "Dad"

Pickard play JH in some old B&W movies when I was a kid.

Mark D Poss

Mouthbow (re)quest

A friend of mine is teaching an African Music course at a local community college and has asked me to teach a class on the African mouthbow for her. Since there's a lot of mouthbow history in South Africa, your colleague who does research on South African Jew's harps came to mind (I can't remember her name at the moment [Angela Impey, ed.]). I think one of her articles appeared in a recent IJHS, which I will look for in my parents' basement this weekend. However, just wanted to check in with you and see if there are any other articles or resources floating about that you know of. Mouthbow is an entirely new area for me, though it is very similar to Jew's harp.

Deirdre Morgan

---oOo---

GRAMMY nomination

Just been nominated for a GRAMMY Award: *Cutting Loose* with David Holt and Josh Goforth. (Congratulations, ed.)

David Holt

---oOo---

Always worth telling colleagues...

(A work colleague spotted this and passed it on. Ed.)

<http://pitchfork.com/tv/#/episode/219-bill-callahan/2>

Not exactly a first-rate technical performance but a Jew's harp nonetheless....

Zoe Cumming



NoticeBoard

Errata – Newsletter 10 Supplement

Or “More haste, less speed.”

There were errors in the Supplement, the most obvious being:

1. 9 Akbope Abilbekova the Kazakh

1. 37 participants danced the **ohuokhai**

No. 27 **Ohuokhai** circle dance at the

No. 29 **Mariya** Kulichkina

No. 43 Maltsev (**khomus** makers), Ivan Alexeyev

(**president** of the Khomus Centre),

Photographs

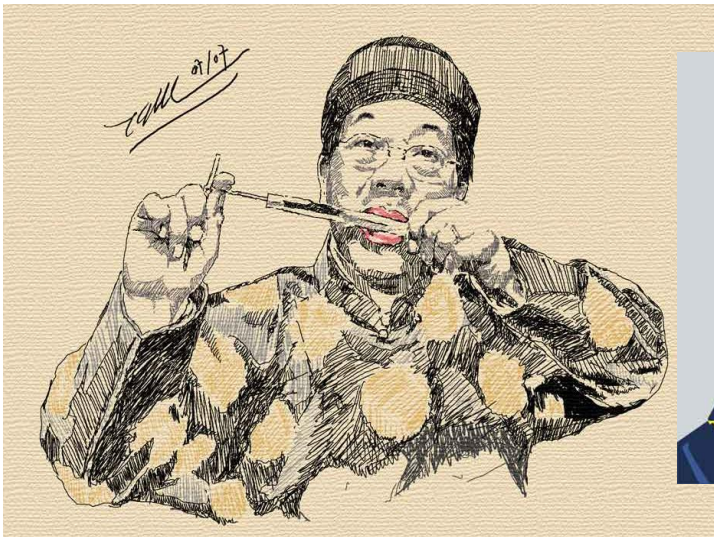
Vladimir Grigoriev: 6-7, 9, 13, 15-16, 19, 24, 29-30, 37-38,

Alexey Shishigin: 10- 12, 14,

Nikolay Shishigin: 26, 40-41, 51, 58, 62-63, 66-67

Leo Tadagawa: 1-5, 8, 17-18, 20-23, 25, 27-28, 31-36, 39, 42-50, 52-57, 59-61, 64-65, 68

Don't forget to send your subscription!



Drawing by Tran Quang Minh

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.

If you received the Journal but have not yet paid for that year, please add this to the dues.

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