

Invitation Issue

Newsletter

of the International Jew's Harp Society

No. 1

January 2003

It is a great pleasure to present the first issue of this Newsletter, and with it to announce that the International Jew's Harp Society is off and running.

The Society was founded at the Third International Jew's Harp Congress/Festival, in Moln in June 1998. A call for members went out, and was answered by only about 40 people. Now, the Society is determined to recruit as members a substantial number of the many enthusiasts of the instrument worldwide. This Newsletter is being sent, by post or by e-mail, to as many addresses as we can find. Please indulge us founding fathers and mothers, and read what we have to say, and then do the natural thing—send in the application form that ends the newsletter to the Secretary-Treasurer.

Rauland

The Fourth International Jew's Harp Congress/Festival was held in Rauland, Norway, from September 11 to 15 2002. The Society's Board of Directors met for two hours on the 14th. Most of the meeting was given to producing a set of Bylaws that was satisfactory to all. This was then polished by the officers into a final form, which is printed later in this Newsletter.

The Board also chose a new set of officers in accordance with the Bylaws. Franz Kumpl (Austria) was elected to a second term as President; Tadagawa Leo (Japan) was chosen as Secretary-Treasurer; and Fred Crane (U.S.A.) was named (off the books) Honorary President.

Finally, the Board chose a slate of candidates to fill out their membership to the new total of 16: Gerd Conrath (Germany), Janet Gohring (U.S.A.), Yedil Khuseinov (Kazakhstan), Spiridon Shishigin (Sakha), and Valentina Suzukei (Tuva).

Board members present were President Franz Kumpl, Tadagawa Leo, Trần Quang Hai (Vietnam/France), Ivan Alexeyev (Sakha), Manfred Russmann (Austria), Rimma Madvarova (Kyrgyzstan), Svein Westad (Norway), Fred Crane, and Robert Zagretdinov (Bashkortostan). Not present were Phons Bakx (The Netherlands), Anton Bruhin (Switzerland), and Ånon Egeland (Norway). All of these will continue as members of the Board until the next Congress.

The Fifth International Jew's Harp Congress/Festival will be held in Amsterdam in 2005, the dates not yet chosen.

The first issue of the new *Journal of the International Jew's Harp Society* will come out at about the end

of 2003. It will replace VIM, and for at least the near future will resemble its predecessor closely. The first issue will include reports on the Fourth Congress/Festival, papers delivered at it, and a collection of photos of persons and events. Contributions are eagerly sought, on any topic and of any nature, as long as they relate to the Jew's harp. English will be the basic language; in most cases, material submitted in other languages will be translated to English. The editor's postal address is

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From the President:

Dear friends of the big Boing,

Slowly but steadily the global society of Jew's harpists takes shape. In movements of concentration and expansion, of regional and international activities, corresponding to the various sounds of breathing in and breathing out. Changes of focus on preserving national folklore traditions, on experimental and avant-garde techniques as

well as on mutual fertilisation of distant playing styles.

Allow me a personal review of the International Jew's Harp Festivals so far.

The 1st Jew's Harp Festival in Iowa City/US in September 1984 connected the US with Europe, gave a glimpse of the East and focused on traditional folk music and on improvisation. The seed was sown.

The 2nd from June 1991 in Yakutsk/Soviet Union opened wide the window for musicians and researchers from the former Soviet Republics towards the western world. Japanese and European aficionados understood the message and started to get organised because the time was ripe.

The 3rd from June 1998 in Molln/Austria outbalanced east and west and emphasized the cross-fertilisation between cultures, traditions and playing styles. Personal techniques and national traditions became accessible worldwide, enriching individual players and a cultural mixture.

The 4th from September 2002 in Rauland/Norway consolidated the east-west exchange with a focus on traditional styles, additionally introducing the element of dancing to improvised Jew's harp music.

What are the lessons learned out of this experience? I think, we should go for the maximum, for the squaring of the circle:

- Strengthen ethnic traditions of Jew's harp playing and support experimenting without any limits.
- Respect and advocate the rights of minorities and become even more cosmopolitan and global.

At the same time we should become more aware and honest towards ourselves and our auditory regarding the musical identity: is the musical piece or playing style traditional or eclectic, which school or sources of influence are present, do I represent a certain national culture or my very personal synthesis?

We also learned that we need a committee for future International festivals, supporting the organizers by

advising on the musical and scientific program. We learned that we have to give more prominence to women and youth, and we learned that despite the growing professionalism we have to give enough space and time to improvisation, fun and the unexpected.

Some of the points mentioned became part of the Bylaws of our International Jew's Harp Society, which we introduce to you with this Newsletter.

Dear friend, use this chance to be part of this slowly but steadily growing minority. I assure you, it's not for money or power but for the sake of one of the most beautiful metaphors for global humanity and cosmic connectedness. Yes, it's the tiny Jew's harp.

Boing,
Franz

Bylaws

1. Name

The name of the Society shall be International Jew's Harp Society/Internationale Maultrommelgesellschaft/Mezhdunarodnoye obshestvo vargana, and the equivalents in other languages shall also be acceptable.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Society shall be to bring together people with any kind of interest in the Jew's harp, to exchange and disseminate information on the instrument in past and present, to support national activities, to coordinate global activities, and to generally promote the instrument.

3. Membership

Any person, institution, or organization may become a member by applying to the Secretary-Treasurer, and by payment of dues. Annual dues will go to publications, and to the necessary expenses of the officers. Dues in the amount of US\$20.00 (or the equivalent in yen) will be payable at the beginning of each calendar year. The membership application or renewal form will include a statement to be checked, to the effect that the

member is unable to make the payment. Members will have the opportunity to pay an additional \$20.00 or more, to make full membership possible for others who cannot pay.

4. Officers

The elected officers of the Society shall be the President, and the Secretary-Treasurer. The President shall preside over meetings of the Board of Directors, and over the general assembly of members at the Congresses. The President shall communicate with the Board, the members, and individuals, on matters relating to the Society. The Secretary-Treasurer shall maintain the membership list, and shall accept dues and other payments, and disburse moneys for publications, communications, and other necessary expenses. The Secretary-Treasurer's residence shall be the official seat of the Society. The term of office for the President and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be from the end of one Congress to the end of the next.

5. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall consist of the President, the Secretary-Treasurer, and 16 members to be elected from the Society's membership. The Board shall be charged with making policy and business decisions, including the places of Congresses, and with appointing the editors of the Society's publications, and other officers as needed. One half of the Board members shall be replaced or renominated at the end of each Congress. A nominating committee of three members shall be appointed by the President for each election. The balloting for officers and Board members shall be by e-mail, and by post for members without e-mail.

6. Meetings

The Society shall hold a Congress/Festival about every three years. Invitations shall be considered by the Board, and a place chosen not later than at the previous Congress/Festival. The principal language for public events shall be English; every attempt shall be made to accommodate non-English speakers.

7. Program Committee

A Program Committee for the Congress and Festival shall be appointed by the President well in advance of each Congress/Festival, consisting of a chairman and two other members. The chairman will act in coordination with the local organisers. The Program Committee shall have a role in the selection of papers proposed for the Congress, and organise the lectures into sessions in accordance with the schedule provided by the local organisers. The Program

Committee shall also advise the local organisers with regard to the Festival Program.

8. Publications

The publications of the Society shall be a journal, the *Journal of the International Jew's Harp Society*, to be published annually in the form of a successor to VIM, and a newsletter to be published as needed in the form of e-mail, and in printed form for members without access to the Internet. A publications board of three members

shall assist and advise the editors of the journal and the newsletter. The journal and newsletter shall be in English, the newsletter with translations to other languages if desirable.

Please notify the Secretary immediately of changes or corrections to your address as currently listed.



International Jew's Harp Society
Application for Membership

New member

Renewal

Name and address:

E-mail address: _____

The annual dues are US\$20.00, and may be paid by International Postal Money order payable to International Jew's Harp Society. The amount may also be paid in cash, with a risk of loss in the mail. No bank cheques are acceptable.

I enclose payment in the amount of US\$_____ 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 enclose an additional amount of US\$_____, as a subsidy for members not able to pay.

The Secretary-Treasurer's postal address is

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Japan

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