

Newsletter of the International Jew's Harp Society



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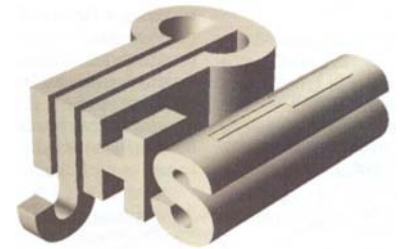
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July 2007
Spring / Summer
Issue 5



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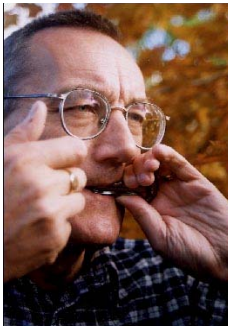
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Signed articles or news items represent the views of their authors only.

Cover photograph of Molln monument by Leo Tadagawa.

Editorial



(above)
Michael Wright,
Photograph by
Debbie Wright

"The most ancient of instruments with the most modern sound" Anton Bruhin, 2005

Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of the IJHS Newsletter. It's become obvious that, while there is a lot to share, regional news is best coming out once a year. So, we've decided that the Autumn/Winter edition will focus on regional activities, while the Spring/Summer one can concentrate on short features. This issue has been inspired by a feature article by Spiridon Shishigin on the importance of national identities in the use of the Jew's harp after his visit to the first UK gathering 'Oxford Firsts' held in Oxford in April. This led me to ask Luca Recupero to tell us about the rationale behind his music and the ways in which his group have developed a style that takes inspiration from their tradition, merging it with their urban background. Also, at the conference held in Oxford, Angela Impey described her work with the KwaZulu Natal players on the Tanzanian border and there is a short edited piece based on her research into the adaptation of a European instrument into their local tradition – an article that can be expanded for the Journal.

The theme has even moved quite coincidentally into the Regional news section. Earlier this year José Luis Pignocchi of Argentina sent an article on his visit to Patagonia where an aboriginal people have made the 'trompo' their musical instrument of choice. (José, by the way, has to be held up as an example of someone who regularly sends me material for the Newsletter without me asking!). The Regional section also has updates from France, Germany, the UK and USA, but as above, I will be looking for a bigger section from

all the regions come the next issue that tells us about all the great events that must be going over the summer – get those pictures taken and send me reports.

There is also something practical we can do to support local initiatives as the 6th International Jew's Harp Festival will take place on 17-21 July 2008 in Kushiro, Island of Hokkaido. Funds are severely limited, but this gives us the opportunity to not only support the Ainu, as discussed in the last Feature Article by John Wright, but to continue to celebrate our individual musical identities, as considered in this newsletter. Anyone with ideas on how we can helpfully make this event happen, please let me know and I'll produce a supplement Newsletter if needs be.

The Website has yet to kick into life, but to wet our appetites, Danibal (Daniel Hentschel) has written a piece on Web 2.0. in a new section called **WebWise**. Finally, Leo has given me permission to publish his collection of monuments to the trump / khomus / Maultrommel... so this issue is packed with lots of interesting observations, images etc. and there are the usual extras in the **AndFinally...** section.

As always, please send me material for the newsletter whenever you have something to share – I'd sooner have it in my in-tray – and don't forget to take photographs at your events and send those also. A picture tells a thousand words!

Michael Wright, Editor

BoardMatters



(above)
Franz Kumpul

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From the President

Dear friends,

From 17-21 July 2008, the 6th International Jew's Harp Festival and Congress with a focus on indigenous people is planned to take place in Kushiro, island of Hokkaido, Japan. In accordance with the announcement in the last Newsletter, Leo Tadagawa researched the feasibility of organising and funding the IJHF in cooperation with the Ainu community in Japan. Leo returned from Hokkaido with the news that despite scarcity of funds, the Ainu want to go for the festival in 2008. In a recent email-questioning, out of the 16+1 (the "1" is our honoured Fred Crane) board members a majority of 11 fully support, 3 didn't answer (out of which Gordon Frazier "is out of the picture", as Fred Crane called it), 2 support but would like to get more information about the consequences of the financial limitations and 1 has not taken a decision yet. We understand that this festival in Japan will be the first and as Leo confirms the only realistic chance for the implementation of an IJHF in Japan. I consider it as an important objective of my function as president to support a fair distribution of the IJHFs between the continents and cultures, thus including as many ethnicities as possible and giving the respective region the chance of increased participation. An IJHF in Japan is supposed to strengthen especially the jew's harp communities in East and Southeast Asia, including an increased participation of China.

The next steps are firstly the appointment of the Program Committee within the next weeks, consisting of a chairman and two other members. The Program Committee shall advise the local organisers with regard to the Festival Program. Secondly, Leo shall transmit formal invitations to the participants as soon as possible so that the musicians and lecturers may apply for additional funding in their respective country. Thirdly, with January 2008, I will further appoint a nominating committee of three members which will be responsible for the constitution of the new board. At the end of the IJHF, one half of the board members shall be replaced or re-nominated.

I had tried –so far without success- to get a grant from the European Union for supporting jew's harp activities in the Russian Federation and for networking between European national societies and ethnic jew's harp communities in the Far East of Russia. In spring 2007, the EU had launched a new program, funding cultural partnership-projects with the Russian Federation. Since we definitely will give it another try, I will elaborate this project idea:

The jew's harp organizations from Norway, England, Hungary, Sicily and Austria had agreed to work in cooperation with their partners from the Russian Federation on the following activities:

- Promotion of cultural heritage of minorities, including their contribution to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue
- Support of networking, exchange and practical cooperation in the sphere of jew's harp culture between Russian cultural organisations, museums and artistic educational institutions and European NGOs.

- Capitalisation on cultural heritage as an innovative way to activate local economic growth and development based on culture.

The actors from the Russian Federation, besides the main partner Khomus-museum in Sakha-Yakutia, included organizations and representatives from the people of Tuva, Altay, Ulchi, Khakassia and Bashkortostan. The Russian jew's harp players are centered around the website www.vargan.ru (check it out!).

Our Concept Note was evaluated as "very experienced project management" and as "well written and formulated". Yet we did not make it on the short list, mainly because the two persons evaluating our Concept Note underestimated the importance of our instrument, stating that the "relevance is less clear since the target group is rather narrow". This means, we will have to advertise and lobby for our instrument even more.

Franz Kumpul

---oOo---

The 6th International Jew's Harp Festival and Congress (IJHF) is planned to be held in Kushiro, Hokkaido, Japan from 17 to 21 July 2008 (next year!), in association with the International Jew's Harp Society.

Because of the extreme lack of financial supports (for cultural events, especially of "miscellaneous" instruments), the organizing committee cannot invite everybody. Save money, check your local foundation and get ready.

For more information write to Leo Tadagawa koukin@center.email.ne.jp



See: <http://international.city.kushiro.hokkaido.jp/>

Leo Tadagawa

(Right)

Map of Kushiro
website
Ainu Player
(photograph by
Leo Tadagawa
Kushiro Port
website

First Festival of Khomus Music in England

Khomus – an instrument that doesn't make sound by itself. It can only sing with a human being, when the player enlivens it with their breath. The human body becomes a resonator of sounds: speech organs, mouth and stomach cavity. That's why its music is alive, deep and magical. That's why the khomus that is made by hand by a true master, sings and plays the music of its own people.

Blacksmiths, hereditary master makers – people with strong inner energy, who absorbed in their genes all the positive energy accumulated by their nation. That's why a massive positive energy gets released when khomus is being played, and when there is a match between the energy of the player, the resonance happens, multiplying positive impacts of khomus music on the environment.

The tradition of khomus playing existed in every culture on the planet Earth. Traditional playing was peculiar in every nation, because it reflects the soul of the nation; it is characteristic of its traditions and culture. That's why it is important to preserve what is still there, and to recreate what is lost. Unfortunately, in many countries khomuses are only preserved within the walls of the museums, and there are very few bearers of the culture-art left now. In fact in many countries there are no masters-blacksmiths who can make khomus.

We need special events designed to promote and preserve this unique form of art, we have to do everything to attract an interest to this instrument among general public and to restore the craftsmanship of khomus-making – the blacksmiths – to support and encourage the enthusiasts-players who preserved in their genes the traditions of their nation.

In this sense the importance of the first ever UK festival that took place 27-29 April 2007 in Oxford, of the art and history of khomus playing should not be underestimated.

The presentations by Michael Wright and Angela Impey proved that in 19th century England khomuses were produced in Birmingham and exported to other countries and even to Africa where people used the English khomuses. With the help of Angela in South Africa an ensemble of khomus players was formed that recreated their own tradition.

Geoff Egan told about archaeological findings of khomuses of the period of 1270-1350s, which proved that the khomus existed in medieval England. (reference to a village of 16th century makers has been found, though little is known about them and research continues – ed.). Unfortunately the tradition of making has been totally lost now.

John Wright, the unique khomus player, the bearer and the propagandist of the English style of playing devoted his presentation to various technologies of the khomus making around the world.

The participants also visited the musical instruments collection of the famous Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford that has an extensive collection of khomuses from every corner of our planet. This has once again

demonstrated and proved that the tradition of khomus playing belonged to all nations of the world.

Also the conference saw the presentations of the bearers of traditional khomus styles – Lindsey Porteous from Scotland, Leo Tadagawa from Japan, John Wright from France and Spiridon Shishigin from the Republic of Sakha-Yakutia. They not only demonstrated the peculiarities of playing khomus in their countries but told us about their experiences in propagating the khomus in their respective countries.

And in the evening there was a concert of khomus music. First part of the concert saw the performance by the Wright family – John, Michael, David and his daughter Lucy, presenting the English / Irish style. Lindsay Porteous presented the Scottish style, and Michael Wright also played various pieces written for Chamber orchestra.

In the second half of the concert John Wright of France, Leo Tadagawa of Japan, and Spiridon Shishigin of Yakutia presented performances on their khomuses.

The concert was finished with a big jam of all the performers and public. The Yakutian khomus played *osuokhai* (Yakutian circle dance) of the brotherhood, and like-minded people from the audience and from the different countries played along.

Finally I would like to note that as a result of thoughtfully and carefully prepared event was a first and very important step made in recreation, preservation and development of the traditional style of playing of the United Kingdom. It is very heartening that there are people who are working with all their hearts and souls – for the preservation of their own people's culture – as part of the culture common to all mankind.

*Spiridon Shishigin,
Headmaster of Pokrovsk
High School No. 1,
khomusist-improviser,
board member of World Centre of Khomus Music.*

9 May 2007



Spiridon Shishigin in concert at the Wesley Methodist Memorial Church, Oxford.
Photograph by Leo Tadagawa



Right: Final group performance led by Spiridon Shishigin
Photograph by Misha Hamid



Above
Luca Recupero
Photograph by
Leo Tadagawa

The ancient sound of future music

Trumps and traditions in the *global* soundscape: A Sicilian Story

A good definition for “tradition” could be: some human activity which is really old, coming from the past, that is meaningful, useful, necessary *here and now* at least for those who carry it on. In other words, tradition is always contemporary, otherwise it is dead.

When I first met Tran Quang Hai in Bologna (I guess it was 1998 or so) he had something very interesting to say on this issue: “you can’t only *take* from tradition, you also need to *give* something to it”. These words have been of very fruitful inspiration for a young student of ethnomusicology with a definitely urban background. And this concept has been put to use in my experience of not-so-young-anymore musician with an addiction to trumps, drones and harmonic music.

I’ve been stimulated to tell my personal story, and I hope it might be interesting as one example of the way in which traditional contents get reused and recycled, continuously shaping the relation between local and global.

Since I came back to my hometown in Catania, Sicily after about ten years of living in Bologna, Amsterdam and London, I have been fortunate enough to meet with other musicians who, like me, have had close encounters with “other worlds” and their respective traditional music and instruments. These were Stefano Spoto, who had been in Australia and had learned the didgeridoo, and Carlo Condarelli, who had been in West Africa studying Djembe and polyrhythms. Later the young singer and percussionist Alice Ferrara joined the band, and it soon became clear that although we all were very much attached to the traditional musics we had met, it did not make any sense to make music as if we were Australian Aboriginals or African Peasants or Sicilian Farmers or Rajastani Nomads. In fact we are all city kids, grown up between concrete buildings, electronic appliances, urban traffic, cosmopolitan mass media, and university education.

Our music turned out as a tribute to the traditional and tribal cultures from which we learned, but in a musical language which could only be linked to our own “ethnic” background, that of urban genres such as electric blues, psychedelic rock, reggae, electronic dance music.

The main challenge, and the experimental side of our music is in fact the attempt to maintain the identity of the different “ingredients” while creating something new that comes from their mixture.

The Sicilian *marranzanu* is not only an interesting sound, but added to the formula. That could also be done with digital sampling or electronic synths. What’s the added value of actually *performing* a repeated phrase on a murchang? Of learning the circular breathing to play the didj? Of spending countless hours to interlock a traditional Guinean *dundunbà* rhythm with a *tarantella*?

All these instruments take with them entire sonic universes, and in turn these cannot be fully separated from the material and immaterial cultures that have

created the instruments. In other words we relised that the very *sounds* of these instruments bear with them a treasury of very important musical and extra-musical (eco-logic, mythological, cosmologic, religious, ethic, ethnic) connections.

Our attempt is that of using these sounds without losing all these connections, and build up a dialogue among the sonic worlds that we are partaking. We could not exclude from this dialogue electronic musical instruments and sound devices, if we had to be sincere with our own “ethnic” roots. So microphones, amplification and electronic processors are treated with the same respect and attention we grant to any other instrument and tradition.

In the music of Ipercussionici (hyper-percussive-sonic) often literal quotations of traditional Sicilian *marranzanu* are used to accompany the lyrics, mostly sung in Sicilian dialect. We even use some traditional lyrics learned from archive recordings or ethnomusicological transcriptions of the early xx century. But it all gets a new meaning with the interaction with African drumming and didjeridoo or double bass drones...It is an experiment, but it is done with honesty and sincerity, with respect, but without reverence to the original traditions.

At other times the trumps are used in connection with electronic effects to create bass-lines or psychedelic grooves...but could this be done without the training needed to play the traditional songs?

The traditional repertory is like the trunk of a tree, the energy need to flow through it in order to create new leaves and flowers. These in turn blossom and pass away, but falling down on earth contributes to nourishing the roots and the tree itself. If the flowers are *replicas* of the roots something in this circular chain must be going wrong!

The trump is indeed a very old, ancient instrument. But if I use it *today* it is because it meets my contemporary needs. If we want to keep healthy the millenarian tree of the trump traditions, I feel that we must certainly start from the roots, but use the knowledge gained in the exploration and trip to shape new flowers, not just to reproduce the old ones, otherwise the roots themselves will eventually perish.

Luca Recupero
Catania,
3d of June, 2007



Far right
(left to right):
Glen Velez, Luca
Recupero, Alfio Antico
at the Marranzano
World Festival,
22nd April, 2007
Photograph by
Stefano Sciotto

The Jew's harp in Southern Africa

Extract from talk given at the 'Oxford Firsts' conference in Oxford...



Above (top to bottom)
Umqangala player
Isizenze player
Tweletwele player
Tweletwele player
All photographs by
Angela Impey

Apart from being introduced by individual traders and explorers such as LeVaillant¹, the commercial distribution of Jew's harps within the country was likely to have occurred by way of a number of routes: Commercial music stores, trading stores and 'concession stores.

The Jew's harp was readily adopted by young Nguni women who added it to an existing repertoire of mouth-bows. In my area of research - northern KwaZulu Natal, southern Mozambique and Swaziland - the most common of these mouth-bows were the *umqangala* and the *isizenze*.

Performance characteristics are as follows:

- Played by young women prior to marriage.
- Performed as a walking instrument, used particularly when women walked to river to fetch water, long-distances to trading stores, or to visit relatives... Described to me as an instrument that provided impetus for long-distance walking/jogging; helped to keep up rhythm and made you forget your feet...
- Described sometimes also as relating to frogs – like them one uses one's body to create sound; and like them, the sounds were used to attract attention to oneself. Nothing much deeper than that, although frogs associated with witch craft, so the analogy seems unusual.
- Is'tweletwele 'songs' are derived from language, the melody following the tonal contours of a spoken phrase. Nguni languages are pitched, and some will use clicks to accentuate a rhythmic or textural quality (hence notion of 'song').
- Playing style not hugely complex – struck forward (Austrian swartz)
- Generally set up short ostinato phrase and the improvise there-on.

Most often played solo, but will play in call-and-response with friends, the instrument providing a solo phrase and fellow-travellers filling in with chorus. Like most music in this region of Africa, melodies are cyclical, highly repetitive and used to stimulate and support movement: e.g. embodiment

Walking Is'twele

Is'tweletwele had specific cultural function: as these are patriarchal societies, women were excluded from most public decision-making processes. When they marry, women move into the homesteads of their husbands, and have to live and behave according to his rules and mores. You either keep your opinions to yourself... or find more subtle ways to voice them:

Is'tweletwele (like mouthbows) was used as form of commentary by women – their public voicing – protected by subtlety of sound (produced some ambiguity), yet a way to comment on friends, family, neighbours – to say things that may not be verbally

¹ See Crane, Frederick. 1994. "Monsieur Le Vaillant Wows the Hottentots", *Vierundzwanzigsteljahrschrift der Internationalen Maultrommelvirtuofengenoffenchaft*, Vol. 4, p38-44.

expressed: eg. So-and-so is a lazy farmer/ she drinks too much and leaves nothing for us/who is that person who married so young?



In the work I conducted with is'tweletwele in Maputaland, I tried to reconstruct a social history of women by collecting a body of is'tweletwele songs. I wanted to find out first why and how the instrument was played; and then wh it seemed to die out in about 1970.

When I took the instruments to them, they responded as if I was bringing rain after a long drought. Their responses highlighted 3 issues

- 1) all immediately evoked stories about their lives when they were young and played them
- 2) all stories related to places in the landscape where they walked when playing them, and
- 3) despite 30 year hiatus, women were very exacting about which instruments and what sounds they created.

Some of the conclusions I came to was that the is'tweletwele was related to a specific social and spatial configuration of the borderlands: long-distance walking to trading stores and relatives was severely curtailed by fences, spatial restrictions: no longer have the landscape contexts as background for playing. Secondly, the instrument played a social function – but with pressure of men away on the mines and responsibility on women to support families, brought about social and cultural changes. Women could no longer while away their time; new schools, churches, radios, cassette players... replaced many areas of social life.

Being listened to has been an act of affirmation for the women and has generated a greater sense of community between them. One manifestation of this has been the establishment of a performance group - omama bazetweletwele - which in turn, has led to the revival of old beading practices and long forgotten dances. This has also led to the reconfiguration of old songs and composition of new ones; and these activities have produced new income-generating opportunities.

Angela Impey



Far right
(top) Is'tweletwele
players
(bottom) Omama
bazetweletwele
(Mothers of the
Jew's harp)
Photographs by
Angela Impey

Argentina

The Amsterdam Effect...

SINCE I began research on the Jew's harp, it has allowed me to discover many things... places, instruments, cultures and, the most important, people. So, for me the Amsterdam effect was contact for the first time with the music and musicians from the South of India.

It was wonderful to hear directly the "konnakol" - the art of creating sounds with one's mouth that approximate, imitate, or otherwise serve the same purpose as a percussion instrument, whether in a group of singers, an instrumental ensemble, or solo - the "mridangam" and the "morsing" from our friends from Bangalore.

After Amsterdam, I looked for records of this kind of music, and in this route, I had a big, big surprise.- I founded a fusion work that mixed FLAMENCO and INDIA MUSIC...it is sensational!!!!!! With the name "INDIALUCIA" (the name mix INDIA and ANDALUCIA).

I want to recommend the four tracks of the CD with a "morsing" solo from an excellent Hindu musician Giridhar UDUPA. In his biography on the Internet, we can read that Giridhar was born "...into a family of music and literature in 1979 and was tutored initially by his father Vidwan Nagendra Udupa from the age of 4. Currently he is pursuing advanced training in Ghatam under the guidance of Vidhushi Smt. Sukanya Ramgopal and Vidwan V. Zures. He started giving concerts at the tender age of 12 and has given concerts under the auspices of prestigious Sabhas all over India and abroad."

You may read more about this work in : www.indialucia.com.-

---oOo---

TWING – TWING at “the end of the World”

In the deep South of South América there are a wonderful region of mountains, lakes, and snow know as PATAGONIA.-



Right Patagonian landscape,
Far right: (top) Mapuche player,
(bottom) Luisa Calcumil
Photographs courtesy of José Luis Pignocchi

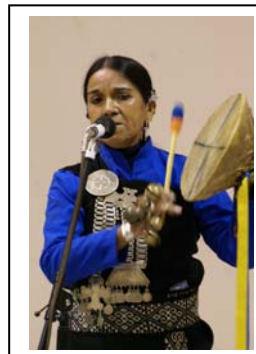
There, there are an aboriginal people named “mapuche” that took the trump as their own instrument many years ago. E.R Smith in his book “The Araucanians” (New York 1981, page 247/8), said that the Jew's harp has become national with the mapuche..

Last January I spent my holidays at San Martín de los Andes, Neuquén, Argentine, where I had a big surprise... Listening to the local radio, I found the loved sound of the trump in a broadcast of “mapuche music” for the mapuche people.

I send some photos from the PATAGONIA, the WAJZUGUN radio and a mapuche player of “trompo” or “trompe”, or “xompe”, the names that they use for the “Jew's harp”.



Also pictures of the "mapuche" singer LUISA CALCUMIL and she also play "trompe" or "xompe" as they say...



Greetings from Argentine
José Luis Pignocchi

France

I am sending you herewith 3 pictures of my playing Jew's harps at the festival XIth Omaggio a Demetrio Stratos at Alberone di Cento (FF), near Bologna, Italy from 15 to 17 June 2007.



Right:
Tran Quang Hai at the
XIth Omaggio a
Demetrio Stratos
festival, Alberone di
Cento (FF), near
Bologna, Italy from 15
to 17 June 2007.
Photographer
unknown

You can find the contents on:

http://www.modomusica.com/omaggioids/seminario_voce.html

I'll go to Vienna, Austria from 2 to 13 July 2007 to participate in the 39th World Conference of the ICTM as Executive member of the ICTM. I shall chair 2 panels and have 2 papers.

Germany

Jew's Harpland Berlin: Only those who have strayed know the way

When I switch on the radio in the morning, sometimes I hear an advert for the shopping paradise IKEA, whose jingle is a piece played on a Jew's Harp.

---oOo---

At the festival "March Music" 07, in the Alpine music section, Anton Bruhin gave a concert named "Music from, 'Trümpi' and electro-magnetic Jew's Harp" and opened a display in the gallery "Yellow Music" with pictographs, writings and designs. It provoked a good response. The 1999 film 'Trümpi', by Ivan Schumacher, was also screened at the festival.

---oOo---

At the beginning of the year, there was an exciting announcement in the world of Jew's Harps in Berlin: the renamed Brecht Ensemble (BE) was searching for a Jew's Harp virtuoso for a new piece from Peter Handke. More than twenty Jew's harp players applied for the job! Peter Handke is one of the most widely known German-speaking writers – and in his youth, he played the Jew's harp. For his piece „traces of the strays“ he had conceived a Jew's harp-playing flaneur for the main role, an everyman among everymen – for whom the world filed past in the form

of a migration of nations. Unfortunately a Jew's harp player was only sought in order to give the actor Jew's harp lessons – and once the play was on the stage almost no Jew's harp playing remained. Claus Peymann, director of the BE and stage manager of the play, has known Peter Handke for decades and has brought several of his theatrical works to the stage. In a public conversation he told me an interesting story about Handke's method of working: "When I met Peter Handke for a discussion about the piece, he led me to a clearing in the woods and there, before me, he played a piece on the Jew's harp and said: the mood that exists here now – that's how the piece should be staged."

Berliner Morgenpost
31. 12. 06

BühnenReif
BE sucht Maultrommler

Für die Uraufführung des Stücks „Spuren der Verirrten“ von Peter Handke sucht das Berliner Ensemble (BE) einen versierten Maultrommler. Die Figur des Dichters in dem Stück ist nämlich als Maultrommel-Virtuose angelegt. Eigentlich erstaunlich, dass weder der Autor noch BE-Intendant Claus Peymann (Foto) die Rolle selber übernehmen. Beide sind bekannter Maßen nicht auf den Mund gefallen, und die Werbetrömmel wissen sie auch zu rühren. Peymanns Ensemble hatte sich noch im Juni für Handke stark gemacht, als der Düsseldorfer Stadtrat dem Autor wegen dessen Grabrede für Serbiens Ex-Diktator Milošević den Heine-Preis wieder aberkennen wollte. Die Schauspieler stifteten damals eigens einen „Berliner Heinrich-Heine-Preis“. Viel Engagement für die „Freiheit der Kunst“ bei einem weltanschaulich fragwürdigen Dichter. Mal sehen, ob sich ein Musiker findet, der für das Stück die Zähne zusammenbeißt. Am 17. Februar soll Premiere sein. *usi*

PHOTO: PAUL ZEB

Peymann justified the shortening of the Jew's Harp piece in the work with the argument that the Jew's Harp playing had brought "romantic character". It's true that the Jew's harp can be romantic, but that's just one of several forms of expression that can be achieved by the Jew's harps. In the conversation I noticed that Peymann hadn't really dealt with the universal character of the Jew's harp, otherwise he would have introduced it into another scene. Handke achieved a speech symphony of the absurd with his text that led the world into a new reality. The correct introduction of the Jew's harp, especially with its shamanistic (holy) virtuosity, could have strengthened this statement. Peymann requested me to play a piece myself, to public applause. It remains to be seen if other productions of the piece will bring to the stage the correct role of the Jew's harp playing hero.

Gerd Conrad

Far right:
Newspaper clipping
from the
Berliner Morgenpost,
31st December, 2006

United Kingdom
IoNAJHA

'Oxford Firsts'
28th April saw the first Jew's harp conference/concert to be held in the UK. Having started out as a small gathering where the idea was to give Spiridon Shishigin, coming to the UK for the first time, the opportunity to play in concert, it grew into something more like a proper festival as the day approached.. We were limited by time - everything was held in one day - and money, with only an offer to anyone who did come of a contribution to travel expenses and what every my wife, Debbie, and I could do in the way of accommodation. Word, however, spread and we eventually were able to have in addition to Spiridon, the Wright family - all four of us - coming together for the first time; Leo Tadagawa, who happened to be in Italy the week before and Lindsay Porteous from Scotland. There were also talks from ethnomusicologist, Angela Impey, and archaeologist, Geoff Egan from the Museum of London. All came together to produce a day of knowledge, music, sharing of ideas and enthusiasm.

Far right:
(top)
Banner from the
JHG website
(bottom)
John Wright with the
oldest Jew's harp
found in UK
(1380-1420),
photograph by
Dave Wood
& find,
photograph[h by
Jonathon Cope

Right (top to bottom)
Lucy & David Wright,
photograph by
Leo Tadagawa.

Leo Tadagawa,
photograph by
Jonathon Cope

Lindsay Porteous
photograph by
Dave Wood

Michael Wright &
Lynda Sayce
photographs by
Leo Tadagawa



Below:
BBC TV filming
of conference,
photograph by
Jonathon Cope

Participants in
deep conversation
photograph by



The objective of the day was to set a marker for such events in the UK and to show that there is an interest worth getting grant money for in the future. Calling it 'Oxford Firsts', we have been able to exploit the unique sound and get at least local media interest on an instrument that has a low profile here.

We did, in fact, get good local television and radio coverage, plus support from the local Folk Festival in promoting the event. The success of the day has convinced those of us who attended, that a regular festival is viable, and that more of our international friends should be invited here for festivals in the future. A special edition newsletter of the IoNAJHA will be available to anyone interested.

Finally, Lucy Wright is spending the next few months in Yakutia in preparation for an MMus at Goldsmiths, London next year.

Michael Wright

United States of America
JHG

Just a note to let you know that the Jew's Harp Guild online newsletter has been updated at:
<http://www.jewsharpguild.org/jhgnews.html>



Among other things this issue consist of the following:

We're Back - A Reintroduction

Alaska and Africa Meet in Amsterdam (The mouthbow article)

Steven Stoops JHarps

Creating a Jewsaphone

A Photo Essay of 2006 Jew's Harp Festivals - Part 1 International and North American Jew's Harp Fests

I've also made some enhancements to the home page (<http://www.jewsharpguild.org>) with revolving pics and new links as well as adding a boatload of pics and slideshows to the past festivals page (<http://www.jewsharpguild.org/fotoindx.html>) .

The plan is to soon rework the Pictorial Archive and to revitalize what I can without re-doing the whole thing.

Don't forget the North American Jew's Harp Festival coming up on August 3 & 4, 2007 in Bay City Oregon.

Ciao, MarkPoss
JHG Webmaster / Editor



PictureGallery



Leo Tadagawa
Leo's contribution this issue is a series of images of monuments in Yakutia, Austria and Japan

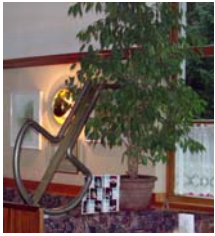
Sakha Republic



Culture of the Sakha (Yakut) people is strongly related to the horse. In front of their houses, people erected horse-tethering posts *serge* [1], which also symbolize life and fertility. On top of them, lucky icons such as horse head, wooden goblet for koumiss *choroon* and Jew's harp *khumus* were put. They were erected also at some memorial occasions [2]. Based on this idea, they created signs at the entrance of villages [3,4,5]. The images of *khumus* can be encountered in front of a museum [6], on walls of a shop [7,8,9], or at local sport grounds [10,11,12] (LT).



Austria

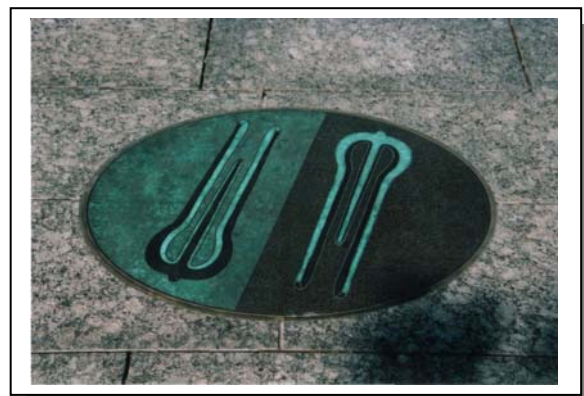


All photographs by
courtesy of
Leo Tadagawa

In Molln, all roads lead to the Jew's harp. Even in a
confectionery/café you cannot miss it (LT).

Below:
Leo Tadagawa at
Saitama

Japan



This relief (not a manhole cover!) is in a park near
a modern shopping centre in Saitama (former
Omiya) city. From a site in a shrine not far from
here, two iron Jew's harps from 10th century
were unearthed. In the park, you may also see
newly designed objects based on ancient
excavations such as beads and jewels (LT).

Being a Jew's harpist in a country with hardly any j-harp tradition, as in the Netherlands, can seem very lonely. Thanks to the internet I found a very vivid Jew's harp online community a few years ago in 1999. It was very encouraging to stumble upon the jewsharpguild.org and other resources like munnharpe.no and a few years later khomus.de and khomus.ru. It was a good way to start and to find a lot of inspiring recordings and artists. But now a few years later the web has evolved and the Jew's harp enthusiasts are not very cutting-edge, technology-driven. They just seem to know how to upload html-sites onto their servers, which is fine because a simple html-site or a more elegant CMS (content management system) will do in most cases.

Recently though, I've found a lot of potential in a few web-services, that we could all benefit from. They can all be referred to as 2.0, which is a very geeky term but please allow me a short tour.

But what is web 2.0?

Web 2.0 is a term often applied to a perceived ongoing transition of the World Wide Web from a collection of websites to a full-fledged computing platform serving web applications to end users. Ultimately Web 2.0 services are expected to replace desktop computing applications for many purposes. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0

Basically it's all about 'sharing'. A lot of online computing makes information available for others. Sharing is benefit for all: that tiny long forgotten instrument (in a lot of cultures) called Jew's harp with it's many names is having a small global renaissance because of people sharing their knowledge via websites, email and forums.

Sharing on a website is a one way communication, you can find information via search-engines or you'll get an update via email-newsletters, but I wish to encourage you, fellow Jew's harpists, to take a dive into the user-driven websites. I'll be explaining a few that I am using at the moment to start with Del.icio.us.

Del.icio.us is a social bookmark site based on tagging. Once you've found a website you consider worth bookmarking you can also add some words that are meaningful to you. Those tags will result in a big mess of keywords, a tag-cloud, which will work very associative. For example after one week, you decide finding the nice page that you've tagged with 'jewsharp' a few days ago, this keyword will also give you the bookmarks of all the other people that have tagged something with the same keyword. That way you'll be finding a few other 'jewsharp'-sites that might be of your interest.

It is very interesting to see that del.icio.us doesn't need any moderation to become valuable. And you don't have to know the other users you'll be only guided by your interest and curiosity. At the moment of writing there don't seem to be many 'jewsharp'-links.

Flickr

Flickr is a photo service to put your photographs and manage them online. Flickr has become a huge library for images of all sort – also because of the tagging features. It could be a good place to store your Jew's harp pictures.

YouTube and also **GoogleVideo** are a great place to start when you're looking for audiovisual content. Users can easily upload nearly every movie-format and it will be encoded into flashvideo-files that will play directly on nearly every browser. You can even put the footage on your website by copying some code and paste it into your website. When you upload the file you can also add tags.

The screenshot shows the YouTube interface for a video titled "Amazing mouth harp guy part two". The video player shows a man playing a Jew's harp. The right sidebar contains metadata: "Added: December 16, 2006", "From: ChipHead0110", "A friend of mine took this in", "Category Music", "Tags: amazing jew's harp", "URL: http://www.youtube.com", and "Embed". Below the video, there are "Related" and "More from" sections, with a "Showing 1-20 of 28" indicator.

I started typing some of the names of the instrument in the end I quickly realized that there was a growing number of movies. Lots of amateur-material taken with mobile phones but there are some nice performances and demonstrations. I tried to focus my contribution to the newsletter on YouTube only but realized that I would end up listing lots of links. I'd like to give you one link to start with:

<http://www.youtube.com/group/jawharp> this is a group started by Hankplow (that's the Youtube-name) an American Jew's harpist. At this moment there are 86 movies in that group alone, and there is much more to be found.

The screenshot shows the YouTube interface for a video titled "Kissing Mouth harp". The video player shows two women kissing. The right sidebar contains metadata: "Added: F", "From: dt", "Category MUS", "This is a", "Category", "Tags: M", "URL: ht", and "Embed: <". Below the video, there are "Related" and "Showing" sections.

Far right:
YouTube websites
'Amazing mouth harp
guy part two' and
'Kissing Mouth harp'

MySpace is a very ugly looking space. It's a place where you can have a profile, tell the world who you are and become friends. It is sometimes referred to as collecting stamps but you also can see it as a gigantic social network. A lot of musicians found their way into MySpace because it a good place to meet your fans and other bands. I was astonished to find new Jew's harp music just by searching. So now I'm trying to collect as many Jew's harp friends as I can. So far I've found that I was not the only musician combining j-harp with human beatboxing: Aron Szilagyí has a great organic dance-project called AIRtist: (<http://www.myspace.com/airtistmusic>). Or the more obscure experiments such as Neue Deutsche Stubenmusi: (<http://www.myspace.com/neuedeutschestubenmusi>) and Delvin' Noggin: (<http://www.myspace.com/delvinoggin>).

This article is mainly meant as an inspiration for those not really familiar with these sites. By putting a movie-clip on youtube instead of directly on your website, there will be a bigger chance that people will accidentally find it – and a lot of times interesting and fun stuff is being passed on to others, via word of mouth the technique of twanging will spread all over the internet and it will inspire new young people to play and to get involved.

PS: if you have a MySpace feel free to become my friend.)

Daniel Hentschel (danibal)

Right: (top)
Gerd Conrad at
Kloster Chorin.
photograph by
Jacqui Enneve



conscious to try. Trying to keep the moment, many photos were taken of Gerd's little Jew's Harp with the elements of new snow and old building. I still look through my photos of this special day and benefit from the peace and energy. The perfect day then led us to a quaint little restaurant in the forest. Here exquisite food is served, the theme being honey. All dishes are cooked with honey. Winnie-the-Pooh eat your heart out! It is dark when we leave the restaurant and another dimension to the day, a walk through the woods with no artificial light, just the snow casting a luminous glow, so soft and soothing. This may seem like a ramble but for a little Aussie from tropical Brisbane, it was truly a day made in heaven.

Thank you Hedwig and Gerd.

*Jacqui Enneve, Australia
19 April 2007*

---oOo---

I recently started playing Kubang at an Irish session that's held once a month. After reading your article about manufactures in the current issue of the Journal, I became interested in the Irish Jew's Harp, mostly, was it played much in Ireland and are there performers still playing Jew's Harp? I haven't seen any in any of the limited music we get in the US. Any information would be appreciated; it might even make an article in a News Letter.

Keep up the good work.

*Sincerely
Ralph Christensen
California*

Below:
Gerd Conrad
photograph by
Jacqui Enneve



AndFinally...

Correspondence

The Snow Queen

My story is that I was visiting my dear friends in Berlin and being from Australia, I was launched into 7th heaven when I woke to find we had been blessed with a large dump of snow overnight. Gerd and Hedwig decided a trip to the country was the best way to enjoy the snow so off we went, by train, to a serene forested area and went hiking through a winter landscape worthy of Narnia. The overwhelming silence of the woodland was like balm on the soul after the hectic city life. Visually it was like strolling through a National Geographic magazine. Everything was perfect. Then the most amazing scene unfolded as we walked towards a looming edifice of the most beautiful proportions. It was Kloster Chorin, a well-preserved ruin of a medieval monastery. An incredible feeling of peace was experienced as well as an underlying sense of positive energy. This place really seemed magical. We were also lucky enough to be the only ones in the building and when Gerd pulled his Jew's Harp from his breast pocket and started playing, the music evoked visions of cowed Franciscan monks gliding silently across the flag stones, chalices of honey mead, deals made in whispers in the dead of night but mostly of happy and peaceful inhabitants. Gerd then led us into some chanting which blended with his music and flowed up into the lofty ceiling. How liberating to do something that normally I would be too self-

Celebrations!

Christmas, Birthdays, Father's Day... you name it, Jew's harper's celebrate it!



Koukin cake, baker unknown! – Norway

Photo: Ryuji



Father's Day card by Alice Wright – UK



Birthday drawing by Tran Quang Minh - France

NoticeBoard

Deadlines!

Newsletter 6

Copy, images – including titles and credits – by Friday, 26th October 2007. I'll be sending a reminder out about a month before, though don't wait until then, but send me things as and when you think of it!

Publication will be around Christmas

If you change your address, please let me know by email or post.

If reading this newsletter has inspired you to write something, please send an email to:

michael.wright@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com

or write me a letter to:

Michael Wright,

The editor

IJHS Newsletter

77 Beech Road

Wheatley

Oxon OX33 1UD, UK.

In the next issue – lots on Regional news – so please send it! Lucy Wright will interview... we'll have to wait and see, PLUS anything and everything YOU want to say, share...

Classic CD

Norsk munnharpeforum have recently published a double CD of old recordings/archive materials, with a good booklet with Norwegian and English text. For more information contact the publisher at info@talik.no.

Germund Kolltviert

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New Guinea player, photograph by courtesy of Leo Tadagawa



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.

- 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.

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