

# Newsletter of the International Jew's Harp Society



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To contribute to the newsletter, send your emails to [michael@jewsharper.info](mailto:michael@jewsharper.info) or post to Michael Wright, General Secretary, IJHS Newsletter, 77 Beech Road, Wheatley, Oxon, OX33 1UD, UK

*Signed articles or news items represent the views of their authors only. Cover photograph Goukon Fukiko, playing a mukkuri. Photograph by Leo Tadagawa*

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(far right)

Franz Kumpl &

Sushil Gautam

*Photograph courtesy of*

*Franz Kumpl*

## Editorial

This issue focuses on reports from various festivals held during the year, but I've devoted the FeatureComment section to two concerts: the first performance of a new piece written for Jew's harp and the performance of an old favourite in an unusual setting. There are also links to the ever-expanding websites featuring the Jew's harp generally and makers in particular, plus a few extras, including two reviews.

As we are getting more and more CDs for review in the Newsletter, Fred and I have consulted and decided that, because the Newsletter is out regularly twice a year and the Journal as and when sufficient material is collected (get those major articles written, you researchers, so we can publish the next one), we've come up with a process that we think is both workable for us all and simple for artists. So now the Newsletter, should be the first place to contact for topical reviews and to provide a relatively quick response to players who, quite rightly, want to promote their work as quickly as possible. The journal, however, will have an overview of releases between each issue, providing an article that stands back and looks at trends.

In the Newsletter I've been keen to include opinions as well as news, and the topic of organising events is one I would like to explore. Having just gone through a time-consuming and ultimately fruitless process of trying to sort out a major Jew's harp event linked to one of the top five Folk Festivals here in the UK, I have to admire the ability of those who pull together the larger festivals – particularly how they persuade funders to part with their cash. I would, therefore, like to devote the next issue of the Newsletter to the various ways concert and festivals are organised and funded, with lessons learned and basic questions you should ask yourself if you are intending to run an event. So, those of you with experience, get your thinking caps on, because I'll be asking you to contribute your ideas for the next IJHS Newsletter 9.

Thanks, as always, to those who contribute, and keep the news rolling in...

Michael Wright  
Editor

## BoardMatters

Dear friend,

Do you belong to those people who spend more or to those who spend less money now? Who travel more or who travel less because of the global economic crisis? People have become more egoistic these past months, more afraid of losing their jobs. This may change, and the situation might get worse: so we may experience the need for solidarity and the value of friendship; of common ideas and objectives. At least, that's what I hope.

Something similar is going on in the International and in some national Jew's Harp organisations: it's low energy time right now, and not only because of the global crisis, or because winter starts, or because it is still so much time to go until the next International Jew's Harp Festival.

I was in Nepal last October-November and met with Sushil Gautam, the founder and head of the Nepalese Murchunga Organisation. Sushil is an excellent musician and a beautiful human being. We had some good talks, played the Jew's harp together, exchanged some harps, made an interview for Nepalese papers and played again. Sushil talked about the problems he is experiencing in keeping the Murchunga Organisation alive, the difficulties to attract active members.



(right)  
Playing music with a  
Sadhu in the Hindu-  
monastery of  
Mukthinath, Nepal  
*Photograph courtesy  
of Franz Kumpl*



(far right)  
Gerd Conrad  
*Photograph by  
Hedwig Korte*

## FeatureComment



I tried to be supportive and positive, but I have to admit that within the Austrian Maultrommelverein we have experienced quite similar tendencies. The Maultrommelverein used to be one of the strongest national organisations, yet, after the great success of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Jew's harp Congress and Festival in 1998 in Molln, the interest and enthusiasm continuously declined for various personal and organisational reasons. This year there were even tendencies to integrate the organisation into another one.

And finally, some weeks ago, our Gen. Sec. Michael wrote me an email that he is worried about diminishing participation of members in IJHS-matters, about problems with financing the activities of the IJHS.

Dear friend, many of us have experienced how motivating a festival or a good concert is, but it is very difficult to keep the energy and attention up over a longer period. There are a lot of ups and downs, important members leave for some reasons, the already mentioned crisis demands attention and individual reaction.

In short, this is the best time to analyse the situation and to launch the next UP. In Austria, we have decided to re-launch our Maultrommelverein by moving the headquarter from Molln to Vienna, with Wolf Janscha, Albin Paulus and myself as the motors behind the planned activities. Sushil in Nepal starts teaching Murchunga in schools and plans to organise a national festival with foreign guests next year. The board of the IJHS has put together a questionnaire for you, the member of the IJHS. The results of the questionnaire will serve as guidelines for setting priorities and defining future strategies.

I feel we are on a good way!

And besides this: "Obama will fix it", as my American friend in Kathmandu used to say.

Boing,

Franz

### Steel and Music Symphony for Jew's harp and orchestra

Orchestral compositions for Jew's harp in music history are rare, so it was with great pleasure that I learned that composer, Karsten Gundermann of Dresden, had decided to create a new symphony for Jew's harp and orchestra.

Karsten Gundermann had apparently heard me play at a birthday celebration and was inspired to compose a piece for this archaic instrument, particularly as the Elbland Philharmonie in Riesa were looking for a suitable piece to be part of a concert entitled "Steel and Music". After initial scepticism as to the value of a Jew's harp as solo instrument, the concert management was eventually convinced after listening to the opinions expressed in the video film "Mundton", that artistically arranged report on the 5th International Jew's Harp Festival in Amsterdam, 2005.

(far right)  
Billboard  
*Photograph by  
Hedwig Korte*



Karsten Gundermann visited me in Berlin, where I played melodies on some of my instruments using various techniques and he noticed in particular that



there is an important connection between the Jew's harp and the breath. Wearing my shaman's costume, which consists of a long black jacket with little bells of different pitches and black-red-golden ribbons attached to the costume with safety pins, I also played on the nose whistle and a shamanistic drum from Tuva.

During the weeks that followed Karsten Gundermann researched the texts of previous compositions for the Jew's harp and listened to CD recordings. Of the concerto of Albrechtsberger he wrote: "I find it incredible that it has been 300 years since a concerto for Jew's harp and orchestra was composed (*not strictly true, as one was composed in America for Fred Crane in the 1980's, but pretty rare, all the same.* Ed). Was music not always a little CROSS Over? I am very proud of my historical composer colleagues and am now full of courage for my own project. It was particularly noticeable to me that the Jew's harp in Albrechtsbergers concerto had already been adapted to the tradition of the classical period – where the Jew's harp was treated like a classical melodic instrument and the charm of the overtones of the Jew's harp was understood by the composer as a strange humming sound, though the archaic forces of the Jew's harp were lost on the way by these refinements"

(far right)  
The concert  
Photograph by  
Hedwig Korte

And so the composer discovered the connection between music and forging art. Now he felt he had all elements together, from which his composition should consist: the vibrating steel tongue, shamanistic rituals and the elixir, "breath".



The concert took place in Riesa, which is located on the Elbe, and had been an important steel production and processing place during the German Democratic Republic. Of the 52.000 inhabitants 13,000 worked in the steel and rolling mill industry. After "the turn" the steel from Riesa was no longer competitive and within a short time 10,000 workers had lost their jobs. However, the steel plant is still at the heart of Riesa and inspired the choice of the concert theme of "Steel and Music".

(right)  
Outside the concert  
hall with left to right,  
Christian Voß, Karsten  
Gundermann & Gerd  
Conrad.  
Photograph by  
Hedwig Korte



Karsten Gundermann decided to try an opposite approach in his composition: "I wanted to treat the Jew's harp as strongly as possible as a Shamanistic instrument, allowing the Jew's harp's own forces to unfold and be examined, and to explore to what extent the Symphony Orchestra could get involved in this process. The collective aspects of Shamanism pointed me to a time where philosophy, theatres, science, welfare, art and music still had a common root, and perhaps shamanism is an important component of our current culture: healing the sick, attracting game, influencing the weather, calling the ancestors, fortune-telling: today one calls it defeating depression, collecting orders, protection of the environment, historical consciousness and to assess trends. It was these "useful" activities that inspired me to consider the "artistic" side of the Shaman:

"The joy of philosophizing, in dressing up, in singing and dancing and theatreplay – the 'extrovertedness' of the Shaman seemed to me a sign of the proximity of science and art, instead of the divide we emphasize between the two nowadays".

Karsten Gundermann decided to use steel as a soundboard in the piece that exists of four sets flowing into each other, used somewhat as the identifying symbol for Riesa. The concert began with humming, zooming background 'surfaces', into which a Tuvanesk Shaman Jew's harp was added.

The piece opened with a soundscape, intended to activate the imagination of the audience. The use of the Jew's harp suggested outlines of a dream in its tones, with curved overtones setting down a trancelike rhythm, using partial syllables of the city name 'Riesa' – "Yiou SA, Hou SA, Rie SA, Yaaah" sung as overtones. In order to strengthen the elementary-archaic effect, hammers were struck on the ground. The trance rhythm was increased by strong in and out breathing, and was reminiscent of the blowing of the fire at the forges. Visually enriched by a dance similar to the Indian Kundalini meditation dances, this part ended with a "birth cry". During the dance a 12 metre length of steel girder slowly, majestically, like a Shamanic 'poweranimal', was driven by deckcranes before the stage.

The orchestra raged with three percussionists hammering on the steel girder and the Jew's harp improvised wild rhythms: the steel plant, the power of iron, the work of the smith, the fire and the breath - everything was materialized by the music. With cries and dance steps this part ended in sudden silence – symbolising the end of the steel era. Tender, easily flowing, long lasting sung overtones floated through the auditorium and dissolved into silence. In the end the audience was encouraged to sing along. The women sang a high "Riiiiiiiie", the men a deep "Saaaaaaa!". Slowly the singing began to be blended -

supported and accompanied by the orchestra, strengthened by the Jew's harp and powerful upper and lower overtones - mixing with the choirs, "Riiiiieessaaaa, Riiiesa, Riesaaaa ". The giants ('Riesen' in German) had returned to the town named after them.

The audience were very enthusiastic and orchestra, conductor, composer and soloist were congratulated and celebrated for this marvellous evening. During the evening itself it would have been possible to sell many Jew's harps as people wanted to try out and purchase an instrument...

For myself as the soloist, this concert was an almost indescribable experience, combining, as it did, the various skills of the orchestra in the background and the listening, curious and astonished public before me, as I was allowed to unite the different tendencies with drum, voice and Jew's harp.

Premiere 5<sup>th</sup> July.2008, in the new Elbland Philharmonic Concert Hall, conductor: Christian Voss, composer: Karsten Gundermann, Jew's harp soloist: Gerd Conradt. Special concert "steel and music ",Riesa.

Gerd Conrad

### When a Yakut Jew's harp enchants an Alsatian chapel...

*In the heart of Alsace there is a place that people call simply "The Chapel". There, the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2008, the much loved Jew's harp player, Spiridon Spiridonovich Shishigin, offered his melodies to amazed listeners.*



(top & above)  
Spiridon Shishigin

All photographs  
courtesy and copyright  
Emilie Maj



You probably know of Alsace as a place for wines and *sauerkraut*, or have you may have seen the Council of Europe headquarters in the district of the Orangerie, near the pavilion built by Napoleon for Josephine, on television. It is also the place where I was born and studied. Perhaps, because I spent a part of my childhood in a house in the forest, I became immediately attached to 'The Chapel' when we located in the village of Geispolsheim in 1990. For almost nineteen years now I visit the site regularly by bike, alone or with my family and friends.

The place is actually called the 'Chapel Notre-Dame of Hattisheim', though Hattisheim village has not existed for four hundred years. Like most holy sites in France, it has a mystical feel. Legend says that in 1300 a

(right)  
The venue

(far right)  
The concert

(below)  
Post concert get  
together



shepherd used to keep his horses near a water source that gushed out onto the adjacent pastures. One day, the shepherd, who lived alone like many in his profession, had a visitation from the Virgin, after which he decided to build an oratory on behalf of Christ's Mother next to the source. This site was situated not far from the village of Hattisheim, becoming a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary a few centuries later. When the village disappeared, the Chapel was attached to Geispolsheim village, today known for its Corpus Christi, which takes place sixty days after Easter. In the nineteenth century, the chapel was destroyed by fire, but rebuilt thanks to the enthusiasm of the villagers, and became an important place of pilgrimage. Today, a group of believers say the rosary every Sunday and, for the rest of the time, the doors of the Chapel are open to pilgrims or to walkers who wish to engage in private prayer for an hour or just a few minutes.

When Spiridon asked me to organize a concert for him on the occasion of his travels in Europe, the Chapel seemed for me to be the ideal place for his peaceful and beautifully subtle performance. I went to see François Woehl, the head of the church, to discuss organizing a concert in the Chapel. He was wide-eyed when he saw the size of the Jew's harp – it was so small! When his wife arrived, he asked her to guess the size of a Jew's harp. "I do not know", she said, "it is as big... maybe ... as a bass?" I took out my instrument and she exclaimed, "Oh! And you think somebody can give a concert with that?" I have to say, though, that during the concert she was as seduced as much by the beauty of the sound of the Jew's harp as she had been skeptical the first time she saw it!

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, Spiridon and I followed the small road that winds through the forest, arriving at Notre-Dame in its surroundings of trees, some animals and a restaurant. The place itself was covered with flowers, like any Alsatian remains worthy of this name, and evoked an atmosphere conducive to reflection and repose of the soul.



We had the nice surprise when we found that the chapel was full for the concert. I saw on the faces of the listeners alternately astonishment, joy and meditation as Spiridon had took them to Yakutia! After the concert there was tea with milk and *aladij*, followed by a cultural talk I had asked Spiridon to prepare in the morning. When the meeting had finished it gave me great pleasure to see that Spiridon was very happy: "Really, this place has a soul!" he said, "I feel my fatigue taken off." Ayssen, a friend



who has lived in Strasburg since the age of fourteen years, made the journey: "We will eat at restaurant," I told him: "Just come home with us, for tonight Spiridon hosts us!"



(above)  
Spiridon Shishigin's soup  
Photograph courtesy and copyright  
Emilie Maj

Spiridon remained ten days in Europe, though he was nostalgic for Yakut soup. He cut all the meat that my parents had in the fridge into pieces, added potatoes, onion, pasta... and we felt like we were in Yakutia! I am sure that, if the Hattisheim shepherd had heard Spiridon's Jew's harp near his source, he also would have appreciated this soup fit to compensate for the hard work of horse breeders and passionate musicians...

Emilie Maj

Researcher at Centre for Landscape and Culture (Tallinn University), sponsored by the Estonian Science Foundation and the European Regional Development Fund. Project and listing of publications:

<https://www.etis.ee/portaal/isikuCV.aspx?TextBoxName=emilie%20maj&PersonVID=57241&lang=en&FromUrl0=isikud.aspx>

**Note:** I also organized during these days a concert, master-class and musicotherapy for Spiridon in the Alpen Mountains. You can receive information about Spiridon in French Speaking countries if you subscribe to the Newsletter in: [www.spiridon.canalblog.com](http://www.spiridon.canalblog.com)

## RegionalNews

### Argentina

#### SPAIN vs. ENGLAND

In the Newsletter of December 2007 I wrote about the trump of the Guaymies, an indigenous people from Costa Rica and Panamá.

Notwithstanding the Spanish, they also received trumps of an English influence through the presence of American's workers constructing the Panama Canal. It can be proved looking at the form and the size of the instrument, or being aware that the popular name of it is "yusá", which is the Spanish translation of the English words "Jew's harp"...

Last July I assisted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Latin American Anthropology Congress at the Costa Rica University at San José (CR) where a good friend obtained for me the "guaymies" musical instruments that you can see in the pictures, two trumps and a little flute of three holes. - It is a new step in the South American trumps's map I am currently working on.



(far right)  
Snapshot from  
YouTube

(right)  
"Guaymies" musical  
instruments  
All photographs  
courtesy of  
José Luis Pignocchi

José Luis Pignocchi  
[jopigi@arnet.com.ar](mailto:jopigi@arnet.com.ar)

### France

There is a website with overtones and Jew's harp I would encourage you to have a look at. I have posted many videos on overtones and Jew's harp and I have also created a forum on Jew's harps of the world. The address is :

<http://overtone-network.org/profile/TRANQUANGHAI>

On my blog : <http://tranquanghai.musicblog.fr> there are more than 200 video clips of Jew's harp (click on rubrique video Jew's harps) Here also is my newest blog dealing solely with Jew's harps. Please spend a few minutes to visit it .  
<http://haidanmoi.multiply.com/>

This summer I participated in a festival in Italy (June 2008); mela festival in Norway (22-24 August 2008); then I performed at Märch 1001 Festival in Dresden (Germany) from 13-14 September; then a workshop in Venice from 3 to 5 October 2008, and finally the year ended with a trip to Reunion Island (near Madagascar) from October 24 till November 2, 2008.

Following are links to films on YouTube of films by me. Ma Guo Guo (a Chinese female Jew's harper of the Di tribe) who is a virtuoso of the Chinese Kou Xian 3 and 5 tongue Jew's harps This film was made in Paris in July 2008:

Ma Guo Guo plays the Jew's Harp

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=zdo6moCZeSs>

Ma Guo Guo plays the Chinese Jew's Harp Kou Xian

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=gsv2zvVoeWs>

MA GUO GUO plays the Chinese Jew's Harp Kou Xian



Sylvain Trias was filmed when he came to visit me at the Musée de l'Homme (last summer):

Sylvain Trias plays the Rajasthani Jew's Harp Morchang

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=b4HGLldh9Zc>

SYLVAIN TRIAS plays the Rajasthani Jew's Harp MORCHANG



Sylvain Trias plays the Norwegian Jew's Harp Munnharpa

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=9hLRNeMLafU>

I then filmed my student playing with me a week ago to show how someone who learnt the Jew's harp with me and are able to perform with me . I also show some videos with my playing.

Tran Quang Hai & Leif Costantini play the Jew's harp <http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=tJNZtqO8YH0>

(right)  
 Snapshots from  
 YouTube



Also see:

Tran Quang Hai plays a Vietnamese 3 tongue Jew's harp <http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=pIawLqX8ojQ>

Tran Quang Hai plays 2 Vietnamese tunes with Jew's Harp <http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=CGNm8T2Zf4k>



Tran Quang Hai plays the Viet baby Dàn môi Jew's harp <http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=8bBsSIkEieQ>

Tran Quang Hai plays a new type of Vietnamese Jew's harp

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=DR9qMXZPMxMBE>



Tran Quang Hai sings overtones, plays spoons & Jew's harp <http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1LbHlvyCyY>

(far right)  
 Fire show  
 Photograph courtesy  
 Sven Otto

**“We are family...”**

From November 7th till 9th the Second **Ancient Trance Jew's Harp Festival** in Leipzig (Germany) welcomed more than 700 passionate Jew's harp friends, manufacturers, musicians, and lots of curious people from all over the world to listen to the sounds of our most favorite musical instrument.

Driven by pleasant anticipation the organizers *Clemens Voigt* and *Sven Otto* opened the festival on Friday afternoon almost on time and invited all guests to three days and nights of lively sessions, conversation and exchange. Right after the opening the festival's atmospheric prelude took place at the backyard of the festival building. The *Lichtgestalten* (light guises) from Leipzig performed a magical and intense juggling fire show accompanied by a medley of the *Little Tongue Vibration Orchestra (D)*. They deserved the first applause of this evening.



Back in the warm and atmospherically illuminated festival hall *Iwan Schumacher's (CH)* film *Triumpi* invited us to a musical journey with *Anton Bruhin (CH)* to Siberia and Japan. After a short break the “grandmaster” himself inaugurated the stage with the festival's first live music. Again, *Anton* successfully fascinated the audience with his wicked musical gadgetry, his own compositions and his skillful interpretation of traditional songs.

(far right)  
 Anton Bruhin  
 Photograph courtesy  
 Sven Otto



Finally, here are a few clips on Jew's harp performed by Slim Defalla, a student of the Sorbonne University, Paris who has prepared his Master degree with a dissertation on the Jew's harp. He has made by himself a Jew's harp in bamboo. He made the phone card Jew's harp and plays Jew's harp in South Indian and Rajasthani styles .

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=iT2-7WfJjQA>



<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=0eT1pQkps6U>  
<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=zBM7cFISM50>  
<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=m65O5tvFu7s>

(below)  
 “...crowd the dance floor...”  
 Photograph courtesy  
 Sven Otto



With their impulsive Jew's harp/didgeridoo/human beatbox music it took *Raphaël Coz*, *Tikaille* and *Flo* it took less than ten minutes to crowd the dance floor with the thrilled public. Together with other instruments like the Persian flute ney or the harmonica also the more calm compositions emerged as a harmonic delight. After two hours of concert, many encores and a heady applause *Mike Hentz (D/USA/CH)* took over the stage to celebrate the Open Stage. By the way, many thanks to *Claudio* from Roma – what a surprising performance!

Cheers, Tran Quang Hai

Saturday started early with a rich breakfast we had together with the artists and the volunteers in the festival hall. In the daytime there were a handful of workshops, the Jew's harp market and some intensive conversations. Once in a while we enjoyed the spontaneous session in- and outdoors.

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In the pole position on Saturday *Steev Kindwald (USA)* invited us to listen with open ears and hearts his virtuoso performance on various Jew's harps and the Indian double flute. Like our French friends on Friday night, *Airtist (HU/D)* put the crowd moving – and the house quaking. Due to so many glowing dancers during their 90 minutes program the humidity in the hall reached 100% and the oxygen content sank and sank and sank...

(right)  
Steve Kindwald  
Photograph courtesy  
Sven Otto



So, we have been thankful for the 30 minutes break to take a deep breath before the *Little Tongue Vibration Orchestra (D)* entered the stage with their considerable instruments collection. The new formation around *Clemens* and *Sven* impressed particularly with their warm hearted music and their diversified program made of fast danceable tunes, hovering atmospheric sound shapes and improvised songs. Vocalist *Misa* even performed with her little son on her back, who did not want to be without mama. Family life on stage! After about two hours program and two encores it was again *Mike Hentz*' turn to conduct the Open Stage, which he developed artfully into a rousing interplay of all musicians – again a gorgeous aural and dance pleasure.

The last day started with a not too late breakfast, which was finished when about 150 kids entered the festival hall to watch and listen this Sunday's real jew's harp fairy tale puppet theater play: *Von der Königin, die keine Pfeffernüsse backen, und dem König, der nicht das Brummeisen spielen konnte (About the queen who wasn't able to bake spice nuts and the king who couldn't play the jaw harp)*. *Christiane* from *Puppen etc. (D)* from Berlin made this puppet theater adaption and *Sven* composed its music.

(right)  
Puppet Theatre  
Photograph courtesy  
Sven Otto



(far right)  
Recording  
(below)  
Aron Szilagyi  
Photographs courtesy  
Aron Szilagyi



Sunday afternoon was Jew's harp market and workshop time. In the early evening *Hanquito (D)* asked the audience to sit down and listen peacefully to his magically playful melodies on his Hangs. After that we were happy to welcome multi instrumentalist *Nadishana (RUS)* on stage, who – supported by *Armin Metz (D)* at the bass and *Erik Manouz Wisniewski (D)* at the percussives/drums – carried us away for an acoustic journey to "Ancient Kuzhebar". Accompanied by his

stories, these wonderful instruments made this concert another gorgeous aural and visual meal.

Fortunately, *Mike Hentz* was not able to bring the Open Stage to a wonderful end – who wanted to stop, who wanted to go home? Nobody! So it was party until the early morning, but unfortunately without me. My daughter became ill and I had to go to the hospital. Therefore I could join the last part of the festival only in my mind, thinking about a wonderful time we spent together with lovely people from all over the world.

We received a lot of feedback from many people. Their conclusion was always that they experienced a festival in such a deeply amicable atmosphere, which is hard to find elsewhere. We want to say Thank You to our 40 volunteers, without their help this festival would not have had such a pleasant environment and warm hearted mood, the artists, whose performances formed the enchanting core of our festival, and of course the many guests who enriched our event with their life force. We were glad to see many "old faces" and we were happy to meet new friends who have been at the Ancient Trance festival for the first time, too. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Thanks to a surpassing media interest with a lot of articles in the newspapers and culture magazines in this year, we hope we were able to make a small contribution to our most favorite instrument. We are looking forward to the next (international) **Ancient Trance Jew's Harp Festival** in Leipzig.

Photos and video clips will be published (hopefully) soon on [www.ancient-trance.de](http://www.ancient-trance.de)

Sven Otto

## Hungary

**1. Aron Szilagyi**, Jew's harp player was nominated to the Primadij (Prima Prize) in the category of music. The jury chose only one nominee for each of the ten categories. Aron won the special prize for his unique approach to a traditional instrument and passing on his knowledge. This prize has been founded by the National Association of Entrepreneurs to support individuals who gained outstanding cultural, sport or science achievements. The nomination for this prize has brought great publicity for the Jew's harp as an instrument and for Aron as the board member of the IJHS and the organizer of the next IJHF. There were numerous articles in different newspapers, radio programmes and TV shows about him and the instrument. He had the chance to meet the possible sponsors of the future Jew's harp festivals in Hungary. Let's hope that despite the financial crisis these culturally sensitive Entrepreneurs will remain open and will sponsor the next IJHF.





(right)  
Recording  
Photographs courtesy  
Aron Szilagyi



(far right)



(right)  
Pictures of  
Distefano's  
Marranzanu,  
courtesy of  
Luca Recupero

2. The world music band, **Navrang** are working on their new album -yet untitled, but already stuffed with loads of Jew's harp- coming out in January 2009. The band spent around 2 months in studio with a true "transatlantic" workflow. The composer and music brain of the band is Barnabas Szilagyi who lives in New York. He sent over his ideas and sketches to the band in Hungary. They worked out, rehearsed and discussed the pieces, then made rough recording that were sent back to NY to a kind of "approval". It was very interesting to practice Jew's harp parts via Skype. Thank God to the broadband internet connection the Szilagyi brothers could easily rehearse their duet without any latency. The recording session was also transmitted via Skype, so there were six 3D and one 2D musicians in the studio. The outcome will be a really groovy world-music album contributed by great players of Jew's harps -of course, bulgarian and moldvan kavals, violin, viola, citera, tapan, tabla, bhol, klarinet, overtone flutes, MC and electronics.

(far right)  
On stage at the  
NKK festival  
Photograph courtesy  
of Nihon Koukin  
Kyoukai



(above)  
'Dorombon' cover  
courtesy Aron Szilagyi

3. "**DOROMB** - oktatókönyv kezdőknek és haladóknak" (for those whose Hungarian is a bit weak: "JEW'S HARP - tutorial book for beginners and advanced players") This ca. 70 pages book is coming out under Aural Records, written by Aron Szilagyi in January 2009. The English version is expected in mid March 2009. The publication will lead trough the player from the very basics to the most advanced playing techniques with loads of illustration and a sound bank with all the exercises. The book also focuses on the background knowledge, so there are more chapters on the history and the physics of the Jew's harp.

(below)  
At the NKK festival  
Photograph courtesy  
of Nihon Koukin  
Kyoukai

4. **AIRTIST**, the Jew's harp-didgeridoo-human beatbox trio, after playing and giving workshops all over in Europe in the summer is heading down to the Southern hemisphere. The band will give four concerts in Australia and three performances in New Zealand in February 2009. Along with the concerts, Aron Szilagyi will spread the Jew's harp word and give six workshops on the the East-Coast. The actual dates and venues will be uploaded to the band's website: [www.airtist-music.com](http://www.airtist-music.com). After returning you'll be filled in how it went and if Aussies got infected by the JH virus.



## Italy / Sicily



## Japan



On October the 12th and 13th the 1st International Koukin (Jew's Harp) Festival in Tokyo "Moon" successfully took place in Shibuya, one of the central district of the metropolis. This incredible (and rather crazy) event was organized by Nihon Koukin Kyoukai (Japan Jew's Harp Association) and Café Enban (Disc / Flying Saucer) where NKK's monthly meeting is held. Under the bright harvest moon, 30 individuals and groups (about 80 musicians in total) and 10 makers had their performances and presentations simultaneously on two stages of 5th and 6th floors of a space called O-nest. Most of the performers came from different parts of Japan, including Kalyiman (temir-komuz and komuz player form Kyrgyz, studying in Japan), Samm Bennett (percussionist from the U.S., living in Japan), Inara



(above)  
Newspaper cutting and  
Sushil Gautam with  
his beautiful girlfriend  
Photograph courtesy  
of Franz Kumpl



Moreover, the audience was enchanted by the mystical khomus playing and natural sound imitations by the female trio 'Ayarkhaan' from the Sakha Republic,



(above right)  
Mukkuri makers  
Photograph courtesy  
of Nihon Koukin  
Kyoukai  
(right)  
Ayarkhaan  
Photograph courtesy  
of Nihon Koukin  
Kyoukai

directed by Albina Degtyareva and danced to the ancient but hypermodern rhythms (which vibration came to Mt. Fuji from Etna through lava) of the Ipercussonici, Luca Recuperò's band from Sicily.



(right)  
Ipercussonici  
Photograph courtesy  
of Nihon Koukin  
Kyoukai

(far right)  
Snapshots from  
YouTube

More academic regional event is planned on the 27th and 28th of March 2009, cooperated with Tokyo College of Music.

Leo Tadagawa

(below & right)  
Mukkuri by Hare  
Daisuke  
Photographs courtesy  
of Hare Daisuke

Winter came to Hokkaido where I lived. It is cold in Hokkaido every day. It is cold in outdoor, and I do not want to go out. Therefore, I made mukkuri in the house. When I make mukkuri, I devise it.



The tube of rubber applied to the string was installed so that the finger should not ache. The back leather is pasted to the other side of mukkuri. It is because of making easily to have.

best regards, Hare Daisuke

## Nepal

We are extremely sorry for this year because of no activities. However I continue playing Murchunga in many Nepalese songs at recordings. I had also played Nepalese Murchunga in the event in Hungary but I had to play Sarangi (like violine ) at the stage last August.

For the next year 2009, I will hopefully be able to find time to continue some events for the public. I was very happy with the visit of Franz Kumpl to Kathmandu in November. We recorded his very important interview and Murchunga music. It was a good lesson for me and my friends. I am also writing and translating his interview for a magazine named Music Diary.

I am still interested to be a registered member of the IJHS in 2009.

Attached is an article in Nepalese daily newspaper named Kantipur, the most popular one in Nepal. Sorry all is in Nepalese language. Franz has done a great interview to promote Murchunga in Nepal. I thank him so much.

Sushil Gautam  
JHFN

## The Netherlands

I think you will be interested in the following found on YouTube

Film about the making of an South-Indian `morsing`  
PART 1

<http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=ni98kUeHUuM>

PART 2

<http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=cPkigVXcYIU>

morchang making (part 2)



Film about the making of a Nepalese `Morchanga`  
PART 1

<http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=mvPKTLZ7lqA>

PART 2

[http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=fAIC3B\\_bWi8](http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=fAIC3B_bWi8)

For your memory:

Jew's harp making by a monk from Laos:

[http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=GQ1P8c\\_9YKk](http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=GQ1P8c_9YKk)

craftymonks Laos





Making of a gugu (= wooden Jew's harp) among the Naxi-people in China (what a nasty dog!)

<http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=c8GL98UGIxQ>

this one belongs also to the Naxi-people

<http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=S3p3xMuY-2k>

Making a vargan or a khomus (Russian Jew's harp):

<http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=CW3Q07TjzF3o>

Zoltán Szilágyi is making an "A" Black Fire Doromb (Hungary):

<http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=rwyb2OUGImw>

Beauty and Specialism on Jew's Harp (Ncas)

played in its Authentic and Aboriginal Background

Very rare and in 5 parts

1. <http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=yq-cXHhUgCM>

2. <http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=8UAqKfOgjt>

3. <http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=zp6UMzOJTuk>

Ncas - 3/5



(right & far right)  
Snapshots from  
YouTube

4. <http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=jGX1o2j4GUK>

5. <http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=BzocBYYcrRE>

I hope you like it

Greetings  
Phons Bakx

Did you know that the NED3, our third national TV-channel has a lot of Jew's harp samples in the programme leaders? I tried to contact the player, but have been unsuccessful so far.

Danibal

## Norway

**Norsk Munnharpeforum celebrated its ten-year-anniversary in Oslo on 12-14 September.**

Usually the annual festivals of Norsk Munnharpeforum are organised in different places in Southern Norway, but this year we wanted to celebrate ourselves by placing the jubilee festival in the capital.

There was a much higher public profile this year, with concerts that presented the old and the new, the national and the international. We had traditional Norwegian folk music on the munnharpe, with dancers in local costumes, and experimental munnharpe with electronics and advanced guitar playing. The audiences saw and heard fantastic music examples from China, Siberia, India, France, Austria, The British Isles etc, etc. But there were also workshops, catering for the needs of the beginners of munnharpe, and some really challenging moments for advanced players. There were well attended lectures, and interviews with people who researched the history of the Norwegian Jew's Harp in the 1960s. Thrown in was also a three course dinner, heavily sponsored by the Forum. Of course there was informal jamming and friendly discussions, always so important when you come to our festivals.

Bernhard Folkestad,

Honorary Secretary of Norsk Munnharpeforum

PS: 10 new people joined the Forum!



"I'd sooner play in front of 1,000 people I don't know..."  
Michael Wright plays solo at the Company Christmas concert.

Photograph by  
Cathy Eeles

## Spain

A few Galician links

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkmY3CuWxwc&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciI2cwz4ttE&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daOWtgZL75A&feature=related>

<http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=F2X1BigrKMw&feature=PlayList&p=B45FA136A5571837&index=90>

A Trompa na Fonsagrada



Also, the most fabulous gaitero (not a Jew's harp, but we're not obsessed - or are we?):

<http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=cinh-wizPTw&feature=related>

<http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=XhykjiAlkIs&feature=related>

[http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=aJ\\_Ud1YTHLo&feature=related](http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=aJ_Ud1YTHLo&feature=related)

Sorry, they all speak the local lingo, but the music's great.

John Wright

## UK

It's been a relatively quiet summer in the UK. There has been the odd concert or performance from various members of the Association, including a couple of television appearances by Peter Hope-Evans – better known as a member of Medicine Head and Pete Townsends percussionist. I gave a workshop and talk at Whitby Folk Week and Lucy Wright has been developing her particular interest in the documenting players on film, which I'm certainly hoping will be at our next Gathering. There was a possibility of IoNAJHA running the next one at the 2009 Whitby Folk Week, but, due to financial difficulties, this is now very doubtful. However, The Bate Collection, here in Oxford, and where we held the first conference and concert, have said they are willing to have us at their facility again and I am looking to run it possibly during the summer or if not, later in the year. More news when I have it. The Wrights recording rather ground to a halt, but we're looking to pick it up again in the New Year. Finally, I'm close to getting the IoNAJHA website up and running early in the New Year. It will be linked to my [www.jewsharper.info](http://www.jewsharper.info) site, so look out for that.

Michael Wright

(far right)  
A Man Played Jaw  
Harp through a  
Chinese Megaphone at  
a Trailhead  
Courtesy of Harm  
Linsen

**USA**

At the bottom is a link to a YouTube post of a NAJHF 2008 slide show.

I've also embedded it in the festfoto page at:  
<http://www.jewsharpguild.org/fotoindx.html>

I've been trying to get folks to send me more on the past fest with very little input. I want to get our newsletter done now! but can't quite fill it out yet. Any festival news from your side of the Atlantic?

Hi, Here is a link to a slide show that I made from photos of the Festival in Bay City 2008 Enjoy and feel free to post.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdbQA9h0TPw>



All the best,

Mark D Poss

**Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2008**

[http://lineout.thestranger.com/2008/09/a\\_man\\_played\\_jaw\\_harp\\_through\\_a\\_chinese](http://lineout.thestranger.com/2008/09/a_man_played_jaw_harp_through_a_chinese)

News: A Man Played Jaw Harp through a Chinese Megaphone at a Trailhead  
posted by Trent Moorman



The Dexter Street Stompers Jug Band played a **Nature Consortium work party at a West Seattle trailhead** this past Saturday. It was raining. Five people were working. The band performed under a blue tent. The Goodyear Blimp was not hovering above. The workers dug, raked, clipped, and bagged to the jug band's jangling musical bounty.

As jug bands and work parties go, these workers were absolutely frikking rocked. The dirt and wet leaves were rocked as well. Band leader Levi Fuller attempted a split and **said a cuss word** because his groin had not been properly stretched for a split. It was during the song "Baby Jump". Fuller apologized, then went back into the song. One of the workers got a blister on their left hand at the base of the thumb. She said a cuss word and apologized as well. The Dexter Street jug player and washboard player are both in a band called **Beaver Deceivers** that has done some things with the consortium before. Dexter Street played the Arts in Nature Festival a few weeks ago and soon after, the trailhead work party show was set up. A paying gig. It was muddy and the band played for a full hour. One highlight was their rendition of Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love". The band played their first two songs again at the end to pad the set.



Jaw harpist Casey Coulombe played his jaw harp through a Chinese megaphone attached to a mic stand for amplification. He lit into solos like **a blowtorch artist carving up sheet metal** into the face of Jimi Hendrix at his most psychedelic. Casey did not say any cuss words the entire outing.  
(Pictures: Alyssa Herbert)

[www.schluetter-trump.de](http://www.schluetter-trump.de)      jawsharps for beginners and professional



Solo Jaws-harps  
Starter-sets  
Profi-sets  
30 different keys



Advertisement



# PictureGallery

Photographs from the Norsk  
Munnharpeforum ten-year-anniversary  
in Oslo on 12-14 September 2008  
*Courtesy of Bernhard Folkestad,*



Photographs from the Second 'Ancient Trance Jew's Harp Festival' in Leipzig, 7th -9th November 2008, Courtesy of Sven Otto





Echo of the Past  
Ayarkhaan



Created in 2002, Ayarkhaan is three women: Albina Degtyareva, Yuliyana Krivoschapkina, and Olga Podluzhnaya. Together they have captivated audiences world-wide and won many awards with their blend of traditional singing and 'khomus' jaw harp playing. A popularity surely aided by their amazing costumes and exotic appeal.

This latest CD by the Yakutian trio is an impressive 70 page hard-backed 'book', albeit CD case size. Text in three languages; Yakut, Russian and English gives background information on the band, their home region, iron working and khomus making, and traditional singing. All accompanied by many 'tour' and concert photos.

The album itself is a collection of 15 tracks that amply showcase the trios talents : from close-harmony traditional singing (that reminded me of the female choral groups of Bulgaria). 'Throat' singing – that is the technique of producing notes and harmonics not normally created in conventional singing (most known from the singers of the Mongolian Steppe and Altai / Tuva), used here by the trio to produce low rumbling vocal chants and shimmering high harmonies. And last, but not least, their abilities with the Yakutian khomus – from wonderfully delicate melodic solos to what I can only describe as full-on jaw-harp 'rock'!

Those listeners not familiar with Ayarkhaan's sound, or indeed the genre of traditional Central Asian singing, shamanic chants, animal impressions, etc. may be a more than a little surprised by some of the sounds and melodies they will encounter but all in all a very rewarding and startling collection. Well recorded and produced – heartily recommended.

Jonathan Cope.

----oOo----

Gerd Conrad also sends information on two players worth looking out for, German and Claudia Khatylaevs from Yakutia. Gerd recommends their two CDs:

"The Sacred Thread of creations"  
"The blessings songs of nature"

Editor

The Underground Sessions 1, 2 & 3  
Jew's harp Trio Aubergine



Trio Aubergine are Phons Bakx, Izz van Elk and Janus Filius, innovative Jew's harp musicians from the Delta Region, Zeeland, in the Netherlands. Their latest project, 'The Underground Sessions' is a four part anthology inspired by the cycle of the seasons, beginning with Spring, Summer and Autumn, and the 4th CD, 'Winter' due for release later this month.

The sleeve notes offer the following disclaimer, "The three players apologise that they play in a style that is hard to compare to any other," but such experimental approaches have not produced a sound that is difficult to appreciate. Of many of the CDs I have shared with my friends, this series has been particularly popular, described as "meditative" and "chilled out." These are records with a unique sound and a warm, primal resonance.

Trio Aubergine's compositions can perhaps best be described as explorations of the vast possibilities offered by the Jew's harp, revealing so many nuances of this versatile instrument. It is also an exercise in harmony, with three players, so in tune with one another, while providing fascinating independent performances.

One of my highlights from CD 1, 'Spring' has to be the 'John Wright Overture', not just for the sentiment but also because it is a great melodic piece which really does evoke the playing style of its namesake.

Lucy Wright

----oOo----

After months of struggle, I finally have my Malaram CD released!!!! I have updated my blog with it: <http://trias.over-blog.fr/article-25635854.html> Any sales from that CD will go to the artist and his family. The only thing I want is for him to come in Europe or USA and play. This CD release is incredible for him, but travelling abroad and play will be the dream of his life as you can imagine. John Wright listened to the CD last month in Oslo festival and said that we really have to make him come and play, that it's a gift for Jew's harp world! I would also be interested in discussing how we might get him to one of the established festivals. Anyone interested, please contact me on [trias.sylvain@gmail.com](mailto:trias.sylvain@gmail.com). (CD review in the next issue. Ed.)

Sylvain Trias

## WebWise

We were hoping to announce a simple website URL, but there is a delay while we sort out a few things, but you can still access the site on <http://www.widgetwell.com/internationaljewsharpsociety> Danibal writes that he has heard rumours that a new Wii-game where you can control instruments has a Jew's harp featured. I've checked with the makers and this is true, though Danibal suspects that it may be very silly.

(far right)  
Barack Obama gives opening speech for the Presidential campaign in Iowa in the grounds of Mount Pleasant  
*Photo from magazine article and..*  
Deirdre Morgan & Michael Wright recreate scene with added 'trump' twist  
*Photo by Lois Crane*

## AndFinally...

### Letters to the editor

In the feature article of last newsletter Franz asked us to think about a format for the coming editor/editor's staff of the journal. I think this can very well be a regular editor. This editor can appoint his own staff per edition of the journal. I imagine this as follows, the editor or maybe the board of the society thinks of a theme for the journal and the editor searches and invites one or two persons with the essential knowledge on that theme to assist him. (for example music in Sakha or Siberia (Shishigin/Tadagawa) or patents (patentholders) or festivals (Recupero/the Dan Moi team/others that organised an event) or historical (Wright/Pignocci/Montagu))

Then one can think of items of ongoing concern that will return every journal. Maybe the editor can appoint and delegate those items to one person. This can be a permanent member of the editor staff. I think a permanent member is good for continuity of this section.

For the rest everything is dependent on what people send to the editor to be published which means you don't need a large staff. The subjects of these articles will also largely dictate the next issues theme.

Harm Linsen

----oOo----

### Jews-harp Lake USGS Cottonport Quad, Louisiana, Topographic Map

Jews-harp Lake is a Lake in the state of Louisiana (county of Avoyelles), located at latitude - longitude coordinates (also known as lat-long or GPS coordinates) of N 30.97797 and W -92.12374. Jews-harp Lake is shown in the centre of the topographic (topo) map, which is sourced from the United States Geographical Survey map USGS Cottonport quad. The nearest major town is Evergreen, LA.

Harm Linsen

(right)  
The Jews-harp Lake  
*Courtesy of Harm Linsen*



## The Obama – Jew's Harp Connection

Question: What's the connection between President-elect Obama and the Jew's harp?

*Answer: Mount Pleasant*

When President-elect Obama began his Presidential campaign in the State of Iowa, he chose to give his first speech in the garden of our Honorary President, Frederick Crane. While this historic occasion took place outside, the historic collection indoors...

Michael Wright



## NoticeBoard

### Deadlines!

#### Newsletter 9

Copy, images – including titles and credits – by Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009. 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 early summer.

**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@jewsharper.info](mailto:michael@jewsharper.info) or write me a letter to:

Michael Wright

The Editor

IJHS Newsletter

77 Beech Road

Wheatley

Oxon OX33 1UD, UK





The Norwegian Jew's Harp Forum wishes all members and "munharpe" enthusiasts a Merry Christmas and all the best for the year to come! Photo by Einar Turtum

## 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:

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