

Newsletter of the International Jew's Harp Society

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December 2006

Issue 4





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

Editor: Michael Wright, translations by Franz Kuml & Gloria Custance; design & layout by Michael Wright ©IJHS2006

Cover photograph by Leo Tadagawa.

Michael Wright:

Taught by brother John Wright in the late 1960's, along with younger brother David, Michael supported John on 3 tracks on *The Lark in the Clear Air* recorded in 1974. Work and family pressures meant giving up for nearly 20 years, but, encouraged by John, began playing again in 1992, Michael now divides his time between playing the Jew's harp, researching its history in the UK & Ireland, and giving talks and workshops at festivals. See www.jewsharper.info

(Available in January 2007)



Michael Wright
Photograph by
Debbie Wright.

Editorial

Welcome to the first of the Newsletters I am putting together for the foreseeable future. Before going any further, my personal thanks to Leo Tadagawa for setting these up in the first place – taking over is considerably easier once the initial work has been done.

This newsletter is your opportunity to share your ideas and what's going on in your area with the rest of the members. In this issue I am delighted to introduce amongst other things, a comments section and photo gallery. John Wright's piece on valorising minority communities has been most opportune, and you will notice a few items that quite coincidentally support his views – Leo Tadagawa's efforts to set up a festival in Japan and José Luis Pignocchi's news from Argentina, for instance.

The intention at the moment is that the newsletter will be published at the end of April and October every year, and it differs from the Journal in that it will only provide snippets of information (i.e. news) and ideas. I would prefer small amounts of information rather than huge essays – 'little and often', is the motto – so don't feel obliged to write pages, and keep items short and to the point – the Journal is for bigger discussions. I need to receive your contributions by the end of March and September of each year; imagery is encouraged to supplement text, though not essential, but please send captions and the name of the photographer, if known – remember, however, the bus will always leave on time, even if there are no passengers on board!

As a general principle, I will publish as sent to me and only suggest alterations if specifically asked to do so – this is your voice, not mine, after all.

The newsletter is now divided into six sections:

BoardMatters keeps you informed on decisions made on your behalf by the elected board.

FeatureComment is a section featuring a thought provoking idea or view, which might be an initial notion that could eventually develop into an article for the Journal. To kick things off I've asked John Wright to expand on comments he made at the AGM at Amsterdam.

RegionalNews will be as large or small as the material sent to me. I would like around 150-200 words (not too onerous), longer if you have something really important to say.

The PictureGallery is an opportunity for artists amongst you to show your favourite image (photo, drawing, etc.) – plus a few novelties!

AndFinally... is a catch-all area, including, letters to the editor, or anything else sent that is not covered in the above.

If you have an impending product you want to tell us about, use the NoticeBoard.

Depending upon what you send, this format may change or evolve.

And finally... from me. Please ensure that you let me know if your address changes – postal and email. 10% of those emails on record bounced the first time I used them, which means you could miss the ensuing issues and any other information you need to be aware of.

My thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition. Keep in touch. If YOU do not send me something, I cannot publish!

Michael Wright, Editor



Franz Kumpl

Changes to the board
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old Board who stepped
down:

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BoardMatters

From the President:

Dear friends,

The 5th IJHF in Amsterdam from 28-30 July was a real success. The organisers from Het Muziekgebouw provided with a great countdown and during the three days of the festival-congress the whole professional machinery was working for “us”.

In my opinion, the main points and lessons learned are:

- There exists a powerful young generation of Jew’s harp players, who know to an astonishing degree the various national and ethnic styles and are representing a kind of technically global yet emotionally personal style of playing; this applies to Silvain Vartan (France), Nguyen Duc Minh (Vietnam), Daniel Hentschel (Netherlands), Wolf Jansch (Austria), Kim Borisov and Yana Krivoshapkina (Yakutia), Aron Szilagyi (Hungary), Luca Recupero (Italy), Li Wang (China), and others.
- It seems that during each festival a certain ethnic Jew’s harp has its “coming out” and fascinates the auditory with its unique possibilities. During the 3rd festival, the star among the Jew’s harps was the Yakutian “Khomus”, during the 4th the Norwegian “Munnharpe” was discovered, and in Amsterdam the Chinese “Kou Xiang” was the people’s darling.
- The concerts on the Summer Stage proved once more the importance of improvisation and session playing. I tend to think that the Jew’s harp is at its best when the song concepts are rather open or when it spontaneously follows emotions and ideas of the player, be it solo or in encounters with other instruments.
- Recommendations for the next festival include: invite more Jew’s harp makers, provide with cultural program for the participants, consecutive instead of parallel events, announcements in the main languages.

New board

I was convinced that we have to take a maximum of young people on board, if we want to have thriving IJHS and guarantee festivals which find the difficult synthesis between the best of the known oldies who represent the traditions and of the young rebels with unexpected approaches. I want to thank our grandsigneurs from the board for their understanding and for making place for young colleagues. For two periods they were board members and supported the IJHS whenever needed. I would especially like to thank Leo Tadagawa who was General Secretary during the last period. At the board meeting we decided to split this job into two:

Firstly the General Secretary who is responsible for putting together and distributing the Newsletter, keeping track and updating of the membership list and writing the minutes in the board meetings; and secondly the treasurer who is responsible for and control over all financial issues, collecting and safeguard of the annual dues, and for payment of any expenses (Newsletter, etc), after consultation with General Secretary and President. Philippe Dallais was appointed as treasurer, because we expect him to be as trustworthy as a Swiss bank. Leo Tadagawa was confirmed as General Secretary, but when it became obvious that Leo, because of his numerous duties and tasks will not be able to be an active GenSec, Leo asked to be substituted. In consultation with Leo and Fred Crane, Michael Wright from Great Britain was asked to take up this job, and after some considerations he answered: “I’m very honoured to have been asked to contribute to the Society on such an important part of its promotion and organisation, and will do what I can to make the role successful.” Thank you, Michael!

Next Congress

Regarding the location for the 6th IJHF, we examined three options: Sicily, Hungary and Japan. The presentations of our colleagues revealed the following:

- Luca Recupero from Sicily is very enthusiastic about organising an IJHF, but had to admit that for a festival in about 3 years he could not ensure the necessary funding.
- Aron Szilagyi from Hungary pointed out the active support of local administration in Kecskemet and was able to provide a realistic scenario for an IJHF in 2010, which is only 4 years from now.
- Leo Tadagawa from Japan is sure that an IJHF in principle was possible to be organised in Hokkaido, where our Mukkuri-playing Ainu friends live. During the board meeting, Leo was not very positive about implementing this long-awaited Japanese IJHF within a reasonable time period.

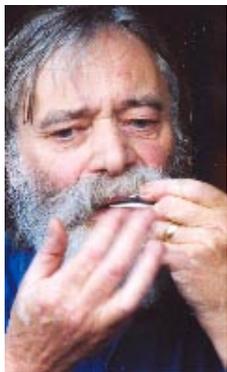
Therefore it was decided to have the 6th IJHF in Hungary.

However, in October Leo was in Hokkaido where the Ainu live and was convinced that there are very enthusiastic people wanting to organise an IJHF within 2-3 years. After consultation with Fred Crane, Michael Wright and Aron Szilagyi, it was decided that Leo should be given until end of 2006 to check the probability of a Japanese festival more thoroughly. Based on this information, we – the whole board – will make a decision. The option is, therefore, to have the 6th IJHF in 2008 in Japan and the 7th in 2010 in Hungary and the 8th in Yakutia. I think this is good news with which I want to end my letter.

Boing
Franz
franz.kumpl@aon.at

John Wright

Pretty much self-taught, John was influenced by the playing of Angus Lawrie of Oban, Scotland. He is a player of international repute, a lay organologist and co-author of the seminal work *Les Guimbardes*, for the Musée de l'Homme, published in 1978. John recorded *The Lark in the Clear Air* in 1974, still available, and has contributed to CD's periodically since then.



John Wright
Photograph from the
collection of the editor,

FeatureComment

Variety – the 'spice of life'

At the General Meeting during the Amsterdam Congress last June there was some particularly stimulating debate, especially when it came to taking the decision on the next venue.

One thing that had been trotting through my mind since Rauland was the importance of the Jew's harp Congress in valorising minority communities, especially aboriginal ones (aboriginal in its widest sense of people who have been living in a given country for the longest time). Notably at Rauland were two groups of Ainus from Hokkaido plus people representing the various Taiwan Aboriginal groups. That's why I found myself pushing for Taiwan or Hokkaido as the next venue but it was soon brought home to me that there would be problems of funding - because we are dealing not so much with inter-national relations (and that's where the money is, if any) but inter-community ones. These communities most often form around a non-official language or dialect and have the unfortunate habit of frequently straddling one or more national frontiers.

Franz, ever practical, spoke of not confusing organisation of the international congress with more localised events, stressing the point that the members an international body like ours by definition of are far-flung making co-ordination difficult, which means that when we do manage to get together we have to make rapid pragmatic decisions on the next international congress taking the most feasible option. He did however think that the society could support more local initiatives (This is how I remember it: if I am misrepresenting you in any way, Franz, please say so).

But of course, this begs the question - how?

Especially as the sands of time are running out because in many places, distinctive traditions of making and playing Jew's harps are in a fragile state. This is particularly true as regards Jew's harp making traditions. Let me give a concrete example - Galicia: I was present at a Jew's harp (*trompa* or *birimbao*) festival organised at Lugo a few years ago by Luciano Perez (who was present at Rauland as an observer). Several local makers were present at Lugo including two men, both in their Eighties. They were the real tradition-bearers: one was a blacksmith who forged the instrument and put it together, only advancing the work to a crucial point, where his colleague, the "adjuster" took over to fine-tune the instrument. The latter, as might be expected, was also a good player and there was a virtuoso player also present at the festival, a little younger than the other two. It was obvious that the very distinctive configuration of the local *trompa* coincided with a very special way of playing. None

(Far right)
Ainus player
Photograph by
Leo Tadagawa.

of these tradition bearers were young men and the makers were very jealous of their knowledge - especially the adjuster who hid in corners whilst he filed and lined up things. There are younger generations involved in Galicia, makers doing fine work - but will they have the wherewithal to continue that distinctive tradition of both making and playing ?

What can our Society do to help in valorising and encouraging plurality of styles in making and playing? - especially as one less positive outcome of cross-fertilisation may be a natural tendency, however slight for the moment, towards uniformity of style. This was to some extent countered at Amsterdam and at the Norwegian festivals I have attended by diversity of activities with several things going on at the same time during the day and in this we are gradually getting closer to the folk festival formula (In the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, this is the only formula with no formal concerts as such). Personally I welcome this tendency because it happens to work very well. One of the most important aspects of these festivals is the public "workshop" with a designated presenter responsible for making sure that things run smoothly. It is not the same as a master-class or lecture (in outdoor festivals, there can be a good half-dozen stages on the go at the same time): The workshops can perhaps be perceived as more superficial, but often they go much further in bringing out the musicians' art in a very flexible informal public presentation of an invited group, an individual artist or a group of individuals brought together through some specific affinity. The formula can be quite simple: for instance everyone likes to tell his life story or how he learnt to play, you can concentrate on one type of instrument as represented in a number of cultures, the Jew's harp as voice disguiser, as a rhythm instrument... The overall result is that individual performers are more occupied throughout the festival and encouraged to do things outside of the framework of the formal concerts - the important thing is that each has his or her say. I have taken part in many of these workshops both as performer and presenter and I can say that they are often joyful occasions and everybody comes away knowing they have done something worthwhile.

Of course in the United States there were little or no language problems for the audience (except for my Leicester accent), and for our international organisation that may sometimes complicate things - but where there's a will there's a way.

John Wright



RegionalNews

This section is totally reliant on what you send me. If your country or region is not included, write something!

Items will be shown in alphabetical order according to country.

Argentina

The First Trump

One of the best trump collections in the world is in the "Musée de l'Homme" in Paris. There we can find trumps from many countries, but up to last year there was not a single one in the museum from Argentina. So on April 28 2005 we presented one to Rosalía Martínez, Directrice Laboratoire d'ethnomusicologie, UMR 7173, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, for their Museum.

This trump was made by "Pilancho" Gonzalez, of the "Pilaga" people, who lives in the little town of "Las Lomitas", Formosa province, Argentine.

Some months after, during an annual meeting of Indigenous Cultures at the province, we gave Gonzalez a certificate from France. It was a very moving moment that finished with "Pilancho" playing one of his instruments and showing the paper that had been given.

This is particularly important for the indigenous culture, who were discriminated against for a long, long time in a country that is the most European of Latin America

José Luis Pignocchi



'Pilancho' Gonzalez is presented with certificate.
Photograph by courtesy of José Luis Pignocchi.



(Right)
'Pilancho' Gonzalez playing one of his instruments..
Photograph by courtesy of José Luis Pignocchi.

Far right)
Manfred Russmann and others in full flow at Amsterdam 2006
Photograph by Leo Tadagawa

Austria – Oe Maultrommelverein

The Jew's harp centre of Austria,

A project was started in Molln in August this year to restore an old house of a very famous Jew's harp manufacturing family – the "Hois Family". An outstanding fact for the Austrian history of Jew's harp makers in Molln, is that the last decades of production were led by the widow of the last maker Georg Hois, who died in the 1930's. Until the 1970's, when production ended, Maria Hois was assembling the Jew's harps with help of her daughters.



The house, first mentioned in 1615, is in quite good condition. History says that Jew's harps were manufactured there up from the late 18th century. Since the early 20th century nothing has changed inside the building, so you can get a good impression how a Molln Jew's harp maker family lived a hundred years ago.

A new association – the "Friends of the Hois-Haus" - was started up to restore the building, as for several years the building was uninhabited and ready to fall down, but with help of EU-funding, the aim is to open it for the public. The Austrian Jews Harp Association, also located in Molln, is cooperation partner in this project. An internet site to give more project information is prepared.

Wolf Jansch, who gave a lecture and concert at the Amsterdam Festival this year, moved from Vienna to Molln to go deeper into the culture of the Jew's harp. He especially wants to learn how to make Jew's harp to a very high quality standard. He therefore started to serve an apprenticeship with the famous blacksmith Schmidberger in Molln. This will truly bring a new dynamic and impact into the Jew's harp scenery in Molln, as Wolf is also an outstanding player.

Manfred Russmann



France

Tran Quang Hai sends some links concerning Jew's harp.



(Right)
Tran Quang Hai in concert..
*Photograph by courtesy of
Tran Quang Hai.*

Tran Quang Hai plays the Jew's harp:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=3sae-BV1jZU>

How to make a Hmong Jew's harp:

http://youtube.com/watch?v=GQIP8c_9YKk&mode=related&search

Tran Quang Hai plays the Jew's Harp in Washington DC on 27 August 2006:

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

There are many videos of Jew's harp on:

<http://youtube.com>

This is the Jew's harp FORUM:

<http://37781.rapidforum.com/recenttopics>, where you can find many articles on the Jew's Harp. For photos and other general information go to: <http://tranquanghai.info>

Tran Quang Hai

Germany – Der Freundeskreis Maultrommel

We have great memories of the "International Jew's Harp Festival 2006" in Amsterdam, and for those marvellous days in the Muziekgebouw, between the sky and the water, with exciting concerts and meetings, we would cordially like to thank the supervisors and organizers.

Back in Berlin again, with all our impressions and ideas, numerous visiting cards, appointments, new friends and new CDs, we are looking at everything that needs to be arranged for our follow-up festival, for time is moving fast. We are planning a "Day of the Jew's Harp" in Berlin. Soeren Birke will organize an annual international Jew's harp concert in the Kulturbrauerei – a very special and unique place for culture, communication, dancing, eating and drinking. I think this concert event will be the heart of the "Day of the Jew's Harp" in Berlin.

Many festival participants will remember the young film crew that was seen in action everywhere during the festival. The result. the videofilm "Mundton"

(25'), was presented in the Kulturbrauerei on October 19, 2006, in the former machine hall of the old brewery. This videofilm is a declaration of love to the Jew's harp, its lovers and virtuosi all over the world. The screening was a big hit with the young visitors and nearly everyone wanted to test a Jew's harp and play it immediately. Various types went from mouth to mouth, although before each changeover they were "cleaned" in a glass of Vodka!

In the interlude our guest, Olaf Garbow, played "Prussian Blue". Afterwards the film producers introduced themselves - and were ecstatically celebrated by the audience. In fact, the entire film team was struck down in Amsterdam by the Jew's harp virus! To conclude the evening, all the Jew's harp players present came up on the stage and improvised together under the guidance of Chris Dehler.

The "Friends of the Jew's Harp" circle is not active at present. This is connected to the fact that our member, Dr. Horst Wittenbecher, died in the early summer and his studio was our meeting place. At his funeral, by his grave, we played all together for the last time. The other funeral guests were impressed, as our Jew's harp playing developed a charm that helped to make the parting from Horst easier.

At this point, I would like to bring up a suggestion again that I made in Amsterdam. I am of the opinion that the members' "board" of the IJHS should plan to meet next year to consider the current state of affairs, to exchange ideas, and look to the future. Not only could they meet, they could also come together to make music and mutually inspire each other. To me, this seems the right thing to do to keep the IJHS a living organization. Paris would be an appropriate place to meet - or Sicily.

Gerd Conrad

(Translation by Gloria Custance)

Hungary

The Second Hungarian Jew's Harp Festival went pretty well on 5th August 2006. The one evening program was divided into a traditional and a contemporary part. Before the concerts Aron Szilagyai gave a Jew's harp workshop for beginners. More than 60 people participated which wasn't easy to handle. In the afternoon Catherine le Maignan's documentary made at the First Hungarian Jew's Harp Fest, Glimpse on the Jew's harp was shown.

The concerts started with the show of the experimental musician Albert Leskowsky followed by a real world music performance: Leo Tadagawa (on Jew's harp, of course) and Takaku Kejiro (Hungarian hurdy-gurdy) played traditional Hungarian songs. After Leo Alexander Horsch demonstrated traditional Hungarian and inner Asian instruments, Anton Bruhin accompanied some
Cont...

songs. The last show of the traditional part was a surprise performance: Sayla's khöömei ensemble from Inner Mongolia, China. These three Mongolian women sang incredible khöömei and played traditional music on Jew's harp, too.



(Right)
Taken at the Second
Hungarian Jew's Harp
Festival, Kecskemet,
Hungary, 05th August 2006,
*Photograph by
Tamas "Joel" Varga.*

Barnabas Szilagyi's Hagakure project was the first show after the break. It was an audio-visual journey through time and space: Jew's harp, tabla female vocal and electronics. After Barnabas Yoram Sival, the Israeli didgeridoo player gave a very nice concert. Many different Jew's harps, didj sounds and overtone singing were looped and dubbed live. The audience enjoyed it very much. Jacob M. Nasim's Psychedelic Jew's Harp project was first ever played unplugged because of unlucky twists of fate: Jacob's rig wasn't allowed onto the plane because of overweight, then in the hotel room he spent the whole night programming the substitute effect processor provided by the fest organizers and when it came to the moment to start the gig, there was not a single sound coming out of the electronics. So, Jacob played unplugged and it was very good, just a bit (quite a bit) different then the original Psychedelic Jew's Harp. The next performer was the great Hungarian avant-garde Jew's harp player, Miklos Paizs. He broke every Jew's harp he played during his show. Just as part of his poetry...

(Far right)
Mr. Giuseppe Alaimo and
his workshop in Resuttano
(Caltanissetta, Sicily.)
*Photograph by
Luca Recupero.*



Marranzanu by Mr. Alaimo
*.Photograph by
Luca Recupero.*

The last player was, of course, Anton Bruhin. He played his ET and hydro-tubular system, too.

The Festival was professionally recorded on video. The edited DVD will come out December this year. It will contain many extras, such as interviews, biographies, gallery and the trailer of a Jew's Harp tutorial DVD coming out in February next year.

The cultural referent of the City of Kecskemet is very positive about the IJHF in 2010 in Kecskemet. The organizer institutes (Kecskemet Youth Centre and Eurokult Association) expressed their will to organize the event. At the moment they are mapping the possible sites.

Aron Szilagyi

Italy

Marranzano: News from Sicily

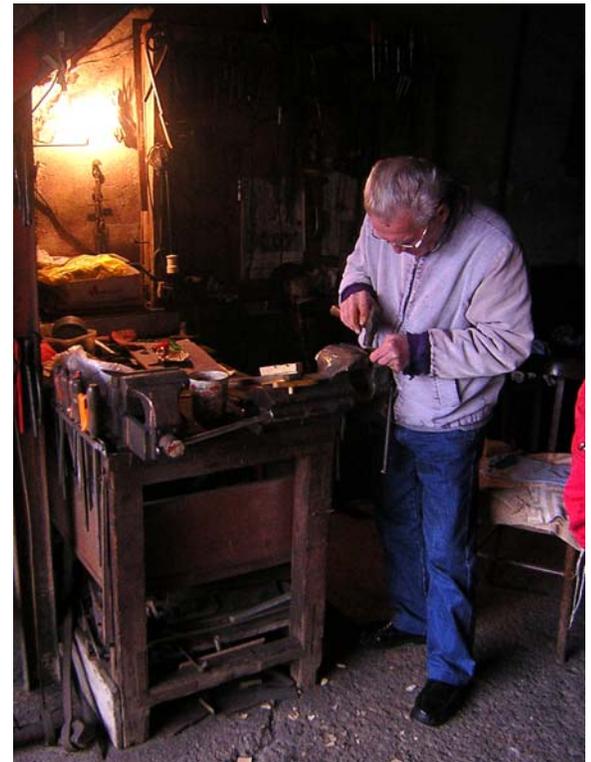
The positive effects of the first Marranzano World Festival, held in Catania in Oct 2005, can still be appreciated after one year, although the second edition of the Festival (originally planned for October 2006) had to be postponed until April 2007.

There are clear symptoms of a positive trend towards the re-discovery and appreciation of this instrument, deeply rooted in the Sicilian folk music culture. Besides the rise in the amount of bands (not only folk, but also rock and even dance/electronic) that feature the marranzanu, one very good news is the increased number of instrument makers: the son of the late Mr. Tremoglie in the town of Leonforte has picked up the workshop of his father, well known both as maker and player, and another good maker has been reported in the town of Marineo.

Another very good news item on this same aspect is to announce a marranzano-making workshop by the well-recognized and very esteemed Mr. Giuseppe Alaimo of Resuttano (see picture), planned for late April 2007 in connection to the 2nd Marranzano World Festival. For more info write to:

mo.mu@tiscali.it or luca_recupero@yahoo.it

Luca Recupero



Japan

Activities of Nihon Koukin Kyoukai [Japan Jew's Harp Association]

Publishing

Last year (2005) December, we published a book "Koukin no Hibiku Sekai (A World with the Resonant Jew's Harp)" with an accompanying CD [NKK005] by Leo Tadagawa. The English translation is under preparation. A tutorial DVD "Learn to Play the Sakha Khomus with Ivan Alexeyev & Spiridon Shishigin" (mainly in Russian, with Japanese titles) which was published in 1996 on a video tape (VHS) will be released very soon.

Concerts and Events

In 2006 we have organized several concerts.

- January: Robert Zagretdinov (Bashkortostan)
- June: Bolot Bairyshev (Altai).
- September: Ivan Alexeyev (Sakha).
- October: Yedil Khusseinov (Kazakhstan).

Monthly Meeting

We are having monthly meeting with a live show by special guest musicians every second Sundays.

International Festival and Congress

We are planning to have an International Jew's Harp Event (Hopefully the 6th International Jew's Harp Festival & Congress) in 2008 summer.

Internet Site

We are running an Internet site in Japanese:
<http://www.koukin.jp/>

Leo Tadagawa.

The Netherlands

I am in contact with two other Dutch Jew's harp players and have decided to do a Jew's harp matinee in a nice theater in the center of Utrecht, NL. The venue is called Theater Kikker (frog theatre, a very suitable name for a Jew's harp event) and maybe this could mean a start of something bigger.

The performance will include: Míku Zee (J-harp, didgeridoo), Tony Antenna's Monorail (a one man band with J-harp, Anthony Glass from the band The Electric Fans) and Plunk (J-harp and human beatbox, Ramon Kool & Danibal)

<http://www.theaterkikker.nl/muziek.php?id=665&agenda=algemeen>

I hope to establish contact with more players, but it is still a little hard. (*We all sympathise. Ed.*). Something of more international interest: I just discovered youtube and there is a humble start of a group sharing Jew's harp movies:

<http://www.youtube.com/group/jawharp>. There is a growing number of people adding there films and it would be nice to find many more Jew's harp films on it and meeting other enthusiasts. (*This is really interesting, and I would like an article for the next newsletter on who, what, when, etc... Ed.*)

Danibal

Norway

Norsk Munnharpeforum

We had our annual festival in Setesdal 22-24. September. Approx. 40 participants, from Norway, plus some coming from Estonia and Finland. The weekend included concerts, workshops and a trip to Folke Nesland's workshop. Further, Sylvain Trias from Paris, has moved with his family to Stavanger. His wife has got a job there, and Sylvain wants to study the Norwegian style of Jew's harp playing. So, he was at the festival, too.

Svein Westad

(Far right)
Photograph by courtesy of
Svein Westad.



Photograph by courtesy of
Svein Westad.



Sakha Republic

We invite you to the extraordinary land of Olonkho, where the Khomus of the people of Sakha will escort you.

The people of Sakha have preserved numerous cultural and spiritual traditions, which have their roots in ancient times. As people and ethnos, we have our spirituality, our language, and we did not lose our national culture and traditions.

Playing the khomus is part of our cultural traditions. The music of khomus transports spiritual energy, which positively affects people, causing happy emotions and feelings. Playing the khomus helps children to reveal, develop and realize their creative potential.

I work as teacher in the creative association "Etigen Khomus" ("Etigen Khomus" means "entrancing khomus") of the children's center of aesthetic education "Aiylyg" ("Aiylyg" means "middle world") of Yakutsk city. I am working with numerous bright and gifted children, playing the khomus and being interested in the national culture of the people of Sakha. I try to attract the children to playing the khomus and to our national traditions with the aim of developing and strengthening spirituality, self-realization and creativity.



Logo by courtesy of Agniya
Spiridonovna Zhirkova



Spiridon Shishigin
 Photograph by courtesy of
 Agniya Spiridonovna
 Zhirkova

(Right)
 Photograph by
 courtesy of Agniya
 Spiridonovna Zhirkova

(Far right)
 Michael & Lucy Wright at
 Peta Webb's birthday
 concert, Whitby Folk Week,
 2006

Photograph by kind
 permission of
 efnMagazine.

I am convinced of this, when I see the happy faces of the children, when they are satisfied with the results of performances. In the past year we achieved quite a lot: we became laureate of the first degree in the international festival "Il Khomus" (Tekhtyr, Sakha), and laureate of children's folklore- musical festival "Crystal Lira" in France. For the active participation in the cultural life of our city we received fifteen places in the summer children's creative camp in Beidaheie, China.



We participated in the All-Russian festival of jazz music "Tong Jazz" ("Jazz in the Permafrost"), 20-22 October of 2006 in Yakutsk city, where we also took part in the event for the new Guinness-record on the "largest quantity of khomus-players on a stage", which was inspired by the Guinness-record holder Igor Zakharov who played on the drums continuously for 24 hours.

At last I would like to note that in each country we visit, we share with the people of this country our soul and heart. Children are very interested in the culture of other people and it was a great pleasure for us to share with you our culture and part of the happiness which is in the heart of children.

*Agniya Spiridonovna Zhirkova, khomus-improvisator, honored pedagogue of the Russian Federation, teacher at "Etigen of Khomus", Sakha-Yakutia, Russian Federation
 (Translation by Franz Kumpf)*

South Africa

Ethnomusicologist, Angela Impey, has been working with and studying Kwa Zulu Natal people for the some years, recording their playing of both the Jew's harp and their indigenous instrument, the mouth bow. A collaborative talk at the School of African Studies will be given at the School in February 2007 with Michael Wright – who is looking at the trade links that led to the use of the instrument in the area.

Michael Wright

UK & Ireland

IoNAJHA

The Islands of the North Atlantic Jew's Harp Association was formed at Whitby Folk Week, in August 2006. Its primary aim is to promote the Jew's harp in the UK and Ireland, and to encourage research and its dissemination. We also intend to run our first Jew's harp festival in Oxford, in 2007 –

date depending upon funding and performer availability. The intention is that this will include talks on the importance of the instrument in the UK, an illustrated talk on the Jew's harp in South Africa, a discussion on archaeological finds, a private view of the collections in the Pitt Rivers Museum and the



Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, and opportunities to hear players from the UK and abroad in concert. Grant applications are in the pipeline, and depending upon the result, we are hoping to invite a number of our colleagues from various groups to attend. For more information, email michael.wright@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com

Obituary – John Campbell 27-3-1933 – 2-10-2006

In October I heard of the death of a very entertaining storyteller and Jew's harp player from Ireland – John Campbell. Although unknown to many of you, John was a renowned performer throughout the UK and Ireland. His close friend and the other part of a performing duo, the Irish singer, Len Graham, said of John, "John Campbell's, magnificent storytelling skills, with his fantastic imagination and his delightfully humorous observations, brought joy to those who witnessed his spellbinding performances." They recorded two highly acclaimed CD's – *Ebb & Flow* and *Two for the Road*. John plays Jew's harp on tracks *Love will you marry me*, *Maggie Picken* and *Fishing for Eels* on *Ebb & Flow* and tracks *The Frost is Over* and *The Shaskeen Reel* on *Two for the Road*. John was very supportive of my efforts to promote the Jew's harp in the UK and will be sadly missed. We are looking to have a tribute concert at the festival in Oxford.

Michael Wright

USA

The 14th North American Jew's Harp Festival was held at the Bay City Arts Center in Bay City, Oregon, on the Oregon coast just north of Tillamook, on the weekend 4-6 August 2006. The programme included a market; concerts; a Musician's Meeting; How-to-play and other workshops; 'Band Scramble'; Twang Time Circle, where there was the opportunity to share techniques, and a final Grand Jam. After the Annual Jew's Harp Guild Meeting that was held on the Sunday, a Sea Cave Outing was organised – proving that festivals are not all talk and twang!

(Michael Wright on behalf of the JHG)



John Campbell in concert
 Photograph by
 Futoshi Sakauchi

Leo Tadagawa

Being Japanese, Leo couldn't understand why he was interested in the Jew's harp so much, particularly as the tradition seemed to have disappeared in Japan. After encountering two iron instruments from the 10th century, excavated from neighbouring town, however, he started to think that there were possibilities. Moreover, he found a country - Sakha (Yakutia) - where the Jew's harp player is considered as a normally respected person. Now Leo is established as one of the regions - and world's - great players, invited to perform in concert and on recordings, and has found other players in Hokkaido whom he enthusiastically promotes.



(Right)
Players from
Top: Ulch.
Middle: Yakutia
Bottom: Ainus.
*All photograph by
Leo Tadagawa*

PictureGallery

Leo Tadagawa

We've all had the pleasure of seeing Leo's photographic work over the years, so I asked him to select a few of his favourites for publication.



Kumpl's Amsterdam Scrapbook

Franz persuaded many and various people to take snapshots at Amsterdam – so thanks to those who did.

(all names left to right)

1. Albina Dekhtereva, Spiridon Shishigin, Fred Crane, Ivan Alexeev, Kim Borisov, Franz Kumpl, Yana Krivoshapkina, Zhirkova.
2. Ivan Alexeev, Spiridon Shishigin, Anton Bruhin, Franz Kumpl, Robert Zagredtinov.
3. The Wright-family and Nguyen Duc Minh.
4. Indian master playing exprompt.
5. Franz and Jan Wolf, who is the initiator of the Amsterdam IJHF..
6. Anton Bruhin (CH), Spiridon Shishigin (Sakha), Phons Bakx (NL) – three grand masters of the Jew's harp!
7. Luca Recupero and his band in action.
8. Jamming of harps and didgeridoos, looking like the playing of two "good"(orderly) boys with two "bad"(wild) boys.
9. Lucy & John Wright.
10. Manfred Russmann and band.
11. Gordon Frazier, Fred Crane, Anton Bruhin, Koichi Makigami, Silvain Trias, Franz Kumpl.
12. Leo Tadagawa, Franz Kumpl, Fred Crane, Aron Szilagy, Jarko Aikens (the program manager at Het Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam, taken in Keckemet in 25 Sep 2005).

All photographs courtesy of Franz Kumpl



Looking Back

Recently I found the photograph below of the 1974 recording of the 'Lark in the Clear Air', and it occurred to me that there must be photos of a youthful Crane, Bruhin, Shishigin, Alexeyev or, indeed, any of you, so dig into your old photo albums and lets show the younger members of our Society that we were like them once!



(Right)
(left to right) Paddy Moran,
Paddy Neylan, John Wright,
Noel Pepper & John Doonan.
Photograph by
Michael Wright.

Caption Competition

A prize (if we had one) would go to the best entry for a caption to this photograph by Leo Tadagawa, but don't let the lack of a gift stop you!

The best three will be posted in the next issue.



(Right)
Photograph by
Leo Tadagawa

(Far right)
Film crew at work.
Photograph by courtesy of
blende39

A call for help from the editor!

Can I have any PR photos to keep on file for future publications, please? Send them to the address (postal or email) on pages 2 and 13, with a caption. Thanks.

Editor

AndFinally...

Comment

Any responses or comments you want to send regarding anything in the Newsletter will be printed here.

New Website

It was agreed at the AGM that we should have a new IJHS website, and I hope to update you on developments in the next issue

MW

NoticeBoard

Those of you that were at the Festival in Amsterdam will remember the film group, blende39, interviewing and filming the participants throughout the weekend. Eva-Luise Volkmann updates us on its availability.

Mundton DVD

A ramble through the world of the Jew's-Harp

The Jew's-Harp chooses his player, it seduces.

It was at the 5th International Jew's-Harp Festival in Amsterdam, where virtuosos and enthusiasts from all over the world met to celebrate its unique sound, that we discovered the Jew's-Harp. We were well prepared and knew the stories and legends, but what we were not ready for the effect the instrument was to have on us.

Our film shows how the Jew's-Harp seduced us. It looks at a small instrument that has fascinated musicians and audiences for thousands of years. The players told us about their thoughts and experiences with the Jew's-Harp and the DVD includes portraits of some of the most famous Jew's-Harp players, such as Anton Bruhin, Spiridon Shishigin and Tran Quang Hai.



It is a documentary for those who are caught by the Jew's-Harp and those who want to be found, and you can buy the DVD by sending an email to info@blende39.de.
Eva-Luise Volkmann

Amsterdam CD

The Fifth International Jew's Harp Festival 2006 - LIVE!

...will come out in December and in January people will be able to order it via the website: www.muzekegebouw.nl

It is a double CD, including:

CD1

Wolf Jansch (Austria)
Phons Bakx, Izzy van Elk, Janus Filius (Netherlands)
Madosini (South Africa)
John, Michael & Lucy Wright (Great Britain)
Leo Tadagawa (Japan) and Arnold Marinissen (Netherlands)
Bolot Bairyshev (Altai, RF)
Robert Zagretdinov en Ildar Nizamov (Bashkortostan, RF)
Albina Degtareva & Yana Krivoschapkina (Yakutia, RF)
Albin Paulus (Austria) and Vaughan Schlepp (Netherlands)

CD2

Li Wang (China)
Sylvain Trias & Jonathan Pontier (France)
Sekaa Genggong Lestari (Bali, Indonesia)
Tran Quang Hai (Vietnam / France)
Nguyen Duc Minh (Vietnam)
Steev Kindwald (USA / India)
Morsing Tarang Jew's Harp Quartet (Southern India)
Mollner Maultrommler (Austria)
Das Ohr (Switzerland / Austria / Germany)
Navrang (Hungary)
Oorbeek (Netherlands) and Koichi Makigami (Japan)
Plunk (Netherlands)

"Jew's harpist attached to a wooden block".
Drawing by Danibal.



IJHS Membership

Membership dues are payable in January. Please send your cheques or payment details to: Philippe Dallais, Grand Rue 55, 2035 Corcelles, Switzerland, or phidkat@bluewin.ch.

Please notify the General Secretary immediately of changes or corrections to your address as currently listed at: Michael Wright, IJHS, c/o 77 Beech Road, Wheatley, Oxon OX33 1UD, or michael.wright@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com

Deadlines!

Newsletter 5

Copy, images – including titles and credits – by Friday, 30th March 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 at the end of April 2007.

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



RegionalNews – STOP PRESS

A Guinness World Record!

I received this from Spiridon Shishigin and couldn't let it pass – congratulations to all!

The Russian Jazz music "Tong- Jazz" took place on 20–22 October 2006, in the Sakha Republic, Yakutia. Music groups from Yakutsk, Aldan, Mirny took part and well known Jazz music groups from Russia – such as, Igor Bril from Moscow, Igor Zakharov from Yekaterinburg and

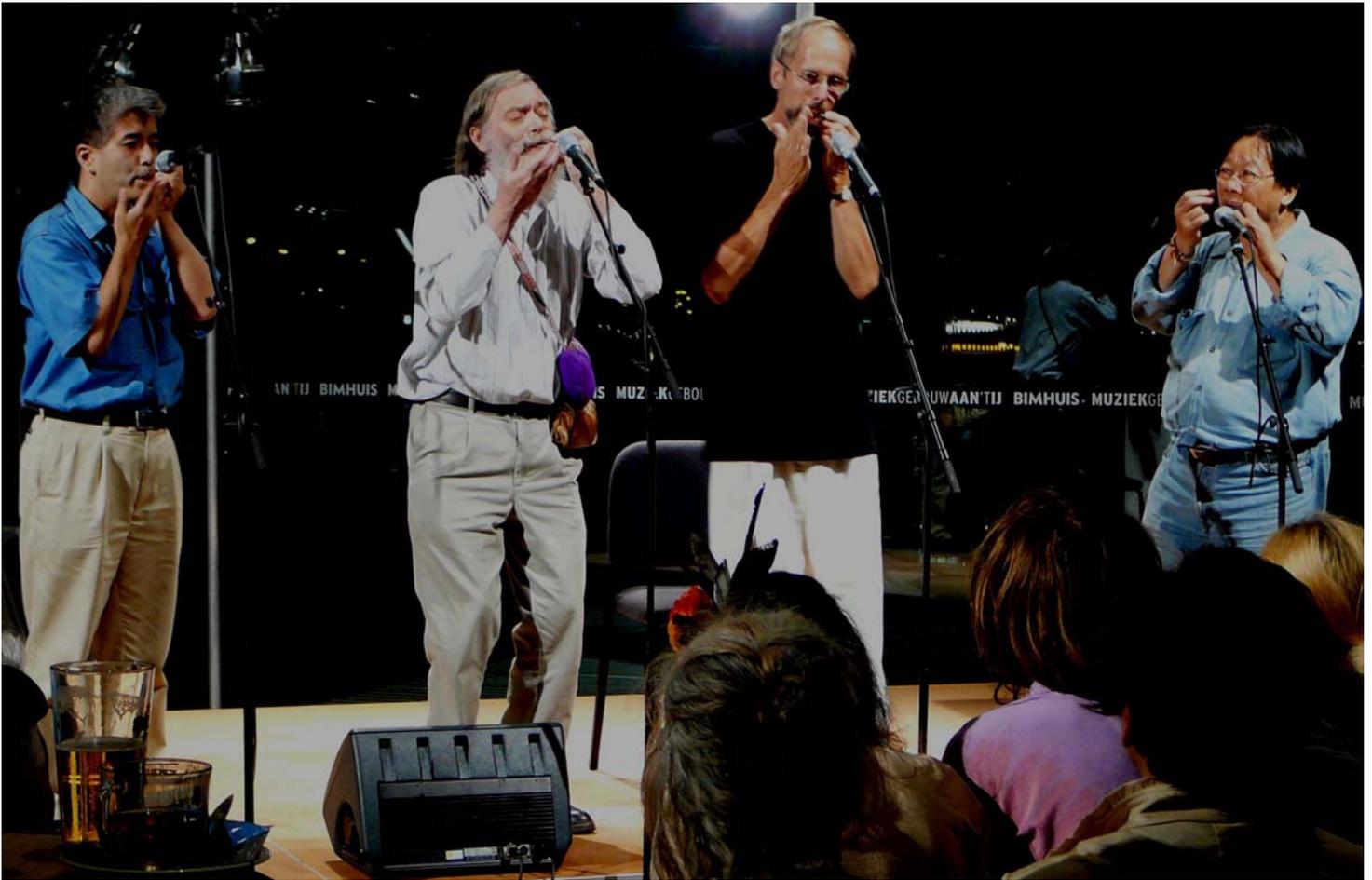
(Below)
The World Record event!
Photograph by courtesy of
Spiridon Shishigin



Igor Burko from Tschelabinsk. During the first days, there were performances by the Orchestra of Sakha Circus "Time Band"; the violin ensemble "Yakutia virtuoso" of the High music school; the choir "Revival" and solo- singer of the Opera and Ballet theatre, that are Elvira Sanievsckaya, Valerie Casatkin; the brass-band orchestra, ensemble of Yakutian music college and others.

On the last day, however, more than 400 Jew's harp players and ensembles from different schools and colleges took part in the record breaking attempt. They all played on the Yakutian national instrument – the khomus (vargan/Jew's harp) under the guidance of Igor Zakharov, a world renowned winner of International Jazz festivals. The ethno-group, Yakutia "Ajarchaan" began to play the first melody, followed by all the other Jew's harp players. Igor Zakharov conducted, shook his head in disbelief, jumped for joy and was in ecstasy with the music. The performance lasted 5 minutes, and the audience received this improvisation with great warmth, standing and loudly applauding at the end. The performance itself was organised by the Moscow committee of Guinness record's book, a similar performance having been carried out in the summer during the National Celebration Ysyach.

Spiridon Shishigin



Leo Tadagawa, John Wright, Svein Westad and Tran Quang Hai in concert on the Amsterdam Festival Summer Stage, 2006.

Photograph by Lucy Wright



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.

The Treasurer's postal address is:

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

