

Newsletter of the International Jew's Harp Society

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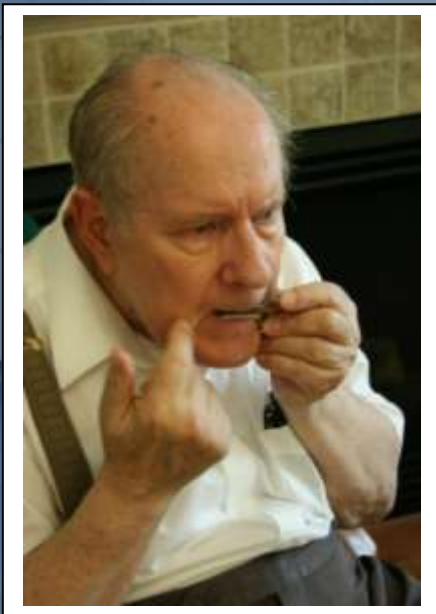
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To contribute to the newsletter, send your emails to michael@jewsharper.info or post to:
Michael Wright, General Secretary, IJHS Newsletter, 77 Beech Road, Wheatley, Oxon, OX33 1UD, UK
Signed articles or news items represent the views of their authors only. Cover photograph & insert courtesy of Franz Kuml & Michael Wright

Editorial



(above)
Michael Wright,
Photograph by
Debbie Wright

NEWS HEADLINES

- THE NEW KHOMUS MUSEUM OPENS IN YAKUTSK.
- IJHS LAUNCHES ITS FIRST WEBSITE.
- FRED CRANE STEPPING DOWN AS JOURNAL EDITOR.

Given that the Society basically runs on goodwill, it never ceases to amaze me how much we manage to achieve. Sometimes it may seem that nothing is happening much, but, just like the swan swimming majestically along on the water, the legs are paddling like mad beneath. Since the last newsletter, along with the news items you always send (and very grateful I am too), some pretty fundamental events have happened these past 6 months, including a new museum dedicated to the Khomus (see article by Franz Kuml), a new website for the Society and, due to ill health, the process of stepping down as editor of the journal by Fred Crane. Deirdre Morgan, an MA student from Canada, and I met with Fred in Iowa and took the opportunity to record and transcribe an interview. All these events, plus the normal news items and reviews, are covered in this edition.

Recording activity continues to go on apace and we have two CDs for review in this issue, so if you want to promote what you are doing, what better place than the Newsletter!

There has been some concern expressed about translations from other languages into English, raising the question as to how much the editor should do. On the one hand the newsletter should be the voice of the members, though, of course, it is in English. Trying to balance keeping the sense and feeling of the contributors against the use of strange phrases can require a lot of work, so please bear with us as we try to achieve a newsletter worthy of the Society – and I'm always open to help.

Michael Wright

BoardMatters

From the president

Dear friends,
The Journal of the International Jew's Harp Society, besides this Newsletter, is indispensable to our work and an integral part the paying members get for their yearly membership fee.

History has shown that the difference between Journal and Newsletter are as follows:

- The Journal is published ideally once per year in a printed version and with the objective of providing opportunities for the publication of scientific research issues related to the Jew's harp.
- The Newsletter comes out twice per year in an electronic version, with the objectives of communicating with the members various issues of interest and providing Jew's harp-related news from all over the world.

Our honorary president Fred Crane has been the sole editor of the Journal from the very beginning in 2004. From 1982 until 2003, Fred had published 11 journals, which before the existence of the International Jew's Harp Society were called VIM (Vierundzwanzigsteljahresschrift der Internationalen Maultrommelvirtuosengenossenschaft). VIM was, therefore, the baby of Fred Crane, while the Journal became his grown-up child. Fred handles this task with outstanding professionalism, with a polyglot approach (he speaks and understands all main languages in which he receives articles) and with his great sense of humour.

For some time now, Fred is suffering from Parkinson's Disease and therefore we – the board of the IJHS - have to support Fred in the task of publishing the Journal.

Our idea is that from this year on until the next International Jew's Harp Festival in Hungary in 2010, we – Michael Wright, Philippe Dallais and myself – will support Fred in collecting and editing articles as well as sending the Journal to the paying members. On all editorial matters, Fred will have the last word. During the board meeting in 2010, we will raise the issue of the Journal with the following questions:



(above)
Franz Kumlpl
(right)
Opening of the gala
concert
Photo courtesy of
Franz Kumlpl

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Norway

- Is there a single person willing and able to take over from Fred the task of chief editor of the Journal?
- Would we prefer an Editorial Board consisting of several persons instead of a single editor?
- Who, and according to what parameters, should be invited to the Editorial Board?

Dear friends, we still have nearly 2 years to go until we have to take a decision, but please feel free to communicate your ideas and comments.

Finally, we kindly ask you to send your scientific articles for the next Journal to Michael Wright. Please tell us if you happen to know of somebody who is writing a thesis or is doing research about Jew's harp-related issues and we will invite them to contribute with an abstract to the Journal. This applies also to our young friends Kaliman Umetbaeva, Silvain Trias, Wolf Jansch and Lucy Wright, who we know are actively researching and might want to share their ideas with us, besides having the chance of publishing in a well-respected organ.

Franz Kumlpl

FeatureComment

The new Khomus Museum in Yakutsk

In the 1990s, I travelled several times in Sakha-Yakutia, but never during wintertime. My Yakutian friends already started to tease me, asking if I was not courageous enough to come when it is cold... and I mean really cold. The chance came in January 2008 when the new Khomus Museum in Yakutsk was opened. Having finished my EC-project on "Social Integration of Disabled People in the Volga District", I had the chance to travel to Yakutsk for the opening of the museum and visiting my Yakutian friends Ivan Alexeev, Spiridon and Kolja Shishigin, Albina Degtareva and Rimma Madvarova. These are the people who I had invited to Austria in 1994, and who "shocked" the Austrian audiences with Jew's harp sounds they never had heard before. Altogether, I spent the week from 14-19 January 2008 in the capital Yakutsk, the city of Pokrovsk (where Spiridon Shishigin is school-director) and the purely Yakutian villages Tekhtyr and Tiit Aryy.

Here my impressions:

1. The International Centre of the Khomus Music

- Address of the International Centre of the Khomus Museum: Russian Federation, Sakha Republic, 677027, Yakutsk-27, Kirov street, 33, tel.: +7-4112-42 86 76, fax: +7-4112-25 94 70;
http://www.sitc.ru/culture/museum/vargan/index_e.html
- My highest respect goes to Semyon Viktorovich Ivanov (director), Ivan Egorovich Alexeev (president), Spiridon Spiridonovich Shishigin (khomus-virtuoso, most dedicated propagator and organisational supporter of the khomus) and their team for the professional organisation of the opening events, which included the festive opening of the museum itself on 16 January, the festive khomus concert in the Russian theatre on 17 January and the party for all supporters and close friends in the museum on 18th January 2008. (*see PictureGallery*)

- The objective of the museum is the propagation and preservation of the Jew's harp. Founded in 1990, the museum now houses 5.500 items, 351 of which are Jew's harps from 36 different countries. Staff of eleven experts is responsible for organisation of festivals, public events, research, publications, collecting/categorising/exhibiting of artefacts like instruments, photos, recordings and films linked with the Jew's harp.
- The Yakutian public and the politicians as well as the mass media paid the highest tribute to the khomus. For three days the main issue in Yakutsk was the opening of the new khomus museum. In my function as president of the IJHS, I had expected to speak at the official opening ceremony. But I ended up with giving numerous lectures at schools and kindergartens, minimum 5 interviews per day in Yakutsk, participating in live-shows and several high-level meetings with ministers and the vice-president.



2. Remarks regarding Jew's harp playing in Sakha-Yakutia

- All performing young khomusists have mastered the most difficult playing techniques, which in the 1980s used to be the sign of experienced master-improvisers.
- Subtle and self-confident eroticism became an important part in the performance and playing-style of some female players, the most convincing example of which is the ethno group "Ayarkhaan" of Albina Degtyareva (<http://ayarkhaan.blogspot.com>). It is interesting that erotic connotations besides spiritual and esoteric ones always have been closely linked to playing the Jew's harp.
- A quite new tendency is that young - and beautiful - Yakutian women play technically perfect khomus to taped trance techno.
- Playing styles and approaches are not appreciated by all khomus experts in Yakutia for reasons of purist cultural traditions and health risks, include women imitating horse-sounds, imitations of shaman playing on the Jew's harp and very small children playing the Jew's harp (which is regarded as hazardous for the development of teeth).
- Ministers and high-level bureaucrats ask you to give them the honour of playing on the khomus for them.
- Fortunately, there is no lack of master-blacksmiths producing visually beautiful and sound-wise outstanding khomus. To name a few, there are Revoriy Grigorevich Chemchoev, Ivan Ilich Khristoforov, Innokentiy Nikitich Gotovcev, Petr Fedotovitch Osipov, Roman Ilich Gotovcev, Zakhar Konstantinovich Elesin, and many other. Ivan Alexeev and Spiridon Shishigin plan to organise a festival-congress for the Jew's harp makers of the world. The idea is to invite at least one blacksmith

- from each respective country to come together with a musician playing on this very instrument.
- ‘Normal’ Yakutians use khomus-sounds as tunes for their mobile phone.

3. Sakha-Yakutia in winter

- The Yakutian people are very proud of their cold winter. Nevertheless, I heard a journalist saying to the children he was about to photograph: “Smile, outside it is cold and in here it is warm”. People kept telling me that this was an unusually warm January, because we had only maximum 47 minus and not way below 50 degrees minus which is supposed to be the usual cold in January.
- Since the flats are well-heated, you move around in T-shirts. But never forget to dress in double and warm underwear once you leave the house! People mostly move around by car in the city of Yakutsk. This is why there dominates thick fog in the city, caused by the many sources of warm air from houses, people and cars, which are not turned off for the whole working day.
- Once you leave the city, one is absolutely fascinated by the purity and clarity of cold air below 40 degrees, by the trees and bushes thickly covered with ice-needles.
- Other impressions linked to the cold:
 - The road on the frozen river Lena
 - The sheer beauty of women and children in furs
 - The fish-market with upright standing frozen fish
- General impressions
 - Sakha-Yakutia and especially its capital Yakutsk is a fast-developing region with a tendency to materialism like everywhere in Russia, although compared to the Elcin-era, Yakutia now has to transfer more money to Moscow.
 - The Yakutian people are more oriented towards Shanghai and Harbin in China than to Moscow. China is about 2/3 cheaper than Russian cities and trips to China for weddings, celebrations or shopping-tours are a lot closer and cheaper.
- The food is a chapter of its own, since Yakutia offers several specialities you get only in this region and which taste best in wintertime; this is the raw and frozen liver from the young Yakutian horses, raw white fish –“stroganina”- from the river Lena, rich sour crème –“smetana”- with wild berries from the Yakutian Tayga. This might not be everybody’s taste, but it is absolutely biological and healthy food.

Dear reader, don’t miss the chance of experiencing real cold at least once in your life! Yakutia is the best place for this unique experience.

Dear friends in Yakutia, you managed again to impress me deeply, with your enthusiastic love for the khomus and with your overwhelming hospitality. Thank you indeed, and be assured that in the long run culture will win over economic interests and you will take over the whole building in which your museum is located. To support this aim, I ask the readers and aficionados of the Jew’s harp from the whole world to bring artefacts linked to the Jew’s harp to the International Khomus Museum in Yakutsk. Fred Crane has already started and has donated his huge collection to the Khomus Museum in Yakutsk. I am sure there is no better place for it in the world.

Franz Kumpul

Interview with Frederick Crane

During a visit to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, Deirdre Morgan and Michael Wright took the opportunity to interview IJHS Honorary President, Frederick Crane. Following are a few extracts from that interview.



When did you first become aware of the trump?

That’s very easy to answer. For reasons that I don’t know anymore in the summer of 1955, some 53 years ago, I decided to write a paper on the trump, Jew’s harp.

Why the trump?

I just knew that was the thing to do.

So you’d seen them around?

Not very much really. I knew that they turned up in various places in art, in history, in country music, in film scores, and so I just decided to do this, and the way I remember it is that I shut myself up in the library day and night for the entire two month summer session, made notes on everything I could find about the Jew’s harp and turned that into a paper... When it comes to later times I realised it was just a tiny fraction of the important material, but that’s what I did.

Were you doing a Musicology course?

That was my major at the University of Iowa.

Were studying ethnomusicology?

No. There was no such thing at Iowa at that time. I was interested in musical instruments in general and found something fascinating about that (trump) instrument, for some reason I don’t know, and certainly it turned out in the course of the next 53 years that it was broad in its worldwide presence, broad in its potential uses as a maker of music, broad in all the traditions to different peoples and different persons, and turned out to have been a very good topic to have chosen.

Did you then go out and buy one or could you play one before?

I don’t think I bought one that summer, maybe I did, at least I could verify that because in my catalogue I have the dates when I bought all the instruments. I had owned one as a child, but that disappeared.

Could you play it as a child – did you play it?

No. I don’t know why. Later on when I remembered where it had been in the attic before, it wasn’t there.

So when you did get another one, where did you acquire it from?

That was the next time I went on leave. I went to Karlsruhe and did a bit of research – theory, that sort of thing.

Were you in the army?

No. I was teaching. I’d graduated from the University of Iowa with a Phd in 1960 and went off to Europe to teach and spent this one semester in ’62-3, getting away from it. Took my family and at that time I bought a

(right)
Michael Wright,
Deirdre Morgan &
Fred Crane
Photo by
Lois Crane

(below)
Fred in full-flow
Photo by
Michael Wright





(above)
Lois & Fred
(right)
Mount Pleasant
Photo by
Michael Wright
(below)
Fred
Photo by
Michael Wright

really rather good little instrument made in Molln from the local music house and played that a lot. Found I could play a tune pretty well, you know.

Were you taught by somebody how to play?

No, I've hardly ever met anybody who didn't have to work it out for themselves, who had instructions.



Did that start the interest in collecting?

When I look at my collection, there's a date on each of them and there's a scattering of them over the next 10 - 20 years. I had enough interest that when I saw them, I went to buy them. Because of course, there was no internet at that time. It was mostly music shops...

How many instruments do you think you've actually got?

Until I finish cataloguing the American ones I'm not going to know exactly. Between 400-500 somewhere, but this doesn't put me nearly the largest collector.

Your intention is to go to...?

They will all go to the new trump museum, khomus museum in Yakutsk. They say they will have a complete room in that museum for my collection - I don't think it's worth that, but I've tried to get variety of good things, though there are an awful lot of duplications too.

Are you giving your entire collection to the museum?

I'll keep a little set to play on. One tuned set. You have to have one for every key - 12 different keys.

Are they the same types or are you going for a cross-section?

They are all made by what in general I would have to say are my favourite maker, Schlutter of Germany. They are all instruments of strong, brilliant tone, play overtones up to high ones and so forth, they are all very well made and I like playing on them, can play any tunes and play other kinds of things too. It's a unique design. They started making them about 1970 and stuck to that same design. They cover over 3 octaves.

What are your thoughts on the appeal of the instrument or its charm?

I think it's obvious, but it isn't to everybody, probably. The striking thing to me is always that with regard to ensembles, it always stands out immediately. It has a sort of biting sound. It's like pepper as a spice that inserts itself. It can be in the background but still you can see it. Even if its recorded at an extremely low level, you can recognise the unique quality of the sound and it has always been very good in the movies for sound effects, because again its striking and you can get all sorts of effects, a little bit comical - very often 'boing!' is the most famous sound, then low harmonics glide up to high harmonics then the opposite direction. And then you can do many, many things with them, vibratos, and there are quite a number of special effects

you can get, tongue tip, trilling sound. I never work on this very much. I mostly just play tunes, the old British, American folk dances (sings 'the girl I left behind me') etc., etc. Those work very well for me. Did I finish that subject? I don't think so.

Do you have a vision as to how you see things move on? Where do you think it should go?

Since you ask for my wishes, my preference is that I would like achieve immortality, to go on doing this myself for ever. Inevitably I'm so much more interested I my own work than anybody else's, present company excepted. If I can I slip a bit of humour into it. One of my favourite reviews is 'The Trump in the Movies', that's one of my best little bits. That's my sort of serious answer to the question, otherwise I like to see the getting together of all kinds of people in the different places. The first meetings were 7 years in between, which is too long. Today they still haven't quite settled down, I think 3 years is about right. But it hasn't always worked out that way.

Deirdre Morgan & Michael Wright

RegionalNews

Argentina

NEWS ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUMPS

The latest large archaeological site to be found in Argentina, is "ESTECO EL VIEJO" (The Old Esteco), situated in the Salta province in the north of our country and founded by the Spanish conquerors.



This singular and important city (60.000 inhabitants) had a very short life of only forty two years, from 1566 to 1609, though noone knows the reason for its disappearance, only the legend says that it was a place of sin.



Its discoverer, my friend, Professor Alfredo Tomasini from the "La Plata University", has sent me the first picture of trumps that were found on the site and I have the pleasure in publishing it. At some point in the future I shall write a comparative work comparing these trumps with those that I found at the Cayastá site in our Santa Fe province (dating circa 1580).

José Luis Pignocchi
jopigi@ciudad.com.ar

Canada

(While not directly on the Jew's harp, one of our members, David Holt, sends this. Ed.)

Thanks to my friend Al Poindexter, there are new videos for you to enjoy on YouTube. Watch segments with Doc Watson, clips from *Fire On the Mountain* and interviews with interesting old-time musicians. Here's the link: [David's YouTube videos \(http://jp.youtube.com/results?search_query=banjofolk&search_type=&aq=f\)](http://jp.youtube.com/results?search_query=banjofolk&search_type=&aq=f)

In July I will be in Canada filming the newest addition to the PBS *Great Scenic Railway Journeys* series.

We will depart from Calgary on the Royal Canadian Pacific for a scenic rail trip around Alberta. We'll visit the exquisite Lake Louise, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located outside of Fort Macleod, try some fly fishing at Summit Lake and ride the rails through the Spiral Tunnels. Watch for it on PBS next March.

To see *Great Scenic Railway Journeys: The West, Folk Rhythms* and my other DVDs, click on http://store.davidholt.com/cart.php?target=category&category_id=63

I look forward to seeing you at one of my concerts. Click on [schedule](#) to find a performance near you.

All the best,
David

www.davidholt.com
www.myspace.com/davidholtmusic

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Canada (cont.)

At present I am conducting a survey/comparative study of playing techniques (long-term ongoing project!) – particularly the relationship between phonetics and overtones; Jew's harp as speech surrogate, and ethnographies of Jew's harp traditions. Right now the focus is on Bali, with a hope to do South India, and now chatting with Bernard Folkestad about Norwegian playing techniques, etc, etc, etc. It never ends! There is so much to do. I'd love to eventually have a database of this information, with notation/transcriptions, and recordings, all in a standardized format, to make comparisons across the board possible. And then publish a series, with each volume dedicated to a different region, and then...: on and on it could go, but realistically, I'm in support of any activity that raises consciousness about the instrument, no matter the scale.

I've attached an article that appeared in Bali last summer, after I performed in the Bali Arts Festival while doing fieldwork. You may reprint it if you wish, or just have a chuckle--the writing is priceless. All the best,

Deirdre Morgan



(above)
Deirdre Morgan
Photo by
Lois Crane
(below)
Article on Deirdre
Morgan
Courtesy of
Deirdre Morgan

(far right)
Photos from last year's
'Ancient Trance 2007'
Poster for this year's
event
Courtesy of
Dan Moi

France

I am sending you some videos I have made during this weekend with spoons and Jew's harp. Just watch them and enjoy. best,
Tran Quang Hai

Click on these links to watch the videos.

<http://tranquanghai.musicblog.fr/803581/Tran-Quang-Hai-improvise-avec-une-paire-de-cuillers/>

<http://tranquanghai.musicblog.fr/802729/TRAN-QUANG-HAI-plays-a-new-type-of-Vietnamese-Jew-s-harp/>

<http://tranquanghai.musicblog.fr/802719/TRAN-QUANG-HAI-joue-de-la-guimbarde-vietnamienne-a-3-languettes/>

TRAN QUANG HAI

website: <http://tranquanghai.info>

blog: <http://tranquanghai.multiply.com>

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

Germany

«Ancient Trance 2008» An International Jew's Harp Festival in Germany, Nov 7th-9th in Leipzig

We are happy to announce that there will be the second Ancient Trance Jew's Harp Festival, which will take place from 7th - 9th November in Leipzig, Germany.

Since the success of last year's *Ancient Trance Festival*, where we had a great time, full of beautiful sounds together with many international musicians, Jew's harp enthusiasts and even some guests who saw/heard the Jew's harp for the first time, we were eager to organise the festival again in this year.



Most importantly, we would like to invite you to join our festival to make it another marvelous Jew's harp experience. It is always the spirit of the participants which creates the spirit of a festival.



(above)
CD 'Malaram' cover

This year again, we will invite many great Jew's harpist to play concerts on our stage. There will be workshops, a Jew's harp market and, of course, the notorious open mic jam sessions.

If you have any inquiries about participation as visitor, artist, merchant, etc., please feel free to contact us. More information will be added gradually within the next few weeks on our festivals website:

www.ancient-trance.de

Yours cheerfully,

Clemens Voigt, Sven Otto & The Dan Moi Team



(above)
In 2001, Sylvain Trias initiated his researches thanks to Tran Quang Hai with whom he studied more closely Tuvinian throat singing techniques, especially kargyaa one. He discovered on that occasion the magic of the Jew's harp through the records of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Considering the inexistent previous investigations in that field and the very special singularity of this style, he found then the direction for his University studies in ethnomusicology. He quickly learned from the basics to the highest level with the best players (Tran Quang Hai, Kim Borisov, Mehardeen Khan Langa, Anon Egeland), giving him today a perfect awareness of the instrument's possibilities. Once assimilated all the major well-known styles, he finally focused on the beloved one: the Langa morçang from the Sind

India

Modern popular music from Rajasthan is in a real turmoil. The old Sindi techniques are more and more substituted by South Indian-like styles, much demonstrated and provided for with better visibility for an international public fond of dexterous demonstrations. But the soul of Rajasthan is miles away, concealed in far more subtle forms. These people are the true artists! I have a passion for their music and faithfully try to mimic them in order to understand what they really feel.

Very recently, I travelled to the depths of the Thar desert in Rajasthan, near the Pakistani border, with a single name on a piece of paper: Malaram. After two weeks of investigations, I finally found this exceptional player, who has been given up by the Rajasthani stage. This travelling merchant has developed the absolutely unique style of the Sindi shepherds, learnt from his father. Throughout his life, he has grown richer in all the subtleties of the North Indian popular music that he sumptuously sums up now with each finger stroke. I will release a CD of Malaram's recordings next September, and a large part of the sale's profits will go to Malaram and his family.

This September I will be giving two lectures demonstrating my learnt techniques and research at the next Munnharpeforum festival in Oslo.

Sylvain TRIAS

Italy

The New Ipercussonici Album is OUT! (see review by Lucy Wright – ed). I am always spinning around between concerts and work these days, but I hope I can send you some news next time about a "new" maker I have found in Messina.

Luca Recuperero

Japan

The regional news is as follows;

1. Nihon Koukin Kyoukai [Japan Jew's Harp Association] has released a new CD "Tak-Teke Dancing Mountain Goat: Ooz Komuz (Jew's Harp), Komuz (Lute) and Vocal Music of the Kyrgyz." - Jew's harp music by representing Kyrgyz musicians including Shaken Jorobekova, Süydüm Tölökova and Orozobay Kenchinbaev.

- Jew's harp melodies and its vocal/komuz versions.
- "Whistling" and other special techniques make the listeners hypnotized.
- The recording includes rare stringed wooden Jew's harp ji" gach ooz komuz.
- Old traditional tak-teke dancing goat puppet, which is made to dance by the movement of the player's fingers, is specially featured.
- 25 tracks, 63 minutes in total.
- Field recorded in 2003 and released as a production of the Kyrgyz-Norway-Japan joint project in 2008.
- 32 pages full colour booklet -- introduction by Svein Westad (Chairman of the Norsk Munnharpeforum), track notes by Leo Tadagawa (Chairman of the Japan Jew's Harp Association) both in English and Japanese, and original Kyrgyz song texts.

2. We are happy to announce that there will be the Regional Jew's Harp Festival, which will take place on October 12th and 13th this autumn in Tokyo, Japan. Except many Japanese musicians (including 10 Ainu mukkuri players from Hokkaido) and makers, The Ayarkhaan (Albina Degtyareva's group) from Sakha republic and the Ipercussonici (Luca Recuperero's band) from Sicily are expected to join. According to the budget limitation, we cannot invite anybody fully. If the reader wants to join the Festival, he has to pay the transportation, accommodation and food. Moreover, there will be no honorary. If you still want to join, write to the address below.

3. More academic regional (hopefully Asian) meeting is planned in the end of March 2009.

For more information, write to;

koukin@center.email.ne.jp

Best regards,
Tadagawa Leo

YouTube links

I am HARE of Japan and I play Jew's Harp on YouTube. It is a Movie by a friend taken in my house.

<http://jp.youtube.com/watch?v=BQuEhn7Kw7E>

And the following youtube is from February's Japanese MUKKURI (Bamboo Jew's harp) contest and shows my performance.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gj9LRTiuSK4>

Hare Daisuke

Museum and Pyramid

I research and write about the relationships between sound analysis of Jew's harps and functional anatomy of articulators.

I am a member of Jews Harp Society in Hokkaido, and I show my works and Jew's harp collection at the museum. I have studied the sound of Jew's harp for eight years.



DAN MOI

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www.danmoi.de

advertisement

When I was Dean of our school until March 31, 2008, I was too busy to write an article for the Newsletter and journal, though once I sent an article about Mukkuri. This year, I will continue as Dean of the Centre for Higher Education in our University, so I may find time to write. In my school, I have taught seven students to write papers on studies on the phonetic use of Jew's harps and have organized two concerts for Kim Borisov, playing with him on four occasions..

If you visit Sapporo, please contact me.

sincerely

*Kazuhiro Abe, M.D., Ph.D.
Professor of Anatomy and Histology*

(right)
Pyramid
Courtesy of
Kazuhiro Abe



(below)
ethnomusicology,
professor Valdis
Muktupavels informed
us shortly about Jew's
harp history in Latvia.
Photos courtesy of
Zane Smite



Latvia Riga, May 2008

Franz Kumlpl invited me to take part in a Jew's Harp Festival in Riga, May 2008.

I was to give a class together with Aron Szilagyi from Hungary and to also give a concert. The manager of this festival, Latvian organiser, Zane Smite, took great trouble to make the stage an event as joyful as possible for us, and thanks to her excellent arrangements the days in Riga were indeed a great experience for all.

Aron and I arrived on the same plane on May 1st and were picked up by Zane and her husband at Riga airport. They took us to our hotel, and throughout the trip we talked about Latvia, politics and the music scene. Aron recognised some parallels between Latvia and his home country, Hungary. As an Austrian both were so interesting that I preferred to listen. I only added that in my country there are also many woods, we love drinking beer as well, love music – and our flag is also red and white. So in some way we all are neighbours and we got along pretty well.

The hotel turned out to be quite cosy and comfortable enough and we soon went off to our "base camp", a nice restaurant with good meals and fine beer where the Latvian hosts took care of our nutrition throughout the whole time. Zane explained us our schedule for the festival, and Aron and I were amazed about the perfect organisation since we both know it can be difficult.

Zane introduced us to Aija Rozentala and Ilmars Pumpurs, Aija translated from Latvian into the English language for us and Ilmars was responsible for the financial part of the festival. There was some spare time after taking lunch so Aron and I went for a walk through the beautiful old town of Riga. We already know each other from the International Jew's Harp Festival in Amsterdam where we first met. The day passed by soon. In the evening Aron and I began

playing Jew's harp together, a spontaneous rehearsal for the day and concert to come.

On Friday May 2nd at 9 a.m. Zane, her daughter and Aija opened the festival with an a cappella folksong in Latvian, sung in the ancient traditional style. Zane is teaching singing at university.

With this song everybody woke up finally, with so much vitality it was sung!

First topic of the day was the History of the Jew's Harp, especially concerning Latvian tradition, presented by a professor from Riga music university. Before the communist era, the Jew's harp was wide spread and well-known in Latvia. Now, after almost having vanished, it is having its renaissance – since lots of the younger generation have again started playing it. In my own lecture I was talking about playing practise, traditions, techniques and how to notate Jew's harp tunes.

I accompanied my lecture on the Jew's harp in order to demonstrate the acoustic part of it, aiming at making theory as lucid as possible for the audience. I also explained how one can work on music for Jew's harp in general (different tunes, rhythms etc.). Knowing this can help you arrange your own folk tunes on the Jew's harp. My lecture mostly covered the theoretical part. Aija Rozentala was translating directly and exactly so that the audience could benefit from the information by simply listening.

Aron then gave a practical workshop for beginners and showed "face to face" how to play Jew's harp. He also made reference to my former explanations and thereby built the bridge between theory and musical practise. The participants, most of them young students, quickly learned the basic techniques and we all were having fun together.



Afterwards we all went to the house where the concert should take place, a sound check was necessary beforehand. Two young professional DJ's took care of the sound engineering this evening - the concert was wonderful!

A family trio began by playing the bagpipes, drums, flutes and "kokle" – an ancient Latvian instrument, similar to our zither, whose sound is beautiful. Played by the hands of 20-year-old student Laima Jansone, it just sounds breath-taking...! Laima studies song and composition with Zane Smite, and started playing the kokle instructed by her mother's in early childhood. The instrument is a reconstruction, built by her father

(right)
Too long classes for
child, but too short for
every player...
Photos courtesy of
Zane Smite

who is an archaeologist of ancient music, dealing with the construction and playing of archaic instruments. After Laima, Aron played amazing solo pieces on the Jew's harp his father made (the famous Hungarian Jew's harp smith Zoltán Szilágyi). Characteristic for his pieces are the strong beats, once whipping up, once powerfully supporting the sound. This sound is colourful, rich, spontaneous – a typical Hungarian firework!

(right)
Wolf and Aron were delighted with Latvian traditional instrument kokles and kokles player Laima Jansone. Photos courtesy of Zane Smite



I played after Aron, and I presented my own compositions – some of which I'm going to publish on my new album "Sulfur" this fall. At the end we played some extra pieces together in a duet.

The evening was rounded up with red wine and a nice buffet.

Later on it turned pretty joyful in the upper part of the building. Ilmars, Aron, me and other musicians spontaneously started a jam session, Aija began to dance and others joined. One song after the other was played, people were dancing and the ambiance was jolly without any further drinks. By chance a musician was there who plays Hungarian music – she called her friends, all members of the same band, and Zane organized another room for us where the celebration continued the Hungarian way: lots of dancing and singing!!!

(right)
The after-party. Photos courtesy of Zane Smite



(far top right)
The after after-party. Photos courtesy of Zane Smite

(below)
Garfield cartoon
Sent by Harm J. Linsen



I played the drums and also improvised some pieces with Laima Jansone on Jew's harp and kokle – those two instruments sound well together due to the kokle



Five hours later I was already on my way back on the airplane. I am more than happy that everything went that fine and that we all had such a great joy making music together. Again and again I realize that music is the language that people speak all over the world... and the Jew's harp is one of the most international instruments!!!

*Stay tuned,
Wolf Janscha*

Footnote:

More information about my **Solo Jew's Harp CD "Sulfur"**, about my style and Jew's harp notation will be available from autumn 2008 on at my website: www.wolfsonium.com

The Netherlands

Rock n' Roll Jew's Harp: Antenna Tony Monorail
Antenna Tony Monorail is the musical alter ego of Anthony Glass, a Jew's Harper based in Amsterdam. Accompanying himself on harmonicas, percussions, a small suitcase with a kick-pedal and of course various Jew's harps, he sings short, bluesy songs of love, life, death, travelling and haunted hills (among other things). The music can be described as rock n' roll in it's most basic form: rhythmical, gritty, to the point – and 100% live. Past performances include opening slots for Bob Log III and Damo Suzuki (formerly of Can).

Last May, "Antenna" was at Hermann Blaupunkt's Casa Cassette studios in Eindhoven (NL), where he recorded a number of new tracks. You can hear some of these recordings on the website (www.myspace.com/antennatonymonorail). The song "Too Fierce for the Town" will also be included in an 7-inch vinyl EP to be released later this year.

The other songs are my 'theme tune', "Ride the Monorail", and two more tracks from the recording session that won't be on the EP.

I've had shows in Holland, Switzerland, and hopefully soon in Finland. My aim is to have a more RnR oriented approach to the harp, and I hope to reach a broad audience. My release won't be out in time for the new magazine, but if you are interested in running some kind of article, I'd be more than happy to send any material that might be of use to you. I was meaning to send you a copy of the EP anyway.

Anthony Glass

Patentprints

There is a company that sells vintage patentprints. Among those also the patentprints of Dusinger and Harry Pidgeon and I guess from the other patents as well, they're new prints on 'old' paper.

<http://stores.ebay.com.sg/Patent-Artwork-and-Manual-Reprints>

Yours, Harm J. Linsen

Dear Jew's harp lover,

On request there can be heard some short fragments/parts of the CD-sequence
"THE UNDERGROUND SESSIONS"

Part 1 and Part 2

by the Dutch

Jew's harp Trio

TRIO AUBERGINE

try it out on your own, ,

Visit: <http://www.myspace.com/mondharptriboaubergine>

Phons Bakx, on behalf of Trio Aubergine



(right)
Trio Aubergine in concert.
Photo courtesy of Phons Bakx

Nepal

Starting in December 2007, the Murchunga Munch Nepal (Nepal Jew's Harp Society), which involves musicians of different backgrounds, organised a workshop 'Murchunga Utsav,' at Lalit Kala Campus, the Fine Art College located at Bhotahiti, Kathmandu, with the aim of encouraging students to study and research the traditional music of Nepal by providing a scholarship.

3rd year Bachelor degree students of Music department were taught how to play Murchunga, developing their technique for an upcoming competition to decide who would be awarded the scholarship in the music field. At the same time students from the Sculpture department and students of Painting Department created work inspired by the instrument. At the end of December there was selection of three students for a scholarship from each of the subjects i.e. Music, Painting and Sculpture. This took place on Tuesday 25th December and congratulations go to the winners; Radha Rai (Music), Santosh Maharjan (Painting) and Kedar Maka (Sculpture) who were nominated for the scholarship.

On 26th December, just two days before winter vacation, there was a Student Welcome Program in the college, The President of Student Union, Mr Lal Kaji Lama welcomed our Murchunga Utsav initiative and the closing ceremony for Murchunga Utsav was merged with the Student Welcome Program. The chief guest was the Campus Chief, Mr Govinda Dangol and other guests included J B Tuhure (General Manager) and Sanskrit Samsthan (National Theatre), plus Department heads Mr Rabin Lal Shrestha (Music);

(far right - left to right)
Luciano Perez; Daniel O Pando; Emilio O Pando (great player); John Wright; César Fernandez; Natalia Regueiro; Xuacu Amieva.
Photo by & courtesy of Carlos Real

Mr. Hriday Ballabh (Sculpture); Mr Surendra Raj Bhattra (Painting); SB Shah (Folk music Teacher at the college) and Sushil Gautam (President MMN) The Murchunga painting and sculpture exhibition continued until Friday 28 December.

The result has been the establishment of Folk Music Instrument Scholarship. The Murchunga Munch Nepal will provide a scholarship every year to a student from the Department of Music for the study of the murchunga at Bachelor level.

For the 2nd Murchunga Utsav there will be links to mobile phone users, who will be asked to use the best tune created by traditional Nepalese musical instruments on their mobile, because we are all proud to hear traditional sounds on our mobile.

*Sushil Gautam
President*

*Murchunga Munch Nepal
Putalisadak, Kathmandu*

For details contact:

01 4443560 or Mob. 9803005949

Norway

One of Norway's largest folk music festival, included a small trump section - five musicians from three continents - Svein Westad, Shaken Jorobekova (Kyrgyz), Li Wang (China), Madosini (S. Africa) and I will met there. Report next time.

<http://www.fordefestival.no/>

*Best regards,
Tadagawa Leo*

Spain

On the 31st of May 2008 the second congress of *tocadores de trompa* (trump players) was organised at Fonsagrada, in the province of Galicia, Northern Spain by the piping society, La Asociación de Gaiteiros Galegos. Fonsagrada straddles the Asturian frontier and is on the Santiago pilgrimage route.

Both players and makers were there and both represent magnificent and unique traditions. The Galician *trompa* is unusual in that the metal tongue is held in the frame by a small wedge after the fashion of a Norwegian *munnharp*, but apart from that the instrument is very different. The last maker was thought to be Otilio Álvarez who was present at the first conference in Lugo five years ago and has since died; however Oliverio Fernández was waiting in the wings and his work is quite magnificent.

The playing tradition is mainly in the hands of Emilio do Pando, a local farmer who is equally a *gaiteiro* and an excellent percussionist whilst his nephew, Daniel o Pando is keeping up the *trompa* tradition, but is also interested in modern playing styles.



Thanks to Belén Garcia for the references and web links

<http://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/hemeroteca/2003/03/13/1546318.shtml>

http://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/lugo/2008/05/27/0003_6853079.htm

<http://elprogreso.galiciae.com/nova/11463.html>

(excellent pic of Galician *trompa*)

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

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciI2cwz4ttE&search=fonsagrada>

And for good measure -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVxa-4vz9eo>

John Wright

UK

Membership to the IoNAJHA gradually increases – we’re now over the 50 member mark. New members include Peter Hope-Evans of Medicine Head – I suggest linking to his website <http://www.peterhope-evans.co.uk/>.

After a fair amount of negotiation, Whitby Folk Week have agreed to The Wright family performing at a concert, asked me to give workshops, run a quiet instruments session and give an illustrated talk ‘Magic, Murder & Mayhem’ based on the article ‘The Jew’s Harp in the Law’, published by the Folk Music Journal last November – soon to be reprinted in the IJHS Journal. Members of the IONAJHA will also meet to discuss the next festival we intend to hold next year, so more news next time.

The Galpin Society Journal have also commissioned me to write an article on the Jew’s harp in Colonial America, which has been accepted, though their comments have not yet been received, so I’ve no idea how much more there is to do.

Lucy Wright continues to record and film players in the UK in particular, though will be travelling again to Asia in the final year of her MA at SOAS.



(right)
The Wright Family recording at SOAS
left to right: John; Lucy; Michael; David.
Photos courtesy of Jeremy Glasgow

Finally, The Wright Family has recorded the first part of their CD and are working on a number of smaller group arrangements, which we hope will be out in the not too distant future – though we’re discovering the distance between the idea and the reality!

Michael Wright

USA

The Jew’s Harp Guild Online Newsletter has been updated (now in .pdf format) at:

<http://www.jewsharpguild.org/jhgnews.pdf>

Please feel free to print and distribute the newsletter to your friends.

This issue includes:

- 16th. Annual North American Jew's Harp Festival (NAJHF) announcement
- A Word from the Executive Director – A tribute to Velma Bilyeu
- CD Review ORGANICA
- Evan Fraser Bulletin Board - ID this Jew's Harp
- NAJHF 2008 Schedule

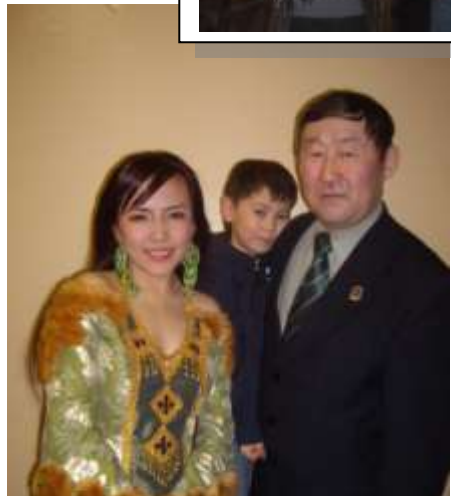
Images .hot from the festival:



PictureGallery

Clockwise from top left: opening ceremony; At the entrance to "Centre and museum of khomus (trump) of the people of the world", with Ivan Alexeev"; Spiridon Shishigin with grandson and trance-techno khomusist, who is singing Spiridon's poems; farewell party; IJHF-posters in the background; Minus 47 with Rimma Madvarova, Ivan Alexeev and Roman Gotovtsev; Having the honour to play with Ivan Alexeev and Spiridon Shishigin; museum staff; Revival of the group "Algys" after 20 years; Ayarkhaa.

Photos courtesy of Franz Kuml



IJHS Goes Live!

We are delighted to announce that the IJHS website is now accessible. This site is our first step on the internet giving basic information on who we are, what we do and how to join. It should evolve to be a good starting point for Jew's harp enthusiasts.

Although the page is still static we are hoping you will contribute with your musical findings, news about the instrument, strange Jew's harp inventions. This, though, will rely on finding volunteers to monitor what's coming in, so any web-buffs willing to give up their time would be appreciated.

Click on the site below and explore. (feedback is also appreciated)

So, from now its easy to join and pay your subs – just click on the 'Add to cart' and follow the instructions. Newsletters will be posted on the site from now on and we are looking at member access to previous issues of the Journal.

This is a major step for the Society and could not have happened without the work put in by Danibal. We would also like to thank Gerben Schmidt and Micha Zee for their input and cooperation in setting the site up.

Access to the site for the time being will be <http://www.widgetwell.com/internationaljewsharpsociety>, but we hope before long to transfer to the domain jewsharp.org in the very near future – so look out for further announcements.

Michael Wright

and the well positioned 'Boz Salkin' komuz solo is breathtaking. A personal favourite is 'Ala-Too kayriktari', solo temir komuz played by the wonderful Shaken Jorobekova, which is simply stunning, with the characteristic whistling vibrato.

There is a gentle, but persuasive tone to this music, almost familiar, but unique, it takes you on many journeys.

Ipercussionici - Tutti Pari

This is an album which has been passed around my friends since i was sent it last month. It's full of energy and passion, and makes you want to move, with primal force. For me, it's the ultimate festival sound (I would have loved to see them at Airvault last year) which somehow avoids the studio stasis of some great live band's recordings. It still has that stamp your feet, heart-pounding urgency and quirky spontaneity which leaves you only to imagine what this band in performance must be like...

Tutti Pari translates as "Everybody all together. All equal." One of the things that's so great about this album is that the jews harp holds its own amongst so many other instruments. Ipercussionici's sound combines elements of many musical cultures, from djembe to dij, but is also uniquely Sicilian. The tamburello frame drum was a particular highlight for me.

This is a great example of the diversity and versatility of the jews harp in performance, as well as of the amazing music coming out of Sicily!

Lucy Wright

CDReviews



Tak Teke: Dancing Mountain Goat

Ooz Komuz Komuz and vocal music of the Kyrgyz

Last year I was sent the Norwegian munnharpe compilation album 'Fille Vern' and was surprised at how much some of the melodies sounded like the Kyrgyz temir komuz music I was hearing snippets of in my Ethnomusicology classes. Having been sent 'Tak Teke,' an album showcasing Kyrgyz playing, I can now make the same observation in reverse!

This is a beautiful album, both in content and presentation, coming with highly informative and sumptuously illustrated sleeve notes which I have found very helpful in understanding more of the context to these performances and providing comment on the aforementioned inter-continental similarity. It is so nice to hear the temir komuz alongside the komuz (lute) in several of the tracks, particularly 'The Ker Ozon River' and Sarinji and Bokoy' which are truly evocative,

AndFinally...

Letters to the editor

(Harm Linsen responds to the Feature Article in the last issue).

I agree that the IJHS should be prepared for the future. Even when all is going well right now there are always issues like: who and what we are and what are our goals; how do we want to reach these goals. Do we want to be in the picture and how do we want that to look. All of that, I hope, is to be found in the articles of the association. The way you organize stuff like that is ever limited to the activities you want to deploy. An example in that respect is the attempt to get funding from the European Union for an exchange project between the Russian Federation and European National Societies that didn't succeed (*NIJHS 5, 'boardmatters'*). Although I can't say that this is the cause in this particular case it might have flipped the coin the other way if issues like these were absolutely clear.

How to present this is another thing, you can't simply say to your members 'go and multiply' as was the message not that long ago as we (speaking for myself) Catholics left mass (although I'm too young to have experienced that for I was born after the council of prelates of 1961). For myself I am glad that there will be a website on behalf of the IJHS. Ever since I discovered the internet and search engines I miss something like that. For instance I knew there had been

You can now subscribe to the Society that promotes one of the world's most diverse musical instruments ONLINE! Just click on 'Membership' and follow the instructions.

International Jew's Harp Festivals and I always intended when there is one in the neighbourhood to attend one. It was only by accident via the French site guimbardage.net that I learned that there was one in my own country! It's very important that when someone's interest is aroused he or she can still his or her thirst by searching the internet.

Recognisability (is that English?) in the way of a brand or logo is very important as well. It is also very important to choose something for life. The national ethnographic museum I work for in Leiden, the Netherlands, changed their name not that long ago because they wanted to look more modern. So they changed their name to the Ethnografic Museum Leiden. What was an institute now suddenly one of the many ethnographical museums. First they changed all the paper with paper that had the new logo. And now they discover that no-one knows the new name and they start an expensive campaign to get the name familiarized. Personally I think that the logo for the IoNAJHA is a strong one, it's simple, recognisable and clear. The IJHS logo needs in that respect a little more studying but once familiarised with it you know what it's all about. A logo like that ought to be present on everything you do, the newsletter, Emails on behalf of the society, advertisements in local newspapers when a festival is organised and on the clothes (buttons or prints) of those who interact on behalf of the society during an event. People have to recognise it and want to identify themselves with it. In respect of identification I think every member should have a copy of the articles of the association and when lost they should be able to find those articles easily. (on a special spot on the IJHS website for example)

When identification is a fact you can also think of quality brands in which you want standardised qualities for all kinds of products but in our case mainly jew's harps. For this you need to work out some quality standards on one side and manufacturers who want to identify themselves with an IJHS and comply to such standards on the other. A close cooperation between all the parties to establish standards like that is imperative. With this the IJHS enters the world of professionalism, and to keep up standards you'll have to verify them on a regular basis. There have to be sanctions whenever your quality brand is miss-used or when a standard is not met by the manufacturer with whom you have an agreement on those standards. For that a legal basis of those standards is also required.

An organisation like ours is (the word organisation implies such already) an organic entity which means it is constantly subject to changes. So it's perfectly okay when all is well that you keep it like it is but be prepared for new developments. When they come you have to deploy new developments yourself and thus stay ahead of the game

To be honest I don't know how to see these Take Home Messages. Maybe I would have chosen other messages but frankly I haven't studied them too well. But what I like about them and what I would give other participants in this discussion to ponder on is that they keep us with both feet on the ground. Especially the first THM which states that the instrument we're all full of is just another instrument amongst I don't know how many other instruments.

Cordially,

Harm J. Linsen

NoticeBoard

Two requests for funding. Any offers can be passed on via the NIJHS editor.

Do you think that may be some interest in the IJHS to fund a little book about "THE JEW'S HARP PRESENCE AT SOUTH AMERICA", with all my works about this subject, those that I have published at VIM, the published in the Journal, and unpublished pictures that also I have???

José Luis Pignocchi

---oOo---

I am looking for some financial help to edit my CD of Malarum and other CDs of my same collection **hear&now**

hear&now's aim is to promote as large as possible the talented, isolated artists, whose tradition is almost universally unknown to the rest of the world, and is sometimes already in decline. Far from the idea of making profits from them, this collection tries to help the artists. Without any fees from them, an album represents a visiting card allowing them to apply for performance opportunities abroad. A large part of the sale benefits for these records will be distributed to the performers themselves and their family.

Sylvain Trias

I would like to introduce our CDs to the readers of the Newsletter.

jun ogawa

MUSIC CD SERIES



1st Album, "ODE TO MOTHER EARTH" released in both of Japan and Philippines, 2005. It is a maiden recording intended to record a series of ethnic sounds from the Philippine Archipelago. This is a combination of Cordillera and Mindanao ethnical patterns fused with guitar and other modern musical instruments. ODE TO MOTHER EARTH is exploratory in nature with Kalinga Bamboo musical instruments and tune with Kalinga Bamboo musical instruments and tune as base. Of course including of jewsharp "Kullifao". Featuring by EDGAR BANASAN. Studio recording (15 songs 47 min. recorded. Price \$ 20)

2nd album FOGGA released by Pagoch this year 2008 music in the Philippines. FOGGA literally means transmitting an important message or an announcement for everyone in a community to know and act. Musical instruments used by GONGS & BAMBOO and CHANTING.

This CD also Kalinga music, by EDGAR BANASAN with FOGGA group. Studio recording (17 songs 47min. \$ 20 – 20% will donate to bamboo plants project)

Contact e-mail; pagoch_k@msn.com pagoch music Japan or fogga002@yahoo.com pagoch music Philippines