

# FLUTE

*zine*

A MOM & POP PUBLICATION  
*just for the love of it*  
*a zine with sound - so turn it up!*

DELIVERING YOUR QUASI-QUARTERLY DOSE  
OF "GOOD-FOR-YOU" FLUTE SYRUP  
ONE GALAXY AT A TIME! FZ Fluteship

😊 written by human  
not by AI

YEAH, WE KNOW  
... IT MAKES NO SENSE.

Clint Goss

Vera Shanov

Crystal Ramirez

Ami Sarasvati



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Image on the Cover:

Fluteship with Jeff at the helm created by Tina Burris

Paper Bag Photo by Calum Lewis on Unsplash

All art and design work by Tina Burris unless otherwise noted

Clint Goss and Vera Shanov, Photo credit: Jeffrey Celdran

Crystal Ramirez, Photo Credit: Dawn Leith Dougherty

Ami Sarasvati, Photo Credit: NA



# FROM THE DESKS OF JEFF & TINA BURRIS



**H**ello everyone! Thank you again for taking the time out of your busy day to check out our Flutezine. It truly means

ing on a sci-fi piece for a graphic design class of mine, and thought “hey, a flute sure looks a lot like a rocket!” I thought it would be a loving gift for Jeff with him being a sci-fi buff. Yes, that’s him at the helm. I told him, “you can’t say that I never gave you anything! You have your very own fluteship now!”

the world to us! As always, we hope you enjoy these quasiquarterly doses! And when we say quasi quarterly, we mean quasi-quarterly!

This 3rd Flutezine dose is only 12 or so days past the quarterly mark, but who’s counting, right? With one internship, a mural for an ape sanctuary (still in



**T**hank you again to all of you for your support and as always, if you have any comments or inquiries, please feel free to reach out to us at [Flutezine@gmail.com](mailto:Flutezine@gmail.com).

the works out in the heat of the Florida sun), a beloved pet’s eyeball turning gray overnight (he’s OK now), and one threatening hurricane, we’re grateful to have made it!

**M**uch love to all of you from the both of us!

**W**e’ve added a mascot to our little zine - the green FZ Fluteship! He came about a bit by accident. I (Tina here) was work-



# CLINT GOSS & VERA SHANOV - PRECEDING NAMES, INDEED!

## SHARING IS CARING

There are some that are born with the proclivity to effortlessly absorb and retain abundant amounts of knowledge, but there are some that are born with the same proclivity who choose to generously organize and share that knowledge

with the world. It is truly such a privilege and an honor to be able to feature in this dose of Flute-zine two of the most influential people in our flute communi-

ty. Somehow though, after being given the green light to dive further into the lives of these two amazing people, a sense of inadequacy pangs at the back of the author's head. Their combined bios read like something out of a science fiction/action novel. We're not sure when they find the time to do all that they do, but we owe a huge amount of thanks and gratitude to these two beautiful people for their huge contributions! What have these two not accomplished during their time on this planet? Well, maybe, just maybe, they have not yet accomplished the death defying feat of the trapeze act



Clint and Vera in Sanur, Indonesia, June 8, 2017. Photo credit: Jeffre Celdran.

without a net, but hey, Clint did obtain an FAA flight instructor and commercial pilot certification and they have both adventurously participated in a good number of road rallies, so perhaps that's close enough?! A good Wikipedia definition, for those unaware, "Rallying is a wide-rang-

ing form of motorsport with various competitive motoring elements such as speed tests (often called "rally racing"), navigation tests, or the ability to reach waypoints or a desti-

nation at a prescribed time or average speed." It takes quite a bit of skill and savvy to compete in one of these, as one can imagine.

## THE RESUMES THAT JUST KEEP ON GIVING

Clint and Vera met while studying at NYU and married in 1982, eventually settling down in Westport, CT. This seems like the standard fair for humans, right? Know this: There is nothing commonplace about Clint and Vera. Together, they are a formidable power house! Clint brings to the table a Computer Science background

which, without a doubt, comes in handy in the course of sharing their wealth of knowledge across the World Wide Web. And how intuitive of Clint to get into this field when he did! He has worked as a software development and Internet technologies consultant



Workshop Group in Phoenixville, PA., October 17, 2009; Photo credit: Ron Greenberg.

for 36 years. He also served as an expert witness in patent dispute cases in the U.S. and Israel. Vera brings to the table an MBA in marketing and has worked for fortune 500 companies “such as General Foods, Diageo, and PGA Tour.” She also taught as a professor at the State University of New York, and they have both traveled the world providing their computer knowledge and teaching skills to “tech and teaching projects in developing and under-developed countries.”

## SOULFULLY INTWINED, MUSICALLY INCLINED

In their travels they have acquired quite the collection of instruments and have

gained a deep appreciation for ethnic flutes in particular. Who says computer geeks have no musical soul? Well, maybe no one has ever actually said that, but these two

would prove any inclination of that entirely wrong. As their love of music continued to grow, Clint “learned music facilitation by shadowing David Darling for 4 years facilitating music workshops.” They have both taken considerable advantage of this background by way of the “110+ multi-day Native Flute and general music workshops they have facilitated on 5 continents since 2001.” It is said that they “bring out the musical potential in all participants, focusing on techniques that make music expression accessible to players with all levels of musical experience.”





## CONNECTING PURPOSES, CONNECTING FLIGHTS

If one were to carefully study the lives of Mr. Goss and Mrs. Shanov, it might be discovered that many of their individual achievements eventually end



Vera Shanov - Photo credit: Clint Goss; September 7, 2004.

up working in tandem with one another, serving as a platform to an all-together new purpose. It is said that Vera's Marketing background really helps

her to know her audience and she "encourages flute players to expand their musical repertoire of styles so that they can serve a wider audience." If you've never seen Vera facilitate one of their flute workshops, she really knows how to take charge

of a room, such a vibrant and charismatic personality! She is also "fluent in Russian and has a working knowledge of Spanish," which is certainly instrumental in reaching out to a larger audience. Vera is also the heartbeat of these workshops, providing the rhythm and the timing, keeping the sweet melody



VeraShanov on the Djembe; October 8, 2003; Armadillo Flute Circle gathering in Flower Mound, TX. Photo credit: Clint Goss;


of the flute on course. Together, their cultural knowledge is most definitely well-rounded, to say the very least. Their technology development projects, which gave them both a front row ticket to see the world, started in the late nineties. Clint and Vera have been practically every where in the world. Are you ready for this? This is their list of

countries visited: "Zimbabwe, Calcutta, Tokyo, Namibia, Bulgaria-



Clint Goss jamming with a couple of local Tuareg men in Ouarzazate, Morocco, April 20, 2007. Photo credit: Vera Shanov

ia (twice), Russia, Republic of Georgia (twice), Kenya, Honduras, Zambia, Palestine, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, Jordan, Jerusalem, Korea (North and South), Laos, the Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Myanmar (Burma), New Zealand, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, the Ukraine, the UAE, Uruguay, and Vietnam.” They have even created an online site to help “potential skilled advisors” navigate through all the difficulties involved in finding international projects to lend their services to, [www.interopp.org](http://www.interopp.org). This is also just one more example of that proclivity of theirs to want to share their knowledge to help others. Additionally, these international projects are just more examples of how Clint and Vera’s achievements tie so nicely together, referring to Clint’s Ph.D. in Computer Science and Vera’s teaching experience.



I'm sorry, Clint.  
I'm afraid I can't  
play flute.

ABCDEFGH . . . ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

We’re assuming that these two work and play in their sleep. That’s the only logical explanation for these massive amounts of accomplishments. Clint even has under his belt, publications on “compiler optimization, graph theory, quantitative metrics of physiology – ‘a branch of systems biology’, and music facilitation” They also have more than 30 CDs under their Manifest Spirit label. In case you’re wondering what “compiler optimization” is – “In computing, an optimizing compiler is a compiler that tries to minimize or maximize some attributes of an executable computer program.” Yeah, we can’t believe anyone

would not know this! Doesn't everyone know this? One of the first discoveries of their intensive dedication to our precious flute community began with the gold-mine-find, [Flutopedia.com](http://Flutopedia.com), which Clint has worked tirelessly on for well over a decade or more now. For anyone that has not yet stumbled across or been introduced to this site yet, it's an immense treasure trove of resources (understatement) for anyone in the Native American flute community. Whether you're a player, a maker, or simply a Native American flute enthusiast, this is your go-to site for delving deep into this subject matter. As Jeff puts it, "Flutopedia has made available some of the most important and exhaustive information and tools that one could possibly ever need in their flute playing and flute appreciation journey, and it's always there for reference." We are positive that we will miss something here. In presenting to you the "mathematical truth" of their existence, their combined output of goodness falls somewhere in the realm of 'off the charts,' and we only have so much room to fit all this goodness within these measly 2 columned pages! This sort of human

output should lead anyone to ask "are they from another planet" or at least ask "where are they from and what is their history?"

## HISSTORY, HERSTORY

Vera's story, as she proclaims it to be, "is one of SELF- DETERMINATION!" Her mother was Ukrainian and her dad was Belorussian. "You can imagine how that would play out in today's world events!", Vera says. Her parents met in a Displaced Persons Camp in Germany shortly after WWII, "when the Soviet Union existed." As fate would have it, they would meet again in New York "at a New Year's Eve party", after having been "sponsored to come to the USA." Vera continues, "they fell in love, married, and had my sister and I. To them, America was the land of opportunity and they worked hard to make a better life for themselves and their family. As a result, I am fluent in Russian." In fact, Vera is quite fluent in Russian. She can, ". . . read, write, and SING in Russian!" Who would not love to hear this? Note to self: must find recording of this!





Vera celebrates her mother's 90th birthday!

Here we see Vera giving a life review of her mother's life, "she is the dark-haired beauty sitting behind me," Vera points out. She continues, "The photo I am pointing to, is of my mom, dad, and my sister and myself. I am the baby in my mom's lap!" Vera explains that her mother passed away in 2019, before Covid reared its ugly head, "so she didn't have to go through that horror!" Vera goes on to explain how important education was in her family and that her parents "scrimped and saved" and sent her to NYU, where she achieved her MBA in Marketing. She lovingly proclaims that the "best bonus" was meeting Clint, "who was studying for his PhD in computers." Vera goes on to reminisce about her post college years when she found herself working for those fortune 500 companies mentioned earlier and about her time spent as a State University of New York

Professor. "This is where the self-determination comes around...where we focus on what we want out of life...we combined Clint's flute talent, and my teaching experience to teach music workshops around the world!" Vera adds, "AND LIFE IS FUN!" And to "pay it forward," Vera and Clint have sponsored a second cousin of Vera's who is from the Ukraine to come to the U.S. Vera concludes "... and complete the circle of self determination!".

Clint's family tree is by no means any less rich in its history. Clint proclaims, "One interesting tidbit I found in a genealogy search a few years ago is that I'm a direct descendant on my dad's side of the Hutchinson family singers, who became rather famous as the earliest protest singers in the U.S. They were a big deal - sang at the White House at the same time as singing protest songs about abolition and protesting Congress and the Mexican American war." It is written that the Hutchinson family "sang in four-part harmony a repertoire of political, social, comic, sentimental and dramatic works."



Hutchinson family, 1845

He continues, “On my mom’s side of the family, my great uncle (James Verlotte) immigrated from Italy and wound up doing well enough playing accordion to bring over ‘the whole family’, as I was told. My Aunt played piano recreationally. She learned piano in a typical childhood lesson program, and that was ‘OK’, but then she wanted to have more fun so she took some lessons in ‘stride’ playing. It enabled her to read a



James Verlotte, 1920s

lead sheet and play any popular song on the spot - making her a big hit at parties. She had a ball! Clint goes on to recall his High School clarinet teacher, Lenny Portnoy. “He was great - played Dixieland with a band and I saw him perform once - unbelievable chops! Wrote a song ‘Portnoy Lives’ that I’ve performed in concert with Peter Dubner, my piano guy.”



Leonard Portnoy,  
Fordham Prep Yearbook, 1971



Clint Goss “sitting in with a Tuesday-night Blues Band .”

## CURRENT DIRECTIONS FOR CLINT

“Over the last two years, I have-  
branched out from physical Native  
American flutes to electronic ones. I  
obtained an electronic wind instru-  
ment – called a Sylphyo - from a small  
producer in France, worked with them  
to get Native flute fingerings into the  
instrument. I now play this electronic  
version of a Native American flute in  
music gigs and concerts. I also devel-  
oped sample libraries based on nine of  
my contemporary and historic Native  
flutes so that the electronic flute can  
sound like the real  
thing. These sound libraries are freely  
distributed under an Open Source li-  
cense at [Flutopedia.com/soundlib.htm](http://Flutopedia.com/soundlib.htm).

I have also developed an Open Source  
font collection that provides every  
character in every human language.  
This serves many smaller language  
communities that have difficulty writing  
in their own language because of lack  
of suitable fonts. This project is freely  
available at [Kurinto.com](http://Kurinto.com). ‘Kurinto’ is  
how Japanese speakers pronounce my  
name, so I adopted that as the name for  
my font library.”

## CURRENT DIRECTIONS FOR VERA

“There is an old Russian proverb; ‘life  
will show you how to live it!’ So, in  
terms of what the future holds.....you  
just gotta wait, and enjoy the ride. I am  
a definite gym rat: pilates, swimming,  
spin class, yoga, etc. and i am bless-  
ed to work as a SUB (substitute, when  
they need help, like if employees go on  
vacation) at the westport YMCA  
where i work at the membership desk  
or in KIDS CLUB, playing/supervising  
the adorable 2-4 year olds while their  
parents work out. Nothing puts you in a  
good mood like drawing with little kids,  
or reading stories (where OF COURSE I  
act out all the voices in the story!!)  
As i said before....life is good, and i’m  
very blessed!”



Contemporary Myanmar and Historic Pyu  
scripts at the National Museum of Myanmar, Yangon, December  
2018. Photo: Vera Shanov)





Clint Goss, Photo credit: Chris Weitzer;  
Graphics processing: Julie Weber



Vera Shanov putting in some studio time,  
1/9/2009, Photo Credit: Clint Goss



Vera Shanov - KenyaCallReponse;  
1/27/2004, A Village west of Nairobi, Kenya  
Graphics processing: Julie Weber



Clint Goss facilitating floor exercise,  
Photo Credit: Jörg Otto, 1/20/2014; Tapu



Clint Goss - Therapeutic Music in Tokyo, Japan  
1/24/2016, Photo Credit: Vera Shanov

[clint@goss.com](mailto:clint@goss.com)

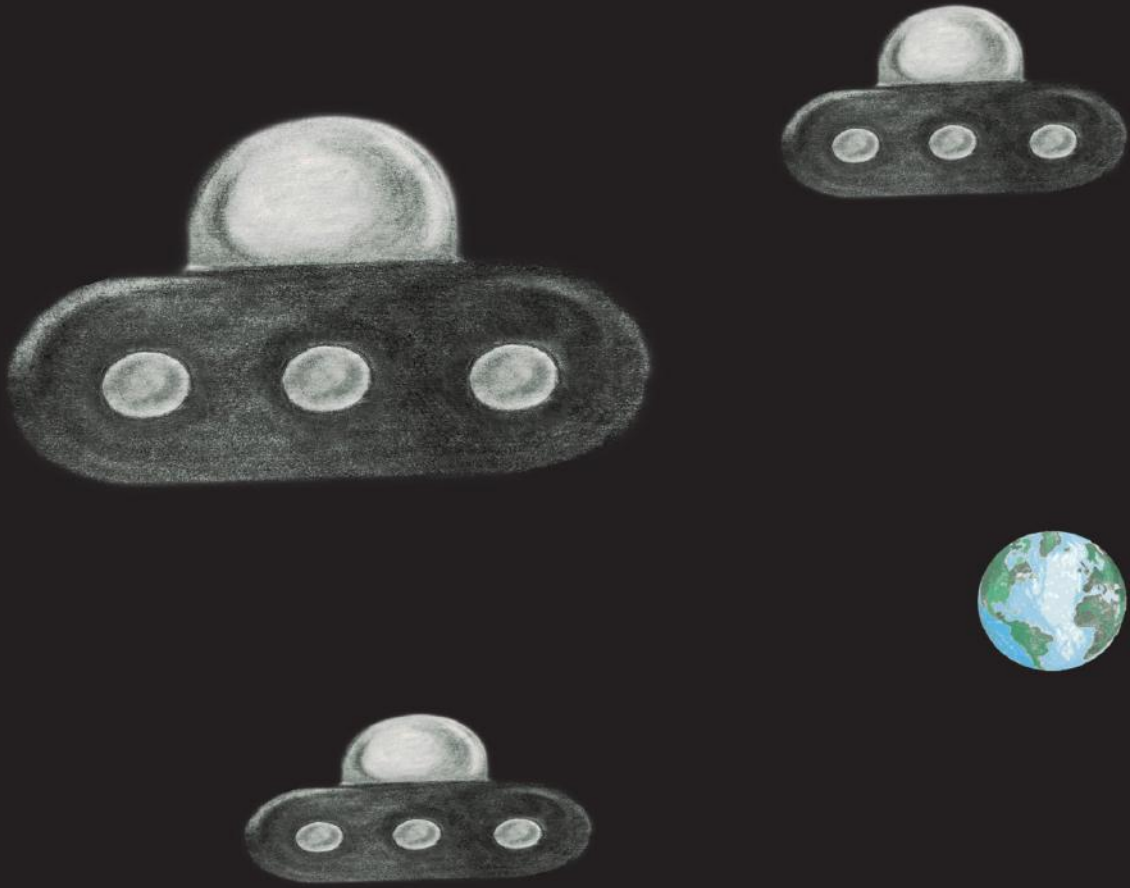
[vera@shanov.com](mailto:vera@shanov.com)

<https://www.flutecast.com>

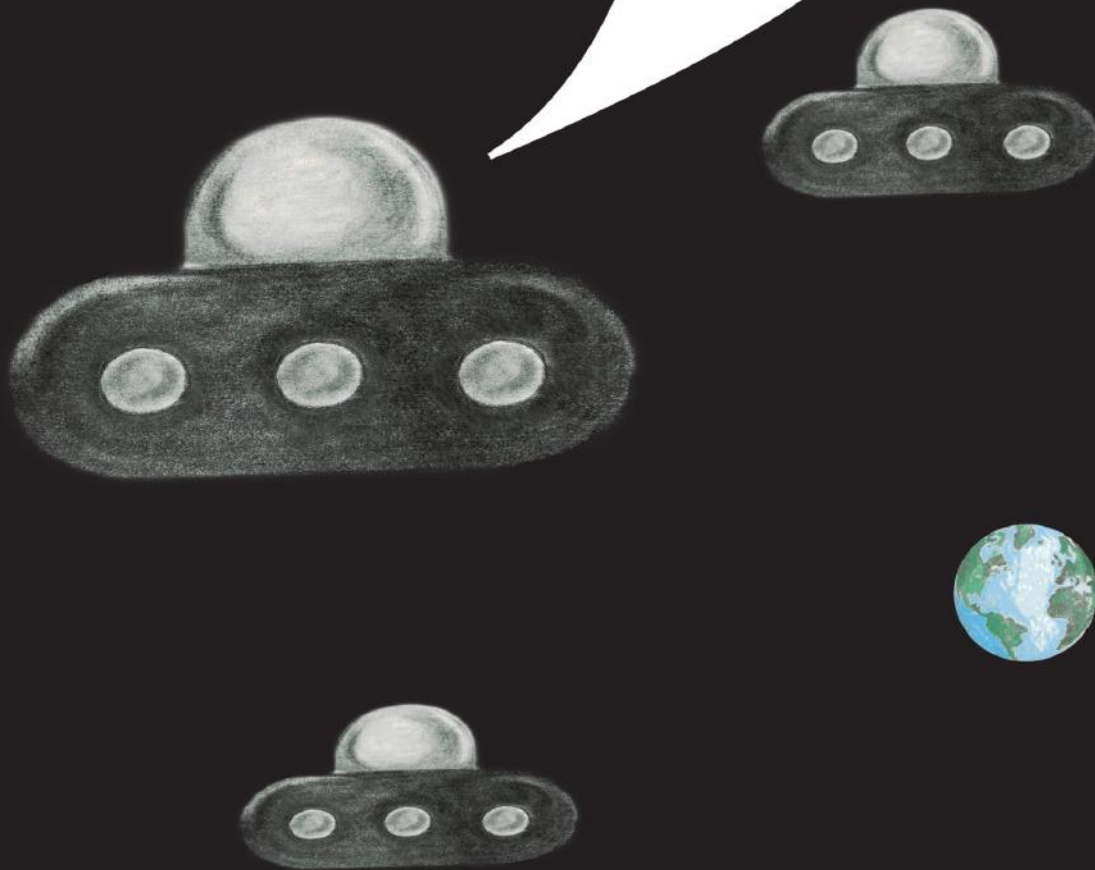
[www.ClintGoss.com](http://www.ClintGoss.com)

<https://www.youtube.com/ClintGoss>

DEAR CLINT AND VERA,  
FROM EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US IN THE FLUTE COMMUNITY, A HUGE  
'THANK YOU' TO YOU BOTH FOR ALL THAT YOU'VE DONE AND  
FOR ALL THAT YOU CONTINUE TO DO, FOR THE FLUTE COMMUNITY AND  
FOR THE WORLD AT LARGE!

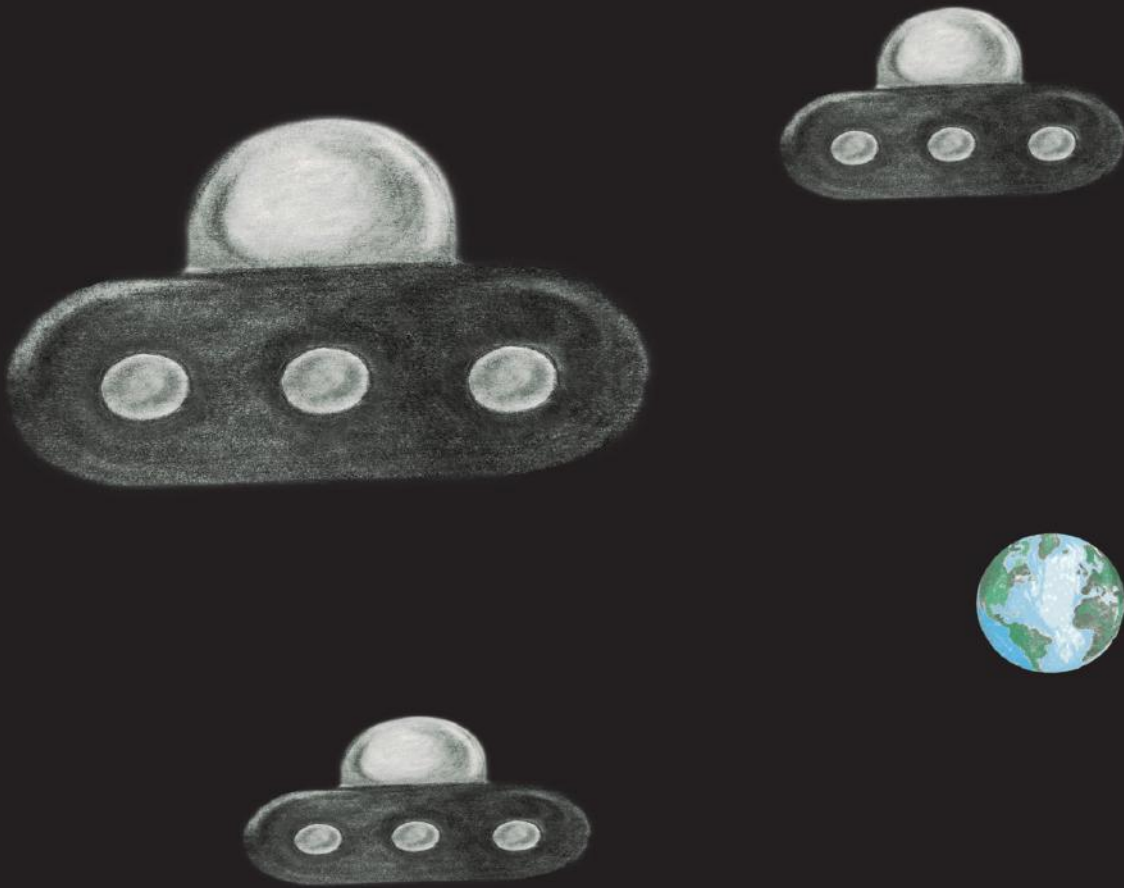


Where is that  
amazing music  
coming from?

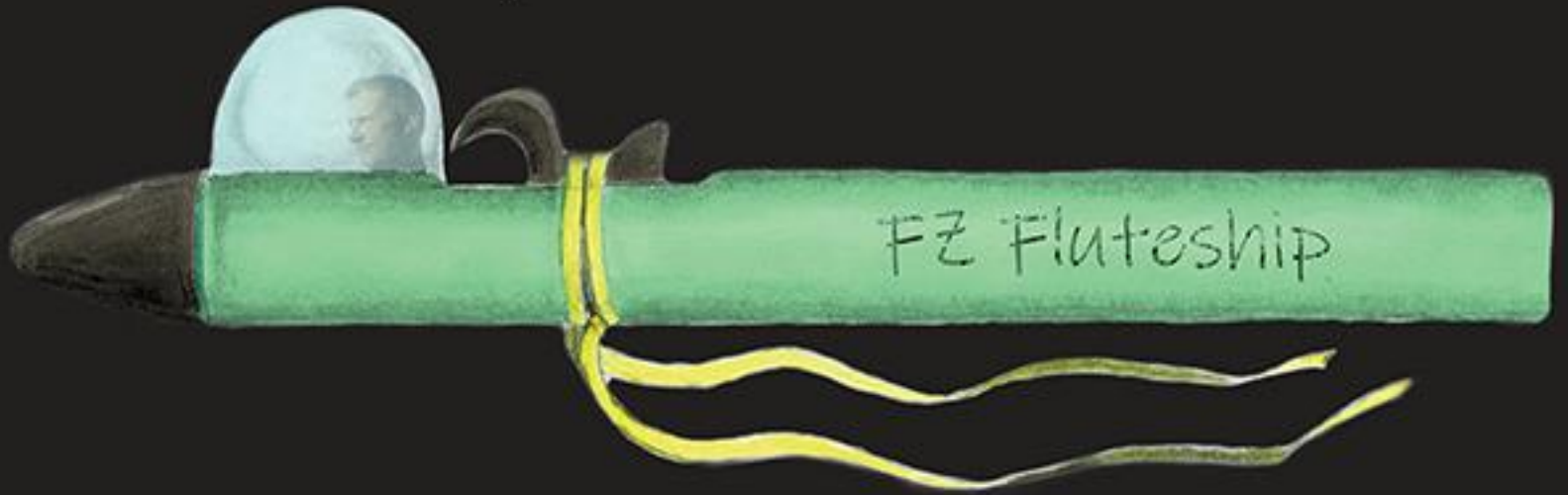








Planet  
Earth !!







# HARK! FROM WHENCE DOEST YOND DELIGHTFUL MUSIC COMETH?

## You are Listening to the Music of Crystal Ramirez

Thank you so much for taking the time to get to know me! I'm absolutely thrilled to share my love for the Native

American Flute. But before we dive into that exciting world, let me give you a glimpse into my life. I was born and raised in sunny California, surrounded by beautiful landscapes during my early years. At the age of twelve, my family packed

up and moved to St. George, Utah—a place that quickly captured my heart. Utah became my playground, and I couldn't get enough of the incredible hiking trails in national parks like Bryce Canyon and Zion. Fast forward a few years after high school, and I decided to embark on a new adventure by joining the army. I proudly served my country for nine years, including three deployments to Iraq. But my journey didn't end there! After completing my

military service, I set my sights on Raleigh, NC, where I eagerly pursued a degree in Business Administration.



Photo Credit: Dawn Leith Dougherty

These formative years of my life provided the structure I needed to navigate the struggles I face with PTSD. I often found myself seeking an escape, which sometimes led to moments of being greatly out of balance.

It was during the pandemic that I was first introduced to the Native American Flute. I immediately fell in love with its soothing sounds and peaceful nature. The Native American Flute has led me to a spiritual awakening, reminding me that there are no mistakes in your own songs. In many ways, I feel like I channel my inner Bob Ross, where there are no mistakes, only happy accidents.

My preferred style of playing the Native American Flute is improvisation. I love the freedom it brings, allowing me to let whatever needs to come out to flow freely. I began playing my flutes for deer and birds while walking along greenways. They remain my preferred audience, and I have a few favorite parks where I used to take my pocket flutes with me on trails. I was the secret flutist, always out and about, creating my melodic tunes. I would wait until nobody was around, then pull out my flute and start playing. One day, someone caught me in the moment and approached me, saying, "Are you the flutist I always hear?" I couldn't deny it. I confessed, "Yes, that's me." They expressed how much they enjoyed hearing my songs, and from that moment, I realized that my music had an effect on others as well. It was truly gratifying to feel appreciated.

My flute journey has introduced me to many amazing people. I joined a local flute circle run by Jon Norris, where I have learned so much from the members. I deeply appreciate each and

every one of them. Despite playing the flute for a little under two years, I have accomplished a lot. I created my own album and released a few singles. In 2022, I was honored with the Best Flute Solo award, and one of my songs was nominated in the One World Radio awards. It's hard to believe, but it's true! I believe that what helps me in creating music is my belief that none of my songs can ever be considered a mistake because I am perfectly imperfect, and my songs emanate from the depths of my being.

I hope to one day have my own sound healing practice. I have already begun planting the seeds for this goal by playing live for others and volunteering to run meditation classes. It's an incredibly rewarding experience, and I derive great joy from helping others release energy. In addition to music, I enjoy painting by hand and even experimenting with AI painting tools. I hope you've enjoyed getting to know me a little better. Thank you for reading, and may all your dreams come to fruition.





My Youtube is kinda silly but here it is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNHU3LJByZitd3jp5YJSvCQ>

My Bandcamp:  
<https://crystalramirez.bandcamp.com/>  
fortunate enough to have had an “encouraging high school music

## FLUTEZINE IS NOW HAPPY TO SHARE TWO OF CRYSTAL RAMIREZ'S ART PIECES WITH YOU!

### *Ephemeral Shadows*

A captivating art piece unveils a mesmerizing side profile of a person's face, adorned with profound shadowing and imbued with ethereal brush strokes. The artist, Crystal Ramirez, combines Indian Ink and watercolor to bring forth a creation that transcends reality, blurring the lines between the conscious and the subconscious.

Through this enigmatic composition, Ramirez delves into the depths of her own mind, where the seeds of her imagination flourish. Uncertain of the outcome, she allows her artistic intu-

ition to guide her brush, giving birth to a manifestation of her innermost thoughts. With a focus on catharsis, this artwork serves as a conduit for the release of the shadows and scars inflicted by the haunting specter of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The deliberate interplay of shadow and light is central to the composition, inviting viewers to explore the depths of the human experience. The strong shadowing accentuates the enigmatic nature of the subject, concealing and revealing simultaneously. The dreamlike brush strokes further enhance the ethereal

quality of the piece, blurring the boundaries between reality and the intangible realm of dreams.

As one gazes upon “Ephemeral Shadows,” they are transported into a realm of mystery and introspection. The painting’s esoteric essence encourages contemplation, inviting viewers to reflect upon their own hidden scars and the power of art to offer solace and healing.

### *Eternal Bonds*

Description: Within this captivating artwork, Crystal Ramirez pays homage to her cherished German Shepherd, Bella, who departed this world due to cancer. Combining the mediums of mixed media photography and AI art, Ramirez presents an emotional tribute that captures the enduring connection between a human and their loyal companion.

The vibrant and luminous background serves as a poignant symbol, rep-

resenting the joyous and treasured memories Crystal shared with her beloved Bella. As rays of vivid hues dance across the canvas, they embody the radiant moments that defined their unbreakable bond. Bella’s presence remains eternally imprinted in the artist’s heart, her loyalty and companionship acting as the guiding force in Crystal’s transformative sound healing journey.

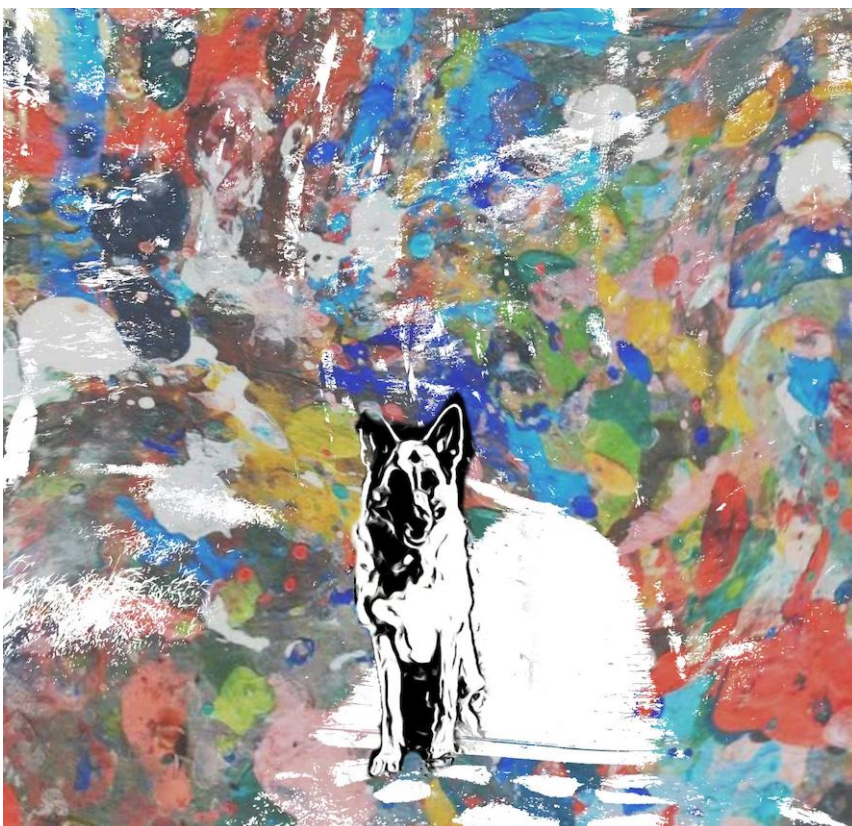
Crystal believes that Bella will forever hold a significant place in her life, and as such, images of her cherished companion find their way into various pieces of art. The ethereal presence of Bella is woven into the fabric of this artwork, capturing her spirit and preserving her memory. Each image, carefully incorporated into the composition, serves as a tribute to the profound impact Bella had on Crystal’s life and artistic expression.

Through the amalgamation of mixed media photography and AI art, “Eternal Bonds” stands as a testament to the profound connection between humans and their beloved animal companions. This

evocative piece invites viewers to reflect upon the enduring power of love, companionship, and the indelible mark left by those who hold a special place in our hearts.



Ephemeral Shadows, Indian Ink and watercolor,  
Crystal Ramirez



Eternal Bonds, Mixed Media Photography and AI Art,  
Crystal Ramirez





AND NOW A GLIMPSE INTO A REALLY AWESOME BOOK!!

## LEARN TO PLAY THE NATIVE AMERICAN STYLE FLUTE WITH AMI SARASVATI

### Community Music Making

Playing music with others, when in a supportive and inclusive environment, is a great joy and an exciting musical journey. If you feel intimidated about playing with others, consider that the group mindset is more important than the individual levels of mastery on any instrument.

Have you ever seen a flock of birds suddenly change direction? The entire group finds their place quickly and unites in their flight direction. To travel harmoniously and efficiently, the community flies in the same direction, unified and without discord. It may take a few seconds, but somehow it is done naturally and gracefully. This is the concept of the Pod Mind and one that is an ideal



mindset when playing music with others. It doesn't matter if it is two people playing together or a large group, the communal mind and implied commit-

ment of all players makes for a successful group experience.

For example, in a well-run flute or drum circle, it works well when all players have been instructed in basic group music etiquette. A good approach to playing in a

group means playing your instrument so you can hear the player on your right and left. Ideally, everyone listens to the group sound and considers how to contribute to the whole in a harmonious and balanced way.

As the player listens to the sound of the whole and entrains to the rhythm and group soundscape, the shift from single-mindedness to group unity takes place. Weaving oneself into that sound mosaic of the group is organic. As individual players express new ideas, the mosaic evolves and is ever-changing.

The healing that happens in a harmonious group sound circle is palpable and consistent. Everyone contributes and expresses their sound. Simple

and complex sounds open a doorway for self-expression while simultaneously contributing to the greater community experience. When we play together, we take each other in. This invites all levels of talent and inspiration in the group. Truly, improvisational music is an outstanding platform to create



group resonance where we meet each other in a place of inclusion and compassion.

Playing in community offers a unique way to discover your heartsong. How do you find your place in community? What kind of sound do you choose to offer?

Take notice of yourself as you play with others, without judgment. Just notice how you show up in community and adjust accordingly. Do you become competitive or supportive internally? Are you

okay with what you have to offer? For beginners, getting past any insecurities and self-criticism can be a big hurdle. The most important point to remember is to show up for the greater good of the group and consider what you can contribute to the whole. This can be a metaphor in our daily lives for spiritual development.

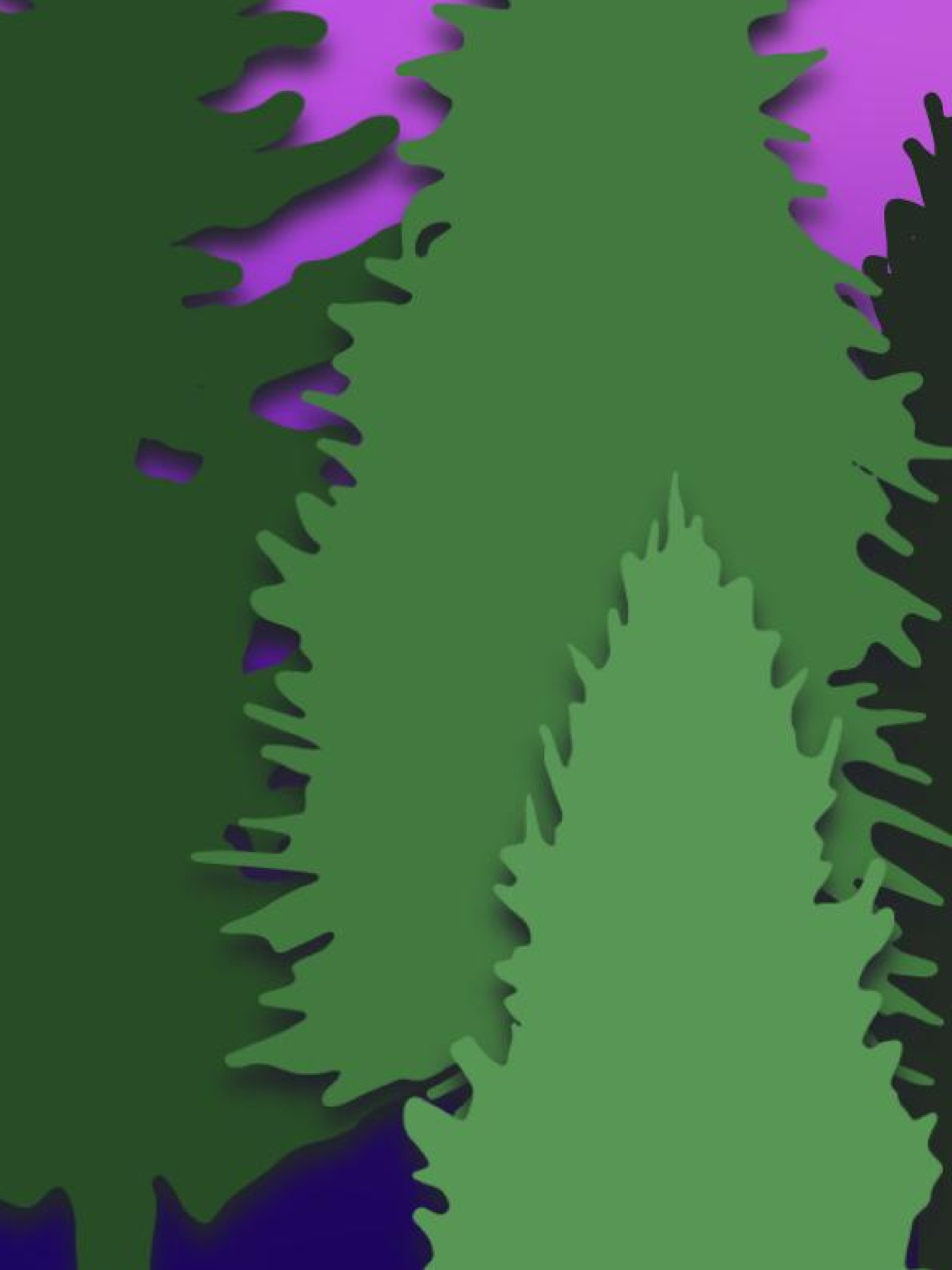


Ami Sarasvati is an author, therapeutic musician, and teacher. Her book on Amazon, *Learn to Play the Native American Style Flute: Discover Your Heartsong*, is a perfect starting place for the beginner flute player. She gives live group and private lessons online.

Explore her website [www.learntoplaynaf.com](http://www.learntoplaynaf.com) as well as her [Youtube channel](#).







# SEPARATING THE CEDARS FROM THE CEDARS

Technically speaking, the cedars we are commonly familiar with in North America are not truly cedars, but pleasantly scented, pest-resistant and highly workable woods we lovingly call cedars. Taxonomically, true cedars or *Cedrus*, which do get planted in the Pacific Northwest, are not native to North America at all.

True cedars consist of:

- Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*)
- Deodar cedar (*C. deodara*)
- Lebanon cedar (*C. libani*), Cedar of Lebanon

A fourth species is less often referred to, Cyprus cedar (*C. brevifolia*), which may be getting grouped with *C. libani*, now or soon, bringing it down to just three, true cedars. Either way, these all grow in places like the Middle East or Himalayas.

So what are the cedars folks mostly know and love in North America?

Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) is so commonly referred to as to go by WRC, and is in a genus called *Thuja* as

opposed to *Cedrus*. As the name hints, it grows in places like Oregon and the Southwest. WRC is loved by beginners and master makers, alike. It has a caramel-to-chocolate hue and is one of the very softest woods to work with. WRC flutes often carry many, little battle scars as reminders of their trips out and about, since one may form a groove in WRC with a solid fingernail. It is one of the few woods that, despite the same finish inside the bore of two, given flutes, this author feels he notices a true difference in the warmth of the voice of a flute, specifically due to the wood used, when it is WRC, esp. if the walls are 3/16" thick or less.

Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), or ERC is even more aromatic than WRC with the natural phenols that evaporate as hydrocarbons do. It's a pleasant bouquet to our noses but highly repellent or deadly to bugs, and is rot resistant. While not known as a very hard wood, ERC is noticeably denser than WRC, making a bit harder and heavier of a flute than WRC. It has a massive range consuming the entire Eastern half of the

country, halfway through Texas, and it occurs as far North as Maine and as far South as most of Florida. It's quite knotty and often alternates between steak-pink and maple blonde.

Both Eastern Red Cedar and Western Red Cedar have rich and wonderful history and traditions among many tribes of indigenous people throughout North America.

ERC may be known as Eastern, but it is known as a Holy Tree or Tree of Life by Kiowa of the Western and Southern Plains, the Comanche, Cheyenne and many other tribes not necessarily associated with being particularly Eastern. It is a sacred medicine with many uses, in fact it is often known as one of the four sacred medicines, among Red Cedar, tobacco, sage, and sweet grass. Women drank (or drink?) Red Cedar Tea to hasten childbirth. It was/is also used for coughs, rashes, sores, swelling, and symptoms of rheumatism. It was also considered such an abundant source of fragrant incense that it was not uncommon for a person to be

assigned the principal task of burning Red Cedar incense for hours at a time. It would go without saying ERC holds great spiritual significance, but it is such to the extent that Cherokee teach that the Creator places souls of their ancestors in Red Cedars, which contain powerfully protective spirits.

When it comes to Western Red Cedar, Northwest tribes from coastal Oregon to Southeast Alaska could be heard referring themselves as People of the Red Cedar because of their sheer reliance on this blessing and resource. They would carefully harvest its bark as not to over-stress the tree, using it for fiber, ropes, and cordage, making mats and all manner of woven basketry. Another obvious building material of wooden items for homes, canoes, and tools, Western Red Cedar also, naturally, possesses great spiritual significance to Native Americans.

It can be seen in ornamental head-dresses and is shredded and pulverized with deer horn to make soft padding for infants' cradles. Like ERC,

WRC is important medicine. As Mike Roesch reflects in a segment on Montana Public Radio titled "Field Notes: The Power Of The Western Red Cedar", as he is standing and listening to the breeze through their branches on a birthday hike, "The Lummi chewed the buds of cedar and swallowed them for sore lungs, the Cowlitz chewed them for toothache, and the Skokomish boiled them for a gargle. The Skagit boiled the ends of the leaves for coughs. In addition to these medicinal uses, the leaves and limbs of cedar were used for scouring the body in bathing, both for ordinary purposes and in preparation for ceremonial occasions, especially winter dances."

There are a variety of other indigenous trees that people call cedars in America, wonderful for making flutes, including but not necessarily limited to:

Northern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) which is more closely related to WRC than others

Port Orford /White/Oregon Cedar (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*)

Atlantic White Cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*) a close cousin of Port Orford

Spanish Cedar (*Cedrela odorata*) which Jon Norris has demonstrated is most excellent for flutes and Alaskan /Yellow Cedar or Nookta False Cypress (*Callitropsis nootkatensis*) which is very high on the author's list for flute wood he's never tried but is anxious to.

- Jeff Burris





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Ami Sarasvati is an author, therapeutic musician, and teacher. Her book on Amazon, Learn to Play the Native American Style Flute: Discover Your Heartsong, is a perfect starting place for the beginner flute player. Live group and private lessons online. Explore her website and Youtube Channel:

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Hello,

This is Ambros - I'm a Native Style Fluteplayer from Germany. My Contact is [www.ambros-goeller.de](http://www.ambros-goeller.de) and there you'll find everything about me.