

# Glass Music World

FALL - WINTER 2002

## Clemens Hofinger – M.D., Family Man, Glass Musician

— By Carlton Davenport —

Many GMI members had the pleasure of meeting Clemens Hofinger at the Glass Music Festival in Philadelphia in 2000 and listening to his wonderful glass harp playing at the Franklin Court Museum. He played beautiful selections that he has composed as well as those of well known classical composers. Members of the festival audience were heard

commenting on his technically perfect glasses, and on his excellent speed and sensitive playing. Clemens' program included an original composition for guitar and glass harp. He was joined by Michele Hogan (New York City), who is currently working on a glass music movie script. The program also included an ensemble selection with Brien Engel and Michele on guitars in a performance of a piece written for Clemens by James Bassi in 1999. Clemens considers that festival to be a high point for him. He enjoyed meeting all the folks he knew only from the newsletter and seeing and hearing what they were doing. To quote him, "So many colours and styles of glass music! Of course, I also much enjoyed my own recital. It's a pleasure to play to an audi-



ence that really knows what you're doing." He is determined to join us again in Paris.

Clemens is also known as Dr. Clemens Hofinger. His "out of music" career led him through various hospitals and a medical doctoral thesis. In September 2002, after moving back to Wuerzberg where he lived as a student, he started working as a general practitioner as well as teaching students at his "home" university. His family has also developed over the past few years. He and his wife, Susanne, now have four children born in 1997, 1999, and twins born in 2001.

Glass music plays a major role in Clemens' life, although he is in the fortunate situation of being able to do it "just for the music" since he has a solid job to live on in medicine. Rather than having to play on every possible occasion, he can choose to do only the events he really likes.

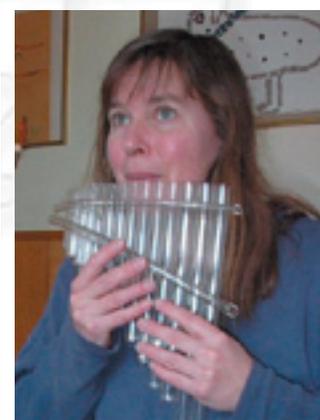
Clemens had just finished high school when he first discovered the fascinating art of glass music. Having occasionally heard some of Bruno Hoffman's recordings on the radio, he was simply struck by a sound he had never heard before. Curious as he is, he fetched some of his father's best glasses and tried to make them sing. He decided right then to learn to play Mozart.

please see **CLEMENS**, page 4

## My Fascination with Making Glass Instruments

— By Sally Prash —

When I was a child, my parents asked me what instrument I would like to play. I replied "drums", and never heard anything else about music lessons. I took up scientific and artistic glassblowing at age thirteen, and in the early eighties I was very fortunate to meet Gerhard Finkenbeiner. He introduced me to his work, including the quartz glass harmonica and quartz bells. Gerhard



also gave me a tape of him playing the glass harmonica to listen to while I worked in my shop. It was such an inspiration! Soon I was testing every tube

in the shop for sound and making every type of instrument I could think of: recorders, flutes, pan pipes, rattles, didgeridoos, xylophone, rainstick, chimes, horns, lithaphones, and, yes – drums. For a while, everything I created made noise, even the beads I made had a smaller bead inside to make a rattle sound.

Glass is such a beautiful media. It allows you to fabricate any shape, size, thickness, and sound.

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members login online at <http://www.glassmusicintl.org>



## PRESIDENTIAL NOTES

First, I would like to express my appreciation to Thomas Bloch for his efforts in trying to set up the next festival. GMI is lucky to have someone with his dedication and persistence in pursuit of a successful festival for our organization despite numerous changes and setbacks.

Thomas has notified us that Ingeborg Emge will be performing at the next festival. Ingeborg is a glass harpist who performed at our Glass Music Festival in Munich and Frauenau, Germany in 1991. She studied glass harp with Bruno Hoffman, who lent her one of his instruments. Since his death in 1991, she has continued to perform in the tradition he established. Her website can be viewed at [www.glasharfe.ch](http://www.glasharfe.ch).

The list of glass musicians who have announced their intentions to perform at the next festival includes **Peter Bennett, Liselotte Behrendt, Thomas Bloch, Ingeborg Emge, Clemens Hofinger, Alisa Nakashian-Holsberg, Dennis James, Sascha Reckert, Ann Stuart and Jonathan Stuart-Moore, and William Wilde Zeitler** (there are several others who would like to perform but don't know yet if they will be able to attend). Other members who are planning on attending are **Deborah Avery** (William Zeitler's wife), **Peter Behrendt, June and Carlton Davenport, and Peter Sterki**. Anyone who wishes to notify Thomas of his/her intention to perform at or attend the festival can send him an email at [thbloch@club-internet.fr](mailto:thbloch@club-internet.fr), fax him at 33 1 43 08 45 45, or write him at 59 Bld Fichot, 93 360 Neuilly Plaisance, France.

Everyone should have received their dues request by now and I want to thank those who have already sent in their dues. I encourage all others to respond quickly since it is very important to build up our treasury with the festival coming up in about two years. The dues are also needed for GMW printing and

mailing expenses, of course. I want to express my sincere appreciation to Alisa Nakashian-Holsberg for mailing out the dues notices after such a stressful time with her very serious surgery and necessary recuperation.

We still have a critical need for someone to replace Norm Rehme as our GMI Treasurer. Norm has contributed a greater ongoing effort to our organization than anyone, as evidenced by numerous items in our GMI History articles, and it is time for him to be able to move on. Please consider taking over this position as a way of contributing to our most important organization and the future of glass music.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to find with new articles for the newsletter and I greatly appreciate those who have done so. Please take a hard look at whether you could contribute an article in the near future. Also, Liz Mears is not getting the kind of response to her requests for items for her GMI Happenings column that she had hoped for. Please be sure to send her your news updates for the next issue within the next three months. Thank you in advance for your responses.

This issue contains very interesting articles on two of our members, Clemens Hofinger and Sally Prash. Please note that Clemens has recorded an excellent CD. Anyone wishing to purchase one should contact Brien Engel at [glassharp@mindspring.com](mailto:glassharp@mindspring.com).

The next issue will include the first part of a four-part article on the history of GMI. It will cover the period from 1986-1989 and will also contain information about the first two glass music festivals which occurred in 1984 and 1985 (before our organization was founded). Liselotte Behrendt has provided photos from these festivals which will accompany this article.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Carlton Davenport

### Glass Music World

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## GMI HAPPENINGS

— By Elizabeth Mears —

As I write this column, yet another snowstorm is coating the state of Virginia with a blanket of white. My husband is headed to a Bluegrass get-together for the weekend, which makes me look forward even more to our Paris gathering for the shared sounds of glass music.

The column is a brief one this time. I sent out a request for information via email but have had little response. My server won't allow me to send messages to large numbers of people at a time, so I broke the mailing down into smaller groups. Please let me know if you did not receive the request ([Elizwndhil@aol.com](mailto:Elizwndhil@aol.com)) and I will try a different system.

Now on to our news:

From **Peter Bennett** (New Orleans, LA) we learn that during the summer he played several community festivals, weekend farm markets, and a tenth anniversary concert at the Barrett House Museum in New Ipswich, NH. In October 2002, he played on Broadway at the Bindlestiff Family Cirkus held in a variety theater in the 100 block of 42nd Street. In mid-October, that was followed by the annual "Puckerama" in Tulsa, OK, where Peter led the audience in a whistled version of the *Col. Bogey March* by K. J. Alford.

The premier of a new glass music composition was performed by **Lynn Drye** (Prescott Valley, AZ) at the First Congregational Church in Prescott on October 13, 2002. The *Ancestral Suite for Glass Instruments, Flute and Harp* by Mike VanBlaricom includes 3 movements: *Scottish Aire, Arirang, and Danze Afrique*. The second movement *Arirang* (for glass harmonica) had been performed previously as a single piece, but the suite now includes a new first movement, *Scottish Aire* (also for glass harmonica), and a third movement for tuned bowls, *Danze Afrique*. The piece is available in the GMI Library.

**Sascha Reckert** (Heidelberg, Germany) reports that he continues to build all sorts of glass instruments, including the glass harmonica. He plays professionally as a glass musician with an ensemble in Germany, and he performed *Lucia* (perhaps the first time) completely solo in a public opera performance in the opera at Heidelberg.

During a concert with Koln WDR Radio Orchestra in Germany, **Thomas Bloch** (Paris, France) met a glass player who played popular songs on a glass harp on the main street of Koln. The man was Alexander Bezgotkir, from Barnaul in Siberia (Russia) where he planned to return in mid-December.

*please see HAPPENINGS, page 7*

## Latest Paris Festival News

— Based on Information from Thomas Bloch —

Thomas has reported that, after lengthy and persistent efforts on his part, the Cite de Musique has set a time period of January 18th to the 23rd, 2005 for our next Glass Music Festival. As this issue of GMW goes to the printers, Thomas is still pursuing a change to the spring of 2005 when, not only would it be nicer in Paris for all of us, but it would give members like Peter Bennett a chance to play in the streets of Europe during and after the Festival.

Thomas had started working with Brigitte Marger, the President of the Cite de la Musique in Paris, shortly after our last festival in Philadelphia. He met her with the help of GMI member Bernard Baschet. She had approved the plans for a festival in the spring of 2003. However, Brigitte retired and was replaced by a new President of the Cite, Laurent Bayle. Laurent Bayle put everything connected with the Cite on hold while he proposed his own ideas. This affected not only our project in the Music Museum department of the Cite, but those in the many other departments of the Cite as well.

Thomas met with Museum officials in an attempt to reestablish a time period for the Festival. One meeting was with Emma Lavigne, a curator in the Music Museum who is in charge of exhibitions. He asked Jean-Claude Chapuis, a glass instrument maker in Paris, to participate in this meeting because his focus is on all glass instruments, not just the glass harmonica and Cristal Baschet. Thomas gave Emma Lavigne a 60 page folder and documents such as projects for exhibitions, concerts, meetings, a movie festival with original soundtracks using glass music, and so on. At that meeting, they spoke of a festival in spring 2004 (at that time, the future of all projects had not yet been established).

In early October, Thomas spoke with Emmanuel Hondre, a manager for cultural activities, who said that Emma had asked him to follow the project. A week later, Thomas gave Emmanuel a thorough description of his festival plans and it was decided that we could expect to have the festival organized in the Museum, even if the new President decides to dedicate each year to a special theme. Other projects will be reduced, but Museum officials really like our idea and will try to support us. Possible exhibitions, concerts, meetings, and costs were also discussed. Although, Thomas already knew several people in the Museum, Emmanuel introduced him to others he had never met. Each one knew about the GMI Festival project and said something like, "Thomas Bloch. Hey! You are the one who works on the glass project. We must absolutely have it here!"

*please see PARIS, page 7*

— CLEMENS from page 1 —

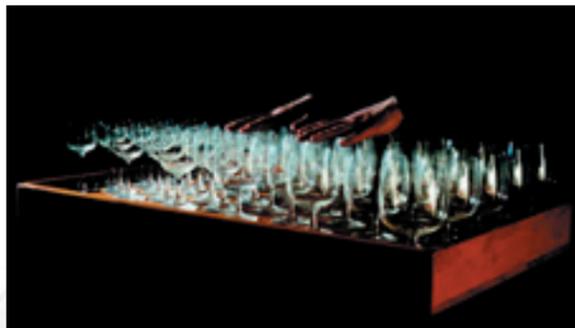
He soon developed a good technique in producing the crystal sound, but it took years for him to design an instrument that could play the complex pieces of classical glass music. Finally, he constructed a set of 50 musical glasses, which he had bought from various stores where the staff always wondered why he so eagerly searched for a special tone. He tuned them by adding water drop by drop just as Pockrich had 250 years before. Of course, the instrument he had built was not at all professional, but audiences were enthusiastic whenever he performed.

Everything changed when, through a newspaper article his grandmother sent him, he learned about and contacted another glass musician living near Munich - Sascha Reckert. Sascha is a well known GMI member, a former GMI Vice-President, and

the organizer of Glass Music Festival V in Munich and Frauenau, Germany in 1991, as well as the inventor of the verrophone and a manufacturer of glass armonicas and glass harps. An article on Sascha and the verrophone, "Glass Music at the Frauenau Glassworks," appeared in the Fall 1998 GMW. Clemens and Sascha together planned a glass harp that exactly fit Clemens' needs, for he had grown accustomed to a very special arrangement of the glasses. Then, permanently tuned glasses were blown by the famous Bavarian glassmaker Eisch and mounted on a wooden frame. He also acquired a verrophone from Sascha.

Between these two instruments, he is now able to play nearly everything that is demanded in glass music. From Mozart's great works such as the K617 Quintet to Tomasek's delicate Fantasia from modern pieces like Schnaubelt's Elegy and Caprice to the charming sound of well known melodies played on the glasses, Clemens offers a wide range of glass music for a wide range of places and audiences. He has premiered several pieces written for his instruments. Reviews focused on the sparkling, magical sound of the glasses as well as the amazing variability in speed, articulation, and dynamics that these instruments offer to the musician.

Clemens has come to play with first class musicians. His all time high (so far) was a concert featuring Mozart's Quintet, Naumann's Quartet, and Schnaubelt's Elegie and Caprice together with four soloists from the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, one of Europe's finest



Glass Harp

and most famous symphony orchestras. Not only did he feel honoured to play at this level, "it was also an exciting musical experience to have people around who were able to pull the best from Mozart's scores in only a few rehearsals."

He considers the musical project he is working on at the moment "just another impossibility" - Bach's last Violin Sonata. It is hardly possible to play this work on a violin; and, of course, absolutely impossible to play it on a glass harp. However, he says he needs to do it. He did the Preludium as his encore at the Munich Philharmonic concert.

Clemens' website, [www.glasharfe.de](http://www.glasharfe.de), contains both English and German content, pictures, and sound samples. It includes sections on the two instruments he plays - the glass harp and the verrophone. He also has a section on Franklin's armonica, but I will not repeat anything from that section here since the information is better known to GMW readers. The following information on the glass harp and verrophone is taken from sections of his website.

The first musician to revitalize the art of glass music was Bruno Hoffman of Stuttgart, Germany. His "glass harp" was related to the ancient verrillon. Sound was produced by moving wet fingers along the rims of glass bowls mounted upright on a wooden base. The glass harp has some striking advantages when compared to the simple "musical glasses". First, the glasses



Verrophone

are arranged in rows, making chords much easier to play. A simple major chord can be played with one hand. Second, the glass harp is not tuned by adding or removing water. Like the armonica bowls, the bowls of the glass harp are blown and ground until they are perfectly in tune, and, once tuned, they never need tuning again. The absence of water also improves the sound of the singing glasses, as the tuning water of the "musical glasses" attenuates the sound. Although the voice of a wine glass is familiar to everyone, the sound of a glass harp

is always a surprise to the audience. People are charmed by the sweetness of its tones, as was Benjamin Franklin when he first heard glass music. Some compare it to a flute, a celesta, or a viola da gamba, and the sound is often described as "celestial" or as "music of the spheres" which Clemens thinks means that it is not

(continued on next page)

— PRASCH from page 1 —

Depending on what type of glass you use for percussion instruments (i.e. borosilicate, quartz, lead) you will create a different sound. I love glass and I love listening to glass.

Lately, I have been teaching the art of glassblowing throughout the world, in Japan, Italy, Ireland and many places in the United States, and in every class we make glass instruments. I require the class to give a concert to the school in which we are learning. At first some of the students grumble, but by the end of the class they all want to make instruments for everybody they know.

The panpipes shown in photo on page 1 were made at my studio. The panpipes are made from borosilicate tubing that has been bent and fused together. Before fusing each tube is ground to a specific size to obtain the notes desired.

The drum shown above was a class project at Pilchuck Glass School in the state of Washington. Dante Marioni was the head gaffer for the drum project. A gaffer is a person in charge of a team of glass workers. By the time someone is given the title of gaffer, they have many years of experience and are well respected. One of the benefits of teaching at Pilchuck

(continued from previous page)

comparable to anything at all.

The verrophone is one of the younger members of the glass instrument family. Instead of bowls, he used tubes of high quality industrial glass affixed vertically to a wood frame. Like a pipe organ or a pan flute, the pitch of every tube is determined by its length, which avoids the problems caused by disparate

Glass School is that they give you a certain amount of time with the gaffer. As a teacher at Pilchuck, I got to design the glass that was to be fabricated by the gaffer and his team. I designed a drum and requested that all my students, students from all over the world, participate by drawing with hot glass onto the drum.

The standing pipes shown below right were made at The Penland School of Crafts in North



Carolina. That class was eight weeks long and had a 24 hour open studio. The standing pipes are 18 inches by 46 inches and made of borosilicate glass, wood and silicone. The glass tubes are set into openings that have been drilled into the wood. Dabs of silicone are used between the wood and glass thus allowing the glass to vibrate freely. Paddles with foam glued to one side are used to pop

bowl diameters as described for the glass harp. Other advantages are the verrophone's compact construction and its greater dynamic abilities. An audience of 500 to 1,000 people can hear the verrophone without technical amplification.

Clemens released his first CD, Rever(r)ie, in late 2000. The CD includes several beautiful solo and duet recordings, genuine glass works

the top of the tubes and sound rings out. Depending on the length of the tubes different notes are created. We made so many glass musical instruments that our band was quite well equipped! Both the classes, the one at Pilchuck and the one at Penland, gave concerts and I believe both schools have them on videotape.

I hope all my students take the musical instruments they make in class home with them and continue to make more wherever they are in the world.

Editor's Note: Sally Prash started working with glass in 1970 as an Apprentice Scientific Glassblower and Teaching Assistant for Lloyd Moore at the University of Nebraska. She received a Bachelor in Fine Arts in Glass and Ceramics from the University of Kansas in 1980 and degrees in Applied Science and Scientific Glass Technology from Salem College. She has worked as a Scientific Glassblower and Glass Instructor and continued her own education in this area for more than thirty years now. Her awards include the Kimble Award for Excellence in Glassblowing and a 1988 Corning International Glass Music Award for Outstanding Performance. She is a member of the American Scientific Glassblowing Society, the Glass Art Society, the International Society of Glass Beadmakers, and, of course, Glass Music International, Inc.

and arrangements of classical pieces for lute and guitar and glass harp.

A preview of interesting gigs that he has coming up includes several concerts with his lute partner Wolfgang Barger, a cooperation with the Duisburg Philharmonic Orchestra, participation in the European Glass Music Festival in Bavaria, and a Japan tour in late August - "Spreading glass music throughout the world."

— **HAPPENINGS** —

— from page 3 —

**Mikio Kozuka** (Yokohama, Japan) reports he has had several performances with his Armonica, and that all the guests loved his glass sounds every time he played. His wife Taeko is an important person in a small confectionary and also creates cloth and paper arts.

Several GMI members noticed that **Vera Meyer** (Malden, MA), former GMI Treasurer and Librarian, was shown playing her Glass Harmonica on the PBS documentary on Benjamin Franklin. Peter Bennett put it in his message to Vera, "What an eloquent confirmation of the reasons I have for so long considered him (Franklin) in my pantheon of heroes! He was not merely a genius but a polymath of the first order. Which is why, of course, we members of the glass music community owe a debt of gratitude to his memory. Which is what makes the wonderful part you played in the film so poignant and important. It was short and sweet, your part, and Franklin himself, not to mention Gerhard, would have been proud to see his instrument demonstrated so beautifully."

We were sorry to hear of **Alisa Nakashian-Holsberg's** health emergency (Westford, MA) which required life-saving surgery and a subsequent lengthy recovery. We are so glad to hear that she has now returned to good health and are also thrilled about the news that Alisa and her husband, Alan, are expecting the birth of their first child in May-June, 2003.

— **PARIS** from page 3 —

On October 29<sup>th</sup>, Thomas called Emmanuel. He was told that they could not organize the big event that Thomas had dreamed of. Emmanuel said that they depend on the general cultural politics of the Cite and they are still working on their budgets. Emmanuel said they will continue to push the issue and do their best.

Thomas has provided a breakdown of the situation as it now stands, keeping in mind that things can change as they have in the past:

- **Exhibition** - It seems that they will have to stop all exhibitions in the main public hall for the next two or three seasons.

- **Congress (Meeting)** - Emmanuel can offer us the meeting room of the Museum completely equipped with sound and video during the time of our festival for discussions, conferences, and mini-concerts as we had during other festivals. If we choose, it may also be open to the public.

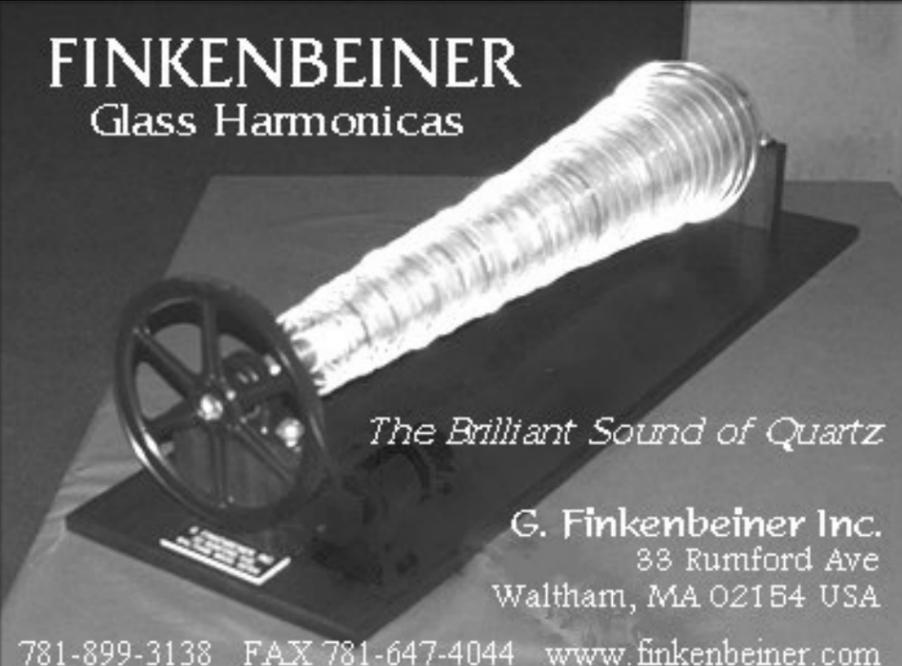
- **Concerts** - The Museum lost the concert hall they were in charge of for their own activities. The Cite decided to manage it directly together with their other big concert hall, which has 2700 seats. This means the Museum cannot organize all the concerts they want, when they want, as they have in the past. They have to propose and manage within the general programming of the Cite. Therefore, Emmanuel can only offer us one public concert there at the end of our festival. This can be with an orchestra and Emmanuel can obtain a budget for that. This means that now Thomas will need to find other places in Paris to have public concerts.

- **Name of the Program** - Emmanuel can try to register the GMI project with other concerts during the same month as "Le Salon des Refuses." "Salon" means both the nicer room

of a house (where people can meet and speak) and exhibition. Recently in Parks, they had the main "Salon de l'automobile" in the world. The translation could be the room where musical rarities refused by the academism are collected.

- **Possible Dates** - 3 to 5 days (as we need) from January 18<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005.

The latest information from Thomas is that he has been named Artistic Director of the Evian Festival. Evian is the town from where the famous water comes. It is located on Lemane Lake, one hour by car from Geneva, Switzerland in the Alps. He began his activity for the 2004 program after he proposed a project to the Mayor of the town and it was approved. The festival will be dedicated to rare instruments and music. In the past, the Artistic Director of the Evian Festival was the famous cellist, Mstislav Rostropovich. However, the Festival was discontinued. Thomas will begin with a small festival for the first time, three days in length, and if it works well he plans to make it longer. That festival will be held on the first weekend in June. Thomas suggests that, if he really has difficulties organizing our festival in Paris, he can consider the possibility of a festival at Evian in 2005 if that festival still exists. Geneva has an important airport with easy access to Paris, if people would like to go there. A June festival would also be a much better time of year than the present January schedule. Thomas is offering his suggestion about the Evian alternative in case the situation with the people in Paris becomes desperate. Meanwhile, he is continuing to work hard and is doing his best to try to coordinate about a fine festival in Paris at a time that would be good for GMI members.



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