



## Laurel Ann Maurer: Have flute, will travel

By Jim Lowe  
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Central Vermont is not only home to one virtuoso flutist, but now two. Laurel Ann Maurer, through a series of life changes, found herself living in Barre and married to composer David Gunn.



“I’ve lived all over the country and I don’t know if I could say that any place was home,” she said in a recent interview. “But now I feel that I’m home.”

Central Vermonters will have the opportunity to hear Maurer this weekend when she takes her program, “Baroque and Blue,” to Burlington’s First Baptist Church at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Stowe’s Community Church at 7 p.m. Sunday, and at Montpelier’s Bethany

Church at 7 p.m. Monday.

With pianist Claire Black, Maurer will perform the “Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano” by French composer Claude Bolling, as well as Baroque works by J.S. Bach and his sons C.P.E. Bach and... P.D.Q. Bach. Completing the program will be “Forbidden Flute,” a bluesy tune by Gunn.

Pianist Black, another recent addition to the Vermont classical music scene, earned her master of music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music with Margarita Shevchenko. She currently teaches in Burlington and at her home in Underhill.

Maurer has been praised by The New York Times as “a secure technician and an assured communicative interpreter.” According to Fanfare Magazine, she is “superb in every way.” And The Salt Lake Tribune described Maurer as “stellar in both tone and technique. She is a master of coloration and interpretation.”

Maurer has participated in the master classes of Vermont’s famed Marcel Moyse, and later Louis Moyse. Among Maurer’s 12 commercially released CDs, “More American Flute Works” and the Jeff Mannokian “Flute Concerto” both were nominated for Grammy Awards.

With all these credentials, Maurer’s start on flute was based on a mistake. Her mother, a teacher and a good amateur violinist, told young Laurel, mistakenly, that the flute was an English instrument. Fascinated with all things English, she set her heart on flute. She started in a public school band program, then with a good teacher, and then joined youth orchestra.

“I liked to practice so I was always first chair in band and those things,” she said. “It was an odd way to start, but I loved it.”



At 16, flute became the focus of Maurer's plans for the future. Her teacher asked her to spend a week thinking of anything else she could do instead of music, telling Maurer that she'd be happier and would make more money with almost anything else.

"There isn't anything that comes even close," Maurer told her teacher "She was supportive and taught me what I needed to know. She also told me about the pitfalls."

Maurer first studied at the State University of New York at Stony Brook with flutist Samuel Baron.

"He brought out the analytical side of music — how to understand form and structure, how to practice efficiently, technical nitty-gritty," Maurer said. "He was great."

Maurer earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at CUNY/Queens College, where she studied first with Jeanne Baxstresser and later Julius Baker, both principals of the New York Philharmonic at different times.

"I ended up studying with Julius Baker for six years," Maurer said. "And I learned everything — the freedom, the artistry, tone, inflection and hard work and discipline. His teaching tied up all the loose threads, basically put it all together for me."

Following college, Maurer spent a year as a fellow with the National Orchestra of New York, a professional training orchestra that no longer exists.

"It was an entire year of really feeling what it would be like to be in a professional orchestra," she said. "It was fabulous. I got to play the Dvorak Cello concerto with Janos Starker — I was first flute."

Maurer learned plenty, but one of the things she learned was, though she was trained to be an orchestra player, she preferred a more diverse career.

Freelancing in New York, Maurer performed myriad recitals and recorded with pianist Joanne Pierce Martin, now with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. But, seeking more new experiences, she moved to Utah where she got her "second education" as part of the Park City International Chamber Music Festival.

"Your first education, when you're young, is with your teachers. Your second education is with your colleagues," she said.

Teaching has been important to Maurer since she was young. She became a Suzuki flute instructor in 2007, and went on to become a teacher trainer in 2007. Currently Maurer is on the adjunct faculty at Saint Michael's College and teaches at her home studio in Barre.

Maurer's fascination with contemporary music began while she was at Queens College, where the faculty included the likes of composer George Perle.



“So I started to get my feet wet — and I found I had a knack for it, and I would often be asked to play in things,” she said. “I’ve always had a soft spot in my heart for composers — which was ironic because I married one — because I know how difficult it is. It’s such a hard gig: getting people to listen to it, getting people to play it, getting people to play it well.”

Maurer has performed and given master classes throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia including performances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, and Khachaturian Hall in Yerevan, Armenia. In Vermont, she has performed with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble, and Bella Voce.

“I do a little of everything,” Maurer said. “I’ve somehow managed to have a very interesting journey through music, doing all the things I love.”

## Baroque and Blue

Flutist Laurel Ann Maurer and pianist Claire Black will perform music of J.S. Bach, C.P.E. Bach, P.D.Q. Bach, Claude Bolling and David Gunn in “Baroque and Blue.”

Saturday, Dec. 29: Burlington — First Baptist Church, 81 Saint Paul St., 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 30: Stowe — Community Church, 137 Main St., 7 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 31: Montpelier — Bethany Church, 115 Main St., 7 p.m.

Admission is free, though donations will be accepted (\$10 suggested, \$5 for students and seniors).