

Flute and piccolo featured at Kent Blossom this week

by Jarrett Hoffman



Planning a recital means choosing music, of course, but also choosing people, and at this Wednesday's faculty concert at the Kent Blossom Music Festival, Mary Kay Fink knew she wanted to play with Jessica Sindell.

The two have worked together in The Cleveland Orchestra for

a season now — Fink, principal piccolo, has been in the flute section since 1990, while Sindell joined as assistant principal flute last fall. But their history runs deeper: Sindell studied with Fink in high school, having grown up in Pepper Pike. Later on, when she was preparing for professional auditions, she would sometimes play for Fink.

"I encouraged her to go the piccolo route," Fink said during a recent interview, "and then she got the job in Rochester [solo piccolo in the Rochester Philharmonic]." Fink noted that she didn't coach Sindell before the audition in Cleveland, but said that it's been a great fit this past season. "She had subbed with us, and [principal flute] Josh [Smith] really enjoyed her. And her first teacher was Saeran St. Christopher, who plays second flute. It's been a pretty easy transition — it's been really wonderful."

Sindell and pianist Carolyn Gadiel Warner will open the program on July 17 at 7:30 pm in Kent State's Ludwig Recital Hall with a classic: Poulenc's Flute Sonata. The rest of the first half is made up of music chosen by Fink that's based around flute and piccolo. "Even though my job in the orchestra is piccolo and Jessica's is primarily flute, the two of us play both instruments," Fink said, "so I thought it would be fun to have different combinations."

One of the pieces Fink was most keen to program was 20th-century Greek-American composer Nicolas Roussakis' *Six Short Pieces for Two Flutes*. "I played it as an Oberlin student with a dear friend and classmate of mine, and we had a lot of fun," Fink said. "I've always wanted to do it again at some point. It's very hard," she added, laughing. "So that's been really the bulk of the work for this program. Jessica's been a great sport about it, and we've been having a good time trying to whip it into shape."

Another piece Fink remembered playing at Oberlin was Arthur Honegger's *Rapsodie* for the unusual — and beautiful — combination of two flutes, clarinet, and piano. "I thought we needed some variety, so I was looking for another combination," she said. "It's a piece that certainly doesn't get done much. I noticed it's not on Honegger's list of works, which is odd." Joining Fink, Sindell, and Carolyn Warner will be clarinetist Robert Woolfrey. "Rob is really fun to play with," Fink added. "I play with him pretty often in a woodwind quintet — we give a concert every year at CIM."

Bohuslav Martinů's *Sextet for Piano and Winds* includes a movement for flute and piano which Fink has arranged for piccolo and piano. "It's a very short scherzo that doesn't get played much at all. But it's a cute little piece, and I remember thinking that it would probably work really well on the piccolo. Carolyn and I played it last spring at a fundraiser, and we thought we would recycle that one."

One last very charming piece to close the first half: Henri Kling's *Two Little Bullfinches*, here performed by two piccolos and piano. "It's like a corny Sousa-era showpiece, but it's very short," Fink said with a laugh. "We'll leave out all the repeats because a little of that goes a long way. It's kind of like ending the show with a little bon bon."

But even a bon bon can have an interesting history. "I noticed when I was reading about Kling that he's arranged it a bunch of times — for two cornets and band, or flute, clarinet, and piano. I think he's recycled it a lot as a show tune. Back when communities had their own little bands, the piccolo and the cornet were the two instruments that were usually brought up to the front to play solos."

The flutists will then depart the stage, making way for an entirely different second half in which cellist Richard Weiss and pianist Joela Jones will play selections by Astor Piazzolla. Tickets for this concert are available [here](#).

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