

FLUTE FAMILY

THE OSTON-BRANNEN KINGMA SYSTEM FLUTE

by Anne La Berge

One of the most revolutionary ideas in the development of the concert flute had been brewing in 1994. Dutch flute builder Eva Kingma (creator of the open-hole alto and bass flutes) and Bickford Brannen (president of Brannen Brothers in Boston) have collaboratively designed and built a flute that not only provides quarter tones throughout the range of the flute, but also offers an entirely new gamut of multi-phonics. The new *Oston-Brannen Kingma System Flute* has opened an acoustic door that will undoubtedly affect the future of music.

Like all revolutions, the birth of the flute did not happen overnight. Through frequent and lengthy telephone conversations, faxes and visits, the builders designed and created working prototypes, eventually leading to the present design. From time to time, flutists specializing in extended techniques were consulted for feedback and suggestions. Their knowledge was helpful in testing the logical placement and the necessity for certain keys and touches.

The Oston-Brannen Kingma System Flute feels and plays like the Boehm system flute we all presently use. The new touches and keys are elegantly designed and intelligently placed. They don't obstruct normal playing and are easy to reach for most extended techniques. A danger when extra mechanism is added to the flute is the potential imbalance the extra weight causes. This flute is remarkably light and well balanced. The flute is immediately playable with or without using the new keys.

The new keys and touches are used to open or close keys placed on top of keys. The *key-on-key* system functions the same way as "half-holing" a rim on open holed keys.* This technique of half-holing already exists on the modern open hole flute. By using the



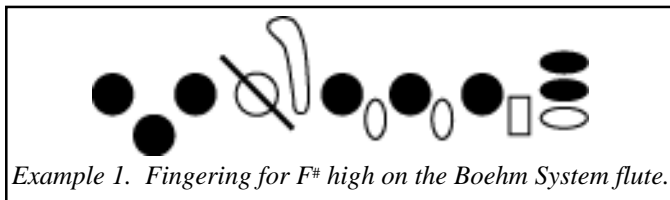
Flutemaker Eva Kingma



Kingma Wood Bodied Flute

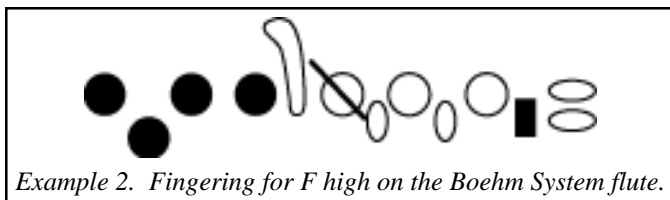
* Flutemaker Eva Kingma patented the present version of the "key on key" system, which she developed for her open hole alto and bass flute design. For more information, see Anne La Berge, "Contemporary Concerns: Eva Kingma - Open-Hole Alto and Bass Flute Builder", *The Flutist Quarterly*, vol. XV no. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 31-33.

key-on-key system, performers can now half-hole keys which normally their fingers can't reach. In other words, it is possible to depress the rim of six more keys than was previously the case. By using the new touches and keys (on keys), it is possible to play six new quarter tones and many new multi-phonics. Until now, the standard open hole flute could play the quarter tones D[#] high, E high, F high, G[#] high, A high, C[#] high (with the C[#] trill key). The rest (D high, F[#] high, G high, B^b high, B high, C high) all required venting and cross-fingering. The cross-fingerings previously needed to produce a quarter tone are acoustically complex and have a variety of interesting but unstable colors. For example, the fingering used to produce the quarter tone between F[#] and G on the Boehm system flute in the first octave involves elaborate venting and cross-fingering (see Example 1).

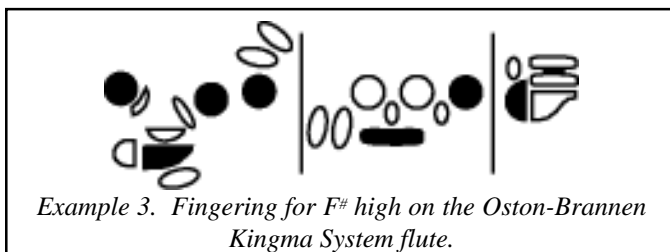


It is impossible to depress the rim of the F[#] hole to play a more simple quarter tone because we don't have enough fingers. An example of a simple quarter tone is the one between F and F[#]. This is produced by depressing the rim of the F key.

On the Oston-Brannen Kingma System Flute, the F[#] key can be half-holed by depressing a touch which closes only the rim and leaves a small (key-on-key) key open. This quarter tone is acoustically similar to the normal tones of the flute, and much easier to finger than the old cross-fingering.



Therefore the Oston-Brannen Kingma System Flute offers us not only the acoustic variety of the old micro-tuning on the Boehm open hole flute (Example 1) but it gives us a new set of reliable and well-tuned quarter tones. By using the new options for half-holing, the potentials for fingering combinations extends the list of available multi-phonics too. The normal fingerings for the entire range of the flute have not changed.

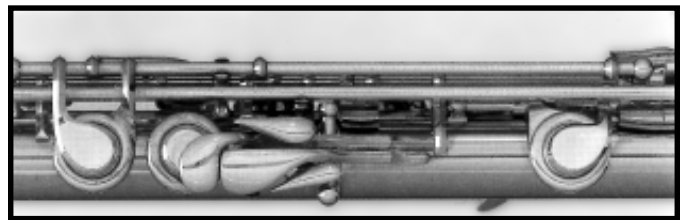


Now that we have this instrument, what music shall we play on it? I spoke with a few flutists who have played this flute. Some of them are already performing on it, and each has exciting plans for future projects. Some will first play older pieces involving extended techniques, some have begun commissioning composers, some will improvise, and some are writing their own music. The general consensus was that there is a new world of sounds to discover on this instrument. Because every musician's talents and tastes are different, the musical and pedagogical directions we take are guaranteed to be rich and full of surprises. Harrie Starreveld, professor of flute at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, will tackle the chamber music of Brian Ferneyhough and premiere a work by American composer Morris Weddington. Both of these composers write music which is complex and virtuosic, requiring long hours of dedicated practice. Their music utilizes a full assortment of quarter tones, microtones and multiphonics. Starreveld plans to work out the possibilities of the instrument, to provide composers with information, and to "let the flute guide the future of its music."

Flutist/composer Jos Zwaanenburg is a member of the faculty of the Amsterdam School of the Arts and the Brighton University in England. Like most musicians specializing in new music, commissioning composers and seeking out new sonic and aesthetic possibilities is a lifestyle for him. Zwaanenburg's reaction to the new flute is that it is "...beautiful. Eva and Bickford have found terrific solutions to problems I have faced in my experiences and experiments on the alto and bass flutes."

Kate Lukas, professor of flute at Indiana University, performed Fukushima's *Mei* for solo flute on the third prototype of the Oston-Brannen Kingma System Flute at the Kansas City Convention in August 1994. She had two days to practice on the flute before her performance. Her reaction at that time was that the flute was "made for pieces like this." Subtle pitch and color inflections were easier to execute, and she felt that she could do more with the piece than she could on her own flute. The instrument handled like a conventional flute, and invited experimentation without requiring special skills in extended techniques. Her image of what the flute could do was expanded each time she ventured to try yet another new key or fingering.

John Fonville, professor of flute at the University of California San Diego, and a pioneer in microtonal compositions and explorations on the conventional flute, wants to begin by cataloging the finger-



14k Gold/Silver Brannen-Cooper Kingma System Flute

ing possibilities and their probable sonic results on the Oston-Brannen Kingma System Flute. He is inviting composers to write pieces for it. In his own compositions, he particularly wants to bring out the acoustic and musical strengths of the instrument. In addition, Fonville is developing exercises to build strength and speed at getting around microtonally on all the open hole and quarter tone flutes that he uses.

This author's first project is to intimately understand how the Oston-Brannen Kingma System Flute handles in many musical situations. My practice time is dedicated to exercises for the development of fluency, flexibility and an intuitive response to the flute. In my work, improvisation and composition come as a response to intuitive reactions. I am developing chamber music repertoire which uses the basic quarter tones and the new multiphonic families by commissioning composers and writing myself, and have written a piece for flute quintet which will be premiered at the NFA convention in Orlando, Florida.

As I watch the development of the flute, I always marvel at the solutions flute makers and players find for design and music. Here again, it is a privilege to witness and take part in a truly remarkable stage of the flute's evolution.

Flutist/composer Anne La Berge grew up in Stillwater, Minnesota and is now based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Her education includes a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of New Mexico where she studied with Frank Bowen, a Master of Music degree from the University of Illinois where she was a teaching assistant to Alexander Murray, and two years of theoretical research studies at the University of California San Diego. She was awarded the performance prize from the 1990 Darmstadt Ferienkursen für Neue Musik, and was a guest performer/teacher in the first European Flute Festival in 1993. La Berge has been on the faculty of the Amsterdam School for the Arts since 1989. Her works are published by Frog Peak Music, who have also released a CD of her works for flute called "Blow".

Addendum:

Eva Kingma, Brannen Brothers and F & B Associates (makers of the Oston-Brannen flute) are pleased to announce the upcoming availability of a totally new concert flute designed to meet the increasing needs of flutists.

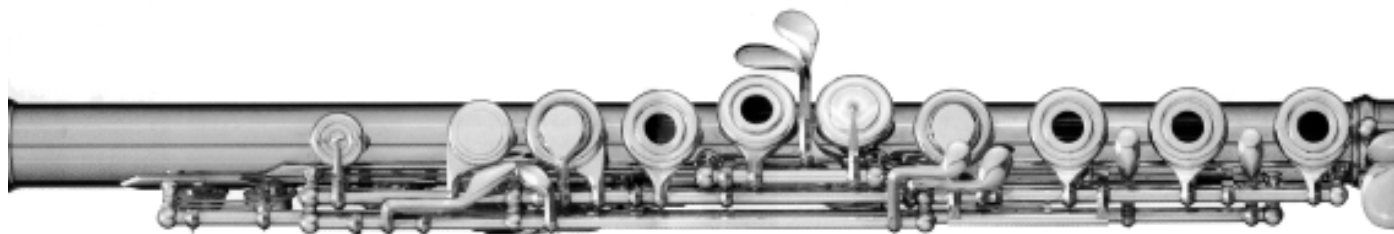
This flute, the result of extensive collaboration between Eva Kingma and Bickford Brannen, is the first C concert flute to offer a full quarter tone scale, as well as complete multiphonic venting, for the modern flute repertoire. Next to that, it gives the flutist increased possibilities to make corrections in intonation and tone colour.

The Brannen/Kingma System flute is, in all respects, a Boehm system flute. All of the normal touch pieces and fingerings are where you would expect them to be. When playing this flute for the first time, it feels similar to the usual C flute. The extended possibilities are to be discovered in the course of time - once you need them, they are there.

Eva Kingma is world-renowned for her pioneering work in developing the open hole and quarter tone alto and bassflutes. Her ingenious, patented "key on key" system is the most practical means of making this type of instrument possible.

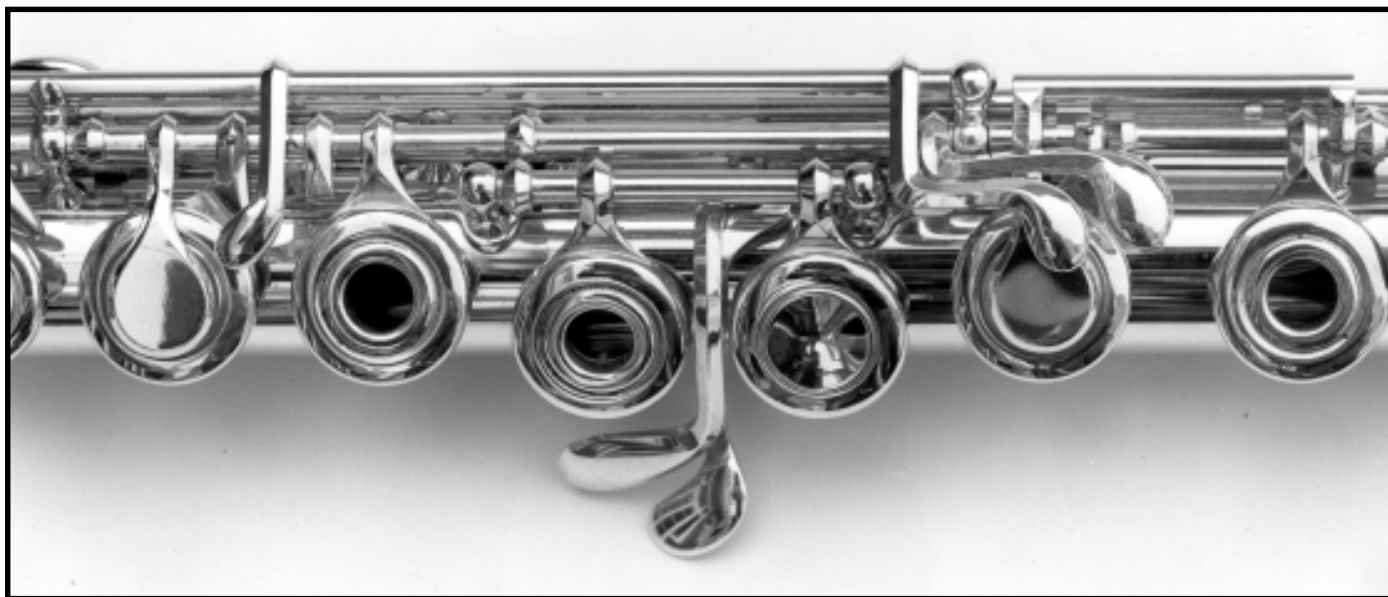
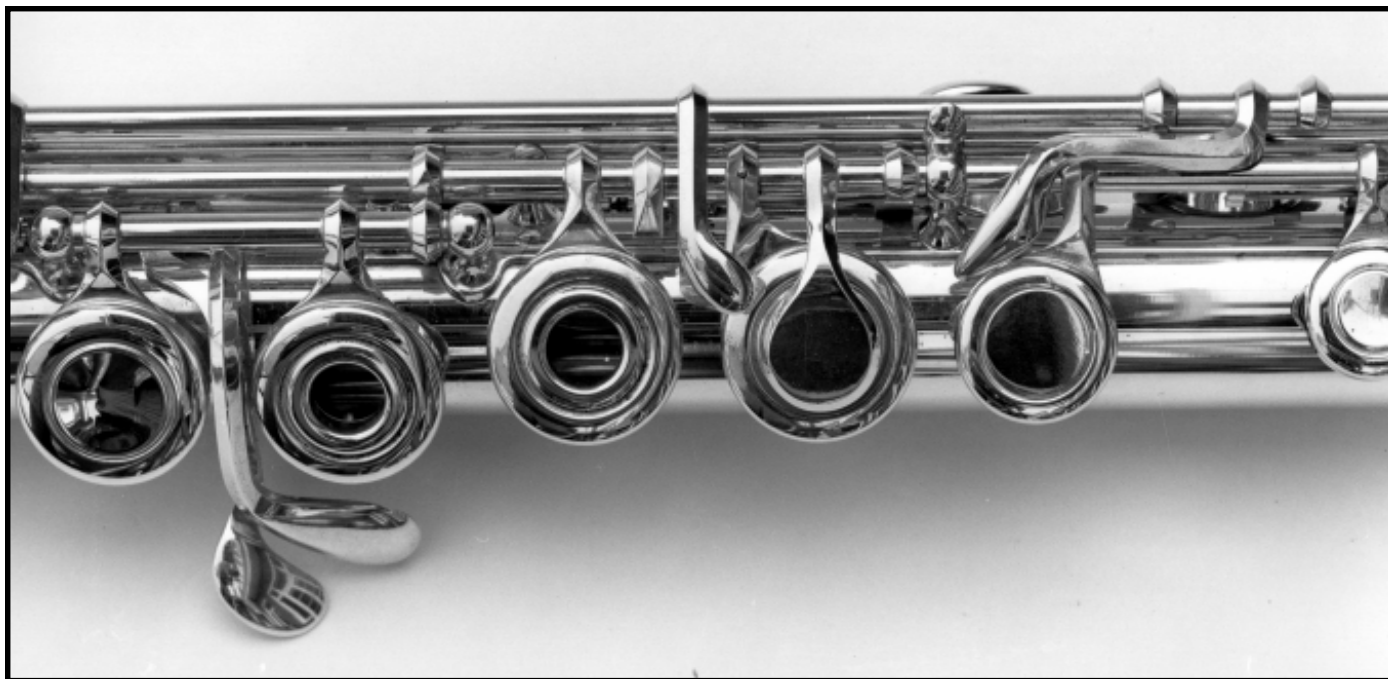
The Brannen flute has been accepted by flutists worldwide for a long time, and provides an exceptional foundation for this exciting project. Utilizing the renowned Cooper scales and headjoint designs, as well as one of the most sophisticated mechanisms available, it is truly a state-of-the-art flute.

All Kingma System flutes come with B foot joint and C# trill key as standard features. The C# trill is necessary both as a multiphonic vent and for the production of two of the quarter tones. In addition to the standard Boehm mechanism, there are six extra keys; these are used to produce the quarter tones and multiphonic vents which are "missing" on the normal French model (open hole) flute. The Kingma System is available on Brannen-Cooper flutes and on Oston-Brannen flutes.



14K Gold Brannen-Cooper Kingma System Flute





For additional information concerning the **Brannen-Cooper Kingma System flute**, please contact:
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or, for the USA and Canada,
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Kingma System Fingering Chart

Fingerings courtesy of Anne La Berge