



Musician Profile – Flutist Robert Wakeley

www.robertwakeley.com



Tell us a little bit about yourself and your life as a musician.

I grew up in Seattle and have lived in Portland for a little over three years.

I am a DMA candidate in Flute Performance at the University of Minnesota and have previously studied at the University of Oregon, Carleton College, and the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo in Mendoza, Argentina, where I studied with the Swedish flutist Lars Nilsson, a former student of Marcel Moyse. I play 2nd flute and piccolo with the Eugene Concert Choir and Orchestra and perform regularly as a substitute with the Helena and Rogue Valley Symphonies. I have also performed

with Orchestra Next and the Eugene Ballet, including on their recently released recording of *The Nutcracker*.

In addition to the traditional repertoire, I enjoy performing new and lesser-known works for the flute.

I have performed live on Minnesota Public Radio in a concert that featured world premieres by two young Minnesota composers. I have also performed as guest flutist and piccoloist with the Balkanicus Contemporary Ensemble in Minneapolis in a program of world and North American premieres of works by Balkan composers. In 2015, as a performance fellow at Hong Kong's Modern Academy, I played in the Asian premiere of Edgard Varese's *Etude pour Espace* for orchestra, chorus, and specialized sound diffusion with the Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart. While in grad school in Eugene, I also collaborated on numerous world premieres with members of the Oregon Composers Forum and was invited to perform with my Pierrot ensemble at the 2016 Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium.

In 2018, I won the Thelma Hunter Schubert Club Award at the Schubert Club competition in Minneapolis, have placed at the Upper Midwest Flute Association and the Coeur d'Alene Symphony National Young Artist Competitions, and have been a finalist in the Francis Walton Competition in Seattle in both the solo and chamber music categories.

In addition to teaching private students, I work with several high school band programs around the Portland area, giving regularly coaching sessions for their flute players. I also work as a Winds and Brass coach for the Metropolitan Youth Symphony and teach flute and music theory at the Key to Music school in Vancouver, WA. I am currently accepting private students at my home studio in the Portland Heights neighborhood of SW Portland.

What projects are you involved with now that particularly excite you?

I am especially looking forward to performing **The Planets with the Rogue Valley Symphony in late April and to the Eugene Concert Choir's May concert**, which will feature a collaboration with the professional vocal ensemble EXIGENCE in an oratorio on the life of Martin Luther King Jr, and other works inspired by and about the struggle for racial equality in our country.

What's on your music stand these days?

Lots of audition excerpts. I have also been revisiting the music of the Japanese composer Yuko Uebayashi, several of whose works I have had to pleasure of performing in solo or chamber music recitals.

What music have you played recently, or recordings have you listened to that you'd like to share with GPFS members?

In the fall, I got to play William Dawson's Negro Folk Symphony with the Rogue Valley Symphony. It is a wonderful piece by one of the first successful African American composers that was largely forgotten for years and is just starting to be rediscovered. Each movement is based on a different spiritual and the musical language is reminiscent of Dvorak's New World Symphony. There is a wonderful recording conducted by Leopold Stokowski, who conducted the piece's premiere in 1934.

Who is your favorite flutist these days?

It's tough to choose since there are so many wonderful flutists out there, but **I especially enjoy to the work of artists such as Claire Chase and Flutronix (Natalie Joachim and Allison Loggins-Hall)** who are really pushing the boundaries of what the instrument can do. I have really enjoyed getting to hear some of Natalie Joachim's recent collaborations with the Oregon Symphony.

Why are you a member of GPFS?

I think flute societies like GPFS are a great way to bring the local flute community together and to hold events and provide resources for students and flutists of all levels.

What kind of flute(s) do you play? I play on a vintage Powell flute made in 1937.

Favorite book you've read or movie you've seen lately? Or, what do you like to do when you are not making music?

A book that I particularly enjoyed recently was *The House on the Cerulean Sea*, by TJ Klune. It is a charming story of love and acceptance that follows a by-the-book bureaucrat in the Department in Charge of Magical Youth who is sent to evaluate an orphanage where some of the department's most challenging cases, including the 6-year-old antichrist, live. Outside of music, I enjoy cooking and taking advantage of the beautiful outdoors in the Pacific Northwest. **I recently ran my second full marathon and apparently forgot how difficult it was because I have already signed up for two more this year.**

What else would you like to share with GPFS members?

I live in SW Portland with my partner, fellow flutist Alexis Evers, and our cat, Maya. **Alexis and I are also two thirds of Xebec Trio, a two flutes and piano trio that we founded in 2019** with pianist Ednaldo Borba. It is currently on hiatus because Ednaldo had to return to his native Brazil during the pandemic, but we are hoping to be able to present additional concerts in the future, whether here in the US or in South America.

robertwakeley.com



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