

# Newsletter of the International Jew's Harp Society



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supported and accompanied by the orchestra, strengthened by the Jew's harp and powerful upper and lower overtones - mixing with the choirs, "Riiiiieessaaaa, Riiiesa, Riesaaaa". The giants ('Riesen' in German) had returned to the town named after them.

The audience were very enthusiastic and orchestra, conductor, composer and soloist were congratulated and celebrated for this marvellous evening. During the evening itself it would have been possible to sell many Jew's harps as people wanted to try out and purchase an instrument...

For myself as the soloist, this concert was an almost indescribable experience, combining, as it did, the various skills of the orchestra in the background and the listening, curious and astonished public before me, as I was allowed to unite the different tendencies with drum, voice and Jew's harp.

Premiere 5<sup>th</sup> July.2008, in the new Elbland Philharmonic Concert Hall, conductor: Christian Voss, composer: Karsten Gundermann, Jew's harp soloist: Gerd Conradt. Special concert "steel and music ",Riesa.

Gerd Conrad

### When a Yakut Jew's harp enchants an Alsatian chapel...

*In the heart of Alsace there is a place that people call simply "The Chapel". There, the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2008, the much loved Jew's harp player, Spiridon Spiridonovich Shishigin, offered his melodies to amazed listeners.*



(top & above)  
Spiridon Shishigin

*All photographs  
courtesy and copyright  
Emilie Maj*



(right)  
The venue

(far right)  
The concert

(below)  
Post concert get  
together



You probably know of Alsace as a place for wines and *sauerkraut*, or have you may have seen the Council of Europe headquarters in the district of the Orangerie, near the pavilion built by Napoleon for Josephine, on television. It is also the place where I was born and studied. Perhaps, because I spent a part of my childhood in a house in the forest, I became immediately attached to 'The Chapel' when we located in the village of Geispolsheim in 1990. For almost nineteen years now I visit the site regularly by bike, alone or with my family and friends.

The place is actually called the 'Chapel Notre-Dame of Hattisheim', though Hattisheim village has not existed for four hundred years. Like most holy sites in France, it has a mystical feel. Legend says that in 1300 a

shepherd used to keep his horses near a water source that gushed out onto the adjacent pastures. One day, the shepherd, who lived alone like many in his profession, had a visitation from the Virgin, after which he decided to build an oratory on behalf of Christ's Mother next to the source. This site was situated not far from the village of Hattisheim, becoming a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary a few centuries later. When the village disappeared, the Chapel was attached to Geispolsheim village, today known for its Corpus Christi, which takes place sixty days after Easter. In the nineteenth century, the chapel was destroyed by fire, but rebuilt thanks to the enthusiasm of the villagers, and became an important place of pilgrimage. Today, a group of believers say the rosary every Sunday and, for the rest of the time, the doors of the Chapel are open to pilgrims or to walkers who wish to engage in private prayer for an hour or just a few minutes.

When Spiridon asked me to organize a concert for him on the occasion of his travels in Europe, the Chapel seemed for me to be the ideal place for his peaceful and beautifully subtle performance. I went to see François Woehl, the head of the church, to discuss organizing a concert in the Chapel. He was wide-eyed when he saw the size of the Jew's harp – it was so small! When his wife arrived, he asked her to guess the size of a Jew's harp. "I do not know", she said, "it is as big... maybe ... as a bass?" I took out my instrument and she exclaimed, "Oh! And you think somebody can give a concert with that?" I have to say, though, that during the concert she was as seduced as much by the beauty of the sound of the Jew's harp as she had been skeptical the first time she saw it!

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, Spiridon and I followed the small road that winds through the forest, arriving at Notre-Dame in its surroundings of trees, some animals and a restaurant. The place itself was covered with flowers, like any Alsatian remains worthy of this name, and evoked an atmosphere conducive to reflection and repose of the soul.



We had the nice surprise when we found that the chapel was full for the concert. I saw on the faces of the listeners alternately astonishment, joy and meditation as Spiridon had took them to Yakutia! After the concert there was tea with milk and *aladij*, followed by a cultural talk I had asked Spiridon to prepare in the morning. When the meeting had finished it gave me great pleasure to see that Spiridon was very happy: "Really, this place has a soul!" he said, "I feel my fatigue taken off." Ayssen, a friend

who has lived in Strasburg since the age of fourteen years, made the journey: "We will eat at restaurant," I told him: "Just come home with us, for tonight Spiridon hosts us!"



(above)  
Spiridon Shishigin's  
soup  
Photograph courtesy  
and copyright  
Emilie Maj

Spiridon remained ten days in Europe, though he was nostalgic for Yakut soup. He cut all the meat that my parents had in the fridge into pieces, added potatoes, onion, pasta... and we felt like we were in Yakutia! I am sure that, if the Hattisheim shepherd had heard Spiridon's Jew's harp near his source, he also would have appreciated this soup fit to compensate for the hard work of horse breeders and passionate musicians...

Emilie Maj

Researcher at Centre for Landscape and Culture (Tallinn University), sponsored by the Estonian Science Foundation and the European Regional Development Fund. Project and listing of publications:

<https://www.etis.ee/portaal/isikuCV.aspx?TextBoxName=emilie%20maj&PersonVID=57241&lang=en&FromUrl0=isikud.aspx>.

**Note:** I also organized during these days a concert, master-class and musicotherapy for Spiridon in the Alpen Mountains. You can receive information about Spiridon in French Speaking countries if you subscribe to the Newsletter in: [www.spiridon.canalblog.com](http://www.spiridon.canalblog.com)

## RegionalNews

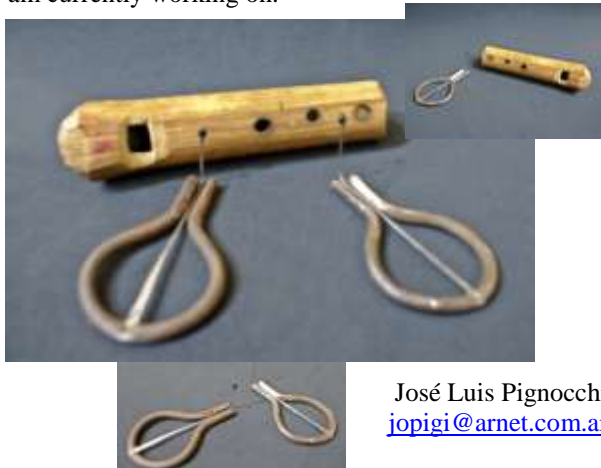
### Argentina

SPAIN vs. ENGLAND

In the Newsletter of December 2007 I wrote about the trump of the Guaymies, an indigenous people from Costa Rica and Panamá.

Notwithstanding the Spanish, they also received trumps of an English influence through the presence of American's workers constructing the Panama Canal. It can be proved looking at the form and the size of the instrument, or being aware that the popular name of it is "yusá", which is the Spanish translation of the English words "Jew's harp"...

Last July I assisted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Latin American Anthropology Congress at the Costa Rica University at San José (CR) where a good friend obtained for me the "guaymies" musical instruments that you can see in the pictures, two trumps and a little flute of three holes. - It is a new step in the South American trumps's map I am currently working on.



(far right)  
Snapshot from  
YouTube

(right)  
"Guaymies" musical  
instruments  
All photographs  
courtesy of  
José Luis Pignocchi

José Luis Pignocchi  
[jopigi@arnet.com.ar](mailto:jopigi@arnet.com.ar)

France

There is a website with overtones and Jew's harp I would encourage you to have a look at. I have posted many videos on overtones and Jew's harp and I have also created a forum on Jew's harps of the world. The address is :

<http://overtone-network.org/profile/TRANQUANGHAI>

On my blog : <http://tranquanghai.musicblog.fr> there are more than 200 video clips of Jew's harp (click on rubrique video Jew's harps) Here also is my newest blog dealing solely with Jew's harps. Please spend a few minutes to visit it .  
<http://haidanmoi.multiply.com/>

This summer I participated in a festival in Italy (June 2008); mela festival in Norway (22-24 August 2008); then I performed at März 1001 Festival in Dresden (Germany) from 13-14 September; then a workshop in Venice from 3 to 5 October 2008, and finally the year ended with a trip to Reunion Island (near Madagascar) from October 24 till November 2, 2008.

Following are links to films on YouTube of films by me. Ma Guo Guo (a Chinese female Jew's harper of the Di tribe) who is a virtuoso of the Chinese Kou Xian 3 and 5 tongue Jew's harps This film was made in Paris in July 2008:

Ma Guo Guo plays the Jew's Harp

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=zdo6moCZeSs>

Ma Guo Guo plays the Chinese Jew's Harp Kou Xian

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=gsv2zvVoeWs>

MA GUO GUO plays the Chinese Jew's Harp Kou Xian



Sylvain Trias was filmed when he came to visit me at the Musée de l'Homme (last summer):

Sylvain Trias plays the Rajasthani Jew's Harp Morchang

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=b4HGLldh9Zc>

SYLVAIN TRIAS plays the Rajasthani Jew's Harp MORCHANG



Sylvain Trias plays the Norwegian Jew's Harp Munnharpa

<http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=9hLRNeMLafU>

I then filmed my student playing with me a week ago to show how someone who learnt the Jew's harp with me and are able to perform with me . I also show some videos with my playing.

Tran Quang Hai & Leif Costantini play the Jew's harp <http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=tJNZtqO8YH0>