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THE SIMPLE SYSTEM TRANSVERSE FLUTE IN TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Abstract
This article addresses the issue of the simple system wooden transverse flute as an instrument present in traditional and folk music in four musical traditions: Irish, Cuban, Breton (France) and Roztocze (Poland). It traces the instrument's transition from the professional concert sphere to amateur practice, and characterises the regional specificities of its use (performance technique, ensemble function, repertoire). Such an approach to the wooden transverse flute in folklore is pioneering. In addition to existing scholarship, the article also draws in part on the author's own research (including fieldwork) concerning the Polish context.
KEY WORDS: simple system transverse flute, flutes in traditional music, flutes in folk music, charanga, Irish wooden flute.

Anotacija
Straipsnyje nagrinėjama paprastos konstrukcijos medinės skersinės fleitos – instrumento, naudojamo airių, kubiečių, bretonų (Prancūzija) ir Roztočės (Roztocze, Lenkija) tradicinėje ir liaudies muzikoje – problema. Jame atsekamas instrumento perėjimas iš profesionalios koncertinės sferos į mėgėjišką praktiką ir apibūdinami regioniniai jo naudojimo ypatumai (atlikimo technika, ansamblio funkcija, repertuaras). Toks požiūris į medinę skersinę fleitą folklore yra novatoriškas. Be esamų mokslinių tyrimų, tekste iš dalies remiamasi ir pačios autorės tyrimais (tarp jų ir folkloro ekspedicijų medžiaga) Lenkijos tradicinės muzikinės kultūros kontekste.
PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: paprastos konstrukcijos skersinė fleita, fleitos tradicinėje muzikoje, fleitos liaudies muzikoje, čaranga, Airijos medinė fleita.

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Introduction

The wooden transverse flute of the simple system, a flute with 19th-century roots, has almost completely fallen out of use in the professional sphere. Renaissance or Baroque flutes are often played in performative practices focused on the recreation of the historical sound, but the Romantic flute is rarely used (Pilch 2011, 5–6). However, this instrument is still present in certain traditional and post-traditional[1] cultures, including Brittany (France), Ireland, the Roztocze region of Poland, and Cuba. In each of these countries and regions, a distinct playing style has developed, characteristic of the local culture, drawing on regional traditions, while creatively incorporating and assimilating external influences.

The flute appeared in Ireland, Poland and Cuba at roughly the same time, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, as a result of broadly understood transformations (both geopolitical and relating to the instrument's construction). In Brittany, it has only been present since the 1970s, having been adapted to the performance of local music by specific artists.

The **subject of this research** is the role of the wooden transverse flute in traditional music, or music inspired by it that has not yet been comprehensively summarised. Irish publications are largely focused on playing techniques (Larsen 2003; Valelly 2014; etc), and rather than characterising or analysing the music, they primarily collect or index it (McCullough 1977, 85). In Brittany, perhaps the only overview of the flute's presence is the work by Gildas Moal (Moal 1996). As for Cuban music, the first comprehensive study appeared only in 2014, but apart from its author, the researcher and flautist Sue Miller, the playing style of the flute in *charanga* music has not attracted broader interest among musicologists (Miller 2014, 22). The role of this aerophone in Polish music has also not yet been comprehensively studied. The **motivation for the research and the aim of this study** paper is an attempt to rediscover the simple system wooden transverse flute, presenting its regional distinctiveness, musical characteristics, and the playing style. I aim to fulfil the postulate expressed by Tomasz Nowak: '[...] every instrument that appears in any form within Polish musical folklore deserves a balanced and, as far as possible, comprehensive description' (Nowak 2018, 10), using the example of four musical cultures in which the wooden transverse flute is or was present. In order to understand why this particular type of instrument became widespread in certain traditional music, I will begin with a brief historical overview of the development of the transverse flute in general.

[1] By post-traditional, I mean musical traditions that are based on folklore, or connect and incorporate elements not only of other cultures, but even popular or Classical music, to create a new quality.

On the methodology behind the research: the examples are analysed from three perspectives: historical (the incorporation of instruments from outside folklore into traditional music), musical-social (playing styles, repertoire, and the flute's relationship to other instruments), and ethnographic (contexts of use).

The instrument's development

Flutes are among the oldest known instruments. They appear, or have appeared, in nearly every culture around the globe. Originally, they were played by healers, shamans or priests (in many cultures, the flute is considered a gift from the gods). Depending on the materials available, flutes have been made from wood, bone (in the past both animal and human), horn, metal, reed, and also synthetic materials.

The complexity of various types differs significantly. The simplest form is an open-ended pipe, which produces sound by directing a stream of air at the pipe's open edge at a specific angle. These include single-tone aerophones without finger holes (such as the Polish *końcówka*, also known as a *holeless pipe* or *overtone flute*), as well as flutes with finger holes that allow for a broader range of notes (such as the Persian *ney*). Intermediate between the simplest examples and flutes with highly precise and complex mouthpieces are instruments with a notched edge at one end of the tube (e.g. the Japanese *shakuhachi* or the South American *quena*).

Flutes can be divided into two main groups: those with a separate windway through which air is blown, and those without such a channel. An example of the former would be European block flutes (recorders). The latter group is represented by transverse flutes (such as the Indian *bansuri*, Korean *taegŭm*, or Japanese *nōkan*), although they have not achieved the same level of popularity as the former. The term *transverse flute* (present in many languages, e.g. German *Querflöte*, French *flûte traversière*) refers to the horizontal way of holding the instrument. However, it is worth noting that even in the early 18th century, there was no clear terminological distinction between vertically held instruments (so-called *recorders*) and those held perpendicular to the player's body (transverse flutes).[2]

Over the centuries, the construction of the instrument underwent changes, including the addition of keys to facilitate the production of notes outside the diatonic scale. The first significant modifications were made in the second half of the 17th century: as a result, the transverse flute no longer consisted of just one

[2] Despite the long history of flutes, the origin of the name has not yet been fully explained. It is assumed that it may have Latin roots: flautus, 'to breathe', flare, 'to blow' (Kreyszig 1998, 1–50).

or two parts, as was the case with earlier Renaissance flutes, but three distinct sections: a headjoint, a body with six finger holes, and a footjoint with a single key. In addition to the division into three parts, its construction also changed, from a cylindrical to a conical bore. These transformations reduced the distance between individual finger holes, which had a positive effect on the playing technique. The range also expanded, reaching two and a half octaves (from d^1 to g^3). In this form, the instrument displaced the previously dominant recorder.

This three-part flute, developed by Jacques Hotteterre,[3] spread throughout the European continent and in England.[4] The revised construction solved many of the problems faced by flautists at the time, although not all, which led to further improvements in the instrument's design. Around 1760, the key mechanism was expanded.[5] This was made possible by the stabilisation of tuning and the mid-18th century introduction of equal temperament.[6]

The most significant figure in the development of the flute was Theobald Böhm, a native of Munich. His innovations, introduced gradually from 1833 onwards, laid the foundations for modern instruments. Böhm eventually began producing flutes made of metal (although he initially applied his mechanism to wooden flutes), in which he incorporated, drawing on the inventions of other makers, a unique system of keys and levers combined into a single mechanism. His solutions made it possible to place tone holes at any distance from each other, regardless of the player's physical reach, which improved intonation. The key system devised by Böhm was also more ergonomic for performers, allowing

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[3] The three-part construction of the flute is most likely a French invention. It is attributed to instrument makers from the Hotteterre family, with particular reference to Jacques-Martin Hotteterre (Kreyszig 1998, 1–50).

[4] Magdalena Pilch notes that 'one of the main research problems concerning the flute in late 17th-century music is identifying the moment when musicians in various Western European countries abandoned instruments of the simple type in favour of Baroque flutes built according to the French model' (Pilch 2021, 13).

[5] The next keys to be added after Hotteterre's D♯ were those for G♯, B and F. A so-called C footjoint was also introduced, which not only extended the instrument's range down to the note C, but also had a positive effect on improving intonation (Pilch 2021, 13).

[6] At that time, there was no fixed standard pitch across Europe, and the tuning of the wooden transverse flute varied from a = 392 Hz to a = 415 Hz. To make it easier for flautists to play in different tunings, Brassens introduced a four-part construction, in which the final part, the footjoint, was interchangeable, and allowed the instrument to be more easily tuned to a given pitch. Other structural solutions were also developed to enable playing in various tunings. Pierre Gabriel Buffardin proposed so-called cors de rechange, interchangeable middle sections of the flute body. Another type of cors de rechange was an additional extension fitted on to the footjoint. The four-part flute gradually gained in popularity as well, although even this design was not ideal. The flute still suffered from scale unevenness; individual notes had differing timbres, which proved problematic during modulation. Moreover, the system of so-called cross-fingering (forked fingerings) remained too complex.

them to play faster and with greater technical ease. With only minor modifications, this system remains in use in modern flutes to this day (Montagu 2001, 31–32).

Thanks to these changes and innovations, described here necessarily in brief, which the wooden transverse flute underwent over the centuries, the instrument's capabilities were significantly expanded. Ultimately, by the end of the 19th century it had fallen out of use in the professional and concert sphere, and was replaced by a new type of flute designed and constructed by Theobald Böhm. Professional musicians switched to newer models, as these allowed for more efficient and optimised playing. At the same time, due in part to the low cost and widespread availability of 'abandoned' older instruments, the transverse flute of the simple system became accessible to amateurs and the lower social classes. These factors led to this older type of flute becoming rooted in several musical traditions.

The wooden transverse flute in Ireland

The transverse flute made its way into the traditional music of the Emerald Isle towards the end of the 19th century. As a result of the aforementioned structural changes, and the consequent devaluation of the older type of instrument, it became widely available and inexpensive. Today, it is so prevalent that it is even referred to as the ***Irish wooden flute***. It is one of the most popular instruments in the contemporary ***ceol nua*** (Irish for 'new music') movement. Its prominence is largely owing to numerous recordings by the flautist John McKenna[7].

Due to the presence in the Irish tradition of other aerophones, simple pipes (*fuarawn*), and later also the six-holed flageolet (*tin whistle*),[8] as well as the Irish bagpipes (*uilleann pipes*), the wooden transverse flute had a relatively smooth path into local folklore. However, for centuries, pipes and flutes did not enjoy much esteem on the island. Simple duct flutes (four or six-holed *fuarawn*) were very commonly used by rural communities and children. In historical sources,

[7] Originally from County Leitrim, McKenna emigrated to the United States, where between 1921 and 1936 he recorded as many as 30 albums. Their popularity led to many regional tunes entering the standard repertoire of Irish traditional music (Vallely 2014, 237).

[8] Archaeological artefacts similar to the whistle date back to the Viking era. The first metal tin whistles, however, originated in Britain around 1825. They became particularly widespread in Irish dance music between 1825 and 1840, with their popularity increasing after 1843, following the opening of Robert Clarke's factory. The history of this aerophone, essentially a simplified version of the flageolet, in traditional Irish music begins only in the 19th century. Nonetheless, it is now one of the most popular instruments, thanks in large part to its portability, availability and ease of use at the beginner stage, as well as its low purchase cost (Vallely 1999b, 397).

however, they are never associated with professional performers (Valelly 1999c, 137).

The status of flautists was once lower than that of fiddlers, as Francis O'Neill[9] observed: 'flute players held low rank in a low-ranking profession' *(Valelly 1999c, 137)*. Similarly, even today, 'Now present in the tradition for over 200 years, the flute never achieved the same level of prestige or popularity as the pipes or fiddle, and this is reflected in the comparatively low number of recordings by flute players' (Valelly 1999c, 137). It was only in the mid-20th century, thanks to the popularity of musicians such as Matt Molloy and Seamus Tansey, that the flute became more widespread and appreciated. The existence of local workshops that produced the instruments undoubtedly also played a role in this development.

The simple system wooden transverse flute is found in every region of Ireland, although it is especially favoured by musicians in the counties of Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, southern Fermanagh, eastern Galway, Clare and western Limerick (Valelly 1999c, 137). Distinct regional playing styles have also developed in Leitrim and Sligo. The former is characterised by less melodic variation and a more restrained approach to ornamentation. This style is represented by players such as John McKenna, John Blessing and Packie Duignan. The Sligo style (as played by Matt Molloy, Seamus Tansey and Peter Horan, among others) is richer, with performers particularly fond of decorating tunes with elaborate ornaments such as *rolls* (McCullough 1977, 85).

Playing the metal transverse flute is rare (it is used, for example, by the American flautist of Irish descent Joanie Madden[10]). This is because: 'The traditional instrument is wooden, and therefore has a warmer tone. Today, it is the preferred

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[9] An American police officer of Irish descent, in addition to his professional work, O'Neill played the flute, fiddle and pipes. He devoted himself to the task of documentation, especially after retiring, publishing several collections of tunes, including The Music of Ireland (1903) and The Dance Music of Ireland (1907). O'Neill is also the author of two books: Irish Folk Music – A Fascinating Hobby (1910), which includes biographical elements (such as reflections on his inspiration to take up the pipes), and Irish Minstrels and Musicians (1913), which contains biographies of Chicago-based musicians from whom he collected melodies. These are also available online: https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:O%27Neill,_Francis (accessed 12 May 2024). His collections are considered highly significant today. In addition to notating music, he also photographed performers, and, from 1902 onwards, equipped with an Edison phonograph, made a number of recordings, some of the earliest known recordings of Irish music. The tunes he transcribed are not representative of the entirety of Irish music, and his transcriptions have been subject to criticism (similar to the reception of Oskar Kolberg's notational methods). Moreover, he would at times invent missing parts of melodies, and often assigned titles to individual pieces himself (Doherty 1999, 285–286).

[10] It is worth noting that both her playing style and the tone she achieves on the metal flute (which is by no means a given) imitate closely the sound of the simple system wooden transverse flute.

instrument among traditional flautists, as the potential for ornamenting melodies is greater on a wooden flute than on a metal one' (Sawyers 2000, 72).[11] Some ornaments characteristic of the folk tradition, such as *cut*, *tap* or *roll,* are extremely difficult to execute on a flute with an integrated system of closed keys.[12] At the same time, traditional performance is inseparable from appropriate ornamentation, which, although freely shaped, must remain within the bounds of an accepted stylistic canon, and forms an inherent part of the music.[13]

The flute in the music of the Emerald Isle serves a melodic function, and is played either solo or in unison with other instruments, particularly fiddles, uilleann pipes, or various types of diatonic accordions. It is used to perform dance melodies such as reels, jigs, slip jigs and hornpipes, as well as ad libitum airs. More rarely, it functions as an accompanying instrument, supporting the vocalist or the band as a whole. It is very seldom treated as a virtuoso instrument, or used for improvisation. Among the few exceptions are the American Michael McGoldrick and the Englishman Niall Keegan, who teaches flute performance at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick. Keegan is also one of the few who frequently employs keys, thus fully utilising the chromatic possibilities of the instrument in his work.[14] It should be noted that in Irish music the flute is quite commonly treated as a diatonic instrument: it is primarily played in the natural keys of D and G, and less often in A, and their related minor keys. The notes of these keys are obtained by covering the appropriate finger holes, often ignoring most of the added keys.

Charanga típica, or the transverse flute in Cuba

Cuban music is a conglomerate of numerous absorbed foreign elements (Spanish, African), which began appearing on the island as early as the time of the

[11] 'It remains the preferred instrument of the traditional flute player today, since the possibilities for ornamenting melodies are greater with a wooden flute than a metal one' (Sawyers 2000, 72).

[12] Addressing the challenges of applying traditional ornamentation to the Böhm-system flute is the publication by Mizzy McCaskill and Dona Gillam, The Complete Irish Flute Book (see: McCaskill, Gillam 2002), which presents a method for 'transferring' the ornamentation style from the wooden flute to the metal one.

[13] The fundamental components of the traditional playing style in Irish music are ornamentation, phrasing, articulation and variation (McCullough 1977, 85). Keegan adds further distinguishing features of style, including intonation, tone, dynamics, repertoire, duration, tempo, instrumentation and techniques specific to individual instruments (Keegan 2010, 66).

[14] CD Don't Touch the Elk, Elk Records, Elk 001, 1999.

conquest (1492),[15] along with a small number of indigenous components.[16] Colonisation, migration, and the coexistence of initially foreign (musical) cultures and religious traditions left a strong imprint on the shape of the music. Musical elements were often adopted alongside belief systems, as music played a significant role in local religions.[17] From African traditions, a particularly large number of idiophones and membranophones were incorporated. The string instrumentarium, in turn, was enriched by imports from Spain, such as the guitar and the bandurria. From native Cuban traditions, the most enduring instruments in music have been maracas and the güiro (Carpentier 1980, 21). Thus, the musical culture of the island was shaped to a large extent by traditions lacking a broader representation of aerophones. However, as noted by Alejo Carpentier, the author of the first comprehensive study on Cuban music, archaeological excavations have uncovered shell trumpets known as guamo (or futo) (Carpentier 1980, 19).[18]

Due to the strong influence of African musical culture on the local folklore, today we speak of Afro-Cuban music (Rodrigues 1996, 810), which can be divided into two groups:

- Cuban popular music (son, charanga, música campesina, timba),
- Afro-Cuban musical forms (rumba, comparsa, santería, folklórico) (Miller 2014, 27).

In Afro-Cuban instrumental music, several types of ensemble can be identified: charanga, charanga típica, conjunto, the historical orquesta típica (Miller

[15] Slaves originating from various regions of Africa recreated entire musical ensembles in Cuba, particularly percussive ones. Significant inspiration came from the traditions of the Arará, Yoruba and Bantu ethnic groups. In a later stage of occupation (17th and 18th centuries), slaves from the Ewe and Fon groups, originally captured by the French, also arrived on the island. Along with them came hybrid Franco-Haitian traditions, including the tumba francesa (French drums) tradition (Rodrigues 1996, 823, 825–826).

[16] Not all indigenous musical traditions were well documented, nor were all of them absorbed into later Cuban music (see: Rodrigues 1998, 822; Béhague 2001, 764; Carpentier 1980, 17).

[17] As a result of the blending of African and Spanish religious influences with local Cuban traditions, a new religion emerged, known as Santería (also referred to as Regla, Ochá or Lucumí), in which both local deities and Christian saints were worshipped. African cultures and religions developed freely in Cuba, due to the considerable liberty granted to African slaves by the Spanish. This freedom allowed Africans to preserve their music and religious practices, as well as to organise themselves into mutual aid societies, which helped to sustain their identity and culture (Rodrigues 1998, 823). Owing to the use of the same instruments in both religious music and, later, in rumba, the latter closely resembles the music performed during Santería ceremonies (Béhauge, Moore 764).

[18] It is worth adding that the musical transfer was not one-sided. At a later stage, Cuban music strongly influenced, among others, jazz and popular music in the United States, and subsequently also in Europe (through genres as such son, rumba, mambo, cha-cha-chá), while the bongos gained worldwide fame (Rodrigues 1998, 827–828).

2014, 27),[19] and the gran combo or gran orquesta, which emerged under the influence of American jazz bands. The instrumental set-up of ensembles including the flute gradually expanded. The incorporation of percussion instruments was especially significant, as it increased the overall sound volume. As a result, some Cuban flautists began modifying their instruments by enlarging the embouchure hole in order to play higher (often beyond the commonly used range) and louder. Eventually, players began to push the cork deeper into the headjoint, which slightly lowered the instrument's tuning, and in some cases the entire embouchure hole was enlarged (Miller 2014, 15, 75–76).

Currently, the standard Cuban charanga consists of: violins, a keyboard instrument, bass, congas (tumbadoras), paila (timbales), the idiophone güiro, vocals, and flute (either the five-key wooden simple system transverse flute, or the modern Boehm system) (Miller 2014, 33). The type of wooden flute used in Cuba, of French origin, is referred to in Spanish as la flauta de cinco llaves[20] (five-key flute) or la flauta de madera (Miller 2014, 25), wooden, as opposed to the modern metal one. Some performers, such as René Lorente, alternate between both types of flute in their playing. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the tradition of the Cuban charanga in which both types coexist is unique. Although the Boehm system flute is beginning to dominate numerically (Miller 2014, 68), the tone of its predecessor remains more appreciated: 'many charanga musicians maintain that a charanga orchestra sounds correct only with the five-key flute, even though the metal flute is more common in charangas today' (Miller 2014, 68).[21] This correlates closely with the previously mentioned statement regarding the preferred flute tone in Irish music.

Charanga ensembles perform popular music, including mambo, cha-chachá and pachanga. This repertoire combines elements of Classical music with rhythmic traditions from sub-Saharan Africa. The flute plays two roles here: melodic and improvisational. The melodic function was particularly important in the early development of charanga during the 1920s and 1930s, when the music was almost exclusively instrumental. Jessica Valiente notes that 'contemporary improvisers draw from three sources: classical music (evident in virtuosic

[19] Sue Miller uses Spanish terms such as charanga orquesta so that the word orquesta does not evoke associations with a symphony orchestra. However, it seems that in the context of Polish ethnomusicology, the term is fairly well established (e.g. orkiestry włościańskie, 'peasant orchestras'), so the use of the Polish equivalent is also possible.

[20] There were several types of Romantic flute, with the English, French, German and Austrian flutes being the most notable. 'In no case can one speak of a single type of "Romantic' flute ..." (Pilch 2011, 12).

[21] 'Many charanga musicians insist that the charanga orquesta only sounds right with the five-key flute, even though the metal flute is more commonly used in the charangas of today' (Miller 2014, 68).

passages and articulation), the vocal layer (a rich source of melodic motifs for improvisation), and the rhythm of the charanga. The influence of classical music is especially audible in the playing styles of performers like Antonio Arcaño and Richard Egües. The vocal inspiration is consistently used by Belisario Lopez and Rolando Lozano, while the internal rhythmic subdivisions of charanga are most clearly expressed in the improvisational style of Johnny Pacheco.'[22]

Brittany: an invented tradition

The wooden transverse flute was introduced intentionally into Breton music in the 1970s. Thus, we can speak of something akin to Hobsbawm's concept of an invented tradition.[23] Today, it is recognised as one of the fundamental instruments appropriate for performing music from Armorica, which, although in many respects thoroughly contemporary (such as through the inclusion of new instruments, like electric guitars, saxophones and Hammond organs, or its fusion with jazz, broadly understood Classical music, rock, and popular music), still retains a strong traditional layer, manifested particularly in its metre and rhythm, and sometimes also in the use of ancient scales. Many outstanding musicians currently play this instrument, including Sylvain Barou, Malo Carvou, Erwan Hamon, Jean-Michel Veillon and Jean-Luc Thomas.[24]

The first to take an interest in the old-system wooden transverse flute were Patrick Molard and Alan Kloatr, but it was only Jean-Michel Veillon who successfully adapted it for performing traditional music:

> [...] there is no such thing as an old flute-playing tradition in Brittany. Small pfifes were used in central Brittany, but disappeared totally during the First World War, and all that was left from their presence are some photographs. Patrick Molard and Alan Kloatr were the first Breton musicians to use English wooden flutes (bought in Ireland while they were playing with Alan Stivell, around 1975), but they never really concentrated on adapting Breton music to them. When I started to think of how the flute should be played in the Breton repertoire, I spent more time than ever listening to singers and '*sonneurs*' from all parts of Brittany (*sonneurs* are *biniou/bombard* players, and to a larger extent all Breton traditional musi-

[22] Jessica Valiente, The French-Cuban Charanga Flute, p. 3. https://www.nfaonline.org/docs/default-source/committees-documents/global-flutes-committee/charanga-flute.pdf?sfvrsn=96adedfd_2 (accessed 6 May 2024).

[23] '"Traditions', considered ancient or as passed down from time immemorial, often have quite recent origins, and sometimes are outright invented' (Hobsbawm 2008, 9).

[24] The only flautist who has made wider use of the metal transverse flute in Breton music is Pol Huellou.

> cians). Then I tried, literally, to 'translate' their music and feelings through my flute-playing. It takes time, and you can never tell for sure what is right or wrong in your own technical choices in playing Breton music. It's like an 'invented tradition', I guess![25]

Today, the flute leads among traditional instruments, which is precisely thanks to Veillon.[26]

Breton flautists perform primarily melodic parts, often playing in unison with other instruments, such as violins, bagpipes, accordions and others, including in the traditional responsorial technique called *kan ha diskan* (Breton for 'call and response' singing). They also frequently improvise (for example, musicians like Jean-Luc Thomas, Sylvain Barou, Erwan Hamon). Most of them demonstrate a very high level of technical and performance skill (Grygier 2025), and blend Breton traditions with other genres or musical cultures.

The Bretons not only adopted the instrument from the Irish, but also readily perform music from the Emerald Isle.[27] Conversely, the Irish engage less frequently with Breton folklore, and when they do they often lose some important characteristics, such as phrasing and accentuation.[28] Among the flute players discussed in this article, Breton flautists are arguably the most open and progressive group. Beyond references to other Celtic traditions, they also draw from more foreign musical traditions, frequently incorporating aksak rhythms, such as the flautist Sylvain Barou in melodies in the 7/4 metre uncommon for Brittany, found in the piece Lesnoto Horo,[29] or in mixed metre (9/8 + 13/8) in Balkan melodies (Horos[30]). In the latter piece, he also demonstrates the ability to use modern flute techniques and improvisation in irregular metres.

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[25] Interview with Jean-Michel Veillon, http://www.irishfluteguide.info/jean-michel-veillon-interview/ (accessed 6 May 2024).

[26] 'Jean-Michel VEILLON donne à la flûte traversière en bois un statut de premier plan en musique bretonne' (Moal 1996, 4).

[27] See, for example, the album Arri eo ar momant (released by Compagnie Hirundo Rustica, 2009) by the duo Jean-Luc Thomas (wooden transverse flute) and Yvon Riou (acoustic guitar tuned to DADGAD).

[28] The track Gaelic Gavote from Michael McGoldrick's album Wired (Vertical Records, 2006) lacks the characteristic accents on the first, third, and seventh beats that define the Breton gavotte in 8/4 time, and instead simply sounds like a slow Irish reel in 4/4. Similarly, on the track Ridee from Fused (Vertical Records, 2000), when performing the six-tempo ridée dance, the musicians play it without accenting the first, third, and fifth beats of the measure, causing this traditional Breton melody to sound like a waltz in 3/4 rather than the proper six-beat ridée (in 6/4 time). The band Lunasa, with the flautist Kevin Crawford, does something similar. The piece Fest Noz also refers to the tradition of Breton ridée (the title itself, Fest Noz, means 'night festival', or literally 'night celebration', in Breton). Here, in addition to the lack of proper accentuation, the tempo of the piece is not suited for the dance.

[29] The CD Triad, Sylvain Barou, Dónal Lunny, Padraig Rynne.

[30] The CD Sylvain Barou, Sylvain Barou.

Gurvant Le Gac is inspired by the Middle East,[31] as well as contemporary electronic music,[32] while Youn Kamm uses the old system wooden transverse flute in jazz music, performing in the band of the trumpeter Ibrahim Maalouf. Jean-Luc Thomas combines playing the wooden transverse flute with Nigerian traditions (with the group Serendou[33]), South American, mainly Brazilian,[34] influences, Indian music (on the studio album Magic Flutes,[35] with Ravichandra Kulur playing the bansuri flute), improvisation, and jazz, also employing contemporary performance techniques (such as flutter tonguing, whisper tones,[36] percussive effects, and more).

At the same time, musicians from Armorica still use the flute to perform traditional music and dance forms such as plinn, hanter dro and rond de Loudeac.

The transverse flute in the Zamość region[37]

In Poland, flutes have been, and to a large extent still are, marginalised instruments, including in scholarly studies.[38] A similar fate befell, for example, the clarinet, as a relatively new and foreign instrument to traditional cultures. This manifested in the diminishing of its role, pejorative terms used for the performer or the sounds produced, and a general scarcity of audio documentation (Novak 2018, 8–9). Unfortunately, 'the borderland between rural music-making at weddings and dances and the concert life in urban centres did not attract much attention from ethnomusicologists' (Dahlig 1998, 77),[39] even though it was precisely in this area that the transverse flute functioned within the native tradition.

Krzysztof Gorczyca further emphasises that the generation of musicians from Roztocze, born in the second and third decades of the 20th century, mainly play-

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[31] Originally in the trio AGB, and later in the band Charkha (see the album La colère de la boue, Innacor 2018).

[32] For example, the pieces Ubiquité, Rasim, Indi, and others from the album Ubiquité (L'Usinerie Production 2020) by the duo Bertolino (hurdy-gurdy) and Le Gac (wooden transverse flute).

[33] Also, a guest appearance on the track Kissey from the album Taboussizé by Mamar Kassey (P1M Innacor 2013).

[34] Oficina itinerante (Compagnie Hirundo Rustica 2020).

[35] Magic Flutes (Hirustica 2016).

[36] Terms introduced into the Polish language by the jazz flautist and academic lecturer Leszek Wiśniowski (see: Wiśniowski 2017).

[37] The description and conclusions contained in the fragment concerning the Polish context will also be published in the Polish-language version in the article "The Old-System Wooden Transverse Flute and the Instrumental Traditions of the Lublin Region" in the journal "Roczniki Humanistyczne".

[38] The topic of aerophones has been explored, among others, by Alojzy Kopoczek (see: Kopoczek 1981), and Józef Kubik (see: Kubik 1981, 58–82).

[39] The researcher notes that larger ensembles, including wind bands, were given attention in the works of, among others, Adam Chętnik, Paweł Szefka and Jan Piotr Dekowski.

ed wind instruments that 'were not accepted by jurors' at folklore festivals. As a result, 'what we have is a wealth of recordings of the oldest performers, born at the beginning of the 20th century or earlier, while later musicians left practically no traces that would allow us to get to know the sound of their bands ... They failed to attract the attention of folklorists focused on capturing the last opportunities to document more "authentic" playing' (Gorczyca 2016, 17).

Fortunately, the performances of some Roztocze flute players have been preserved, for example, recordings of Antoni Bednarz can be found in the Phonographic Collections of the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences,[40] the Polish Radio Archives,[41] and the Muzyka Odnaleziona Foundation.[42] In the Music Folklore Collections of the Museum of the Lublin Village, one can also find flautists from the bands of Wola Grodecka, Dzierążnia, Majdan Górny and Sokołówka.[43]

In Polish traditional music, wind instruments began to appear in folk bands only in the second half of the 19th century, and became more widespread in the next century. At that time, two types of ensemble developed: those in the 'village style' (these were small, usually two-person bands playing in archetypal line-ups such as fiddle-bass, fiddle-bagpipes or fiddle-drum), and bands of the so-called 'new style', which were expanded to include drum, double bass, clarinet, trumpet or flute (Bielawski 1999, 113–114).

In this context, Piotr Dahlig refers to a dual approach, which was reflected during a wedding in the following way: during the so-called *marszówki* (music

[40] ZF IS PAN, rec. no. T4623.01–T4623.04.

[41] Recordings of the Bednarz Brothers' Band from the years 1976 to 1996, originating from the Polish Radio Archive, were acquired and partially published by Antoni's son Lucjan Bednarz, on the YouTube platform: https://www.youtube.com/@KapelaBraciBednarzyzNowe-sr8kw (accessed 26 July 2024). In some of these recordings, Antoni Bednarz plays the flute, while in others he plays the drum. Polish Radio included recordings of the Bednarz Brothers' Band on the album Muzyka Źródeł vol. 03 Lubelskie (Polish Radio, 1997), featuring two tracks: Suwak and Podróżniak, also known as zawiślak. Although the booklet includes a photograph of Antoni Bednarz playing the flute, in the recordings featured on the disc he is performing on the drum.

[42] Audiovisual documentation and a description are available on the website: https://www.muzykaodnaleziona.pl/kapela-bednarzy-z-tomaszowa-lubelskiego/ (accessed 26 July 2024). The album Jadąc przez Roztocze (Travelling through Roztocze, Muzyka Odnaleziona, Vol. 8) includes a Polka recorded in 1991, performed by the band in the following line-up: Antoni Bednarz (wooden transverse flute), Stanisław Bednarz (bass drum), Stanisław Bielecki (lead fiddle), Władysław Szymczuk (second fiddle).

[43] Catalogue numbers of the recordings: ZFM/S2A – Band from Dzierążnia (Tomaszów Lubelski 1973 and 1969), ZFM/S2B – Band from Majdan Górny (Tomaszów Lubelski 1969), ZFM/S4B – Band from Wola Gródecka, ZFM/S10B – Band from Sokołówka near Frampol (1977?). Among the archival materials, there are also recordings of the Bednarz Band from Nowa Wieś (1977), but without the flute (ZFM/S10A). At present, the details concerning these phonograms (band line-ups, recording context) remain unknown; this matter is currently the subject of ongoing research.

performed outdoors during processions to and from the church), musicians played wind instruments, while indoors they used string-based ensembles (sometimes accompanied by drums), known as *rznięte* (in Polish 'sawed') instrumentation (Dahlig 1998, 79), 'Where brass bands existed, military or fire brigade, musicians took the opportunity (also in the Lublin region, for instance) to add splendour to the wedding ceremony (typically for a fee)' (Dahlig 1998, 79; Koter, Kusto 2011b, 100), so at least some musicians were 'bilingual' in their use of instrumentation.

Earlier information about aerophones, especially those forming part of larger instrumental ensembles, is scarce. For the following discussion, it is of interest that Oskar Kolberg once recorded the term *floterwers*. He did so only once, quoting a verse from a nobleman's song '*A wiecorem w miłym chłodzie*' (And in the Evening, in the Gentle Cool):

> But I do recall,
> that I have a *floterwers* with me,
> I draw it out, fold it up,
> sit down under the *spaler* (Kolberg 1970, 101).

The folklorist also noted the presence of a flute (of what kind?) in a Kujawy band featuring a line-up expanded to include wind instruments (violin, bass, small drum, flute, oboe, clarinet and trumpet) (Kolberg 1962, 203–209). He also repeatedly mentioned instruments such as the *piszczałka* and *fujarka*, and more rarely used terms like *flet* or *flecik*. However, the latter are difficult to associate with the wooden transverse flute, and are more likely regional names used to describe duct flutes with finger holes. Nonetheless, determining with certainty which instrument a given term refers to is often difficult (Dahlig 1988, 81).

Aerophones became widespread in rural bands especially after the First World War (Gorczyca 2016, 15). At that time, there was also a noticeable increase in interest in brass and dance orchestra instruments (Nowak 2018, 14). The presence of brass instruments in villages was linked both to the functioning of local musical groups attached to Volunteer Fire Brigades,[44] and to the experience of playing in military bands, which many musicians had in their backgrounds (Gorczyca 2016, 15).

It is also worth emphasising that the instrument serves as a medium allowing folk artists to express themselves, only partially changing their repertoire or playing style:

> Musicians playing brass wind instruments (trumpet, cornet, trombone, flugelhorn) in traditional bands largely remain folk mu-

[44] The extensive development of fire brigade brass bands occurred during the interwar period. Some of these ensembles may potentially have performed at rural weddings (Dahlig 2025).

> sicians; adopting a relatively new instrument does not immediately change the traditional flavour and style of playing (joint melodic playing by ear, so-called heterophonic variation); elements of the old repertoire do not disappear with the adoption of new instrumentation. In other words, the new instrument is 'tamed' with the help of the traditional playing style (e.g. oral-memory based) and previously well-mastered repertoire; the modernisation of instrumentation does not mean a change in the musical consciousness (Dahlig 2025).

In the interwar period in the Lublin region, traditional two-person bands (violin and drum) were expanded to include trumpet, cornet, saxhorn, tuba and clarinet, and also the transverse flute. Several such larger bands-orchestras are known: the band of Franciszek Zajma from Przewłoka and Tomasz Wyjadacz from Podhorce, the Bednarz family band from Nowa Wieś, and those of Jan Mazurek and Stanisław Kowal from Majdan Górny, the Jadalok family band, and after the Second World War, also the bands of Bronisław Tor from Rogóźno, Jan Baryła and Józef Tys from Rachanie and Werehanie, Józef Mosór from Rogóźno, Jan Kimak from Wola Gródecka, and Władysław Kurczaba from Klekacz (Koter, Kusto 2011b, 100–105).

Between 1957 and 1964, Feliks Olesiejuk conducted research on wedding customs, and among the ensembles he recorded was a larger band active around Teodorówka and Frampol, consisting of a violin, clarinet, flute, trumpet and drum. These larger ensembles operated in parallel with the original two-person bands, particularly in the Lublin Powiśle region.

We also know the names of several flautists who performed the traditional repertoire on the old-system wooden transverse flute: Antoni Bednarz, Bolesław Depko, Dominik Drzazga, Józef Flis, Jan Knap, Franciszek Niedzielski, Wacław Pasternak, Józef Ratyna, Antoni Seta and Ignacy Zwolakiewicz. Stanisław Maksim, an organist and bandmaster of the brass band in Chrzanów, also played the flute (type unknown), and Władysław Bieńko played the piccolo.[45] The best-documented and most renowned instrumentalist was Antoni Bednarz.

To the above list of players of the old-system transverse flute, we should also add Jan Molenda from Jędrzejów,[46] and Michał Żak, a multi-instrumentalist who

[45] There is very little information available on the topic. This is the only known reference to the playing of the piccolo flute in the rural tradition (see: Butryn 2014, 83–84).

[46] Jan Molenda (b. 1904 in Ludwinów, d. Jędrzejów) was a member of the so-called large band from Gniewięcin in the Kielce voivodeship. The band's line-up included three violins, a flute, two cornets and a harmonium. The ensemble was recorded by the Kielce team of the Musical Folklore Collection Action in 1951; recording reference: ZF IS PAN T0512. Although Molenda does not represent the Zamość region, he is mentioned here due to the use of an instrument

has formed ensembles drawing on traditional music (such as Janusz Prusinowski Kompania, Tęgie Chłopy or Transatlantyk). However, while the other flautists absorbed the style and manner of playing through traditional modes of transmission, Michał Żak studied village music intentionally, choosing it as one among many available traditions. Moreover, he focused on music from central Poland, rather than from the Roztocze region.

> We simply used to go to the countryside. And one figure, one of the most important for me, from the Mazovian region, was Kazimierz Meto, whom Maciek and I had been visiting since we were about six. He passed away last year [...] we were with him during that final stage of his life, I used to visit him often, and that was probably, well, the encounter there, with those people ... (Grygier 2025, 44).[47]

The practice of Antoni Bednarz, born in Nowa Wieś near Tomaszów Lubelski, encompassed both being apprenticed under a master and participant observation through active involvement in his own regional traditional culture. In the first instance, the musician received instruction from Bolesław Depko (Koter, Kusto 2011a, 82). This took place on the basis of the mutual exchange of services, characteristic of the traditional transmission of knowledge and the secrets of playing:[48]

> I said: I will forge this mill for you, and you write a bit here, show me the notes. If you teach me, the mill will be finished. Oh, and on that basis! Later I kept visiting him, caught on to those notes a little [...] he also played the flute and wrote down the fingering [i.e. the fingering chart] for me, and showed me how it goes (Grygier 2025, 48).[49]

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rather unusual for bands performing traditional music. Based on auditory analysis, it is difficult to determine definitively the type of flute he played.

[47] Initially, Żak played Celtic music on the flute. He became acquainted with the instrument thanks to the Breton flautist Jean-Michel Veillon, with whom he also trained, as he did with Jean-Luc Thomas: 'I used to go [there] every summer and spend time with them, really not only playing and learning, but also [...] visiting musicians, meeting people, talking about traditional culture, what it's for, where it comes from, how fleeting it is, what significance it holds for a given country's culture. All of this somehow influenced my development, what I do now here [...] In the end, the question always came up, don't you have any Polish traditional music? [...] I remember that at first, I didn't really know what they meant. I'd say we didn't really have any folk musicians, until I got into it and discovered this scene, which is actually quite large' (interview with M. Żak, conducted in Warsaw in 2009) (Grygier 2025, 44).

[48] The form of payment could include, for example, help with agricultural work or providing a free accompaniment to the teacher at several weddings (see: Dahlig 1993, 81–91).

[49] Interview with Antoni Bednarz, conducted at his home in Rogoźno, Tomaszów Lubelski, in 2009 (Grygier 2025, 48).

Before he started playing the flute, he absorbed the local musical culture from an early age:

My uncle often said, 'Come on, sit down and drum a bit' [...] the melodies were sung by various singers and songstresses, and all of that was memorised [...] I used to go drumming there and remembered some of the tunes [...] once I was eavesdropping on an orchestra playing [...] there was an older chap who tended cows near a birch grove, and he played the fujara in the woods. He was very skilled, nobody taught him, he learned by ear, various songs, you know, folk songs [...] and melodies, he played beautifully. I picked up a bit from him. But you've got to practise! (Grygier 2025, 48).

Antoni Bednarz was an instrumentalist, especially a flautist (playing a wooden transverse flute of the old system) and a drummer (his first instrument). Towards the end of his life, at about 75 years of age, he also learned to play the violin.[50] The musician's life and work are relatively well documented. Several studies have been published about him, or the Bednarz Band in which he played, including biographical and memoir-type works (Sar 2020, 33–34; Welcz 2019, 367; Zapalski 1971; Grygier 2025). The family originated from the Galician village of Nienadówka, and had rich musical traditions. Four of the six brothers of Antoni's father, Józef Bednarz, were also musicians, playing instruments they crafted themselves (including, among others, flutes). The best known among them was Ignacy Bednarz, founder of the family's Bednarz Brothers Band, who also left a significant musical imprint on his nephew (Sar 2020, 33).

Besides his uncle's ensemble, Antoni Bednarz played the drum at weddings in Franciszek Zajma's band. The group included wind instruments, including a simple system wooden transverse flute, on which Ignacy Zwolakiewicz played at the time (he was also a member of the so-called Kimak Band, a brass band from Wola Gródecka). Bednarz played with this eight-person orchestra between roughly 1945 and 1950.

Due to the limited number of available ethnophonographic recordings of bands featuring a wooden transverse flute, the stylistic characteristics presented here are based primarily on the playing of Antoni Bednarz. The musician performs in the second and third octaves (using only tones within the range of d^2–g^3), that is, in the middle and highest register of the instrument, an octave above the violin. Ornamentation of the melody is minimal, limited to occasional trills on notes of a longer rhythmic value. A similar style was employed by

[50] 'I don't know if you'll find someone who, at the age of seventy-five like I was, would take up the fiddle and manage to learn a bit [...] because it's not that easy, you know,' recalled Antoni Bednarz (Grygier 2025).

flautists from the bands of Sokołówka,[51] Majdan Górny and Dzierążnia. In all recordings available to me from the Museum of the Lublin Countryside, these musicians always play an octave above the violins.[52] The consistent use of only the highest registers may have stemmed from a desire to 'cut through' the louder brass instruments, much like in the early days of *charanga* music in Cuba.

The repertoire performed on the wooden transverse flute in the Roztocze region, according to Antoni Bednarz, included:

> polkas, oberek dances, and sometimes a few sztajereks, although we had few sztajereks to play because they didn't fit; they weren't danced here. Polka, oberek, waltz, tango, foxtrot, those were the tunes played all the time, but now new things have come along (Grygier 2025, 52).[53]

Thus, ensembles featuring the wooden transverse flute performed music that had previously been played in a reduced formation, without aerophones, expanding it with new musical forms and presenting it in a different aesthetic, no longer purely string-based, but a combination of strings and aerophones. Nevertheless, the wooden transverse flute remains an ephemeral phenomenon in Poland, with a limited reach, and continues to occupy a marginal position within the main musical practice.

Conclusion

The above characterisation of the wooden transverse flute in local musical traditions reveals that, despite the overwhelming dominance of Theobald Böhm's flute model, at certain points in history the older type of instrument was, or still is, an integral part of regional ensembles in various parts of the world: in northwest France, southeast Poland, Ireland, and Cuba. Except for its intentional transplantation into Breton music in the 1970s, the flute gradually became established in the other musical traditions from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries through the influence of geopolitical and economic factors, accompanied by numerous changes in culture, technology and society.

The flute functioned in somewhat different ways in the musical traditions discussed. In each, the flute serves a melodic role, sometimes also a solo one (except

[51] Recording incorrectly included in the description of the Kimak Band: Oberek, recording from the Museum of the Lublin Countryside, dated 1975–1980, https://muzykaroztocza.pl/muzyk/194/name/Kapela+d%C4%99ta+z+Woli+Gr%C3%B3deckiej+%28Kapela+Kimaka%29.html# (accessed 29 July 2024).

[52] In contrast to the Roztocze musicians, Michał Żak usually plays in the same register as the violin.

[53] Interview with Antoni Bednarz, conducted at his home in Rogoźno, Tomaszów Lubelski, in 2009.

in Poland). In Brittany and Cuba, improvisation plays an important role. In Celtic lands, this aerophone forms a stable and characteristic part of the instrumental ensemble. Likewise, Cuban *charanga* cannot function without it, although it is also the only culture mentioned where the old-system flute coexists alongside the newer model. By contrast, in Polish music, the wooden transverse flute appeared only marginally, and seems to be past its heyday.

However, considering the continued performance on the wooden transverse flute by the contemporary musician Michał Żak, and considering the recorded repertoire of several previous generations of flautists, it may be worthwhile in the future engaging in applied ethnomusicology. Based on historical audio documents, it would be possible to revive the Roztocze style of ensemble playing, not only in their string-and-percussion format, but also expanded by wind instruments, thus restoring to cultural circulation once again the repertoire of flautists from Majdan Górny, Dzierążnia and Sokołówek.

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Evelyna Grygier

PAPRASTOS KONSTRUKCIJOS SKERSINĖ FLEITA TRADICINĖJE MUZIKOJE

Santrauka

Paprastos konstrukcijos medinė skersinė fleita yra istorinis instrumentas, kurį profesionaliojoje apyvartoje beveik visiškai pakeitė XIX amžiuje Theobaldo Böhmo sukurta metalinė skersinė fleita. Dėl struktūrinių fleitų gamybos pokyčių

ir nemuzikinių veiksnių (ypač ekonominių) medinis instrumentas pateko į tradicinio instrumentinio ansamblio instrumentarijų ir taip jį praturtino. Straipsnyje pristatoma fleitos istorija, atlikimo kontekstas ir grojimo stilius keturiose – airių, kubiečių, bretonų (Prancūzija) ir Roztočės (Roztocze, Lenkija) – muzikinėse tradicijose. Lyginamoji perspektyva leidžia pabrėžti tiek regioninį šio aerofono specifiškumą, tiek bendrus bruožus, siejančius jo vietą įvairiose muzikinėse tradicijose. Be esamos literatūros, autorė dalį analizės grindžia savo tyrimais (įskaitant etnomuzikologines ekspedicijas), daugiausia dėmesio skirdama Lenkijos kontekstui (visų pirma – Pietryčių Lenkijos etnografiniams regionams). Tekste taip pat pateikiamos citatos iš interviu su fleitininkais. Aukščiau pateiktas medinės skersinės fleitos vietos lokaliose muzikinėse tradicijose apibūdinimas rodo, kad, nepaisant didžiulio Theobaldo Böhmo fleitos modelio dominavimo, tam tikrais istorijos momentais šis senesnio tipo instrumentas buvo arba tebėra neatsiejama regioninių ansamblių dalis įvairiose pasaulio vietose: Šiaurės vakarų Prancūzijoje, Pietryčių Lenkijoje, Airijoje ir Kuboje. Išskyrus sąmoningą jos perkėlimą į bretonų muziką 8-ajame dešimtmetyje, dėl geopolitinių ir ekonominių veiksnių įtakos, lydimos daugybės kultūrinių, technologinių ir visuomeninių pokyčių XIX ir XX amžių sandūroje, šios rūšies fleita pamažu įsitvirtino ir minėtose kitose muzikinėse tradicijose.

Aptariamose muzikinėse tradicijose fleita funkcionavo kiek skirtingai. Kiekvienoje iš šių muzikos kūrinių fleita atlieka melodinį vaidmenį, kartais ir solinį (išskyrus Lenkiją). Bretanėje ir Kuboje svarbų vaidmenį atlieka improvizacija. Keltų žemėse šis aerofonas sudaro stabilią ir būdingą instrumentinio ansamblio dalį. Panašiai ir Kubos čaranga negali funkcionuoti be jos, nors tai vienintelė minima kultūra, kurioje senosios sistemos fleita egzistuoja kartu su naujesniu modeliu. Tuo tarpu lenkų muzikoje medinė skersinė fleita pasireiškė nežymiai ir, regis, jau praėjo savo klestėjimo laikotarpį.

Kita vertus, atsižvelgiant į tai, kad šiuolaikinis muzikantas Michałas Żakas toliau groja medine skersine fleita kelių ankstesnių kartų fleitininkų įrašytą repertuarą, ateityje gali būti verta užsiimti taikomosios etnomuzikologijos tyrimo metodais. Remiantis istoriniais garso dokumentais, būtų galima atgaivinti Roztočės ansamblinio grojimo stilių – ne tik styginių ir mušamųjų instrumentų formatu, bet ir išplėstu pučiamaisiais instrumentais, taip vėl sugrąžinant Maidano Gurnų (Majdan Górny), Dzeronžnios (Dzierążnia) ir Sokoluveko (Sokołówek) fleitininkų repertuarą į etnokultūrinio gyvenimo apyvartą.