

An Orchestral Player's Perspective on the Full Concert Model Flute: A Conversation with Julia Bogorad-Kogan

by JEREMY MCENTIRE



“I just want to tell him thank you. He changed my career!” Julia Bogorad-Kogan exclaimed. She had approached the Nagahara Flutes booth at a recent convention looking to speak to Kanichi Nagahara. Ms. Bogorad-Kogan, the principal flutist of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, had stumbled upon the Nagahara Full Concert (FC) Model in 2019. The FC Model flute, with its larger bore size and improved scale, represents the latest step in perfecting the Boehm-system flute. Since the invention of the modern flute in 1848 by

Theobald Boehm, no serious attempt to alter the diameter of the bore of the flute had succeeded- until 2001, when Nagahara Flutes released the Full Concert Model flute. The brainchild of Master Craftsman Kanichi Nagahara, the FC Model allows today's flutists to find greater projection and new tone color opportunities. I recently had the opportunity to sit down with Julia and hear her story....

How did you first come across the Nagahara Full Concert Model flute?

I was introduced to Nagahara Flutes totally fortuitously and by accident. I was visiting my dear friend, Camille Churchfield, former principal flutist of the Vancouver Symphony, at her lake house in Quebec, Canada. She said to me ahead of time, “You don't need to bring a flute. I have two of them.” Turned out she had 2 Nagaharas! So I started practicing on one of them, and very soon I said to myself, “Where have you been all my life?” As soon as I got back home, I called up the company! The first time I called the Nagahara shop they didn't have any flutes in stock. I kind of forgot about it for a few months, but then I called again, and they said they had two instruments in stock that I could try. One was a standard model and one was a Full Concert Model. I immediately felt that extra fullness of tone in the FC, and I was drawn to it right away.

What were you looking for when you first tried the FC Model?

The FC Model combined the qualities I had experienced in different flutes into one instrument. The first of these qualities I desired was projection. In our orchestra we have amazing string players- amazing solo-

type performers with great instruments - and I wanted to be able to project my sound without sounding forced or “edgy.” In my orchestra we always have microphones placed near us in performances. The first week playing my FC Model flute our recording engineer came up to me and said, “Julia, I heard you got a new flute. It’s ten percent louder!” I hadn’t said anything to him; he just noticed it. Not that louder should always be the goal, but I was able to achieve this without working any harder. I wasn’t forcing it at all. The instrument has a presence of its own.

The second quality I was looking for was a beautiful round sound with the ability to change color easily. I feel the FC Model really allows me to do that. The FC has a dark core to the sound. I find the sound of many flutes to be too “vanilla” or “soprano.” The FC has a deeper sound, something I am attracted to. I have heard some people say the Guarneri violin has that type of deep sound.

What was your experience in adjusting to the FC Model?

I didn’t have any trouble. I felt better right away! Because it takes more air, I do have to be more aware of my breathing and fill up like a balloon. I have to remind myself to breathe well. I like to use a lot of air anyway, so this minor trade-off is certainly worth it! I also felt that it was easier to be musical.

What differences have you noticed playing the FC Model in an ensemble setting?

I think the scale is one of the best I’ve ever played. I’ve noticed the pitch is much better than my old flute. The low and middle registers are not as flat, and the high register is not as sharp. The C# on the staff is also not as sharp. All the negative tendencies we are used to dealing with as flutists are not as extreme.

How has playing the FC Model affected your practice routine?

What has changed for me is that I now have more confidence that I can do what I want to do musically. I can be more creative, and I have more enthusiasm for everything I’m doing. I am also more ambitious in the projects I take on. And, of course, practicing is simply more fun when you get to do what you want to do musically and with your color!

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