

THE MAGIC FLUTE
A Journey in Time and Music
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There was a time long ago, after everything had been created, that all life was silent. Nothing moved. Nothing sang. The first Flute Player emerged from Mother Earth's womb and began the song of life. The first flute was long and deep-toned. The slow and low tones set in the Ley Lines surrounding Mother Earth. The First Flute player then picked up the second, higher pitched flute, and sang in the Power Points. Then the third and smallest flute was played. The higher pitched notes were needed to create the points of Transformation and Traveling called Vortexes. Without movement, without vibrations, there is no life. So began life in the Universe. The flute music began the hum of the Universe.

October 2006 was the time of the Flute Festival in Springdale, Utah. I was asked to guide folks to that special place of Transformation. At that place, the Womb of Mother Earth still exists with the Flute players painted on the inside of her Cave. She offers her stories of origins and creation and transformation. It is not the story for just one individual, but for all who find their way there. It is the place that Mother Earth reminds us that all can transform. It is the place where the Ancient Spirits live. Some at the Festival had heard about the painted cave with the many Flute Players on its walls. I agreed to take small group to the rich Geo-Ritual Landscape, but only the three who were meant to be there showed up. First was Peter Phippen, a recording artist with Canyon Records, and the "Rock Star" of the Festival. His life changed 20 years earlier when someone handed him a bamboo flute. Peter left the life of a Rocker and moved into the Circle of Flutes. He

brought the cold clear North winds of Wisconsin. From the East, Jan Seiden brought the sounds and teachings of the flute from Maryland. Cecelia Turbyville brought the Southern joy and laughter from Georgia. I brought the Wisdom of the ancient travelers of the West. All four directions were present to walk to the center place of origin. We journeyed to the Center Place where the physical joins with the spiritual. So began our Journey into the past.

The view of the approach to the Cave includes a mountain with the profile of a lying down Old Face. Father Sky is looking up to his home in the Sky, frozen in that position for eternity. Father Sky is always protecting us with the Sky Blanket. Next to him is a turtle-shaped Red Mountain with its round back and projecting head. The locals refer to this formation as the Tabernacle. I think of it as the Mother Turtle. She represents Mother Earth. Mother Earth keeps us grounded in her unconditional Love. With both my Earth parents gone, I take a deep breath and realize that there are no orphans as long as we have Father Sky and Mother Earth. For me, the turtle shape looks like the Native American Sweat Lodge. I am attached and part of the Sweat Lodge ceremony. When I conduct the Lodges, I have seen many transformations from the individuals who have made the choice to change. They journeyed to the center place of the Sweat Lodge to find balance and peace. So deep in my heart, I am reminded of the potential to change every time we wake up in the morning. I want somehow to crawl inside the Turtle Mountain.

Peter insisted on shifting through the sand and sagebrush trail to the Cave in his tailored suit and shining black shoes. He carried his case of flutes, part of an exquisite and expensive worldwide collection. Peter was determined to let his flutes be heard inside the Cave. But he was also anxious about getting back in time for the Flute Reception. He hurried along, always taking a peek at his watch. The watching of the watch kept him in this world. He was not yet ready to wonder into the world of no time. Letting go of the watch and the concept of time allows one to travel.

The four of us snaked along the strong smelling sagebrush and the paprika colored sand for about one mile. As we neared the Cave, I pointed out the rock formations of the Midwives, who will always be there to help the birthing process. In our Native American Culture, I was taught that these formations do not just represent the Midwives, but they are actually alive and performing their duties. Everything vibrates. Everything is alive. The Midwives support all who journey here to birth a new life or to remember the birth of past lives. Next was the impressive phallic shaped rock structure that represents the Male Creative process. Having a touch of the Coyote, I pause to whisper a short prayer of gratitude at the Maleness. Looking up, just past the Maleness, one sees the rock formation of a female leg and foot in the birthing position. We will be going back into the actual Womb of Mother Earth. All these symbols were in place when the paintings began in the Cave thousands of years ago. The supernatural was there first followed by the natural. The physical and spiritual are blended in that place.

We respectfully enter the Cave of darkness and light. The Cave was filled with the evidence of many ancient fires and many ancient Spirits. We were not alone. After our eyes and Spirits adjust, I start the stories that have been painted walls. We had found our way back to the Center Place of the beginning of Life. Our journey in life is two fold, first to make the Journey and then to understand. Our journey is finding our way back home to the place of remembering. This was home. I start with the stories that are painted in black. The black is the color of the Underworld, of the past no matter when that past was. We must come out of the darkness of the Past to live our lives in the Light of Knowledge. Next on the wall are the stories of the present and the physical world. The colors are in yellow, white and red. The figure with her ears up is listening to the reclining flute player. And then there are two ancestor spirits, one gently handing a new flute to the other. The flute music came from the Spirit World.

One can not help but notice the large center figure. He is the Teacher of the Cave who wears the headdress of the Milky Way. Playing into one of his ears, are the two Golden Flute Players. They are giving him the knowledge about the vibrations of Life and the joy of Life. The music never stops. Below the Great Teacher is a circular place cut into the rock. One can sit in that place to listen to the lessons that are dispensed by the Teacher.

The stories proceed with the T-shaped portal that leads to the Above Place of the Spirit World. The portal is a small, but must be found to get through the gateway. The walls have many helpers including a Spirit animal helper, snake dancer and blessing man.

Through the portal one sees many Spirit beings including a male and female painted in turquoise. The sky path then leads to the Red Cross of Venus. Venus is the morning star and the evening star. It is the star of eternity. The Red Cross is also the symbol of Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent deity in many Mesoamerican religions. So this is an ancient but new story about transformations. Transforming from the physical skin of the Serpent into the Feathers of a spirit being, coming out of the Darkness into the Light are the stories on the wall.

Hidden on the other side of the Cave is the Mystic Bat Woman. She and her children are the guardians of the mystical. She can see and feel in the darkness. There are no sacred stories without the presence of Bat Woman. Her presence is of importance.

When you look out of the Cave, you are looking out the Vagina of Mother Earth. The birthing canal follows upwards back into the Cave. Above is seen the hour glass shape of Grandmother Spider. The upper part of the hourglass lets in the light of Father Sky. The lower part leads to the entrance of the Cave and Mother Earth. It shows the connection of the physical world with the spiritual world. The hourglass shape also forms the figure eight which is the sign of infinity. I was taught that "s" is the symbol of a journey. When you complete the s into an eight it becomes the continuous journey. The never ending story is everywhere in this place.

Sacred places like this need to be visited many times. First you can listen to the stories and then you must come back and feel the stories. The Spirits talk through the Rocks.

They never leave. Energy never dies. Each person finds their own stories in this Cave. Mother Earth and her helpers talk to each person in the language he or she understands. Each visit carries a different message. Each visitor will receive a different story. All receive the lessons they need.

After I finished the stories, I noticed a yucca stalk on the floor. The local yucca plants produce this stalk each year, and with winter, the stalk dies and falls off. Many people use the stalks as a walking stick because of their straightness and sturdiness. As first I was frustrated and angered that the stick behind. I made sure the Cave was clean and clear of debris just a few weeks earlier. "Where did this come from?" I wondered. Just then Jan picked up the yucca stick to point at a figure on the wall to ask another question. The question was asked and then the stick was turned slightly and replaced on the floor. If the question had not been asked, the story would have ended here.

I told Peter that the teachings were over and it was time to give an offering the Flute Music. Now was the time to play the flutes that he had so carefully carried over the sand journey. He looked at his flute case, and then looked over at the yucca stick. He saw what others did not see. He saw six small holes that tiny critters had left in the old hollow stick.

"I think I can play the stick." Peter surprised everyone with this statement. I thought I knew plants and plants usages. But this was new to me.

He picked up the stick and so began the music of the Yucca. With spiffy suit and shiny shoes, Peter crawled up into the circular place below the Great Teacher and began the haunting music. Time stopped. Peter forgot to look at his watch. The need to get back to the reception was no more. The World stood still and the music of the ancient ones blended with the music of today. The Ancient Flute Players came alive with through Peter's breath. Plant united with Man. Past united with Present. The Center Place was vibrating with new life. The hum of the Universe was heard once again. We were one.

We left the Cave changed. We had left some of our energy behind and took home some the ancient energy. We began to look for other yucca sticks. Jan found one with only one hole.

At the Flute reception various flute players stepped up to the microphone to show off their abilities and their expensive man-made flutes. When it came their turn, Jan and Peter stepped up to the mic to play their humble sticks. Peter insisted that I first tell the story. And so the flute music was heard once again. The room fell silent. No one could believe that such beautiful music could come from the plants untouched by man. Peter and Jan had brought back the Spirits from the Cave.

In many walks, I have never found a similar flute. There was only one Magic Flute.