

Christine Stevens - Improvisational Flute for a Higher Purpose 2024

In this musical and highly experiential course, you'll:

- **Learn the basic tools and techniques of playing the Native American-style flute to access your higher purpose and soul's wisdom**
- Develop the ability to shift your brain into the present moment by **shutting down self-criticism** so you can freely express yourself
- Uncover **the 7 principles of improvisation** to start living in the moment, within the sacred music of life
- Explore **the neuroscience behind developing the brain pattern of the “experiencing network”** through improvisation — and its benefits for your brain chemistry
- **Infuse yourself with the medicine of spirit animals from the natural world** to experience your connection to All That Is and honor All Our Relations
- Learn how to **create “hooks” for melodious compositions**
- Practice **playing the 2 modes of every flute** — solar and lunar, or major and minor
- Play with **flourish and a wide array of embellishments**
- Explore improvisational flute for **self-healing** and the restoration of others
- Experience the guest teachings of **Joe Hunt on guitar and Guillermo Martinez for a closing flute prayer and ceremonial celebration**
- *And much more...*

Modern neuroscience has shown that **playing an instrument with improvisation shifts your brain into the “experiencing network,”** — similar to meditation, a state of flow. This simultaneously turns off the brain areas pertaining to self-rumination, self-monitoring, past-future thinking, and planning.

In this eagerly awaited course, you'll not only transform the way you play the flute... you'll evolve the way you live and feel in the world, while **unearthing your higher purpose**. If you've never played the flute before, you'll discover joyous, fun, and accessible ways to start playing.

You'll become more **confident and spontaneous**, with an understanding of the **enormous breadth of possibilities** contained within your flute — and in your life. You'll learn to **use the flute as a healing tool** for yourself and you'll develop the heart and skills needed to offer profound relaxation and peace of mind to others in need.

Playing extemporaneously is a deeply cathartic approach to healing and deep soul-expression. And it's your birthright. Whether or not you believe you do it well is not the point. It's about changing your heart and brain, and awakening to the uncharted songlines in your soul.

Because experience is the best teacher of improvisational playing, **Christine will bring in guest artist musicians to support your playing and demonstrate the harmony created when jamming with others.**

You're sure to walk away from these seven weeks with lifelong tools for liberation, healing, living in the present moment, **being aware of the music of the natural world**, and becoming a better flute player.

Adopted into a Native American family in a Making of a Relative Ceremony, Christine spent more than a decade learning to sing Lakota prayer songs in sweat lodge ceremonies and participating in vision quests with Descendants of the Earth and Oceti Wakan. With the permission of her elders and great respect for the Red Road traditions of music medicine, she continues to play in such sacred sites as a Sedona vortex and the Grand Tetons. Her commitment to beauty, love, and harmony and the reciprocity of music as an offering to nature continue to guide her sound-healing practice and teachings.

You won't want to miss this opportunity to be in Christine's (virtual) presence and experience her authentic transmissions.

What You'll Discover in These 7 Weeks

In this 7-week transformational course, Christine will guide you through the practices you'll need to learn the depth and breadth of improvisational flute playing to release inhibitions and connect with your higher purpose through the spirits of the natural world.

Module 0: Beginners Flute Class With Young Bear Medicine for All New Players (August 21)

*Dear Great Spirit,
You are inside of me, within my very breath,
within each bird, each mighty mountain.
Your sweet touch reaches everything and I am well protected.
Thank you for this beautiful day before me.
May joy, love, peace, and compassion be part of my life
and all those around me on this day.
I am healing and I am healed.*

— Anonymous Prayer

We call upon the young bear cub medicine with this special module as Christine supports new players gathering to **learn the basic tools of playing the Native American-style flute**. Just as bear cubs are great explorers and always having fun, you're invited to bring a playful, explorational attitude to this session. You'll be empowered on a variety of components — from how to care for your flute to techniques for avoiding squeaking while playing — and **receive guidance on the five-note scale so you can move swiftly into improvisation**. You'll also learn about the sacred lineage of the Native American-style flute as a gift from the Creator, Great Mystery.

During this pre-course module for first-time players, you'll:

- Practice the **3 keys for getting a good sound, covering the instrument holes, correct embouchure, and proper use of breath**
- Learn how to take care of your flute, from both a practical and spiritual perspective
- Practice the **5-note scale**
- Explore the alignment of the bird/whistle and how to reduce moisture

Module 1: Explore a Soft Heart Practice to Experience the Freedom, Joy & Authentic Expression That the Hummingbird Inspires (August 28)



Beat the drums, sing the songs

Beat them loud, it's where your heart belongs

For in the vision, is the goodness of tomorrows

Dance the rhythm, the rhythm of the earth

For life to begin again, as the first birth

— **"Beat the Drums" from *Realities Within* by Peter V. Catches (Zintkala Oyate), Oglala Lakota (Sioux)**

In this first session, you'll call upon hummingbird medicine as a reminder of enjoyment. The hummingbird — playful, resilient, and optimistic — will guide you into enough flexibility to move in all directions.

As you **explore the five principles of improvisation**, you'll be empowered to find the joy and freedom of creating your own music. Authentic expression is an **anecdote for depression and repression**. Each note in the pentatonic scale has an energy to be explored, with infinite combinations and melodies, to fit every mood and situation.

Improvisation is more than a musical tool. It's **a way of living in the moment, within the sacred music of life**. Come discover who you really are and allow the flute to feed your soul. Experience is the best teacher.

During this opening module, you'll:

- Learn the **5 principles of improvisation**
- Experience a **flute blessing and warm-up**
- Discover the **benefits and higher purpose of improvisation** for your brain chemistry
- Explore **the meaning of each note in the Native American pentatonic flute scale**
- Experience the **Soft Heart Practice With the Hummingbird** — softening your heart center through breathwork and visualization to play from a deep place within using only four notes

Module 2: The Golden Hour Practice to Enter Gateways Between Worlds With Deer Energy (September 4)



*From the beginning there were drums, beating out world rhythm.
The booming, never failing tide on the beach.
The four seasons gliding smoothly, one from the other.
When the birds come, when they go.
The bear hibernating, awakening from winter sleep.
All in perfect time.*

— “Life’s Drum” by Jimalee Chitwood Burton (Cherokee) from *In Beauty May I Walk*

Call upon **deer medicine, which stands at the gateway to other realms** — the spirit of deer energy guiding you into gentleness, innocence, and intuition.

Receive inspiration via prompts for improvising on the flute — playing through transitional points of day and night in the “golden hour,” and reflecting on “golden moments” of your day. You’ll **learn the two modes of every flute — solar and lunar, or major and minor** — and journey through the transition points in the interchange of night and day that is the rhythm of life.

Experience a demonstration of this powerful polarity through a **method of meditation for the morning golden hour** with guitar accompaniment,

In this module, you'll:

- Learn how to **improvise in the magic windows of time** — the golden hours at dawn and dusk — as a metaphor of solar and lunar modes on the flute
- Experience the power of **embellishing your playing by focusing on your favorite tool** — such as grace notes, trills, and toss — to decorate your playing
- Explore your connection to gratitude through sound using **the Golden Moment practice**
- Practice going from light to dark with the flute, thinking of a golden moment during the day

Module 3: Creating a Hook to Elevate Your Playing With Meadowlark & Songbird Energies (September 11)



*Shout from deep within your soul that which is good
Echo what the Giver of Creation has given you
Let the wonder of yourself spread forth from your heart
In the new wind, laugh for you have understood*

— “Dawn Rises” from *Realities Within* by Peter V. Catches (Zintkala Oyate), Oglala Lakota (Sioux)

Call upon the song of the Meadowlark, who stands on a tall perch with head lifted high, and sings a gorgeous melody originating from its DNA. This session is dedicated to all the songbirds and all the melodies that fill the sky with music. Like birds in flight, **you’ll learn to “wing-it”** — and may be surprised by what comes through.

When you listen for the good, rather than fear the mistakes, you can **create a “hook,” — a short repeated phrase — that, like an acorn, contains a whole composition inside of itself.** Get ready to spread your wings and find the notes within.

In this module, you'll:

- Experience the vastness of a good idea, hook, or phrase
- Learn how to **play with words, names, and mantras** to create a hook
- **Practice 3 tools of musical improvisation** — tempo, range, and rhythm — as you water the seed into its full expression or bloom
- Practice **ear training** to learn to echo a series of notes
- Explore intervals and contour to **shape your improvisations**
- **Discover your personal style** through using an audiogram (contour of play)

Module 4: Flute Postcards for Rewilding Your Soul With River Medicine as Your Guide (September 18)



*I hear the Golden Meadowlark saying we are loved
I hear the gushing stream laughing gently along
I think of you in the daydream of loving eternity
And in my heart there is this lovely song.*

— “Daydream” from *Realities Within* by Peter V. Catches (Zintkala Oyate), Oglala Lakota (Sioux)

Call upon the guidance of rivers, streams, creeks, and all that flows freely on the Earth. **Rivers teach how to “ribbon” through nature, finding the easy path and traveling to the Source.**

As you step into the field of nature, you’ll improvise with the most powerful forces in a duet of organic expression. **When you play with the flourish embellishment of a stream, the natural world sings with you in a duet of existence.** Just as we give tobacco before harvesting plants, music is an offering of reciprocity, giving gratitude and beauty to nature, people, and yourself.

During this module, you’ll:

- **Learn to play in Mode 4** as a tool of discovering new territory within the landscape of your flute

- **Experience an ocean improvisation** with the live accompaniment of the ocean drum during class
- **Explore playing with the landscape around you**, either physically outdoors or through imagery
- Let go of the constructs holding you back from your inner wild child

Module 5: Healing Through Improvisation to Connect With Bear Medicine for Inner Awareness (October 2)



*Wise dark gaze, voice of quiet or roar.
From earth's beginnings and before,
he rises from sleep, shaking self, awakening to purpose.
Powerful body, mind, deceptively mellow
roamer, loner, exiting dark den to walk the forest floor
through dense growth that parts before him.
Shambling, steps from cliff overhung with vine to walk
among the stars and through dreams guiding his children
round dangers seen and unseen.
Walk as animal, stand as man, remain eternal.*

— **“Bear God Spirit” by D.S. Red Haircrow (Chiricahua Apache/Cherokee)**

Invite the spirit of **bear medicine — the teacher of hibernation and rebirth — to bring us healing** and show us the importance of solitude, as we connect deeply to the earth.

Focusing on the healing capabilities of musical improvisation Christine played the flute for people during the first year of the Covid pandemic and established the COVID-19 Sound Clinic Project. Learn the tools of improvisation for the higher purpose of healing, including the contour of melodic expression, the rubato style, and the accompanying sonic prompts that create **soothing, spaciousness, and self-love**.

In this module, you'll:

- Practice **playing a healing improvisation for yourself**
- Experience the subtle field, or 5th-dimensional energy, through sound to access the divine current
- **Improvise within the “Healing Arc” to a shamanic beat** (played by Christine) to transform whatever you need in that moment
- **Step into greater beauty**, authentic values, a slower life, and reciprocity

Module 6: The Rhythm of Jamming With Others to Inspire Wisdom & Playfulness With Coyote Spirit (Guest Musician: Joe Hunt) (October 9)



*For all we know, we could already be crystal motes,
shattered by swift and quick surging light.
We would never be certain if we had a chance at all,
only settled a vast moment later into dim shadow,
gradually blending into the prairie, the low hills, the horizon, ours now.
The moment before, always too late.*

— **“After Lightning” by Simon J. Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo) from *Native American Songs & Poems***

Invoke the trickster energy of coyote medicine — to **cultivate a sense of humor, bring balance between wisdom and playfulness, and learn not to take things too seriously.**

“Losing our mind” is a good thing! This class will offer you the opportunity to build on your skills and **learn tools of improvisation that go beyond the mind**, using the field of “unknown” as your guide.

Just as the coyote sniffs its trail, curving through trees and plants without breaking stride, you, too, can **find your way into the field of “no mistakes” through different rhythmical meters**, always being gentle with yourself. So many of us come from critical music backgrounds, having survived piano lessons, or having been told that we don’t have rhythm or a good voice. It’s time to move beyond such notions into the center, the dancing ground, the place between good or bad.

In this module, you'll:

- Experience 3 types of rhythm for awakening new ideas in your playing
- Learn to use the **Coltrane Warm-up** to clear energy and become more open
- Experience jamming with guest musicians

Module 7: Flute Prayer for All Our Relations Guided by Eagle Medicine (Guest Faculty: Guillermo Martinez) (October 16)



*Like eagle that Sunday morning over Salt River.
Circled in blue sky.
In wind, swept our hearts clean with sacred wings.
We see you, see ourselves and know
That we must take the utmost care and kindness in all things.
Breathe in, knowing we are made of all this and breathe, knowing
We are truly blessed because we were born, and die soon within a
True circle of motion, like eagle rounding out the morning inside us.
We pray that it will be done in beauty.
In beauty.*

— “Eagle Poem” (excerpt) by Joy Harjo (Muscogee) from *Native American Songs & Poems*

Bring together the medicine of the condor and the eagle — two powerful symbols of North and South America — in a reunion prophecy of **earth-connected, receptive, intuitive energy**, with far-seeing, rational, structured energy.

With guest teacher **Guillermo Martinez**, you'll join in a **ceremony of calling in the directions and creating your own ceremonial playing** — to honor the ancestors and participate in a flute prayer. Guillermo will accompany you with a hand-carved powwow drum he crafted.

You'll **gather together in the beauty way to make offerings to All Our Relations** in four rounds — the Tree Nation, the Bird Nation, the People of All Races, and the Star Nation.

For the Spotted Eagle of the Oglala Lakota, music is an essential tool of communication with nature and the spiritual world. Prayer songs accompany ceremony, dance, and the sacred way of life.

In this final module, you'll:

- Discover how to **become a catalyst for good on the planet through your flute playing**
- Experience improvising your own flute prayer to the beat of the drum and the rattles
- **Participate in the trilogy of the Mexican tradition** of the 3 sounds of creation: drum, rattle, and flute

The Improvisational Flute for a Higher Purpose Bonus Offering

In addition to Christine's transformative 7-week online course, you'll receive this special bonus offering to complement the course and take your understanding and practice to an even deeper level.

When you register by Midnight Pacific on Sunday, August 18, you'll receive the bonus below as an extra gift:

Video Improv Training

Play-Along Video Clips From Christine Stevens and Guest Percussionists



Covering five different keys — E, F#, G, A, D — Christine plays call-and-response phrases that repeat often. These are designed to help you learn to use your ear and copy her playing. You can also riff off her phrases and make your own music. These were all recorded in sacred beautiful places in nature.

Register by August 18 to claim this bonus before it expires.

Plus... you'll receive these bonuses too!

Engage Your Song

Play-Along Nature Video Montage From Christine Stevens



Everywhere in nature there is music. And everything in music is a part of nature. This video offers a doorway, a portal, a channel for enhancing that connection, as you breathe life into your Native American-style flute. Play along with nature to inspire songs to flow from your spirit — through the timeless harmony of earth, water, space, and wind. Cinematography by Peter Pilafian of Horizon Pictures in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

No Wrong Notes

Play-Along Audio Track From Christine Stevens



Featuring drums and rattles, you'll fill in the flute piece, creating a full-sounding trilogy. This welcoming and friendly audio track is designed to help you practice improvisation and will fit with flutes in any key.