

Varnum House lawn in a free, public concert.

Building on the success of that event, Healy then decided to go ahead with his idea for a flute symposium the following year on the first weekend of October.

"It's a better time because people don't have to choose between their summer plans and us," says Healy. "And the atmosphere around town at that time really works with our event."

For a name, he picked one that would wind up sticking: Wind On The Bay (www.windonthebay.com). The next step was finding instructors.

Healy had taught and performed at the now-defunct West Coast Flute Symposium in Seattle, WA, the year before. An old friend of Skip's, John Skelton, was also on the staff that year. A skilled multi-instrumentalist on the wooden flute, bombarde, bagpipes, and whistle, Skelton had released several solo albums and was a member of the highly regarded Celtic/Irish folk group, The House Band, as well as his own band, The Windbags. Even better for Healy, Skelton also traveled extensively as a music instructor.

"I knew John was the man," says Healy. "He's one of the funniest, nicest people you'll ever meet. When I was making a list of who I wanted teaching at Wind On The Bay, John Skelton was at the top." Skelton accepted Healy's invitation and has taught at every Wind On The Bay, including the upcoming event on September 30 - October 2, 2005.

The premiere Wind On The Bay took place in 2001 with an attendee limit of 30 students. From the first year, Healy did things a little differently from the typical folk music festival and included music theory classes.

"A lot of these events concentrate heavily on the tunes," explains Healy. "One of the things that I wanted to do a bit differently was help people understand what makes a tune tick. I brought in a friend of mine, Jim Clark, to teach some basic music theory and composition. It went over really well and we've kept the music theory in the classes schedule." In addition, Healy brought Friedrich von Huene of the Von Huene Early Music Workshop down to Rhode Island from Boston as a guest lecturer.

Healy also folded his original event, the "Concert On The Lawn", into Wind On The Bay so that he could include the teaching talent and even some of the students into the program along with local performers.

"It's great because it exposes the public to a wide range of 'transverse' styles in a really casual setting," says Healy. "People bring blankets and lawn chairs and hang out on the lawn. They get to hear everything from traditional Irish tunes and song to classical arrangements to fife & drum music."

The first Wind On The Bay proved that there was a demand for such an event. Musicians traveled from the West Coast as well as the Deep South to attend and left happy, full of tunes, and eager to return the next year.

At the same time, the first Wind On The Bay also exposed some room for improvement. "We knew it wouldn't be perfect," says Healy. "Especially not the first year. For example, the panels and lecturers were okay, but people really wanted to learn tunes and play music. So, we now know that we need to concentrate on classes, sessions, and concerts."

Starting the second year, Healy decided to fill the gap left by panels and lectures with more teaching content geared toward classically trained musicians. The event now includes classes on playing traditional folk tunes on Boehm flutes as well as instruction to help Boehm flute players learn to play simple-system instruments, which is the standard system for most traditional folk music on flute.



In classes, Skip Healy offers some very individualized instruction

To teach these classes, Healy enlisted Andra Bohnet, Professor of Music at the University of South Alabama, Mobile, and principal flutist with Mobile Symphony and the Gulf Coast Symphony in Biloxi, MS.

"We already knew each other because I had custom designed and built a flute for Andra, and she had brought me out to give master classes at University of South Alabama," remembers Healy. "She's an excellent teacher, she knows classical music on Boehm flute, she knows theory, and she's also plays Celtic and Irish music on wooden simple-system instruments. So, I asked her to teach music theory and the classes targeted at classical musicians who were crossing over into traditional." Like Skelton, Bohnet continues to teach these courses at WOTB today.

Another addition to Wind On The Bay after that first year was the "Evening of Irish Music", a Saturday evening concert in the Varnum Memorial Armory's concert hall. While the "Concert On The Lawn" provides casual, picnic setting, the "Evening Of Irish Music" is somewhat more formal and caters to the after-dinner crowd along East Greenwich's Main Street.

"I love providing the teaching content to students, but I also feel it's very important for students to see their teachers in action so to speak," says Healy. "It's equally important that I continue to expose more people in the general public to all the different forms of music that can be played on flute and other transverse instruments. The Saturday concert focuses on Irish music, but we encourage the teachers to branch out. So, we get a mixture of classical music with a Celtic theme, straight



