

The Oklahoma Flute Society premiered its newly commissioned work from composer Catherine McMichael at its 11<sup>th</sup> annual Flute Fair in November of 2004. *Salt of the Earth* is music for flute quartet or choir that is meant to evoke the sounds, sights, challenges and strengths of Oklahoma's land and people; but also of any land and people faced with challenge, met by strength. Oklahoma is a land of beauty and stern landscape, of struggle, injustice and conquest, of defeat and blessings at the whim of the weather, of riches from the ground. It is a land of tenacity and artistry. The movement titles are words that can conjure up scenarios of Oklahoma's history in nature, politics, personalities and cultures.

**Tranquility:** the virgin prairie, birds calling at dawn, the harvest in, the task complete.

**Ferocity:** the wind, the sun, the dust, the snake, the tornado, the struggle.

**Prosperity:** rich earth, political chicanery, and the gift of oil.

**Iniquity:** relocation of the Five Civilized Tribes, isolation and its demons, injustice.

**Audacity:** the will to conquer the land, to stick to the claim, to make a prosperous life.

This versatile, multi-movement composition was written for full flute choir, including piccolo, alto and bass flute. The flute choir that premiered the piece was comprised of OFS members from all around the state. Because OFS received support in the form of grants for this commission as well as the larger event of Flute Fair (a three-day event), admission to the Showcase Recital was free and open to the public. OFS brought Catherine to campus to conduct the premiere and lead several classes, as well as give a composer's lecture. The Showcase Recital took place at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 20, 2004, in Pitman Recital Hall at the University of Oklahoma. The Norman Flute Quartet premiered the quartet version at the OFS Solo and Ensemble Festival on February 5, 2005 at Oklahoma City University.

*Salt of the Earth* was commissioned by the Oklahoma Flute Society, with generous support from the Brannen Cooper Fund. This premiere was made possible in part through a partnership of Meet the Composer, Inc. and Mid-America Arts Alliance with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, ASCAP, and the Virgil Thomson Foundation, Oklahoma Arts Council, and private contributions to M-AAA.

**Catherine McMichael** is a pianist, arranger, composer and publisher of a wide variety of band, orchestra and choral music, chamber music and Suzuki-related material. Teaching, performing and composing comprise her professional musical life in Saginaw, Michigan. Her studio includes students of all ages and levels, from beginner to college music major to adult enthusiast. She performs frequently with the Saginaw Choral Society and the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra, which recently premiered *The Navigator*, commissioned from her as a salute to the new century. Public and critical acclaim was so enthusiastic that it was performed again on the season finale.

Catherine's commitment to making chamber and ensemble music available to the young musician has led her to compose and publish music for piano and strings, flute and harp, brass choir, piano

duet, and chorus, many of which appear on the National Federation of Music Teachers' recommended repertoire list. Two of her works for flute have won the Best Newly Published Music award from the National Flute Association (*Floris* and *La Lune et les Etoiles*). She's the author of a piano method, *Making Music My Own*, supplementary repertoire and duets, published in 1994-1995 by Lorenz Corp./Heritage Press of Dayton, Ohio.

Catherine's flute music is published by Alry Publications, Charlotte, NC; string orchestra and chamber music by Latham Music Ltd., Winston-Salem, NC; band and brass music by C. Alan Publications, Greensboro, NC. She maintains a website at [www.catherinemcmichael.com](http://www.catherinemcmichael.com) which provides a link to these publishers, and includes comprehensive information about her other compositions and commissions.

Her composition projects in the past three years include commissions from such diverse groups as the Saginaw Bay Orchestra (full orchestra), Ithaca Talent Education (for string orchestra), The Canadian Brass (brass quintet), University of Massachusetts at Amherst (chorus, saxophone and piano; and tenor, saxophone and piano), Chautauqua Institution (for a string orchestra festival in October, 2000), New England Conservatory, Thayer College and Delta Flute Choir (flute choir), Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Gallery (double choir, woodwind quintet and orchestra), *Flûtée* and *Flutes Fantastique* (flute quartet), and First Presbyterian Church in Saginaw (choir and organ). Catherine is available for commissions on any instrument or voice.

An alumna of the University of Michigan (B.M. piano performance, M.M. chamber music and accompanying), she also directs the handbell choir at First United Methodist Church in Saginaw, is on the faculty of Saginaw Valley State University, and a clinician at workshops and institutes in North America and Australia. She and her violinist husband Rod Bieber have two spirited children, Meredith and Nathan, and two fluffy cats.