

S909**V. Q. Powell**

#: 2

Boston, Mass. USA Note: Please contact us for a link to our 20 page report on this flute!**Stamp:** On all three joints: (triangle with VQP) / VERNE Q. POWELL (Note: no period after Q on body joint) / BOSTON / (on body only) 2.

Comments: Rarely are we so moved by the artistry and talent of a flutemaker as with this flute. Only Carl Mendler, Boehm's partner, could finish a flute with with the finesse, cohesiveness, and precision evident in this work of the flutemaker's art. This is the first flute that Verne Powell made to sell, and represents the very beginning of what we call the modern flute. This is the first instrument of a new era in flutemaking, which saw America, and especially Boston, take the lead in flutemaking worldwide. Verne Powell set out to make a copy of Louis Lot's flutes, drawing inspiration from several instruments available to him, probably including Albert Tipton's Lot made in 1887 for Charles Mol, #4742 mentioned earlier. Powell's flute #2 is indeed a derivative of Lot, even to the unique shape of the triangle under the C# touch. Powell's keymaking is only equaled by a few individual instruments from the Lot shop. The flutes from Wm. S. Haynes Co. of the 1920's do not meet this instrument in their quality of manufacture. This flute, and the ones to follow, created a new level of excellence, transforming Boston flutemaking into the world's leading center of this artform.

Date: Made in 1926, per VQP. Powell had left the Wm. S. Haynes Company and set up his own little shop at 25 Huntington Ave. by July 19, 1926 (per letter from Wm. S. Haynes to Dayton C. Miller, quoted in Susan Berdahl's extraordinary dissertation, and the source of much of the history mentioned here). Apparently working alone, and with only a small lathe and polisher, he made ten flutes at this shop. In 1927, Powell incorporated his business, and sold shares reportedly worth \$10,000.00 in order to finance a proper workshop. He moved to 295 Huntington Ave. and set up the shop that was to be Powell headquarters to 1970, when the business moved to Arlington. Although the Powell "Bible" begins with #1 in 1927, in fact



the current flute, serial #2, would have been made in 1926 at the 25 Huntington Ave. address.

Material: Powell used sterling silver (925 parts silver, 75 parts copper). The springs are of gold, including the flat springs under the thumb keys.

Hallmarks: No hallmarks or silver marks.

Markings: No marks visible under keys.

System: Verne Q. Powell (scholars differ over whether the Q stands for anything) set out in 1926 to make a flute based on the instruments of Louis Lot. Just as Lot himself had left his partnership with Godfroy to make silver flutes of his own design, so Powell left the Haynes Company to design and build a better silver flute. Just as Godfroy made a special effort to match the work of their lost Lot, so too did the Haynes Company endeavor to meet the skill, and the new model, of Powell. In a letter from Albert Tipton to Jan Scott, Tipton says that Powell copied his Lot #4742, which was made by Debonnetbeau in 1889 for Charles Mol. This flute was a model 6, silver flute with B foot and gold lipplate. Powell's design includes the triangular base to the upper C# key, first introduced by Debonnetbeau around #4000 c. 1885. Powell's flutes also include the "spatula" D# key, first introduced by E. Barat around #5000 c. 1890. Powell used the seamless tubes first used in France by Chambille, proprietor from 1904-1922 (apparently George Haynes was the first to use seamless tubes in the 1890's). In fact, Powell was a finer craftsman than one often sees on the Louis Lot flutes of this period. This flute, Powell #2, is exquisitely finished. Every piece is gorgeous. The back clutch is especially reverently treated. All of the pillars, spring catches, ribs and other pieces are perfectly formed. This flute shows that Verne Powell was indeed one of the great flutemakers, equal to Lot, Godfroy, and even Carl Mendler.

Condition: This flute is very nearly in perfect original condition. The G# has been changed from open to independent, but this conversion is invisible. There is a tiny little dent at the top of the headjoint, and Paul Rabinov sees modest signs of dent removal in the footjoint, but these issues are microscopic. The headjoint tenon has been slightly



Verne Powell made this flute entirely by hand, and took the time and care to finish it exquisitely. His engraving, pointed rib, post, and even the tiny bit of the trill key rod we see here are all absolutely perfect.



Powell's right hand marries the purposeful trill touches of Louis Lot with the modern "hanging T" clutch of Villette. Every piece of this flute carries the conversation among flutemakers to a new level, and shows the emergence of the new world master flutemaker.

expanded for a tighter fit. The latest padding is excellent. This instrument is a perfect player.

Pitch: This flute is pitched very nicely at A=440.

Sounding length: Sounding length is 598 mm.

Measurements: Scale length is 225 mm. Embouchure is 12.3 x 10.3 mm. Bore averages to 18.9 mm. Tubing appears to be .014". Toneholes graduated; left hand holes 13.6 mm, right hand 14.4 mm, and footjoint 15.6 mm. (see sheet of measurements).

Weight gram: 402 g.

Case: In the original brown leather case, with a silver plaque bearing the name of the flute's first owner, John MacKnight.

Restoration status: In perfect playing condition.

Price: Available! \$31,250.00



Under any circumstances this is among the most elegant and perfectly made of flutes. That this was the very first flute that Powell made to sell, and to begin his new business, shows that he wanted to begin with a huge leap over the other American makers, and enter the world stage with power.



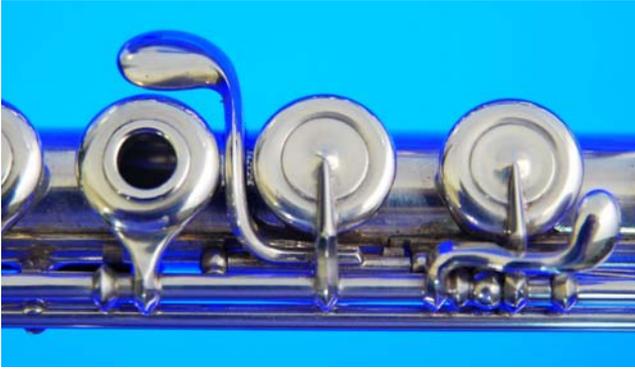
The left hand gives flutemakers a chance for ornamentation at the Bb shoulder clutch and under the C# touch. Here we see Powell has gently tapered and curved the edge of the shoulder clutch. Later we will peek under the C# key.



Once again, Powell has amalgamated the best of the Louis Lot company designs, coming up with a supremely elegant thumb; almost austere but for the sweetly swollen teardrop, and the luscious lip under the thumb arm, almost reaching to lick the hanging drop of the Bb touch.

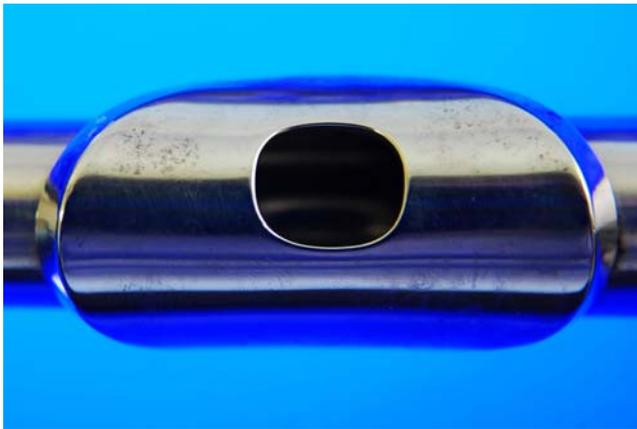
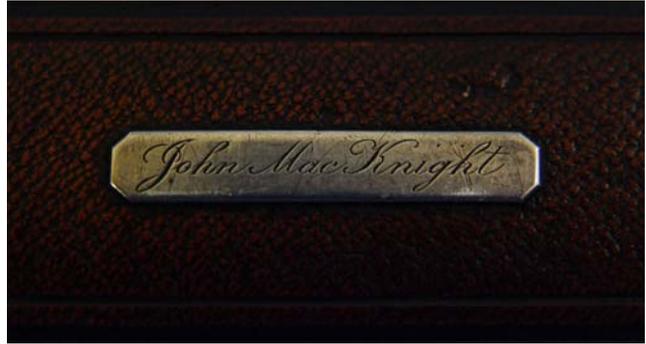


Finally a flutemaker has treated the backclutch with the reverence it deserves. Powell has far exceeded his forebears in recognizing the importance of this little devise, without which we would not have the flute of today. He has

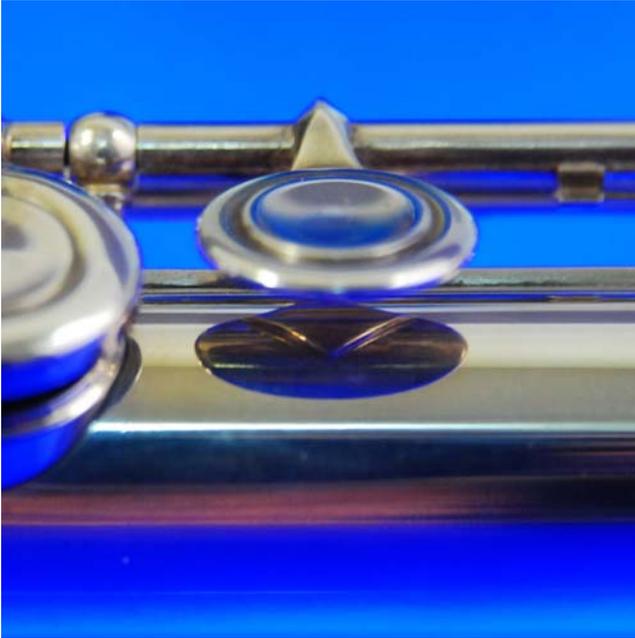


Powell eschewed the looseness of Debonnetbeau, perhaps the most fluid of the Lot makers and yet the source of much of Powell's inspiration in other areas.

treated it lovingly, shaping all the edges and bringing these three pieces of silver into a glorious unity.



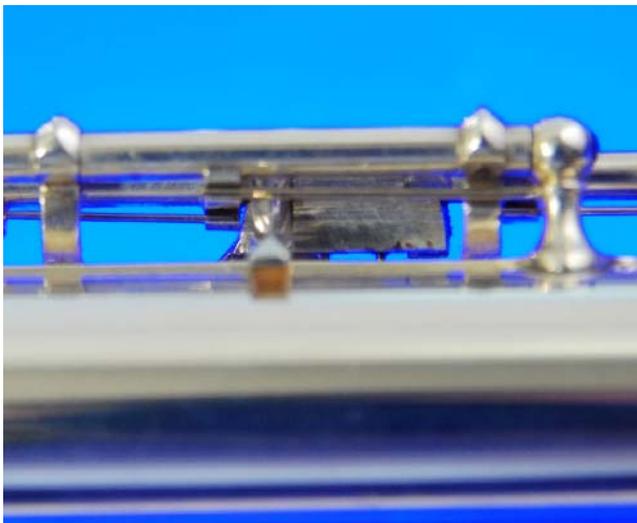
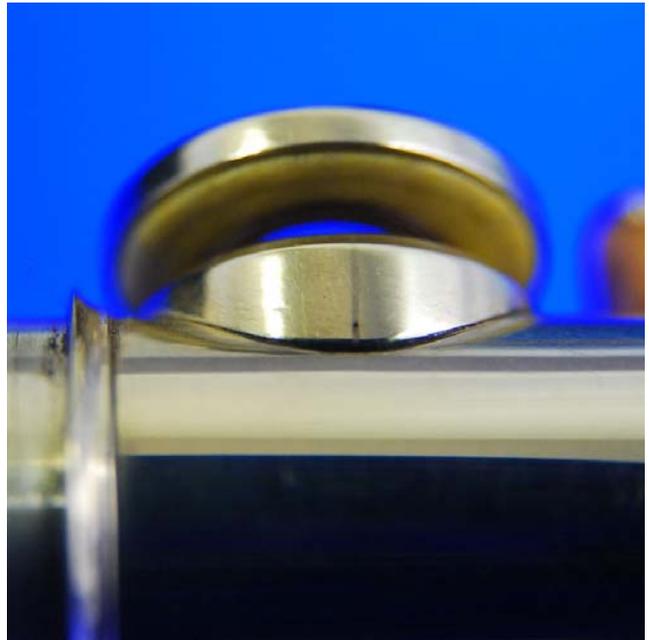
Powell's embouchure is extremely precise and perfectly cut. At 12.3 x 10.3 mm it is very similar to a large Louis Lot embouchure hole.



The flute tube reflects the underside of the C# touch. This hidden moment carries one of the great conversations among flutemakers. Powell is saying here that he has chosen the Debonnetbeau/Barat period of the Louis Lot shop for his inspiration. He has made an exceptionally beautiful version of their characteristic little triangle under the touch, as an homage.











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A calling card for David and Nina Shorey Antique Flutes. The card features a close-up photograph of a flute key mechanism on the right side. The text on the left provides contact information: the company name, address (4135 Center St., Culver City, CA 90232), website (www.antiqueflutes.com), email (antiqueflutes@gmail.com), and telephone number (Tel. (310) 413-0307).

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