

Amy Rice Blumenthal: A Flutist's National Legacy with Strong Ties to COLORADO

Including a Map and Timeline of ALRY Publications, Etc., Inc.

The Rocky Mountain Flute Choir
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 Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah
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 "Mile High Notes: Flute Music of
 Colorado and Amy Rice Blumenthal"



Amy Rice Blumenthal began her career by creating opportunities. First, "she wrote a letter to Denver Free University asking why the school didn't offer flute lessons. The university suggested that she start a class, and out of the class grew her flute choir."¹ In 1977, Amy founded the ALRY Flute Choir in Denver, Colorado. As the flute choir expanded, Rocky Mountain Flute Choirs, Inc. was formed as an umbrella organization to append various youth, amateur, and professional ensembles. Sometime during the 1980s, "Rocky Mountain Flute Choirs, Inc." merged into the sobriquet, "Rocky Mountain Flute Choir," which is how our historic flute choir is known today.

Second, Amy "saw the need for good music for flute ensembles" among our crowded flute community. Like a Russian doll, one thing led to another, and ALRY Publications successfully emerged in Denver. Amy overcame numerous challenges during startup. For example, she was the only female publisher in a field dominated by men, and she survived embezzlement by an employee all too close to home. By their 25th anniversary, ALRY had grown from three publications to well over 1100, represented 200+ composers and arrangers from all over the world, and distributed music for ten other companies.² Ten years later in 2016, ALRY published and promoted the woodwind and chamber music of over 400 composers and arrangers, and eventually produced and published over 5000 musical works.³

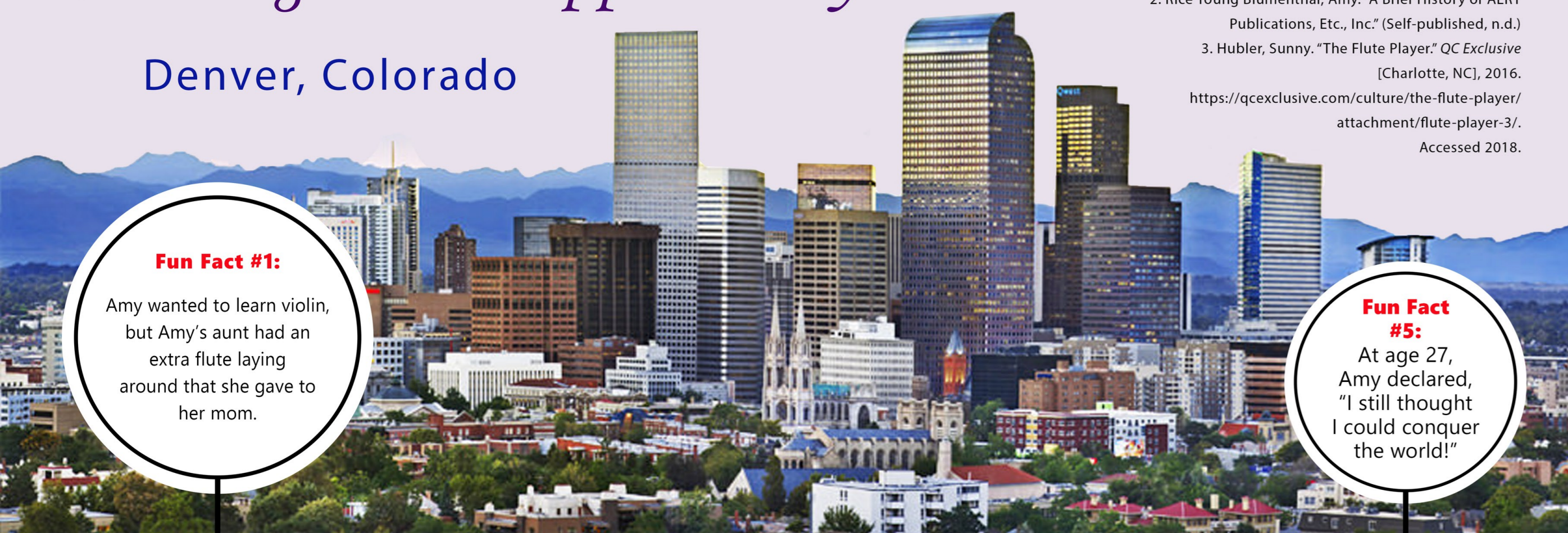
Colorado seeded and inspired much of Amy's performing and publishing career. To illustrate, Amy received two bachelor degrees in music from the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she would later profess flute in addition to teaching at Denver Free University and the Colorado Academy. Amy worked closely with the Rocky Mountain Flute Association, moreover, and developed a strong relationship with Mountain States Printing (Denver). As such, she tried to represent as many Colorado composers as possible, for instance, *Cloud Forms* by the late Cecil Effinger (Music Chairman, UC Boulder). On that note, Amy said she "loved working with composers and hated turning down compositions."

Amy eventually left Colorado for love and moved ALRY to Charlotte, North Carolina. While there, she also fell in love with Wildaeres Retreat and has been teaching/performing as part of the Wildaeres Flute Masterclass since 1981; she ran the class for fourteen years, to boot. Today, Amy is active with Arts Advocacy at many levels—locally and nationally—and she runs an Artist Retreat. Occasionally, Amy still teaches, and "when it is something [she] finds challenging and inspirational," she performs as well. She has been playing and recording for dance companies, most recently the Martha Graham Dance Co., and she remains deeply involved with the Wildaeres Flute Retreat (www.wildaeresflute.com). Other than that, Amy stays busy with a variety of Boards, painting, gardening, traveling, and just enjoying life in general!

She is a flutist/musician, arranger, teacher, performer, founder, publisher, philanthropist, fundraiser, advocate... a true entrepreneur. She has been featured in a flute choir dissertation and countless newspaper and magazine articles; she has arranged several important works for flute choir such as *The Pink Panther Suite* by Henry Mancini; and, she is the author of *The Flute Choir Warm-up Book* and has written scholarly articles on diverse topics about flute choirs. One can only imagine how far Amy's reach is and the extent to which ALRY set the stage for the flute community at large. Through Amy's legacy, we can glean that fluting is not just about a cascade of flashy notes; rather, music is a way to connect with the community, accept or make opportunities, and engage and inspire. As Coloradans, the Rocky Mountain Flute Choir is proud to pay tribute to Amy Rice Blumenthal for her outstanding work in scaling flute choirs, flute music, and paving the way for future generations to cherish the art of flute.

"Never ignore an opportunity."

Denver, Colorado



Fun Fact #1:
 Amy wanted to learn violin, but Amy's aunt had an extra flute laying around that she gave to her mom.

Fun Fact #5:
 At age 27, Amy declared, "I still thought I could conquer the world!"

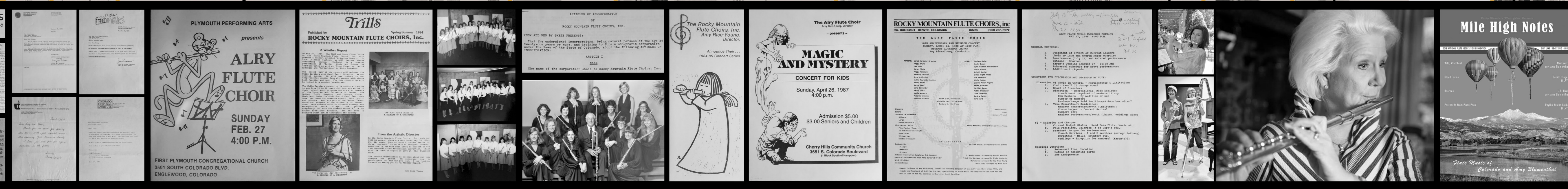
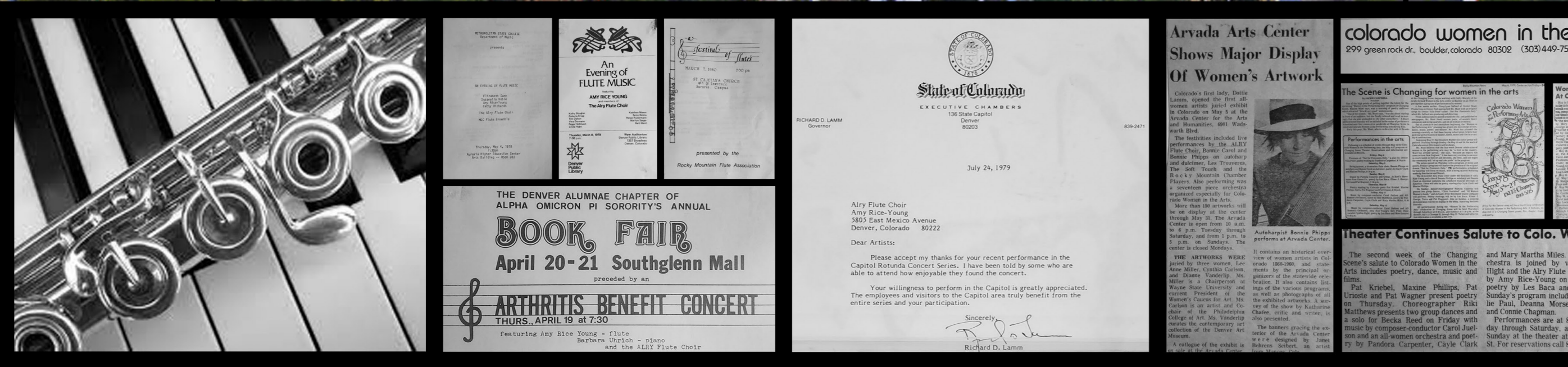
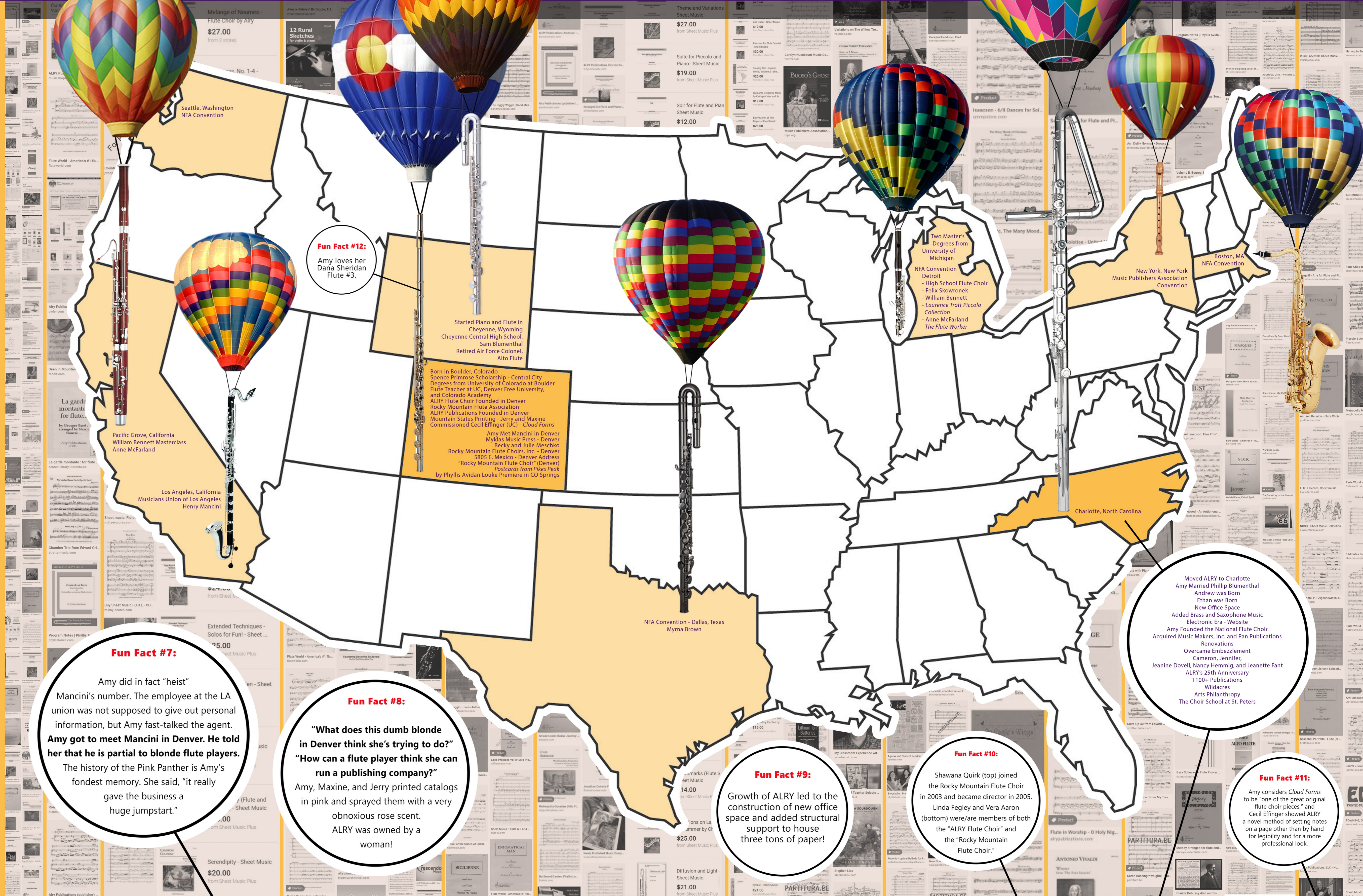
Fun Fact #7:
 Amy did in fact "heist" Mancini's number. The employee at the LA union was not supposed to give out personal information, but Amy fast-talked the agent. Amy got to meet Mancini in Denver. He told her that he is partial to blonde flute players. The history of the Pink Panther is Amy's fondest memory. She said, "it really gave the business a huge jumpstart."

Fun Fact #8:
 "What does this dumb blonde in Denver think she's trying to do?" "How can a flute player think she can run a publishing company?" Amy, Maxine, and Jerry printed catalogs in pink and sprayed them with a very obnoxious rose scent. ALRY was owned by a woman!

Fun Fact #9:
 Growth of ALRY led to the construction of new office space and added structural support to house three tons of paper!

Fun Fact #10:
 Shawana Quirk (top) joined the Rocky Mountain Flute Choir in 2003 and became director in 2005. Linda Feigley and Vera Aaron (bottom) were/are members of both the "ALRY Flute Choir" and the "Rocky Mountain Flute Choir."

Fun Fact #11:
 Amy considers *Cloud Forms* to be "one of the great original flute choir pieces," and Cecil Effinger showed ALRY a novel method of setting notes on a page other than by hand for legibility and for a more professional look.



from "ALRY Flute Choir" to "Rocky Mountain Flute Choirs, Inc." to "Rocky Mountain Flute Choir"

1952 - 1960
 Amy was born on November 6, 1952 in Boulder, CO. She started on piano at age 5 and started flute at age 8. (See **Fun Fact #1** above.)

1966 - 1969
 Cheyenne Central High School (WY); too many flutes (16) in band, so director, Sam Blumenthal, sent massive flute section off to form their own ensemble. Retired Air Force colonel gave Amy an alto to add to the mix. Worn Spence Primrose Scholarship in Central City, Colorado.
Fun Fact #2:
 This is the time when Amy's flirtation with flute choirs began.

1971 - 1976
 Flute Performance & Music Education from University of Colorado at Boulder. Masters' degrees in Flute Performance and Music Theory from U. of Michigan. Amy created an opportunity to teach at Denver Free University, which led to the formation of the ALRY Flute Choir. Amy wrote flute choir arrangements.
Fun Fact #3:
 ALRY stands for Amy Luccetta Rice Young. Lone male player in flute choir objected to all names except for "ALRY."

1980
 Publishers at NFA convention in Boston, MA were skeptical about a flute choir market. As a result, ALRY Publications was born with the support of the Rocky Mountain Flute Association. ALRY self-published three of their favorite pieces

via Mountain States Printing in CO.
1981 - 1982
 ALRY printed & catalogued 100 copies of *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need*, *Bourree*, and *Fanfare Duet* for the Detroit, MI NFA convention. ALRY's music sold, and:
 * Amy was asked to conduct the High School Flute Choir by Felix Skowronek.
 * Bennett asked ALRY to publish a few of his personal arrangements.
 * Laurence Trott asked ALRY to publish *The Laurence Trott Piccolo Collection*.
 * McFarland wrote an article about Amy in *The Flute Worker*.
 * Amy wrote her Publishing Agreement.

Fun Fact #6:
 Amy stated, "I have always believed that success or failure is in large part due to luck and one's ability to be available for it."
 Amy used the opportunity to conduct the HS Flute Choir as a means to commission Cecil Effinger to write a piece published by ALRY, i.e., *Cloud Forms*. (See **Fun Fact #11**.)
 Amy's initial request to publish her arrangement of *The Pink Panther* by Henry Mancini was rejected; so, she "heisted" Mancini's direct line from the Musicians Union of Los Angeles. After calling him at home and sending a copy, Mancini said, "go, go, go!" (#7)

At the 1982 NFA convention in Seattle, WA, *Cloud Forms* and *The Pink Panther Suite* were premiered by the HS Flute Choir. Additionally, Bennett and Trott performed pieces published by ALRY - "ALRY Publications was truly on its way."

1983 - 1984
 Advice from Mykias Music Press in Denver. Attended Music Publishers Association Convention in New York. Amy was the only female. In a field dominated by men, rumors started. New Name: ALRY Publishing, Etc., Inc. "Etc." was added to reflect their expanded mission: **To Promote Flute Music and Flute Playing.** (#8)

1985 - 1995
 '85 - ALRY moved to 5805 E. Mexico.
 '86 - ALRY Flute Choir's first recording was released, *A Bouquet of Flutes*, feat. works from ALRY Publications, Etc., Inc. '87 - Added oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and small chamber ensemble.
 '88 - Amy's "greatest challenge" was moving ALRY to Charlotte, NC. Sales increased because Amy sent out a record number of catalogs.
 '89 - Amy got married.
 '90 - Amy's first child Andrew was born.
 '91 - ALRY's 10th Anniversary. Brass music was added to catalog.
 '92 - '93 - Ethan was born. ALRY moved to a more permanent location. (#9)
 '94 - ALRY started publishing "Updates"
 '95 - Saxophone music added.

1997
 Amy founded the National Flute Choir and released a CD, *Over the Edge*.
2000
 Catalog too large; brass was extracted defining ALRY as a flute & woodwind brand.
2001
 In honor of ALRY's 20th anniversary, the National Flute Choir recorded three CDs, including, *Special Occasions*. ALRY expanded its distribution.

2004
 20 talented flutists/23 hours recording, the National Flute Choir recorded its 8th, 9th, and 10th CDs, including, *Here We Come a-FLUTING*.
 2004 was a difficult time for Amy and ALRY Publications, Etc., Inc. An 11-year employee—who was also a good friend of the family—had been embezzling the company for over four years. This person scrambled the books, records, and correspondence, forged checks, made illegal wire transfers, and failed to pay bills. With the help of other employees, friends, grief counselors, accountants, attorneys, banks, police, insurance, engravers, printers, etc., etc., ALRY survived!

2005
 "2005 was a very good year. [ALRY] was cleaned up and able to reach [their] maximum potential and goals of publishing great music." The NFA released their 10th CD, *Silver*, in honor of ALRY's 25th!
 Shawana Quirk appointed director of the Rocky Mountain Flute Choir. (#10)
2012
 Matt Johnston and Bill Van Steenberg inherited the ALRY legacy. They kept the name, so their publishing company is still operating as "ALRY Publications."

2016
 Amy was featured in QC Exclusive.
Postcards from Pikes Peak by Phyllis Avidan Louke was commissioned and premiered by the Pikes Peak Flute Choir. The work celebrates Colorado.

2019
 The Rocky Mountain Flute Choir presents "Mile High Notes: Flute Music of Colorado and Amy Rice Blumenthal" at the National Flute Association Convention in Salt Lake.

