

Recorder Reporter

Newsletter of two chapters of the American Recorder Society (ARS),

Chicago Chapter & the West Suburban Early Music Society

April 2011

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Chicago Chapter News

For March Dennis Sherman directed a Do it Yourself session, drawing works from piles of copies of sheet music brought in by chapter members. We played nearly all modern works, from American Recorder Society Editions, including *The Harmonious Blockflute* by Glen Shannon, as well as favorites *Royal Flush* by Andrew Charlton and *LeClerq's Air* by Richard Wood. We also enjoyed a performance of the Ridgeland Consort. Ben & Nancy Eisenstein, Elizabeth Tharp, and John Thompson offered a suite by the French Baroque composer Marin Marais, as well as *Suite for Three Recorders* by Ladislav Kajstura. Ben discovered the work in a Prague music shop. A professor at the Ostrava Conservatory, Kajstura created his *Suite* in 1992 and then, it seems, disappeared.



Short a proper Renaissance drum, Dennis improvised

Patrick O'Malley will direct our April 17 meeting.

Recorder Spa Treatment

Here we are again, having survived a Chicago winter, including the big blizzard. We could use some nice TLC. Our instruments deserve a day at the spa, too. They work hard. That alto puts up with your cheese and crackers between songs. Your soprano plays those low C#'s and high A's (usually). At the April 17 meeting, I will hold a day spa. I will demonstrate how to remove the cedar block, clean the wind way, oil the bore, and fix loose joints. It can be intimidating to the novice, but it won't be after you've attended this demonstration.

Please bring a wood recorder that could use some help. My lovely assistants (you) will gain hands-on experience with recorder care. We have a lot to cover in an hour, but we'll treat as many instruments as possible. Please don't play that recorder for two days before the spa, so the wood can dry out. After the performance of Machaut by Dennis Sherman's trio, Par Tre, and a snack break, we'll have an hour of reading for pleasure. See you then!—
Patrick O'Malley



The Ridgeland Consort

Whitewater Early Music Festival

Last year's workshop was a whirlwind of activity in celebrating the 50th Anniversary. How do we top that one? We read carefully all the participant comments which were submitted and considered many suggestions. Download a complete list of classes at the web site www.chicagoars.org.

Mike Becker's Drum Circle was so popular that we are bringing it back. Mike will also assist Laura Kuhlman in incorporating percussion into Renaissance dance music. We have enlisted Kristin Sturgeon (Duneland Early Music Consort) to do a three-session class in beginning krumhorn. This is for those who have never put a capped reed to their lips and for those who need help in getting the right pressure, tuning and sound. We only ask that you know your C and F fingerings. Though some will be available, you may wish to borrow a reed for this class.

Charles Fischer will offer a variety from Klezmer and Tango to Glen Shannon. Laura Osterlund will give us more insight into Medieval music and we've brought back Baroque Flute with Laura Kuhlman on Friday

evening. Shelley Gruskin will do a first introduction to Pipe & Tabor. This class is limited to ten students due to number of instruments available. If you have one, the choice would be a Generation in D tabor pipe and a small hand drum.

We have enticed Mark Davenport to join us this year. He will be bringing us insight into Renaissance and barless music and a chance to use your Renaissance instruments. And bring your great bass and contra bass for Patrick's consort class.

Look for your brochures in the mail shortly. There will be copies available at the Zajac workshop and both ARS chapter meetings. Direct questions to Nancy Chabala (708) 442-6053, Carol Stanger (cvstanger@aol.com), or Pam Wiese (gcaosapam@gmail.com). See you June 3-5!—*The Board of the Oak Park Recorder School*



Chicago Syntagma Musicum, with Andrew Scultze, at Rockefeller Chapel on March 13

West Suburban Early Music Society

The West Suburban chapter met on March 13 under the Director-for-a-Day plan. Nancy Good warmed up the group and passed off to Eric Stern to lead in *A Solis Ortuz* and *Fata la Parta*. Jim Heup upped the ante with *Los Reyes*. Finally, Nancy Chabala took the house with our first successful reading of *La Spagna* by Josquin des Prez. After the break, Nancy Chabala continued with the big group working on *Warum Betrubst*, Theme and 2 variations by Samuel Scheidt. This piece includes two soprano lines, so there was some work to get them to play out, and also not be squeaky. The last piece, *Laet varen alle fantasie* by Lupus Episcopus, involved repeated notes and quarter notes on off-beats. The library group continued work on the two English Country dances from last month, and added a third, the Duke of Kent's waltz. Our next meeting will be April 10

(the day after the Concordia workshop) at 2 PM in the usual place. Hope to see you there!—*Eric Stern*

Chicago Chapter Spring Concert

The Chicago chapter Spring Concert is Sunday, May 15 at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2012 West Dickens. We welcome any music on recorder or early music on any other instrument, and performed by individuals or ensembles. We would also encourage our participants to consider choral works, or pieces offering gamba, lute, shawm, dulcian, or other Renaissance instruments.

Please send your program to Ben Eisenstein at beneisenstein@comcast.net by May 9. You can also contact me at msjddawson@sbcglobal.net. We need:

- Name of the piece(s) you plan to play
- Composer name, nationality, and dates (if known)
- Movement names (if any)
- Performers' names, instruments, and name of your group

Please limit your performance to last five or six minutes.

Workshop at Concordia

Well? Are you coming or not? Our workshop with Tom Zajac, *A Musical Tour of Colonial Latin America*, is April 9. As of this writing we have 36 participants signed up.

If you need a flyer feel free to contact Mark Dawson at msjddawson@sbcglobal.net or call (773) 334-6376. The flyer is also available on our web page.

Please note that we have scholarship funds available.

We would like you to feel free to attend. Contact me if you want to join us but find raising the entry fee difficult. Bring your reed instruments, viols, contra bass, and voice. Enjoy some great music, lunch, snacks, fine company, and an excellent day of playing and instruction.

Music Coming Up

The **University of Chicago Early Music Ensemble** performs on Tuesday May 10 at 7 PM at the Rockefeller Chapel. This free concert features 15th to 17th century German works for mixed vocal and instrument ensembles by Heinrich Isaac, Ludwig Senfl, Heinrich Schutz, and others. Listen for recorders, viols, krumphorns, cornettos, Renaissance flutes, and lutes.

Join **John Langfeld** on Sunday, April 10 at 4 PM at St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1500 West Belmont, for "Sight, Sound, Movement, and Language: Interdisciplinary Connections for Recorders." The concert features a work for alto recorder, Flamenco dancer, and guitar, a Baroque suite with multimedia, and recorder music set to poetry. The concert is free to the public, and a reception follows.

The **Rose Ensemble** offers *Slavic Wonders*, an evening of double choir works from the Polish Renaissance, Russian Orthodox Baroque motets, and Medieval Latin chants at Rockefeller Chapel of the University of Chicago, April 29 at 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$35. To learn more call Chicago Presents (773) 702-8068.



Baron's Noyse, Conrad Sulzer Regional Library of Chicago, March 21, for Play the Recorder Month

On March 31 I was crossing Lawrence Avenue in my Lincoln Square neighborhood, about a half mile from the Sulzer Library. A stranger passed me. "I liked your recorder concert," he said.

Good Friday Recorder Players Needed

Marco Castillo is looking for a bass, an alto, and a tenor to perform at LaSalle Street Church in Chicago on April 22 at 7 PM. You will perform two pieces, including Mozart's *Ave Venum Corpus*. He will send the music in advance to participants. LaSalle Street Church is at 1136 North LaSalle, near North Avenue in Lincoln Park. You can reach Marco at vinikasteel@gmail.com or call him at (773) 369 7327.

Private Lessons At Home

Patrick O'Malley offers private recorder lessons online. Students as far away as California, Louisiana, and even Mexico are taking advantage of expert individualized lessons with maximum comfort and convenience. Save gas and save the planet.

Students simply need a computer with camera, microphones, speakers and Internet. Most laptop computers now have those built in. Half hour mini lessons are just \$25. It's as easy as making a phone call. You don't even have to wear shoes! To learn more email Patrick at patrickrecorder@mac.com.

Visit his web page at www.patrickrecorder.com.

The Golden Age of Classical Music

Early Music America's spring 2011 magazine features a fascinating article by Heather MacDonald called "How Early Music Helped to Save Western Civilization." MacDonald observes that we benefit today from an extraordinary variety of classical and early music available in live performances and in recordings, unlike anything seen in Europe or the US before 1900. We also assume that the musicians we hear will be outstanding, their performances close to flawless. Despite budget cuts for the arts and the rise of Rap and Hip Hop, we truly live in 2011 in the Golden Age of classical music.

It didn't used to be this way. MacDonald follows Hector Berlioz' travels across Victorian Europe, as he complains bitterly about the routine ignorance and incompetence of the conductors, musicians, and ensembles he encounters. Worse, the people of the time were so parochial in their tastes that by 1775 Johann Sebastian Bach was seen as hopelessly old-fashioned. Often only the works of living composers were performed even in places like London and Vienna. Finally, even musicians with real talent were shockingly arrogant in their approach to the literature of some of the greatest geniuses mankind has ever produced. Works of Brahms were dumbed-down, surplus movements tossed out, Liszt improved Beethoven with his own cadenzas, Chopin's etudes were rewritten to make them more modern. It was as if a director decided to add a happy ending to *Romeo & Juliet* by preventing the death of the star-crossed lovers in the final act.

A friend of mine, a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, told me years ago that if Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, and Handel could return to life next month and listen to their concerti and symphonies performed live on Chicago stages, they would weep with joy. Musicians in our era grow up listening to this music constantly, and benefit from far better educational resources, so the average musician in the early 21st century is much more skilled than his or her 19th or 18th century counterpart. The entire classical music community also benefits from the emergence, in the 1950s—around the time that the ARS was founded—of a new interest in medieval and Renaissance music, and, even more important, a new and profound respect for our ancestors. Suddenly musicians and ensembles sought to perform historic works using the same types of instruments and techniques that the composers intended. MacDonald observes that the new Early Music movement took a lot of abuse 50 years ago, as scholars wondered just how possible it was to recover sounds from past generations. How much can we really tell from yellowed manuscripts and images in stained glass windows about what 15th and 16th century instruments sounded like? How does the modern practice

of performing works in concert halls full of paying audience members with master's degrees, 401(k) plans, and excellent teeth influence music originally intended for court or cloister or cathedral? Early musicians listened respectfully to these valid criticisms, and then, as MacDonald observes, something wonderful happened. The musicians kept going. They politely ignored the criticisms and kept right on making great music, bringing back to modern ears obscure but gifted composers whose works had not been played for centuries. Even better, in a disciplined effort to deal truthfully and reverently with the works of Thomas Tallis and Orlando de Lasso and Heinrich Isaac, the Early Music movement set an example for the rest of the classical music world to treat Mozart and Beethoven with similar respect. At the same time the movement introduced to a moribund classical music scene in the late 20th century a broad array of "new" music, in the form of old music brought back to life. Given that most classical music composed after 1950 sounds like puppies and kittens being tortured on top of a mountain of empty soft drink cans, the Early Music community has given modern music lovers an extraordinary gift.

MacDonald's article left me in a very good mood, considering what a privilege I enjoy to live in Chicago in 2011, surrounded by so many treasures from the past. If you would like to read "How Early Music Helped to Save Western Civilization" let me know, and I'll send you a copy.—Mark Dawson

The 415 Club

Please join me for the inaugural meeting of The 415 Club, an informal playing session for recorders at "low pitch." Bring your A=415 recorders. Bring any sheet music you think would work, probably mostly for altos, such as Schickhardt or Boismortier. Bring a music stand. And bring your love of 415. We will meet on Sunday, May 22 at 2 PM, 5515 North Winthrop Ave (at Catalpa), in Chicago. My place is close to the northern end of Lake Shore Drive. Please RSVP at 773-552-1856 or at patrickrecorder@mac.com.—Patrick O'Malley

Chapter Information

Visit the Yahoo group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChicagoARS>.

Our chapters are open to anyone, regardless of musical training, who wants to cultivate and sponsor love and appreciation of the art, history and use of the recorder and related instruments. Our meetings, programs and publications help members to come together and to find others with similar interests. Chicago Chapter Dues begin September 1, and West Suburban dues cover June 1 through May 31 and are due in September. Both groups include membership in either chapter and in the *American Recorder Society*. Members are listed in the ARS

directory, receive *The American Recorder* magazine and this newsletter. The *Recorder Reporter* is published monthly from September to May jointly by the Chicago Chapter and the West Suburban Early Music Society.

Chicago Chapter ARS (chicagoars.org)

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Chicago Chapter meetings: Usually third Sunday of each month, September through May, 2 PM, at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2012 West Dickens, Chicago. Enter the front door of the parish building immediately west of the church and go to the large fellowship hall on the right.

West Suburban Early Music Society

President/Chapter Representative:	Nancy Good (Good-Naperville@wowway.com) (630) 355-6690
Vice-President:	Judy Stephens (stephens71@att.net) (630) 740-0880
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Secretary:	Open
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Music Director:	Laura Kuhlman (laura@thekuhlmans.com) (630) 462-5427

WSEMS meetings: Second Sunday of each month, September through April, first Sunday of May, 2-4:30 PM at the Naperville Evangelical Covenant Church, 1150 Hobson Road, Naperville, southwest corner of Naper Boulevard and Hobson Road. Exit I-88 at Naper Boulevard and travel south. The church entrance is on a side street, more obvious from Hobson Road.

Mark Dawson, editor

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