

Recorder Reporter

*Newsletter of two chapters of the American Recorder Society (ARS),
Chicago Chapter & the West Suburban Early Music Society*

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Rudy Mundle, 1921 – 2016

Lynette Colmey still uses the recorder stand that Rudy Mundle made for her. Dale Fitschen has one, too. Lee Newcomer has several Mundle stands on his counter at Performer's Music on Michigan Avenue, to display instruments. Customers consider the recorders but also ask about the stands. Not for sale.

They used to be. Lee Newcomer thinks about Rudy Mundle a lot, who died on March 23 at age 94. Rudy started supplying recorder stands to Performer's Music in 1981, and continued for nearly 25 years. Besides instrument stands Rudy fashioned music stands and recorders, violins, and an 8-string Norwegian Hardanger fiddle. He once repaired a mandolin that had belonged to Lynette's grandfather. He was skilled with his hands and endlessly enthusiastic about music and about making things from wood. And he was a regular with the Oak Park Recorder Society for many years.



One of Rudy's instrument stands, still in use 40 years later

Rudy started studying music in 1974, and learned to play recorder, violin, viola, rebec, and gamba, as well as other instruments. A blue collar background and a limited education never held him back. Rudy was a regular at the Whitewater Early Music Festival from the early days, and at Milton College before that. At Whitewater he was celebrated (sort of) for playing bagpipes in a small country cemetery on the University campus. At 6 AM. After his recorder-playing companions had been up jamming until the wee hours. "Some people thought that

it was funny," Lee reflected. "Some people thought nothing. Some people thought it was a pain in the neck."



Rudy with a tenor he made himself . . .



And Larry Johnson playing another

Rudy was born in Chicago but lived in Elmhurst for 60 years, where he and his wife of 73 years, Evelyn, raised seven children. They also had 17 grand-children and nine great-grandchildren. Rudy's mother died when he was four years old, and his father when he was ten, so he was raised by his stepmother and an aunt and uncle, and he only finished the 8th grade. After a year and a half in the Navy during World War II, a Seaman First Class serving on an oil barge in the Pacific, Rudy worked as a machinist for the Teletype Corporation (later Bell Telephone Laboratories) until he retired in 1983. Lee

remembers him as someone who maybe belonged more in Kentucky than in Elmhurst except for his fondness for Renaissance music. "He was in his own orbit," Lee said. "He wasn't working for the court, he was working for the countryside."

Rudy arrived in Oak Park self-taught, and armed with a tenor he made himself. "He taught himself the wrong fingerings," Nancy Chabala remembered. He played tenor with alto fingerings. Undaunted, Rudy learned to play tenor again. In time, the Oak Park Recorder Society voted him "the most improved player ever."



Playing some of Rudy's favorites at the wake

So another piece of our shared musical history comes to a close. "Music was a great inspiration for Rudy," Louise Austin said. "His ability for the crafts involved in making the instruments was just as impressive as his determination to enjoy the fruits of his efforts."

Chicago Chapter News

For our April meeting Lisette directed the chapter and we focused on Alyson Lewin's arrangement of a set of 18th century Welsh folk songs, "West of the Severn," in three sections with names like *Hela'r Ysgyfarnog* and *Bugeilia'r Gwenith Gwyn*. It was so cool we decided to perform one of the sections for our spring concert May 15. Many thanks to Joanne Miller of WSEMS who sponsored this meeting and provided the music for us to play. We had a great meeting, a splendid time of music making together. We also had another member's meeting. We talked about several issues of interest to the members.

First, we continue to explore moving our venue to a more accessible location, likely Oak Park. Our goal is to make it easier for music teachers who live in or near Oak Park to join us for our monthly meetings, as well as other friends who live in the western suburbs and who prefer not to travel into the city. We will look for a possible venue and report back as soon as we know

more. Part of our goal is to find a site that will not require us to buy liability insurance.

We are also considering changing our meeting date to the first Sunday of each month. This would serve to accommodate music teachers who attend a monthly meeting of the Orff Society in Oak Park on the third Saturday of each month. These teachers are often very committed to playing and teaching recorder; by moving our meetings to the first Sunday of the month, they would not be obliged to attend two long meetings on the same weekend, and are more likely to be able to join us.

Finally, we are considering introducing a break-out session for newcomers, for both beginners and players who feel intimidated by the larger group, to have a chance to play separately, and at their own pace. Our goal is to help new people feel more welcome.

Feel free to contact the board with your comments.

Spring Concert

Our annual spring concert is May 15 at 2 PM. If you would like to perform, please contact Mark Dawson at msjddawson@sbcglobal.net, and provide:

- Name of the piece(s)
- Composer name, nationality, and dates
- Performers' names and instruments

Don't forget to bring treats to share. We plan to hold the concert in the sanctuary of Covenant Presbyterian Church this year. Please help us promote the event by communicating with your friends, and with any musical groups of which you are a member.

Early Music Festival, Whitewater

The Early Music Festival returns June 3-5 this year at the University of Wisconsin Whitewater. Find the festival on Facebook, "Whitewater Early Music Festival," or visit whitewaterearlymusic.org. You can download the schedule and registration form, and you should have received a print copy as well. You can also register online this year using PayPal. After May 20 a late registration fee applies. Contact Pam Wiese to learn more at gcaosapam@gmail.com.

Chapter dues

We plan to raise our dues for the Chicago chapter to \$40 a year for the 2016-2017 season. We received a generous gift recently so our finances are in good shape for now, but we need to ask our members to contribute more to build a sustainable fiscal model for the future. To that end we are offering a new membership level, a Sponsor Member, for \$140 a year. The additional \$100 would allow you to sponsor one of our monthly meetings. You

will be recognized in this newsletter, and invited to provide one to three pieces of music to perform at the meeting you select.

West Suburban Early Music Society

The April meeting of the West Suburban monthly meeting convened on the 10th and was well attended. The board position of treasurer will require a new nominee for a vote at our May meeting. Any member wishing to step up and help us out will be appreciated.

Laura Osterlund returned to lead us through some of our recent repertoire including *Canzon decima: La Feliciana* and *Canzone sesta: L'Alcenagina*, both by Adrean Banchieri. Laura also lead us in a review of some music from the past 3 months to help us decide some favorites we'd like to perform as a large group for our spring concert. Darlene Kay directed our chapter in a lovely arrangement of *Autumn Leaves* and *Sh-Boom, Sh-Boom*. As we finalize some of our preferred pieces for the concert they can be accessed by members on our website.

On May 1 we will have our spring concert, and we welcome the Catalpa Quartet in a special appearance. Our own Laura Osterlund is a member; hopefully we can persuade her to also give a solo.—*Joanne Miller*.

A few Museum Notes

The Art Institute of Chicago is home to the **Charles Harding Collection**, 1500 pieces of medieval arms, armor, and art works. Harding (1868-1939) was a Chicago businessman who avidly snapped up medieval treasures in Europe between the World Wars, ultimately showcasing them in his custom-built castle on the south side. The Art Institute acquired the collection in 1982 and prominently displayed it for a number of years in Gunsaulus Hall, near the Michigan Avenue entrance.

In May of 2009 the Art Institute opened its new Modern Wing and extensively renovated other parts of their facility at the same time, mounting their collection of south Asian art in the same gallery that once hosted their arms and armor. They put the Harding collection in storage, full of good intentions to remount these items in a new set of galleries. But the fundraising for this effort landed in the middle of the Great Recession. So \$140 million was borrowed to cover construction costs while waiting for pledges to arrive, bringing their total debt to a record \$450 million, even as the endowment lost a quarter of its value. But visitors continued to tour the museum, and *every single one* of the visitors who walked in the front door in 2009 and 2010 went to the information desk and asked the same two questions:

1. Where are the bathrooms?
2. Where did you put your medieval arms and armor?

Soon the Museum management realized that packing one of their most popular collections into a closet had been a mistake. So they created a temporary exhibit space, with promises to provide a much larger series of galleries in the future to display the arms and armor as part of a broad collection of medieval and Renaissance decorative arts. Now the construction is finally under way, with plans to open in March of 2017. Visit [artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/exhibitions/Arms-and-Armor/resource/1246). For a detailed essay on the collection, see <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/exhibitions/Arms-and-Armor/resource/1246>

The **Chicago Maritime Museum** plans to open its new facility in the Bridgeport Arts Center 1200 West 35th Street, in June of 2016. This 10,000 foot space will be used to interpret and display over 6,000 artifacts related to Chicago's ports, waterways, and shipping heritage, including models, craft, art, books, photos, navigational instruments and shipping equipment, maps, and other treasures. Visit chicagomaritimemuseum.org.

Board Members Needed

Your president and vice president have served the Chicago chapter for four years. After next season, 2016-2017, both Ben and Mark plan to step down. We need to attract at least two members willing to serve on the board. Our goal at this point is to look to expand the board with members at large for 2016-2017, to provide the new board members time to make the transition.

Music Coming Up

St. John Cantius Church in River North in Chicago offers a sacred music series worth considering. Attend an organ recital on Sunday May 1 at 3 PM (\$20 includes lunch), or hear Schola Antiqua sing works of William Byrd on Saturday May 14 at 7:30 PM. Jason Moy will be featured on harpsichord. Tickets are \$25.

Built in 1898, St. John Cantius was at the time the largest house of worship in the city and the center of the Polish Catholic community. The church had 22,000 parishioners and 2500 school children in 1918, with 13 priests and brothers. Then the Kennedy expressway was built; at their only Sunday mass 70 years later, 40 people showed up. But rather than demolish the facility, a priest was called who thought that the same highway that carried the parish away in the 1960s might serve to bring parishioners back to a city that was being rediscovered. Today 2000 families are active at St. John Cantius, and the parish hosts eight choirs. The building was also handsomely restored, making the church well worth a visit merely to admire the elegant interior. The church is one of the most beautiful sacred spaces in the city. Find St. John Cantius at 825 North Carpenter Street, near Chicago and Ogden Avenue

and a short walk from the Chicago subway stop on the CTA Blue line. Visit www.cantius.org to learn more.

The **Haymarket Opera Company** offers *La Calisto* (1651) by Francesco Cavalli, featuring Craig Trompeter's orchestra of period instruments, on Friday May 6 at 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 8 at 2 PM. Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Avenue in Chicago. Reserve tickets at www.athenaeumtheatre.org or call 773-935-6875.

Grace Lutheran Church of River Forest continues their monthly Bach Cantata Vespers series with "Praised by the Lord my God" on Sunday, May 15, both at 3:45 PM. The May concert also features the Brandenburg Concerto #5. Free, 7300 Division Street, River Forest. Call 708-366-6900 or e-mail info@graceriverforest.org. Visit the web page graceriverforest.org for more.

The **Quinta Essentia** recorder ensemble plays Friday May 20 at 7 PM at Northeastern Illinois University's Steinberg Fine Arts Center, 5500 North St. Louis in Chicago. Quinta Essentia is one of the leading chamber groups in Brazil. Call (773) 583-4050 or visit neu.edu.

Master Class with Lisette Kielson

Mark your calendars for May 7th! For the second year, a Master Class with Lisette Kielson is being offered on May 7th at the home of Valerie DePriest in Oak Park. All recorder players are welcome to sign up either for a lesson or as an auditor. The day will begin at 10 AM with six half-hour lesson times available for individuals or ensembles, and will include a break for a potluck lunch. The last hour will be a group playing session led by Lisette ending no later than 3 PM. Registration is \$40 for lesson participants or \$20 for auditor participants. Last year all six lesson times were filled, so sign up early! For more details or to register, contact Valerie DePriest at themusicalchild@mac.com, or 708-524-1625.

Chapter Information

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.

Tuesday Night Recorder Sessions

The Oak Park Recorder Society offers a fine way to gain regular experience in playing with a group. OPRS members meet Tuesday night, 8 to 10 PM, in the basement of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, 460 Lake Street, back entrance ring buzzer for the basement.

Chicago Chapter meetings: The 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 west of the church and go to the large fellowship hall on the right.

Chicago Chapter ARS (ChicagoRecorders.org)

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WSEMS meetings: Second Sunday of each month, September through April, first Sunday of May, 2-4:30 PM at the Downers Grove Friends meeting house, 5710 Lomond Avenue in Lisle. The church is located near Maple Avenue and 355. From 355, take the ramp and go east on Maple for 4/10 miles and turn right (south) onto Lomond street. The church is on the right.

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Visit us at chicagorecorders.org

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