

Recorder Reporter

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

Chicago Chapter & the West Suburban Early Music Society

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Plans for the Rest of 2019-2020 Season

Nobody needs any more bad news related to COVID-19.

Due to the extraordinary circumstances we are living in for the foreseeable future, however, we in the Chicago Chapter ARS are cancelling our April and May meetings. With conditions changing daily, it's just not sensible to make definite plans at present. Given the drastic steps taken by so many other businesses and organizations, I don't think we should do otherwise than cooperate. Covenant Presbyterian Church has cancelled everything and closed its buildings until at least April. Chicago Opera Theater and Lyric opera have cancelled the rest of their seasons, not to mention all the other closed businesses, schools, bars, and restaurants. Certainly we can help fight the spread of this virus by waiting to play recorders in groups again, until it's deemed safe to resume some semblance of public life.

I believe the biggest concern is unknowingly passing the virus on to someone else, before we even know we're affected. We all still need to go out to stores for supplies, some to work, so we're all possibly being exposed at least occasionally. So the most socially responsible thing to do is keep our social distance for now.

If things improve so quickly that we can get together sooner than next September, then we will happily send out a special invitation to meet and rejoice, just to play with a group again!

On a related, entirely predictable note, the National ARS Board has cancelled its April meeting in Milwaukee, so the MARS chapter will not be having the planned potluck and playing session on April 25th. We'll just have to consider having a shared event with the Chicago and Milwaukee chapters some other time.

So, until we meet again in person, stay safe, healthy and keep on playing recorders at home!—*Larry Johnson*

Chicago Chapter

I had hoped that a gallant group of recorder players would gather on Sunday, March 15, offering an afternoon of normal life in a breathtakingly strange moment in our shared history. "Beware the Ides of March," indeed. We would practice social distancing (if grudgingly on my part) and keep our lips on our recorders too, no kissing.

But we would make music together nevertheless. And we would combat the spread of virus with elegant 17th century harmonies. We would not be overly cautious!

As late as 4 PM Saturday March 14 it looked like we were going to pull it off. About 7 or 8 people had committed to attend, and Andrew Schultze was ready to lead a program of music from the French Baroque. But pressing on with our traditional meeting meant resisting the advice of the Centers for Disease Control, the governor of Illinois, the mayor of Chicago, the American Recorder Society, and, evidently, most of our members. As time passed even some of those who had said they would join us changed their minds. The Chicago chapter has not cancelled a regular monthly meeting in the nearly 20 years that I have been involved. But diminishing numbers and a lot of comment from members who felt strongly that we should not meet on March 15 compelled that decision.

Looking back, I am very happy that I viewed the excellent exhibit on El Greco at the Art Institute on Wednesday March 11 before the Art Institute closed to visitors, and even more pleased that the concert for Apollo's Fire, the fine Baroque ensemble from Cleveland, went on as scheduled on Thursday the 12th. The Chicago Botanic Garden and Garfield Park Conservatory remained open (at first), but not the Lincoln Park Zoo (the Zoo is open on Christmas Day!), nor the Historical Society, the Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium, Adler Planetarium, Newberry Library. No Bach Week fundraiser, *Pirates of Penzance* was cancelled, the Field Museum Loop Lunch postponed and even their 69th annual Members' Nights.

I collected 50 or 60 email messages telling me of venerable institutions closing temporarily perhaps for the first time ever, besides seven musical events and four lectures over the next five weeks that I had been looking forward to that weren't going to happen after all. Meanwhile the collapse in the stock market found me waving goodbye to my retirement savings, and as of March 23 I was told to work from home for the first time since 2006. The previous week I was feeding the fish, the only employee still in the office. Chicago Catholics were stunned that the archbishop decided to close all parish churches, so that Mass would not be offered in the city for the first time since the 1830s. The city's restaurants and bars were ordered to close for two weeks, too, and then longer. CTA buses were running empty downtown during rush hour.

All of this is deeply troubling. But not as troubling as the image of Italian doctors being forced to allow elderly patients to die of infection because they simply do not have the resources to treat everyone effectively, and must triage, like surgeons in combat, toward those victims most likely to survive.

So we wait. And wonder. In the middle of March we had still planned to be back April 19, welcoming Lisette to lead us again. But hope just continued to fade from that point. Our next regularly scheduled meeting currently will be next September, though we are considering arranging a special meeting or two this summer.

I am very sad to write a description of our chapter meeting in this newsletter that in fact describes why that meeting did not happen. I am sadder still to see us abandon our April and May meetings as well. But recorder players have been meeting in Chicago since 1959. We will look forward to making music again next season, if not sooner. We will let you know about a potential gathering in June or July.—*editor*

West Suburban Early Music Society

Dennis Sherman led the March 8th meeting of the West Suburban Early Music Society by directing us in multiple variations of “The leaves be green.” We played several Renaissance pieces: “Browning” by Elway Bevin, “Browning my dear” by Henry Stoning, and another version by Clement Woodcock. We also enjoyed playing rounds of Browning Madame by Thomas Ravenscroft. Following the break we played through “The leaves be greener,” a new work by Bradford Wright available on the ARS website. Wright’s piece was a jazzy version that was technically challenging but quite interesting!



WSEMS gathers in March 2020

WSEMS will not be meeting until the Shelter in Place in order in Illinois has been lifted.—*Kathy Hall-Babis*

Chapter Activities

Make Music Chicago returns on Sunday June 21. The organizers emailed on March 19 to say that the event will still be happening this year. The chapter continues to encourage members to participate in offering free music as part of this event this summer. Contact Mark Dawson or Larry Johnson.

Chapter members are encouraged to join the national American Recorder Society.

http://www.americanrecorder.org/docs/ARS_Membership_Form_2018.pdf

You might also consider donating to the Recorder Artist Relief Fund, sponsored by the ARS:

https://americanrecorder.org/recorder_artist_relief_fund.php

Whitewater

The Early Music Festival at the University of Wisconsin **Whitewater** returns June 5-7, 2020. Look to the web site, www.whitwaterearlymusic.org, for the schedule for the weekend, class offerings, and faculty. Brochures should be in the mail shortly, and as of this writing the event is still scheduled to be held in early June.

A thank you from Lisette Kielson

Our season has been cut short as we join with many to do what we can to slow the spread of Covid-19. As sad as we are to miss our group music-making, I feel connected to you more than ever before. I think of you all—each member—and all that you bring to Chapter Sundays, and I thank you for this year, for seasons' past, and for when we'll meet again! Stay safe and be well!

From the Chicago Recorder Quartet

Dear Fellow Musicians, we want to express how much we miss you and are thinking of you all. At this point, very many events have been cancelled, including concerts and ARS chapter meetings throughout the country. Nevertheless, we gain strength and gratitude from all of the music we have been fortunate to make together and share with each other. Now more than ever is a time to reflect and to give thanks for the experiences, camaraderie, learning, and collaboration that continue to bring us hope and joy. We are all in this together, and for this reason, will get through it!—*Lisette Kielson, Laura Klehr, Mirja Lorenz, and Patrick O'Malley*

An educational offering, Andrew Schultze

Andrew Schultze was unable to lead our March meeting, but his program on French music from the time of Louis XIII and Lully has been rescheduled for October 18, 2020. In the meantime, Andrew is generously sharing with us his recently completed research on 17th century

vocal ornamentation that can also apply to the recorder. He traces the meanings of several terms, such as trill, tremolo, trillo, vibrato, and more, from original Renaissance and Baroque sources, comparing them to later practices in singing and instrumental playing. Among the sources, you'll find some familiar names in recorder performance, like Ganassi, Praetorius, John Playford and others.

The study includes many interesting quotations from original source publications, and the changing definitions of the trill over time. Musical examples written out to demonstrate these different types of ornamentation are included, which can be used for practical application. The study can be found at <https://chicagorecorders.org/resources/educational-materials>

While we are unable to meet in person, learning new skills and reevaluating old techniques will keep us in practice, and this study of trills will come in handy when Andrew returns with his program of 17th century music in October. Enjoy!

Music and Events

Alas, most of the events that might have been listed in this space have been cancelled or postponed, including Bach Week's events in May, that are being moved to the fall. For now the Midwest Sacred Harp Convention is still scheduled for May 30-31. Also, the Italians keep making music while in lockdown:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDRiINXik00>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_rLw6SCSME

Meanwhile, here's a lovely performance of Andrew Lloyd Weber's "Pie Jesu" with two Croatian artists, Stjepan Hauser on cello & child soprano Josephine Ida Zec:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkqb7dLg4uM>

This one is fun too, Apollo's Fire, a Baroque ensemble from Cleveland, offering a traditional Irish anthem "The Seven Rejoices of Mary:"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVSiwODnDts>

Here the director, Jeanette Sorrell, is interviewed on the Living the Classical Life video podcast:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LA_InU8XdA&list=PLB1AE6E2F5106F713&index=65&t=0s

Reflecting on Apollo's Fire, here is an essay considering mistaken assumptions about classical music:

<https://www.circeinstitute.org/blog/3-mistaken-assumptions-about-classical-music-through-lens-vivaldis-la-follia>

WFMT Radio offers a weekly broadcast, Wednesdays at 10 PM, Baroque and Before, "A fresh feast of early music every week." Past episodes are available for playing on their web site.

<https://www.wfmt.com/category/programs/baroquebefore/>

Math and music, and WFMT:

<https://www.wfmt.com/math-in-music/>

This is fun, John Dowland and old fashioned trains:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=516jF8v_Wus

The same quartet singing music carved into the Eglantine Table at Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3-xOHp6kho>

The Eglantine Table is an oak work created at Hardwick in England in 1567. It features inlaid designs of sheet music, instruments, board games, and coats of arms.



Featured in the inlay is song *Lamentation* that Thomas Tallis set for four voices in 1562. The ensemble singing is Les Canards Chantants ("the singing/melodious ducks") originally from England, but now Philadelphia.

Chapter Information

Our chapters are open to anyone, regardless of musical training, who wants to cultivate appreciation of the art, history and use of the recorder and related instruments. Our meetings, programs and publications help members to come together with 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, September to May by the Chicago Chapter & 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.

Go to the back entrance near the parking lot and ring the buzzer for the basement.

Chicago Chapter ARS (ChicagoRecorders.org)

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Webmaster Ben Eisenstein
Member at large Valerie DePriest
Music Director: Lisette Kielson lisettekielson@gmail.com

Chicago Chapter meetings: The third Sunday of each month, September through May, 2 PM, at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2012 West Dickens, Chicago.

Enter either door of the parish building west of the church and go to the large fellowship hall.

West Suburban Early Music Society (westsubems.org)

Convener/Chapter Representative: Christopher Culp
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WSEMS meetings: Second Sunday of each month, September through April, first Sunday of May, 2-5 PM at the Downers Grove Friends meeting house, 5710 Lomond Avenue in Downers Grove. 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.

Like us on Facebook: 

<https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoARS>

Visit us at chicagorecorders.org
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Here we are, playing recorder in happier times.
Thanks to Peter Beck for this photo montage.

