

# Recorder Reporter

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

December 2025

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## Chicago Recorder Society News

For our November 16 session we welcomed 29 people, another excellent turnout. Lisette directed, leading us through a set of pieces for the Yuletide concert on December 21.



We will open the Yuletide concert playing a pair of 16<sup>th</sup> century works, *Gaudete* directed by Lisette, and then the French carol *Sing Noel*, directed by Nancy Chabala. Then the chapter returns to close the concert playing *O Magnum Mysterium* by Gabrieli and Uwe Heger's *Les anges dans nos campagnes*.



Our next meeting is our annual Yuletide concert, Sunday December 21 starting at 2 PM. If you want to perform, please send the names

of your pieces with the names of the composers and participants to Mark Dawson. Please also remember to bring food and drink for the reception. We plan to close the meeting, and 2025, with our traditional jam session directed by Nancy Chabala.



*Practicing for December 6 at St. John's Episcopal*



*The Recorder Orchestra of the Midwest gathered in Brookfield on November 22*

## Chicago Recorder Trio

I brought along a guest when I attended the Chicago Recorder Trio concert at the Northbrook Public Library on November 2. My companion, Bob, is someone who's



been to more live events than seems possible—and yet, this was his first time seeing recorders played in concert. He really enjoyed it! The program was typical for the Trio, by which I mean, full of variety and outstanding musicianship. And the whole time, part of my mind was trying to imagine what Bob was hearing, with his “fresh ears.” What he was hearing was recorder playing at the absolute top level. Afterwards, I felt obliged to inform him that not all recorder performances were likely to be as good—that some of the things Mirja Lorenz, Patrick O’Malley, and CRS’s own Lisette Kielson were doing were not nearly as easy as they seemed.



*Chicago Recorder Trio November 2 at Northbrook Public Library, Lisette Kielson, Patrick O’Malley and Mira Lorenz*

A piece ends on a unison note, and it’s perfectly in tune—we all know that doesn’t happen by accident! The Trio played two movements from Sören Sieg’s African Suite No. 2, and there were loud parts and soft parts—so I’m thinking, “Bob, recorders don’t ‘do’ dynamics, that’s a nearly impossible level of skill!”

If you’ve heard the Trio in concert, you know what I’m talking about. If you haven’t, you owe it to yourself to attend one of their all-too-rare performances. I suspect that your reaction will be similar to mine: admiration mixed with jealousy, and a renewed intention to practice, practice, practice.—*Peter Beck*

### **Recorder player of the month Mike Kuby**

Rosalie Guttman, of the Oak Park Recorder Society, lived in the same building as Michael Kuby and she was persistent. Why not learn to play the recorder? She could teach him. “It took me a year to take her up on the offer,” Mike said. “I wish I had had the confidence to say yes sooner. We would have had more time to play together.” Part of Rosalie’s final arrangements before she died was to ensure Mike was welcomed into the Oak Park Recorder Society and the Chicago Recorder Society. Mike Kuby

has been a regular at Chicago chapter meetings over the last two seasons and now takes lessons from Nancy Chabala. In October we were pleased to welcome him to the board as the chapter vice president.

Born in Chicago, Mike was raised in the University of Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood by parents who worked at the university. His mother was a talented pianist; as a child, with her sister, Marcia, she had tried out for Major Bowes Amateur Hour. His father played the recorder when Michael was a child, and Michael still plays from his dad’s Trapp Family book.

Mike studied piano for six years with Claire Oppenheim, sister to alderman Leon Despres. In high school he took up the violin, but replaced it with the guitar when he enrolled at Simon’s Rock Early College in Massachusetts. After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in English, at 19, he moved to New York City. There he worked as a typesetter, proof reader, and editor at Discover Magazine, The New York Times and Food Arts and other publications. He wrote some articles and pulp fiction and for two years backpacked through Europe, Africa and Asia.

Upon returning to Chicago in 1993, he held various different positions at technology firms, hospitals, and universities. He tried renting out apartments and selling cheese before throwing up his hands and giving up on the whole “money-making game.” “One could say I have always been retired,” he observed.

When not playing the recorder, Mike tends to a Victory Garden at Rainbow Beach in South Shore.



*Mike playing crumhorn with Nancy at a WSEMS meeting in March 2025*

### **West Suburban Early Music Society**

The West Suburban Early Music Society met November 9 at the Friends Meetinghouse in Downer’s Grove with 15 attending. Nancy Chabala led us in Christmas selections,

including *Sing Noel*, *T'was In The Moon Of Winter*, *All On A Starry Night*, and *Verbum Patris Hodie*.

Janet Fitchuk then took over the helm and directed us on *Deck The Halls With Catchy Rhythms*. This is a challenging piece that we will continue working on. I think we made good progress.

Our next meeting will be December 14 at 2 PM at the Friends Meetinghouse.— *Nancy Culp*



## WSEMS Members Make Music

Linda Shaub plays flute with the Senior Suburban Orchestra on Saturday December 13 at 2 PM, Woodridge United Methodist Church. Free, donations are welcome.

Ed Green performs with the American Wind Band in Holiday Melodies on December 7 at 3 PM, Hinsdale South High School Auditorium, 7401 Clarendon Hills Road, Darien, Illinois. Free admission.

Suzanne Scott recommends Piano Forte Holiday Recycle on Saturday December 6 at 1:30 PM, 1335 South Michigan Avenue in Chicago, \$10.

Chris Culp will be in a Barbershop extravaganza, *Home For The Holidays*, on Saturday December 6 at 3 PM and Sunday December 7 at 3 PM at Grace United Methodist Church in Naperville. Tickets are \$25. To learn more visit [www.chorusofDupage.com/events](http://www.chorusofDupage.com/events).

Nancy and Chris will be singing with the DuPage Chorale at the Mac in Glen Ellen on Sunday December 7 at 7:30 PM. Find tickets at <http://www.atthemac.org>.

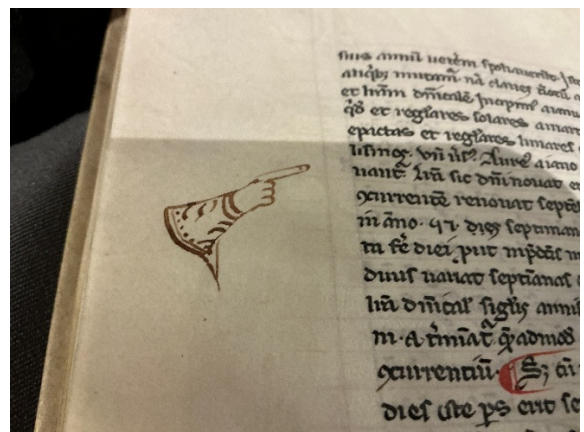
They will also participate in the Elgin Symphony Orchestra sing along Messiah on Thursday December 4

at 7 PM at the Second Baptist Church of Elgin. \$5 to sing. Visit <https://elginsing-alongmessiah.org>.

## Recorders Available

The Chicago chapter holds a set of 30 recorders, including sopraninos, sopranos, altos, tenors, and a single bass, given to us by former chapter members and friends. I recently bought a Moeck tenor from the chapter collection myself, not merely a handsome vintage instrument made of pear wood and with real ivory fittings, but an instrument that once belonged to our old friend Karen Crotty, who died in September of 2024. So I get to play a fine recorder at monthly meetings, and play an instrument that has long been a part of the chapter's history.

The instruments include a Moeck wood sopranino, eight plastic altos and Ariel, Moeck, and Kung wood altos, and a Roessler maple tenor and bass. If you would like to own one of these instruments, talk with Larry Johnson to look at an instrument and offer a donation. Your gift helps fund our chapter expenses.



Drawing a [pointing hand](#) (a *manicule*) on the margin of a text to highlight something important was a common practice in the middle ages. This one appears in a book from 1250 AD, the oldest text in the library at [Adler Planetarium](#), written by Johannes de Sacrobosco (ca 1195–ca 1256), a cleric and astronomer who taught at the University of Paris.

## Finances and Membership

As of December the Chicago Recorder Society counts 37 paid members, up from 34 at the 2024-2025, and that's great news. Membership continues to grow, but our expenses have also grown, and more quickly than revenue over the last few years. As a result we face a \$750 deficit by May of 2026. Please make plans to renew your membership with the chapter, and consider providing the chapter with a year-end donation. Currently donations are at last year's levels, and come mostly from regular donors. But we could balance our budget if every member [donates](#) an additional \$20. Thank you for your generosity.



## Music and More

[James Howard Young](#) offers a lot of beautiful music played on recorder on his YouTube channel.

This ironic and profound video, "[If you haven't succeeded by 30, it's probably over](#)," does not have much to do with playing recorder but everything to do with creating great art and great ideas.

The [Newberry Consort](#) presents Corkscrews, Coils & Clocks, music from Ockeghem to Josquin celebrating scientific inventions from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century. Friday March 13 at 7:30, Bond Chapel of the University of Chicago, Saturday March 14 at 4 PM at St. Luke's Episcopal in Evanston, and Sunday March 15 at 4 PM at Ganz Hall, Roosevelt University in downtown Chicago. This concert of medieval and early Renaissance specialists will feature music on shawms, dulcians, sackbuts, recorders, and hurdy-gurdy.

[Handel Week](#) returns for their 27<sup>th</sup> season at Pilgrim Congregational Church, 460 Lake Street in Oak Park. The concerts are at 3 PM on Sundays, February 15 and 22 and March 1.

[Apollo's Fire](#) performs the Christmas Vespers of Michael Praetorius, Sunday December 14 at 3 PM at the Church of the Holy Family, 1080 W Roosevelt Road in Chicago, and Monday December 15 at 7 PM at Faith, Hope, and Charity Church at 191 Linden Street in Winnetka. These are both elegant venues, and both are well served by public transportation. And Apollo's Fire, based in Cleveland, is one of the nation's best Medieval and Baroque ensembles.

[Bach in the City](#) offers *The Composers of Bach's Musical World* on Sunday January 11 at 3 PM at the Allen Hall of the Holtsschneider Performance Center, DePaul University, 230 North Halsted in Chicago. The program features chamber music provided by Bach's contemporaries, including Georg Telemann, Dieterich Buxtehude, and George Frederic Handel.

[Barbara's Rhubarb Pie Bar](#) and the barbarians who loved it, and their barber.

The University of Chicago Presents concert series offers a [long list](#) of concerts this season in Hyde Park.

- Trio Medieval sings in Rockefeller Memorial Chapel on Friday, January 23, 2026 at 7:30 PM, sacred monophonic and polyphonic medieval choral works, modern pieces, and Norwegian ballads.
- The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Wind Ensemble performs Mozart, Haydn and Nielsen on Friday, April 17, 2026 at 7:30 PM in Mandel Hall.

## 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 Recorder Society and West Suburban dues are paid in September for each new season. Dues include membership in your local chapter, this newsletter, and a welcome to attend the meetings of both chapters. The *Recorder Reporter* is published monthly, September to May by the Chicago Recorder Society and the West Suburban Early Music Society.

### Chicago Recorder Society ([ChicagoRecorders.org](http://ChicagoRecorders.org))

President	Mark Dawson
Vice President	Michael Kuby
Secretary	Cheryl Kreiman
Treasurer	Carl Foote
Facebook	Hyacinth Egner & Cheryl Kreiman
Web site	Larry Johnson & Peter Beck
Members at Large	Ruth Dunnell, Jacob Shermer
Chapter Representative	Larry Johnson
Music Director:	Lisette Kielson <a href="mailto:lisettekielson@gmail.com">lisettekielson@gmail.com</a>

You can contact the chapter through our web site.

Like us on Facebook: 

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

**Chicago Recorder Society meetings:** Third Sunday of each month, September through May, 2 PM, at St. John's Episcopal Church, 3857 North Kostner. Enter through the side door on Byron and go to your right down a few steps to enter the parish hall, or enter in the front.

### West Suburban Early Music Society ([westsubems.org](http://westsubems.org))

Convener/Chapter Representative:	Pat Mahoney
Vice Convener	Nancy Culp
Treasurer	Stephanie Duesing
Secretary/Membership:	Elaine Gillies
Hospitality:	Norm Adams
Web page support:	Chris Culp
Music Director:	Nancy Chabala <a href="mailto:nchabala5555@gmail.com">nchabala5555@gmail.com</a>

**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.

Visit us at [chicagorecorders.org](http://chicagorecorders.org)  
**Mark Dawson, newsletter editor**  
 2425 W. Leland, Chicago, IL 60625-2913  
[msjddawson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:msjddawson@sbcglobal.net) (773) 334-6376