

# Recorder Reporter

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

*April 2026*

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## Chicago Chapter News

For our March 15 meeting, we welcomed David Echelard from Minnesota to direct. David has served regularly as an instructor at the Early Music Festival each June at the University of Wisconsin Whitewater, teaching courses on Renaissance choral music. A professional tenor/counter tenor who has taught monks how to sing Gregorian chant, and a skilled player of hurdy gurdy and bagpipes, I always attend one of his classes each June.

We started with a fine weekend shared with David in Chicago. He took Amtrak from Winona, Minnesota, and I met him at Union Station. We took the L to Lincoln Square and went to a discussion about Chicago's Uptown Theater at the Conrad Sulzer Regional Library. Friday morning we had some time to explore the Loop briefly, and then visited the Field Museum, where we admired antique and ancient musical instruments from around the world in a private tour of the Field's underground Collections Resource Center. Of course we had to see the Tyrannosaurus rex, and then took the Red line L to the Loop to visit the Art Institute (the subway stop at Roosevelt is really cool). This was before dinner at the Medici's in Hyde Park and then the Newberry Consort's performance of Corkscrews, Coils and Clocks at the elegant Bond Chapel at the University of Chicago. The concert featured Liza Malamut on sackbut and Rotem Gilbert playing bagpipes and recorder. Saturday David sent me a video of the Shannon Rovers marching bagpipe band and photos of a Chicago garbage truck featuring an image of Pope Leo XIV. We finished off several bottles of wine together and talked about pretty much everything.

Then, Sunday. We made music together.

David offered a lecture and playing session related to the Stile Antico, or "ancient style," a method of creating music in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that led to the golden age of polyphony. The form was meant to recall the music of earlier eras and featured magnificent composers Tomas Luis de Victoria, Orlando de Lassus, Adrian Willaert, and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. Palestrina was the poster child for Stile Antico with his ethereal style and warm, pleading musical lines. Victoria's work, rich and dark, overflows with its color, intensity, and deep human emotion, while Lassus was a dramatist and word painter.

This monthly meeting featured 25 participants and focused on singing with recorder accompaniment. We weren't just singing, though. The idea of the meeting was to play the recorder with an understanding of how a singer makes music, how the singer breathes and opens his or her throat to form vowels.



The goal of Stile Antico was to mirror the divine through perfect balance and subordination of the composer's and musician's will to the words. This deeply spiritual form is all about singing sacred text, where every line is a melody. The style requires a seamless blending of voices, where each singer was equal to the other voices in the ensemble. The music asks for restraint, for balance, clear texture, spacing, smooth melody, and subdued ego. Thus Stile Antico can be considered a democratic means of making music.



But Stile Antico was also a philosophy of sound, and a universal language of the church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose of the form was to provide an official artistic standard for the church during the Counter Reformation.

As a result referring to Stile Antico as a “democratic” form is somewhat misleading. The church hierarchy showed the way—composers and musicians were expected to follow.



#### *Recorder players without recorders but with dinosaur*

We closed an excellent afternoon welcoming Nancy Chabala to lead our third hour. Of particular pleasure was playing *Kleine Passacaglia*, written by Michael Kunz in 1940. We also played a piece from the ARS Members Library, Glen Shannon’s *Cloud Jaunt*. That was very cool, and I was happy to see a new piece from Glen, as he hasn’t published any compositions lately. I still think fondly of Glen’s special commission for our chapter, *Petite Sweet Flute Suite*, in memory of Hilde Staniulis, that we premiered at our May 2022 concert.

For our April 19 meeting. Lisette will lead us in our dress rehearsal for the spring concert. We will run, in order, Handel’s *Sarabande*, Williams’ *My Bonny Boy*, Gabrieli’s *Alla Battaglia*, and Lully’s *Chaconne*. We will have time to rehearse a few select spots. Lisette emailed out a list of detailed rehearsal notes to those who plan to take part in the concert. If you haven’t received Lisette’s April rehearsal notes contact her at [LisetteKielson@gmail.com](mailto:LisetteKielson@gmail.com). We will plan to vote for officers for our 2026-2027 season at our May meeting. Lisette’s rehearsal notes file will be posted to the chapter web site, with the music for April.

The Chicago chapter has plans to provide music for two Sunday services at St. John’s this season, **April 12** and **June 21**, both at 10 AM, arriving at 9:30. And Sunday June 21, 2026, is Make Music Chicago, an annual event where hundreds of soloists and groups offer music for free in venues all over the city. As we will be gathering to play at St. John’s on that Sunday morning already, I hope to recruit some of those same recorder players to travel with me to a venue in the city, probably downtown, where we can offer our music for free in this festival.



*A sublime, if somewhat risky, moment in the music store at the Old Town School of Folk Music*



*David with a 13<sup>th</sup> century antiphony, a choral book for nuns, Art Institute of Chicago*

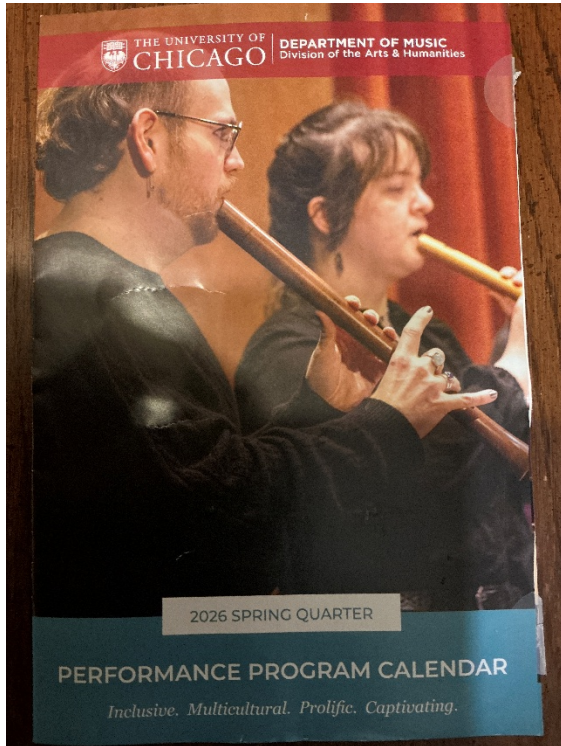
## Whitewater Early Music Festival

The [Early Music Festival](#) at the University of Wisconsin Whitewater returns May 29, 30, and 31. I attended the event for the first time 20 years ago, many of us have been going to Whitewater for a lot longer than that. The festival offers three days of classes and jamming on recorder, viol da gamba, and loud band, as well as singing, and only about 100 miles from Chicago. Bring your reed instruments.

## Spring Concert

We gather on May 17 to close our 67<sup>th</sup> season with our annual spring concert. To take part, send the names of the people in your ensemble, and the name of the piece or pieces you plan to perform, to Mark Dawson at [msjddawson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:msjddawson@sbcglobal.net). Join us for a reception after the concert, and then we close our season with our traditional jam session directed by Nancy Chabala. As

with our recent practice, the whole chapter playing together will plan to open and close the concert.



*James Watts and Jennifer Haar made the front cover of the spring calendar brochure for the University of Chicago Department of Music. Here they are playing with the Early Music Ensemble on February 21.*



*Rotem Gilbert playing recorder with the Newberry Consort, Bond Chapel, March 13*

## West Suburban Early Music Society

The West Suburban Early Music Society met Sunday March 8 at the Friends Meeting House in Downers Grove, with 17 members attending. Nancy Chabala directed the first session emphasizing Renaissance dances followed by a nod to St. Patrick's Day.

She opened with "Golden Rules For Ensemble Playing" by Larry Harlow.

These rules for playing in an ensemble include:

1. Everyone should play the same piece.
2. Observe the repeat signs only if what you just played was interesting.
3. If you play a wrong note, glare at one of the other players.
4. Carefully tune your instrument before playing. Then, if you play out of tune, you can at least do it with a clear conscience.
5. The right note, at the wrong time, is a wrong note.
6. A wrong note, played timidly, is a wrong note.
7. A wrong note, played with authority, is simply your interpretation of the phrase.
8. If everyone gets lost except you, follow the ones who are lost.
9. Strive to always play the maximum notes per second. This will intimidate the weaker players and gain you the admiration of the ignorant.
10. Markings for slurs, dynamics, and accidentals should be completely ignored. They are only there to make the score look more complicated.
11. If a passage is difficult, slow down. If it is easy, speed up. Everything will even itself out in the end.
12. You have achieved a true interpretation when, in the end, you have not played one note of the original piece.
13. When everyone else stops playing, you should stop also. Do not play any notes you may have left over.

We started the instrumental playing with a Pavane, "Bella Qui" composed by Toinot Arbeau in 1589. Nancy explained that the Pavane is a southern European dance used to show off the gracefulness of the couples involved and the finery of their clothes. We played a "Padouana" by Johann Shein from 1617 and a galliard by Anthony Holborne from 1599. This dance is in 6, with motions of kick, kick, kick, leap, and land. Our fourth number was an anonymous "Pavane and Galliard de la Bataille" from 1583. Our last Renaissance dance was a courante by Praetorius. This dance features fast running steps. We attempted to play it at speed, which was challenging. The session ended with two Irish pieces by the blind harpist T. O'Carolan from 1700. The first was a gigue, "Planxty Connor," a round, and the second, "Carolan's Receipt," is a hornpipe. Nancy told us that the story is that O'Carolan didn't have the money to pay his pub bill, so he wrote this piece as payment.

The alto group played duets, Pentasm by Glen Shannon and the prelude from Les Lorsing de Sonya by Angelo

Zaniol, and the De Capo group played Irish pieces, “Hornpipe” by Henry Purcell. “Give Us a Drink of Water” which is a hop, or slip jig. “Humor’s of Limerick”, a single jig. “Madame Bonaparte”, a set dance, and “Beamish’s Goat”, a reel.

Our next meeting will be at 2 PM on April 12 at the Friends Meeting House.—*Nancy Culp*



*WSEMS members gather in March 2026*

## Music and More

The [Grant Park Music Festival](#) returns, a summer of free music at the bandshell in Millennium Park. Coming up, the Beethoven Symphony #9, Dvorak’s New World Symphony, the Rachmaninov Piano Concerto #3, and of course, a lot more.

The [Recorder Orchestra of the Midwest](#) offers *Laments and Renewal* at Grace Episcopal Church, 924 Lake Street in Oak Park, on Sunday April 25 at 3 PM. Many of our friends will be featured in this performance of works by Machaut, Telemann, Lully, and more.

University of Chicago Presents offers [Trio Medieval](#). This ensemble offers a combination of Nordic folk songs and medieval polyphony. Logan Center of the Arts, Sunday April 12 at 3 PM.

Join [Apollo’s Fire](#) in their performance, *O, Jerusalem, a Crossroads of Three Faiths*, a journey of the historic music of the Middle East. Friday, April 17 at 7:30 PM at the Music Institute of Chicago, 1490 Chicago Avenue in Evanston, Saturday, April 18 at 7:30 PM at KAM Isaiah Israel, 5039 S Greenwood Avenue in Chicago, and Sunday, April 19 at 5 PM at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E Washington Street in Chicago.

## 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	Jacob Schermer
Treasurer	Carl Foote
Facebook	Hyacinth Egner & Cheryl Kreiman
Web site	Larry Johnson & Carl Foote
Members at Large	James Watts, Ruth Dunnell, Hyacinth Egner
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)  
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