

A Study Program for the Recorder, by Richardo Kanji

It was early in 1970 that I arrived in Holland to study at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. I had met Frans Brüggen in 1966 at a summer course in Saratoga Springs, NY, and after this experience had the desire to have more contact with that remarkable man.

After I finished my studies in 1972, Frans asked me if I wanted to take his place as a teacher at the conservatory, as his performing career was taking too much of his time. I was stunned, and gladly accepted an offer that profoundly affected the course of my life.

In 1973 I started teaching at the Royal Conservatory and, as this was during the rise of the early music movement, I had a full load of 28 teaching hours per week. I had students from all over the world and, as a sport, I took on the challenge of teaching them in their native tongue, which helped me to develop the ability to speak several languages. I only didn't succeed with Japanese....

Soon I discovered that the students' desire to improve the art of recorder playing and to become more acquainted with the style and repertoire of baroque music often exceeded their technique on the instrument.

As I realized that we did not have the repertoire of technical books known to other instruments, I started putting some exercises on paper, and soon noticed that their effect on the students was very positive. Encouraged by that, I worked on developing the exercises further, and created a first version of the book in 1976. I showed it to Frans, whom I deeply respected, to ask for his opinion. He took it home, and after some days he said: "*Het staat als een huis!*" ("It is as solid as a house!"). My colleague Bruce Haynes started using it with his oboe students and was very pleased with and enthusiastic about the results. Since then this method has been used by many colleagues and ex-students of mine, and everyone is happy with the progress of their students.

Back then I decided to publish the book, and Frans suggested that I should establish contact with a Japanese publisher with whom he was working. I did so, and they were very receptive and kind. But when the print proof came I realized that a big

misunderstanding had occurred: they had written out all the exercises note-for-note, making the book 40 pages long, instead of the original abbreviated 12!

Already at that time I insisted on not writing it all out, so that the student would develop a better connection with the instrument, training what the ear wants to hear and what the fingers need to play. This was a big blow to the Japanese publisher who, after having seen my cuts and corrections, became disappointed with his wasted efforts and did not want to work further with me.

So this book remained unpublished for more than 40 years, and has been used by people as an exercise guide in its copied manuscript form. In 2020 a former student of mine who became a university professor asked me if I would reconsider publishing the Study Program. This made me revive the idea, and I decided to re-order the exercises, and expand the book with an appendix that deals with important matters of interpretation of early music as well as general technical aspects inherent to the recorder.

I am absolutely sure that anyone who does these exercises for some months will notice an almost magical change in their technical abilities!