Fall 2024, Vol. LXV, No. 3 • Published by the American Recorder Society • https://AmericanRecorder.org

AMERICAN RECORDER

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AMERICAN RECORDER

ON THE COVER

Tom Prescott (center) and his former assistants Eric Maxfield and Beth Hilgartner with a batch of great bass Renaissance recorders.

CONTENTS

Editor's Note · GEOFFREY BURGESS

In my first issue of *AR* I am thrilled to be able to bring together a diversity of voices. I invited recorder builders and players to demystify the art of recorder voicing, and in her feature article, Rachel Begley also engaged a circle of colleagues to speak about the experience of playing in orchestras. Music reviews have been selected on the theme of voice. You will find a number of new editions relating to vocal music and song. In book reviews, DEI committee co-chair Jamie Allen encourages us to think hard about some vexing questions facing the future of classical music.

Summer is a time to gather, share ideas at workshops and festivals. It was inspiring to attend the Berkeley Festival. You can read about some of the festival events featuring recorders and flutes in Listen and Play. In Berkeley I met a number of key ARS members, including out-going editor Gail Nickless who has generously assisted with the editorial transition. If you missed your opportunity to attend a summer workshop, perhaps Cléa Galhano's and Anne Timberlake's comments will inspire you to participate next year!

This issue would not have seen the light of day without the tireless work of Mary Humphrey. A round of applause for her beautiful work on her first issue!

President's Message · CAROL MISHLER

When ARS board member Barbara Prescott proposed an "angel" sponsorship of the Members Library Editions and Play-the-Recorder month music included with your *American Recorder* magazine, I wondered. As a new board member in 2019, I didn't know how ARS donors would react to a sponsorship requiring a $1,000 donation. Little did I know that a stream of angels would appear to fund new recorder compositions for the next five and half years! We are profoundly grateful to the 17 angels whose combined donations of $19,000 have allowed the ARS to publish and print new music and pay composers a modest honorarium.

By July 2024, we were fresh out of angels to support the music you receive in the magazine. Meanwhile, we had created a new sponsorship of our free online beginner and second-level recorder classes. Started during the pandemic, the classes are still popular and a source of new ARS members. While they are free to students, it costs money to pay professional recorder teachers and to publicize the classes. NAVRS (North American Virtual Recorder Society) stepped forward to sponsor a free class in the spring of 2024 as a pilot test of the new $500 sponsorship. It was a success; the ARS is grateful.

Last July, the ARS mailed a letter to recruit new angels of either the music in the magazine at $1,000–1,500 or the free classes on Zoom at $500. When I wrote this column, I didn't know how our donors responded to these sponsorship opportunities. I hope the letter generated as many angels as it did last time!

We want to keep the angel program thriving and even expand it to other successful ARS activities. For instance, we want to develop a sponsorship of the Play-the-Recorder Day in whatever format this March event takes. Additionally, we could have sponsors for significant articles in *American Recorder*. The ARS plans to add new sponsorships where we can and recruit more angels to support them.

If any of these sponsorships appeal to you or your recorder group, please let Administrative Director Susan Burns know at director@americanrecorder.org. We welcome new angels.

AMERICAN RECORDER SOCIETY

ANNOUNCEMENT

Results of ARS Board of Directors Election

The election period began on April 1, 2024, and the deadline was June 1, 2024 for members to cast their ballots. There were 324 voters, which is approximately 14% of our membership. This is a fairly typical election turnout, and we are grateful to those members who participated.

As it was a no-contest election, all candidates have been elected. Congratulations to all!

The incumbent Board members who stood for re-election are:

- **Peter Faber**, retired corporate tax attorney, New York City, NY, chair of the ARS Governance Committee
- **Virginia Felton**, retired communications professional, Seattle, WA, chair of the ARS Fundraising Committee
- **Eric Haas**, Boston, MA, longtime employee of the Von Huene Workshop/Early Music Shop of New England, serving on the ARS Communications and Fundraising Committees

The newly elected Board members are:

- **Gwyn Roberts**, Philadelphia, PA, professional recorder player and teacher
- **Barbara Stark**, retired telecommunications professional with financial experience, Austin, TX, ARS Board appointee in 2023, serving on the Finance Committee as well as the Scholarships & Grants Committee

CHANGE

New Print Layout Specialist for *American Recorder*

Mary Humphrey was chosen from a broad pool of applicants to join the ARS editorial team. Geoffrey Burgess writes "It has been a great support collaborating with Mary on this, our first issue of *American Recorder*."

A native of North Carolina currently living in Raleigh, Mary is a graduate of the North Carolina State University College of Design. She has 30 years of design experience, collaborating with both for-profit and non-profit clients.

Organizations she has worked with include Duke University and the North Carolina Museum of Art. Mary enjoys working on projects of any scope and appreciates the opportunities to learn something new from her clients and their varied businesses. "I like to be involved in a project from its conception. Considering design questions at the front end makes for rewarding work that is successful for the client and audience. Win!"

The search task force, comprising Managing Editor Geoffrey Burgess, retiring Editor Gail Nickless and Administrative Director Susan Burns, was impressed with Mary's experience. She stood out from other equally qualified applicants as a collaborative thinker and troubleshooter willing to apply her creative skills to a new challenge.

◀ **Mary Humphrey**

APPLAUSE

ARS supports a Celebration of African American Composers at Montclair

With support from an American Recorder Society Diversity, Equity and Inclusion grant, Montclair Early Music (MEM) presented "Jubilee 2024: A Musical Celebration of African American Composers," as part of Black History Month last February. A multi-generational ensemble of recorder players and other instrumentalists and vocalists brought to life the rich history of spiritual, folk and jazz music from Black composers over the centuries.

See the full report at https://mms.americanrecorder.org/news_archive_headlines.php?org_id=ARSO&cat_id=#43895141

REMINDER

The ARS YouTube Channel

The number of fine performances archived on YouTube that include the recorder is immeasurable these days, which is a great thing for our community! The American Recorder Society operates our own ARS YouTube Channel with playlists of videos that you can access to advance your playing or learn some new music. The ARS channel includes a few of our favorite professional recorder-centric ensembles under our "Featured Channels." The ARS channel also includes a number of instructional and informational videos of interest to the blossoming recorder enthusiast.

AMERICAN RECORDER SOCIETY

CONTRIBUTIONS
ARS DONORS

The following generous donors contributed between January 1 and June 30, 2023. With these funds, we are able to create a beautiful and informative magazine; offer scholarships and grants; provide helpful resources to our chapters, consorts and recorder orchestras; continue to add valuable content to our website; and much more. We can't offer all of these valuable educational and community-building programs without you. Thank you for your support!

SYMPHONY ($1000-2499)

Anonymous
Busse, Megyn
Cunningham, Shirley
Faber, Peter*
Feinberg, Edward
Felton, Virginia*
Frederick, Nancy
Jablon, Madelyn
Miller, Jody*+
North American Virtual Recorder Society
Wink, Judith & Michael Zumoff

CONCERTO ($500-999)

Charsky, Thomas
Cordes, Charlotte
Haas, Eric*
Oberst, Marilyn
Princeton Recorder Society
Schlafly, Laura
Simpson, David
Woods, Patsy

OVERTURE ($250-499)

Anonymous
Becker, Jann+
Carpenter, Jennifer+
Carver, Margaret
DePriest, Valerie
Pleasant View Elementary
Harper, Conrad
Higham, Kaat
Imperial Recorder Consort
Kuntzelman, Diane
Lewitus, Ricardo
Neufeld, Bee
Oppenheimer, James
Schultz, Charlie
Stephenson, Jean
Sugarman, Paul & Susan
Trautwein, Charlotte+
Webb, Garrett

SONATA ($100-249)

Ainsfield, Neale+
Aldrich, J. Winthrop
Ballinger, Peter
Bent, Nancy+
Breslin, Mary
Brown, Margaret
Bruner, Daniel*+
Cadwalader, David
Clark, Nathan
Clymer, Mary Ann
Coleman, Michael
Confer, Connie
Cowles, Christina
Desert Pipes Chapter
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Essenberg, Richard & Margaret
Ford, Sabine
Galhano, Cléa
Gillmor, Mickey
Glasscock, Robert
Grieve, Mark
Handley, Jeffrey
Hanley, Patricia
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Harris, John
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Kotis, Constance
Kvilekval, Kara+
Lazar's Early Music
Levine, Robin+
Lincoln, Carolyn
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Mason, Scott
Melanson, David
Messer, Donna
Meyer, Gary
Miller, Elaine
Moore, Sharon
Muntges, John
Neiburg, Dale
Nichols, Karen
Pond, Amanda
Porter, Gary+
Scamehorn, Donald
Scholten, Lucinda
Schoomer, Suzanne
Schwartz, Eric
Senn, Barbara
Smutek, Judy*+
Sokolow, Jayme
Terada, Rose
Thompson, Albert+
Timberlake, Anne
Vehe, Kathryn+
Wagenknecht, Robert & Therese
Walsh, Roberta
Wavada, Victor
West Suburban Early Music Society
Wilson, Joan
Wysession, Michael
Zukof, Lawrence

PRELUDE ($25-99)

Adair, Audrey
Allen, Jamie*
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Asmuth, Claudia
Barnes, John
Basile, Donna
Bellows, Jerry
Bergemann, Marjorie
Bethel, Jim
Braen, Susan
Brown, Carmen
Bruzelius, Margaret
Burns, Susan+
Carbone, Richard
Chestnut, Joanna
Cowden, Margaret
Crawford, Cynthia+
Espenshade, Mary Anne+
Evans, Joan
Farrell, Ellen
Fischer, Bill
Garlick, Nancy
Graybeal, Lynn
Grendahl, Spencer
Gruskin, Shelley
Gutnick, Tom
Gwin, Holly
Hafner, Sharen+
Hale, Ray
Hampton, Russell
Hansen, Kent
Harrington, Regan
Herr, Mary
Hollis, Susan+
Holy, Chantal
Hooker-Haase, Stella
Hopkins, Joyce
Hunter, Elaine+
Huysman, Anne+
Kahn, Diane
Kim, Marianne
Kogut, Merry
Lacefield, Cathay
Landesman, Betty
Lietz, Cheryl
Manson, Joseph
Maurer, Holly
McCollum, Jeanette
Meadow, Margery+
Mraz, Sam+
Ovitsky, Steven
Palmer, Stephen
Paterson, Elizabeth+
Pennington, Amy
Pont, Leslie
Pontious, Elaine
Rachouh, Susan
Riley, Warren
Ritchie, Gilbert
Rogers, Patsy
Sakimoto, Irene
Sale, Liz
Samant, Jillian
Samuelson, Susan
Sansom, Roy
Sherrick, Kathy
Soma, Karen
Uecker, Dennis & Judy
Ungerer, Joe
Valiente, Jessica
Van Proosdij, Hanneke
Veit, Carol
Wagner, Diane
Weatherbee, Deborah
Woolsey, Annette

AMORE ($1-24)

Adams, Alecia
Bachman, Stephanie
Benkle, Ilene
Bolles, Sharon
Brown, Tom
Carpenter, Mark
Collis, Nancy
Dempsey, Helen
Funderburk, Lance
Halfar, Chris
Harewood, Sandra
Hopkins, Linda
Lieby, David
McDonald, John
McRae, Deborah
Midford, Peter
Mitchell, Gerard
Moore, William
Newcomb, Margaret
Port, Hilary
Reynolds, Steve
Russill, Kailey
Scott, Lynne
Shonle, Michael

Starr, Mark
Stewart, Bill
Stokes, Jarrett
Stone, Robin
Treska, Mary
Van Wyck, Donald
Wiggins, Denise
Wright, Sue Ann
Wyan, Vicki

NEW LIFETIME MEMBERS
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Carbone, Richard
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IIN MEMORY OF EVELYN KATUSAK
Charsky, Thomas

IN MEMORY OF DARLEEN KAY
West Suburban Early Music Society (IL)

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Anonymous
Rachouh, Susan

IN MEMORY OF HANS LEWITUS
Lewitus, Ricardo

IN HONOR OF JODY MILLER
Kotis, Connie

IN HONOR OF GAIL NICKLESS
Galhano, Cléa

IN MEMORY OF JAMES OPPENHEIMER
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Pontious, Elaine
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Schoomer, Suzanne
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IN MEMORY OF FLORENCE & DICK WILKINSON
Desert Pipes Chapter (AZ)

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+recurring monthly donors

Calling All Angels

Become an ARS "angel" by sponsoring recorder music mailed with American Recorder

- A gift of $500 will support a free online beginner or second-level class
- A gift of $1 000 will support an honorarium for the composer and publication costs for one Members' Library Edition
- A gift of $1,500 will support an honorarium for the composer and publication costs for one Play-the-Recorder Month composition

MORE INFORMATION

americanrecorder.org/sponsor • director@americanrecorder.org

844-509-1422

Notice of ARS Annual Meeting

The 2024 ARS Annual Members' Meeting, once again accessible to all members with an internet connection, is set for Saturday, October 19 at 3 p.m. EDT on Zoom. ARS President Carol Mishler will conduct the annual meeting. On the agenda:

- ARS financial report for fiscal year 2023-24
- ARS mission and key strategic initiatives
- Key member benefit initiatives
- Importance of membership growth and fundraising to our ability to remain strong and mission-focused
- Select questions from members

Please register to attend at https://americanrecorder.org/annualmeeting2024. An emailed reminder will be sent.

ON THE RECORD(ER)

News about the recorder

LOOKING BACK

Tom Prescott Lays Down his Tools. American recorder maker retires after 50 years

Recipient of the ARS's Distinguished Achievement Award in 2019, Tom Prescott looks back over his long career

I feel that I have led a charmed life. I became interested in recorders in the early 1970s when the field of early music was just starting to take off. I realized early on that I would never be a really good recorder player. Playing passages over and over, constantly refining them, was not something that interested me. Making things was the talent I had, and to that end I was well suited to recorder making. I had the good fortune of becoming an apprentice in the von Huene Workshop right after finishing college in 1973. At first it was hard, often dirty, dusty work, spending days rough-turning and drilling wood, but as time went on, I was given more and more tasks, guided by Friedrich but refining my skills under the watchful eyes of the three other workers there at the time. It was an inspiration to see how a recorder was made to the highest level of quality, something that players could appreciate in appearance as well as function. I learned everything necessary to make complete recorders, including executing drawings, developing new designs, and toolmaking. That was unusual. Bob Marvin only made keys while he was with von Huene, and most of the others focused on specific skills, such as carving ramps, voicing, tuning and finishing.

Within a year of beginning at von Huene, I started my own workshop. Friedrich was very helpful in getting my business started, giving me access to all of his instrument measurements, some tools he no longer needed, and lots of advice. I learned a great deal from Ingeborg about how to run the business, and she generously allowed me to copy materials that she sent with instruments such as "care sheets" and fingering charts. By the time I left the von Huene shop I'd been there just under 2 years. I already had my first instruments, Grenser Baroque flutes, in production under my own name and sold a number of orders. I could get a better hourly rate for my time with traversi, as there were a lot of professional flutists who wanted to explore playing on historical instruments. Since they were used to paying $3,000 for a modern flute, my $400 price tag was no problem!

As time went on, my efficiency at making recorders improved and they became the real income producers. I would add one or two new models every year, and eventually had 9 models from sopranino to tenor, nearly all with corps de rechange for 440 and 415. At that stage Bob Marvin began visiting me 4 or 5 times a year. Early in our relationship he encouraged me to make Renaissance models, and offered to give me any of his designs to copy. I felt that I would be stepping on his toes to accept that and chose to copy a Renaissance F alto that I measured in Linz, Austria. After I got it playing I showed it to him. He explained all its shortcomings,

◀ With the Flanders Recorder Quartet at the Amherst Early Music Festival in 2015 just before they decided to replace their Marvin consorts with one by Tom. Each member helped to refine Prescott's Renaissance recorder designs.

and told me how simply copying his designs would be a better way to go. I took his advice and in 1991 made my first alto, pitched at a=440 – not the original at A=460 ("God's pitch" as Bob called it). On his next visit we sat down and he told me how I could refine it. A tenor and soprano quickly followed, and when each was playing, Bob helped me perfect the design. One of the most important things I learned from him was how to make a recorder that was reliable and easy to play but still had "soul." My first bassett in F was finished in 1993, and I started getting orders for SATB consorts. I had thought that one consort would be sufficient for any playing group, but soon discovered that every member would want their own set of 4 to 6 instruments. Over the ensuing 30 years, Renaissance instruments became the backbone of my business. If it hadn't been for Bob's generosity and all the wonderful people who have treasured those instruments, I would not have been able to stay in business. Many consider my consorts to be the world standard at A=440.

I could fill a small book with the names and contributions of the people who made it possible for me to become a successful maker. With no effort I can think of more than 40. Many pushed me out of my comfort zone when my natural inclination would have been to maintain the status quo.

Over the years I've had seven different people assist me in the shop. The first 4 all quickly became proficient at making recorders from start to finish. Later I hired people to help with the production of the bodies, but cut the windways and performed the later operations myself. My father worked for me in the colder months, when he couldn't work in his garden, from 1990 through 2002 when he was 85 years old. He helped me make enough instruments each year to pay my bills

◀ **Repairing and testing a recorder while exhibiting in Malmö, Sweden, 2018.**

and support my family. In 2001 my son, Bennett, began working for me during the summer and other times when he wasn't in school. I benefited from his efforts over the next 7 years. He advanced my production capabilities, including producing digital drawings of my instruments in AutoCad, and then converting them into machine-readable format so that they could be made with computer driven (CNC) machines. That was just a dream before he started working with me. In the end, this production method was less of a time-saver than a way to guarantee accuracy.

After Bennett went off on his own to work in the loudspeaker industry, I hired a local man, Eric Maxfield, to work for me full time. After a few years he was able to hand me instrument bodies that were finished to a level that even I had difficulty achieving, including perfect windways and tone-holes. Eight years after Eric began working in my shop, Beth Hilgartner, a recorder player and renaissance woman joined me and spent most of her time making and fitting blocks, voicing recorders, finishing tone-holes and helping out with whatever needed to be done. She and Eric worked with me another 6 years, at which time I needed to prepare to retire. When I sent them on their way in the summer of 2022, they left me with about 200 blocked and voiced recorder bodies.

Since then I've been finishing those recorders that had been ordered. Through it all my wife, Barbara, has been running the financial side of the business and helping at exhibitions. She's been good at keeping me from being too satisfied with the quality of my recorders. Her support has made everything possible. I retired fully on June 1, 2024 and will begin pursuing other dreams.

When Barb and I said goodbye to Eric and Beth, there was no more design work to be done, no more wood turning, no more blocks to fit. It was down to the final adjustments. I've been tackling the large instruments: 4 great basses last year. With 5,050 instruments sold, it was time to stop. There are still 40 instruments that could be finished, but they are not spoken for.

We intend to stay put for a while, but still want to enjoy life and travel while we can.

I will still service a limited number of recorders, a maximum of one per week. Otherwise, I recommend contacting von Huene.

I have donated the reamers from the very first instrument that I made, the Grenser traverso, to a young maker who is training at von Huene, so I feel that things have come full circle. ❁

www.prescottworkshop.com.

See also Tom's comments in the article "Voices on Voicing" in this issue.

CONGRATULATIONS

Piffaro appoints two new core members, both well known to the recorder community

Priscilla Herreid, Artistic Director of Piffaro, has announced the appointment of Héloïse Degrugillier and Sian Ricketts as core members of the ensemble.

Piffaro holds a special place in Héloïse's musical journey.

The very first concert I attended when I came to America was a Piffaro concert. How fitting and what an honor to be joining those wonderful musicians. I have been playing the recorder since I was 5 years old – it is time for me to learn new instruments, play the music I love, surrounded by amazing people. I can't wait!

For Sian Ricketts, who is also a core member of the medieval ensemble Alkemie, playing with Piffaro is a "dream come true."

There are few opportunities to play 16th-century consort repertoire in this country, and even fewer with these incredible players. I'm so honored and excited to get the chance to delve deeper both into repertoire that I love and that I have yet to know; to learn new instruments; and to know that when I put away the shawms after each concert, I will certainly get the chance to play them again soon.

◀ **The display of recorders at Piffaro's final concert for 2023–24.**

◀ **Héloïse Degrugillier and Sian Ricketts.**

Both Ricketts and Degrugillier performed with the group in their final concert of the season: "The Glory of the Wind Band: Music of Portugal and Spain" (May 10–12, 2024). This musical journey through the Spanish–Portuguese peninsula included moments of sumptuous harmony with 6 or more recorders. In addition to the new members, Priscilla and Grant Herreid, and the other regular members Greg Ingles and Erik Schmalz (usually situated behind their sackbuts), plus guest Kelsey Schilling all joined in the recorder consort pieces. Surprisingly, the remarkable unanimity of tone and tuning that they produced was not the product of a matched set of instruments. In addition to two separate consorts made at different times by Adrian Brown owned by Piffaro, another set by Martin Praetorius owned by Ingles and Schmatz was in use. There was a total of no less than 5 different tenor recorders on stage. The glorious result can only be attributed to the skill of all the players. ❁

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

AR Winter 2023

A big THANK YOU for a great magazine and a special thank you to Beverly Lomer and Sian Ricketts. The article about Hildegard of Bingen is excellent; very well written, interesting and understandable to an amateur like me. Keep up the good work.

— Bea Dobyns

VOICES

POEM

Practicing Telemann (2021)

for Betty

I live inside the note
focused into sound, into longing.

Lungs full, throat open, mouth a chamber of breath energy.
Lips, tongue, fingers moving with purpose
confident, clumsy, hesitant.

Note to note, measure to measure, breath to breath,
music moves from within, from air to breath,
from nerve to tendon to muscle,
vibrating across edge, through wood to sound.

But it does not match what sounds within my mind.
Imperfect and imprecise,
it does not echo back through the centuries to Telemann.

Vibrations from within, notes on the page long to be realized,
they long to rise from the page, from the soul, into the world.

So start over again, again —
break it down to stitch it together,
eighths, sixteenths, allegro, vivace.
Note to note, measure to measure
disappointment to frustration
breath to sound to tone.
Slowly, moments of music emerge.

Not perfect, still humble.
Not what is longed for or hoped for.
Not perfect, but beautiful.
Notes, phrases, rhythms merge.
Slowly, music lifts from the page.
In isolated and near-perfect moments
It is released, vibrating, into the world.

— Virginia Felton, Seattle, WA

THE LITERARY RECORDER

Many older readers may recall the reference in Kingsley Amis's novel *Lucky Jim* to the Suite for three recorders by Peter Racine Fricker, a work close to my heart as I recall that I played it in my first BBC Radio 3 studio broadcast, with David Munrow, along with some of the Lutoslawski pieces for three recorders (curiously not mentioned in the recent book about his music, and seemingly more or less unknown). Many of the same generation of readers will also recall the science fiction novels of John Wyndham. Amongst his works, many televised, were *The Midwich Cuckoos, The Day of the Triffids* and *The Kraken Wakes*, several of them quite frightening!

The composer Elis Pehkonen has recently sent me a copy of a short story involving a recorder by John Wyndham, which readers might like to seek out. It is called *A Present from Brunswick*, and was published in a collection called *Jizzle*. It is apparently, from the description, a low pitch ivory German recorder, which possesses magical powers, and the story is founded on *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* (near Brunswick).

It would be interesting to know if Wyndham or any of his relatives or friends played the recorder. Apparently he started his career as a writer in the 1930s, writing short science fiction and fantasy stories for American magazines! And the location of this story is Pleasantgrove, Pop. 3226, "The Liveliest Little City in This or Any State." Presumably a fictional town in New England somewhere?

— John Turner

INSTRUMENTS

VOICES ON VOICING

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY BURGESS

Voicing is an essential part of recorder making. The English term is used almost universally throughout the recorder world, even without translation into other languages. But what exactly does voicing mean, and what does it entail?

I sought opinions from a team of experts:
Makers and Repairers Patrick von Huene **PvH** (Boston, MA), Gerry Leatherman **GL** (Portland, OR), Tom Prescott **TP** (Hanover, NH), Nikolaj Ronimus **NR** (Copenhagen, Denmark) and Owen Watkins **OW** (Dover, NH)
Players and Educators Eric Haas **EH** (Boston, MA), Michael Lynn **ML** (Oberlin, OH) and Gwyn Roberts **GR** (Philadelphia, PA)

What is recorder voicing?

OW Controlling how the air travels over the edge of the lip. It is the shaping of the all the contours of the windway so that the air travels through to the lip with maximum effect to produce the desired sound quality and response.

PvH Voicing refers to how a recorder speaks and responds, its "voice" and timbre (sound quality, tone color).

ML Voicing is like the engine of the car: it produces the basic sound that makes the instrument go. The relationship of windway width and height, the chamfers, and the distance to the edge: all of the physical aspects that control the way the recorder responds to the air that the player supplies.

We also speak of voicing on organs and harpsichords, but on those, each note is voiced individually. Harpsichordists speak of voicing in terms of the heaviness or lightness of touch required – so comparable to air flow – and the evenness of voicing from note to note across the range of the instrument; but on a recorder, the same voicing has to serve for every note.

What does it mean to "voice a recorder"?

PvH To make it speak and respond throughout the full range of the instrument with a full, strong tone and clean, clear articulation.

GL The biggest challenge with voicing is to find balance between the registers.

EH In general, the parameters that allow a recorder to respond well in the lowest range (a relatively large windway and large upper and lower chamfers) make it more difficult to produce a clear and articulate sound in the extreme high end, so voicing becomes a balancing act.

TP I learned the rules of voicing from Friedrich von Huene and Bob Marvin. Bob in particular thought mathematically, and if you go back to my 2016 article "The Recorder Windway Demystified," you'll see a lot of figures: the ratio of windway, and the distance from the cutup to the bore. I got all that from Bob. The ratios are what he observed on original recorders, and what he further developed in his own workshop for voicing Renaissance recorders. Marvin did his voicing entirely by measurement. As well as Friedrich and Bob, I have also benefited from the advice of others. Nikolaj Ronimus challenged me to think outside the box. For example, he made more rounded chamfers (American builders prefer more precise angles) and higher windways.

GL As I've been learning the craft of building, Tom Prescott's article on the windway has been invaluable. I play mostly Renaissance consort music, and so those instruments are my favorites, and I think I have "found their voice." Out of the Baroque series, I'd choose the Bressan model. I'd really love to see more original instruments, and

also observe what the best modern builders have been doing.

Can one voicing suit all sizes and models? Are some recorders more difficult to voice than others?

TP The same principles don't always work from Renaissance across to Baroque models. The voice flute presents an acoustic problem. There's nothing neat and tidy about how you make it play. Tenors are by comparison easier. Maybe it's because of the key, and the bottom hole can be placed lower down the bore. The original voice flutes have a limited range, and we want them to play the full 2 octaves plus, so maybe we're asking more of that model than it has to offer.

GL Each original has a slightly different voicing. For instance, I've noticed that with the Steenbergen model, the roof (or ceiling; see the cross-section of the headjoint in Figure 2) of the windway has much more curvature than other designs. It seems to be intentional and gives that model its unique voice.

What is involved in voicing?

PvH Broaching (cutting) the windway, fitting the block, carving the window and labium, and adjusting the chamfers at the end of the windway, and controlling relationships of these elements for optimum performance, and polishing surfaces.

GL Recorder voicing is like a person walking around in a topographical landscape in dense fog trying to find the highest point. There's a pinnacle somewhere that represents optimum voicing. There are many characteristics you can change (windway dimensions, shape and angle, chamfer sizes and angles, edge position and shape). In a landscape you can walk in any direction, but the only way to tell if you are approaching the pinnacle is to check your altimeter. The only way to check where you are with voicing is to play the recorder and see how it sounds. You can't see the peak from afar; to find it you have to go there. And there are cliffs that you can go over from which you can't recover. To complicate matters, the pinnacle may actually be a ridge that has multiple optimum points, and each different model has a different topography. As I have gained experience in voicing, I have learned the general lay of the land – or what direction to go in to achieve the characteristics I want in the sound. In the end, good voicing really can only be learned by the experience of doing it.

How personal is voicing? Are there different schools of thought?

EH So many factors affect the timbre and response of the recorder that it isn't surprising that instruments by different makers sound quite different. Different models have different characteristics as well. A maker may prioritize a booming bottom register, or a pure timbre without overtones, or a rich, complex sound with lots of overtones, or a clear, singing top. Not every style of voicing appeals to, or even works for, every player.

> Voicing is the shaping of the windway so that the air travels through to the lip with maximum effect to produce the desired sound quality and response.

PvH Oh, yes, voicing is very personal, depending on playing styles and performance needs. Does one try to emulate the playing characteristics of an original instrument, or modify the instrument for modern requirements? Usually it's a compromise between these two ideals.

ML For me, Fred Morgan and Bob Marvin got the voicing of their instruments exactly how they wanted it, and were consistent about it. That's amazing because it's more an art than a science. At least with Marvin, whom I visited while he was working on an instrument for me, voicing is done as much by eyeball and feel as calculation and measurement. But Morgan and Marvin were craftsmen who worked as individuals and dedicated their energy to each instrument in turn, rather than a large outfit work-

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1: Patrick von Huene carving the window of a Denner recorder. (Photo Emily O'Brien)

ing on batches at the same time. That is not to say that a larger workshop can't make recorders with excellent voicing, but I've just noticed that there may not be as much attention to detail, or consistency from one instrument to another, from larger companies. Some makers have been able to incorporate machines to help with standardization, but even with precision machines, there's still that final 2% that makes all the difference, and that has to rely on hand finishing by a master builder. Another difference is that when you buy an instrument from a small workshop, there is a greater chance that the recorder has already been played and tested thoroughly. A larger workshop doesn't have the time to do that for every instrument.

GL I have followed in the footsteps of David Ohanessian, Bob Marvin and Tom Prescott, and as an engineer, I am still amazed that modifications below the level of measurability can have a significant impact on the way the instrument plays. Furthermore there are some voicing changes which I would have expected to have major impact but in fact have very little, while other seemingly minor adjustments can result in a major change to the voice of the instrument.

> Resistance is important for musical playing, in fact I would say that it is a necessary component of voicing, as good voicing helps give you more control over dynamics, pitch and tone color.

NR I believe that the voicer has to make choices that will serve the needs of the professionals. The instruments have to work, but they must have as much of the original soul of the instrument as possible. Even if it has a lovely tone and can play loudly, if the voicing diverts from the original sound then it is not correct and has missed the mark. I really try to balance these things out, and my goal with voicing is that it is comparable to the original instrument that it's modeled after. My ideals are based on years of acquired knowledge and experience, combined with Fred Morgan's guidance and advice, and what I desire as a professional recorder player.

Players develop personal preferences for voicing influenced by what they play, but also where they play. Soloists who play in large concert halls want something different from players who dedicate their artistry to consort performance in smaller venues. Some also find that climate plays a part. A recorder's voicing is very sensitive to changes in humidity, temperature and atmospheric pressure. What will function in a dry summer might get congested and become unresponsive in a damp winter. An expert voicer will take these factors into consideration, and most agree the best way to do that is to "blow in" the instrument.

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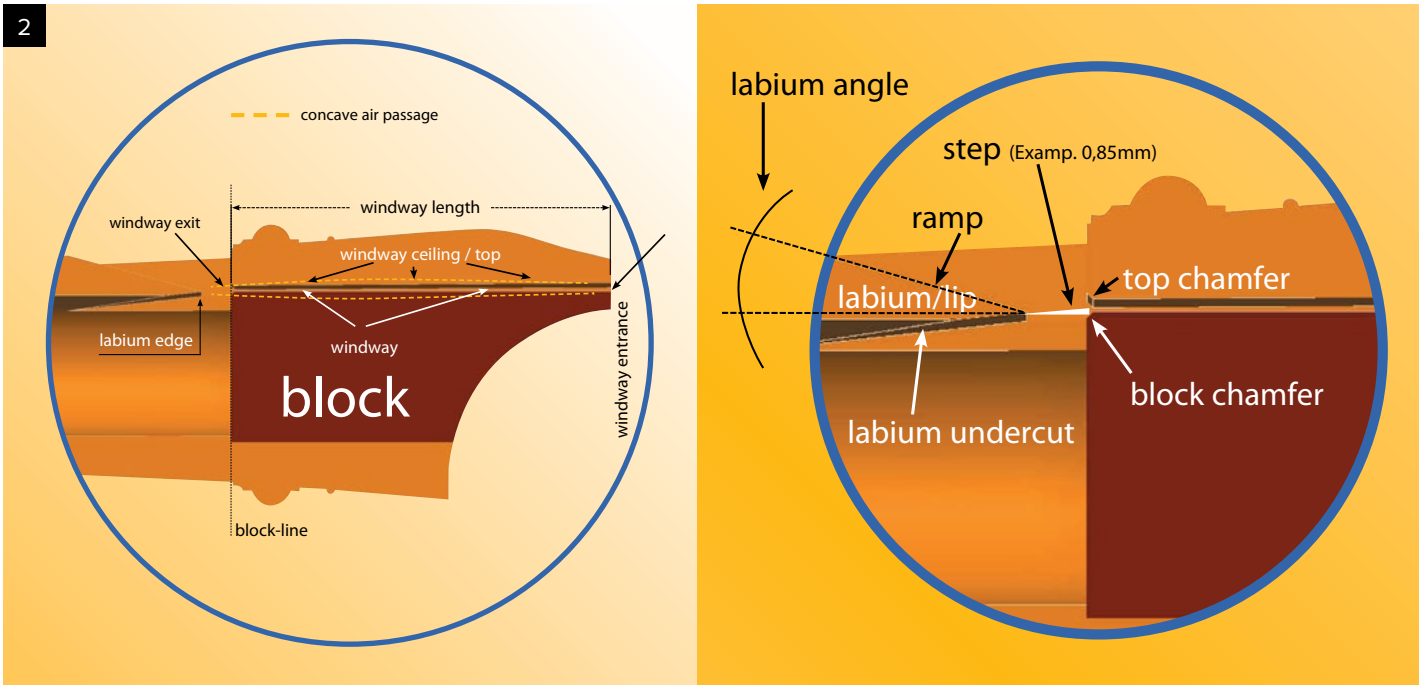

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2: Detail of recorder voicing from "Parts of the Recorder" by Mollenhauer. (Reproduced with permission. Visit Mollenhauer.com.)

NR Voicing also has a lot to do with how much the player wants to play the instrument. A narrow windway won't accommodate hours of playing in the same way as a wide windway. I think of one hour continuous playing as a standard. I adjust my voicing for players who require more sustained use. Climate also plays a big part. For instance, a voicer has to predict how the wood will respond to being played in environments with greater or lesser humidity than the maker's workshop.

Voicing requires an exacting knowledge of acoustics, a refined ear, advanced recorder technique or a master-player collaborator, and an understanding of the materials and how they will behave over time.

ML There can be disagreements over voicing style. A current trend seems to be towards louder voicing, and possibly a little less refined tone. Ernst Meyer (1954–2016) developed a style of voicing with a much larger windway that is very popular with younger players. (Meyer's son Joel is continuing with production.) In my personal experience, this style of recorder can sound loud and a bit brash up close, but at a distance they are very good.

I like to have a recorder that sounds good to my ear as I play, and something that I can play against. Resistance is important for musical playing, in fact I would say that it is a necessary component of voicing, as good voicing helps give you more control over dynamics, pitch and tone color.

NR Builders and voicers tend to work for a customer group with similar taste. These customer groups are self-selecting.

A recent trend in recorder making is to voice instruments for maximum volume so that they can hold up against a symphony orchestra (recorders from the workshop of Ernst Meyer are an example), but to my taste, these instruments depart too much from historical models, and do not have the same possibilities for subtle gradations of tone, "intimate" effects, and articulation. If you're going to "re-invent" the recorder for modern purposes – and there are some very good instruments like this out there, such as Adriana Breukink's Eagle model – then just don't advertise it as a historical model!

What does revoicing entail?

EH Changing or correcting the voicing affects how the recorder sounds and speaks. It does not change the overall tuning or the pitch of individual notes. In rare cases, "opening up" the voicing may allow the player to blow a little more strongly, perhaps raising the pitch.

PvH It's a "tune-up" to restore tone, response, and articulation to optimum performance. It's NOT adjusting intonation or tuning. At von Huene, we start by removing the block, cleaning the surface of the block and the windway, and making small adjustments so that the airstream intersects the labium at the height and angle that produces the best possible sound. We may also refinish the windway and/or scour the bore of the recorder and oil, depending on what's needed. Of course, when deciding what's possible one has to keep in mind the quality of the instrument to begin with: you can't make a Ferrari out of a Rambler.

ML There have certainly been changes in taste over the years. Before makers had contact with historic instruments, most recorders had straight, large windways. That's how the Dolmetsch instruments of the 1960s and 70s were made. It was the state of the art of the day, but the tone is terrible: noisy, and you feel like you are blowing a lot of air for little return in sound. That all changed when Frans Brüggen started to play

original recorders; but it's also really interesting that before that, Arnold Dolmetsch had made much more historical-style recorders with more historical voicing. I own soprano no. 167. It has Baroque fingering and single holes. It has a very focused clean tone.

How do I know if my recorder needs revoicing?

PvH All recorders will need cleaning and/or revoicing with use, time and environmental exposure. Usually the first sign is that something has changed, and not for the better: sluggish response, weak bottom and/or top register, excessive clogging, scratchy, "tinny" sound from the outset of playing.

The parameters that affect the voicing are very delicate and critical for the best outcome. Most people do not realize how dangerous a do-it-yourself job can be. To paraphrase the British recorder builder Tim Cranmore, revoicing is major surgery, and can be fatal. Internet advice should be taken with great caution: once the wood is altered or taken away, it's almost impossible to return the recorder to its original state. It's best to call a qualified recorder professional for advice at the very least.

GR If your instrument sounds thin and tight, or hollow and airy, or if your high notes are crankier than usual, or if your lowest notes are weak, you may need a revoicing. Keep in mind that improving one end of the range can come at the expense of the other – it's a trade-off.

ML If you are an experienced player and know your instruments well, it will be clear when the tone or response gets worse on your recorder. A raspy sound, especially on high notes is something easy to notice. Sometimes you can see that things are wrong. If the end of the windway and the edge are not parallel, you know that the instrument will not play well. Also if you can't see the edge or the edge is very high in the wind channel when you look down it, there can be problems.

EH If you feel the sound and/or response of the instrument has changed/deteriorated – the sound may become stuffy or "hoarse," some notes may be slow to speak, especially in the extreme high or low registers – the instrument may benefit from revoicing.

ML I had a really beautiful soprano, and after playing it for about 8 years, it was starting to get stuffy. What happens is the block swells with the moisture from being played. I had it revoiced, and even though it was very good, I felt that it lost something of its original magic. So there can be compromises and when possible I would have recorders voiced by the original maker.

> The biggest challenge with voicing is to find balance between the registers.

How important is it to get the instrument revoiced by the original maker?

PvH That is a delicate question. Ideally a recorder should be revoiced by the original maker or by a trained and qualified recorder maker, but that is not always possible or practical. Most commercial makers in the E.U. have authorized repair agents in the U.S. and U.K., so that you don't need to send your recorder back to Germany or Switzerland to be revoiced. Sometimes these technicians have years of experience and are well-regarded makers on their own. It is not uncommon for a customer to comment that the Moeck recorder revoiced by me sounds better than it did when it was new. On the other hand, if you have a high-end recorder from a maker whose work you like and respect, it makes sense to either send it to them for revoicing, or ask if there is anyone they would recommend.

GR I usually go to Patrick von Huene for all of my revoicing and repair needs. He made many of my instruments, although I also own and bring to him many other instruments that I own from European or Canadian makers. Patrick is a true master at this, and I would rather be present in person while he does the work than ship my other instruments interna-

RESOURCES:

- Tom Prescott, "The Recorder Windway Demystified" / **AR Summer 2016: https://americanrecorder.org/docs/ARsum16body.pdf**
- Barbara Prescott, "Keep your wooden recorders happy": **https://americanrecorder.org/care_of_your_wooden_recorder.php**
- Patrick von Huene, "Care of Your Plastic Recorder": **https://americanrecorder.org/care_of_your_plastic_recorder.php**
- How do I know when my recorder needs revoicing? **ARS Nova November 2020: https://myemail.constantcontact.com/How-do-I-know-when-my-recorder-needs-revoicing-.html?soid=1102285871582&aid=7OLysFrRLIs**
- Maintenance, and cleaning the block: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TE9ZelzviJs**
- Vicki Boeckman, "A Visit with Recorder Builder Nikolaj Ronimus" / **AR Summer 2022: https://americanrecorder.org/docs/ARsum22_body.pdf**

tionally to their makers, who do not know how I blow and who will do the work without my being there. That said, when I happen to be nearby, I will bring my instruments to their makers for work.

NR As well as making my own recorders, and voicing the instruments for the Morgan workshop after Fred died, I revoice instruments by many other makers. With revoicing, the bore and tone-holes are set, and so it is more a matter of making the best of the instrument as it is. I start by examining exactly the model I'm dealing with and if it is a historically based instrument, what original it was based on, and how did the maker adapt the design? Has it been changed in length, or the bore changed? Are the tone holes comparable in size to the original? This information informs what is possible with the voicing.

It is also important to talk with the player. What are they seeking? Some will request the voicing to be brought back to where it was when the instrument was new. Others want it changed: something that comes with the risk of altering the instrument so much that it will not be recognized by the maker. Some years ago David Bellugi asked me to do a radical revoicing of his Bressan alto by Tom Prescott. I told him that Tom might not appreciate the result! But when Tom played the instrument later on, he was really happy with what I had been able to do, and that led to an amicable exchange of experience.

Can plastic recorders be revoiced?

ML Why bother? Just buy a new one!

EH ABS or PLA (molded) plastic recorders cannot be revoiced, nor do they need to be as the plastic does not change or shift with exposure to moisture and changes of climate

PvH The head-joint of plastic recorders can be washed with warm soapy water and rinsed in clear water. DO NOT USE ANY SOLVENTS as they may melt the plastic.

Any general advice?

PvH If you have a problem or concern about your instrument, it's best to call a qualified professional for advice. Playing a well-regulated instrument should bring you joy, not frustration. The von Huene Workshop is the authorized North American repair agent for most European manufacturers.

TP Now that I am retired, I will still revoice my instruments, but I'm only going to accept one per week when I'm available. Otherwise, I recommend contacting the von Huene Workshop.

GR One other thing to know: sometimes, your recorder is just dirty and doesn't need revoicing at all. If you are confident taking out the block, you can clean it quite effectively yourself using peroxide and dish-washing detergent. There are good videos of this process posted on YouTube by various makers, including Tom Prescott. If you are not confident doing this yourself, you can send it to a reputable maker and ask for a cleaning AND/OR revoicing. They will always clean it before doing any additional work. If the cleaning fixes the issues you are having – and you should be quite specific about what is wrong – don't insist on a revoicing too. There is always a slight risk that it will make things worse rather than better. Reserve revoicing for when your instrument really needs it.

ML To produce a fine recorder, voicing is only half of the equation. There has to be acoustic matching between the voicing and the bore. Tuning is something else. That is a matter of the hole placement and size, undercutting, and bore. But the distinctive tone of an instrument is a combination of voicing and bore.

PERFORMANCE PERSPECTIVE

RECORDERS IN ORCHESTRAS

RACHEL BEGLEY

Rachel takes us into the performance space, onto the stage and behind the scenes as she explores the inclusion of recorders in orchestras

Rachel Begley is a recorder professional based in New York, where she has performed on recorders with numerous orchestras, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, American Classical Orchestra, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, Bach Vespers, Early Music New York, New York City Opera, New York Collegium and Little Orchestra Society. She also performs on recorders and historical bassoons with early music ensembles and presenters across the country including Newberry Consort, Apollo's Fire, Tempesta di Mare, Dallas Bach Society and the Boston Early Music Festival. In addition to early music, her recordings also include soundtracks for a number of movies and TV shows, including productions by Disney, Warner Brothers and Showtime. Rachel is the Founding Music Director of the North American Virtual Recorder Society (2021–2023), and she has served the Recorder Society of Long Island as its Music Director since 1994. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in recorder and early music from SUNY Stony Brook, and has been a visiting scholar at the Early Music Institute at Indiana University. In addition to giving lessons and coaching ensembles as part of her active studio, she particularly enjoys leading ARS chapter playing meetings and teaching at workshops across the country.

In 2022, internationally renowned conductor Harry Bicket was in New York to conduct Handel's Rodelinda *at the Metropolitan Opera. Bicket was happy to share his thoughts and ideas about recorders in the orchestra, and in Handel operas in particular, not only from a historical perspective but also from a practical contemporary one, and this article was inspired by our fascinating conversations. Additional viewpoints emerged from my North American colleagues, and I am grateful to Nina Stern, Gwyn Roberts, Frances Blaker, Vicki Boeckmann, Sarah Davol, Jeffrey Grossman, Allen Hamrick, Jeanine Krause, Paul Leenhouts and Kathryn Montoya for generously sharing their personal insights. This article has been greatly enriched both by the breadth of their knowledge and by the range of their lived experiences.*

Perhaps this has happened to you: you're at a performance or you're listening to a recording or live broadcast, you hear the orchestra playing, and then suddenly you recognize the magical sound of recorders… It's a special thrill for audiences everywhere, especially for recorder enthusiasts. And yet it's a fairly rare one.

The Audience's Experience

If you ask a dozen recorder professionals what special quality the sound of the recorder brings to the orchestra, you're likely to hear the word "unique" from almost all of them. The recorder's tonal quality is strikingly different from that of any other wind instrument, having greater precision of attack than a transverse flute, and greater fluidity of airflow than an oboe. The recorder's tonal clarity gives it a special presence in the orchestra, its sound carrying much further than its decibel level would suggest. The recorder adds a glow or a sheen to the string section, and has a visceral effect on both listeners and players. Its clear timbre, similar yet so different from that of the flute, captures the essence of what some describe as "purity."

The recorder has been used to great effect by composers since the first orchestras were put together in the late 17th century. The sleep scene from act 3 of Lully's *Atys* (LWV 53, 1676) is famous for the beautiful writing for an on-stage consort of recorders and lutes. To create a varied palette of soft textures in his oratorio *La Resurrezione* (HWV 47, 1708), Handel called for his wind players to use a variety of instruments: not only alto recorders (with muted violins), but a solo traverso (with gamba and theorbo) as well as unison recorders with a muted oboe. As you might expect, the recorder vanished from orchestras in the later part of the 18th century, reemerging again in the 20th. Recent examples include the scores to the *Harry Potter* movies, which feature a range of recorders, and the soundtrack for *Star Wars: The Mandalorian*, which features a bass recorder.

Whatever the music, the inclusion of recorders in the orchestra is almost always there for a specific reason. Historically the instrument was used in both sacred and secular music to represent birdsong and associated pastoral imagery, to enhance the flowing lines of musical images of water, and in sleep scenes, as well as to symbolize themes as diverse as death, the supernatural, and love, both erotic and divine. The recorder's magic enthralls us, inspiring us to listen to these special moments with close attention.

Though we hear recorders in modern works, this article focuses on Baroque scores. Here, recorders appear most commonly in pairs, with the usual instrument being the alto. That's not to say that they are always heard in pairs, or that other sizes don't appear. Handel used a sopranino to great comedic effect in the aria "O Ruddier than the Cherry" for bass soloist (the monster Polyphemus) in *Acis and Galatea* (HWV 49, 1718), and Purcell included a trio of recorders with a "bass flute" (either bass or possibly great bass recorder) in his *Ode to Saint Cecilia* of 1692 (Z 328). Voice flutes (tenors in D) are often heard enriching French Baroque music. And smaller recorders are often added for extra brilliance, doubling other parts at an octave or even two higher.

During the Baroque period, unless the music was antiphonal, recorders usually played together: in unison, in harmony (thirds and sixths), and in imitation, sometimes in concert with the rest of the orchestra, and sometimes as soloists. It is when they emerge from the orchestral texture, that recorders can create an instant mood shift through their symbolic associations, and their appearance enhances the musical drama. Recorders can also be used to give a specific color and focus to the overall sound of the orchestra, without standing out from it. They can add a richness or brilliance from both within and above the orchestral sound, yet are truly audible – and magical – only when the music and the performers allow them to be.

The Player's Experience

One of the greatest differences between orchestra playing and that of the soloist or chamber musician is the necessity to be a team player. Orchestral playing demands the discipline to serve as part of a larger musical entity, and the flexibility to be simultaneously consummate team player and expressive soloist. Within the orchestra, there are sectional teams: the winds, the strings, the continuo and so on. Within each of these sections there are yet further teams: for the winds these teams include the oboes, the flutes, the recorders. These teams commonly, but by no means exclusively, feature pairs of instruments, with the principal or first generally playing the higher notes and the second playing the lower.

Understanding the difference between these two roles is critical, says Nina Stern, and is very different from other ensemble playing such as consorts and chamber music, where independence and individuality are valued. In the orchestra, the principal player takes responsibility for both the intonation and the artistic decisions of the team (including overall pitch and the tuning and color of specific notes, phrase shapes, aspects of breath control, resonance, articulation etc.), while the second is responsible for making the principal sound even better. This requires a different kind of listening, of feeling oneself "inside" the sound, rather than ahead of it

or outside of it, and the unity of the recorder team must be the first priority.

SOUND AND BLEND

Being able to integrate with the orchestra's sound is paramount, and having quality instruments is critical, but simply having good recorders is not enough, of course. Vicki Boeckmann stresses how important it is to know the idiosyncrasies of each instrument; how flexible to be with airflow, how each instrument behaves in different registers, how each responds to different articulations, what it takes to play every note in tune, and which alternate fingerings work with what kind of breath. All this serves to give the player the widest range of expression to enhance the performance.

In terms of technical differences in playing style, Gwyn Roberts feels that an orchestral recorder player should create a more diffuse sound than one would in other contexts. This helps the recorders blend better with one another. She also notes that it's not uncommon to be unable to hear yourself in the orchestra. She recommends practicing getting the sound you want without being able to hear it – in effect, to play by the memory of what it feels like.

Recorders are soft compared to other orchestral instruments, but Frances Blaker cautions against the temptation to play more forcefully in order to be heard. Instead, she suggests aiming for a broader, thicker sound, using the breath to create a clear, open, round and full tone. Indeed, it is that clarity of the recorder's timbre – which some call the defining feature of its musical presence – that allows the sound of the recorder to carry in even the largest halls. Simply blowing harder in an attempt to be loud creates a harsher sound that reduces the recorder's clarity, and results, ironically, in not only sounding less beautiful but in being less audible.

INTONATION

Flawless intonation has to be a priority for orchestral playing, says Kathryn Montoya, even more so than as a soloist, and the smaller the instrument, the more important tuning becomes. Having instruments at the correct temperature (not always easy to achieve, such as when playing in a cold church) is a must. Another challenge is knowing and adapting to the orchestra's chosen temperament. For some, a tuner set to that temperament is an essential practice tool to help learn where the sharps and flats sit pitch-wise, especially when mastering alternate fingerings and finessing subtle air manipulation. Having the technical ability to be both precise and flexible is critical for success when playing in the orchestra, second only to finely attuned listening skills, together with being highly responsive to the orchestra's sound.

Of all the intonation challenges, none looms larger for the orchestral recorder player than playing in *unison*. (The musical term comes from Latin "unisonus," quite literally "one sound.") Unison can be an art, a joy, and a terror – sometimes all three in the same passage! Orchestral writing for recorders will invariably include passages where the recorders have to play in unison, either with each other or with the strings, or occasionally both simultaneously.

More than anything else, it is recorder unisons that fascinate listeners. This special tonal quality is not simply a matter of two instruments matching each other, already a challenge in terms of intonation and articulation. It is about creating a special blend in the flow of the breath that merges the essence of each player's clear, steady tone into its open center. The artful submission of each player's sound (and ego) in the service of the other's allows recorders to create a distinctive orchestral color. Recorder unisons have a greatly multiplying effect, creating what conductor Jos van Immerseel describes as "not two recorders, but one GIANT flute." It is much more than a single player amplified: it has

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1: Recorders on stage from a 1992 performance of Les Arts Florissant's famous production of *Atys* by Lully. (Photo Michel Szabo)

both greater depth and more profound emotional impact.

One technique used in sound-blending is alternate fingerings (also referred to as secondary or altered fingerings). These fingerings are frequently forked, and have a different tonal quality from the standard fingerings. Often less focused, they require a different use of the breath to be in tune. When recorders play in unison, certain notes can seem extra loud and have too much presence. This is most apparent at the ends of phrases, and especially at the end of movements, where parts that have been in harmony suddenly play a single, bold tone. Unisons here can detract from, rather than add to the effect, particularly if a restrained dynamic is desired. A good solution at these points is for one player to use the standard fingering while the other uses an alternate, or even for each player to use a different alternate. The color differences knit together to produce a blend more appropriate to the context. Similarly, dynamics can be effected by the judicious employment of alternate fingerings, and their use as an expressive tool is the mark of a skilled player.

ARTICULATION

In addition to its unique tone, perhaps the greatest asset that the recorder can bring to the orchestra is an unmatched range of articulations, adding immeasurably both to the clarity of the ensemble and to the expression of musical gestures in the music. This is not only about how long notes are held, it is also about how notes begin and end. The stylish use of articulations in the delivery of notes, full of variety and nuance in the hands of a recorder specialist, can make an eye-opening difference to the music, imbuing an ordinary piece with profound pathos, sophisticated elegance, or fiery frenzy. Having an

extensive toolbox of articulations is a critical part of artistic expression for every recorder player, and even more so for those who play in orchestras, says Nina Stern. The range of possibilities – from hard, almost percussive sounds to subtle, almost imperceptible tremolos – can be huge. Articulations are not made only with the tongue, they can also be effected with the breath, by the action of the fingers, or by some combination of the three.

Many players focus their attention on beginnings, yet audiences can miss beginnings. Endings, on the other hand, are rarely missed, and so need special care. Above all, articulations need to match the style adopted by the other instruments, so if the orchestra is playing a restrained ending, use gentle articulations, alternate fingerings and a less focused airstream.

WHO PLAYS?

In the 17th and 18th centuries recorder parts were played by doublers. Most often other wind players – oboists, bassoonists and flutists – but on occasion, even string players picked up a recorder. That meant that the players were not idle as they waited for those special recorder moments. They would "play along," switching instruments according to the mood of the music, or the action on stage in an opera. Today, players whose principal means of musical expression is the recorder, who bring a heightened virtuosity, organic fluidity and subtlety to their performances, are much more common than they were historically, and listeners should consider themselves extra fortunate to have the opportunity to hear the sophistication and brilliance that these specialist musicians can add.

Doublers are often experienced orchestral players who bring along an array of essential skills that may be less developed in recorder specialists. What doublers may lack in technical tools for creating rich and nuanced interpretations and for elegantly executing virtuosic passages they make up for as team players, with experience "reading" music directors, and seamlessly fitting into the bigger picture.

Quite apart from the need to keep instruments at playing temperature so that entrances are perfectly in tune, switching from one instrument to another isn't always easy, and not just because of the speed at which it must often be done. The use of both the air and the tongue is very different on each wind instrument, while the fingering systems are close enough to cause confusion – and that's without including alternate fingerings. It all takes practice.

PART OF THE MACHINE

Being clear, accurate and artistic even while playing as part of an orchestral "machine" is the goal of the orchestral recorder player. In developing that artistry, cultivating a sense of sound quality is essential. Sound quality can originate with the breath, from the fingers, and from the tongue, but it also requires the use of the imagination to audiate the desired sound. Audiation ("visualizing" sound by hearing notes ahead of time) gives the brain time to explore the range of technical options, and the soul confidence to ensure that the music is being communicated to both players and listeners. In spite of its limited dynamic range in terms of decibels, the recorder does in fact possess a palette of dynamics, albeit a subtle one, one that uses color variations (through the breath, tongue and special fingerings) to create that canny illusion of varying degrees of loud and soft.

In addition to implementing these technical aspects of expression, conductors may be willing to encourage ornamentation. Often, however, this doesn't get explored due to time constraints, or other priorities like ensemble precision or a perceived need for restraint. Ornamentation can be as subtle as a shimmer of vibrato to add shape to a phrase or as bold as decorations to match those of the diva's cadenza. Each of the conductors interviewed for this article said they encouraged musicians to add spontaneous embellishments for the most exceptional moments.

The Orchestra's Experience

The goal of every orchestra is to make beautiful music together, and that is no different when recorders are included. Orchestras rarely function well without a director of some sort, whether conductor, continuo player, concertmaster, and the key to successful integration of recorders into the orchestra is communication. When musicians get the most out of the conductor, the conductor gets the most out of the musicians. Harpsichordist and conductor Jeffrey Grossman thinks of recorders as a special orchestral flavor – a spice that elevates both the music and the ensemble. As with any precious resource, the recorder should be used wisely. Conductors should have high expectations of the expressive capabilities of recorder players, and be curious to seek the full range of orchestral colors. They should not only be inventive, but, more importantly, be guided by the expertise of the players to explore possibilities, whether regarding the selection of instruments, the shape of phrases, the choice and range of articulations, the use of dynamics, or other expressive techniques. Decisions must also be made in context: whether it is for live performance or a recording, whether a staged or unstaged work.

SOFT BUT NOT COMPLAINING

By far the greatest issue faced by recorder players in the orchestra is balance. Sometimes problems arise from the instruments being used, at

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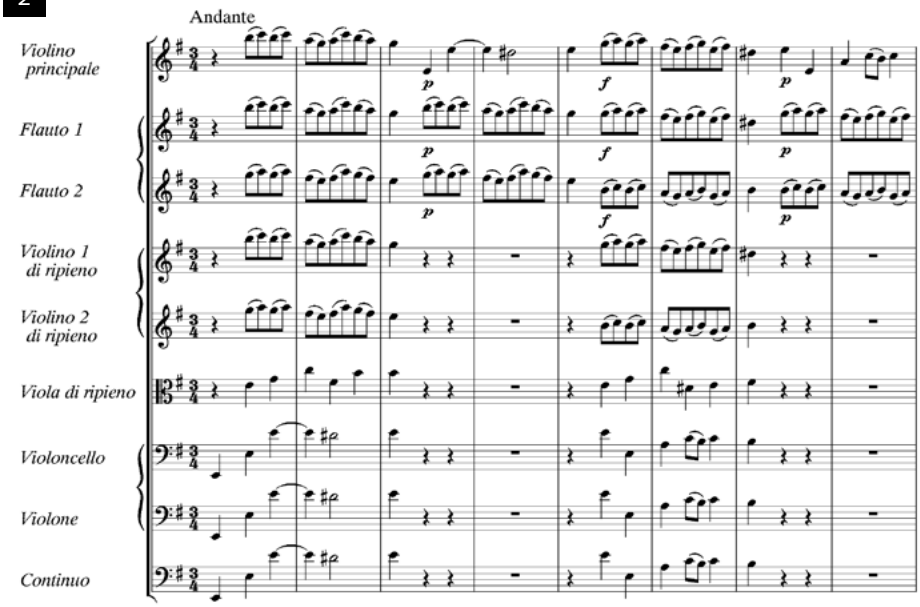

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2: Andante from J.S. Bach Brandenburg Concerto IV, showing piano markings.

others from the player's technique. The venue can complicate matters, both musically and acoustically, and positioning the recorders in the orchestra can make a huge difference. Expectations are often set by recordings where clarity and balance of all the parts has been carefully managed. Live performance brings with it many advantages over recordings, of course, but perfect balance is rarely one of them.

What makes the biggest difference to balance is the orchestra itself. Conductor Harry Bicket believes that "the sound of the recorder is already perfect," and insists that its volume is a key ingredient of its color. Nurturing the recorder's sound – not only its lower decibel level but also its more limited range of dynamics – within that of the orchestra becomes the responsibility of both the conductor and the string section. Regardless of whether he is directing modern or Baroque instruments, Bicket works to fit the orchestra *around* the recorders, rather than simply adding recorders to the orchestral mix. Creating a string color that allows the string players to hear the recorders is the first step. There are a number of options for reducing the presence of the string sound. The most obvious is simply for the whole section to play softer; using fewer players can also be effective, as can using mutes, though that creates a different kind of softness.

Musicians today can easily be misled when they encounter dynamic markings in Baroque scores. These markings are very often not an instruction of *how* to play at these places, but rather information about what is going on in the rest of the ensemble: *description, not prescription*. The piano markings in the second movement of Brandenburg 4 are not telling the recorders to play softly (after all, they will never be loud!). Rather, they indicate that the sound itself will be soft, as at that point the only instruments playing are the solo recorders and violin.

Another factor in ensuring the audibility of the recorder parts is their placement within the orchestra. Back in 17th-century France, recorders usually appeared on stage during opera performances where they could be seen and heard, but where they were quite apart from the body of the orchestra. Today there is no standard place for them to sit or stand within the orchestral context. Sometimes they are placed with the other winds, at others close to the strings. Often they are behind the orchestra, where there is the risk of being out of time and out of tune with the rest of the band. However, this can work if the recorder players can see the concertmaster's bow or the conductor (if there is one), and hear the bass section. Some players prefer to be central, some at or close to the front, some elevated. Much depends on the musical context. In modern opera houses, players are often confined to the pit below the stage. The players may be able to hear themselves, and see the conductor and concertmaster, but they may not be able to hear the singers. In cantatas where recorders have obbligato parts, performing from a more prominent position, perhaps central or at the front, means they are seen as well as heard, which makes for a more rewarding experience for the audience.

WHAT TO PLAY?

The question of where to add recorders in addition to the places where they are specified in the score often arises. The players are present, after all, so why not use them? Recorder players can be overly enthusiastic about playing as much as possible when given the opportunity, but it's important to reserve the distinctive sound of recorders for special moments, rather than have them be part of the general orchestral color. Their uniqueness is their superpower: small but mighty!

Both in the 17th and 18th centuries and today, recorder parts are often included in the oboe "book," and

the contents of that book should be thought of as music for a versatile wind player rather than just oboe music. For any given moment, the player selects the most appropriate instrument. There should always be a reason for choosing the recorder! When exploring places to add recorders, key is definitely a factor. Recorders sound better in flat keys; flutes sound better in sharp keys. In addition to ensuring the recorder's tone enhances the overall orchestral effect, it's also important to pay attention to the affect, and to select moments that will be enhanced by the recorder's characteristics. Recorders can really make the orchestra shine when added to dance music for extra color, playing either in unison with the violins or an octave or more above them, but that magical sheen can lose its charm if heard too often.

Making Performances Happen

Audiences love to hear the sound of the recorder in the orchestra, especially when it transforms the ensemble's sound to create a distinctive mood. After performances, audience members will often share with the players how special it was to hear the recorder; how its *extra*ordinary sound emerged from the ordinary sound of the orchestra, and some even recount feelings of nostalgia and pleasant associations that were evoked by the presence of the recorder. How wonderful to hear this appreciation! Clearly the recorder adds something very special for these listeners.

Performances don't happen, though, without people working behind the scenes. Often the person who will direct the performance, be it for the stage, the church or the concert hall, will be directly involved in the hiring of musicians, though sometimes a contractor or administrator is entrusted with that task. Hiring a recorder player might seem to be a fairly simple task – and it usually is for most other instruments – but there can be complications.

First of all, there is the issue of identifying recorder parts in the music. In the 17th and early 18th centuries, *flute* and *flauto* usually meant recorder – and alto recorder at that. When a transverse flute was required, *flauto traverso* (or some variant) was used. This can be a potential source of confusion, and while the French term *flûte à bec* and Italian *flauto dolce* clarify this, these fuller names appear less frequently.

Secondly, there is the composer's intent to be considered, as well as the practice of the musicians at the time and in the location for which the music was created. This is particularly true of Bach's cantatas, where the recorder parts might be in a different key from the other instruments. While these days the optimum choice of instruments and the key are generally agreed upon, this knowledge does not necessarily filter through to those contracting the musicians. In addition to hiring a suitable player, it's also necessary for that player to have the appropriate instrument(s) at the required pitch. Sourcing rarer sizes and pitches of recorders can be problematic, even for those players with extensive collections, and it's frustrating for all concerned when these issues aren't addressed well in advance of the first rehearsal.

Thirdly, it is essential to cast the recorder parts well. To contribute to the special quality of the music, special players are required. They should be on a par with the rest of the ensemble, equal in artistry, execution and reliability. Those trained specifically as recorder players are the ideal choices, but compromises are often made. Players who are "good enough" (and sometimes not), who don't detract from the sound of the rest of the ensemble, get selected in place of specialists on a regular basis. This can be both frustrating and disheartening for musicians and audiences alike.

RESOURCES:

- *The Birth of the Orchestra: History of an institution, 1650-1815* by Neal Zaslaw and John Spitzer (Oxford University Press, 2004; also available as an e-book from various sources).
- David Lasocki's two books – *Marc-Antoine Charpentier and the Flûte: Recorder or traverso?* and *Jean-Baptiste Lully and the Flûte: Recorder, voice flute, and traverso* – detail the presence of recorders in music by two important French Baroque composers; his *Not Just the Alto* is a comprehensive chronicle of the use of recorders of different sizes in the Baroque period. Available as e-books from **www.instantharmony.net**
- Richard Harvey talks about recording one of the themes from the Harry Potter movies: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0_GqZcbwKE**
- To learn to play the Hedwig's theme, see Sarah Jeffrey's video: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C04X9svdhVo**
- Composer Ludwig Göransson describes how he came to use recorders in *The Mandalorian*: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQIcZbzr9Wk**
- An article about the Yamaha bass recorder used in *The Mandalorian*: "The Bass Recorder Takes Center Stage" by Rich Tozzoli **https://hub.yamaha.com/winds/wood/bass-recorder/**
- The sleep scene from *Atys*: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlMpwSu3K4E**

The Value of Recorders

By enhancing exceptional moments in the music, recorders bring value to the work of an orchestra, but perhaps the biggest obstacle to our hearing recorders at all, let alone players who bring both flexibility and nuance to enhance the artistry of the orchestra, is the budget. Often there are simply no funds available for extra players, so doublers are used. Doublers are usually paid extra for this additional work, but that is not a given. Sometimes the recorder parts are handed to other instruments or omitted altogether. Sadly, such artistic compromises, made for the sake of money, happen all too often.

For recorder professionals these cuts hurt both financially and artistically. But it isn't just the players that lose out. Orchestras lose the opportunity to experience the expansion of their sound palette with the addition of this unique color. More importantly, audiences are deprived of the recorder's other-worldly magic, of its subtle yet extremely varied means of expression, and of the dramatic impact it can have on the overall performance.

To hear such variety and subtlety in the expressive and sensitive playing of those who have devoted their creative energies to the recorder is an experience few music lovers, especially recorder enthusiasts, would want to forgo. In the words of recorder professionals across North America: "Find the money for recorders!" "Think of us, and often!" The latter can also be directed at composers: "Include recorders in your music!" And indeed this is starting to happen, particularly in movie scores.

For all of us, let us continue to delight in the sound of recorders in the orchestra, no matter the context, and let's encourage orchestras and large ensembles to make it happen ever more beautifully, and often.

Berkeley Festival & Exhibition 2024

Geoffrey Burgess, Gail Nickless, Kraig Williams,
Bonnie Kelly and Glen Shannon report

Beginnings and Endings. Old and New. East and West

As the final chord of Heinrich Schütz's *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* died away, the audience rose to their feet in spontaneous applause. This was not in response to a lavish production with large chorus and orchestra: there were just 8 musicians on stage at this, the last concert of the Berkeley Festival (BFX). Partnering two quartets – the West Coast Farallon Recorder Quartet and the New York-based viol consort Parthenia for a program titled "Antiquæ/Novæ" – brought home a number of themes of this year's Festival.

Consort playing is familiar to most early music audiences, so not only could the auditors appreciate the skill level of the performers, they could identify with the style of music-making. Bringing two groups from opposite sides of the continent together was also a reminder of the Berkeley Festival's national importance, and the juxtaposition of early and modern idioms was a nod to the many early music performers who have also been at the forefront of new music.

Even before the consorts entered the stage, a feeling of "belonging" had been set up by a pre-concert Sing-In. The pop-up choir of 60 singers made up of festival performers and audience members, conducted by David Morris, sang excerpts from large-scale vocal works: *Missa a 24* by Annibale Padovano (1527–75) and *Decantabat populus Israel a 20* by H. Praetorius (1571–1621).

The biennial BFX serves as a community meeting place where professionals and early music enthusiasts gather to share their talents. Artistic Director Derek Tam is to be applauded for the festival's commitment to inclusiveness, embracing international and multi-cultural elements. As well as featuring Bay-Area ensembles such as the Philharmonia Baroque, Voices of Music, Farallon Recorder Consort and the Bach Cantata Project, and featuring guest ensembles from Europe, including the Dutch vocal ensemble Cappella Pratensis, and the Italian medieval ensemble La Fonte Musica, the festival presented artists from non-European traditions.

▼
1: Testing recorders at the exhibition. (Photo G. Nickless)

Alam and Manik Khan played classical Indian music, and Trío Guadalevín integrated Mexican and Mediterranean musical cultures in their vibrant performances.

The inclusion of modern music was also a distinctive feature. The final concert included sensitive pairings of early and contemporary music, such as *Hugh Ashton's Maske* from the early 16th century with *Christe* by Fulvio Caldini (b.1959), and pieces composed by recorder player Frances Baker. This brought awareness to the modernness of early music – and the pastness of the modern.

> The Berkeley Festival serves as a community meeting place where professionals and early music enthusiasts gather to share their talents.

Surveying the Week: A Summary for Recorder Players

The spirit of bridging East and West Coasts was already set with the very first fringe concert presented by Musica Pacifica's Judith Linsenberg who welcomed Sarah Cantor from Boston in a fiery program of Baroque music for two recorders and continuo entitled "The Highest Form of Flattery…" Playing an arsenal of instruments including voice flutes, altos and transitional or Ganassi-style sopranos, the pair opened and closed the program with florid Italian 17th-century sonatas for 2 sopranos by Castello and Salamone Rossi. In between, they played trio sonatas by Dall'Abaco (1675–1742), and J.S. Bach (BWV 1028, with its amazing pyrotechnical final Allegro); the Concerto No. 4 for 2 flutes by Boismortier (1689–1755), and Sonata VI, op. 3 by Guiseppe Sammartini (1693–1750) with more sparks flying in the final Allegro. Associate artists cellist Alexa Haynes-Pilon and harpsichordist Yuko Tanaka performed exquisite solos by Marais and C.P.E. Bach respectively.

It was delightful to watch the connection and interaction among performers at the Bertamo Trio's fringe concert on Monday June 10 entitled "*Eine Musikalische Freundschaft*: Bach and his Circle of Friends and Colleagues." Letitia Berlin (recorders), Yuko Tanaka (harpsichord), David Morris (gamba) and guest violinist Tekla Cunningham made it obvious that they are not only colleagues but friends. Pieces performed included J.S. Bach's Trio Sonata in G, BWV 1039; Sonata in E minor for Violin and Basso Continuo by J.G. Pisendel, featuring Cunningham; music by Buxtehude and Telemann; and J.S. Bach's version of Concerto No. 9 from Vivaldi's *L'estro armonico*.

The following day, Letitia Berlin appeared again with the Medieval ensemble Calextone: Frances Blaker, Allison Zelles Lloyd and Shira Kammen, joined by percussionist Peter Maund. "Solatium: 14th Century Music Honoring the Cosmos" involved Letitia as vocalist and recorder player; she was also heard on the *douçaine*, a reed instrument not dissimilar to the Armenian duduk. Shira was ever the musical showman, giving little more than occasional glances to her music, and drawing the audience in. Allison Zelles Lloyd was expressive in making the 14th-century lyrics come alive.

Voice of the Viol is a viol consort and their mainstage concert titled, "Awake, Sweet Love: English Music for Voice and Viols," took place Tuesday evening. The consort, comprising Elisabeth Reed, Cristiano Contadin, Farley Pearce, and William Skeen, was joined by Hanneke van Proosdij (recorder), David Tayler (lute) and Amanda Forsythe (soprano). The concert was a mix of vocal and viol pieces by John Dowland and his contemporaries. In a wonderful pairing of pieces, recorderist van Proosdij first played the Fantasia on *Doen Daphne* written by the blind Dutch recorder master Jakob van Eyck, followed by the very piece on which the Fantasia was based, *When Daphne from fair Phoebus did fly*, an anonymous 17th-century ballad, beautifully sung by Forsythe. Other favorite and recognizable pieces were Dowland's *Can she excuse my wrongs?*, *Come again, sweet love doth now invite*, and *The Earl of Essex galliard*. The blending of instruments and voice, combined with great programming, brought the audience to their feet for a standing ovation.

◀ **2: "The Highest Form of Flattery…" Alexa Haynes-Pilon, Yuko Tanaka, Judy Linsenberg, Sarah Cantor.** (Photo G. Shannon)

◀
3: Hanneke van Proosdij and Amanda Forsythe in Handel's "Il volo così fido."

The late evening festival concert presented Alkemie on its own, performing Medieval music in "Love to my Liking: Refrains of Desire in Gothic France." The resonant acoustics of St. Mark's Episcopal Church favored the group's varied program, which employed different instruments and up to four female singers. The groupings ranged from contemplative solos to instrumental pieces (in which recorder player Sian Ricketts often switched to *douçaine*), to rousing full ensemble pieces. Especially well-received was the polytextual motet *Dieus, de chanter/Chant d'oisiaus/(In seculum)*. After a heartfelt introduction, with recorder and other instruments, voices were gradually added, winding around each other in the three simultaneous Old French texts.

A pared-down version of the Italian ensemble La Fonte Musica was one of Wednesday's festival events. While their usual forces include sackbuts and Baroque flute, this smaller group focused its program on viols and voices, performing music by the shadowy figure Antonio Zàcara (c.1360–c.1416) that ranged from vigorous to meditative, often ending in growly open fifths, perfectly tuned. Not only did the performers utilize the entire stage, but a singer also walked the entire circumference of the St. Mark's chapel during one of the last pieces, rejoining the stage singers perfectly on time and in tune.

Soloists from the Philharmonia Baroque played a program centered around three "Paris" quartets by Telemann. Stephen Schultz's traverso floated above the texture of violin, gamba, cello and harpsichord in tuneful and often virtuosic lines. The program was cleverly punctuated with works by Boismortier and Rebel to demonstrate Telemann's affinity with French music.

On Thursday morning, the Albany Consort took the opportunity to celebrate their 50th anniversary. Jonathan Salzedo led an ensemble of strings in music by Geminiani and J.S. Bach, plus the Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings by his relative, Leonard Salzedo (1921–2000) introduced as "historic music of more modern origin." To conclude, the ensemble treated the audience to an arrangement of Charles Gounod's tongue-in-cheek *Marche funèbre d'un marionette* (1879), featuring Marion Rubinstein on alto recorder.

Three fringe recitals by Baroque

▶
4: Ellis Montes demonstrating the Peruvian *quena*.

5: Flutes, and pipes played by Ellis Montes: L to R: pipe (1-handed flute played with tabor) alto recorder, Peruvian *quena*, a smaller pipe, "transitional" soprano recorder.
(Photos 2 & 3 K. Williams)

flutists almost collided, timewise, on Thursday afternoon. Coming in from her remote California woodlands home, Kathleen Kraft mesmerized an intimate audience at the Berkeley Piano Club with a program including two warhorses by J.S. Bach, both of which she told us she had worked on for the past 65 years. After an elegant performance of the solo Partita in A minor, BWV 1013, she was joined by Phebe Craig, harpsichord, and Barbara Blaker Krumdieck, Baroque cello, for the Sonata in E minor, BWV 1034, a work equally difficult for all three performers. We should all keep practicing for 65 years, to acquire such musical grace!

Down the hill in the resonant acoustics of St. Joseph of Arimathea Chapel, where even the most intimate pluck of the lute, or delicate flute note took on ravishing resonance, Nash Baroque offered "Douce Memoire: 200 Years of Love Song." Playing a flute by Boaz Berney (who was also an exhibitor), Vicki Melin shone as she adeptly mirrored the vocal lines of soprano Victoria Fraser in a *Suite de Brunettes* by Montéclair (1667–1737) with lute and gamba accompaniment.

The Peralta Consort's program "The Reign in Spain" captured some of the music that might have been heard in the courts and salons of Europe in 1724, when Louis I of Spain died just 7 months after ascending the throne. Consort director Kraig Williams played soprano and tenor recorders in a number of transcriptions. His clever arrangements emulated the original instrumentation. In the delightful *Concerto à cinq parties* by Boismortier (1689–1755), violin and soprano recorder played together to replace the oboe.

For those who had not had enough Bach, the Cantata Collective presented five concertos by the Leipzig Cantor. Brandenburg Concertos 3, 5 and 6 were interspersed with the Double Concerto for Oboe and Violin BWV 1060R (in C minor) with the Collective's founder Marc Schachman playing oboe, and his wife Linda Quan as violin soloist. Titled *A Suite of Sinfonias*, the final work on the program was a concerto reconstructed from cantata movements, featuring solo organ (replaced by oboe in the 2nd movement). Avi Stein, the harpsichord soloist in Brandenburg 5, was the dexterous organ soloist.

Vajra Voices, a women's vocal quintet led by Karen R. Clark, presented a program of sacred and secular music that embodied Medieval rhetoric expressed in song. Despite its chronological distance, the performance had an uncanny immediacy and provided an uplifting experience.

Thursday night's mainstage event featured Voices of Music in a highly energetic program of concertos and arias by Vivaldi and Handel. Not to be outdone by Augusta McKay Lodge, who gave a riveting performance of Vivaldi's technically demanding Violin Concerto RV 208 (known as *Grosso Mogul*), Hanneke van Proosdij rose from the harpsichord where she had played continuo, to dazzle the audience with a brilliant performance of Vivaldi's *Concerto per Flautino* RV 444 on her Alec Loretto sopranino recorder. She used the same instrument to partner Amanda Forsythe's agile soprano in the Handel aria "Il volo così fido" (*Ricardo* primo, 1727) as the perfectly tamed warbling songbird that returns faithfully to its nest.

"Bach Again" was Thursday's final Baroque flute program, featuring BFX perennial Peter Fisher with five early string players and harpsichordist Mardi Sicular. The Briarbird Consort's numbers were geared to play the final work, another performance of Brandenburg Concerto No. 5. The Berkeley City Club Members' Lounge resonated with nicely executed unisons between Fisher and principal

▼
6: Peter Ballinger receives Presidential Special Honor.

▲
7: Gail Nickless receives Board's Resolution.

violinist Carol Braves, breaking into harmony and then counterpoint among all ensemble members.

Saturday began with "Caîma Yyaî Jesus," a program of music from South American Missions, presented by Trio Guadalevín, with tenor David Kurtenbach Rivera, and multi-instrumentalist Ellis Montes, plus a string ensemble. The first portion featured music written in South America, but in European style. It was sweet and very simple, but gave Montes the opportunity to display his technique on soprano recorder in a *Pastoreta Ychepe Flauta* (a recorder concerto in Baroque-Galant style). In the second half the gloves came off, and the mood shifted to music with more local influences. The texts were in the indigenous *lengua chiquitana* or *bésio*, and the accompaniments featured an array of instruments, including recorders and several other types of flutes and pipes with accompaniment of special percussion and harp. The combination of two groups of musicians trained in different traditions effectively portrayed cross-cultural exchange in the Americas during the colonial era. The concert ended with the entire audience singing along, and broad smiles on all faces.

"What could be better than four recorder players?" asked by Derek Tam, as he welcomed the audience to Saturday's late-evening concert by Farallon Recorder Quartet (Miyo Aoki, Letitia Berlin, Frances Blaker and Vicki Boeckman). Their program, "Between Heaven and Earth," moved seamlessly from piece to piece, occasionally with bridges provided by one player while the others changed recorders. A particularly well-received end for the segment "From the Stars to Terra Firma" was *The Jogger*, a chiffy, jazzy SATB offering by Dick Koomans (b. 1957). The final work, Tish Berlin's arrangement of variations on *Onder een Linde Groen* (All in a Garden Green) by Sweelinck (1562–1621) mirrored much of the rest of the concert, with a simple unison melody followed by variations with contrasting instrumental groupings, rhythms and shimmering runs.

> Two groups of musicians trained in different traditions effectively portrayed cross-cultural exchange in the Americas during the colonial era.

ARS Session and the Great Recorder Relay

For many ARS members, the Recorder Relay is the highlight of the Berkeley and Boston Festivals. This is where the Society holds official presentations, and sponsors performances from its membership. This year's event, held on June 15 in the 1st Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, was preceded by a performance from the Barbary Coast Recorder Orchestra, led jointly by Greta Haug-Hryciw and Glen Shannon. The program, titled "Facets," presented music spanning the 16th to 21st centuries, and concluded with Shannon's recent *L.A. Triptych*, a work commissioned by the Los Angeles Recorder Orchestra to celebrate the musical idioms of the different cultures that make up the Los Angeles melting pot. It was a great opportunity to witness recorders of all shapes and sizes being put to use! We can look forward to the release of the video recording from Voices of Music.

Next on the agenda was the ARS award presentations. Hanneke van Proosdij received the Distinguished Achievement Award; the Presidential Special Honors Award went to Peter R. Ballinger; and Gail Nickless was presented with a framed certificate of the Board's resolution recognizing her long and valued service to the organization. For the announcements, and full text of the resolution for Gail Nickless, see **AR Summer 2024.**

Celebrations continued with 8 performances in the Great Recorder Relay, compered by Glen Shannon, who also participated in two of the ensembles, starting with the opening number – his Variations on *Happy Birthday*. The audience was treated to performances ranging from a charming rendition of Ludovico Einaudi's *Due Tramonti* by Daniel Soussan and pianist Joon Woo, to a poised Bassano *ricercata* on renaissance G alto by Susan Sugarman; duos by 16th-century masters and a Telemann

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◀ **8: The Barbary Coast Recorder Orchestra (directors Glen Shannon and Greta Haug-Hryciw at far left).** (Photos 5–7 Geoffrey Burgess)

9: A view of the exhibition.

10: Members of Parthenia and Farallon Consorts preparing to leave after final Berkeley concert. (Photos 9 & 10 G. Burgess)

sonata from Sarah Cantor and Judy Linsenberg; and a demonstration by Frances Feldon showing just how easy it is to improvise jazz on recorder.

More Than Just Concerts

At Berkeley, the exhibition and workshops are vital to the festivities. In addition to the display of recorders, *rauschpfeifen* and other assorted wind instruments that adorned the ARS table, Lazar's Early Music had a full range of Mollenhauer, Küng, Yamaha and Paetzold recorders. Also present were recorder builder Gerry Leatherman from Portand OR, flute maker Boaz Berney from Montreal, and numerous makers of harpsichords and bowed-string instruments. In addition, there were representatives from several early music associations, and plenty of sheet music, and recordings for everyone.

A Monday daytime event featured members of Alkemie leading a Renaissance music workshop. During the first section, they taught participants some common steps of the dances of the period; then participants danced while Alkemie played. In the second period, sheet music was provided for an estampie and a 3-part motet. Participants were taught, and were able to practice as a group, adding ornaments and additional musical devices such as drones to enhance the music, as was often done in the Renaissance.

Saturday morning brought an amateur playing opportunity, at the Baroque play-in led by Eva Lymenstull, who later in the summer was on the viol faculty of the San Francisco Early Music Society's Baroque Workshop. The music was suitable for all levels and all instruments and voices, with at least one participant occasionally consulting a fingering chart. Players included three with Baroque flutes, two each with recorders and sackbuts, and six playing strings down to bass. Lymenstull suggested giving attention to how text shapes music in selections like the chorale *Ein feste Burg*. She also led consort pieces by Marc-Antoine Charpentier and others. There was also a workshop for singers. Members of Cappella Pratensis led an exploration of solmization practices and Renaissance traditions of improvised counterpoint.

As you might expect in Berkeley, California, BFX has a laid-back feel. All the concerts are within walking distance of Berkeley's Collegetown, and it is not unusual to find yourself joining up with other audience members headed in the same direction. With 19 main-stage concerts, 4 special events, the exhibition, and 40 fringe concerts, it was not possible for our team to get to everything. Other events of interest included the *Messe de Nostre Dame* by Machaut performed along with chant and Propers by Chanticleer and Alkemie; and concerts addressing climate change, musical magic and mysticism.

As Tam suggested when first introducing Farallon Recorder Quartet, the only thing better than four recorder players is to add the Parthenia Viol Consort to the mix, and so ended the 2024 Berkeley Festival. After the final concert, performers gathered at The Musical Offering music store and café for a celebratory reception and final farewells, until they gather for BFX 2026.

RESOURCES

- BFX website: **https://www.berkeleyfestival.org/**
- Voices of Music: **https://www.voicesofmusic.org/**
- Some of these ideas covered in the Alkemie Workshop can be seen in the article Sian Ricketts co-authored with Beverly Lomer / **AR Winter 2023: https://americanrecorder.org/docs/202312_ARbody.pdf**.

Workshop Debrief

This summer I taught recorder in two workshops, SFEMS Baroque Workshop in San Francisco and Amherst Early Music at Union College Schenectady, NY. Workshops always inspire me. The students' passion and the dedication of wonderful directors and faculty who not only perform beautifully, but inspire the students and audiences keep early music alive in the U.S. SFEMS featured French Baroque Music and Amherst Italian and Spanish.

I have to say that the students from the two coasts are slightly different according to their experiences, but their interest and love for music is the same. I was very impressed by the quality of instruments that some of the students have. They invest in hand-made Renaissance and Baroque recorders that make their playing even more beautiful.

There is nothing better than to see students learning new ideas and implementing them in their playing. So happy that the recorder is alive at workshops all over the country!

—Cléa Galhano

Why Attend A Summer Workshop?

After the summer, some of us will come back from workshops fired with new ideas, and maybe a love for newly discovered music and techniques. Others might be envious, or just skeptical. Recorder player and inspiring pedagogue Anne Timberlake addressed some key questions about summer programs in her article "Why Attend a Summer Workshop?" published in Early Music America's E-News, June 17. Here are a few excerpts.

Why carve out a whole week of your life to attend? Is a summer workshop worth the time, travel, and cost? What do you get out of the experience?

▲ **Fountain Woods Elementary School (Burlington NJ), directed by Miriam Arbelo.** (Photos 11–13 Bill DiCecca.)

Workshops are all about making music in community. Here, even if you're playing alone, you're typically playing for others, and more often than not you're playing with them as well. There are many reasons to attend summer workshops, but one refrain I hear over and over, from students and teachers alike, is how wonderful it is to be able to connect with other lovers of early music.

For those wanting to evaluate their summer experience, or those still contemplating taking the plunge, see the full article at: https://www.early-musicamerica.org/web-articles/why-attend-a-summer-workshop/

Recorders in the Cathedral

This past spring The Cathedral Church of St John the Divine in New York City hosted a musical celebration of the three Abrahamic faiths. Local well-known professional instrumentalists performed on string, wind and percussion instruments appropriate to the Near East. Nina Stern and Daphna Mor were featured on various recorders. Nina also performed on a chalumeau, a single-reed instrument with a very mellow sound similar to the Armenian duduk. The attentive audience responded enthusiastically in gratitude for the evening's musical respite in the midst of turbulent times.

—Nancy Tooney

Piffaro Recorder Fest 2024

The Recorder Fest grew out of Piffaro's Recorder Competitions for high school performers, which they held regularly through the 2000s. This evolved into competitions for both middle and high school soloists as well as showcases for local school performing ensembles. This year's Recorder Fest, held at Philadelphia's Settlement Music School on April 13, was truly a celebration of the recorder.

For Philadelphia Recorder Society members, the day began with a masterclass by two of the Fest performers, Teresa Deskur and Sarah Shodja. Teresa explained that winning the Piffaro Recorder Competition in 2016 let her envision a career in music. She was able to share her expertise throughout the day with Fest participants during workshops and masterclasses coached by Teresa and Sarah, Priscilla Herreid, Joan Kimball and Leon Schelhase in preparation for the evening concert.

In the afternoon, students were coached by early music experts, and

the public event began with a community "play-in" led by Piffaro's Artistic Director, Priscilla Herreid. This gave some 20 players a chance to perform Renaissance music under Ms. Herreid's clear and concise suggestions, resulting in an ensemble that was not just playing notes on a page, but creating music together.

An audience of more than 100 music lovers experienced a full range of musical styles and expression, from elementary school ensemble to professional soloist in both live and pre-recorded video performances.

Prepared performances began with fifth graders from Fountainwood Elementary School, directed by Miriam Arbelo. Their poised display of traditional melodies culminated in a trio performing *The Ash Grove*. A video submission by Josselin Roger from New York followed, and her performances of Telemann and van Eyck were virtuosic. Local middle-school students Corvin Fuchs-Orsher and Clara Kersting were accompanied by harpsichordist Leon Schelhase in a Telemann trio sonata, and their collaboration was so successful they decided to continue playing together. A video submission by 13-year-old composer and performer David Brown featured his own piece, *Perseverance*, which featured modern recorder techniques as well as piano accompaniment by his brother, Jayce. The first half of the concert concluded with Virginia High School student Knox Seabolt in an expressive performance of a Quantz trio sonata with Ms. Deskur and Ms. Shoja.

Piffaro artistic directors past and present kicked off the second half with a demonstration of Renaissance and Baroque recorders. Priscilla Herreid, Joan Kimball and Bob Wiemken showed off the range of the recorder consort in both size and sound. A video performance by two Connecticut teens, Claudia Griffel and Sruthi Kommana, showed musical camaraderie in Telemann's Canonic Sonata in C Major. Knox Seabolt again took the stage, accompanied by Mr. Schelhase, in a Barsanti sonata that showcased his poise and focus. A brief technological glitch interrupted a video performance by Vinayak Vikram, but nothing could interfere with this California teen's incredible virtuosic tempo in Vivaldi's Allegro from Concerto in C minor. Next on-stage was Musica Sophia, performing on a matched set of Renaissance-style recorders by Thomas Prescott. The 6 recorder players switched instruments between their lively Holborne dances and the Isaac favorite *Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen*. A final video performance by sisters Cecilia, Agnes and Theodora Berry featured the earliest music of the night as they performed anonymous settings of *Stella splendens* and *Alle psallite cum luya* from the 14th century. To conclude the evening of joyful music making, Teresa Deskur and Sarah Shojda performed a Loeillet sonata.

—Kimberly Yocum

For more information, visit **https://www.piffaro.org/recorder-fest/**

Matthias Maute Visits Philadelphia

Last April Recorder/flute virtuoso Matthias Maute visited Philadelphia.

◀ **Mathias Maute**

He led a special consort reading session for the Philadelphia chapter featuring music from across the ages up to the present day with some of his own compositions. Two days later he gave an exciting and eclectic program entitled "Telemann: Twitter and Tweets" for the PhilaLandmarks Early Music Series on Thursday April 18 at 7:00 in the historic Powel House in Society Hill, Philadelphia.

This program featured composers as early as Guillaume de Machaut (c1300-77), to pieces by Maute himself, stressing musical conversations, both imagined and real. Quoting Maute's program note:

Telemann was one of the most inspired composers in music history, delivering high-flying music to literally all instruments. His fantasias for recorder solo are like short messages from the 18th century. I have assembled a program where these Baroque tweets are in dialogue with other composers throughout music history. Obviously, Telemann's good friend and colleague J.S. Bach can't be ignored in this fast-paced musical conversation across time and space.

The form of this program was constructed with whimsically titled subsections like "Lost Love," and "Venice of the North," with Telemann's Fantasias providing anchors for each. Maute's virtuosic compositions, along with Fermo Dante Marchetti's song *Fascination*, created lighthearted, wistful nods to the iconic composers of previous centuries like Anton Stamitz, Henry Purcell and Jacob van Eyck. Maute's charming banter wove these seemingly disparate pieces together into a technicolor musical collage.

—Margaret Humphrey

Essential Tips for Recorder Consorts
Ensemble playing, part two

WRITTEN BY LOBKE SPRENKELING

Lobke Sprenkeling obtained her Bachelor's and Master's degrees as a recorder player and theatrical performer at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and Utrecht Conservatory, Netherlands. She continued her studies at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, Spain, with a national scholarship from the Dutch Culture Fund. In 2016 she earned her music Ph.D. *cum laude* at the Universidad Politècnica de València. She also studied multidisciplinary theater from a musical perspective (Carlos III University, Madrid, and the Yale University Summer Program); her specific interest in the relationship between musician and body has led to her performing in and creating multidisciplinary works. She taught recorder at the pre-conservatory program (ages 8-18) of Conservatorio Profesional of València (2007-16), and has taught in Europe, Mexico and the U.S. (sessions with the recorder societies in Phoenix, AZ, and Seattle, WA, and for Amherst Early Music).

She currently teaches recorder at the Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid. In 2022 she released a CD and in 2023 taught at Lyon National Conservatory in France, in an Erasmus Program collaboration with recorder pedagogues Pierre Hamon and Sébastien Marq.

Info: https://lobke.world.

In the Summer 2024 *American Recorder*, we began to look at tips for playing in a recorder consort. Here are some more ideas to build on the basic skills discussed there.

Finding Your Sound: Harmonizing and Tuning

In an ensemble, each player contributes to the overall sound. Focus on blending your sound with the group, rather than standing out. Experiment with different subtle dynamics and articulations to find the right balance. Don't be afraid to listen to recordings of professional ensembles for inspiration – you can learn a lot from their sound!

There are also different general rules for different sizes of recorder. The lower the part in the score, the more you have to actively support the music and articulate the notes more separately. A bass recorder player has to imagine playing like a bassoonist or a cellist, with the musical line still connected, but the notes a bit more separated by articulation. Use something between a T and a D most of the time. If you listen to bassoon players in Baroque music, you'll understand how this works. It's not about shortening the notes or interrupting the melodic line, but about maintaining the musical line – despite separating the notes with articulation somewhat more than in the higher parts.

At the other end of the spectrum, the soprano recorder players have to float on top of the other parts. The soprano should use gentle articulations where the melody flows in stepwise movement, and control the sound so that it blends with the sound of the lower recorders.

Alto recorders normally don't have to float as much, and also don't have to focus in particular on clear articulation. Tenor recorders, on the other hand, do have to work more on articulation – not as much as bass recorders, but articulating enough that their sound does not get lost in the texture.

What we don't want to hear is a sort of "soprano solo piece" accompanied by several larger recorder sizes. Instead we want to hear a balance among all the voices. Especially in polyphonic music, where each voice is independent and equally important, we need to hear all parts equally.

No matter what size of instrument you're playing, it's important to seek "the center of the tone" using good breath control. When we no longer play alone, all of a sudden we don't hear ourselves as much as when we play on our own; we tend to blow more. But think of it like this: now you're part of one big instrument, which is the consort. If you can't hear yourself, it usually means you're doing a perfect job of blending!

Read more about breath control in my article about this subject, where I especially address the issue of the

center of the tone. ("Technique Tip: Use of Air and Breath Control, The respiratory system," AR Spring 2021.)

Exercise: Tuning SATB Recorders

Start with the recorder that you think is going to be a bit low in pitch. For example, my conservatory students have Renaissance G altos that are always low, so we take those instruments as our reference point.

The easiest method is to tune all the instruments in the same key together: C basses, tenors and sopranos; then F/G instruments (basses, altos). That allows you to tune first in octaves, then in fifths and fourths.

Work as much as possible with a stable note on your specific instrument. The most stable notes tend to be those with fingering 0123 or 012 (C and D on an F recorder; or A and G on a C recorder). One player strives to maintain the note with the tuning as stable as possible, while another fluctuates the tone (blowing more and less) to match that reference note. If you feel that you have to blow a lot to get in tune, it's a sign that the other recorder player has to lower their instrument by pulling out the headjoint a little. On the other hand, if you need to blow very little in order to be in tune, it's you who has to pull out the headjoint.

The second step is to tune C instruments with F/G instruments. You can tune in octaves, but it's also a good idea to tune a fifth apart, so a C on an alto recorder with a G on a soprano recorder. That way, both are using stable notes.

Once you're all in tune, try tuning different chords from the piece you're going to play. The final note of a piece is always a good choice.

I remember once leading a recorder orchestra of over 50 adults, adolescents and children in a summer course – all different levels, ages, brands and sizes of recorders, etc. Tuning was a big issue. Whereas with a small group, I work without a tuner in order for the players to tune by ear, here we definitely started with a tuning app. One by one, I passed by and they would tune to the app. The result was fabulous. It taught me that tuning apps can be of great help – as long as we don't forget to teach our own ears to recognize good tuning.

As recorder players, we need to know that there are several historical tuning systems, and one of those may actually work better for our instruments and a specific repertoire. In 1936, for the first time an electric tuning device was invented. It could divide the octave equally into 12 chromatic notes and indicate the exact frequency of each. Before that, tuning was done by the ear, based on specific pleasing intervals. Even so, it is interesting to know that, based on mathematics, equal tuning apparently was more common than we think.

> If you can't hear yourself, it usually means you're doing a perfect job of blending!

In the Middle Ages, the Pythagorean tuning system, used on the European continent, was based on perfect fifths, so these notes would be tuned in sequence: C-G-D-A-E, etc. The E turned out to be a really large third above the initial C. That is why major thirds were considered dissonances. It seems that the English used a different tuning system, because theirs is the only medieval music that uses the major third as a consonance.

In the Renaissance, the so-called meantone tuning was practically the opposite of Pythagorean tuning. Here, the major thirds are the most important intervals. They were played really small. When they are really in tune, you get to hear the combination (or resultant) tones – extra frequencies that sound with the two notes being played. While the major thirds were small, the minor thirds were large, and the fifths were a bit smaller than in Pythagorean tuning – all still sounding sonorous in that repertoire.

In general, when playing Renaissance music, keep in mind that you will want your major thirds to be a bit small if possible, especially on final harmonies. For more advanced players, in cases where you are playing the third, I recommend "casting some shadow" over one or two open holes next to the closed ones. Partially covering the holes helps to lower the major third a bit. Try this, even if it's only for that last chord.

When we play Renaissance music, we can keep in mind the ideas of meantone tuning. The sharps (like F#) on our recorders tend to be a bit low anyway. That also goes for notes like B on a soprano and E on an alto.

Those tendencies also fit within the Baroque tuning systems that came after meantone tuning (Valotti and Werckmeister temperaments for example). These systems are less extreme than "pure" meantone tuning. They represent the type of tuning that J.S. Bach probably used for his keyboard collection *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. By the Baroque period, even tonalities with many sharps and flats could be played without sounding horribly out of tune.

Exercise: Two players play the major third from the last chord of the Renaissance piece you're working on. The person playing the third lowers the note little by little, until you hear the difference tone – an extra frequency that's usually about two octaves below one of the two notes.

You'll hear when it's in tune: that's how low the third should be on a chord that is held.

When playing Baroque music, since our Baroque recorders are adapted to the tuning systems of those times, you don't have to alter too much in the way you play your recorder. Most importantly, when using a tuning app, use one that has historical tuning systems (for example, Cleartune, which I describe in my video, see Links of Interest below).

In short, tuning is key to a good performance – and to more joy when playing. Spend time tuning together. Stop at several chords in your piece and listen carefully to the others in your group.

Ornamentation

Adding ornaments can add depth and color to your performance. In historical music, they are really part of the music itself. Composers assumed that the player would add ornaments.

For Baroque music, it is much easier, since it's mostly about trills on cadences or passing tones (filling in by adding a note or notes between two nearby notes); the voices usually don't bother each other. Trills are often written in the score, but there is always room for more!

When playing in a group, you will want to practice simultaneous trills so that you can really move together. If several people play the same voice, you will have to practice your trills together: How long is the appoggiatura at the beginning? How slow or fast is the trill itself? and How does it end – does it just stop, or is there a turn, or anticipation of the following note?

In Renaissance music, you need to ornament with diminutions. Here you will need to decide who is adding an ornament and when, in order to avoid a chaotic clash of diminutions. Don't overdo the quantity of your diminutions: playing one part in an ensemble piece gives you much less freedom than playing than solo music.

Repertoire and Sources

There is such a huge and ever-growing number of adaptations for recorder ensemble, available in printed editions and online. It's beyond the scope of an article to make a list of the possibilities. The enormous advantage of playing in a recorder ensemble is that you can play music from the Middle Ages up to the present day in a range of styles: not only Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical, but different modern styles like blues, ragtime, pop, cinematic or experimental styles.

One easy tip: for Renaissance music, you can visit **cpdl.org** (the ChoralWiki) and search for Renaissance composers. This website houses a fantastic amount of great pieces!

For more advanced players, I always recommend searching for the facsimile (a copy of the original manuscript or historical publication). These we can often find on **imslp.org**.

Decide if you are going to work from score or parts: they are two very different experiences.

I hope that these ensemble recommendations will help you along the way!

LINKS OF INTEREST:

- Lobke Sprenkeling's website: **https://lobke.world**
- On combination tones, see the Wikipedia article: **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combination_tone**
- Using the Cleartune phone app: **www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIGMHDhqPzU**
- For more detail on tuning systems, and their history, see the series by Gustavo de Francisco in **AR Fall 2014**; **Winter 2014**; **Spring, 2015**; **Summer, 2015**
- Videos for some articles in this series: **www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag**
- This piece is part of Sprenkeling's technique series, which has progressed through individual to consort skills.
  Part 1: "Use of Air and Breath Control: The Respiratory System" / **AR Spring 2021**
  Part 2: "More on Breathing plus Posture and Hands" / **AR Summer 2021**
  Part 3: "Articulation" / **AR Fall 2021** added articulation to previous skills.
  Part 4: "A Toolbox for Coordination of Air, Fingers and Articulation" / **AR Winter 2021** covered all skills learned so far.
  Part 5: "Daily Study Habits & How to Work on a New Piece of Music" / **AR Spring 2022** applied skills in daily practice.
  Part 6: "How to Play Air and Finger Vibrato" / **AR Fall 2022** added an expressive element.
  Part 7: "How to Apply Articulations to Music" / **AR Winter 2022** Basic rules, and when to break them.
  Part 8: "How to use double tonguing and apply it to music" / **AR Spring 2023**

Music

Music with a vocal theme: Arrangements of songs, music for voice and recorder, and variations on vocal music

01	**Fantasia on "Flow my tears" of John Dowland, Op. 266a**	by Klaus Miehling
02	**Flauto e Voce: Original Compositions from the 17th and 18th centuries for voice, recorder(s), and basso continuo**	edited by Klaus Hofmann and Peter Thalheimer
03	**Chanson du Matin and Chanson du Nuit**	by Edward Elgar, arranged by Alison Cameron
04	**Country Gardens**	by Percy Aldridge Grainger arranged by Helen-Jean Talbott
05	**Motet: Cantate Domino**	by André Campra, arranged by Maurice C. Whitney

KEY: rec=recorder; S'o=sopranino; S=soprano; A=alto; T=tenor; B=bass; gB=great bass; cB=contra bass; Tr=treble; qrt=quartet; pf=piano; fwd=foreword; opt=optional; perc=percussion; pp=pages; sc=score; pt(s)=part(s); kbd=keyboard; bc=basso continuo; hc=harpsichord; P&H=postage/handling.

01 Fantasia on "Flow my tears" of John Dowland, Op. 266a

by Klaus Miehling

Edition Walhall FEA213, 2020. AATBgB. Sc 5 pp, 5 pts 1 p ea. Abt. $13.65.

www.edition-walhall.de

REVIEWED BY:
Victor Eijkhout

The lute song *Flow My Tears* (or *Pavane Lachrimae*) by John Dowland (1563–1626) is well-known to recorder players, by way of the van Eyck variations. In this instance, we're looking at a fantasia that takes the material of the song, but, rather than subjecting it to variations, shuffles it around into a long-form composition.

Composer Klaus Miehling (b. 1963) received an early music diploma in harpsichord in 1988 from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, and later his doctorate in musicology, art history and historical auxiliary sciences from the University of Freiburg. His prize-winning compositions, numbering over 1,000, include works for voice and historical as well as modern instruments.

Miehling is a freelance musician and musicologist in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany. He specializes in writing strictly late-Renaissance to early-Baroque style. In the case of this piece, it means that harmonies are traditional, but with occasional quick changes, such as from E major to G major, as happen in the music of Renaissance composers Orlando Lassus or Claudio Merulo. Thus this piece could easily fit in the repertoire of an ensemble that shies away from contemporary music.

This fantasia is of an intermediate level. The notes as such are not hard

to play – only the altos hit the high points of their range, and there are no fast passages. Ensemble playing is a little more of a challenge, if all the indicated tempo changes are to be obeyed. Also bringing out the motives of the original composition may require some attention and marking-up of the parts. Explicit emphasis on important and not-so-important notes is quite necessary. This piece runs a good 4.5 minutes without any obvious breaks, and almost without significant changes in texture. Thus there is a certain danger of it all running together into a featureless polyphonic texture.

People familiar with the original *Flow My Tears* may pick out the high points, but other listeners will appreciate some assistance from a carefully prepared performance.

Victor Eijkhout resides in Austin, TX, where he plays recorder in The Austin Troubadours. The multi-instrumentalist and composer has two titles in the Members' Library Editions. His other compositions can be found at **https://victorflute.com** and you can support his work through **www.patreon.com/FluteCore**. See and hear samples of some of the music that Eijkhout reviews posted at **www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag**.

02

Flauto e Voce: Original Compositions from the 17th and 18th centuries for voice, recorder(s), and basso continuo edited by Klaus Hofmann and Peter Thalheimer

Edition Walhall EW 1094, 1109 and 1146 (Volumes 15, 16 and 17). 2019, 2019 and 2020.
Volume 15: Alto or bass voice 2–4 recs, bc. Sc 35 pp, 3 pts 35 pp, 10 pp, 18 pp. About $29.25.
Volume 16: Soprano voice, 2–4 recs (oboe), bc. 2 scs 28 pp ea, recs pt 14 pp, bc pt 8 pp. About $27.
Volume 17: Soprano or tenor voice, S or T voice, nino/A, bc. 2 sc 31 pp ea, 2 pts 10 pp ea. About $29.

www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind.html

REVIEWED BY:
Suzanne Ferguson

These three volumes follow earlier Walhall editions of arias with recorder obbligato for various voice and recorder ranges (the most recent, volumes 13 and 14, were recently reviewed in *AR* Spring 2019). Specifically, Volume 15 presents 8 pieces for alto or mezzo-soprano (or bass) with 2–4 recorders, mostly altos, plus continuo; Volume 16 has 7 pieces for soprano with 2–3 recorders and continuo; and Volume 17 has 7 for soprano or tenor with one recorder – all alto except Matthew Dubourg's where sopranino-accompanies "The Lark's Shrill Notes."

Generally speaking, the more recorders, the easier the parts – for the instruments and for the singer. In the alto volume 15, the best-known piece is J.S. Bach's "Esurientes" (He hath filled the hungry) from the 1723 Magnificat in E-flat major, with its limpid melody and winding recorder lines. Among the others are a fairly brief communion cantata by G.P. Telemann; Henry Purcell's "Return fond Muse" from his *Birthday Ode for Queen Mary II* (1693); and an aria from Heinrich Ignatz Franz von Biber's only "opera," with ritornellos of 2 sopranos, alto, and a bass recorder (!). Several are strophic, with the recorders alternating with the voice. One I particularly liked was N.N. Liebhold's 1729 aria, "Jesu Christi teures Blut" (Jesus Christ's dear blood), in which the pleasant recorder parts collaborate with the voice.

These pieces would make good, mostly short, selections for church or school use for players and singers of modest ability. In Volume 16, I would recommend in particular Telemann's "Stehe auf, Nordwind" (Wake up, Northwind) on a text from the Song of Songs written for Pentecost (the text continues with an invitation to the Southwind to also appear). The "wafting" imitation of the winds passed between voice and recorders is charming without being difficult. Carlo Badia's "Dea volante spiega l'ale" (Flying Goddess, spread your wings) of 1699 presents a little more challenge, with its dotted-rhythm duets between the recorders, imitated by the voice. The pieces in this volume will rarely rise to show-stopper quality, but they could be fun for house-music evenings.

Volume 17, however, is a different matter altogether – both for the singer and for the recorder. The pastoral texts (secular and sacred) give full rein to the recorder's vaunted ability to imitate birdsong. The singer will likewise find opportunities to echo and imitate the recorders.

In most of the Volume 17 pieces, upper intermediate to advanced players may have to practice a bit to render their parts with the required *sprezzatura* (easy grace) anticipated in the texts and in the musical effects. Similarly, some voice training will benefit the agile passagework required of the singer. More than in the previous volumes, these arias allow the singer and the recorder to actually duet with each other, rather than being mostly alternating.

With selections in English, French, Italian and German, the singer will have diction practice as well as coloratura challenges. I would recommend this volume enthusiastically to singers and recorder players looking for fresh material for programming and just plain exuberant fun.

As usual, I admire the care with which these volumes were prepared. The notes are helpful, but not exhaustive, and the continuo realizations are reasonable for players who do not create their own. There are adequate parts (extra pages or parts when they would be convenient) and they are clearly laid out.

As someone who, in earlier years, spent many onerous hours in music libraries combing, copying and pasting from archival editions in order to have music to sing with my recorder buddy and accompanists, I would just like to give a shoutout to editors Klaus Hofmann and Peter Thalheimer, and to Edition Walhall for making these pieces so conveniently available for study and performance. ❁

Suzanne Ferguson is active as an early musician in Tucson, AZ. She served on the ARS Board in the 1980s and is past president of the Viola da Gamba Society of America.

03 Chanson du Matin

by Edward Elgar, arranged by Alison Cameron

Peacock Press P680, 2019. SATBB/gB. Sc 5 pp, 5 pts 2 pp ea. Abt. $6.50.

Chanson du Nuit by Edward Elgar, arranged by Alison Cameron

Peacock Press P681, 2019. SATBB/gB. Sc 4 pp, 5 pts 1 p ea. Abt. $6.50.

www.recordermail.co.uk

REVIEWED BY:
Bruce Calvin

Edward Elgar (1857–1934) was a British composer best known in the U.S. for the first of five *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* used in graduation ceremonies from primary schools through universities. His father was a professional violinist and organist, and the whole family was musical. Elgar was also a professional violinist, pianist, and self-taught composer of Romantic orchestral works and symphonies.

These two chansons were originally scored for violin and piano. Elgar later adapted them in an orchestrated version for a small orchestra: flute, oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 2 horns, strings and harp. They were first published in 1897 and 1899.

Chanson de Nuit, op. 15, no. 1 is considered the more profound and well-constructed of this pair of pieces. This arrangement spreads the melody line among the soprano, alto and tenor recorders, starting low in the tenor, moving briefly to the alto that is then doubled on the soprano, and back down again. While the soprano has the melody for the longest time, the players of the three parts need to know when they have the melody, as they pass it back and forth among the parts. This will allow each player to bring out the melody while they have it, but then drop back into the accompaniment role for the rest of the piece.

The playing level is Intermediate or higher; the soprano is the most challenging, going up to a high B flat and has a double sharp sign. The alto goes up to a high E and the great bass has several instances of low C sharp and E flat.

There are several places where lines double each other. The two bass lines provide a solid structure under the three upper parts. The challenge is in the many tempo changes, crescendos and diminuendos, which are more understandable if the players are familiar with the original violin and piano version.

Considered the more melodic of the

two pieces, *Chanson de Matin, Op. 15, No. 2* has become much more popular than the other chanson in this pair. The violin part is primarily carried by the soprano recorder, only occasionally shifting into the alto when the melody drops too low. The alto line varies in its role, usually joining the three lower parts as the accompaniment with occasional melodic lines that cross and interplay with the soprano. The soprano part also includes about a measure with *ossia* notes in the lower octave, if the player wants to avoid playing a high C.

Chanson de Matin would be appropriate for an Intermediate level group, with the lower three lines being very simple and the soprano line having more challenges (including high C). The great bass line would be good for a new player; this part doubles the notes up an octave, so it could be played on a regular bass in F. Both the soprano and alto lines include trills.

Each of the parts is printed on the front and back of a single sheet of paper, leading to very awkward page turns for two of the five parts. It would simplify things to make photocopies of the second page before playing.

While both of these chansons can be successfully played by just five players, they would also be effective for a larger group at a chapter meeting, where the director could guide the group through the tempo changes. Each piece is 3–4 minutes long. They would make an interesting pair in a concert program.

Bruce Calvin has reviewed videos and books for professional library publications. He is a spiritual director for people of diverse faiths; visit http://knowthatiam.blogspot.com. Having started playing recorder in college, he met with a group weekly for some years to play recorders in the Washington, D.C. area.

04 Country Gardens

by Percy Aldridge Grainger, arranged by Helen-Jean Talbott

Peacock Press P703, 2019. NinoSATBgBcB. Sc 10 pp, 8 pts 2 pp ea. Abt. $13.

www.recordermail.co.uk

REVIEWED BY:
Victor Eijkhout

Percy Grainger (1882–1961) is mostly associated with a 20th-century revival of interest in English folk music. This is somewhat remarkable considering that he was Australian-born, later taking the American nationality, and spent a lot of energy in musical experiments that completely fit the early 20th-century avant-garde. However, he is probably most famous for his *Country Gardens*, a piece he played in his piano recitals, and which also exists in a version for small orchestra. The latter is a mainstay of the school orchestra repertoire.

Arranger Helen-Jean Talbott is a composer with a lengthy acquaintance with the recorder as well as flute, having begun playing them both at age 8. In 2013 she won the recorder orchestra category in the ARS is 75! Composition Competition with a piece called *Reverie*, published in the Members' Library, **https://mms.americanrecorder.org/members/compositions/composition.php?**comp_id=104771&org_id=ARSO).

Country Gardens is based on a folk melody collected around 1900, but likely much older. It is in AABA form, lasting a good 20 seconds. So turning it into a longer composition relies very much on the craft of the arranger. Talbott here succeeds quite well, starting with how the instruments come in one after another, a feature not found in either the piano or the orchestra version. To keep the music interesting, there is a cut-time section, a phrase in triplets, and a modulation from G to C. While there are a couple of tricky notes around the modulation, on the whole this piece is well-written and quite playable. It requires at least 7 recorders, using one each of soprano through contra bass, with solo/tutti indicated if more players are employed. In all, I find this a sprightly and attractive 2.5 minute item, suitable for Intermediate level recorder orchestras.

05 Motet: Cantate Domino

by André Campra, arranged by Maurice C. Whitney

Loux Music LMP69, 2000. SATB (+vocal/harpsichord/continuo). Sc 4 pp, 4 pts 1 p ea (3 kb, 6 pp ea+bc pts). $14.95.

www.recordershop.com

REVIEWED BY:
Bruce Calvin

André Campra (1660–1744) was a French composer of operas and sacred music. In his thirties, he became the director of music at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and introduced the use of violins playing with the organ for worship services.

When he began to compose for the theater in 1697, Campra published those pieces under his brother's name to avoid issues with the church. In 1700 he gave up his church appointment and turned to writing theatrical pieces. Then in 1720 he returned to composing sacred music for the rest of his life.

Maurice C. Whitney (1909–84) was a composer, music educator and conductor in upstate New York, the

founder in 1962 of the Adirondack Baroque Consort. Whitney wrote the continuo realization as well as the recorder parts for this arrangement, which was found among his manuscripts and subsequently edited by his son, John C. Whitney (1942–2014).

The text Cantate Domino is the Latin Vulgate translation of Psalm 149, which in English begins: "Sing to the Lord a new song; Let Israel rejoice in the One who made him and the children of Zion be joyful in their King." In this arrangement, the focus is on the two voices, whether sung by sopranos or tenors, with the keyboard providing a realized continuo part. The recorder quartet is usually in a supporting role, doubling and enhancing the keyboard. However there are short sections where soprano and alto recorders substitute for the voices, playing the vocal lines on their own.

The minimum forces to perform this piece would be an ensemble of seven: 2 singers, keyboard and 4 recorders. There is a separate viola da gamba/cello/bassoon part to supplement the continuo.

The recorder parts are appropriate for Intermediate or higher level players. More advanced players could enhance the performance by developing their own embellishments as could the keyboard player.

The music is clearly printed on a heavy, ivory colored paper. The publisher provides three voice/keyboard scores, one each for the singers and keyboard player; a recorder score as well as individual recorder parts and a gamba/cello/bassoon part.

(Note: an earlier edition of this work was previously distributed by Magnamusic.)

Recordings

Alchemy and Astrology: Rarities and Surprises from British recorder players John Turner and Piers Adams

01 **Breaking Free**
Baroque Alchemy reimagines well-known music from Baroque to modern in new remixes that will inspire and challenge.

02 **Highways & Byways**
Modern rarities from British recorder player John Turner and friends.

REVIEWED BY TOM BICKLEY
American Recorder Recording Reviews Editor Tom Bickley is a multi-instrumentalist/composer/teacher in Berkeley, CA. He grew up in Houston, TX; studied in Washington, D.C. (recorder with Scott Reiss, musicology with Ruth Steiner, and listening/composition with Pauline Oliveros); and came to California as a composer-in-residence at Mills College. A frequent workshop faculty member and leader at chapter meetings, he teaches recorder at the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training; and Deep Listening for Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. His academic library career included service with the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, the National Endowment for the Arts, and California State University East Bay (as their Performing and Visual Arts Librarian). He performs with Three Trapped Tigers (with recorder player David Barnett), Gusty Winds May Exist (with shakuhachi player Nancy Beckman), and Doug Van Nort's Electro-Acoustic Orchestra, and he directs the Cornelius Cardew Choir.

01 Breaking Free

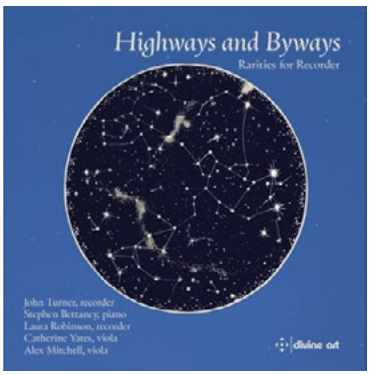
Piers Adams, known for his vigorously performative virtuosic approach to early music with his band Red Priest, joins with keyboardist Lindy Mayle as the duo Baroque Alchemy for a surprising and quite striking album, *Breaking Free*. Adams embraces a wide repertory in his performance career, and presents an interesting presence in an ethos that generally places high value on authenticity and historically informed performance practice. While I imagine that early music purists might not find his approach appealing, I regard his edgy theatricality as close to the core of the meaning of the word "baroque," and it has a tremendous appeal to audiences (today as well as in the 18th century). Sampling the videos at his website (https://piersadams.com/videos) gives a sense of the variety of his projects.

In Baroque Alchemy, Adams uses 9 recorders, soprano, alto, tenor, bass (by Breukink, Dawson, Musch, Moeck, Mollenhauer, and Küng), and his keyboard partner uses a Master Keyboard by Korg, playing sample libraries from Logic, Pianoteq and Eventide. This configuration allows them to deliver an enormous panoply of timbres. The Korg instrument is played in conjunction with a MacBook to access instrumental sounds, some of which emulate acoustic instruments (e.g., piano on Ian Clarke's *Hypnosis*, track 7), and some of which are synthetic hybrid sounds (e.g. the flanging drone/plucked instrument on *There Is No Rose*, track 8). Mayle, who studied piano and harpsichord at the Royal College of Music and has worked in theater, film and television, employs her keyboard's timbral variety as well as her skill in improvisation and ornamentation to match Adams' playful style. In the notes we read, "Our vision is to break free from the constraints of the classical music world and reimagine some of our favourite music in a way which we hope is engaging and inspiring." What strikes me is the sense of playfulness and exploration, full of humor and solid musicianship. The first 10 tracks are mostly Baroque pieces, along with a Medieval carol, and works by Albéniz, Clarke and Piazzolla. Tracks 11–19 are a suite drawn from Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. As satisfyingly exploratory as are the first 10 tracks, Baroque Alchemy's play with the Bach material breaks free into an homage of parody and satire, with impressive virtuosity and care for the music.

Breaking Free will be a delight for many listeners. The sound is clear and well recorded. Given the timbral ex-

perimentation, I am surprised that the stereo image of the duo is as tame and straightforward as it is. I look forward to an audio design that reinforces their playfulness in future recordings from Adams and Mayle. *Breaking Free* is available only from Adam's website. The CD sound is optimal, but the download options of mp3 or preferably WAV file will provide good results also.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Breaking Free. *Baroque Alchemy (Piers Adams, recorders; Lyndy Maybe, keyboards). 2024. 1 CD, 62:25. Red Priest Recordings RP016.* **https://piersadams.com/baroque-alchemy** *(available from* **https://redpriest.com/cd-breaking-free** *CD £12 + shipping (approx £5 to the US; approx. $15.22 + $6.34 USD). CD purchase includes album download. Download (mp3 or WAV files) £7.50 approx. $9.51 USD).*



02 Highways & Byways: Rarities for Recorder

Highways & Byways: Rarities for Recorder by John Turner and company is a treasure trove of late 20th- and early 21st-century mainstream pieces for recorder. Over the course of two discs (41 tracks), 20 beautifully sequenced pieces provide a survey of easily approachable, tuneful and substantive works by 15 British composers, one Russian, and one American composer. Turner recorded this music in May and October, 2023, with the exception of CD2 tracks 14-16, which were recorded in 2008. Turner (b. 1943), plays with virtuosity and utmost musicality throughout, clearly having heightened his musicianship over time.

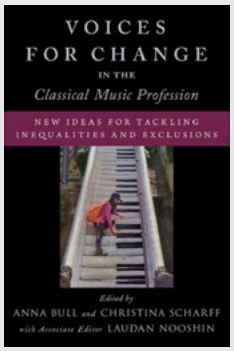
There is a consistent harmonic vocabulary in the works on this album. The tonal/modal underpinning gives the listener satisfying anchor points, and makes it easy to follow the melodic and harmonic excursions. However, this does not mean trite or hidebound reuse of major and minor harmonies. We hear imaginative use of timbre, occasional flutter-tonguing, striking counterpoint, and a range of approaches to tonal composition. Three works that particularly caught my ear are David Butler's *The Summer Triangle* (CD1: 12–14), Christopher Ball's *Homage to Dvořák* (CD2: 6) and William Bergsma's *Pastorale and Scherzo,* for recorder and two violas (CD2: 10–11). Butler's work takes inspiration from the triangle of stars Altair, Deneb and Vega, as seen by the composer on summer nights. Ball's piece captures the sound of the much-loved Czech composer Dvořák in a remarkably concise 4.5 minutes for alto recorder and piano. Bergsma was an American composer who studied with Howard Hanson and taught at Juilliard. In his piece the melodic lines in all three instruments weave together beautifully, as the timbres of violas and alto recorder combine and contrast. One of the shortest and most charming pieces on this album is Dorothy Pilling's *Conversation Piece* (CD2: 12). The least expected work is Russian Alexander Gretchaninov's *Concertino*, op. 171 for 2 recorders and piano (CD2: 9), a piece both catchy and cute. The album concludes with David Ellis' *Fipple-Baguette: Three Encores for Solo Recorder*, op. 76 (CD2: 14-16), a challenging and complex work with a lovely fade-out ending, and Thomas Pitfield's *A Little Caribbean* (CD2: 17) for recorder and piano, rich with fluttering melodic line and **7/8** time signature.

Of the many recordings by John Turner that I have heard, *Highways & Byways* may be my favorite thus far. The variety within the common elements among the pieces works very well. Not only is Turner's playing winning, but Stephan Bettaney's piano playing is nuanced and present in such a way that the pieces strike the ear more as duos rather than solo instrument with accompaniment. Kudos as well to Laura Robinson (recorder) and violists Catherine Yates and Alex Mitchell. The recorded sound by engineers gives a very satisfying stereo image on the CD, and I imagine the HD 24-bit would be even better. As you listen, please take advantage of Turner's notes in the booklet. This is an album I would happily give both to fans of 20th-century recorder music, and to those who are skeptical. Thank you, John Turner!

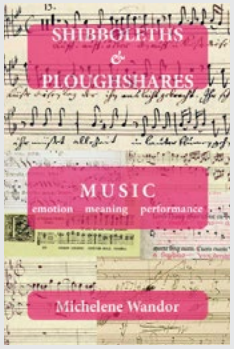
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Highways & Byways: Rarities for Recorder. *John Turner, recorder; Stephen Bethany, piano; Laura Robinson, recorder; Catherine Yates, viola, Alex Mitchell, viola. 2024. 2 CDs [disc 1 58:10 disc 2 46:56]. Divine Art ddx 21245.* **https://divineartrecords.com/recording/highways-and-by-ways-rarities-for-recorder/** *digital booklet available free of charge; CD £19.50+shipping (approx £3.50 to the US; approx. $24.37 + $4.44 USD); mp3 £12.49 (=$15.84 USD); higher resolution files also available. Full album available on YouTube* **https://youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_l2izQ1Qd-SO9JX0BKoGWgMUn9LUHMxSUB-k&si=JcbXV4Njyg3KGS-1**

Books

An Examination of the future of classical music culture, and a survey of past practices



Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession: New Ideas for Tackling Inequalities and Exclusions
edited by Anna Bull and Christina Scharff



Shibboleths and Ploughshares: Music, Emotion, Meaning, Performance
by Michelene Wandor
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Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession
edited by Anna Bull and Christina Scharff
New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. 368 pp. Hardcover $125; paperback $39.95, ebook $38.99

https://global.oup.com/academic

REVIEWED BY:
Jamie Allen

Voices for Change in the Classical Music Profession: New Ideas for Tackling Inequalities and Exclusions, like its title, is not a fast read. It is meant to be studied, discussed, challenged and re-read. It does not present itself as the (or even an) answer to the complex and deeply rooted issues of equity, diversity and inclusion in the classical music world. Rather, it presents itself as a curated collection of interviews and essays designed to "foreground voices for change, those who are already making a difference." These voices come from many varied corners of the classical music world, including scholars and professors, industry leaders and administrators, performing artists and composers, and union representatives and activists. The chapters range in style and content from highly researched and annotated academic treatises to conversational interviews full of eye-opening anecdotes. As one might expect from such a breadth of contributors, some of the viewpoints shared in this book directly contradict or argue against each other, but rather than shying away from this or trying to reconcile the differences, editors Anna Bull and Christina Scharff have embraced the tension. As a result, readers are forced to do a bit of deep thinking on their own to develop opinions and consider courses of action.

As co-chair of the ARS committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), as well as a professional composer, musician, and administrator who works regularly to move the needle forward on these very issues, I personally find this volume timely, relevant, and important. Over the course of 26 chapters, plus an introduction that provides crucial context, a thoughtful and inspiring afterword, and a number of useful Discussion Questions at the end, one becomes immersed in the ongoing and evolving conversation regarding inequalities in classical music. The work of engaging in this conversation, as is pointed out in this book – and as I can attest to from personal experience – is "often time-consuming and yet unpaid, mentally and emotionally draining,

> Class and lifestyle factors are a huge part of what makes participation in classical music in the US possible.

and frequently done by those already marginalized." Such a reality can, and has, led to a sense of fatalism among some. Even contributors to this book, such as the prominent British vocalist Anthony Gray, see no way forward in this work within existing structures and norms, and as a result, have abandoned classical music altogether. But others, such as gambist and early music expert Patricia Ann Neely (who has graciously provided valuable input to ARS DEI committee meetings on occasion), feel strongly that, while "no one wants to have the onus of being at the helm because of the criticism…, we have to work towards a positive outcome rather than continue accusations."

When I think of this book from the point of view of an active member of the ARS, a few interesting observations pop out to me. Recent demographic studies of ARS membership reveal the unsurprising fact that the vast majority of our membership is older, white, and at or above the median income level. This shines a clear spotlight, given the fact that the ARS has made public its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, on the need to embark on innovative efforts that encourage broader, meaningful participation at both the local and national levels. But there are other areas in which we get it right, almost by default. One of the book's oft-repeated criticisms of the current structures of the Western classical music tradition is their focus, as Music History professor Marianna Ritchey puts it, on "individual successes above collective flourishing." The ARS, on the other hand, flips this script. Collective flourishing is essential to the existence of the ARS, and therefore at the forefront of everything the society does. Another valid criticism points to the hesitancy of influential music institutions and organizations to broaden the scope and definition of classical music. "The canon isn't set," says multi-instrumentalist Jon Silpayamanant in his chapter on polymusicality, "it's just a thing that's been constructed." Recorder players and early music enthusiasts, by necessity, actively seek to expand the canon, as the vast majority of our repertoire already falls outside of conventional performance practices. As a result, finding new composers and musical voices from any and all quarters is built into our DNA. And we are a remarkably fluid and flexible group, as we are constantly having to adapt our approaches and our repertoire to accommodate the numbers, instrument ranges and skill levels of folks who show up at any given playing session.

While some of the chapters in this book can tend to be a bit dry and difficult (I found myself having to read passages twice in some of these to truly understand their meaning), others are clear and engaging. But both types provide ample food for thought.

For example, while I didn't fully agree with Mina Yang's negative assessment of the LA Phil's YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles) program, their new performance center, and the El Sistema movement in general (full disclosure: I have had longstanding professional experience with El Sistema, and have seen the sustainable power of its impact firsthand), she does make some good points about the critical need for robust music programs in our public school systems, and raises a fair question about the decision to spend $23 million on a Gehry-designed building rather than on music teacher salaries.

I was also deeply intrigued by elements of both Marianna Ritchey's "Critical Perspective on Diversity and Inclusion in US Classical Music Discourse," and the interview with Quodesia Johnson (again full disclosure: I was Quodesia's mentor many years ago when she did a high school project on orchestra conductors). Ritchey notes that in 130 years, the Metropolitan Opera offered no commissions to female composers. Observations such as this lead quite naturally to the suggestion that wholesale changes should be made to the systems currently in place, rather than just settling for piecemeal "diverse" additions to the repertoire. An irrefutable case is made that class and lifestyle factors are a huge part of what makes participation in classical music in the US possible; and that the gatekeepers of this participation are the product of a history that is infused with troubling elitism and white supremacism. Given all of this, well-considered steps placing this artform – which, despite its shortcomings, has given inestimable joy and meaning to countless artists and audiences through the centuries – into an appropriate context would be well worth the necessary time and investment. As would be any and all efforts to organically expand the definition of the artform going forward, on stages both large and small.

These are just a few of the wide-ranging and challenging topics brought to the fore by this book. And, while not for the faint of heart, it is most certainly for the full of heart. ❁

Composer, music educator, performer and conductor **Jamie Allen** has been the children's chorus director and lead teaching artist for the Santa Fe Opera, Education Director for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Senior Director of Operations for the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra and Music School.

Shibboleths and Ploughshares: Music, Emotion, Meaning, Performance
Prima la musica!, ©2023, 137 pp., Paperback, about $12.50, available in the U.S. from the author at mwandor@googlemail.com

REVIEWED BY:
Valerie Hess

This is the newest book in a long list of publications from Michelene Wandor. Again, Ms. Wandor was very gracious in sending a copy for me to review after I saw it advertised in Helen Hooker's blog (www.helen-hooker.co.uk), a blog I highly recommend. (See my review of her first novel in **AR Spring 2024**.)

Michelene Wandor is an acclaimed playwright, poet, short story writer, musician (founder of the early music group, the Siena Ensemble), and self-described "cultural commentator." Siena has recorded *Salamone Rossi Hebreo Mantovano* (2002, https://michelenewandor.co.uk/siena). This new book is nonfiction, a re-working of her MMus dissertation, together with other essays and new material. It will be of interest to viol and recorder players, though anyone who thinks about performance practice in music will find her reflections useful.

In the Introduction, "Music: emotion, meaning and performance," Ms. Wandor claims her book distills "a wide range of ideas, historical moments, and concepts… I hope it will help to demonstrate hybridity. This may challenge some experts, while opening up new ways of thinking about music to others for the first time."

The first two chapters are a retrospective from musical aestheticians beginning with Eduard Hanslick (1854) and ending with Anthony Rooley (1990). The next two chapters deal with teaching music and its "pedagogic implications for the students' training for performance." Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the revival of lost and/or forgotten music through musical scholarship, and a look at a number of historical examples of editing by people like Carl Dolmetsch and Raymond Leppard. It also tackles the issues of gender in music history. Chapter 7 gives a wonderful overview of historic performance practices under Arnold Dolmetsch, whose great achievement, Wandor writes, "was to bring earlier instruments, repertoire and performance into the twentieth century," and his followers Thurston Dart and Robert Donington. It also briefly examines the effect political and social changes after World War II had on music culture, as well as the "three key concepts which have guided and defined (and sometimes confined) the development of the early music revival: interpretation, authenticity and intention."

Almost as an afterthought, Coda 1 tackles the issue of "emotion" in music. Coda 2 is about the author's script to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Drapers' Guild as well as reflections on other music-making endeavors she has been involved in.

Ms. Wandor herself admits that she is a writer first and came to formal music training later in life, earning her advanced degree as a "mature student." In my mind, this only makes her reflections in this volume all the more valuable as she brings a breadth of culture and knowledge to the notion of "What is music really all about?" ❁

Valerie E. Hess is an organist, harpsichordist and recorder player. In addition to music, she also writes and teaches on issues related to spiritual formation. She can be reached at hess.valerie@gmail.com.

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RO = Recorder Orchestra
RS = Recorder Society

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navrschapter@outlook.com

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AMERICAN RECORDER

The mission of the American Recorder Society is to promote the recorder and its music by developing resources to help people of all ages and ability levels to play and study the recorder, presenting the instrument to new constituencies, encouraging increased career opportunities for professional recorder performers and teachers, and enabling and supporting recorder playing as a shared social experience. Besides this journal, ARS publishes newsletters, a personal study program, a directory, and special musical editions. Society members gather and play together at chapter meetings, weekend and summer workshops, and many ARS-sponsored events throughout the year. In 2024, the Society celebrates 85 years of service to its constituents.

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Your contribution is always welcomed.

- Send a letter to the editor
- Submit articles
- Send chapter news
- Submit photos for covers and articles

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Articles may be sent as an attachment (doc or rtf preferred) or text in an email. Photos may be sent as unedited JPG or 300dpi TIF files (cover photos about 9.5" square x 300dpi; highlighting recorders; light background preferred; no cell phone photos).

DEADLINES
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March 15 – Summer
June 15 – Fall
September 15 – Winter

TO SUBMIT
Email editor@americanrecorder.org or mail to Geoffrey Burgess, Editor, *American Recorder* 632 Reed St., Philadelphia PA 19147.

AMERICAN RECORDER (ISSN 0003-0724) is published 4 times a year: February (Spring), May (Summer), August (Fall), November (Winter), by American Recorder Society, Inc., 3205 Halcott Ln, Charlotte, NC 28269-9709. Periodicals Postage Paid at Charlotte, NC, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to American Recorder Society, PO Box 480054, Charlotte, NC 28269-5300.
TEL: 704-509-1422 | TOLLFREE: 1-844-509-1422 | FAX: 1-866-773-1538
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$42 of the annual $55 U.S. membership dues in the ARS is for a subscription to American Recorder.

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