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AMERICAN RECORDER

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Winter 2025 • Published by the American Recorder Society • Vol. LXVI, No. 4

AMERICAN RECORDER

ON THE COVER

Young Man Playing a Tenor Recorder by an unknown Northern Caravaggesque painter, c.1630 formerly in the collection of Luigi Koelliker, sold at Sotheby's in 2008. Note the playing cards on the table. Image reproduced with permission from Jean Moust, owner of Old Masters, Bruges, Belgium **jeanmoust.com**. Moust owns another slightly different version of the painting possibly from the same artist's studio.

CONTENTS

2 Editor's Note & President's Message

NEWS & NOTES

3 Voices • Letters to the Editor

4 American Recorder Society • Business Members; ARS 2024-25 Fiscal Year Income & Expense; ARS Distinguished Achievement Award; Meet the New President; SFEMS nominates two ARS members to Board; ARS Outreach at EMA Summit

8 On the Record(er) • So you want to start a Recorder Orchestra? Here's some advice; Update from Africa; Recorders add to Richness of Costa Rica; Library Corner

FEATURES

14 Composer Profile • **My Life as a Composer for Recorder** Australian composer Benjamin Thorn, known for his clever custom-made compositions for recorder, discusses some of his compositional strategies

24 History and Repertoire • **17th-century Music on the Recorder** Peter van Heyghen updates his ground-breaking research on the use of recorders in an oft-forgotten corner of history

LISTEN & PLAY

28 Education • **Synergy with Suzuki** Mary Halverson Waldo interviews Stephanie Pedretti; Review of Concert with Matthias Maute

LEARN

31 Learning Tips • **Play Learning:** An Interview with Stephanie Brandt Creating Games to Motivate Your Practice by Bert Honig

CRITIQUE

34 Music • **Aussie Wonders and Reworked Classics** *Owl Dances* by Benjamin Thorn; *Daintree Wonders* by Elliot Leahy; *Black Summer/Rising Waters* by Clive Lane; *Sketches of White Wings* by Kym Dillon; *L'Orfeo: 20 pieces for recorder orchestra by Claudio Monteverdi*, arr. by Scherschmidt; *Eight Tuneful Duets for Descant Recorder* by Richard Kershaw; *Concerto in A Minor, TWV43:a3, for recorder, oboe, violin and continuo by G.P. Telemann*, ed. by K. Hofmann; *Concerto VI* by J.B. de Boismortier ed. by M. Harras and R.B. Meyer; *Pink Neon* by Lance Eccles
Music Editions Received

42 Recordings • **Blowing the Waterfall Apart** by Tom Bickley. Andrew Collis presents Markus Zahnhausen's *Jahrenzeichen* in a video recording; Juho Myllylä takes listeners to distinct yet related sound world in *Herder's Herd*; Susanne Frölich forges musical connections between antiquity and the avant garde in an innovative disc that "…blows the waterfall apart"

ARS

46 Chapters & Recorder Orchestras
47 Statement of Ownership
48 Advertising Index

Editor's Note · GEOFFREY BURGESS

An advantage of being *AR* editor is being able to share information and articles from other organizations. Perusing the latest issue of *Blokfluitist*, I was drawn to Bert Honig's article about Stephanie Brandt's card games, and thanks to editor Tom Beets we are able to print an English version of Peter Van Heyghen's research update on 17th-century recorders. In the Feature, Benjamin Thorn, my fellow alumnus from Sydney University, opens a window onto the exciting recorder scene in Australia and reminds us that avant-garde music can be fun. The focus in the Recordings Reviews is new music with several reviews of works from Australia – but don't worry, the ultra-modern is tempered with reviews of classics, and pieces for larger groups, to reflect Kathleen Ingley's article about Recorder Orchestras. We also have inspiring reports on records in the classroom, and the British Columbia Recorder Society's music library. The cover called for an image that brought together games, recorders, and the 17th century. *Et voilà!* A portrait of a recorder player with the accouterments of style and a deck of cards. That *chapeau* alone is a winner!

President's Message · JODY MILLER

As a freshman in college, I stumbled on my first copy of *AR*. I can say for certain that was the most important moment in my life as a recorder player, with the exception of discovering the instrument itself seven years prior.

Opening the magazine was not unlike those movie scenes in which the lead character opens doors to a magical, multi-colored world. It presented to me a community that I had previously known nothing about. It was through the ARS that I learned that there were professional performers, that people played music together in chapter meetings, and that there were handmade instruments. In the pre-internet 1980s, this was the enlightenment I needed.

Four years later I moved from Mississippi to the Atlanta area to begin a teaching career. Three recorder professionals moved to the area around the same time – Aldo Abreu, Frances Blaker, and Tish Berlin. They provided me with the tools for my evolution. But the most important community I found was the Atlanta ARS chapter. I was an awestruck 21-year-old sitting in a room surrounded by more than a dozen other recorder players with instruments of various sizes. While the recorder professionals gave me invaluable guidance and inspiration, the local chapter provided support, resources, and an outlet I needed to make music.

It was there that I learned how recorder players connected with each other. Members had their own trios and quartets and I was lucky enough to be invited into one. There were no steps in the wrong direction because every recorder player I met contributed to my understanding and delight in making music.

I hope that recorder playing provides YOU with this same sense of community. If that's not your experience, I hope that together we can find ways to build a love for recorder playing wherever you are. The first step is letting others know about your musical journey. Take a moment and let the recorder community know a little more about yourself by sharing your own story at americanrecorder.org/stories. I think we'll see through your submissions how we are all incredibly similar, while also being entirely unique!

ARS

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VOICES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A quick note to say I really like the cover collage for the Fall 2025 issue of *AR*. When used to document a single event, a smooshing together like that can be terrifically effective, and yours is – it made me wish I had been there with you all in Boston.

Bright moments,
Peter Beck
Member, Chicago Chapter

I just wanted to drop you a note to say how much I enjoyed the latest *AR* magazine. I particularly enjoyed the interview with Frances Blaker and the insights into what is needed to keep Amherst running smoothly. David Lasocki is always a welcome source of insight into composing. It was great to relive our wonderful time at the Boston Festival with all the details captured in the report. Nice work!

Barb Prescott
Awardee, ARS president's

When I saw the comment in the review of Raphael's *Advent Calendar*, I wanted to share the info about downloading the recordings, because I didn't want recorder players to shy away from this wonderful collection and miss out on the creative recordings. The reviewer said that it was not possible to adjust the tempo of a playback without affecting the pitch. But there are tools designed to do that. I'm able to do it using my Windows Media Player, and there are also apps like Audacity that work on the Mac platform.

There is so much wonderful technology out there that we can make use of. I am lucky to have some knowledgeable techies in our groups here in Phoenix, on whom I can rely to help me with tech questions. I'd always rather be playing than futzing with tech, but it sure is fun to have an engaging backtrack to play with!

Basilisk Edition offers a host of very nice music for recorders (and other instruments) in large and small ensemble configurations, and most of the original compositions are available in PDF with additional media downloads.

Ann Koenig
Phoenix Chapter

CRAZY COINCIDENCE

I just discovered that the only other magazine that I have ever had anything to do with (and which I also advertise in), called *American Randonneur*, shares the same layout artist as *AR*! The "other" *AR* is the publication of the endurance cycling organization I've been a member of for almost 20 years. Jake Kassen and I have both written articles and columns for that magazine from time to time. Both magazines are quarterly and have similarly-sized circulation and both are pretty niche.

I realized that both editors referred to a layout person named Mary… and it turned out that Mary Humphrey really does work on both magazines! It's pretty rare to encounter someone else connected to both of my weird little corners of the universe!

Emily O'Brien
Owner, Dill Pickle Gear
and Canzonet Cases

IN GRATITUDE

On behalf of the Sam Houston State University School of Music and our recorder ensemble, Recording In Progress, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the ARS's generous grant support. With these funds, we were able to purchase six instruments (1 soprano, 2 altos, 2 tenors, and 1 bass), which have greatly enriched our ensemble's work.

Our group is made up primarily of vocal and instrumental music education majors, and participation has been invaluable in reinforcing their studies in theory and musicianship. We recently presented our first performance – two works by Rameau – and are excited to continue exploring the recorder's beautiful repertoire together. Very soon, we will also be accompanying our men's vocal ensemble Musikanten in an arrangement of "Alma del core," one of the famous *Twenty-Four Italian Songs & Arias of the 17th & 18th Centuries*.

Thank you for helping us make this possible.

With appreciation,
Dr. Tony Boutté
Professor of Music
Faculty Advisor (Recording In Progress), Sam Houston State University School of Music

There are other stories of recorders re-appearing in universities and tertiary music schools. Let's hear yours!

AMERICAN RECORDER SOCIETY

BUSINESS MEMBERS

Information supplied by Business Members responding. Please contact the **ARS office** to update listings.

AMERICAN ORFF-SCHULWERK ASSOCIATION
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The American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA) is a professional organization of educators dedicated to the creative music and movement approach developed by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman. Our mission is to:

- demonstrate the value of Orff Schulwerk and promote its widespread use
- support the professional development of our members
- inspire and advocate for the creative potential of all learners.

Founded in 1968, membership in AOSA has grown to include 4000 music educators, musicians, industry partners, and related professionals. AOSA fosters the utilization of the Orff Schulwerk approach through a vibrant professional development program that sponsors hundreds of workshops in 98 local AOSA chapters across the U.S. each year and through more than 70 certified Teacher Training programs across the country.

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Selling Yamaha, Aulos, Moeck, Mollenhauer, Küng, and Zen-On recorders, as well as recorder method books, a wide variety of recorder sheet music, recorder music for large groups and recorder orchestras, and music arranged for recorder and other instruments. Susan Lindvall recorder music arrangements. Among our accessories: recorder cases, stands, clip on thumb rests and more. We also carry music for flutes, crumhorns, ocarina, tabor pipe, tin whistle, viola, guitar, strings, fiddle, harp, reed, keyboard, voice, and choral music.

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info@kunath.group; www.kunath.group

Silke "Katze" and Jo Kunath are certainly among the people who can rightly be called "recorder enthusiasts." Over the last 40 years they have built up the "recorder paradise" in Europe with the Kunath group – the workshops Kunath, FEHR, Paetzold by Kunath; the store **blockfloetenshop.de**; a radio station; online forum on the recorder; and organization of Europe's largest recorder festival (Blockfloetenfesttage).

LAZAR'S EARLY MUSIC
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Carson City, NV 89701
678-465-9114; 866-511-2981
info@lazarsearlymusic.com; www.lazarsearlymusic.com

Our goal at Lazar's Early Music is to provide top-quality instruments and personalized service for every customer. We carry recorders (Renaissance, Baroque, and modern), Baroque flutes, violas da gamba, Baroque cellos, Baroque strings and bows, and a variety of early music woodwinds. Some of our vendors include Moeck, Mollenhauer, Küng, Kunath, Martin Wenner, Guntram Wolf, Lu-Mi, Charlie Ogle, Christopher English and more. We do recorder key additions and can modify plastic tenors to knick style. Check out our stock and collection of used instruments. We are happy to send instruments to try on approval to help you find the instrument that's perfect for you.

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Family-owned enterprise in its fourth generation, producing high-end recorders and publishing recorder music, books on music and *Tibia Online Portal* for Woodwind Players. Moeck recorders and music publications are available at Honeysuckle Music, Lazar's Early Music and Von Huene Workshop, Inc. Moeck organizes courses for recorder players and promotes the recorder on a professional level by awarding prizes at significant contests such as the Moeck/SRP Recorder Competition in London and others.

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Peripole Music, founded by music educators to serve music educators in 1945, has long been a leader in the recorder field. Starting with publishing early works by Erich Katz, and leading in distribution and promotion of recorders for school music programs, Peripole now features the Halo® Recorder series with a modified Renaissance shape and its trademarked Halo® Hanger neck strap for classroom use. Peripole is also the exclusive direct distributor for Bergerault Orff Instruments, Peripole Classic Ukuleles by Enya, Peripole Percussion and Classroom Instruments, and much more.

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14 Grant Rd., Hanover, NH 03755-6615
603-643-6442
recorders@aol.com; www.prescottworkshop.com

I'm ALMOST retired! However, I still have a few baroque and Transitional soprano and alto recorders that I plan to complete before hanging up my shop apron.

TOYAMA MUSICAL INSTRUMENT CO., LTD.
Takeshi Toyama
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Founded in 1960 by Friedrich von Huene (1929-2016) and his wife Ingeborg (1930-2023), the Von Huene Workshop, Inc., has enjoyed a reputation for producing the finest recorders available for over 60 years. This tradition of excellence continues with Friedrich's son Patrick and his staff. Our shop is internationally renowned for both the exceptional quality of our instruments and unparalleled repair work. North American warranty repair agents for Moeck, Mollenhauer, Aafab (Aura, Coolsma, Dolmetsch & Zamra), Blezinger, Küng and Yamaha. In addition to our own von Huene recorders, we stock a wide selection of instruments from these makers, plus Paetzold/Kunath & Martin Wenner. We also have an extensive and ever-changing inventory of pre-owned recorders and other instruments, as well as one of the largest selections of accessories, books, sheet music and facsimiles for recorder and other early instruments. We gladly send instruments "on approval" for players who wish to compare options before making a commitment.

ARS 2024-25 Fiscal Year Income and Expense

The ARS has produced its financial results for the fiscal year ending on August 31. The pie charts accompanying this article present a positive picture of ARS financial income and expenses.*

Membership dues and your generous donations continued to be our main sources of income. Program Revenue also contributed. That is money from the sale of ads in the *AR* magazine, library subscriptions to *AR*, and sales of music and other items offered in the ARS online store.

Income was earned from investments made on funds established in memory of loved ones by family and friends and through personal bequests. That income – Dividends and Capital/Unrealized Gains in the revenue pie chart – is used for specific mission-driven purposes (often specified by the donor), such as scholarships or recorder music publication. Our investments are conservative but still increased in value last year due to the performance of the stock and bond markets. Altogether, membership dues, donations, and investments produced an income of $321,878.

The ARS spent the majority of this income on programs that benefit members and potential members. The largest share of expenses went toward production of *AR* magazine, the benefit that members appreciate the most. Other popular programs include the ARS website with all its resources; beginner and second-level online classes; and scholarships and grants.

Administration is a necessary piece of the expense pie, as are membership and fundraising expenses. Our staffing is very lean. The goal is to spend as much on the ARS mission as possible. Our expenses totaled $244,146.

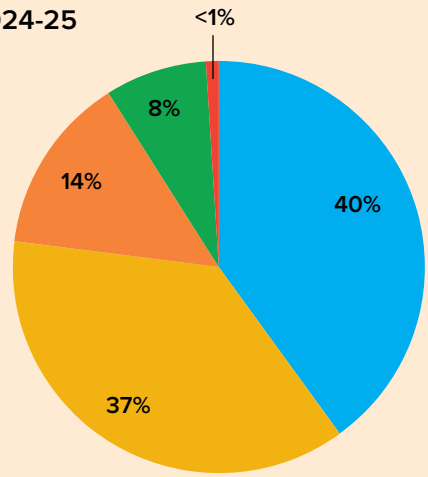
The ARS submits information to an organization called Candid/GuideStar, a source of philanthropic information in the U.S. For the three prior fiscal years, the ARS received a Gold Star rating. In the last two, it has also received the top 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, another rating organization. We will continue this so that donors know they can trust ARS to spend donation funds appropriately.

All in all, ARS finances are healthy. Income exceeded expenses, giving us reserves to be used for special program projects and any needs that arise. This good fortune was primarily due to several large donations and bequests, and the increase in value of our invested funds. ❁

Jody Miller
ARS President

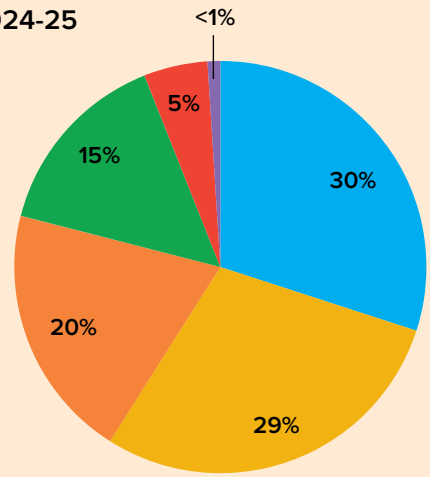
**As the ARS 990 was not yet filed at the time this went to press, there may be some minor changes to final income and expense totals.*

ARS Income
Fiscal Year 2024-25
$321,878



- Donations
- Membership Dues
- Dividends and Capital/Unrealized Gains
- Program Revenue: Ads, Subscriptions, Sales
- Other

ARS Expenses
Fiscal Year 2024-25
$244,146



- Program: *AR* Magazine, Publications
- Program: Administrative Program Support
- General Admin
- Program: Website, Events, Video, Classes
- Program: Scholarships & Grants
- Other

ANNOUNCEMENT

ARS Distinguished Achievement Award

The ARS Board is pleased to announce Patricia Petersen as the 2026 recipient of the ARS Distinguished Achievement Award. Pat helped establish the culture of recorder and early music workshops as it now exists throughout North America, even creating workshops in areas that were previously "deserts" of recorder activity. The unanimous Board approval is a testament to her selfless work to promote the recorder and its music while serving as a mentor to younger recorder teachers.

Pat Petersen is one of the most influential forces in the recorder and early music workshop culture. She has taught at many workshops over the years, and not just in the recorder world. She also teaches classes in reading original Renaissance notation and in the characters of the Baroque dance. Her passion for teaching early notation has inspired many amateurs to dabble in the arcane study of manuscripts from the late 14th and 15th centuries. Through her gentle and thorough approach, she has helped countless musicians unravel the mysteries of reading the early manuscripts, giving them a better understanding of repertoire prior to 1600.

Pat holds an MFA in Early Music Performance from Sarah Lawrence College, where she studied recorder with Phil Levin and Steve Silverstein, but she speaks of William Russo as perhaps her greatest musical influence. Composer, jazz arranger, and gifted teacher, Russo led a Chicago-based group that put on rock cantatas.

A Certified Teacher of the ARS, Pat is a director emerita of Amherst Early Music Inc., the past director of Mountain Collegium in Cullowhee, NC, and a popular teacher of English country dance, recorder, and early notation, both at home in North Carolina and at summer and weekend workshops across the country.

◀ Pat Petersen.

She was the Music Director of the Triangle Recorder Society, NC for 25 years, and also led collegia musica at UNC-Greensboro and at Wake Forest University. For 20 years, her award-winning a capella choir, Fortuna, drew crowds across the North Carolina Triangle to performances of music from the 14th through early 16th centuries. A performer on recorder and many other early instruments with Rossignol, Pat also appeared as recorder soloist with the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, and over the years managed to get European recorder stars – Loeki Stardust, Flanders Recorder Ensemble, Marion Verbruggen, Camerata Trajectina, and the Egidius Quartet – to add Durham, NC to their U.S. concert itineraries. ❁

NEW LEADERSHIP

Meet Jody Miller, ARS's New President

Jody Miller discovered the recorder quite by accident. Growing up near the small town of Waynesboro, MS, where the only opportunity for formal music study was the school band, he initially chose trumpet, but later decided French horn was the instrument for him. Recorder came into the picture after he had only played trumpet for a year. He found his first recorder among the toys in a department store, but Jody loved the sound it made and couldn't quite embrace it as a toy. Six years later he arrived at the University of Southern Mississippi for his undergraduate studies in music education and helped revive the recorder ensemble with the guidance of Dr. Dana Ragsdale.

It was Dr. Ragsdale who put Jody in touch with Steve Rosenberg, then the chair of the music department at the College of Charleston. Jody saved his pennies and traveled to Charleston to take a weekend of lessons, and that was the confirmation he needed to pursue recorder seriously. Rosenberg's impact was immense. He guided Jody on tone production, Renaissance and early Baroque repertoire, and how to source materials for recorder study. Jody's very first recorder lesson occurred on the same day he was also able to hear his first live recorder concert. When he should have been studying 19th-century opera for his class assignments, he was actually listening to old recordings

of Frans Brüggen and Walter van Hauwe. By the time he graduated from college, Jody had performed two recorder recitals.

Jody continued to study and play, but he really worked on honing his teaching skills during a 30-year career as a middle-school band director in suburban Atlanta. By the time he retired from his position in 2021, he had already assumed roles as Music Director of Lauda Musicam of Atlanta and Director of the Mountain Collegium Early Music Workshop. Along the way he led the Atlanta Recorder Society as President and Music Director and played as much as possible. His appearances with the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, New Trinity Baroque Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Opera, Chattanooga Bach Choir, and many others helped satisfy his desire to perform. His work with private students, middle-school musicians, adult learners, and professional musicians has allowed him to see the world of recorder playing from many different perspectives.

As Jody approaches his 45th year of playing recorder, he also assumes the role as President of the American Recorder Society. It was through the ARS that he learned about professional recorder players, new music publications, where to buy instruments, and playing tips. It was also through an ARS scholarship that he had his first opportunity to study with Eva Legêne at Indiana University's summer recorder program. Legêne's guidance helped him refine his understanding of technique and interpretation of Baroque music, the importance of basso continuo, and even how to tune a harpsichord.

Jody is proof that the ARS's mission to support and grow the diverse recorder community by providing resources and opportunities on the social, educational, and professional levels has an impact on the lives of its members and he is proud to be part of this supportive community of recorder enthusiasts.

◀ **Jody Miller.**

CONGRATULATIONS

San Francisco Early Music Society (SFEMS) nominates two ARS members to their Board

Frances Feldon is a former ARS Board member. Now retired, she is focused on studying jazz improvisation and theory. She will contribute her extensive knowledge and experience, particularly in education and performance, to SFEMS to ensure the future of early music in the Bay Area.

Frances is a retired professional musician, educator, and arts administrator with a long history in early music. She holds a Doctor of Music degree from Indiana University and has taught at various institutions, including Indiana University and the University of California, Davis. For over 30 years, Frances was deeply involved with SFEMS, directing multiple programs such as the Recorder Workshop and collegium evenings. She has a broad range of performance experience, having played with numerous Bay Area groups, including American Bach and the San Francisco Opera. Additionally, she founded and directed several ensembles and concert series, including the Baroque and Beyond series, and the Barbary Coast Recorder Orchestra. (see story p. 8)

Nicholas Jones has valued the work of SFEMS since moving to the Bay Area, and is thrilled to be involved in moving the Society's mission forward. He brings a wealth of experience from both academia and the arts community. Nick holds a PhD from Harvard University and had a long and distinguished career as a professor of English at Oberlin College, where he also served as an associate dean. His passion for literature and history is closely tied to his deep involvement in early music. He is a published author and translator of works from the Renaissance, and he has written classical music reviews for publications like the *San Francisco Classical Voice* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Nick has also served the San Francisco early music community directly through his work as a pre-concert speaker for Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale, and Columbia Baroque, and as a former board member for Early Music America.

Both Frances and Nick have made significant contributions to *AR*.

OUTREACH

EMA Summit

Mark Davenport and Geoffrey Burgess represented the ARS at Early Music America's Summit. The virtual event, held over the weekend of October 17–19, brought the early-music community of North and South America together for three days of thought-provoking presentations, performances, workshops, and networking, including performances by outstanding local partners.

The ARS presentation brought attention to the Society's role in community building, documenting the recorder's heritage, celebrating its members, reporting on technological advances in manufacture, providing guidance for players of all levels, and collaborations with EMA, and the Boston and Berkeley Early Music Festivals.

ON THE RECORD(ER)

News about the recorder

RECORDER ORCHESTRAS

So you want to start a Recorder Orchestra?

Here's some advice
by Kathleen Ingley

A recorder orchestra? The idea sounds impossible to people whose knowledge of the instrument starts and ends with plastic sopranos in elementary school.

And that's one reason that Recorder Orchestras (ROs) exist: to blow up stereotypes and show off the recorder's musical depth and potential.

For an instrument that's been around for centuries, the recorder orchestra is a relatively new creation. It wasn't until 1962 that a group used the term in its name: the Mid-Peninsula Recorder Orchestra, founded in California by William Barnhart.

The basic definition is simple: "What makes it a recorder orchestra is having multiple players on a part," says Glen Shannon, co-director of the Barbary Coast RO. And there's typically muscle in the low range, with players on great bass, contrabass, sub-great bass, and sub-contrabass.

Recorder orchestras in the U.S. typically have 20–40 players. When the ARS set up a special category for recorder orchestras, its definition required a minimum of 10 permanent recorder positions, with at least 5 recorder voices.

A recorder orchestra exists to perform, and meets to rehearse. "This demands more of the individual players," explains Vicki Boeckman, co-director of the RO of Puget Sound. "Members really have to prepare and be part of a larger whole." That experience may be quite different from a monthly meeting of a recorder chapter, where members don't necessarily have to practice, or may just be starting out.

▲ **Mid-Peninsula RO and director Fred Palmer.**

Yet every recorder orchestra is different. Some are strictly recorders, others include other instruments. Some are semiprofessional. The newest in the United States – East St. Louis RO, founded in 2024 – plays mainly sacred music.

With the caveat that there's no one-size-fits-all model for forming and running a recorder orchestra, here are some common steps.

Write out the vision. What are the group's goals? Exploring diverse styles of music, improving players' skills, educating the community?

Putting the answer into words – the "mission statement" of the corporate world – will guide future decisions and help make sure everyone is on the same page.

Pick a leader. The music director – sometimes the founder – needs to spark enthusiasm and choose pieces suited to what may be a very eclectic group. "You have to guarantee that you deliver high-quality music," explains Cléa Galhano, who directs the RO of the Midwest.

Flexibility is key, says Fred Palmer, who has led the Mid-Peninsula RO since 1988: "You can't come in with any preconceived notions. Do some good music and have fun. You can't be afraid to work the orchestra hard to get results, as long as people are enjoying the end result."

Recruit players. The process starts with two critical decisions: the level of ability that will be required, and whether admission to the orchestra will be through audition, by invitation, or open to all.

"We didn't want to do auditions, because it could lead to hurt feelings," says Rosi Terada, founder of the Colorado RO. Instead, the group asks potential members to fill out an interest form with a self-evaluation that includes ensemble experience, facility in counting time, and playing different sizes of instruments. If they come to a concert or a rehearsal, they usually quickly realize whether their skills are adequate or not. "Many times," she says, "they eventually come back and become valued members."

Barbary Coast RO is an invitation-

only group. It kicks off every musical season with a September workshop led by a guest artist. Directors Glen Shannon and Greta Haug-Hryciw play in the orchestra with the rest of the players. The guest conductor does a deep dive into several pieces, and they choose one for the season's repertoire. "We invite a lot of people to the workshop," Shannon says. New people interested in joining the orchestra are invited to attend a rehearsal to see if it's a good fit.

"Not everyone likes being in a recorder orchestra," Shannon has found. "It's a different way of playing," without the freedom a player would have in a small ensemble or as a soloist.

For Puget Sound RO, "we don't have an audition per se," Boeckman says. But if she's contacted by someone whose playing she doesn't know, she explains the criteria and asks to hear them play. "There isn't time to be futzing with fingering. We assume proficiency so that making music can start from the first rehearsal."

The Mid-Peninsula RO, on the other hand, opens the door wide. The website states: "You are welcome to join as long as you can read music, and play basic melodies on your recorder."

For virtually every group, recruiting is an ongoing challenge as people age out. At Mid-Peninsula RO, "it's getting harder just to keep the numbers up," Palmer says. "It's something we have to address this year."

Set up a structure. Recorder orchestras "can't be ad hoc and casual anymore," says Palmer. When Mid-Peninsula RO started six decades ago, the group met at a high school and would pass around a cigar box collecting cash donations.

These days, "a new group would be advised to have a board to take care of the day-to-day business that comes along with a group of this size," such as setting fees, says Philip Rugel, president of the RO of the Midwest. Key positions are treasurer and someone to handle recruiting and marketing.

◀ **East St. Paul RO, director Alex Carlson is in the center**.

Become a nonprofit. Not only does nonprofit status pave the way for receiving donations, it also may be required to use some facilities. At least one RO has become a nonprofit on its own, but the easiest route is to affiliate with a local ARS chapter that is already nonprofit. Barbary Coast RO is an outreach program of Voices of Music, a San Francisco–based nonprofit that promotes early-music performance and education.

Get liability insurance. While few activities are less hazardous than playing recorder, most venues require groups to have liability coverage. Colorado RO has a policy through the company that founder Terada uses for her own liability insurance. Otherwise, insurance can be another benefit of affiliation with an ARS chapter.

Decide on fees. Virtually every recorder orchestra charges a fee to cover expenses like site rental, printing music, and director's fees. A charge of between $200 and $250 per season isn't unusual, although some organizations offer full or partial scholarships. At the low of the spectrum, Colorado RO's fee is $40. Mid-Peninsula RO has three tiers of membership, starting at $160.

▶ RO of Puget Sound with co-directors Vicki Boeckman, 2nd from L, and Charles Coldwell, 2nd from R in front row.

East St. Paul RO encourages its members to join ARS but otherwise has no fees. Alex Carlson founded it less than two years ago with the help of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, where he's music director. They've gotten free rehearsal space at another church by offering to perform at a service.

Choose music. "There's a plethora of repertoire, that's for sure," says Boeckman of RO of Puget Sound. "The richest and most glorious pieces are between 8- and 10-part."

Many directors arrange and some compose their own music. Every Barbary Coast RO concert includes a piece by Shannon. The orchestra also has a theme for each performance with one piece directly tied to it – the current theme is Moodscapes.

Not everything is classical in the world of recorder orchestras. Barbary Coast RO co-director Haug-Hryciw has arranged a Beatles song for the group. Rugel arranged *Stairway to Heaven* for the Midwest RO, with director Galhano playing the guitar solos on alto recorder. In St. Paul RO, where the group focuses on church performances, Carlson has tapped traditional Lutheran hymns to make more than 80 arrangements.

Schedule rehearsals. In rehearsing, most groups opt for intensity over frequency: often four rehearsals lasting a half-day and more, ending with a concert. The last rehearsal is often on the same day as the concert, a boon to those who have to travel a long way.

Such a tight schedule means everyone needs to be on hand. Puget Sound RO is strict: "We require that members don't miss more than one rehearsal," says Boeckman, "and they are required to get notes from someone who was there."

That policy is part of a formal list of expectations the orchestra hands out to members. The rules include commitment to home practicing, and getting music organized beforehand.

Technology can play an important role. Thanks to a tech-savvy member, the Mid-Peninsula RO sends music on Midi or MP3 files to members, so they can include a play-along in their practice. All the group's rehearsals are streamed on Zoom, so members who have moved out of the area can still check in.

Find space. There has been a tradition of using churches for rehearsals and performances. But rentals are getting pricey and bookings harder to secure. Some groups are turning to other spaces.

Mid-Peninsula RO connected with a veterans' center that provides free space, prints the programs, and has easy parking. Retirement communities often have spaces suitable for performing. This year, Midwest RO will rehearse in a nursing home, which is providing the space for free; as a thank-you music director Galhano will play a concert.

Stay nimble. Founded in 2008, the Midwest RO "became an amazing community," Galhano says. Players drove from half a dozen states to re-

◀ Barbary Coast RO with co-director Greta Haug-Hryciw.

hearse and perform, mostly in Bloomington, IN. But the drive and health issues eventually shrank membership. "We could have folded last year," she says. Instead, they regrouped and moved to Chicago in fall 2025. With help from an ARS grant, the orchestra held a kickoff rehearsal for new members and has scheduled an April 2026 concert.

Final advice: "Pay attention to the details and don't procrastinate," says Frances Feldon, who co-founded Barbary Coast RO with Haug-Hryciw. "Have a mission, a budget and a plan, and that will go a long way toward taking care of business."

Directors of ROs are happy to offer advice. For contacts, news and rules for ARS affiliation, go to **americanrecorder.org/recorder_orchestras.php.**

NEWS FROM LATIN AMERICA

Recorders add to Richness of Costa Rica

XXVI *Festival Internacional de Música Barroca* held October 15–25, 2025, in Santa Ana, Costa Rica.

Sponsored by the local government, this 2-week celebration created a vibrant sense of community and intergenerational collaboration with early music concerts by the National Symphony, professional musicians, conservatory students, an adult choir, and a children's choir.

Sarah Cantor was one of three international guest artists invited to participate and to open the festival with Vivaldi's Concerto in C Major, RV 443, and a solo recital with skilled local Baroque enthusiasts. I also led a masterclass for the students of flutist Mario Alberto Coto Rodríguez. His

▶ **Sarah Cantor with Costa Rican colleagues: festival organizer and viola player Laura Araya Ríos and recorder player Diego Salazar.**

students performed Schickhardt's Quartet Sonata, and by popular demand, Sarah directed another informal masterclass that lasted late into the night.

Santa Ana is home to the Escuela Municipal de Artes Integradas, where residents can borrow instruments for free and study music, chamber music, theory, and solfège. The school also offers programs in dance, visual arts, and creative writing, making it a true hub for community arts education. Mario generously lends his personal instruments to his students, but there are not enough to go around! Anyone interested in donating Baroque or Renaissance instruments can contact Sarah at **cantornote@icloud.com.**

This warm and joyful event highlighted how early music continues to unite and inspire communities across borders.

KUDOS TO KENYANS

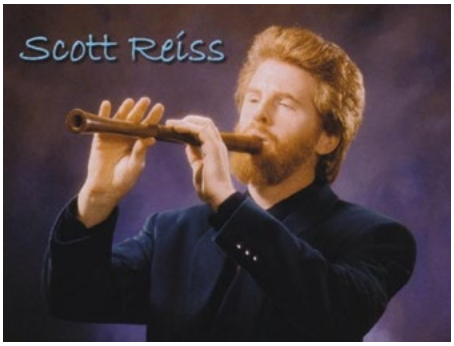
Update from Africa

This August, a group of SCS/Crossing Thresholds (CT) students from Nairobi competed at the 97th Kenya National Music Festival. The music team came in first place in Recorder Ensemble: Primary School section and third place in African-Western Instruments Band: Primary section. Jacob Saya, SCS/CT Kenya Music Director, shares in the pride and dedication witnessed in the students' efforts: "More than anything, nothing beats the reward of hard work, consistency and commitment to a cause. The Facing the Future School music team did not just contend in this year's national music festival, their efforts were decorated with a comeback win."

IN MEMORIAM

Scott Reiss

Anyone who knew Scott Reiss, recorder player and teacher extraordinaire, will never forget him. His impressive technical discoveries and musical explorations, and his exuberant performances with the Folger Consort and HESPERUS, left a legacy of loving mastery. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of Scott's passing, Scott's widow, HESPERUS Director Tina Chancey, is creating a memorial website, as well as establishing a grant program targeting innovative American recorder players. Tina writes: "I'd like to invite Scott's friends, colleagues and students to share their memories on the site, either in writing or on video. And there will be a funding campaign for the grant in the near future." To participate in either, please contact Tina at **tinachancey@cs.com.**



Scan this code to see Scott play, and talk about his enthusiasm for the recorder and his long-term musical goals, visit this mini-documentary from 2003.

LIBRARY CORNER

The Treasure in Our care

Elizabeth Paterson introduces the BCRS's outstanding collection: one of the best in North America. Reprinted from British Columbia Recorder Society's September Magazine.

In an old house down a shady Vancouver street, is found a rare treasure. Climb the front steps, make your way up the winding staircase, and in a warren of small offices you will find the BCRS Music Library, 25 feet of published music stored in oak and steel cabinets and overflowing into banker's boxes.

Gathered over decades, there are music gems from the Middle Ages and pearls of modern music, solitaires for soloists and precious settings for a crew of players. Novices and old hands can ransack the place for musical gold among the 2000-strong collection. And every piece is written specifically for our beautiful instrument.

In truth, we inherited and are now the stewards of an outstanding collection. For a little context, a search in the University of British Columbia Music Library returns 633 recorder scores; at Vancouver Public Library, there are 313. You can find 1,675 scores featuring the recorder in IMSLP, and the music publisher Schott has 2,187 in its catalogue.

How does our collection compare to other Recorder Society Libraries? A few years ago I took a survey and found that Edmonton Recorder Society Library is somewhat smaller than ours, Toronto Recorder Players' Society has roughly 600 titles. Seattle Recorder Society's is similar to ours; in the U.K., the Society of Recorder Players has a collection of more than 2,500 different items, spread across its 12 local branches. The top, though, must be Hudson Mohawk Recorder

◀ **Elizabeth Paterson.**

Society in New York State with over 7,000 titles – and a membership of under 50!

With 2,000 titles, our collection covers a lot of ground. There are exercises and tutors, pop songs and madrigals, sacred music, sonatas, fantasias, dances, and divisions. There are parts for Sopranino, C-Bass and Great Bass. The Renaissance and Baroque periods, however, form the bulk of the collection, largely at the Intermediate level and mostly for SATB.

I was pleased to learn that we have most of the titles listed in *ARS NOVA* articles "Gotta Have It: Collections Everyone Should Know, parts 1 and 2," and "Recorder Method and Technique Books, updated."

Considering how the understanding of early music has developed over the years, it was both surprising and pleasing to find that the big music publishers such as Schott and Moeck are still offering music for sale which was published and edited decades ago. This suggests that our collection, largely formed in the late 1960s to the 1980s, is still contemporary and desirable.

It is also possible to do a "back-of-the-envelope" estimate of our collection's value. By making a shopping cart list of titles we hold at Schott, Moeck, and Schirmer (our top publishing houses), I found that the average replacement price per item was US$15, which gives an approximate value for the entire collection of more than $40,000.

The value of a collection does not rest solely on its cash value. In this age of thousands of free digital editions, you might ask why we need to hold such a collection at all. But consider the difference between buying a self-published book and one put out by a Penguin or Oxford University Press. Proofing for errors, peer reviewed commentary, professional layout, and many other aspects of publishing are the norm for a music publisher. (I don't mean to imply there are no careful and knowledgeable editors who offer their labours for free. Of course there are, just as there are sloppy publishers.)

All the items in the collection – with the possible exception of some early publications – are in copyright. This means that the library catalogue can be made publicly available, that all the items are suitable for use in competitions, examinations, and paid performances – and that none of them can be found in IMSLP or other digital sources. Copies may be made for personal use.

Just to be clear: original manuscripts and publications of long dead composers are well out of copyright, but the editorial work done for publication is not. For example, the notes for Alfonso Ferrabosco's First Set of Pieces are free, and you can find a digital edition of an early printing at Internet Archive. You can also find a modern transcription on IMSLP. But in both cases the music is set for viols. For a recorder transcription you must turn to a published work, digital or print.

There are excellent editions of works for the recorder in IMSLP, but those with historical and performance notes, for example by London Pro Musica, are generally only available in published editions.

On IMSLP, you will not find works by Canadians Keith Bissell, Barbara

Pentland, Jean Papineau-Couture; recorder greats Hans-Martin Linde, Hans Ulrich Staeps, or Ralph Vaughan Williams, Paul Hindemith, and Benjamin Britten, nor the famous Rooda exercises or the well-known tutors by Hugh Orr and Mario Duschenes, nor works edited by Piers Adams. Music by all these modern composers and more can be found in our library. And all of these titles are accessible for BCRS members to borrow, if they live in the Lower Mainland.

The library is also a repository and a keeper of recorder culture and BCRS history. Looking at publications through the decades will give you an idea of how the skill and interest levels of the average member have changed. Many groups in the earlier years did not have a bass recorder and this is reflected in the higher quantity of works for "recorders without bass" from the 1950s and early 60s. About half the Library collection has been donated by members as they retired or turned to other instruments. Their taste and ability colour our collection.

Bill Read, Jim Whittaker, David Donaldson, and others all arranged or composed for the BCRS and their work is preserved in our library. Until 2018, I would have included our manuscript copy of *Eons Ago Blue* by Bob Dorough, renowned American jazz musician. The composition circulated among recorder players for more than 50 years before being officially published, preserved by collections like ours.

BCRS membership numbers are not quite as extensive as the library collection. Accordingly, our circulation figures look small. 60 items were borrowed in the last year, by 9 borrowers. Several people though were borrowing for their groups. Counting group members as borrowers bumps the number to around 20-25, quite a good proportion of our Lower Mainland members.

The reasons for borrowing are many and varied. Having music to play at your group's next meeting is obviously one. Choosing music for an upcoming performance is also common, whether playing for a wedding or a memorial, a seniors' home, or an open mic event. Music has been borrowed for exams and to take away on holiday. Folksongs to play for an elderly relative, material for teaching others, exercises and technical studies for self-improvement. These are only a few of the motives for exploring the library. In order to find a worthy challenge, to search for beauty, check out the BCRS Music Library.

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- The first Playing Meeting is free – try us out!

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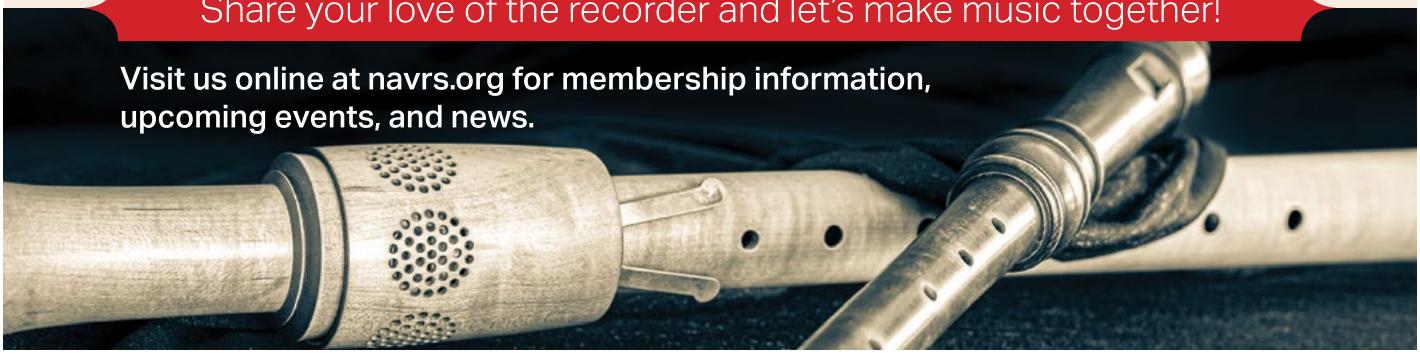


COMPOSER PROFILE

MY LIFE AS A COMPOSER FOR RECORDER

BY BENJAMIN THORN

The composer of *Voice of the Crocodile* describes some of his compositional strategies.

There are several questions that periodically come up when people talk to me about being a composer. Three of them are:

- *Why do you write music?*
- *Why do you write so much for the recorder?*
- *Where do your ideas come from?*

I'll try to answer all of these, and at the same time provide some background and description of my music.

Why Do I Write Music?

In a way, this question is both easy and difficult to answer. I have been composing fairly seriously for 50 years. Maybe I could, like Martin Luther, say "Here I stand, I can do no other," though that doesn't provide much enlightenment. When I was about 13 I felt the urge to write music, initially just melodic lines playable on the flute, and I've been doing it ever since. It is one of several creative outputs that helps keep me sane. But I don't know whether I would have persisted if it weren't for Grant Helmers, the music teacher at my school, who happened to be a prize-winning organist. He encouraged me, and showed me a few tricks of the trade. After he left to pursue further study and establish a career as a professional organist, I had lessons with Edward Primrose, Larry Sitsky and Donald Hollier, the latter two while receiving a single-study scholarship at the Canberra School of Music. That helped establish my self-image as a composer, but I wasn't yet committed to a musical career. I studied music as part of a Bachelor of Arts at Sydney University, but hung around with the student composers and even submitted a folio of compositions each year to Peter Sculthorpe, who was embarrassed because I was

Benjamin Thorn is a composer and recorder player based in Armidale, NSW, Australia. He composes for a wide range of instruments and voices but has gained most acclaim for his music for recorder. His music is performed around the world, including in the ISCM 2012 World Music Days, and has been published in Australia, Germany, the United States and Canada. He is the music editor for Orpheus Music and of New England lectures in creative arts education at the University of New England (in Armidale, Australia). He is the author of Keep the Presses Running, an oral history of the Australian printing industry.

writing more music than some of his composition students. At Sydney University I also came under the influence of Winsome Evans. I played with the Renaissance Players that she directed, exposing me to ways of elaborating and reinventing Early Music.

One consequence of this background is that I have always been very eclectic and have never limited myself to one style of music. One of the worst things that I sometimes observe in young composers is being too narrow and settling on a style that they pretentiously call "their voice," before they really discover what music is about. I would also say that there are composition teachers who try to generate clones, which is alarming for the same reason. Larry Sitsky once told me that when he went to America he discovered lots of Hindemith clones and how that really frightened him. I would say that the opposite tendency, shown by some composers, of trying to reinvent themselves and solve new musical problems with each new piece, is also probably less than ideal.

One thing that I did discover as a student was not to take myself too seriously. I discovered this through bitter experience. I wanted to write deep and meaningful music, full of symbolism. I found I didn't have the talent for it. Whenever I tried, the results might have been deep and meaningful, but made for pretty awful music. However, when I had a more light-hearted approach, which could include having fun experimenting with sounds, the results seemed to work. So since then, I have eschewed the deep and meaningful, which has occasionally led to criticism such as that my music "lacks any sort of weight." What doesn't seem to have been considered by such critics is that I might have a strong and considered philosophical position against such "weight" in *my* music (what other composers do is up to them).

"

I discovered or evolved several general principles about writing for recorder based around the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument.

As a student, I wrote a lot of music purely for itself, without any immediate plans for performance, though sometimes opportunities came along. While I will still write the occasional piece "on spec," most of my music has been written for specific purposes, or on request.

Why Do I Write So Much for the Recorder?

While I was at school my main instrument was the flute, though, perhaps perversely, I still played around with the recorder. What I didn't know however was the range and scope of the recorder repertoire, ancient or modern. So when I decided to participate in the Under 14 Solo Recorder section of the Canberra Eisteddfod, I composed the piece that I was to perform, a Nocturne and Fugue for recorder and piano. I am possibly the only person ever to combine those two musical forms, but Grant Helmers had started teaching me about fugues, so that's what I wrote. I won the section. I suspect that the person who came second, who subsequently became a professional clarinetist, had similar repertoire problems, but had discovered Gluck's *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*.

The point of that little story is that the initial impetus for writing for the recorder was to write pieces that I myself could play. And to some extent that impetus has continued, though I do also write a lot at the request of others.

I soon began to discover the real scope of the recorder repertoire, ancient and modern, and came to realize that many pieces I had assumed were flute pieces were originally written for recorder. This included examples from the avant garde which encouraged me to explore the range of tonal possibilities on the recorder. The ease with which the recorder can produce "extended techniques" – particularly multiphonics, but also glissandi, flutter tonguing, burbles, and more was fascinating and intriguing. It probably led me to change my performance focus from flute to recorder, though I did also start playing Baroque flute.

The recorder music that I was writing in the 1980s was, as I said, largely written for myself to perform, and therefore required competent players. I discovered or evolved several general principles about writing for recorder based around the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument.

The recorder doesn't do dynamics particularly well, and in particular doesn't do the crescendos and diminuendos in slow movements that the flute does so well. This suggested to me that idiomatic recorder writing lends itself to rhythmic explorations and variations. I realized, partly influenced by Balkan folk music, that asymmetrical meters were a good way of maintaining rhythmic interest and impetus. These became almost a defining characteristic of my music, for instance the duet *5s and 6s and 7s* where the three movements are in 5/4, 6/8 and 7/8, or *Pype and droom and…* for recorder and drum with movements in 7/8 and 10/8. My friend, fellow composer and recorder player Ian Shanahan, used to say that I needed to go to 7/8 Anonymous to cure my addiction to that meter.

The other thing I discovered was how to use extended techniques effectively. When these first started to be used in the 1960s, there was a tendency to use them for short bursts

of color and/or to try to include as many different possibilities as possible – so much so that pieces could be perceived as a catalogue of funny sounds that forgot to be music. What I started to do was limit the range of extended techniques in any one movement and to use them consistently. So for instance in the third movement of *Pype and droom and…* I use singing into the recorder (mostly in unison/octaves) and occasional flutter tonguing. I think this was the first piece ever written where singing into the recorder was used as the main timbre for an entire movement. But doing something all the time can get a bit boring, and interest can be maintained by having short fragments that are only voice or only recorder or where the voice reinforces only every second or third note.

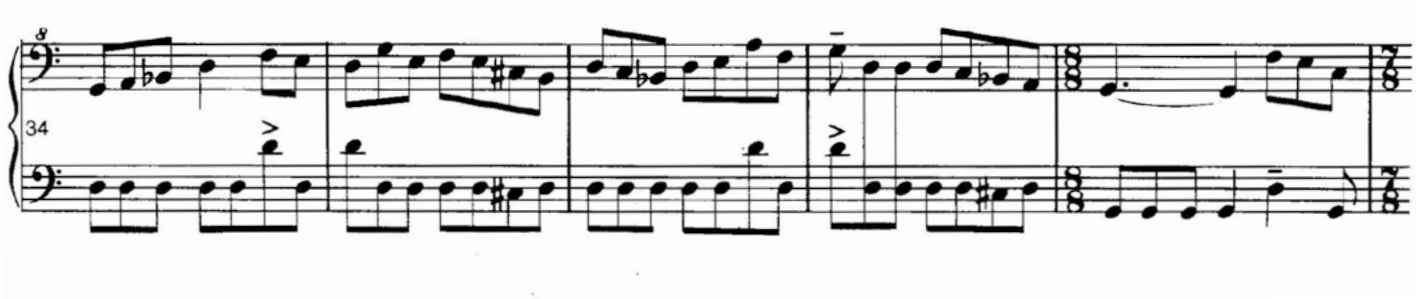
This approach was later extended and elaborated in *The Voice of the Crocodile*. The second movement uses a technique very similar to *Pype and Droom and…*, with the main difference being that there is more extended use of solo recorder in the middle section to heighten the timbral contrast. The first and third movements explore other possibilities. The first movement uses the percussive effect of bell banging (the opening is inspired by the drum calls in traditional Japanese music). The main timbral effect is the use of multiphonics. It is an a-metrical piece, and the voice is used as a separate part that rarely coincides with the recorder but adds an independent layer that enhances the crunchiness of the sound. The third movement is different again. Another metrical piece (mostly in 7/8), here the voice is only occasionally in unison/octaves with the recorder and a lot of the time has an independent line, though often this is an elaborated drone. Where the voice part is melodic, it is either solo or singing against held notes on the recorder. Part of the excitement of the piece is due to the specified use of falsetto, which does mean that the effect of male and female performers is somewhat different. The metrical nature is broken up by an ad lib. section of chaos on both voice and recorder and towards the end there is an extended passage of falsetto singing and bell banging that helps to create a link to the timbral world of the first movement (see ex.1).

> “…. when I had a more lighthearted approach, which could include having fun experimenting with sounds, the results seemed to work.

Another early piece that I should mention is the duet *Canard-canard~*. The first movement makes extensive use of multiphonics and syncopated rhythmic ostinati creating a jagged, disjointed feel. This is contrasted with a more lyrical middle section before the opening idea returns. The second movement is much more lyrical and uses burbles (block thumb hole and stroke fingers over the others), including doing this on two recorders at once. It also uses half blowing (blowing across rather than directly into the mouthpiece) and glissandi. The third movement uses bell banging and rhythmic multiphonics under a syncopated melody. Again, this is a case of limiting the extended techniques within each movement. *Canard-canard~* gained me some international recognition after I'd given a copy to Walter van Hauwe who used it with his students in Amsterdam. This led to contact with several international recorder players, including Pete Rose to whom I sent other pieces including *The Voice of the Crocodile*, which he recommended as a set work in a European recorder contest. That resulted in it being published by Moeck. The rest is history.

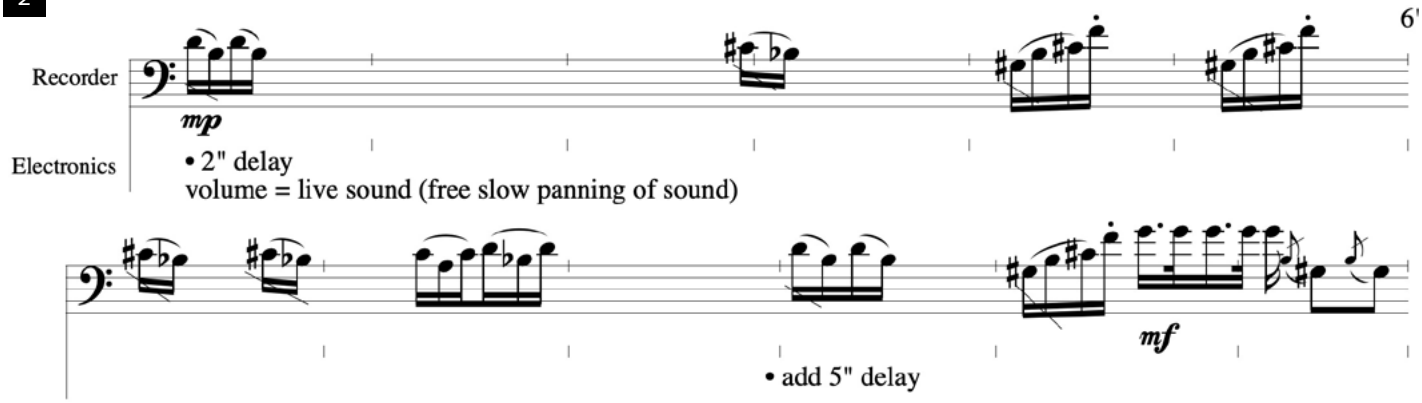
There is a funny story associated with Amsterdam. I made a preliminary enquiry about the possibility of studying composition at the Amsterdam Conservatory with the aim of applying for a Dutch Government

1



1: *The Voice of the Crocodile* mvt 3.

2



2: *Pipistrelli gialli* mvt 1.

Scholarship. I didn't pursue this with a formal application, but did receive a very official letter saying my (non-existent) application had been rejected. This at the same time that *Canard-canard~* was being taught in another part of the conservatorium.

While at Sydney University I was exposed to electronic music and I experimented a bit with it. This included *Newrotika* for recorder, tape delay, recorded tone, and digital delay. I had the misfortune to learn all my electronic music just before MIDI became an industry standard, so a lot of what I could do was immediately obsolete. Tape delay pieces have the inherent issue of predictability in that you hear something once and then you hear it again. In *Newrotika* I addressed this by not using the delay all the time, and also using digital delay to frequently alter levels of reverb. This created an unstable sense of space. Later I used the digital delay to add various levels of distortion to the recorder which, when it involved multiphonics, could create a wide range of sound possibilities.

Newrotika was a fairly successful piece but definitely a learning experience and I developed the ideas further in *Pipistrelli gialli*. This piece had much the same set up but with two asymmetrical delays (2" and 5") and the instruction that distortion or reverb could be added to the sound before or after recording so that the delay was not always identical to the live sound. These features allowed for a much more complex and unpredictable sound world. Although conceived as a tape delay piece, *Pipistrelli gialli* has always been performed using digital delays (see ex. 2).

Because of limited access to equipment, it was the last piece I wrote using electronics until Jo Arnott commissioned a piece in 2013. *Polly Wants a Cracker* involves some use of delays but more use of capturing and looping melodic fragments, and also doubling of the recorder sounds one or two octaves lower, and manipulation of the spatial location of the sounds. The third movement requires the recorder player to play two instruments at once. The title is a joking reference to the trade mark of the Arnott Biscuit Company (no relation to Jo), also adopted in the U.S. by the younger Nabisco company.

Until the late 1980s, most of my music had tended to be at the more difficult end of the repertoire, but I was getting known. I was then approached by Richard Vella of Currency Press to edit a collection of Australian Recorder Music for their New Music venture. This was to be aimed, if not

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at absolute beginners, at less virtuosic players, where the press saw most market potential. I had two or three pieces that I thought might be suitable; I knew of some pieces by other composers, and also knew people to ask to write for the series. But after discussions with Richard, we decided that we could have two volumes and that half of the first should include pedagogical pieces that introduced both extended recorder techniques and compositional techniques. And so *Recorders at Large* was born.

I wrote 18 pieces specially for the publication – mostly a page or less in length – that introduced different modes, different rhythms, dissonance, aleatory, burbles, multiphonics, minimalism, singing into the recorder, playing two recorders at once, and a piece that could be played upside down. The rest of the first volume comprised existing pieces, including a little suite called *Exotic Dances* that I had written, and other pieces written on request, including Stephen Yates's two duets *Shoes and Socks* that can also be performed as a quartet. Some composers had difficulties writing simple music and produced pieces that were not at all suitable.

A second volume came out a couple of years later, with slightly more difficult pieces intended for performance, including *5s and 6s and 7s* and *Pype and Droom and*….

> One of my motivations for incorporating extended techniques … is to increase the timbral range and variety of recorders.

Recorders at Large was published at almost the same time as *The Voice of the Crocodile*. A professor of music, Malcolm Gillies, gave me some good advice, which was not to be tied down to either the virtuosic or the pedagogical repertoire, but always to pursue both.

Having had some success with publication, though I certainly didn't made a lot of money out of it, I approached several other publishers. I sent three ensemble pieces to Loux Music. They agreed to publish *Chasing…, What about Tabouleh?* and *The Great Emu War* together under the last title. These pieces are all fairly virtuosic and make use of glissandi, flutter tonguing, and multiphonics in *Chasing*; singing, burbles, glissandi, and indeterminate pitches in *What about Tabouleh?*; and multiphonics and flutter tonguing in *The Great Emu War*. Because the last piece is a quartet, and the first two are trios, I added an optional percussion part to them.

Carus Verlag then offered to publish *Songs for My Father's Wedding*. This is a piece for bass recorder that makes extensive use of singing, not just as a timbral effect but singing a text made up of fragments from the *Song of Songs* (see ex. 3). The piece was actually written for my father's (second) wedding.

These pieces were just coming out in 1998 when I moved to Armidale in New South Wales, and started collaborating with Zana Clarke in establishing Orpheus Music. I have been the music editor there since then. As a consequence, most of my subsequent recorder music has been published by Orpheus, though I have maintained some links with Loux, editing some early music editions including a recorder quartet version of Telemann's *Heroic Marches* and a couple of original pieces that they commissioned: *Any Blue Cat Dances*, five pieces in Baroque style for recorder quartet and harpsichord, and *Recorder Studies 10*, a set of pieces that like *Recorders at Large* explores contemporary techniques but at a slightly more difficult level.

At this time I also started working with an adult amateur recorder group and they provided the impetus for a lot of new works, both arrangements and original compositions. I also wrote for a couple of local teenage groups that could play music that was a bit more complex. All of these were

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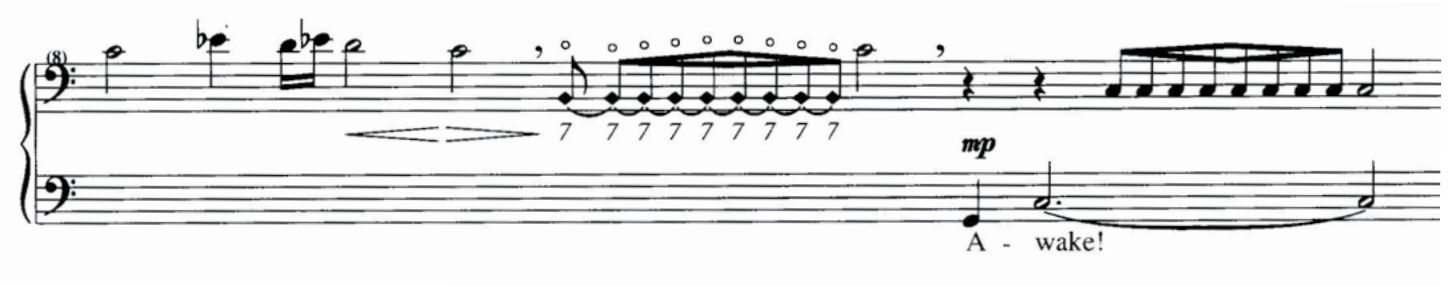

3: *Songs for My Father's Wedding* mvt 3.

suitable for Orpheus Music. I established several principles for writing ensemble music.

Firstly: all parts should be interesting melodically. I don't want the players of the inner parts to feel they are just filling in the harmony.

Secondly: the texture should vary, both in terms of number of parts playing at any given time, and the relationships between parts. So in a quartet, for instance, there are times when three, two or even only one part is playing, though for most of the time there are four. A main melody can and should appear in any part. I also think about different possible textures such as homophony, polyphony etc. and don't stick to one of them all the time.

Thirdly: the harmony should also be varied. This is a bit dependent on style and genre but as a general principle, any melody should not be harmonized in the same way all the time if that can be avoided. One of the first things I look at when someone shows me a new piece is whether there are any accidentals. If there aren't, it is likely to sound harmonically static.

For several years Zana Clarke and I organized an event, Recorders en Masse, that the Armidale Recorder Society hoped would involve every recorder player in Armidale. For the most part different groups performed but we wanted everyone to play together as well, and I wrote several pieces for that. This meant that one soprano part was limited to five notes (G to D) and simple rhythms, while some other parts needed to be much more challenging to keep advanced players engaged. The first of these pieces was *We Hate Brussels Sprouts*: the title comes from the rhythm of the two bar ostinato that is played with variations throughout most of the piece by the simple soprano line (see ex. 4 over page). The rest of a quartet also has fairly straightforward parts and there are two much more virtuosic lines. After that, I sought out folksongs and carols that had limited range (at least for one section) and created arrangements of them as quintets, with the first soprano playing the 5-note melody and the other parts being more (but not excessively) complex. Four collections of these are published by Orpheus.

> “
>
> It is possible to combine a reflection of early music with contemporary techniques.

One of my motivations for incorporating extended techniques, particularly in solo pieces, is to increase the timbral range and variety of recorders, so that a solo recital doesn't have the same sound all the time. Techniques like multiphonics and singing into (and out of) the instrument also increase the harmonic potential, and most of my solo repertoire includes one or the other technique somewhere. When a solo recorder is combined with another instrument as in *Salad undressing* (recorder and cello), *Hot silk* (recorder and harpsichord), and *Out of Aegypt* (recorder and guitar), the scope for varying texture exists without necessarily using such techniques, though I do use multiphonics in a rare piece for recorder and piano, *Blue Wombat* – but there I also use the piano largely as a percussion instrument.

Another technique that expands harmonic possibilities is playing two recorders at once. I first experimented with the technique when busking, partly to provide something different for the public, and included a simple little piece *Duet for One* in *Recorders at Large*. Children find it great fun. In *Canard-canard~* the second movement

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does involve one player creating burbles on two recorders at once, but my first really extended piece using the technique was *Where's The Other One?* (see ex. 5) In it I explore various possibilities, from parallel movement and heterophony to polyphony, with the second movement almost fugal. When doing this, it is always important that at times just one recorder is playing for textural variety.

The other thing to consider is that because there is a very limited range of notes that can be played with one hand you should try to use all the available notes, including the two that are possible in the second octave and the C# on the soprano as well as C. The apotheosis of this technique is my *Duetto ultimo* where two players both play two recorders and sing to create a wide range of timbral possibilities and combinations.

On the subject of keeping the audience engaged, I have written a couple of pieces where they are actually involved. The first of these, *Farmyard*, was written for me to use in solo recitals, but doesn't actually involve any recorders. It is perhaps the only piece written just for the audience and involves co-ordinating them in making a variety of animal noises (and at one point the sound of a lettuce just to make some of them think!). *Drone Dances* does use recorders. Here the audience is asked to sing a drone – in the first movement a sustained note, and in the second, a metrical alternation between the root and the fifth, while a recorder duet is played over the top.

> The titles of my pieces usually come after the process of composition, so they don't really provide inspiration – even if they seem to.

Where Do My Ideas Come From?

Actually to some extent I have partly answered this already. As I have explained, I consistently produce music in several styles, and several levels of difficulty. I like folk music and have produced a lot of pieces based on existing folk tunes. At the same time I have created my own tunes in folk styles – such as in the quartet *Celtic Materials* which includes a *Cotton reel, Lace slip jig, Muslin mazurka, Irish linen jig*, and *Polka dot poplin* (ex. 6) – or inspired by Baroque or Renaissance styles as in *Any Blue Cat Dances*.

It is of course possible to combine a reflection of early music with contemporary techniques, and I am far from the first to do this if you think about composers like Hans Martin Linde. In my *Three Follies* for bass recorder (actually originally written for ocarina) the three movements are constructed over an implied Follia ground bass. The first movement has a scat-type feel with melodic fragments that deliberately do not coincide with the 4-bar bass patterns, while the second movement incorporates singing and playing.

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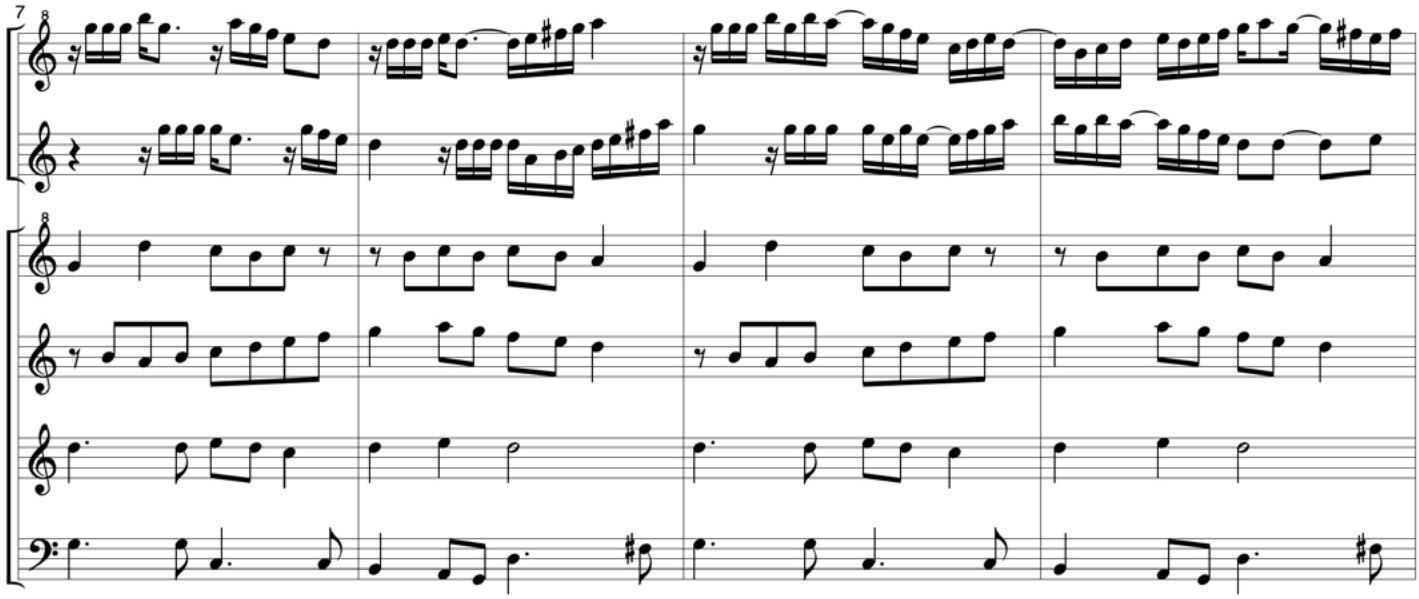

4: *We Hate Brussels Sprouts* (the rhythm of the title is in the first bar of the third part from the top of the score).

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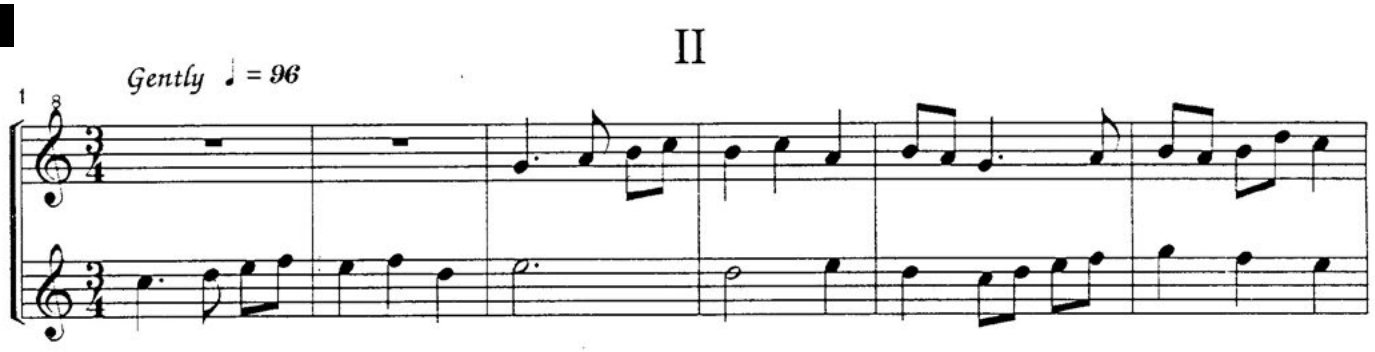

5: *Where's The Other One?* mvt 2.

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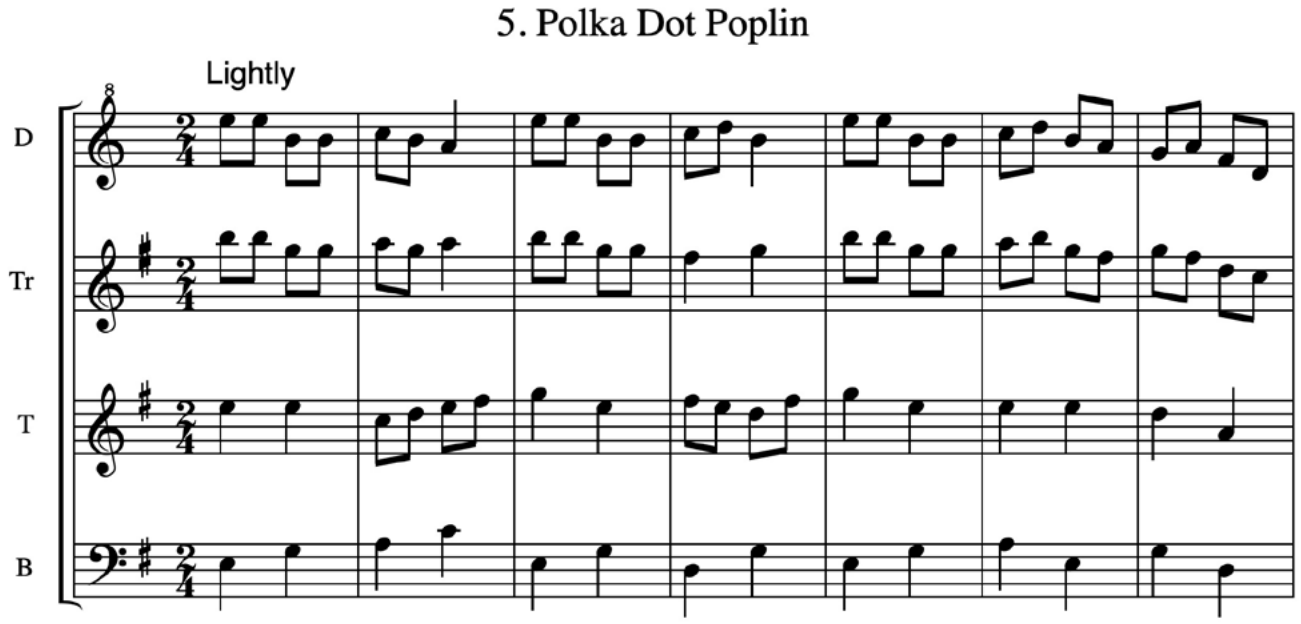

6: "Polka Dot Poplin" from *Celtic Materials.*

The third movement is a somewhat straighter jig. While conceived as a solo, you can play it with an actual ground bass (see ex. 7, p. 22).

Improvisation can also be a source of inspiration: playing in a particular style and seeing what comes out. You do have to be careful here because first ideas are often not as good as they can be, and an important part of the composition process is tweaking and experimenting with the initial ideas. Reworking ideas can even generate new ones. A recent quartet, *Through a Glass Darkly*, is based on the premise of rejigging the same initial music ideas in three different ways (and three different time signatures) to effectively create three variations on a theme that is never explicitly stated. This is an idea I had previously explored in *Deep Sea Perspectives* (octet) and *Mirror* (quartet), though just with pairs of movements.

One thing to be wary of when improvising is unconsciously recreating an existing tune. I recently discovered that I'd written a tune that was rather too similar (not identical) to Hedwig's Theme from the *Harry Potter* movies. Fortunately it was still in the compositional process and a few little tweaks meant that I could ensure that it only had a similar feel, and in any case I developed it differently. But I was surprised when someone pointed out that I had incorporated the opening 4-note motif of the Wedding March from *Lohengrin*

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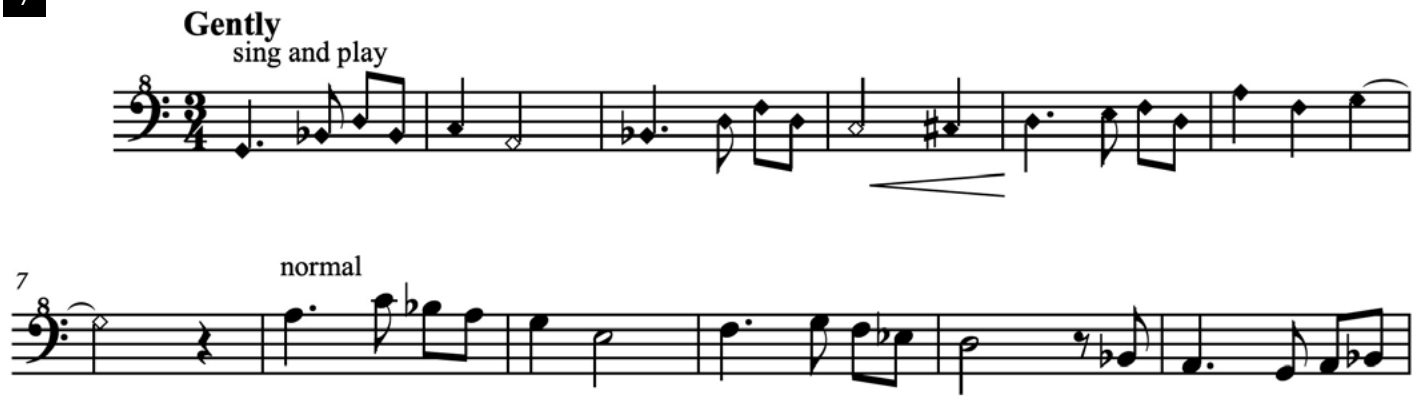

7: *Three Follies* for bass recorder mvt 2.

in *Songs for My Father's Wedding*. I've embraced it and said it was a deliberate reference!

The titles of my pieces usually come after the process of composition, so they don't really provide inspiration – even if they seem to. The multiphonics in the second movement of *The Great Emu War* might sound like machine guns, but they were created as abstract music exploring rhythm and timbre before I thought of the title. Similarly, the three movements for bass solo, *Forestry in New England*, which could be interpreted as twining tendrils, multiphonic axe blows, and a frenzied animal dance with singing into the recorder, were all finished before the idea of the title came along. Not all my titles are quite as pertinent. Some involve puns like *Four Bass in a Pond* (for four bass recorders) and some are purely absurdist like *Dancing with a Cabbage* (three recorders and harp), where the relevant word is "dancing" since the three movements could be conceived as dances, as could a lot of my music. I've already alluded to my interest in strong rhythms and that these seem to suit the recorder, so perhaps moving my body is one source of inspiration and ideas.

So, my initial ideas come from all sorts of places and have resulted in a variety of musical styles and forms. Music can start from movement and dance, or a song, or a rhythmic or timbral exploration, or a combination of these. Some of my music looks back at the past and reinvents it, some is very much of the present and looks to the future, but one really important aspect is that whatever the musical ideas are or wherever they come from, the process of playing with them and tweaking them is the key to successful composition. Once I have a first draft of a piece it undergoes an intensive revision process. And this is where computers are so useful. The playback function allows me to play a piece again, and again, and again, and again. If there's anything that doesn't quite work it becomes pretty obvious, and I can then tweak and adjust (some adjustments can be quite substantial), and play with the music until it is as good as it can be.

If I had to give any advice to potential composers, it would be to revise, and revise, and revise. Even so, some pieces work better than others. They achieve that indefinable magic that keeps me composing, and keeps all of us engaged in performing and listening. ❁

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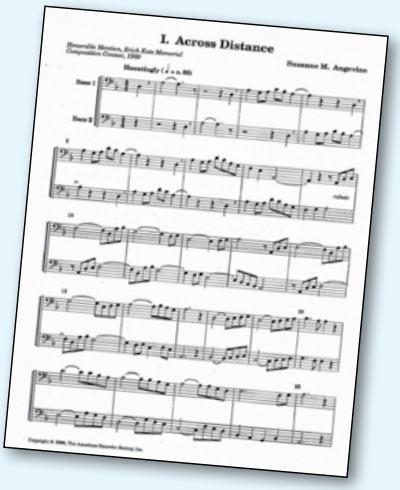

REFERENCES AND LINKS OF INTEREST:

Some Performances of Benjamin Thorn's music:

Voice of the Crocodile

There are a variety of videos of Ben's most popular piece including one by the composer himself, another vintage performance by the late Pete Rose, and others from student recitals. Listen for the differences resulting from the register of the performer's singing voice.

Benjamin Thorn, Armidale Uniting Church, live performance 2023

Pete Rose from 1992

Martin Chocholouš, 2010 at the Dům hudby Plzeň, Pilsen, Czechia

Jonathan Debus (13 years old), annual concert of the Westfälischen Schule für Musik, Münster, Germany 2012

Laura Kießkalt, Mozarteum Salzburg, 2020

Songs for My Father's Wedding
Annika Petschnig, Anton Bruckner Privatuniversität, Graz, Austria 2025

Three Cantigas
unnamed performers

Pipistrelli gialli
Otto Hashmi, Recorder Day, October 1, 2023, at te Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London

We Hate Brussels Sprouts
Kathy Williams-Devries, 6-part multitrack

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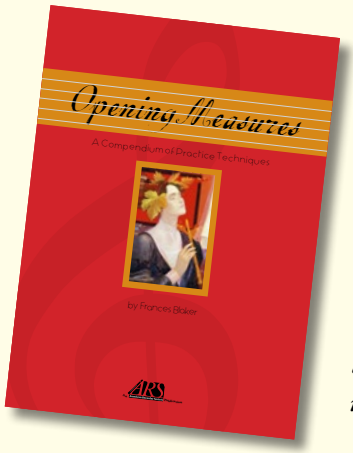

"It is a gathering of topics, some about techniques specific to the recorder, others concerning various musical skills that are pertinent to musicians of all sorts. My goal with these articles is to help recorder players of all levels to move forward in their own playing."

— FRANCES BLAKER

HISTORY AND REPERTOIRE

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ITALIAN MUSIC ON THE RECORDER

BY PETER VAN HEYGHEN

An update of the author's ground-breaking research.

Recently, I defended my doctoral thesis entitled "The Place of the Recorder in the Performance of Italian Music c.1600-1690." With the research that preceded it, I returned to a theme that has fascinated me since my student days. More than 30 years ago, I published a number of articles on this theme, which are still considered reference texts by many recorder players today. However, a new comprehensive publication on this theme was urgently needed, as it had become clear that my old articles from 1994 and 1995 told a very incomplete story and even contained errors. The plan for the near future is to publish a book based on my doctoral research, of which the present article can be regarded as a trailer.

My great love for the recorder has always spurred me to search for the unique characteristics – the soul – of each historical recorder type, and to relate this to the music that was demonstrably played on it, or could have been played on it.

There are two reasons why this search is particularly difficult with regard to the period from 1600 to 1690 (at the latest), a period dominated by Italian musical innovations. Firstly, during that period, the first musical works composed explicitly for the recorder appeared, while at the same time, in certain musical genres, there was still considerable freedom in terms of instrumentation. As a result, the scope and limits of the recorder repertoire of the time are by no means immediately clear. Secondly, with a few exceptions, the surviving historical recorders that may originate from that period cannot be accurately dated and cannot be attributed to a known maker or even a region. This makes it virtually impossible to link a specific type of instrument to a specific repertoire with absolute certainty.

Research Questions

As a conservatory student, I was confronted for the first time with this problem of the so-called "transitional recorder" and its presumed early 17th-century repertoire. However, the answers and solutions offered in the recorder world at the time – and which are still applied by many today – did not really convince me even then.

Peter Van Heyghen is primarily active as a recorder player and conductor. He performs both as a soloist and with numerous chamber music ensembles. As a teacher of historical performance practice, he is a faculty member at the Royal Conservatories of Brussels and Amsterdam. He has published several groundbreaking articles on the history and performance practice of the recorder during the Renaissance and early Baroque periods. Recently, he completed a Doctor of Arts degree.

This article was commissioned for Blokfluitist*, where it will appear (in Dutch) in January 2026 and is printed here with permission.*

I asked myself questions such as: were all those canzonas by Frescobaldi and those sonatas by Cima, Castello, Fontana, Merula and Turini, which were already being performed everywhere on soprano recorders by pioneers such as Hans-Martin Linde, Frans Brüggen, Kees Boeke, Walter van Hauwe, Conrad Steinmann and Clas Pehrsson, really intended for performance on the recorder? After all, more and more versions were gradually becoming available on the violin and cornetto, and these often sounded much more convincing. And was the soprano recorder really the most important recorder size at the time? Italian historical sources seemed to point more in the direction of the slightly larger descant or alto in G. Why did modern recorder players usually play this music on instruments inspired by originals dating from the second half of the 17th century (Kynseker, Haka, Denner), or products of modern makers who inventively developed their own models ("Ganassi," "Bassano," "Van Eyck")? Were there really no instruments left from the first half of the 17th century that could serve as models?

My first real research project, which would ultimately result in the articles of 1994 and 1995, was therefore focused on defining the Italian recorder repertoire between 1600 and 1670 and the recorder sizes and types that were used for this purpose. The main conclusions of this study were:

- That the soprano recorder was indeed used at the time to perform Italian music, but exclusively by amateurs in the Northern Netherlands;
- That in Northern Italy and the South of the Holy Roman Empire, the most prominent recorder size was the descant in G. In addition, tenors in C were also used occasionally, and occasionally even a sopranino in G';
- That the repertoire for the descant in G consisted, on the one hand, of a limited number of compositions explicitly composed for the recorder and, on the other hand, of a much larger number of compositions that at the time could be performed on the violin, cornetto or recorder. However, since the register of the descant in G was lower and notated in a different clef (C1) from the one in which violin or cornetto parts were usually notated (G2), a downward transposition of a fourth was necessary for the performance of violin or cornetto music on the recorder. This transposition was only possible if the original bass part was sufficiently high and notated in a tenor or baritone clef (C4 or F3). A large number of compositions are also notated in a clef system (G2 in the soprano and F4 in the bass) that in principle does not allow a downward transposition of a fourth, because this would result in the bass part being atypically and often unplayably low. As a result, these works are not suitable for performance on the recorder, or at least not on the descant in G.

Deepening and Broadening

The weakest element of this first research project was undoubtedly the section on the types of recorders in use. I still had too little knowledge about the number of surviving historical instruments and their characteristics. The problem is that recorders of presumed early 17th-century origin often look identical to 16th-century instruments. This meant that I not only needed to conduct a second research project to thoroughly study the 16th century, but also to do so in collaboration with an experienced recorder maker whose enthusiasm matched my own. In 1995, I was very fortunate to meet Adrian Brown. The results of our joint research led to the publication of two long articles on the Renaissance recorder consort in 2005. Thanks to Adrian's research on the historical instrument collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna – with which I occasionally assisted – the proverbial needle in the haystack was finally found: the historical recorder type that is the best candidate for performing even the most challenging early 17th-century music, and which has since inspired Adrian's Dolcimelo model.

Specifically, these are three historical instruments of different sizes – tenor, alto and soprano – most likely of Italian origin and made by the same, unfortunately anonymous, builder (shown in fig. 1). Among other things, the decorated mouthpiece and foot of the largest instrument suggest that these instruments, if not built in the 17th century, were certainly still in use in that period. The special bore profile of the three instruments allows for a range of more than two octaves.

A few years ago, I decided to finally write a new, updated version of my article from 1995, which ultimately resulted in my doctoral thesis. I will summarize the most important results of this new research.

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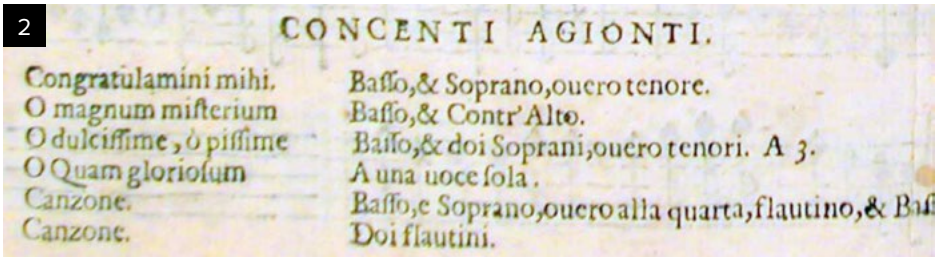
1: From top to bottom: Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum SAM 130, 140 and 148.



2: From Giovanni Battista Riccio's Il primo libro delle divine lodi (Venice, 1612); 3: From Giovanni Battista Riccio's Il terzo libro delle divine lodi musicali (Venice, 1620).

I was able to confirm my main conclusions from 1995, and reinforce them with dozens of newly found references:

•The three most important regions where Italian music was performed on recorders were the Veneto (especially in the 1620s and 1630s), the Viennese imperial court (especially in the 1640s to 1670s), and the Dutch Republic (especially in the 1640s and 1650s). In addition, but to a much lesser extent, I also found references in places, mainly in northern Italy and the southern part of the Holy Roman Empire, such as (in alphabetical order) Bologna, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Ferrara, Florence, Frankfurt, Kroměříž, Mantua, Milan, Neuburg an der Donau, Parma, Pieve S. Stefano, Pisa, Rome, Tortona and Vercelli.

•The recorder was apparently used in virtually every musical genre: court opera, sacred vocal music, secular vocal music, and purely instrumental music. However, there is no indication of the use of recorders in the "orchestra" of Venetian commercial opera.

•The recorder repertoire was indeed clearly larger than just the musical works explicitly assigned to the instrument. As far as Italy itself is concerned, this can be deduced from the fact that composers often suggested an alternative to the recorder ("flauto o cornetto," "flauto o violino," etc.), sometimes accompanied by an explicit instruction to transpose. The fact that there are no examples where the recorder is suggested as an alternative to another instrument may simply indicate that the use of the recorder was exceptional, and that, when no recorders were available, the work in question could also be performed on the more common cornetto or violin. However, it is evident that the alternative worked in both directions.

As far as the Dutch Republic is concerned, we know that amateur recorder players such as Adriana van den Bergh and Gerbrand van Blankenburg had access to numerous collections of Italian music, mostly instrumental.

•Canzonas or sonatas for a single upper voice and basso continuo were apparently rarely performed on the recorder. Only one solo canzona (by G.B. Riccio) was explicitly composed for the recorder (although here too the cornetto is suggested as an alternative), and only a handful of other works, primarily for violin, cornetto, or soprano voice, are suitable for performance on the recorder – at least, if no drastic changes to the original music are taken into account.

•Based on all available musical, literary, archival, and iconographic sources, a ranking can be made according to the frequency with which the various soprano instruments were used at the time: the violin and the cornetto are ubiquitous; the recorder occurs occasionally, and the traverso is virtually absent. There were no other soprano instruments. Only in Dutch amateur music did the recorder occupy an important place.

•The recorder was never a professional musician's main instrument. It may well have served as a "stepping stone" instrument in the training of professional wind players and may have remained a permanent part of their instrumentarium thereafter.

•There is no evidence whatsoever of the soprano recorder being used as a solo instrument in Italy!

•The most common recorder sizes were:

The descant or alto in G: this dominated in all regions except the Dutch Republic. Suitable parts for the descant in G are notated in C1 or transposable G2 clef.

The soprano in C': the dominant recorder size in the Dutch Republic. Parts were notated in G2 clef.

Smaller and larger recorders were used much less frequently, but there are a number of parts for tenor recorder notated in G2. The surprising thing here is that the tenor recorder with its G2 clef sounds at the notated pitch, while the descant in G with its C1 or downward transposed G2 clef sounds an octave higher than the notation.

In my thesis, I also published lists of printed collections of 17th-century

Italian music that contain compositions that, although not specifically intended for the recorder, can nevertheless be performed on our instrument, in accordance with the instrumentation practices of the time, both in Northern Italy and in the Dutch Republic.

My doctoral research also yielded many new and sometimes surprising insights:

- The fact that the recorder consort apparently remained a living practice in northern Italy until the late 1610s and in the Netherlands even until the 1640s;
- The relatively high frequency with which recorders were used in northern Italian church music during the first half of the 17th century;
- The use of the tenor in C, instead of the descant in G, as the standard recorder size in sacred mixed vocal-instrumental music in the western Po Valley (particularly in Vercelli and Tortona);
- The much more frequent occurrence of high notes in parts for both the descant in G (written G5 and A5) and the tenor in C (written B5 and C6);
- The regular use of recorders in Italian theatrical music at the Viennese court;
- The incredible amount of Italian music that amateur musicians, including recorder players, had access to in the Dutch Republic, and also the fact that at least some of those amateur recorder players were highly trained musicians;
- The fact that there is virtually no information about recorder playing by amateurs outside the Dutch Republic;
- And finally, the great regional diversity that appears to have existed in the field of performance practice. Not all music genres in which recorders were used were equally well represented in the different regions within Italy and beyond, but added to this, the sizes of recorders used often differed, as did the range required in the recorder parts.

The 17th-century Recorder

This last point clearly illustrates that there has never been such a thing as "the" 17th-century Early Baroque recorder. Makers apparently experimented with different designs, as evidenced by the surviving historical instruments. In my thesis, I published a list of 50 individual recorders and four consorts that are presumed to be of 17th-century origin, based on various characteristics. Many of them are no longer playable, and those that are, often have a somewhat limited range, which is nevertheless sufficient for the performance of many 17th-century recorder parts. It would therefore be nice if modern recorder makers would reproduce several historical models more accurately, without immediately transforming them completely to adapt to the real or supposed needs of modern recorder players, as is unfortunately usually the case. On the other hand, I would also like to see modern recorder players take a more considered approach to their choice of repertoire and not immediately choose pieces that can be performed on the recorder, regardless of size and type, only with radical adaptations or historically implausible transpositions.

Providing more guidance on these matters will be precisely the aim of my newly planned book. Whereas I have mainly published from the perspective of historical questions (who, what, when, why, and how), I now aim to approach the same subject matter from the perspective of the modern recorder player and recorder maker. My intention is to offer much more detailed advice on what music could be performed on what type and size of recorder, taking into account historically documented performance practices.

RESOURCES:

Peter Van Heyghen's publications:

- "De blokfluit in vroeg 17de-eeuws Italië," *Musica Antiqua* 11/2 (1994): 76–85, 11/3: 116–26; 11/4: 156–62.
- "The Recorder in Italian Music, 1600-1670," in *The Recorder in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. David Lasocki (Utrecht: Stichting Muziekhistorische Uitvoeringspraktijk, 1995), 3–63. Republished by David Lasocki, and available on **instantharmony.net.**
- "The Place of the Recorder in the Performance of Italian Music c.1600–1690," PhD diss., Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2025. Freely downloadable from **instantharmony.net.** (A listing of compositions from Northern Italy and the Dutch Republic that can be performed on recorders is on pp. 172–9.)
- The updated version of van Heyghen's research will be published as a book also through **instantharmony.net.**
- Adrian Brown, "An Overview of the Surviving Renaissance Recorders," and Peter Van Heyghen, "The Recorder Consort in the Sixteenth Century: Dealing with the Embarrassment of Riches," in *Musicque de Joye*, ed. David Lasocki (Utrecht: Stichting Muziekhistorische Uitvoeringspraktijk, 2005): 78–98 & 227–322.
- For a detailed description of the instruments in Vienna, see Adrian Brown, "The Recorders 'SAM 130, 140 and 148' – Rediscovery and Reconstruction," in *The Collection of Historic Musical Instruments: The first 100 years*, ed. B. Darmstädter, R. Hopfner & A. Huber (Vienna: Praesens Verlag, 2018), 237–49.

Synergy with Suzuki and Waldorf: Sharing Common Ground in Music Education

Mary Halverson Waldo interviews Stephanie Pedretti

This article appeared in Volume 53, No.3 of American Suzuki Journal *and is reproduced here with the kind permission of* ASJ *editor, Andrew Braddock.*

In what world can you walk into a North American school classroom and hear ensembles of recorder students playing in harmony, with a beautiful sound?

The answer to this question lies in an environment of creative collaboration between two educational philosophies which complement each other at every turn.

When we in the Suzuki sphere speak about the formative influence of a positive environment, we include caring family members, dedicated teachers, and an inspiring peer group – a whole supportive community! I experienced a microcosm of this kind of community during a workshop organized by Suzuki teachers Stephanie Pedretti (winds) and Pam Hughes (strings), along with a Waldorf school, in the town of Viroqua, WI. Although there was a diverse program at the workshop, as a guest recorder teacher, I was privileged to experience the following activities:

- The Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School recorder groups and ensembles in grades 3-8
- Waldorf classroom teachers in a recorder tone and technique session
- Recorder students of Stephanie Pedretti, in master classes and group lessons
- A music and movement session for recorder, flute, and string families, in the Baroque dance styles of bourrée and minuet
- A Suzuki parents' Q&A session
- An acoustic dance band which invited Suzuki wind and string students to play traditional tunes with them
- The Viroqua Festival affiliated with the Wisconsin Federation of Music Clubs, with a variety of student performers and teacher adjudicators from throughout the area

Intrigued by the quality of musicianship at this collaborative workshop, I invited Waldorf and Suzuki winds teacher, Stephanie Pedretti into the following conversation.

Mary Halverson Waldo Tell me about your position at the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School (PRWS).

Stephanie Pedretti I am one of two music teachers at PRWS and I've been here for 8 years, teaching general music in grades 1–5, and a recorder ensemble for students in grades 6–8.

MHW Waldorf students seem to learn and memorize music with remarkable ease. Is there something in this approach that supports these skills?

SP Yes, there are several aspects of the Waldorf curriculum that support these abilities. Music and other arts are woven into a typical Waldorf school day. Students have the chance to sing and participate in other musical activities throughout the day with their class teacher and in some of their other subject classes, not just in music class.

Students also memorize poems, verses, and songs. Classes often share what they have been learning at informal Friday assemblies, which are open to the community. The class

WRITTEN BY MARY HALVERSON WALDO

Mary Halverson Waldo has enjoyed an extensive and varied career as a performer, teacher, coach, conference coordinator, and writer. She holds a master's degree in music from the New England Conservatory, and whether at conservatories, community music schools, workshops, institutes, or festivals, she has endeavored to make the joy of recorder playing accessible to students of all ages and abilities throughout the Americas and Europe, including those in under-resourced communities.

She has appeared with chamber groups and Baroque orchestras around the U.S., and currently works with the new Fayerwether Friends Recorder Quartet. A former Board member of both the ARS and Suzuki Association of the Americas, she has contributed to columns in the *AR* and the *American Suzuki Journal*.

◀ **Stephanie Pedretti.**

presentations are thought of as sharing with the community rather than performing for an audience, and they help students to be comfortable with singing, dancing, playing instruments, or presenting other classwork in a public but very supportive environment.

MHW How do you incorporate Suzuki philosophy in your teaching, and what other pedagogical influences do you bring to the classroom?

SP It is fairly common to find music teachers in Waldorf schools who have a Suzuki background, as both philosophies share a great deal of common ground. Both prioritize developing the character of the child. Goals of both include educating the whole child, fully developing their human potential and creating lifelong learners. In both approaches, we recognize that young children learn through imitation, so we need to take care in creating an environment that is worthy of being imitated.

Learning is experiential, with the intellectual part coming when the child is ready. In the Waldorf classroom, we develop the aural model by singing songs before we learn to play them on the recorder. Both philosophies value beauty and form, for example playing with beautiful tone and good intonation, with a balanced, natural posture as the foundation. Encouragement is also important – encouragement of the students by their teachers and parents as well as encouragement of the students to support one another. While parents are not present in the Waldorf music classroom, I keep them informed by email about what is happening in class, and I ask them to support their children in developing the habit of regular home practice.

My Suzuki recorder training is the basis for my approach to teaching recorder in the classroom. I mainly use repertoire from the *Suzuki Recorder School vol. 1* with my beginning recorder classes, along with other simple songs with which the students are familiar from the Waldorf classroom. I find it works better to focus on fewer songs, rather than having students learn each of the 30+ songs in Book 1 as I would if they were taking private lessons.

While Waldorf and Suzuki form the foundation of my teaching, I've also been influenced by Orff and Dalcroze. These approaches have inspired me to add movement as an integral part of classroom music activities.

MHW Describe the PRWS music program, and how you incorporate recorder into your curriculum.

SP General music begins in grade 1 and continues through grade 5. In grades 4 and 5, strings are added to music classes. Grades 3–5 include recorder instruction. Chorus takes place in grades 5–8. Starting in grade 6, students chose to join either the Recorder Ensemble or the String Orchestra, and these two ensembles often combine to form a full orchestra.

Beginning recorder, in grade 3, involves learning entirely by ear and imitation. At the same time, fundamentals of music reading are introduced separately. Students continue playing the soprano recorder in 4th grade. For these two years we work on foundational techniques, through songs in the first octave of the recorder. Partway through grade 4, students start reading music while playing, and they also learn simple harmony parts.

In grade 5 a beginning recorder

▶ **Recorder group at The Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School.**

ensemble is formed, with sopranino, soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Students have opportunities throughout the year to try out the different sizes. The Grade 6–8 Recorder Ensemble is made up of approximately 16 to 18 students. Having a mix of students in different grades, with different levels of musical experience, allows students to help each other and learn from each other.

Mary, after you visited our school and offered a recorder technique session to the faculty, many of them inquired about starting a recorder ensemble. Last spring, some of these teachers joined with the student recorder ensemble to play at one of our Friday assemblies and later performed as a faculty recorder ensemble. I think it was a great experience for the students to see their teachers doing this!

MHW Is your recorder instruction at the school completely in classroom settings?

SP Yes, but occasionally I'm able to squeeze in a bit of extra help for individuals or small groups during the school day. Usually, I also have a few of the Waldorf students taking private lessons with me after school, but this is on their own initiative and not part of the school music program.

MHW How many students are in the classes?

SP Each grade currently has between 12 and 18 students.

MHW As the recorder program has evolved, what has prepared the 5th through 8th graders to play with such noticeable fluency and overall quality of sound?

SP Thank you! I work hard to focus on tone and musicality with the students and I'm glad it shows! They are building on the fundamentals learned in grades 3 and 4, as well as early musical experiences in the earlier grades. Early on, we incorporate a lot of listening activities in music classes. In grade 3 I take time with the class in developing their tone on the first few notes before gradually expanding their range. We do a lot of articulation work on and off the recorder as well. As they get more comfortable with the instruments, we can focus on listening to the group sound: breathing together, blending, and matching style. When students reach grade 5 and beyond, they are at a point developmentally where they are ready to take these concepts to a higher level in their playing.

MHW What performance opportunities do your recorder students have?

SP Our two big music program events are our Fall Concert for students in grades 5–8 and Spring Concert for students in grades 4–8. Some students in grades 6–8 choose to participate in the Solo and Ensemble Festival sponsored by the Wisconsin School Music Association. They play recorder solos and/or small ensembles made up of all recorders, or of recorder and string students together. Occasionally, I have classes share the music we've been working on in our more informal Friday assemblies. Sometimes class teachers have individual students play music on their recorders as part of their class plays, or they have the whole class play together.

MHW I am grateful for the deep inspiration of working with this vibrant, collaborative community of Suzuki and Waldorf teachers, and I hope to return again soon!

Concert Review

by James Thomson

Have you heard of a recorder concerto called *Il Colibri* (The Hummingbird)? For people of a certain age Colibri is a brand of cigarette lighter, but the Bach Society Quartet presented something different: the Pennsylvanian premiere of a work by German-Canadian recorder player Matthias Maute in a concert in the Main Line Unitarian Church, on Sunday, October 12.

The Quartet – Margaret Humphrey (violin), Daniel Elyar (violin and viola), Rebecca Humphrey (cello) and Matthias Maute (recorder, flute and violin) – was skillful and assured, and the program gave Maute an opportunity to display his formidable skills.

The centerpiece was his concerto for solo recorder, violins and cello, in a Baroque style, based around the imaginary encounters of a hummingbird. The hummingbird buzzed busily for three movements, including an extraordinary moment where it was left alone with two violins in a cadenza which Maute later admitted he had lifted directly from Johann Friedrich Lampe.

The program also featured a flute quartet by Mozart and a sonata by Graupner for two violins, viola and cello – the first ever string quartet. The concert ended with a striking concerto for recorder by Vivaldi. As a harpsichordist, I might add that the only thing missing was a keyboard! Violinist Margaret Humphrey quipped that Mattias was a triple threat – playing flute, recorder *and* violin all to a high level – but she omitted the fourth threat: Maute the composer, but even though it might sound like it, this was not a one person show. The ensemble playing was crisp and vigorous, conveying a real sense of shared enthusiasm and enjoyment. A treat.

Learning Tips

Play Learning: An Interview with Stephanie Brandt Creating Games to Motivate Your Practice

WRITTEN BY BERT HONIG

Bert Honig studied recorder in Amsterdam with Marijke Miessen, Walter van Hauwe, and Kees Boeke. From 1986 to 2023, he played in BRISK, a quartet that trained with Frans Brüggen, recorded 17 CDs, and gave concerts in Europe, and North and South America. Bert can also be heard on CDs by Camerata Trajectina, the Egidius Quartet, and the Amsterdam Bach Soloists. He also played in the chamber music ensembles Musica Batavia and Le Nouveau Concert. He works as a private teacher and ensemble coach, has given workshops in Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Taiwan, and has guest lectured at the conservatories of Enschede and Utrecht. He is chairman of the jury for the Open Recorder Days Amsterdam, and since 2024, he has also been a member of the editorial board of Blokfluitist.

Originally published in the Teachers' Forum section of Blokfluitist *September 2025, and reprinted here with permission.*

I talked to Stephanie Brandt about her teaching methods. She studied Recorder at the Conservatories in Frankfurt and Amsterdam, and Education at the University of Amsterdam. She is a member of the recorder quintet Seldom Sene, and The Royal Wind Music. In her hometown of Almere in The Netherlands, she participates in a collective that brings music to diverse audiences. Her musical journey has been enriched by experiences like the experimental trio AeroDynamic, with recorder player María Martínez Ayerza and soprano Harma Everts. She has been teaching recorder in Almere at the CKV (Culturele en Kunstzinnige Vorming: Cultural and Artistic Education) since 2006, where she also serves as chair of this cooperative of arts education teachers.

Stephanie talks enthusiastically about her teaching practice: "I have about 30 wonderful students here, a good and diverse group. I have four ensembles, all with adults, fixed groups at four levels. With children, I mainly do ensemble playing projects. For this, I often work with other instruments, which also leads to inspiring collaborations with colleagues. Teaching becomes easier with experience. You can quickly see whether a child has real talent, but it is just as interesting to see what you can achieve with the others. Every child deserves good music instruction. I teach autistic children who may benefit even more from lessons than other children. It remains fascinating that something that works well for one student may not work for the next, and I need to keep coming up with new ideas. This is multifaceted work with great social significance. It's not just about top talent; music lessons are of added value for all ages and at every level."

Black Belt

"It is important for teachers to occasionally do something where they can once again experience what it is like to be a student. In my final year at the conservatory, I suddenly wanted to do something other than just play the recorder, so I joined the beginners' course at a karate school. I wasn't athletic or fit, so it was terrifying. In the first lesson, the teacher said enthusiastically: 'In this course you don't just learn karate, it's something for your whole life.' She then explained that it was mainly about technique and not about strength. Then I realized that the point was you don't have to have a natural talent, as long as you have someone to explain what you need to do. So, step by step, over many years, I earned my black belt in karate."

Simple Cards

Stephanie became fascinated by the learning method. "It all started with two sisters I taught at home. They couldn't sit still, they didn't want to repeat anything, and they found practicing difficult. It was a real mess, caused by a combination of restlessness, insecurity, and impatience with themselves. I then made simple playing cards with super small tasks like: Play your song while standing on one leg, or Circle the most difficult part of the song, or Name the highest note in the song. I asked them to do

▶ Stephanie Brandt (L) teaching a student, Photographer: Rolf Estrodt.

five cards every day. At one point, their mother called me and said, 'They're already on the twentieth card, what have you done?' In the end, they didn't need the cards anymore. It worked well to break down the practice into small steps. If you give it a different purpose, you take the pressure off. I have often used those cards since then as a stepping stone for new students who had difficulty getting into a practice rhythm at home."

A Game for Online Group Lessons

"During the pandemic, I also taught many online group lessons and attempted to devise teaching methods for this purpose. I provided instructions to a group with significant differences in skill levels, and due to the setting, I was unable to adequately guide or provide feedback to everyone. This caused frustration among less independent students, and I was completely exhausted after each lesson. Then I thought: if I create a game, I can take some of the pressure off and give people something fun to do that involves interaction. My original goal was to create a game for an online group lesson. I haven't achieved that yet, because you need technology to support it. At the moment, I don't have the knowledge or the resources to do that."

Ludodidactics

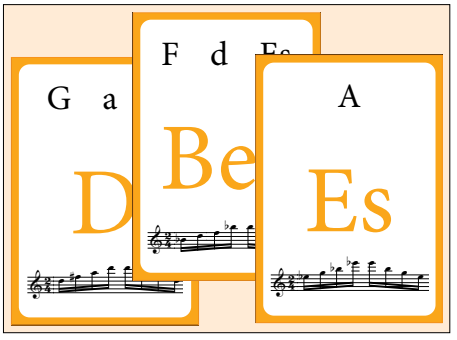
Stephanie then wrote a proposal on game development for a program line for freelancers at the Fund for Cultural Participation, and it was accepted. This enabled her to take the ludodidactics course at the Creative Transformation department of the Utrecht School of the Arts. "We had three teachers and a diverse group of participants. All of them had already completed a degree program: a few musicians and visual artists, but also people who worked for the government, social pedagogues, secondary school teachers, and museum employees."

The aim of ludodidactics is to create a game that allows you to achieve a didactic goal while focusing on the fun of playing.

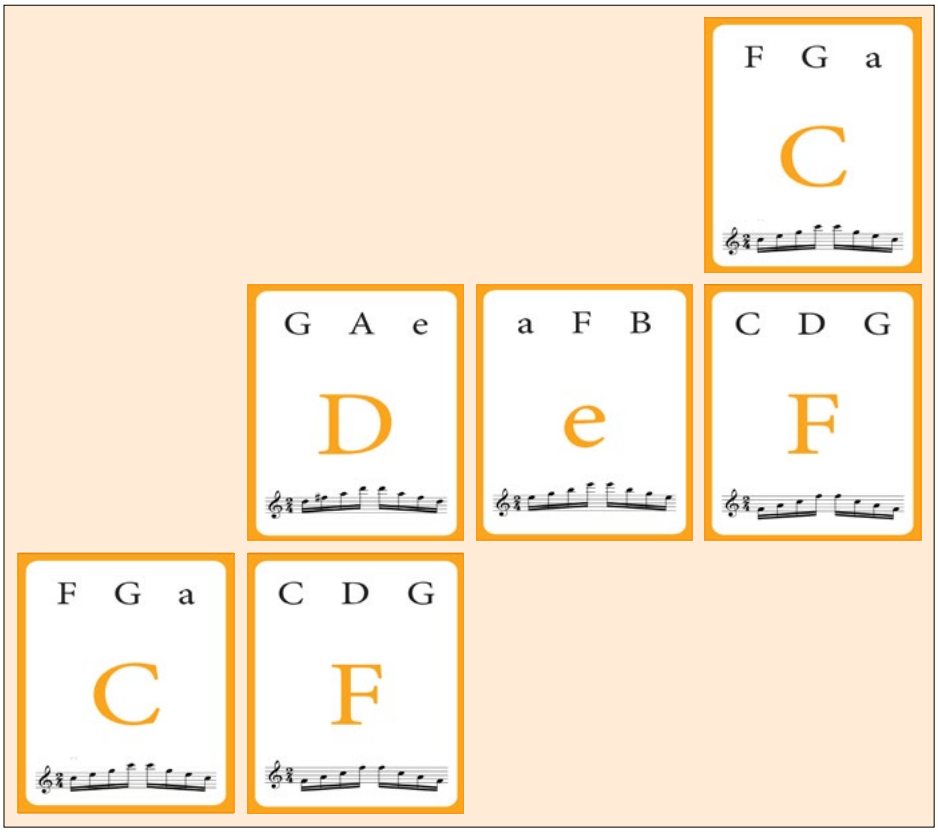
"This is much more than just packaging tough content in a playful way, and it involves a lot of theory that you wouldn't expect from such a playful form of learning. The goal of the game must be different from the learning objective; there must be an epic win moment in the game that motivates you to really do your best. When you play, you learn things incidentally without even realizing it. We tried out the games we had come up with together, and developed them further after each session based on the feedback we received. We also played games that the teachers had made or recommended. Even the final test was a game! A super fun course, just like a playground!"

Playing with Chords

In the course, Stephanie developed an idea that she has continued to refine. "My first design was quite extensive with complicated gameplay. In several trial rounds, I worked toward a simpler, clearer game concept. In the online lessons, I had already started working with chords, but that didn't work the way I wanted it to. So I came up with a card game with chords. The learning objective is to become proficient with different chords and to develop an intuitive understanding of chord progressions. The objective of the game is to lay down the longest possible sequence, which becomes more beautiful and challenging with each card. I looked at Vivaldi's concertos to see which chords he used and how they followed each other. Then I made a table of combinations. It turns out that from each individual chord you can go to a number of possible follow-up chords. I then put those combinations on cards, simply in letters and in countless combinations. The result sounds almost as if you are playing your own Vivaldi concerto. When it turned out that my students



▶ Some playing cards from the chord game.



▶ An example of a sequence from the chord game.

didn't know which notes those chords consisted of, I added musical notation, which worked much better.

The game always starts with a C-major card. Everyone takes turns laying down a card, like a kind of domino game, while also playing. Because you can dock at different places, this creates multiple routes that you can practice in a playful way. It also makes you nice and flexible. In the current design, they are all root positions in 16th notes. I want to expand it with inversions and triplets. You could also do it completely chromatically. The concept has so many possibilities, and new ideas keep coming to me.

The epic win of the game is the feeling of success that players get from coming up with and playing something that sounds really virtuosic and yet is fun to play. People often find scales and etudes boring and difficult. I wanted to break through that with this game. Every time you play it, it gets a little easier. The game works best with two people or a small group, but I also have students who like to play it on their own, as a kind of solitaire game."

More Games

"I have also created another card game, about variations. For this, I borrow the harmonic structure and some melody patterns from *Boffons* by Van Eyck. With this game, you can quickly create your own variation. Because the harmonic structure is so clear, you can also play several variations together with an ensemble, or someone can play the bass line along with it. Voilà, within ten minutes you have created a new polyphonic piece of music together, a kind of guided improvisation. The ease with which this can be done never ceases to amaze students time and time again."

Stephanie is also gathering ideas for other games, such as ones about scales and breathing, but these are still in the early stages of development. "What I've learned from the earlier designs is that developing an idea takes a lot of time. Funnily enough, it's actually very difficult to create something that looks simple and works easily. I hope that more and more games will be added in the future." ❁

RESOURCES:

- Stephanie Brandt's current games are available for purchase as digital downloads via Stephanie's website **stephaniebrandt.nl.**

Music

Aussie Wonders and Reworked Classics

01	**Owl Dances**	by Benjamin Thorn
02	**Daintree Wonders**	by Elliot Leahy
03	**Black Summer/Rising Waters**	by Clive Lane
04	**Sketches of White Wings**	by Kym Dillon
05	**L'Orfeo: 20 pieces for 6 recorders or recorder orchestra**	by Claudio Monteverdi, arr. by Dagmar Scherschmidt
06	**Eight Tuneful Duets for Descant Recorder**	by Richard Kershaw
07	**Concerto VI**	by J.B. de Boismortier ed. by Manfred Harras and Raphael B. Meyer
08	**Pink Neon**	by Lance Eccles
09	**Concerto in A Minor, TWV43:a3, for recorder, oboe, violin and continuo**	by G.P. Telemann, ed. by Klaus Hofmann

KEY: rec=recorder; S'o=sopranino; S=soprano; A=alto; T=tenor; B=bass; gB=great bass; cB=contrabass; 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 Owl Dances

by Benjamin Thorn

Orpheus Music OMP358, 2024. ATB. Sc 6 pp, 3 pts 2 pp ea. Abt. $11.30.

orpheusmusic.com.au

REVIEWED BY:
Gail Nickless

Thorn's performances in Australia and Europe have often involved theatrical elements, such as dance and audience participation. He has published a number of articles on music and theater, as well as composed music for theater productions. He has created elaborations of Renaissance works by composers such as Diego Ortiz.

Thorn's original music has developed in multiple directions. At one extreme are pieces utilizing contemporary techniques (particularly the use of voice, multiphonics and playing two instruments simultaneously). His many pedagogical works may use both contemporary idioms and traditional musics. A strong sense of rhythm and meter is found in much of his music, and a number have whimsical titles that mostly are applied after the piece has been composed (so they do not necessarily indicate a program).

Owl Dances falls into those last categories, having a whimsical title and being suited to a lower intermediate trio. There are some spots with chromatic movement, especially in the "Mysterious" second dance that has no key signature but moves through a number of transient harmonies to land in A minor. The other two dances have one flat and two flats.

There are also strong rhythms to synchronize throughout the pieces, but those are almost all in eighths except for the first dance's "Lilting" 8th-16th rhythms in 6/8 time.

All recorders generally play in comfortable ranges, although the bass

must play its low F a few times, and the alto rises to high E flat several times in the final movement.

Printing is clear, and there are no page turns. Each player has interesting material to play. A less experienced trio with some ensemble experience looking for short pieces to play would enjoy this set of dances. ❁

Gail Nickless served as *AR* editor from 2002 until her retirement in 2024, having begun working for the ARS as its executive director in 1994. She reads a lot, and plays music with the Rio Grande Recorders (Las Cruces, NM). Continuing as music and book reviews editor for *AR*, she invites others to participate in that endeavor. Contact her with genres you are interested in playing/reading, and about which you could report at **ARmusicreviews@gmail.com.**

02 Daintree Wonders

by Elliot Leahy
Orpheus Music OMP356, 2024. S'oSSAATTBcB. Sc 12 pp, 9 pts 2 pp ea. About $19.05.
orpheusmusic.com.au
REVIEWED BY:
Victor Eijkhout

Now that we are solidly in the third decade of the 21st century, we can increasingly expect to encounter composers who are younger than the millennium, and hopefully discover with them some fresh sounds.

As a case in point, here we have the prize-winning composition of the 2022 Orpheus Music Composition Competition for recorder orchestra: *Daintree Wonders* by the then 19-year-old Elliot Leahy, a composer and French horn player.

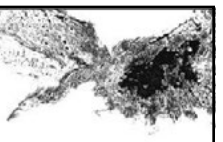
The title refers to the Daintree Rainforest in Queensland in Australia. The music indeed has a program of referring to rainfall and the "wonders and dangers" of the rainforest, but this is not explicitly spelled out in the score. Instead, we have a half dozen untitled sections, each at roughly the same tempo but with its own distinct character. The composition ends with a recapitulation of material from the earlier sections, giving a nice arc. Further unifying the composition is a 5-note chromatic motif.

Each portion of this composition has its own character, from chromatic (the opening sunrise section) to modal, and from lyric (the 6/8 and 3/8 passages) to rhythmic. I enjoyed the occasional tone clusters at the ends of sections. With the exception of the tricky soprano part(s) in the opening segment, everything is at a solid Intermediate level.

On the whole I enjoyed this composition, although in some places it is clear that the composer is not a recorder player. Some rhythmic passages are very low, requiring a mild *sputato* to get sufficient articulation. Also, the sopranino comes in near the start of the opening section, obscuring the fairly low entry of the alto. In general, the balance of the nine voices is towards the higher instruments, there being only single parts for bass and contra, without any great bass.

I should mention that the first soprano recorder has a couple of measures (19 and 20) that are not the same in the part as in the score. (I actually like what is written in the part better, even if it's wrong!) Such quibbles aside, I warmly recommend this 6-minute piece as a fresh, non-threatening contemporary composition. ❁

Scan this code for an excerpt played by Victor.



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Victor Eijkhout resides in Austin, TX. A multi-instrumentalist and composer, Eijkhout has two titles in the ARS Members' Library Editions. His other compositions can be found at **eijkhout.net** and you can support his work through patreon.com/FluteCore. See and hear samples of some of the music that Eijkhout reviews posted at youtube.com/americanrecordermag.

03 Black Summer/ Rising Waters

by Clive Lane

Orpheus Music OMP338, 2023. SAATTBgBcB. Sc 20 pp, 8 pts 3 pp ea. Abt. $20.

orpheusmusic.com.au

REVIEWED BY:
Victor Eijkhout

Australia seems to have a solid recorder scene. Orpheus Music is a publisher dedicated to Australian composers, and also holds regular composition competitions. Clive Lane's *Black Summer/Rising Waters* was the second place winner in a 2022 composition competition, which gives some indication as to its quality. Indeed, I found it to be an interesting composition with some fresh textures.

This set of two pieces is scored for 8 recorders, with only a single passage in the bass part that can actually be played by a single instrument.

The first movement of *Black Summer* eschews traditional harmonies and, rather than using a clear melody, is largely based on jumps of a fourth. This means that the contra part, having the fewest notes, makes little sense by itself.

On the other hand, the second movement is based on scales and more traditional harmonies. In fact, both movements could be described as "textural" rather than melodic. In this movement, titled "Rising Waters," the scales are mostly upward.

The edition provides no information regarding the composer's intentions with this piece. Such information is helpful for ensembles putting together program notes for a concert. Also missing is any information about the composer, but the Orpheus Music website has some biographical information.

A Sydney-based composer who specializes in music for small ensembles, band music and choral music, Clive Lane graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium (majoring in clarinet) and the University of New South Wales. During many years as a high school music educator, he composed and arranged for a variety of musical ensembles. Eventually he decided to concentrate on performance (classical guitar, viola da gamba, voice) and composition. One of his great loves is early music, which he has played for many years in viol consorts. He has several pieces published, including by the Viola da Gamba Society of America and Saraband Music. You can hear some of these pieces played by Consort 8 at **consortviii.wordpress.com.**

Lane's recorder music has been played in many Sydney concerts, but some places in this piece made me wonder how familiar he is with the recorder. For instance, the soprano part in most of the first movement is rather low, and could have been played on alto. There are also many places where there is insufficient separation to bring out a clear top part versus accompanying parts.

Music typesetting is great – with the exception of Alto 1, which has an impossible page turn that could have been avoided. Still, despite some shortcomings this is a fresh-sounding piece, with a difficulty level barely above a solid Intermediate. The total running time is just short of 8 minutes. ❁

Scan this code for an excerpt played by Victor.

04 Sketches of White Wings

by Kym Dillon

Orpheus Music OMP318, 2021. AAAA/SSBgB. Sc 15 pp, 4 pts 43pp ea. Abt. $20.

orpheusmusic.com.au

REVIEWED BY:
Victor Eijkhout

Kym Dillon is a composer, pianist, conductor and educator based in Geelong and Melbourne, Australia. Starting out as a performing jazz pianist, Dillon had an unwavering curiosity about music that led her to focus on composition and art music. While earning a Bachelor of Music Performance (Honors) in Practical Composition (2012) at the Victorian College of the Arts, Dillon was a recipient of the Beleura Award for Composition. She has received commissions for original works from such organizations as the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra, Astra Chamber Music Society and Musica Viva, and her works have also been performed in Canada, the U.K., the United States, Romania and Italy.

These sketches tied for third place in the 2020 Orpheus Music Composition Competition (**orpheusmusic.com.au/Resources/composition-competition-2020-winners--n21**). Dillon's compositional style is often inspired by reflections on what it means to create and what our creative compulsion says about us. About *Sketches of White Wings* she writes, "the title began as a reference to something quite specific; but soon after I began to work on the piece the working title's ambiguity brought alive

the musical material in an unexpectedly exciting way. As such, I wish to leave the interpretation of the work up to the individual listener."

Attempts to find a descriptive narrative in the music are stymied by the heterogeneous nature of the music: there is everything from long notes connected by glissandi to a wild unmetered passage full of grace notes.

While this is a one-movement piece, there is a structure to it. Multiple sections are titled "Chorale" or "Episode" interspersed with "Duet" sections that use only the top or bottom two voices. However, again, it is not clear quite how these sections fit together into a coherent whole.

I'd rate this piece at High Intermediate. There are some places that require study, one being what American composer, music theorist and YouTuber Adam Neely calls an "unperformable rhythm": a quintuplet spanning, for instance, beats 2 and 3 of a measure. Also, there are a few places where the composer's unfamiliarity with the recorder is apparent, such as a great bass line that runs to the high C# and D.

Dynamics and articulation are largely standard, with the exception of the aforementioned glissandi, and explicit indications of no, little, and wide vibrato. Regarding the latter, I wonder if the composer imagined this would sound more dramatic than it does in practice. None of the above is insurmountable. However, overall I'm left with the impression of a composition that falls short of communicating its intentions. With the exception of a few sections, there is too much that feels random rather than eliciting an interpretation by the performers. ❁

Scan this code for an excerpt played by Victor.

05

L'Orfeo: 20 pieces for 6 recorders or recorder orchestra
by Claudio Monteverdi, arr. by Dagmar Scherschmidt
Edition Walhall EW1000 (parts EW933), 2024. SATBgBcB narrator. Sc 45 pp, narrator pt. Abt. $25.70.
edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind.html
REVIEWED BY:
Valerie E. Hess

This arrangement consists of 20 movements from the opera *Orfeo*: "the story of Orpheus and Eurydice – or a story about the power of music" by Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643). The Italian composer of secular and sacred music pioneered the development of opera, and is also a crucial transitional figure between the Renaissance and Baroque musical periods. He started musical studies and compositions in his native Cremona, but later developed his career first at the court of Mantua (c.1590–1613) and for the rest of his years in the Republic of Venice as *maestro di cappella* at the Basilica of San Marco. Many of Monteverdi's works unfortunately have been lost.

L'Orfeo was first performed in Mantua in 1607 and was revolutionary at the time. (You may want to refer to Michelene Wandor's novel on this opera, reviewed in *AR* Spring 2024, for further backstory and a modern fictional tale about it.)

As the full opera itself lasts around three hours, Dagmar Scherschmidt has condensed it "to the essentials," while still dramatizing the story through music and text. Barbara Metzner-Lucas arranged the original libretto by Alessandro Striggio the younger (1575–1630), and Susan Gomme made the English translation. This version with music and text is approximately 50 minutes long. The introduction states that "individual movements can be played as a suite

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Leading from Within: How to Run a Playing Group with No Music Director

ARS NOVA is sent as an email message from director@americanrecorder.org

without a narrator. However, the full effect of the arrangement can only be realised through the alternation of music and narrator."

The 20 movements included are "essential to the plot" and have been arranged for a narrator and a recorder sextet or recorder orchestra "on alternating instruments." It includes arrangements of the toccata, some ritornelli and symphonies, as well as madrigals, arias, and choral movements. Words are included for trained singers to sing, with the recorders doubling their parts. Included in the edition is the text for the narrator, in both German and English, a document that also says what pieces of music fit around each section of text. Note: the cues in the score for the next musical piece are only given in German.

This is certainly a good entrance into the world of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* if one has the resources. I could see an early music group in a university studying the opera and then performing this work at the end of a semester. A well-resourced local group could also find this to be a fun challenge. (Parts are available separately but were not provided with the full score for this review.)

If pulling the whole thing off is too daunting, the edition would still be a lovely addition to the library of a recorder orchestra, whose members could create their own suite out of some of the instrumental movements. ❁

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.**

06 Eight Tuneful Duets for Descant Recorder

by Richard Kershaw
Peacock Press P840, n.d. SS. Sc 11 pp. Abt. $7.
recordermail.co.uk
REVIEWED BY:
Beverly R. Lomer

Richard Kershaw is a British recorder player and composer who primarily writes music for children. While *Eight Tuneful Duets* does not specify the audience for the works, they would be appealing to young students. They are not beginner pieces, however, but rather Advanced Beginner or Intermediate.

They are all quite delightful and varied in their character. Some representative titles include: "Swing-time," "Jumping Jack," "Let's Sail Away" and "Miniature March." They fit comfortably in the range of the soprano recorder, with only occasional forays into the higher and lower registers.

The duets are set in easy keys, employing no more than one flat or sharp. Some of the songs include 16th notes, chromatic notes and slurs across the beat. Generally, the rhythm is straightforward. Articulations are provided, as are directions for performance, such as Gracefully, Gently rocking, Lively. The edition is nicely printed, easy to read, and there are no page turns.

The melodies are charming – and as the title indicates, tuneful. The duet format is well organized. The parts are equal in difficulty and interest, thus making them also attractive to adults who might enjoy them for fun or for a light selection on a concert program. The only drawback is the difficulty of purchasing a copy: the search function for the Peacock Press website was not easy to navigate. It took multiple tries at different combinations of keyword searches to bring up the edition. What ultimately worked was searching for the composer's name. ❁

Beverly Lomer is an independent scholar who holds a PhD in Comparative Studies in Gender and Music. She has taught Music and Gender Studies at Florida Atlantic University. Currently she is the editor of the Transcription Project of the International Society of Hildegard von Bingen Studies. She is a founding member of the Palm Beach Recorder and Early Music Society and has performed with the group's ensemble, A Merrye Noyse.

07 Concerto VI

by J.B. de Boismortier
edited by Manfred Harras and Raphael B. Meyer
Basilisk Edition RM45, 2024. AAAAA. Sc 14 pp, 5 pts 4 pp ea. Abt. $26.80.
basilisk-edition.ch/en/blockfloete
REVIEWED BY:
Jon Casbon

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1689–1755) was a French Baroque composer who wrote many works for flute and recorder. He was the first French composer to use the Italian concerto form, in his *6 Concertos pour 5 Flûtes-traversières ou autres instrumens, sans basse*, op. 15 (1727) of which this is number six. It is a concerto in the earlier sense that it consists of alternating solo and tutti passages. In this case, tutti simply means that all parts are playing together, while solo means that one or more of the instruments has a leading role, with support from the other players.

This edition faithfully presents Boismortier's original, transcribed up a minor third (from E minor to G minor) in order to accommodate

the alto recorder's range. It consists of three movements – an Adagio and two Allegros.

The Adagio is in 3/2 and begins with a pattern of three half notes, whole note, rest, in homophony. Midway through the piece, the third voice begins a solo, followed a measure later by the fourth voice, while all other voices are tacet. The solos transfer to the first and second voices, with harmonic support from the other parts. There are several passages with two or more of the supporting voices playing in unison, demanding careful intonation. The fifth voice provides the role of a continuo.

The first Allegro, in common time, begins with all five voices playing an energetic theme in unison before developing into imitative duets among the upper four voices. Solo 16th-note passages appear in every voice except the fifth. The movement ends with a reprise of the initial unison theme.

The final Allegro, in 3/4 meter, features passages of 8th-note triplets set against quarter notes and standard 8th notes. The movement consists of two repeated sections. Much of the passagework occurs in duets between the first and second voices. The fourth and fifth voices are often in unison, reinforcing the continuo-like function of the fifth voice.

This is a high-quality edition with clear and easy-to-read printing. The editors, both founders and principals at Basilisk Edition, have included Boismortier's original ornamentation markings, consisting of "+" (longer trill) plus short trill symbols. Boismortier himself indicated figured notation with the fifth voice for an optional continuo part. The editors have taken this a step further by adding a continuo bass line with figured notation in the score. A foreword, written in German and English, provides additional descriptive information.

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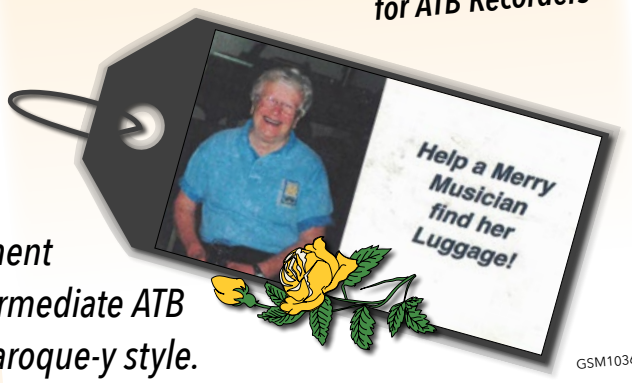

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The piece is well suited for upper Intermediate groups. Players should be comfortable playing fast passage-work and using the entire alto range, going up to high F in the first voice. Careful tuning is essential, especially for unison parts. ❁

A long-time member of the ARS and past president of the Denver Recorder Society, **Jon Casbon** first picked up the recorder at age 13. He has arranged numerous pieces for small ensembles and the Colorado Recorder Orchestra, for which he serves as Assistant Director.

08 Pink Neon

by Lance Eccles
Edition Walhall FEM333, 2018. AATTB. Sc 5 pp, 5 pts 1 pp ea. Abt. $8.90.
edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind
REVIEWED BY:
Jon Casbon

This is possibly a reprinting of an early Lance Eccles piece, as it is mentioned (but not reviewed) in *AR* May 2012, and I have seen an online reference with a 1987 publishing date. The present edition's copyright through Edition Walhall is 2018.

The Australian linguist Eccles (born 1944) is a prolific composer, largely of music for the groups in which he has played over the years: the Reluctant Consort in Sydney and the Sydney Society of Recorder Players.

Pink Neon is a fairly easy and fun piece for Intermediate groups. The 12/8 meter and metronome marking of dotted quarter=70 give it a relaxed feel. The overall structure is a slow 8th-bar blues. Eccles achieves a swingy rhythm with quarter-note/eighth-note pairs in the triple meter.

After a 4-measure introduction, the main theme is introduced in the top (Treble 1, or alto) line. A repeat of the first section is followed by a long bridge section with a secondary theme. Tenor 1 then picks up the original melody, followed again by the secondary melody in Treble 1. The key modulates from the original A minor to B minor (two sharps) for a final reprise of the main theme.

Frequent upward and downward chromatic figures in the melody and the supporting voices provide thematic variety and movement. The rhythm features syncopation and quarter-note triplets against two dotted-quarter beats. Though not terribly difficult, it is a good exercise in counting.

Any Intermediate group should have no problems playing this relatively easy piece. Each part is a single page. The printing is clear and easy to read. ❁

Music Editions Received

François Couperin, Passacaille
arr. by Shirley Watson.
Peacock Press P661, n.d.
recordermail.co.uk
SATB. Sc 7 pp, 4 pts 2 pp ea. Abt. $8.25.

Michael East (1580–1648), The Fifth Set of Bookes for three instruments,
arr. by Olaf Tetampel.
Edition Baroque eba5032, 2016.
edition-baroque-shop.de
3 recs (SST/or SS treble B). Sc 40 pp, 4 pts 13-16 pp ea. $30.

Lance Eccles, The Pink Tarantula
Orpheus OMP274, 2017.
orpheusmusic.com.au
A, piano. Sc 2 pp, pt 1 p. About $8.25.

Antony Hopkins, Pastiche Suite
(originally written for Walter Bergmann; recently rediscovered by John Turner).
Schott ED13712, 1944/2014.
en.schott-music.com
A, piano. Sc 8 pp, pt 3 pp. About $11.50/$9.70 PDF.

Henry Purcell, Catches
3 vols., arr. by Joseph Loux, Jr.,
Loux Music LMP219/220/221, 2020.
recordershop.com
Vols. 1 & 2: 3 recs, opt. voice/other treble instrument. 3 scs, 4 pp ea. $10.50.
Vol. 3: 3-4 recs, opt. voice/other treble instument. 4 scs, 4 pp ea. $11.25.

Sylvia Corinna Rosin, Bear Heart
(Native American influence).
Moeck 3347, 2017.
moeck.com/en/publishing/sheet-music
SATBgBsB + 2 percussion. Sc 10 pp, 9 pts. abt $36.

Dmitri Shostakowitsch, Waltz Number 2 from Suite für Variete-Orchester
arr. by Sylvia Rosin & Irmhild Beutler,
Universal UE36673, 2015.
universaledition.com
A, piano, Sc 8 pp, pt 3 pp. About $15.25. ❁

09 Concerto in A Minor, TWV43:a3, for recorder, oboe, violin and continuo

by G.P. Telemann, edited by Klaus Hofmann
Edition Walhall EW1253, 2023. A rec, oboe, violin, bc. Sc 20 pp, 4 pts 5-7 pp ea. Abt. $21.25.
edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind
REVIEWED BY:
Valerie E. Hess

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) was influenced by French, German and Italian national styles, but this concerto shows his occasional influence by Polish popular music. Throughout his life, Telemann was a pioneer of new musical styles, making him an important link between the late Baroque and the early Classical periods.

This arrangement is Klaus Hofmann's attempt to reconcile two copies of this concerto that, while referencing a lost manuscript, nonetheless have significant differences. Hofmann has included a Critical Report, unfortunately not translated from German, in which he shows the discrepancies between the two copies. He also has realized the figured bass.

The movements are Adagio, Allegro, Adagio and Vivace. While scored for alto recorder, oboe and violin, it might possibly be played using three recorders. There is an extended violin solo at the end that would need to be addressed. Hofmann says that this solo is the most questionable part of the copies from which he worked, as it is out of character for Telemann. Could it be shortened or left out, skipping from beat 1 of measure 102 to beat 1 of measure 144? I will leave you to decide.

Any instrumental combination you use would be in the spirit of the Baroque, which saw players take music written for one instrument and adapt it to their own. It could be a good challenge for advanced recorder players. As the figured bass is given under the realization, it could also be a learning tool for the continuo as well. ❁

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Recordings

Blowing the Waterfall Apart

01 **Signs of the Seasons**
Andrew Collis presents Markus Zahnhausen's *Jahrenzeichen* in a sumptuous new video recording

02 **Herder's Herd**
With 10 recorders and electronics, Juho Myllylä takes listeners to distinct yet related soundwolrds in *Herder's Herd*

03 **Ukai 迂回: Tracing fascinating recorder sonology**
Susanne Frölich forges musical connections between antiquity and the avant garde in an innovative disc that *...blows the waterfall apart*

REVIEWED BY TOM BICKLEY
AR 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. A retired academic librarian, Tom 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 Signs of the Seasons

German composer and recorder player Markus Zahnhausen (1965–2022) was highly regarded as a composer, and his death at age 57 came much too soon. He left a body of work for orchestra, voice, chamber ensemble, and stage, as well as his most well-known pieces for recorder. Many of those are unaccompanied, and perhaps the most recorded are his cycle *Signs of the Seasons (Jahreszeichen)* 1989–91. Each season is portrayed by a multi-movement composition for one player using alto and soprano recorders. The musical language is both modern and lyrical. British recorder player Andrew Collis, who enjoyed playing these pieces during the composer's lifetime, was inspired to collaborate with filmmaker and musician Sam Stadlen to produce these videos to honor Zahnhausen's memory. The resulting videos are phenomenally good.

Stadlen recorded Collis performing the works in a spacious and acoustically well-suited room at Lauderdale House in Highgate, London. Intercut with scenes of Collis performing are seasonally appropriate still and moving images. The artistry and technical virtuosity that Andrew Collis brings to the music is matched by the video and audio recording work of Sam Stedlen. The notes below the video window give the English language titles of each movement as well as links to the location of that movement in the video.

Andrew Collis studied with Philip Thorby at Trinity College, London, as well as with Eve O'Kelly, and in Amsterdam with Marijolein van Roon. He directs the Exeter Recorder Orchestra, and performs both early and new music in a variety of ensembles. He has commissioned a number of new pieces and he is active as a recorder teacher. I wish both his earlier albums *Fusion* and *Exposure* were still widely available. Several other of his performances can be enjoyed on YouTube (e.g. *Wistman's Wood* by Ruth Pitts) and I look forward as well to future recordings. I hope you enjoy his recordings of Zahnhausen's *Signs of the Seasons* as much as I have.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Markus Zahnhausen, Signs of the Seasons. *Andrew Collis, recorder. Four films by Stadlen Productions available on YouTube. 2024, Spring Music, 9:31; Summer Sounds, 10:27;*

Autumn Music, 8:22; Winter Images, 12:23. The videos, available at no charge, as well as a promotional video on the making of them can be found at **youtube.com/@andrewcollis2252.** *Donations may be made via* **paypal.com/paypalme/andrewcollis247.**

02 Herder's Herd

Finnish-born, Amsterdam-based recorder player Juho Myllylä worked with the Nieuwe Noten project (a collaboration of the Gaudeamus Festival, November Music, and the Grachtenfestival) to commission four new pieces for solo recorder player and electronics that were performed in 2023. Those four works, *Waves* (for Juho Myllylä) by A. Crespo Barba, *her immeasurable soul* by Hildur Elísa Jónsdóttir, *Herder's Herd* by Raivis Misjuns, and *Marsyas* by Ernst Spyckerelle, with the addition of *Orange, Blue and Pink* by Arjan Linker and *Faust's Lullaby* by Andrea Guterres make up the Myllylä's debut solo album *Herder's Herd*. The hour-long program rewards listeners with six distinct, yet related soundworlds, and displays Myllylä's significant virtuosity, humor, range of expression, and musicianship with technology.

Spoken word provides light and humorous touches for the open and closing compositions, *Orange, Blue and Pink* (track 1) and *Marsyas* (tracks 6-8). In the first piece, children's voices describe a beautiful fantasy life. Their sound interweaves with alto recorder with built-in pickup that feeds delays and creates rich chords from electronics. The final work reimagines the musical contest of the satyr Marsyas against the god Apollo. The 3-movement work is quite funny both in concept and execution. The title track, *Herder's Herd* engages the listener with minimalist arpeggiation interplaying with silence and held notes.

The composition that I found most engaging is A. Crespo Barba's *Waves* for bass (basset) recorder and electronics (track 2). The recorder part includes trills, multiphonics, a wide array of articulations, and beautiful lyrical arpeggios. The processing of the recorder yields what Ramaer describes in the notes as "a hallucinatory shell of sine waves."

Ten recorders are used, from sopranino to sub-contrabass. Not only is this album engaging musically, but it is a showcase for the instruments made by Fehr, Boudreau, Cranmore, Yamaha, and Paetzold, particularly in how their sound can be extended via digital processing and in conjunction with prerecorded sound. The album booklet insert by musicologist Huib Ramaer, available free from the 7 Mountain Record site, includes not only the list of instruments, but very useful and quite lyrical notes about the project and each of the compositions. The booklet is well designed and includes elegant photographs by Jesse Harrison. In whatever format you choose (Bandcamp provides downloads in 8 formats including excellent AIFF files), these are six pieces well worth your attention. Myllylä's participation in Ensemble Gamut and the Royal Wind Music enriches our musical lives, and his work on *Herder's Herd* welcomes us into new worlds of recorder sound.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Herder's Herd. *Juho Myllylä, recorders and electronics. 2025, 1 CD, 58:55. 7 Mountain Records 7MNTN-058.* **7mntn.com/herders-herd-2/** *CD €19 (approx. $24 USD) via* **juhomyllyla.bandcamp.com/album/herders-herd,** *downloads and streaming available at lower cost from $8 USD from Bandcamp, Apple Music, iTunes, Tidal, Amazon Music, Spotify, Naxos, Deezer, YouTube, and other services. Promotional video available at* **youtu.be/Eq14s5JQOAc?si=eE-0pUP3nbGR1D_6R**

03 Ukai 迂回

It's no longer unusual to find programs and recordings by recorder players that include early European repertory in conversation with new works. On her album *Ukai*, German virtuosa Susanne Frölich, who has done so much to encourage innovations in recorder design, provides interaction among new and traditional works for shakuhachi (Japanese end-blown bamboo flute). About her choice of repertory, she writes, "I aim to forge musical connections between antiquity and the avant-garde, as well as tradition and modernity." I note that not only is this the approach I hope to achieve in my own performances of diverse repertory, but I am married to a shakuhachi player,

and Frölich has chosen two of my favorite Japanese pieces for her album. The title *Ukai* has a meaning of detour or circumvention (迂回). It's also a homophone for a method of fishing at night using cormorants, and has yet another homophone which means "realms of existence." The ethos of Frölich"s album strikes me as delving into all three – with wonderful results.

The opening track, *Hon shirabe*, exists in various lineages of shakuhachi playing and is one of the first pieces players learn. With its affect of centering/focus/tuning, it makes a beautiful opening for this album. Frölich's choice of a Li Virghi tenor recorder for this and her rendition of *Shin Mukaiji* (track 5) works well. More than in Western musical practices, the performance practice of shakuhachi music is determined by the lineage of the master teacher who guides the performer in precise articulation and ornamentation. If you are not playing shakuhachi in a particular lineage – and recorder players don't by definition – then there is appropriate freedom of interpretation. Frölich employs that freedom with good taste.

While *Hon Shiarbe* is a piece for centering, *Shin Mukaiji* portrays the mystery of wandering on a foggy sea. I don't hear Frölich's performances of these pieces as imitations of shakuhachi playing, but explorations of them as a recorder player. She follows *Hon Shirabe* with the first two movements of Markus Zahnhausen's *Autumn Music*, played on a Helder Evo alto. She closes the album with Zahnhausen's *Nachlang* (Distant Echo or Recollection) from his *Winter Images* composition in the *Signs of the Seasons* series. I encourage listening to Frölich's version of these pieces alongside Andrew Collis's performances reviewed in this column as well. Both are quite satisfying.

Chaya Czernowin's *The Last Leaf* (track 4) processes the sound of a Helder Evo tenor (a model that Frölich worked on the design with Mollenhauer) through a volume pedal and amplifier. Originally for oboe, this version maximally exploits timbres of the instrument. The most compelling track for me is *buriedwithdaisy* (track 6), Frölich's collaborative composition with Gerriet Krishna Sharma, for Paetzold sub-contrabass, icosahedral loudspeaker, and subwoofer tower. The spatial aspects are a delight and worth finding a version in Dolby ATMOS format (available on the Tidal streaming service). The various sounds move along continua from noise to pure tone and from one location to another. This is virtuosic hybridity of recorder and processing. Sarah Nemtsov's noisy, minimalist *IRA* (track 7) for prepared Paetzold contrabass conveys a vigorous, angry (thus the title which relates to the Latin root for "ire") energy.

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The album booklet (available for free from the GENUIN records website) richly enhances the experience of listening to *Ukai*. This is a recording that, similarly to Juho Myllylä's *Herder's Herd*, is a showcase for the Helder Evo alto and tenor, the Paetzold/Kunath contra- and sub-contrabasses, and the Li Virghi tenor recorders. This is cutting-edge music-making as well as recorder playing. The innovative practices and sounds in no way diminish the glories of earlier repertory, but serve to place the recorder rightly as a vital instrument of relevance for living composers. The energy in *Ukai* is so compelling that I'll close my comments by quoting the haiku by Natsuishi that Frölich includes in the booklet:

From the future
a wind arrives
that blows the waterfall apart.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Ukai 迂回: Tracing fascinating recorder sonology. *Susanne Frölich, recorders and electronics. 2025, 1 CD, 59:03. GENUIN classics GEN25883. genuin.de/_new/cd_1.php?cd=GEN25883*

CD $16.50 - $22, downloads and streaming available at lower cost from $9 USD from Apple Music, iTunes, Tidal, Amazon Music, Spotify, Idagio, Naxos, Deezer, YouTube, and other services. **susannefroehlich.com/cds.**

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American Recorder Society 17, 22, 23, 37, 39, 41, 45
Amherst Early Music Festival 41
American Musical Instrument Society..... 44
Canzonet 17
Early Music America 33
Honeysuckle Music 19
JGJG Sheet Music 37
Lazar's Early Music 9
Leatherman Recorders 37
Lost in Time Press 35
Magnamusic 45
Moeck Verlag .....IFC
Mollenhauer Recorders ..... OBC
North American Virtual Recorder Society 13
The Recorder Shop 17
Glen Shannon Music 39
Very Good Recorder Transcriptions 19, 35
Von Huene Workshop, Inc 41
Yamaha Corp .....IBC

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