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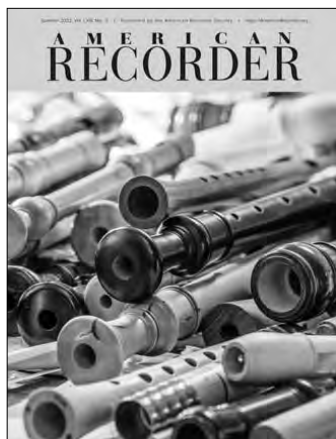
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## ON THE COVER

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## ARS

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**Editor's Note** • GAIL NICKLESS

From the founding days of the ARS, a dichotomy has existed: are we an organization for amateurs or for professionals? The consensus over the years has been that, since there's no other service organization in the Americas specifically geared to recorder players, we are both—so the ARS tries to foster both worlds.

What we do for one group helps the other one, as has been abundantly the case during the pandemic (when free beginner classes helped budding amateurs while providing income for professionals). In this issue is an interview with a recorder maker whose main clientele comprises players of professional-quality instruments. The fruits of his research and labors will undoubtedly trickle down to players of all levels: being inspired by professionals playing those very instruments, or indirectly as particulars of that research affect recorder production.

Switching to instruments and research of a different type, an article about the Constance M. Primus Folk Flute Collection at the Recorder Music Center (Regis University, Denver, CO) gives us insight into ways that relatives of the recorder have been played worldwide—from prehistoric times up to the present. Understanding more about such instruments points out connections all of us have to a distant past, before written records and before written music. ❁

**President's Message** • DAVID PODESCHI**A Milestone on an Interesting Journey, Part One**

To my knowledge, I first heard a recorder in 1967 on the Jefferson Airplane album, *Surrealistic Pillow*, as recorder hadn't been offered in the elementary school I attended. In the album's cover photo, one of the singers, Grace Slick, is holding what appears to be an alto recorder. One song, *Coming Back to Me*, features a solo—curiously not on alto, but on tenor recorder.

I was hooked from that moment, but didn't get a chance to play a recorder until the mid-1970s—when I tried, quite unsuccessfully, to teach myself after hearing a friend play in an SATB quartet. I gave up self-teaching and added, “someday I want to play in a recorder group,” to my mental bucket list.

Someday didn't come until 2010, when my friend said during a bucket list review, “You better get started, you're running out of time.” The next day I found the American Recorder Society online, which led me to the Dallas (TX) Recorder Society (DRS). I showed up for their monthly meeting. I will never forget how then-president Laura Moynihan went out of her way to make sure this newcomer felt welcome and comfortable.

After the session Jennifer Carpenter, then the DRS music director, approached me and said, “I give lessons.” During a break, I talked to Harald Poelchau, who told me about the upcoming Texas Toot Fall Workshop. He said, “I think you would enjoy it, I'll be there to help you get your bearings.”

I know that, if not for Laura and Jennifer and Harald, I would not have returned for a second DRS meeting—let alone attended the next 19 Summer and Fall Toots. If you are just learning to play the instrument, it is intimidating. It was for me, at the time an almost-60-year old male. I was experienced at making presentations in front of large audiences, so I was not shy. We all have to keep this in mind when new members show up.

That first meeting was the start of the most amazing journey—where I have met some of the best people in my life—and I have ARS to thank for it.

I'll fill you in on more of my journey when you hear from me one last time in the Fall *American Recorder*. ❁



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# ON THE RECORD(ER)

News about the recorder

CHANGE

## **Suzuki Association of the Americas hires new executive director Angelica Cortez**

The Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA), based in Boulder, CO, has appointed Angelica Cortez as executive director of the organization. An experienced leader in the arts, Cortez succeeded interim acting director Laura Yasuda and assumed responsibilities on January 31. Yasuda stood in for retiring executive director Pam Brasch, who also assisted in the 2021 search that was co-chaired by *AR* LEARN editor and Suzuki recorder trainer Mary Halverson Waldo.

Los Angeles-born Cortez is an arts leader working at the intersection of music, education and justice.

Cortez previously served as interim president/CEO of El Sistema USA, overseeing fundraising, strategic partnerships, programming and general operations. She worked with the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (YOLA), Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel's signature effort, and launched the YOLA National Festival.

Cortez was one of 11 fellows selected for Sphinx LEAD (Leaders in Excellence, Arts & Diversity), a two-year program designed to change the industry landscape by empowering the next generation of executive leaders. She is an active speaker, educator and consultant, recently advising students at Cornell University, University of California-Berkeley, and University of Southern California.

Cortez has degrees in trumpet per-

formance and teaching from University of California-Davis, Longy School of Music and Bard College.

In Cortez's words, "Suzuki pioneered the concept that music can be a tool for young people's growth and development outside of music. He encouraged creating an environment and a space filled with love and filled with support, which is something our young people need in this moment."

SAA Board Member Bruce Walker commented, "Her dedication to the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging are notable and I am confident that we will begin to see our organization move in a direction that Dr. Suzuki would entirely approve."

The Suzuki Association of the Americas is the organization officially licensed by the International Suzuki Association to support, guide and promote Suzuki education in North, Central and South America. Its learning community, which embraces excellence and nurtures the human spirit, has included recorder instruction for young children since 1977. ✨

<https://suzukiassociation.org/people/angelica-cortez>

Suzuki Recorder, Books 1 and 2 performed by Marion Verbruggen, <https://smile.amazon.com/Suzuki-Recorder-School-Marion-Verbruggen/dp/B00JYKSOV4>

El Sistema USA,

<https://elsistemausa.org>

YOLA National Festival 2022,

[www.laphil.com/learn/yola/yola-national-festival](http://www.laphil.com/learn/yola/yola-national-festival)

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## WORDS AND MUSIC

**Recorder Magazine interviews Victor Eijkhout and publishes a new musical work by him**

In 2021, Victor Eijkhout was approached by the UK's *Recorder Magazine* to create a composition and participate in an interview. Both the resulting piece, *Flow Counter Flow*, and the interview subsequently appeared in the same issue.

Eijkhout is known to ARS members for his compositions in the *ARS Members' Library* series, his works available in ARS online music libraries, and his contributions to *American Recorder* as a music reviewer in CRITIQUE.

The interview delves into his compositional influences, what drives him to compose, and his thought that composing should be motivated by "finding music that resonates with

you," and that "no genre is off-limits for composing or arranging inspiration." ❁

Kind permission was given for the ARS to post the interview by Michael Graham with Victor Eijkhout at [https://americanrecorder.org/american\\_recorder\\_magazine\\_ex.php](https://americanrecorder.org/american_recorder_magazine_ex.php).

Originally featured in the UK publication, *The Recorder Magazine* (Spring 2022, Volume 42, Issue 1), published by Peacock Press.

To obtain a PDF copy of this issue including the commissioned music, please email Graham at [Recordermagcomp@gmail.com](mailto:Recordermagcomp@gmail.com).

Music available in the ARS Downloadable Music Libraries (search for "Eijkhout" as composer), <https://americanrecorder.org/newmusic>

Society of Recorder Players

Quartet Composition Competition Results, with personal observations from Victor Eijkhout, <https://americanrecorder.org/docs/ARsum19body.pdf>

Mention by Sarah Jeffery of Eijkhout and Melika Fitzhugh, composer of the 2021 work for ARS Play-the-Recorder Month: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VR-4tlnmJak>

## IN MEMORIAM

**Markus Zahnhausen**

Munich-based recorder virtuoso, composer and journalist Markus Zahnhausen (1965-2022) died in late April. No cause of death was known at press time. He was 57 years old.

Zahnhausen was hailed as a brilliant and imaginative composer, and left an impressive body of recorder reper-



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toire that expands the boundaries of the instrument. He is often associated with Michala Petri, to whom he dedicated a recorder concerto (*Recordare*, 2015). Numerous recordings of his works, by Petri and by other recorder artists as well as by Zahnhausen himself, are available. Released to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Carl Orff's birth in 1995, two volumes of a five-volume Orff-Schulwerk commemorative collection (still available) feature Zahnhausen playing recorder.

His compositional output ranged from works for string orchestra to stage music, including two other orchestral pieces using recorder: *Pan erwacht* (The Awakening of Pan, 2006) for recorder and string orchestra, written as a cadenza to the *Recorder Concerto in C major, RV443*, by Antonio Vivaldi; and *Sviréli* for string orchestra and four recorders (2001).

Besides the works in other genres, a large part of his output consisted of pieces for recorders—ranging from a number of solo works for soprano, alto or tenor recorder, to a quartet for alto recorders. He also composed ensemble works combining recorder with harp, with cello and piano, and a few times with singers in various vocal ranges, or with transverse flute.

Born in Saarbrücken, Germany, Zahnhausen studied recorder at the Richard Strauss Conservatory in Munich with Hermann Elsner. He also pursued Slavic studies and musicology at the University of Trier and the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich.

In October 2002, he began teaching recorder at the Hochschule für Musik and Theater, also in Munich. From 2010-12, he was a visiting professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz, Austria. He was a guest lecturer at the Carl Nielsen Academy of Music in Odense, Denmark; the Royal Danish Academy of Music; Birmingham Conservatory, England;

Grieg Academy of the University of Bergen, Norway; Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany; and Wichita State University in the U.S.

Active as a performer of ancient and modern recorder music in concerts, radio and television, and on recordings, he appeared among other places in Russia at the Moscow Autumn and St. Petersburg Spring; at Great Britain's International Festival of Early Music; and in Iceland, Tatarstan and the Urals.

In October 2003 he made his American debut and was a guest lecturer at Wichita State University. In 2005 he was awarded a residency at the Millay Colony for the Arts in Austerlitz, NY.

In addition to his musical activities, Zahnhausen worked as a music journalist for Bayerischer Rundfunk, for the Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste and for specialist journals. He edited the series, *Neue Blockflöten Bibliothek* (New Recorder Library), published by Mösel-Verlag. Known to share his time and knowledge, he was the catalyst for new recorder works by composers such as Harald Genzmer, Günter Kochan, Walter Mays, Elis Pehkonen, Rodion Shchedrin, Hans Stadlmair, Boris Tishchenko, Atli Heimir Sveinsson, Porkell Sigurbjörnsson and Ruth Zechlin. ❁

[www.zahnhausen.com](http://www.zahnhausen.com);  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Markus\\_Zahnhausen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Markus_Zahnhausen)

*Recordare*, dedicated to Michala Petri and played by her, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxb\\_XiR6PI4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxb_XiR6PI4)

*Lachrimae*, a recorder trio composed in 2013 by Zahnhausen in memory of his friend and fellow composer Porkell Sigurbjörnsson, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kGv\\_q6BUh8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kGv_q6BUh8)

Partial selection of printed music composed or edited by Zahnhausen, <https://en.schott-music.com/shop/autoren/markus-zahnhausen>

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# INSTRUMENTS

# FLUTES OF THE AMERICAS

BY JACOB MILLER AND TRUDI WRIGHT

Archival research leads to understanding of the instruments in the Constance M. Primus Folk Flute Collection.



Jacob Miller graduated from Regis University (Denver, CO) in May 2022 with a

bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in music. At Regis, he was an Army ROTC student and member of Concert Choir, Collegium Musicum, and the Regis Ramblers.

In high school in Strasburg, CO, Miller was an all-state football, baseball and basketball player, winning two Colorado state championships in football. While always having an immense love for music, he never imagined himself studying, researching, and performing music until encouraged to do so while at Regis.

Post-graduation, Miller will complete his ROTC training and commission as an officer in the United States Army.



Trudi Wright is an Associate Professor and Director of the Music Program at Regis University

(Denver, CO), where she investigates musical theater history, American music and world music with her students. Her experiences with her Regis students led her to write "Engaging the Community: A Public Speaking Performance Class," which was published in 2018 by Palgrave in *The Performing Arts as High Impact Practice*.

As an active musicologist, Dr. Wright focuses on the connections between American labor and musical theater. Her 2016 American music article, "Lost in *The Cradle*: Marc Blitzstein's 'FTP Plowed Under' (1937)," is based on her ongoing research of the musical, *Pins and Needles*. She has also studied the 1978 Stephen Schwartz musical, *Working*, which is featured in the chapter, "It's Still Working: Collaborating to Perform the Stories of Everyday Americans Both Then and Now," in the 2020 *Routledge Companion to the Post-1970 American Stage Musical*.

Undergraduate research is becoming an important part of post-secondary pedagogy. One way students of the humanities can be exposed to archival research is by introducing them to collections held within their university libraries. Regis University (Denver, CO) music students are fortunate to have access to a number of collections held jointly by the Dayton Memorial Library and the Recorder Music Center (RMC). The presentation that resulted in this article is both the beginning and continuation of student-led archival research within the RMC.

In 2018, four Regis music students researched the life and music of composer, performer, musicologist and pedagogue Erich Katz (1900-73), Honorary President of the ARS. Those papers inspired the 2018 AR article, "Erich Katz and Vocation: Exploring the Past with a Purpose." That research was so successful that Regis faculty members Mark Davenport and Trudi Wright began dreaming up ways to create more opportunities



**1: Jacob Miller.** Trying flutes from the Constance M. Primus Folk Flute Collection, early in his research.

**2: In front of the Recorder Music Center display, following the presentation of Miller's paper in April.** (left to right) Jacob Miller; Clelyn Chapin, Mark Davenport and Trudi Wright of the Regis University Music Program faculty; and Miriam Primus (granddaughter of Connie Primus, who unfortunately was ill and could not attend).

for students to learn research skills through hands-on experience in the archives.

This led to an exploration by Jacob Miller, a music minor at Regis, of the Constance M. Primus (CMP) Folk Flute Collection, an instrument collection donated by Connie Primus, a recorder player and former president of the ARS. In addition to her recorder activities, Primus collected flutes from around the world for most of her adult life. She enjoyed sharing the collection with others, whether through performance, demonstration, lectures, or a combination of the three.

Miller's work culminated in two parts: a research narrative (a style of paper that celebrates the curiosity and discovery of the research process from the researcher's point of view), resulting in a presentation and this article; and a curated display of the CMP Folk Flute Collection.

As you might guess, the 170+

flutes of the collection were much too large a topic to cover (or to display in the library), so Miller narrowed his research to flutes of North and South America. This choice was inspired by his high school and its work with the Native American community, specifically Northern Arapaho tribe members. The relationship he describes is a model for any organization working toward reparations with Native people of their community.

In that spirit, Miller and Wright worked with History Colorado, as well as Shelly Thompson (Cultural Preservation Officer, Southern Ute Indian Tribe), and Terry Knight (Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe). These experts helped Miller and Wright properly handle and display the Ute flute of the Primus collection.

When engaging with the CMP flutes in the years ahead, the goal is to strengthen relationships with as many of the cultures represented by these flutes as possible.

The music program will do this because, as Regis outlines in its Indigenous Lands Acknowledgement, partly reproduced here: *Regis University ... recognize[s] the 48 tribal nations that are historically tied to the lands that make up the state of Colorado. As a Jesuit university, Regis is engaged in a mission of walking with those communities who have been excluded. Accordingly, it is important that we acknowledge that our presence on this land is due to the forced displacement of Indigenous Peoples from their ancestral lands. It is only in publicly recognizing this historical reality that we are able to embrace, in the present, our moral and intellectual responsibility...*

Read on for the article that grew out of Miller's project utilizing the CMP Folk Flute Collection.

As a vocalist, my knowledge of flutes is limited, to say the least, so my task of conducting and presenting research on flutes provided quite the learning opportunity. I moved the few dozen boxes of flutes from their lockers down to the Recorder Music Center (RMC) for closer examination. The collection consisted of a grand total of 176 flutes.

Where to begin? One box was marked with the words, “these are the oldest and most expensive flutes,” and happened to contain flutes numbered one through six, so that seemed to be a good place to start. The flutes were all examples of Central or South American globular flutes, the oldest being a pre-Columbian whistle from the native Tairona people in Costa Rica. The first was made of clay and shaped into a small owl. The flute’s corresponding information card said it was from 1500-500 BC. Quite interesting: six flutes down, 170 to go.

My next questions were, “How will I direct my research from here? Will I try and cast a wide net and find information about flutes from all over the world, or try and focus on a specific type of flute or location?” The answer wasn’t clear to me, and so I decided to just start looking at flutes and see what piqued my interest.

I started by reviewing the research cards and wrote down any flutes that had a good amount of information from Primus, as well as any flutes that just seemed interesting based on their description. After I moved through the cards, I compiled a list of the boxes that contained flutes of interest, and I began.

One box held a few Native American flutes, so I gravitated towards it. I had listened to Native American music before, but what I had heard centered on percussion and vocal music, not flutes. The high school I attended had a Native American mascot and

“

Native flutes are very similar to the European recorder, and are played vertically.... The Native American flute ‘is a blockflute in which air is forced across a fipple, or edge, by a blockage in the wind chamber...’

decided that the only way we could keep the mascot, ethically, was if we were given permission to continue to use it as a symbol of our school by the Northern Arapaho tribe. They had previously lived on the land where my hometown in eastern Colorado was, before they were displaced to the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. The Northern Arapaho agreed, and our school used this opportunity to connect with them further to educate ourselves. The Northern Arapaho designed our school logo and visited our school every semester to host a powwow, where they would discuss their culture with the students, and perform music and ceremonial dances.

Because of this experience, and a few interesting Native American flutes in front of me, my research continued in this direction.

### Native flutes constructed like recorders

I wanted to know how the Native American flutes of the collection were constructed, as well as the historical, cultural and spiritual significance of the flute as an instrument. I first looked in the *Grove Music Online Encyclopedia*, as well as the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* in Dayton Memorial Library at Regis. These encyclopedias provided information about the construction and design of these flutes, a great beginning that made me want to find out more.

The *Grove Music Online* entry by Bryan Burton explains that Native flutes are very similar to the European recorder, and are played vertically, which is something I noticed right away when I saw the instruments. The article states that the Native American flute “is a blockflute in which air is forced across a fipple, or edge, by a blockage in the wind chamber. It was traditionally made of wood or cane.” Burton further explains that the flutes were created by making two length-wise hollowed-out halves that were then tied or glued together. The examples in the Primus collection certainly reflected this.

The *Garland Encyclopedia* reiterated this and further elaborated on the construction by saying, “The Indian flute is the internal duct type with a hollowed interior tube containing a block, usually of the same material as the tube, that diverts the air stream to an exterior cap that directs the air across a lip, causing the air column to split and vibrate, producing the actual sound. Flute stops (finger holes) vary from one to nine depending on the culture... Flutes are made from cedar (Sioux and Northern Plains) and various other woods (like box elder), cane (O’odham, Yuman), bark (Northeast and Northwest), pottery (Rio Grande area), and even bone.” This gave me a good idea of how these flutes were constructed, but I continued my search to try and understand flute-related terms like “duct.”

*Grove Music Online* had an entry on the duct flute or whistle flute: a “duct” is something that directs the breath of the player to the proper place within the flute for sound production, allowing the flute to be more easily played, like a recorder. This is in contrast to a transverse flute (which resembles the silver flute we see in bands and orchestras); it requires the player to direct the air properly using correct embouchure, as the player holds the

“

‘The Indian flute is the internal duct type with a hollowed interior tube containing a block, usually of the same material as the tube, that diverts the air stream to an exterior cap that directs the air across a lip, causing the air column to split and vibrate, producing the actual sound.’

flute to the side. The latter allows for more expressiveness and dynamic variety—but, as I learned while trying to make sound come out of a Chinese transverse flute in the collection, is very difficult to do.

Another source I found, the website Flutopedia, explains that in 2011, the Hornbostel-Sachs musical instrument classification system was revised by the Musical Instruments Museums Online consortium to add a new classification that best described the North American Native flutes: “Flutes with an internal duct plus an external tied-on cover.” I could see the external tied-on cover on the Native American examples in the collection, and I could start to make sense of how the flute created sound.

►  
**Globular flutes in  
 the Constance M. Primus  
 Folk Flute Collection.**  
 Photos by Mark Davenport.

**1: Globular dragon flute from  
 North America.**

**2: Globular flutes from (left to right)  
 Mexico, Togo and Mexico.**

**3: Two handpainted globular flutes  
 from Peru.**



1



2



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**Spiritual importance  
of Native flutes**

With a good idea of how the flutes were constructed, I wanted to get a sense of what cultural and spiritual significance these flutes had in Native American culture. The best way forward was to use the bibliography from *Grove Music Online* as a springboard for further information.

The author of the Native flutes entry, Burton, was also the author of the book, *Voices in the Wind: Native American Flute Songs*. After obtaining this book, I learned that Burton is of mixed Native American descent himself. He transposed many Native songs in this book for beginning flute players, and preserved the story behind each of the songs. Ironically, in a book of notated music, he says that Native flute songs were not learned using any form of notation, but instead aurally—passed down from teacher to learner, or among friends, and often between tribes.

Burton also mentions that, when a tribe member returned from meeting another tribe, the first question asked was, “what new song did you learn?”

The relative ease of playing the Native American flute made it a very common form of self-expression; creating new flute music went hand in hand with playing the instrument. There was no distinction between composers and players, as everyone who picked up the flute engaged fully in both.

One song in Burton's book is the *Kiowa Love Song*, which is an example of a courting song among the Kiowa Tribe. They claim to be the first to receive the flute from the Creator. This information, Burton says, should be taken with a grain of salt, as every tribe has their own flute origin story—and each one begins with that tribe discovering it. This book, while having interesting information, proved to be primarily about learning

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Native flute songs, and less about the flutes themselves.

The Grove bibliography led me to a couple more sources: a book called *Native American Flute: History & Craft* by C.S. Fuqua; as well as an article, from a 1921 issue of *The Flutist*, on Native American flutes written by Dayton C. Miller (a physicist and acoustician, as well as amateur flutist; the Library of Congress flute collection bears his name).

Fuqua reports that tribes could be identified by their flute songs when they traveled, thus furthering this idea that the flute served as a social instrument, as well as an instrument of self-expression. Men would often build their own flutes and use them as an attempt to impress women with the songs and flutes that they created.

While the flute clearly had significance in courting, as described by Burton, it was also used in other ceremonies that represented hope for a successful harvest or hunt, or to celebrate completion of these life-cycle events. Flutes were also used during the appointment of tribal leaders or rite of passage ceremonies.

Fuqua continues by saying that, while the flute was primarily a male instrument, both men and women would play the flute. Particularly tal-

ented players were nurtured from a young age, as this ability was seen as a divine gift and of considerable value to the cultural and spiritual well-being of the tribe.

While Fuqua does state that women were allowed to play the flute, my assumption is that this is something that differed between tribes. When we reached out to the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe about our Native Ute flute, they made it very clear that my advisor Dr. Wright, as a woman, was not allowed to touch the flute in any capacity.

Also I was instructed to say a short prayer over the flute before it entered into the case. (Out of respect to the Ute tribe and their spiritual beliefs, this article does not show a photo of that flute, which they agreed could be displayed only for educational purposes in the library at Regis.)

Further, Fuqua emphasizes the “Kokopelli” Native American image depicting a dancing individual who is playing the flute—an image I had seen often, especially in New Mexico, but had not much thought about until now. Fuqua says that these flutist images first appeared around 750-850 CE in Mesoamerica and may represent Aztec traders who traveled to the Southwestern U.S. The first North American depiction of the “Kokopelli” is around 1000 CE, among the original Puebloans that inhabited the Four Corners area of the U.S.

### Origins of the North American Native flute

Next I began to read *The Flutist* article from 1921 called “Flutes of the American Indian” by Miller, which contained interesting black and white photos detailing flutes very similar to the ones in the Primus flute collection. Miller’s article recounts words of ethnologist Canon Galpin:

*It appears to me that we must look to Central America, Mexico, and the home of the Aztecs for the main source of inspiration [for the Northern Native American flute]. The whistle-head was exceedingly well-known to this highly civilized nation. The ruins of their temples and sepulchres have produced large numbers of specimens—some simple whistles, others double, and others with finger holes. The knowledge of the whistle head must have reached [Northern Native Americans] by sea, by coasting canoes, or through the traffic which we know was maintained after the fall of the Aztec power, all along the Northwest Coast by the Spaniards.*

I now had a couple of sources claiming the origin of the Northern Native American flute to have come from the south—first from Central and South America, then to the Southwestern U.S., before expanding all over North America. This gave me good reason to look further into the other flutes in the Primus collection from South and Central America, and finally solidify the focus of my flute display—a focus on flutes from the Americas.

### Flutes from all over the Americas

Luckily, I found flutes of all kinds in the CMP collection that met this criterion. There were many vertical and globular flutes from Mexico that were almost all made of clay. One example is an Aztec-style end-blown flute that was made from hardened and cooled lava. These examples, just like the Northern Native American flutes, were not ancient historical pieces—but more modern instruments, most likely made sometime in the 20th century. Regardless, I wanted to look further into the relevance of these flutes in traditional Aztec culture, just as I did with the North American Native flutes.

The Aztec end-blown flute example

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Both of these instruments were played by the Adonis (or sacrificial young man) as he ascended the steps of the pyramids on the way to his sacrifice!

inspired another look at *Grove Music Online*. There I found an entry for Aztec Music in general, plus another for the “Huillacapitzli,” which is the general term in Nahuatl (a language spoken by the Native people of Southern Mexico and Central America) for the Aztec flute, specifically the ceramic globular vessel flute. There are many examples of this flute type in the Primus collection.

The Huillacapitzli was played alongside the “tlapitzalli,” which is the term for the end-blown vertical Aztec flute. Both of these instruments were played by the Adonis (or sacrificial young man) as he ascended the steps of the pyramids on the way to his sacrifice!

From the Aztec Music entry by Robert Stevenson, as well as his book, *Music in Aztec and Inca Territory*, it was clear that the Aztec flute, and Aztec music in general, played a role similar to that in Northern Native American cultures: it was very important to the spiritual and communal well-being of the tribe. However, Aztec culture differed greatly as to how the flute music was presented and who within the tribe was allowed to play the flute. Stevenson writes, *Music in Aztec culture had no independent life apart from religious and cult observances. A professionalized caste controlled public musical manifestations, and training of an extremely rigid kind was prerequisite to a career in music. Since music was always thought of as a necessary*



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◀  
1: Globular flutes from Mexico in the Constance M. Primus Folk Flute Collection.

2: Native American flutes.

▶  
3: Aztec end-blown flute.

4: More globular flutes from Mexico.

5: Pre-Columbian clay flutes.

6: Peruvian panpipe.

Photos by Jacob Miller.



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*adjunct to ritual, absolutely flawless performances were demanded, such as only the most highly trained singers and players could give. Imperfectly executed rituals were thought to offend rather than to appease the deities, so that errors in the performances of ritual music, such as missed drumbeats, carried the death penalty.*

Just as in Northern Native American culture, Aztec flute music (and music as a whole) was spiritually essential and very ritualistic in nature—but in Aztec culture, music was not something in which just anyone could engage. It was not an accessible means of self-expression, but a serious endeavor carried out by only the most highly trained players.

Both cultures were similar in how they had no form of music notation, not even in the seminary in the Aztec

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The Aztec flute, and Aztec music in general, played a role similar to that in Northern Native American cultures: it was very important to the spiritual and communal well-being of the tribe.... Just as in Northern Native American culture, Aztec flute music (and music as a whole) was spiritually essential and very ritualistic in nature....

capital that served as a conservatory for learning the massive repertoire of flute music required for an Aztec player. The music was so important to the culture that almost every day in the Aztec's 260-day calendar had a coinciding song that had to be memorized and mastered by musicians.

## A prayer for Native flutes and understanding

My research helped give both historical and cultural context and meaning to these musical instruments—when they originally were nothing more to me than very interesting looking objects, now removed from the context in which they were created and initially played. I would like to share the short prayer I gave as I put the Native Ute flute from Colorado into the display:

*I hope these instruments can be used to give students and faculty at Regis a glimpse into a culture that we do not often have the opportunity to appreciate and understand.*

Expanding my desire, I hope that those who see or read about the flutes in the Primus collection have the opportunity to be introduced, as I was, to these instruments and what they meant to the indigenous communities that brought them to life. ❁

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### INFORMATION AND LINKS OF INTEREST:

- Note: Grove Music Online (GMO) requires a subscription or access via a library or organization with a subscription, in order to see some sources for this article, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic).
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- Information about Dayton C. Miller, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dayton\\_Miller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dayton_Miller); [www.loc.gov/collections/dayton-c-miller-collection/about-this-collection](http://www.loc.gov/collections/dayton-c-miller-collection/about-this-collection).
- Donate to the Recorder Music Center or schedule a visit to use items held in the archive: having amassed a very large collection of published recorder music, the RMC now focuses more on acquiring archival materials relating to the history of the 20th-century recorder movement, such as personal correspondence, photographs, historical documents, compositions and instruments. Info: Mark Davenport, Director, Recorder Music Center, Regis University, Denver, CO 80221-1099, [mdavenpo@regis.edu](mailto:mdavenpo@regis.edu), 303-964-3609.

## INTERVIEW

# A VISIT WITH RECORDER BUILDER NIKOLAJ RONIMUS

BY VICKI BOECKMAN

PHOTOS BY WILLIAM STICKNEY PHOTOGRAPHY

A conversation between a Danish recorder maker  
and an American recorder professional.



The American recorder professional Vicki Boeckman has been performing and teaching since the 1980s. Before settling in Seattle, WA, she resided in Denmark from 1981-2004. While there she had a highly rewarding performing and recording career, playing all over

Scandinavia and many European countries, collaborating with some of the finest musicians and composers of the day.

She was adjunct professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen for 12 years and taught at the Ishøj Municipal School of Music for 23 years. Many of those students are now professionals, performing and teaching in conservatories in Denmark and around Europe.

In the Pacific Northwest, Boeckman has been a featured soloist with the Seattle Symphony, Yakima Symphony, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Portland (OR) Baroque Orchestra, Oregon Symphony, Medieval Women's Choir, Gallery Concerts in Seattle, Boise (ID) Philharmonic and the Skagit Symphony.

She is currently a member of the Farallon Recorder Quartet, music director for the Seattle Recorder Society, co-director for the Recorder Orchestra of Puget Sound, and artistic director for the Port Townsend Early Music Workshop that is held in summers of odd-numbered years.

She adores teaching children as well as adults and has been on the faculty of Music Center of the Northwest since 2005, as well as having a thriving home and Zoom studio.

This inspiring interview took place in Nikolaj Ronimus's apartment in the middle of Copenhagen, Denmark, in October 2019, complete with constant interruptions from his daughter Rosaline, then three years old. It was recorded in Danish, then transcribed and translated.

Nikolaj's story is intertwined with his years of long-distance correspondence with the late Australian recorder builder extraordinaire, Frederick Morgan (1940-99). For our readers who are unfamiliar with the work of Fred Morgan, he had a profound influence not only on the early music movement, but also on the quality of recorder building. The instruments that came from his shop are some of the finest copies of historical models known to this day. I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to get to know him through our countless fax correspondences during the final 10 years of his life before a tragic

►  
**Two shots of Nikolaj Ronimus  
 at his work table with his  
 young daughter Rosaline**

auto accident took him from us, and to be the honored owner of many of his magnificent instruments.

The only person I trust to work on any of my Morgan recorders is Nikolaj Ronimus, a passionate, enthusiastic, self-assured Danish recorder virtuoso, recorder builder and father of four.

During my 2019 trip back to Denmark, I brought one of my voice flutes to Nikolaj for a revoicing and discovered that he was making his own instruments. I was struck by his artistry. He is a gifted recorder builder, creating exceptional instruments—continuing the Morgan legacy with a vast knowledge and curiosity that deserves sharing.

Nikolaj gained Fred Morgan's trust and respect by examining original instruments in various European museums and sharing discoveries about voicing, after which they would have lengthy conversations. Fred never had an apprentice, although he led classes in The Hague in the 1970s—inspiring nascent builders like Lyn Elder, David Coomber, Peter van der Poel and Ricardo Kanji to continue, and mentoring Joanne Saunders for several years in the 1990s. Also in the Morgan shop, Dieter Mücke, a skilled craftsman, turned the wood and made bores from the reamers that Fred designed. Those instruments bear his mark, a single D.

In Nikolaj, I believe Fred noticed a kindred spirit—someone who shared an innate understanding of wood and had a fierce desire and curiosity to meet the demands required to make instruments for the professional recorder player.



**VICKI** When did your interest in building recorders start?

**NIKOLAJ** My interest began rather early and was sparked by the desire to repair and/or improve instruments. It was at the beginning of the '80s—I was 14. I had an old Roesler alto with a huge beak, kind of like a brick, very much like putting a wooden shoe in my mouth. I couldn't "do" anything on it. So, basically, I had at it—I sawed a bit and carved away at it with a pocketknife. I still have that knife today! It enabled me to put more of the beak in my mouth, which made the instrument play better.

I was young, I had a "what the heck, go for it" attitude anyway, and thought, "Well, this can't be all that difficult...!" I decided to experiment on various recorders that I acquired at pawn shops—funny old things from the 1930s that I could work on. By sanding and carving and filing and gluing and taking constant notes, I made a series of discoveries that piqued my curiosity more and more. These "freak" recorders served my purpose rather well, and I delighted in gaining the skills and confidence to make them better.

**VICKI** You had a wonderful relationship with Fred Morgan and were one of the very few people whom he took into his confidence and with whom he shared his knowledge. When did your relationship with him start?

**NIKOLAJ** Well, of course I really wanted one of Fred's instruments, because anyone who was "someone," who had made a name for themselves in the performing world, had Fred Morgan's instruments.

[**VICKI** Unlike recorder builders today, Fred did not have a brochure from which one could order, and he was extremely selective about whom

he chose to build for.]

**NIKOLAJ** With my ambitions as a budding professional, studying at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen, I simply had to have one of his instruments. Since he didn't know me from Adam, I knew that I had to approach him in a way that he could see that, not only was I a worthy player, but that I had a strong interest in voicing and building recorders. Because of my connections with the curator of the Music History Museum in Copenhagen (where an original Denner recorder is housed), I was afforded certain privileges that most folks didn't have, and was able to closely examine many of the instruments on several occasions.

Apparently, I was able to express all this to him successfully enough to win his trust and I was the happy recipient of a Ganassi alto recorder three months after ordering one.

I faxed immediately, telling Fred every single observation that I had made about the voicing, the labium, the chamfers, the way the wood was treated, etc...., which was the starting point for a long collaboration. He was of course especially excited that I had connections to the museum and asked me to make some observations about the Copenhagen Denner, and about a couple of G altos that were housed there as well.

By then I had already done quite a bit of homework with regards to studying instruments. While I was at the conservatory, several of my study mates got word that I could revoice and clean windways rather decently—which I was basically doing from day one there. Even a simple cleaning can make quite an improvement! I was about 18 or 19 and had a constant stream of recorders that needed cleaning or revoicing—even from some professionals. I could make small repairs: small changes in

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I was the happy recipient of a Ganassi alto recorder three months after ordering one. I faxed immediately, telling Fred every single observation that I had made about the voicing,... etc...., which was the starting point for a long collaboration.

the angles of the chamfers and the block—basic improvements, if you will. And all my own instruments were constantly in the danger zone of being experimented upon! I could focus on one aspect of a problem, make an adjustment, then play, play, play, make another adjustment, play, play, play, repeat, repeat, repeat. But I never touched a Morgan—they were sacred objects like the Holy Grail!

**VICKI** Did you take notes on your discoveries?

**NIKOLAJ** I do write certain things down, like basic measurements, or particular qualities that an instrument might have, if I am unfamiliar with it, but I have a very good memory. I remember all of my discoveries and observations about voicing and tuning, etc. That's how I am put together. I just remember—which wouldn't be so great if I ever have a blackout!

**VICKI** Well, we will just have to make sure that never happens!

**NIKOLAJ** But it's also a question of intuition. Oftentimes I have felt a kinship with Stanesby or Bressan or Denner. I've studied the drawings very, very, very closely, and I've played on a lot of original instruments and absorbed as much information as



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Even a simple cleaning can make quite an improvement!

I possibly could about the boring and the voicing.

Then there came the time when I started revoicing a Morgan instrument for real.



**VICKI** Sending a recorder all the way back to Australia for revoicing was always fraught with worry and concern. Not only was it expensive, but unnerving—to part with one’s precious instrument for however long it took, coupled with the added worry of it being taxed upon return.

So there was this moment in time where you had gained enough respect and trust from Fred that he would tell people to contact you instead of sending them back to him! That really was the pivotal point in your own career and must have boosted your sense of self-esteem enormously.



◀ Three photos of Nikolaj Ronimus working on Vicki Boeckman’s Fred Morgan voice flute in 2019.

1: With the block removed, it’s possible to see wear that needs to be addressed during revoicing.

2: A closer look at the outside of the windway, and looking at the inside of the fipple.

3: Examining the playing edge of the fipple.

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Oftentimes I have felt a kinship with Stanesby or Bressan or Denner.... I've played on a lot of original instruments and absorbed as much information as I possibly could.

### Next steps: working on Morgan recorders

**VICKI** I'm sure you remember my voice flute that had a horrible case of mold in the windway. I was devastated, and Fred said that he would be happy to build me a new head-joint—but, since the head was two-thirds of the work and cost, that he might as well build me a whole new instrument. With regard to the mold situation, he said, “Go to Nikolaj, he's right there in your neck of the woods.”

**NIKOLAJ** Yes! That was a pivotal point. I was so proud to receive his recognition, and your voice flute was one of the first Morgan recorders that I worked on. We started faxing back and forth about the repairs, but that was sooo slow.

► **4:** The work table of recorder builder Nikolaj Ronimus in his Copenhagen home.

**5:** The “blank” heads of the Hallet model soprano, in cherry, boxwood and maple, which may soon yield ...

**6:** Ronimus recorders, as shown by his maker's mark.



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[**VICKI** This is all pre-cellphone and pre-internet. Calls from Denmark to Australia were very expensive, so we didn't often call. Instead we would send a fax to the Daylesford video shop, where Fred would pop in a couple of times a week.]

**NIKOLAJ** I would call him with the discoveries I made while cleaning or revoicing. Rather than me asking him questions, I would tell him what I had discovered and how I solved a problem. Once he could see how invested I was, he would ask if I noticed other things, other facets of voicing, which I would then immediately try out and report back. It was very exciting.

I wouldn't call it a collaboration—that would not be fair—but an

Sending a recorder all the way back to Australia for revoicing was always fraught with worry and concern. Not only was it expensive, but unnerving—to part with one's precious instrument for however long it took.

exchange of knowledge and information. I was absolutely the novice, and he was absolutely the master. The wonderful thing that happened was that he opened up, and shared and divulged all this wonderful knowledge to me.

One of the very exciting joint ideas we had was about oiling the block.

Most of us were brought up to think that we should never let oil touch the block—but, after I had been in Paris for about six months and had the opportunity to try a couple of original instruments in various museums, I could see that their blocks were very dark. I was allowed to remove the blocks, and I could see and smell that they were basically saturated in oil. When I got back home, naturally, I started experimenting with oiling the blocks on some of my own recorders, which was a total game changer—it opened up a whole other world.

I immediately called Fred and told him about this discovery, which I thought was major, because it enabled me to play for hours, and the voicing was still stable. We embarked upon

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One of the very exciting joint ideas we had was about oiling the block. Most of us were brought up to think that we should never let oil touch the block—but after I had been in Paris ... to try a couple of original instruments in various museums, I could see that their blocks were very dark.... I started experimenting with oiling the blocks on some of my own recorders, which was a total game changer.

all kinds of recipes on how to thin out tung oil—each on our own continent on both sides of the globe—and would compare notes. Fred was building instruments for the professional musician—and for a performer and recording artist, these instruments simply have to hold up under duress and continue to work even after hours of playing.

This began what I would call an intensive exchange of information, discussing the needs of a professional. It was indescribably exciting. We both fed off each other and had the same insights and desire to go into minute detail about voicing. I don't think he shared this information with anyone else. He was a warm, openhearted person—and of course, we shared a lot of other stories about life, and pets and our different countries, and what-not. I'm so thankful that he thought what I had to say was interesting and that he found my observations worth considering.

**VICKI** It was a well-deserved mutual respect. And now, what about Nikolaj Ronimus recorders?

## From repairs to building new recorders

**NIKOLAJ** I always had the desire and a dream to build my own recorders, and even designed my signature stamp back when I was 14. Quite frankly, if one is a good enough musician, and has certain woodworking skills, and a good ear, even though it isn't easy, it is easy *enough* to build a soprano or an alto recorder that functions and plays in tune. The questions beyond that are ... does it have the range of colors, does it have the functionality, does it have the volume capacity, does it articulate quickly? etc., etc. Suddenly when you want to have one thing, there are countless consequences and conversions one must make to the basic design.

Fred always advised me to examine museum instruments and whenever possible to play them. All of Fred's drawings are from the '70s at a time when builders were allowed to come into museums and play the recorders—but unfortunately that's not the case anymore. A lot of liberties were taken, and instruments were damaged.

The Bate Collection of Musical Instruments in the Oxford University faculty of music is one of the institutions that still allow professionals to play the instruments. They keep a strict log—the limit is three minutes, but I don't need a lot of time. One minute, even 30 seconds is enough, because I go in knowing what I'm looking for, and it is easy to spot. Of course, if you go in already knowing what you are listening for, then you don't need a lot of time. Two to three minutes maximum ... *if* you have experience with voicing and your ears are open. It was really cool—after I had gone to a particular museum and played on a certain instrument, Fred and I would compare notes about his observations from the '70s and my own.

The fact that professionals can get

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The fact that professionals can get permission to borrow a museum instrument to use for a CD recording is quite wonderful, but it will be a different instrument afterward.... The instruments get worn out.

permission to borrow a museum instrument to use for a CD recording is quite wonderful, but it will be a different instrument afterward. I don't believe that it is OK, for a whole class of conservatory students to be allowed to come into museums and play on the instruments—because they don't know what they're looking for and they have no idea what they're listening for. The instruments get worn out. It's not right.

If one is so lucky to get permission to play on an original instrument, then it must be for the purpose of gleaning information. I believe it is one's duty to pass along this information. What were your observations, what did you see, how did it feel, how did it respond, what did you discover, etc.? This is not something that a conservatory student on a field trip can assess.

**VICKI** Your own sopranos are marvelous! How did you happen to choose to copy that model?

**NIKOLAJ** I had the extreme pleasure of being able to play on recorders in Frans Brügger's original collection, and one of those was a Hallet soprano. Benjamin Hallet was an apprentice to Stanesby and worked alongside Stanesby, Jr., in England. This little ivory instrument played with incredible ease in the upper register and had an extremely power-



▲  
Two shots of Nikolaj Ronimus with his Hallet soprano.

ful lower register—what I always had wished for in a recorder, the flute of my dreams! I was absolutely speechless! Of course, ivory allows for other possibilities than does wood, but still...

I knew of a Hallet soprano in A in a private collection that I could compare it with—a fascinating instrument, but horribly out of tune, which led me to the conclusion that Hallet as a builder didn't have enough knowledge about the bore or tuning—but the fundamental proportions and characteristics of the instrument were incredible.

There was yet another Hallet soprano in the collection of Dale Higbee [founder and director for many years of the Carolina Baroque in NC; also a frequent *AR* contributor for several decades starting in the 1960s]. I was able to examine it. After comparing all these instruments, I made changes to straighten out the boring so that the instrument plays in tune, while preserving the majority of the original design.

I believe that one has to make choices—I have to make choices—that will serve the needs of the professionals. The continuing question—the dilemma we are always facing—is: do we want to play original music on an instrument that we think could be the best instrument at our disposal, or do we play original music on an instrument that doesn't work and try to make it work?

**VICKI** I have chosen recorder as my tool of expression, and I have a battery of instruments—but regardless of the type of music I have been hired to play, my instruments have to work!

**NIKOLAJ** They have to work, but they must have as much of the original soul of the instrument as possible. As soon as it diverts from the original sound ideal, then it is—in my

opinion—a miscreation. Even if it has a lovely tone and can play loudly, if it moves away from the original sound, then it is not correct and has missed the mark.

I really try to balance these things out, and my goal with voicing is that it is comparable to the original instrument that I've chosen to copy. My ideals are based on many years of acquired knowledge and experience, combined with Fred's guidance and advice, as well as what I desire as a professional recorder player.

**VICKI** Tell me about your new alto.

**NIKOLAJ** My new alto is also a long labor of love! When one lives right here in Copenhagen, this close to the Music History Museum, and one builds recorders, it would be very strange not to want to make a version of the Copenhagen Denner!

Of all the museum instruments I have examined and played, there is not one Denner that can play the high F<sup>#</sup> with articulation—but when you look at Fred's drawings, you can see that it is possible. I know it can be done, and I will! It's just a question of how, so that is my goal.

I've made a prototype and I am getting very close. There is one other recorder on the planet that can take this high note, and that is in Frans Brügger's collection. It's a Stanesby, Jr., B<sup>b</sup> tenor—of course, I've made a copy of it, and my copy can play [the corresponding note]!!

So I know it is possible and that it will be an art of balancing the boring, the voicing and the proportions. This is what takes time as a builder. And my opus one has come surprisingly close!

Fred had many ideas and recorder projects in the works that weren't completed. I want to follow up and build upon those ideas, his spirit, and all the information that he so gener-



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ously imparted. When Fred died, I felt like there was this huge responsibility on my shoulders—like, “Oh my God, what now?” He had shared so much knowledge with me, and then he was gone.

I couldn't just sit with it by myself. I had to pass it on. It is so much greater than just revoicing other people's instruments and making discoveries. I want to help professionals like you, like me, and continue the legacy that this enormously talented and generous man started.

The whole concept of voicing and sound ideal is what determines where a musician can go. As a builder we cannot learn how to voice without knowing the intent of the musician and that player's sound ideal.

“

The whole concept of voicing and sound ideal is what determines where a musician can go.... I feel it is the next generation's duty to play an active part in understanding that the design of the voicing is the framework for the recorder professional's artistic expression.

Whether or not they know it, the way they can express themselves is determined by the voicing of the instrument.

I feel it is the next generation's duty to play an active part in understanding that the design of the voicing is the framework for the recorder professional's artistic expression. It is my duty and my years of experience that I want to bring to the table to make recorders work. Fred said, “The repertoire is there and it's very demanding, so there has to be an instrument that will live up to these demands.”

I've taken it upon myself to continue to explore the parameters. The sum of my ambition is to make instruments that live up to the demands of the professional player.

**VICKI** In my opinion you have succeeded. Thank you for being here for us—your instruments are amazing! ❁

#### INFORMATION AND LINKS OF INTEREST:

- List of historical recorder makers, [www.recorderhomepage.net/databases/Historic\\_Makerslist.php](http://www.recorderhomepage.net/databases/Historic_Makerslist.php).
- Nikolaj Ronimus, [www.recorderhomepage.net/databases/Contemporary\\_Makersview.php?showdetail=&Number=212](http://www.recorderhomepage.net/databases/Contemporary_Makersview.php?showdetail=&Number=212).
- Information about or by Fred Morgan  
American Recorder articles: Morgan, Frederick, “A recorder for the music of J.J. van Eyck,” [https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR\\_Mag\\_May\\_1984\\_Multipage.pdf](https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR_Mag_May_1984_Multipage.pdf) (also in this issue is an article from Eva Legêne about the Rosenborg recorders in Copenhagen); Waterman, Rodney, “Recorder Maker Frederick G. Morgan Dies in Automobile Accident in Australia,” [https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AmerRec\\_1999May.pdf](https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AmerRec_1999May.pdf).  
Rothe, Gisela, *Recorders Based on Historical Models: Fred Morgan, Writings and Memories*, OCLC 907177128, difficult to find, even on Interlibrary Loan, [www.worldcat.org/title/recorders-based-on-historical-models-fred-morgan-writings-and-memories/oclc/907177128&referer=brief\\_results](http://www.worldcat.org/title/recorders-based-on-historical-models-fred-morgan-writings-and-memories/oclc/907177128&referer=brief_results).
- The Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, [www.bate.ox.ac.uk](http://www.bate.ox.ac.uk).
- Two AR articles from Thomas M. Prescott: “Making Recorders,” [https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR\\_Mag\\_August\\_1983\\_Multipage.pdf](https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR_Mag_August_1983_Multipage.pdf); detailed explanation, with photos, on making historical soprano recorders, with a short bibliography on recorder making. “The Recorder Windway Demystified.” <https://americanrecorder.org/docs/ARsum16body.pdf>.
- ARS NOVA e-mag article by Thomas Prescott, “How do I know when my recorder needs revoicing?” [https://americanrecorder.org/ars\\_nova\\_e-mag\\_archive.php](https://americanrecorder.org/ars_nova_e-mag_archive.php).
- For other AR articles on recorder making and acoustics, look in the “Recorder Care and Making” category in the Index to American Recorder, [https://americanrecorder.org/docs/full\\_index\\_1960\\_1999.pdf](https://americanrecorder.org/docs/full_index_1960_1999.pdf).
- Related resources on the ARS YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag](http://www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag): “How to Play the Recorder,” beginning lessons with Vicki Boeckman, [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjsolp5ciq7CpKZeJjiti5tYOyR6n4ERh](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjsolp5ciq7CpKZeJjiti5tYOyR6n4ERh); the late Friedrich von Huene is interviewed in an excerpt from Daniël Brügger's 2015 video about pioneer recorder makers, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MKJnRGn4gw&list=FLjOKApNtumnog8U0Iz9XPtA&index=4&t=200s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MKJnRGn4gw&list=FLjOKApNtumnog8U0Iz9XPtA&index=4&t=200s) (others in the full documentary are Hermann Moeck, Martin Skowroneck, Bob Marvin and Fred Morgan). For more information, contact [info@musicframefilms.nl](mailto:info@musicframefilms.nl).

## WORKSHOPS

## More upcoming events

See the [Spring 2022 AR](#) for previous listings.

### FESTIVALS

**June 5-12**

BERKELEY FESTIVAL (ARS)  
Berkeley, CA

*Artistic director: Derek Tam*

Produced by the San Francisco Early Music Society, the eight-day biennial festival features local, national and international artists. Its three-day Exhibition & Marketplace is a bazaar featuring dozens of national and international makers and sellers of historical instruments, music scores, books and paraphernalia, as well as information for all early music lovers.

The Fringe, independently-produced concerts by soloists and

ensembles from around the world, often includes a number of recorder events with modest ticket prices.

Among partners for this in-person festival is Early Music America, service organization for historically-informed performance in North America. This year heralds the return of the Young Performers Festival and the Emerging Artists Showcase.

<https://berkeleyfestival.org>

<https://berkeleyfestival.org/the-fringe/2022-fringe-calendar>

[www.earlymusicamerica.org/resources/young-performers-festival](http://www.earlymusicamerica.org/resources/young-performers-festival)

CONTACT:

Derek Tam

510-528-1725

[tickets@sfems.org](mailto:tickets@sfems.org)



▲ Texas Toot. Mixed ensemble.

**July 5-9**

INTERLOCHEN EARLY MUSIC  
WORKSHOP

Interlochen Center for the Arts,  
Interlochen, MI

*Artistic director/recorder faculty:*  
*Sarah Huebsch Schilling*

Explore music from the court at Copenhagen during the reign (1588-1648) of Christian IV of Denmark. Learn about Christian's sister, Princess Anne, and her famous husband, James I/VI (of England, Ireland and Scotland) and play repertoire from their favorite composers. Get to know the music and history of late Renaissance Denmark with fellow early music enthusiasts.

Work towards an optional performance and play music by composers associated with the Danish court including Mogens Pedersøn, Giovanni Gabrieli, Orazio Vecchi, Thomas Simpson and John Dowland.

We welcome players of recorders, early winds (cornetto, shawm, dulcian, sackbut, crumhorn), violins (with Baroque/Renaissance bow), viols, lutes, Renaissance harp, harpsichord and percussion. There will be opportunities for vocalists as well.

Participants must be able to read music. Instrumentalists should bring your own instrument(s) and must have proficiency on at least one period instrument. The course will be held at A=440. Some instruments are available to borrow with advance communication with the instructor. Printed music is provided.

Registration deadline: June 28, 2022.

[www.interlochen.org/college-creative-arts/programs/early-music-workshop](http://www.interlochen.org/college-creative-arts/programs/early-music-workshop)

CONTACT:

Gary Gatzke

231-276-7340

[gary.gatzke@interlochen.org](mailto:gary.gatzke@interlochen.org)

## AMHERST EARLY MUSIC

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**AMHERST EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL** August 7-14, and 14-21, 2022

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**CITYRECORDER** October 22-23, 2022  
NYC Location tba

**AEM ONLINE** classes continue in 2022!

See website for the latest details on all of AEM's programs!

[amherstearlymusic.org](http://amherstearlymusic.org)



John Blanke, trumpeter to Henry VII and VIII

### October 22-23

CITYRECORDER (ARS)

New York City, NY, location TBA

Co-Directors: Valerie Horst,

Wendy Powers

Amherst Early Music weekend workshops are smaller, more relaxed versions of the summer festival. Take classes in a variety of subjects for most of the day—repertory, notation, technique, and ensembles.

<http://amherstearlymusic.org>

CONTACT:

Marilyn Boenau, Executive Director

781-488-3337

[info@amherstearlymusic.org](mailto:info@amherstearlymusic.org)

### November 18-20

FALL TEXAS TOOT (ARS)

Lakeview Methodist Conference

Center near Palestine, TX

Director: Daniel Johnson;

Susan Richter, Administrator

The Fall Texas Toot is a weekend early music workshop offering instruction and classes for recorder, viol, harp, voice and other instruments. Some classes are for technique, while others are ensembles large or small. The size of the workshop enables us to create classes for all levels of students, from those of modest skills to advanced players and singers.

The Toot once again takes place at the beautiful Lakeview Methodist Conference Center in East Texas.

<https://toot.org>

CONTACT:

Danny Johnson

512-578-8040

[info@toot.org](mailto:info@toot.org)

Descriptions are supplied by workshops listed and may be edited for length. Those with the ARS designation have joined the ARS as Partner Members. Other workshops may be sponsored by ARS chapters and other presenters, and are listed in ARS NEWS, and on the ARS web site.

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*Opening Measures*



ARS is pleased to offer Frances Blaker's book *Opening Measures* containing her articles taken from 20 years of *American Recorder*, available at <https://americanrecorder.org/openingmeasures>



**1: AR Recording Critique editor Tom Bickley** in an outdoor performance of Terry Riley's *In C* on March 28, organized by Alternating Currents, which presents music at the Albany Bulb, a spit of land jutting out into San Francisco Bay from the East Bay (CA) shoreline, <https://jonwinet.wixsite.com/alternating-currents/in-c>. It was Bickley's first public performance that wasn't online in two years. He reports that his K ng/Breukink Eagle alto balanced well with the ensemble of saxophones, flutes, clarinets, trumpets, violins and cellos. Bickley is in a green jacket and a blue flat cap toward the right, near a cellist (and marked with a white arrow). Panoramic photo by Jim Farber.

**2: AR music reviewer Victor Eijkhout with the Austin (TX) Troubadours.** Their March 27 concert at San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio was likewise their first in two years. (left to right) Eijkhout, recorder, winds, percussion, Baroque guitar; Slobodan Vujisic, lute, oud; Neli Vujisic, organ, harpsichord, saz; Megan Stapleton, voice; Oliver Rajamani, percussion, rabab; Luna Chu, violin; John Walters, cello, viola da gamba, rebec, [www.austrintroubadours.com](http://www.austrintroubadours.com). Photo by Rob Michaelson, Musical Bridges Around the World, <https://musicalbridges.org/programs/international-music-festival>.

# Musica Pacifica 30th anniversary concert

The California ensemble celebrates 30 years (belatedly).

On February 25, Musica Pacifica (MP) took the stage for the first time in two years, celebrating their 30th anniversary (one year late). The concert was part of the Barefoot Chamber Concerts at Hillside Swedenborgian Church in El Cerrito, CA, and was followed by an outdoor champagne reception.

An all-star cast featured MP founder and music director Judith Linsenberg on recorders, with Joe Edelberg and Shira Kammen on violins, Alexa Haynes-Pilon on cello and viola da gamba, both Charles Sherman and Katherine Heater on harpsichord, and Peter Maund on percussion.

The first half consisted of Baroque highlights from their many CDs, opening with their own arrangement of J.S. Bach's *Trio Sonata in F major for Organ, BWV529*. Linsenberg's super-crisp articulation kept the bar high for the rest of the performance, which included *Ballo detto Eccardo* by Tarquinio Merula (1595-1665) paired with *Sonata Sopra L'Aria Di Ruggerio* by Salamone Rossi (c.1570-1630); and finally the *Concerto No. 2 in D major* from Georg Philipp Telemann's (1681-1767) *Six Quatuors*, 1730.

Without an intermission, the concert moved into favorites from their CD *Dancing in the Isles*, with a *Sonata of Scots Tunes* by James Oswald (1710-69), and custom arrangements of English country dances by Musica Pacifica and

of traditional Irish tunes by MP violinist *emerita* Elizabeth Blumenstock.

For the finale, all hands returned to the stage in birthday hats for a rousing *Ground After the Scotch Humor* by Niccola Matteis (c.1650-c.1714). ❁

Glen Shannon, El Cerrito, CA

<https://musicapacifica.org>  
[www.youtube.com/c/MusicaPacifica](http://www.youtube.com/c/MusicaPacifica)

More recently, Musica Pacifica also offered a 20-minute selection of works by Johann Pachelbel, Jean-Marie Leclair and Jean-Philippe Rameau on April 23, sharing the stage with two other Bay Area Baroque ensembles at First Church Berkeley for the San Francisco Early Music Society's second Sanctuary Salon. The following day, April 24, Musica Pacifica played a full concert (in person and livestreamed) for Calliope East Bay Music and Arts at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Albany. "Hijinks of the High Baroque: Composers Behaving Badly" explored the works (and stories) of composers who struggled with keeping their composure.

Photo shows a masked Peter Maund, percussion (left); and Judith Linsenberg, recorder (right), both sporting birthday hats.





# Tabea Debus

## Ode to an Earworm

As live concerts gradually resume in the San Francisco Bay Area, the San Francisco Early Music Society presented three performances by English recorder virtuosa Tabea Debus, including one on April 9 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Berkeley, CA. Performing with Paul Holmes Morton, theorbo, Debus offered a program consisting of pieces that are or could be earworms (those tunes that get stuck in your head).

Fortunately these were not the annoying sort of pop-song earworms, but rather 16 pieces from the 14th–18th centuries.

Born in Würzburg, Germany, Debus studied at Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts with Michael Schneider, and at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London with Pamela Thorby. Graduating with the Principal's Prize, she was appointed Meaker Fellow at RAM for 2016–17, and is now based in North London.

Debus teaches recorder at Wells Cathedral School and has led composition and chamber music workshops at RAM and Cambridge University.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Debus regularly appears with La Serenissima and The English Concert, and has performed at Wigmore Hall, at early music festivals in London, York and Brecon in the UK, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the Schleswig-Holstein Musikfestival in Germany, Musica Antiqua Bolzano in Italy, Edinburgh International Festi-

vals in Scotland, and others. She is a regular guest on the BBC Radio 3's In Tune and Early Music Show, and has released five solo discs to date, most recently *Ohrwurm* (Earworm) on Delphian Records.

At a bit over half capacity of the large St. Mark's sanctuary, the masked audience for the recital welcomed the duo warmly. The reverberant acoustics added fullness to Debus's recorder sound, but tended to constrain the audibility of the fine points of her dynamics and articulation.

She chose to play most of the pieces on Ganassi-style soprano, alto and tenor recorders made by Monika Musch at a=415, with other repertory

on a Denner alto by Ralf Ehlert. It was surprising to hear some of the 18th-century pieces played on the Ganassi instruments, likely chosen for their relatively higher volume and fuller timbre.

Her technique and musicianship shone throughout the performance. A highlight was Debus's performance of the Telemann fantasia for flute solo (No. 8, TWV40:9) played on the Denner alto. ❁

Tom Bickley, Berkeley, CA

[www.tabeadebus.com](http://www.tabeadebus.com)



▲ **Tabea Debus.** During a recording session for *Ohrwurm*.

## Recorders got rhythm

Cléa Galhano leads a session of music from her native Brazil

In April the Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF) Community Outreach Program held a virtual recorder class targeted for young students, “Brazilian Music: Rhythm, Swing and Joy!” The first of several upcoming similar events featuring different recorder professionals, the Zoom class was led

by internationally renowned Brazilian professional recorder player Cléa Galhano, now based in Minnesota. She has taken an active role presenting and promoting recorder classes and workshops in the U.S.

Perhaps more important, she engages with Brazilian organizations to collaborate with music groups there focused on bringing music to underprivileged communities—a goal very similar to that of the BEMF outreach program, headed by recorder virtuoso and educator Nina Stern. She is turn is founder and artistic director of ‘S Cool Sounds, an organization that facilitates recorder instruction in pre-college classes in the U.S. and Africa, using music to inspire, educate and connect children and communities.

This intermediate level workshop was free and, although oriented towards precollege students, open to

“

Probably relatively few Americans are familiar with most Brazilian musical styles, except for the *samba*.

anyone who registered. Twenty-seven participants were from the U.S., 23 from Brazil, five from the UK, three from Canada, one from Switzerland, and two unknowns. There were upwards of 45 actual participants, including 12 under the age of 18 from the U.S., eight from Brazil and one from the UK. The balance of the participants were adults. (We had to register in the age group for “over 18!”)

Probably relatively few Americans are familiar with most Brazilian musical styles, except for the *samba*. Galhano selected repertoire, ranging

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2019 Sitka Recorder Resident Adéla Gardavshá

[sitkacenter.org/residencies/recorder-residency](https://sitkacenter.org/residencies/recorder-residency)

from the 19th century to contemporary compositions, highlighting the infectious melodies and exciting rhythms based on African and Portuguese influences. A “taste” of the musical forms included the *toada*, *choro*, *lundu*, *baião* and, of course, a *samba*. Two folk songs were included.

A link was provided to PDF files of the musical selections, each with a short explanatory paragraph. The music was clearly marked with articulation suggestions and tempo indications. The arrangements covered were for various SAT recorder combinations. Some of the music could be played down an octave.

Three Brazilian composers were represented, supplemented by two folk song arrangements plus a work

by an anonymous composer. Galhano gave a brief description for performance practice and cued up a sound file for each musical selection. I found these very helpful in catching some of the stylistic nuances of the music and some tricky rhythms.

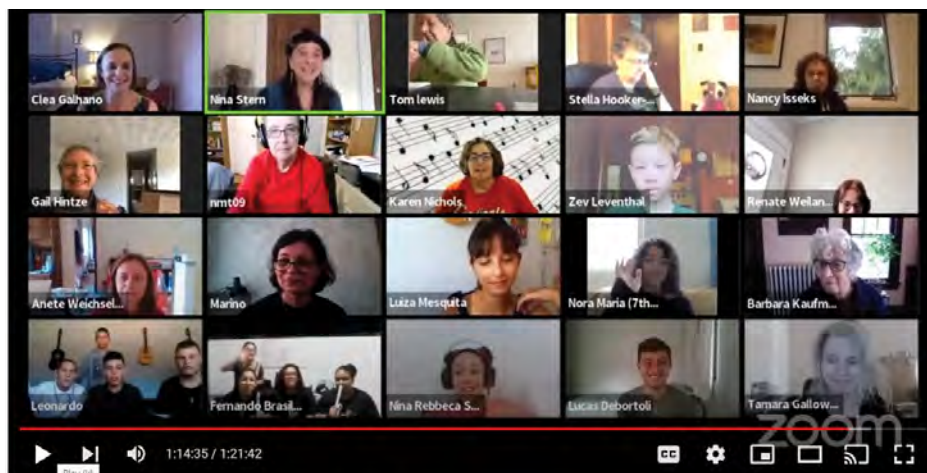
The class was very enjoyable, although perhaps rhythmically challenging for intermediate level players to sightread. A YouTube recording was made available for a few days for participants to review.

Nancy M. Tooney, Brooklyn, NY

#### LINKS OF INTEREST:

- Boston Early Music Festival: <https://bemf.org/about-us/engaging-communities>.
- Cléa Galhano, <http://cleagalhano.com>.
- Nina Stern, [www.ninastern.com](http://www.ninastern.com); appointed BEMF Director of Community Engagement, Summer 2021 AR, [https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR\\_Sum21\\_body.pdf](https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR_Sum21_body.pdf); S’Cool Sounds, [www.scoolsounds.org](http://www.scoolsounds.org).
- Brazilian recorder music, Fall 2021 AR, [https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR\\_fall21\\_body.pdf](https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR_fall21_body.pdf).

► **1: Sponsored by the Boston Early Music Festival, the Engaging Communities online workshop on Brazilian music was presented in April by Cléa Galhano (upper left) and hosted by Nina Stern (top row, second from left). Reporter Nancy Tooney is below Nina Stern in the second row, second from left.**



Engaging Communities | Brazilian Music: Rhythm, Swing, and Joy!

**2: The Regis University Collegium was ecstatic that the madness of COVID-19 has abated enough to perform a live in-person concert at Claver Recital Hall, its first since fall 2019. Director Mark Davenport, at right, gives the April 12 concert, titled “Sumer is icumen in,” two thumbs up. Recorder players were community member Madeline Zanetti (to left of the harpsichord, hands folded) and Regis recorder student Braedon Lepro (to right of harpsichord with bass recorder).**



# Good anxiety? Ways to make it your superpower

Flow, baby, flow!

It happens to all of us: sweaty palms, racing heartbeat, shallow breathing, dry mouth, the music page moving in and out of focus, frozen memory. The mind starts imagining “what if” scenarios, and this overthinking interferes with us displaying the skills we know we have.

Feedback in an ancient part of our brains kicks in, as the “fight, flight or freeze” response. We might call it nervousness, or more accurately for musicians, performance anxiety.

In the Summer 2021 *AR*, recorder professional Erik Bosgraaf outlined some of his thoughts on practicing, based partly on reading K. Anders Ericsson’s book *Peak*. Ericsson’s “deliberate practice” debunks the

persistent myth that 10,000 hours of practice are needed to master a skill.

Wendy Suzuki agrees with researchers who cast aside this 10,000 hour rule, in her book *Good Anxiety*. She wonders what other factors actually help us achieve goals. Talent? Intelligence? Luck? Perseverance? Hard work? She thinks that it’s all of them—plus age, experience and environment.

She believes that the anxiety that we all experience actually can be a good arousal. It gets our attention and motivates us—it reminds us that we are doing something that matters to us. It’s when our reaction is to freeze completely that the problems occur.

Anxiety is treated as a negative

because we associate it only with uncomfortable feelings. It actually becomes positive or negative depending on how an individual responds. Suzuki’s philosophy is that we should stop struggling against it. If we think of it as something to avoid or reduce altogether, we not only don’t solve the problem, but actually miss an opportunity to utilize anxiety to improve.

Instead, we can create positive changes to the anxiety state itself.

Suzuki’s book is divided into several parts, including overviews (clearly explained) about parts of the brain involved in processing anxiety in general. In the second part of the book especially, she cites significant research that shows how to channel emotional energy that could otherwise produce bad anxiety.

If we experience anxiety even when thinking about playing in public, our brain-body response will always be negative—unless we consciously work to change it. To do this, Suzuki recommends certain mind-body interventions (a scientific word for strategies) that retrain the brain, and more specifically, change our relationship with anxiety. The stress that causes anxiety is not going away—but we can learn to better regulate our emotions. In neurobiology, a positive mindset results in productivity, optimal performance, creativity and more.

## Anxiety as a superpower

Early 1960s pioneer neuroscientist Marian Diamond of the University of California-Berkeley and her colleagues believed the adult mammalian brain to be capable of profound change; so does author Ericsson. This capacity for change is now referred to as adult brain plasticity.

To retrain your brain, start working on performance anxiety before you ever ponder playing in public, even just for friends. You may begin to imagine every possible thing that



### WRITTEN BY GAIL NICKLESS

Gail Nickless has been editor of *American Recorder* since 2002. She began working for the ARS in 1994 as its executive director.

Even though playing the recorder was not a requirement for either ARS job she has held, Nickless has done so for over 40 years. Her adult recorder activities started in graduate school, when a fellow student suggested she form a consort to add recorders to an annual madrigal dinner. After that first public recorder experience (with two other players, both named Chuck), things could only improve as players were added to future groups. She performed with that consort for over 12 years, also playing recorder and Baroque flute with the faculty/staff Texas Tech Baroque Ensemble. She also played piccolo for a dozen years with the Roswell (NM) Symphony Orchestra. Nickless holds a Bachelor of Music Education (flute emphasis), and a Master of Music Theory in Music Composition, both from Texas Tech University.

She reads a lot, and sometimes shares with ARS members ideas that she has picked up in books she’s read.

could go wrong: you might forget to bring your music, you might wear socks that don't match, you might forget fingerings or literally everything you know. Rather than dwelling on how horrible this experience could be, reframe it as an opportunity to show how much you enjoy playing music.

We need to both feel the feelings, says Suzuki, and then update how we respond to those feelings, realizing that this is an experience that we can indeed survive. By making a more conscious decision about how to act or respond, a new, positive neural pathway is formed and resilience is learned.

### What is resilience?

According to Suzuki, stress and resilience operate like yin and yang: resilience is the outcome of how we manage stress each and every day. We build resilience by learning how to think flexibly and accepting that we are not defined by failures. When we challenge ourselves and grow more confident, we build our resilience.

Just as preventive medicine helps us avoid disease and can offset effects of aging, building resilience before we necessarily need it is a similar type of safety net—but it can become an even more effective tool. In a sense, we use current anxiety to help inoculate us against future anxiety. The better you get at first feeling anxiety, and then acting to mitigate your stress response, the better you will be at managing it in the future.

Resilience is tenacity in response to falling short of a goal; courage to continue, despite disappointment; a belief that you can and will do better if you put in the effort, persistence and practice. Resilience comes not only from confidence and self-belief that we gain from successes but, perhaps more important, from surviving, making adjustments, and moving on after failures and challenges.

### Going with the flow

The Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has been on the leading edge of one area of neuroscience research that is significant for performers. His ideas have led to looking at how optimal performance shows up in many areas, including science, art and music, and produces what is called flow.

Flow requires that we become deeply engaged in and enjoy an activity. Studying anxiety (both bad and good) tells us more about how we can use good anxiety to boost our pleasure in performing and thus enter into the spectrum of flow.

Suzuki suggests that we approach the idea of playing in public with enthusiasm and interest, rather than fear or reservation, remembering that we get to do something that matters to us. While we may not achieve the full state of flow—an almost magical combination of cognitive, physical and emotional features that align—we may find a way to use enjoyment and immersion in playing music to create a state of alertness that is at least on the positive side of anxiety.

### Practicing and preparing to get to a state of flow

Have you ever played so well that you experienced a sort of high? You lose track of time, you are completely caught in the moment, enjoying yourself, with all cylinders functioning. When we experience this kind of mind-body pleasure, our brains release dopamine (a happy transmitter); that memory is stored and ready to motivate us in the future. Once you've felt this good feeling, you want to repeat it.

Another element that helps induce the experience of flow is improvement: the mere possibility of reaching a state of flow, regardless of skill level, adds to our motivation to practice. The more prepared we feel, the more

## ARS videos online

- Technique tip videos from recorder professionals, <https://americanrecorder.org/techniquetips>
- Topics on the ARS YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag](http://www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag) including recorder care, ornaments, technique and practicing

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*"Ridiculously mellifluous, ridiculous?"—*  
unidentified VGRT user



While we may not achieve the full state of flow ... we may find a way to use enjoyment and immersion in playing music to create a state of alertness that is the positive side of anxiety.

relaxed we will be when performing—which feeds our relaxation and our performance, which makes us happier and more relaxed.

A cycle is created. Flow not only results from joy, but generates it.

Suzuki blames negative thinking as the enemy of this state of relaxation and this sense of trusting yourself. She reminds us that this is why enjoyment of an activity is so essential to achieving flow.

As reported in previous articles in the AR Practice Project, effective practice creates new neural pathways. Practicing with a positive attitude moves the skills of playing music from working memory to declarative memory, a type of longterm memory that helps us to remember experiences and also what they feel like.

If we can't get all the way to a state of flow, we can aim for micro flow—shorter in duration than the classic Csikszentmihalyi flow, but more frequent. It can be used to enrich our everyday lives, as well as musical performance. Suzuki's example is a

super-efficient day where you finish five things in only 15 minutes; that's a sort of micro flow. The idea is to experience joyful moments in everyday life, and remember that feeling of relaxation and enjoyment following the exertion of hard work. Then we must think of a way to reproduce that through musical preparation.

### Some strategies against stress

Stress in life is inevitable; we've all heard the quote from Hans Selye that complete freedom from stress is death. A player who opts for less stress will only limit the chances of learning how to function well under stress.

Visualization is a strategy I have personally used for decades. In my 20th-century musical life, I played piccolo in an orchestra: no one else played the notes that I was playing, and there was nowhere up there to hide if I made a mistake.

I was intrigued when a friend, who was doing doctoral research about performance anxiety, mentioned a book, *A Soprano on her Head*. The one concept that still sticks with me from that book was positive visualization.

Suzuki also recommends visualization, and goes into how it works. When you visualize yourself doing well, you create a new model in your brain for how you will approach a situation that may cause you anxiety, providing an alternative.

While powerful, visualization can take practice and imagination. Like any new habit, you can start small and build from there. First see yourself as you want to show up to perform. Then enhance the visualization by adding details—how the recorder will feel in your hands, how you will focus your attention using a sense of calm, how the music will sound as you play.

Suzuki also recommends that we avoid a fixed mindset: if we tend to believe that any mistake or failure is proof of limited ability, this will hinder success. Instead, adopt a different approach: remember how young people treat mistakes as information that can lead to better solutions next time, using a growth mindset. Adults who are growth-oriented can also utilize this, seeing ourselves as continually learning and able to improve.

For many of us of a certain age, it's a choice: to adopt a growth mindset, listening to a voice that says we can take control of our own stress response. Anxiety moves from being a problem to being a lesson that leads to growth.

Even everyday life can become a form of rehearsal and practice. Suzuki refers to this conscious choice as an activist mindset—a mistake, obstacle or negative feedback becomes data that inform our thoughts and actions. This allows us to convert anxiety from all negative to a neutral or even positive feeling.

There may be some truth to the old adage that what doesn't kill us makes us stronger. ❁

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### LINKS OF INTEREST:

- Suzuki, Wendy. *Good Anxiety: Harnessing the Power of the Most Misunderstood Emotion*. Atria Books. 2021, ISBN 978-1982170738. Also associated workbooks, not investigated for this article.
- Ericsson, K. Anders & Pool, Robert. *Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise*, HarperOne/Eamon Dolan/Mariner Books, reprint edition, 2017, ISBN 978-0544947221.
- Ristad, Eloise. *A Soprano on her Head: Right-Side-Up Reflections on Life and Other Performances*. Real People Press, 1981, ISBN 978-0911226218.
- American Recorder Practice Project, Winter 2018 to Fall 2019 issues of *American Recorder*, [https://americanrecorder.org/american\\_recorder\\_magazine\\_ex.php](https://americanrecorder.org/american_recorder_magazine_ex.php).
- Bosgraaf, Erik. Thoughts on practicing, Summer 2021 AR, [https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR\\_Sum21\\_body.pdf](https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR_Sum21_body.pdf).

# Music

## A few more method books and some summer music

<b>01</b>	<b>Exercitium, BWV598</b>	by Johann Sebastian Bach, edited by Adrian Wehlte
<b>02</b>	<b>Diminutionen (2 Diminutions)</b>	by G.P. Palestrina, arranged by Adrian Wehlte
<b>03</b>	<b>Aria Sopra La Bergamasca for Soprano Recorder and Organ</b>	by Marco Uccellini, edited by Adrian Wehlte
<b>04</b>	<b>Chaconne F-Dur “Three Parts upon a Ground”</b>	by Henry Purcell, arranged by Klaus Hofmann
<b>05</b>	<b>Recorder Quintet No. 4 “Summer Songs”</b>	by John Hawkes
<b>06</b>	<b>Recorder Quintet No. 5</b>	by John Hawkes
<b>07</b>	<b>Introduction to Unbarred: Book 1; Introduction to Unbarred: Two Ricercare by G.P. da Palestrina</b>	edited by Moira Usher

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

01

### Exercitium, BWV598

by Johann Sebastian Bach,  
edited by Adrian Wehlte

*Edition Walhall EW1019, 2020.  
Alto solo. Sc 12 pp. Abt. \$11.85.*

[www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind-/recorder/bach-johann-sebastian-16851750-exercitium-bwv-598.html](http://www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind-/recorder/bach-johann-sebastian-16851750-exercitium-bwv-598.html)

REVIEWED BY:  
**Beverly Lomer**

Editor Adrian Wehlte's notes say there are few original Baroque studies for recorder, and most of those have been adapted from the flute literature and transposed for recorder—specifically the flute *solfeggi* of Frederick II of Prussia and the *études* of J.J. Quantz.

In this set, there are five selections that were composed as practice pieces for different instruments, here transposed and adapted for alto recorder. Generally speaking, they address the development of fluency with intervals (large and small), scale-type passages, the high range of the alto, chromatic additions due to modulation, and ties/slurs. The styles are typically Baroque, with 16th notes predominating in common time, and eighth-note groups of three in 6/8 time.

The first, “Pedal-Exercitium,” has come down to us as a unison fragment from an organ work. The editor states that the composer is uncertain, but he speculates that it could be C.P.E. Bach, mostly noted as a Classical era composer who was the fifth child and second surviving son of J.S. Bach.

Originally written in G minor, it has been transposed to C minor for alto recorder. The focus is primarily on intervals, beginning with thirds and gradually expanding to larger ones. It traverses numerous keys, and the chromatic additions become more

frequent as the etude progresses. There are some challenging segments where pitches jump from low to the highest range of the instrument. At two pages long, it can easily be divided into segments for practice purposes.

The “Rondeau” and “Gigue en Rondeau” are taken from a collection of two-part practice and performance pieces printed between 1750 and 1753 by Michel Blavet in Paris, France. They are transposed up a minor third from the original E minor. The practice goal in each appears to be working with the slurs that are original in the source.

The “Rondeau” is constructed in typical 16th-note patterns. The predominant configuration consists of a tied group of four with a leap from the first note to a three-note figure that moves stepwise. This is followed by tied two-note interval jumps. Keys here do not change as often as in the first piece, and there are minimal chromatic notes. It

also lies within a comfortable register.

The “Gigue en Rondeau” represents the usual Baroque gigue patterns. All three-note groups are marked with slurs, with melodic figurations similar to those in the previous piece. It also exploits the high register, and there are quite a few chromatic insertions.

The challenge in both of these studies is to cleanly articulate the slurred leaps. They can also be easily adapted to other articulations for variety.

The fourth study, “Exercitium H.241,” comes from a piano piece composed by C.P.E. Bach for the right or left hand alone. Transposed here to D<sup>b</sup> major from the original A major, it is one of the more challenging pieces in the collection. In addition to a key signature of five flats, there are other chromatic additions necessary to satisfy the requirements of key changes. It is based entirely on intervals, and the player will need to determine the

proper phrasing. It frequently extends to the highest pitches, including the uppermost A<sup>b</sup>. It is an excellent exercise for experienced players.

According to the comments, the final work—a “Prélude” by Flemish flutist and composer Antoine Mahaut (1719-c.1785)—is intended to be an articulation study. It is quite long, at three pages with two lengthy repeats. The key is B<sup>b</sup> major, and it traverses most of the recorder range. There is a mix of scale-type and interval movement.

In the prelude’s first part, the slurs are placed both on the accented beats and on the off beats, and they are paired with articulations for a sharp attack or staccato. The second section is composed in a fashion similar to the first, but there is also a segment of triplets. The aim, however—to work with mixed articulations—is the same.

The edition is well laid out, with clear printing and page turns only in the

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final piece. The notes are in German and only address the sourcing and adjustments made by Wehlte to the originals. They offer no performance or practice suggestions, but the studies can be adapted in a number of ways to satisfy an individual's own goals.

While I did not find these pieces to be as melodically interesting as the editor does, they are excellent studies that address important aspects of Baroque recorder technique: primarily the articulation and performance of the type of arpeggio/chord structures that are so essential to that repertoire. For those who are interested in that aspect of Baroque skill building this collection is highly recommended. ❁

**Beverly R. Lomer, Ph.D.**, is an independent scholar and recorder player whose special interests include performance from original notations and early women's music. She is currently collaborating on the transcription of the *Symphonia of Hildegard of Bingen* for the International Society of Hildegard von Bingen Studies.

02

### Diminutionen

(2 Diminutions) by G.P. Palestrina, arranged by Adrian Wehlte

*Edition Walhall EW114, 2020. Soprano, keyboard/harpsichord/organ. Sc 13 pp, 2 pts 5 pp ea. Abt. \$17.25.*

[www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind-/recorder/palestrina-da-giovanni-pierluigi-15251594brsopran-bass.html](http://www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind-/recorder/palestrina-da-giovanni-pierluigi-15251594brsopran-bass.html)

REVIEWED BY:  
Valerie Hess

The first piece in this volume, from a collection of madrigals published in 1566 in Venice, is *Vestiva i colli* by

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66

Rarely do we find works where cantus and bass diminutions were notated at the same time.

Bartolomeo de Selma y Salaverde. The second, *Pulchra es amica mea*, was composed by Giovanni Bassano in 1591, but exists today only in one copy made by Friedrich Chrysander (1890), where it is listed as number 51.

Rarely do we find works where cantus and bass diminutions were notated at the same time. In music, diminution can mean the notes are subdivided into smaller units; that is true of these pieces. Whole and half notes give way to eighths and 16ths, breaking periodically back into quarter, half and whole notes. This makes for good practice in breathing and fingering!

The editor, Adrian Wehlte, explains that the accidentals in brackets in his version are not in the original scores; it is up to the performer to add them or not. He also notes that the soprano recorder part in the *Pulchra es amica mea* can be played on an alto recorder (or Renaissance G alto), making this collection more versatile.

Besides the score for soprano recorder and keyboard, there is a “basso” score that could be played on a cello or by a very good bass recorder player.

The texts, given in Latin and German, sing the praises of spring and a shepherdess who collects flowers to adorn the reader. The music is also lighthearted with bits of canonic treatment. These are fun arrangements of very old music. ✨

**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](mailto:hess.valerie@gmail.com).

03

### Aria Sopra La Bergamasca for Soprano Recorder and Organ

by Marco Uccellini, edited by Adrian Wehlte

*Edition Walhall EW1134, 2020. Soprano, keyboard/harpsichord/organ, Sc 8 pp., rec pt 3 pp. Abt. \$14.25.*

[www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind-/37-recorders.html](http://www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind-/37-recorders.html)

REVIEWED BY:  
**Suzanne Ferguson**

Undoubtedly today’s most familiar work by Marco Uccellini (1603?-80), who worked in the Ducal court and the Cathedral of Modena, Italy, is the aria on the popular dance tune, “La Bergamasca.” It comes from the composer’s Opus 3, *Sonate, Arie et Correnti a 2 e 3*—pieces written for violins, but playable “with diverse instruments.”

Anyone who wants to leap into the world of 17th-century divisions (a style of ornamentation also called diminutions) will have a real frolic with this edition, which can be played in several combinations besides soprano recorder and organ. The basic eight-bar melody in quarter notes, with its simple half-note ground bass, returns in one or the other of the parts in six of the 13 divisions. This simply but delightfully subdivides the theme into eighth- and 16th-note runs and leaps—brief and extended, now together in thirds, and now alternating little echo motives embellishing the tune.

Adrian Wehlte gives the second part to the right hand of the keyboard, but it can also be played by a second recorder. Although the bright “birdlike” sonority of the soprano shines, an alto can also play the second part convincingly, with a few octave transpositions. One could even play it as a recorder trio, with a bass on the bottom.

Wehlte has transposed the original from D to C major for the convenience of the recorder, so that the longer runs are more easily negotiated.

There are numerous recordings of this piece on YouTube; my favorite is the 2018 version by Flauti d’Echo (Tabea Debus and Olwen Foulkes, recorder, [www.youtube.com/channel/UC7EgkOmUPa\\_uW7nFD98T-lw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7EgkOmUPa_uW7nFD98T-lw)). It can be played effectively at various tempos, giving upper intermediate players a chance to learn it happily at a moderate speed before adding double-tonguing to bump it up to a brisker performance tempo.

As usual, Edition Walhall produces a handsome score and parts, even including a loose third page in the recorder part to avoid a page turn. Once the player has worked her way through the treatises on improvising divisions, here is a piece that follows all the rules while providing pure fun. ✨

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

04

### Chaconne F-Dur “Three Parts upon a Ground”

by Henry Purcell, arranged by Klaus Hofmann

*Edition Walhall EW1106, 2019. AAA, basso continuo. Sc 11 pp, 3 rec pts 3 pp ea, bc pt 2 pp. Abt. \$15.*

[www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind-/37-recorders.html](http://www.edition-walhall.de/en/woodwind-/37-recorders.html)

REVIEWED BY:  
**Suzanne Ferguson**

Here is another really delightful example of division style. In this case, perhaps as an exercise, a young Henry Purcell uses 27 repetitions of the

“

A young Henry Purcell uses 27 repetitions of the six-measure, triple-time ground ... [and] takes us wandering among divisions.

six-measure, triple-time ground. He takes us wandering among divisions in scalar 16th notes and dotted rhythms, with a few in 9/8 (#21-24). Some have tantalizing canons thrown in for the puzzlers: “Two parts in one *per arsin et thesin* [the second is the first upside down] and the third part “*recte et retro*” [forward and backward]; “four parts in two” [the third recorder with the bass against the first two recorders]. Then there are “four parts in one” and “three parts in one”—the “normal” kind of canon.

Rapid scale sections alternate with slow, stately ones, allowing the players both a break and an opportunity to demonstrate beautiful, slow tones. When all three recorders play at once, the sonority is nothing short of luscious.

A bass gamba outlining the ground for a chording instrument—harpsichord, lute, guitar—will make a fine foundation. Intermediate players can use this to hone ensemble skills, and upper intermediates can have a good time. ✨

05

#### Recorder Quintet No. 4

“Summer Songs” by John Hawkes

Peacock Press P683, 2019. SATTB.  
Sc 26 pp, pts 6 pp. Abt. \$15.

[www.recordermail.co.uk](http://www.recordermail.co.uk)

REVIEWED BY:

**Bruce Calvin**

John Hawkes (born 1942) is a contemporary British composer who was a

lecturer in physics until he took early retirement in 1997. He started playing recorder when he was 12. Attending a concert at the age of 14 triggered a strong desire to write music. After retirement he studied music composition and received a Master of Music degree in composition in 2001. His website ([www.johnhawkes.co.uk](http://www.johnhawkes.co.uk)) notes that he is “strongly committed to the idea that contemporary music should not be the exclusive domain of highly skilled professional performers” and that it should be possible to create music that lets the amateur take part without the feeling that he is being “written down to.”

The first movement in this quintet begins in Moderato to introduce the tonality, then shifts to Allegro with pulsing staccato eighth notes overlaid by an off-the-beat melody line. It continues to alternate with slower *Meno mosso* sections, then Allegro sections, changing open textures into denser ones.

At times the alto is the leader and the soprano plays flourishes above. The first movement can be heard with Nicholas Epton playing all the parts at: <https://soundcloud.com/nerco/recorder-quintet-4-summer-songs-mov1>.

The second movement is a slow and deliberate Andante with lines effectively contrasting between consonant and dissonant effects. For example, the bass line begins a measure on a low C, the soprano adds its low C, the alto line has a G<sup>b</sup>, the tenor 1 line an A<sup>b</sup>; a half-beat later the tenor 2 adds a low E<sup>b</sup> while the alto line moves to an F.

In the third movement, Allegro, the cheerful theme and variations are both passed around the various lines. There are rhythmic challenges when the linear 3/4 sections are interrupted by 3/2 measures with rich chords.

The fourth movement is mostly in Allegro, other than an opening and closing Maestoso. It has an independent and challenging bass line that puts the bass up front—this sets the

pace for the movement.

The composer provides recommended tempos and rehearsal letters in addition to the measure numbers. There are extensive accidentals throughout the piece, including somewhat less common ones for recorder players like G<sup>b</sup> and D<sup>b</sup>. The bass must play low F<sup>#</sup>.

There are a few minor printing issues. For example, in the first movement, in measure 14 of the alto line, the beam between two eighth notes is distorted, making it difficult to read.

*Summer Songs* is a satisfying while challenging piece for upper intermediate players. Each of the parts is interesting by itself, and each one plays a varying role in each movement. ✨

**Bruce Calvin** has reviewed videos and books for professional library publications over the years. He and four others meet weekly in the Washington, D.C., area to play recorders. The group enjoys Renaissance through contemporary music, performing occasionally for special church events.

06

#### Recorder Quintet No. 5

by John Hawkes

Peacock Press P713, 2020. SATTB.  
Sc 21 pp, 5 pts 5 pp ea. Abt. \$17.25.

[www.recordermail.co.uk](http://www.recordermail.co.uk)

REVIEWED BY:

**Victor Eijkhout**

English composer John Hawkes has written for a variety of instruments and ensembles, but, as a recorder player himself, he has written a good deal of recorder music. His concern is for a contemporary repertoire that allows the amateur player to perform serious music—but music that is not

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oversimplified for the amateur player.

That raises the question of just what the term “contemporary” means, other than “written in the present day.” Hawkes’s *Recorder Quintet No. 5* is written in fairly normal time signatures (except in the wild fourth movement), is quasi-tonal, and uses absolutely no extended techniques.

The main thing that puts this work in the current era is its loose approach to tonality. Even when the melody looks traditional, the harmony jumps quickly between related keys, with regular mild dissonances. I found that this worked best in the fourth movement, which is full of irregular time signatures, and also in the slow fifth movement, which is a kind of recapitulation (and could stand by itself).

However, in the first three movements, I found it hard to discern a reason behind the harmonies. Considered as “contemporary” music, the idiom feels rooted in the type of music composed by Hans Ulrich Staeps (1909-88) and Hans-Martin Linde (born 1930)—which some people admittedly really like, but which is, certainly chronologically, becoming rather dated in the 21st century.

This recorder composition is well-written, with a certain logic. The chromaticism is more a reading than a playing challenge. Often, the parts are written low in the instrument ranges, notably the soprano and the second tenor. In group playing, this means fewer of the expected intonation problems when multiple players share a part and play at the top of the second octave.

On the other hand, the soprano player needs to have a relatively powerful instrument. Having the parts in the low recorder range does increase the sonority of the sound, which I really enjoyed.

For an intermediate level ensemble looking to stretch themselves and their audience into moderately adven-

turous music, this is then an interesting piece. With a playing time of almost 15 minutes, it may be a bit much to play in its entirety, but selecting a few movements is quite possible. ✨

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



## 07

### Introduction to Unbarred:

**Book 1** edited by Moira Usher

Peacock Press PEMS075, 2017. ATTB. Sc 20 pp, pts 8 pp. Abt. \$12.

### Introduction to Unbarred:

**Two Ricercare** by G.P. da Palestrina, edited by Moira Usher

Peacock Press PEMS089, 2018. SATB. Sc 7 pp, pts 2 pp ea. Abt. \$12.

[www.recordermail.co.uk](http://www.recordermail.co.uk)

REVIEWED BY:

**Bruce Calvin**

Moira Usher studied at Trinity College of Music in London, playing cello, recorder and piano. She has taught music for a number of years and is an educational consultant in schools. Usher teaches recorder courses across England, including the Recorder Summer School. She has served in the leadership of the UK's Society of Re-

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I learned to love the flow of each musical line without those bar lines.

recorder Players, and also conducts its Suffolk branch, the Eastern Recorder Orchestra and a community choir.

For many years when playing Renaissance music, I heard teachers say to ignore the measure lines and to not follow the familiar habits of playing a downbeat with more emphasis. However, it is hard, if not impossible, to avoid having those assumptions of modern notation influence the way the music is played.

When I started to play from Renaissance notation at an early music festival, I quickly heard and felt the music very differently. I learned to love the flow of each musical line without those bar lines. While I never did master Renaissance notation, it changed the way I hear and play the music.

These two publications—geared to learning to read unbarred music—are intended to bring that experience to players without all the other technical demands of Renaissance notation.

In the introduction, the editor describes that these are two sets of music “designed to bridge the gap between playing from modern notation and playing from totally unbarred music.” They are laid out on the pages “so that each line of a given piece has the same number of minims. Therefore every part, including the score, starts a new line at the same point in the music.”

Each of the lines is numbered, allowing the players to easily start together in the middle of the piece. This layout is essential, since there are no measure numbers to use.

In the introduction, Usher notes, “I also explain the rests before we start—a block counts 4, a suspended

(semibreve) counts 2 and a mounted (minim) counts 1.” For those unfamiliar with these terms, a “mounted minim” rest is a half-note rest; the “suspended semibreve” rest is a whole note rest, and a “block” is a double whole note rest.

The group quickly realized that one of the challenges of playing without bar lines is that we don't pay attention to the difference between a whole rest and a half rest. Within a measure you can tell which rest it is by noting how many other notes are in that measure—but without measure lines, we had to count much more accurately. I also suggest you carefully count the dotted rests and the frequent double whole rests!

Book 1 includes six choral pieces from five composers: *Adoramus te, Christe* by Orlande de Lassus; *Ave Verum Corpus* and *O Sacrum Convivium* by William Byrd; *Nolo Mortem* by Thomas Morley; *Sicut cervus* by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina; and *O vos omnes* by Tomás Luis de Victoria. Each piece has a full text underlay, so that players can see how to shape the lines and where to put breaks to match the text.

Set for ATTB, this book often requires the alto line to play in the upper octave, a problem if the group wants to play these selections on Renaissance period recorders.

The Lassus *Adoramus te, Christe* is a good piece to use to start learning how to play without bar lines. The polyphony is simple, with many places where two or more of the parts play together. It is easy to know when someone is off.

One of the most famous and beautiful pieces of this period, Byrd's *Ave Verum Corpus* is also an introductory piece. The parts often sound together and employ simple rhythms. The alto line does go up to a high E several times. This piece includes rehearsal letters at the beginning of sections as well as having the numbered lines.

*O Sacrum Convivium*, also by Byrd, is more challenging, with each of the parts moving independently, and with off-the-beat entrances and passages.

*Nolo Mortem* by Morley is a beautiful piece that is relatively easy for beginners unaccustomed to barless music, due to its long sections with the parts playing together. *Sicut cervus* by Palestrina, another well-known piece, is moderately difficult with more independent parts.

Finally the gorgeous *O vos Omnes* by Victoria is rhythmically simple, while at the same time illustrating how removing the bar lines leads to a rich flowing movement in the music. It also includes rehearsal letters for restarting in the middle of the piece.

The *Two Ricercare* are from a set of eight *Ricercare sopra li Tuoni*; the one in G is number 6, and the one in C is number 8. While this set has been attributed to Palestrina, scholars question that he actually wrote the pieces.

Arranged for SATB, all voices are in the middle to low part of their ranges—an advantage if using Renaissance instruments.

The *Ricercare in G* is the easier of the two, having more straightforward rhythms. The *Ricercare in C* is much more challenging, with the lines running independently and with periods of long rests that need to be carefully counted. These are both great pieces.

The group playing these works had varying issues and difficulties. People who have never played barless music found it confusing to not be able to count the beats in their head, and just relax into feeling a steady tactus. The experienced player of Renaissance notation found it difficult because not all of the other clues in that notation are included.

Yet all of the chosen music is well worth playing—and, with some practice, these pieces provide a way to experience Renaissance music differently. ❁

## Recording

### Innovative recordings by James Howard Young, Emily O'Brien and John Turner

- 
- 01** **Bach: The Complete Brandenburg Concertos**  
Denmark-based American recorder player James Howard Young plays all the parts in his multitracked arrangements.
- 
- 02** **Songs from Home**  
Daughter-father team Emily O'Brien and Michael O'Brien take us home with their original works for recorder and guitar.
- 
- 03** **Songs for Sir John**  
British recorderist John Turner honors a different John (composer Sir John Manduell).
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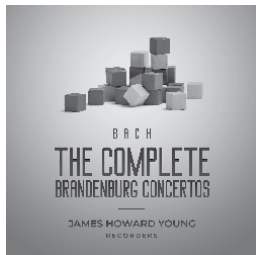
#### REVIEWED BY TOM BICKLEY

American Recorder Recording Reviews Editor Tom Bickley is a multi-instrumentalist/composer/teacher in Berkeley, CA. He grew up in Houston, TX; studied in Washington, D.C. (recorder with Scott Reiss, musicology with Ruth Steiner,

and listening/composition with Pauline Oliveros); and came to California as a composer-in-residence at Mills College.

A frequent workshop faculty member and leader at chapter meetings, he teaches recorder at the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training; and Deep Listening for Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. His academic library career included service with the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, the National Endowment for the Arts, and California State University East Bay (as their Performing and Visual Arts Librarian). He performs with Three Trapped Tigers (with recorder player David Barnett), Gusty Winds May Exist (with shakuhachi player Nancy Beckman), Doug Van Nort's Electro-Acoustic Orchestra, and directs the Cornelius Cardew Choir.

His work can be heard at <https://soundcloud.com/tom-bickley>, and is available on CD on Koberecs, Quarterstick and Metatron Press. Visit his web site at <https://tigergarage.org>.



## 01

## Bach: The Complete Brandenburg Concertos

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the practice of making multitracked recordings of polyphonic music has grown considerably, in both the amateur and professional realms of recorder playing (and beyond). The results vary in quality—yet most have a spirit of engagement with the music and reveal a determination to continue to make music despite social distancing requirements.

There's a growing body of guidance for anyone interested in the technical details of how to do this. Among them is the very helpful "Multitrack Recording Setup and Concepts" by ARS's David Podeschi in the September 2020 *ARS NOVA* e-mag.

A stellar example of using the recorder in multitracking is James Howard Young's work with J.S. Bach's Brandenburg concertos. Young is an American musician living in Denmark. He brings an ideal background to his work with these Bach scores: one master's degree in recorder from New England Conservatory in Boston, MA; and a second from the Danish National Academy of Music, where he worked with Dan Laurin and focused on recorder and interactive computer performance. Along with acquiring impressive skills with audio technology (and video, as shown by his YouTube channel), he has the musicological skills and musicianship to tackle arranging these six concertos so that they work well in this recorded format.

He describes his process of arranging and recording in satisfying detail in the booklet accompanying the CD (not available otherwise, unfortunately), and in his article, "Orchestral works for one man and a recorder!" (*The Recorder Magazine*, Winter 2020, available by subscription at [www.recordermagazine.co.uk/dec20.html](http://www.recordermagazine.co.uk/dec20.html)).

On these recordings he uses five recorders at A=440: alto after Rippert by Von Huene Workshop; tenor also by Von Huene; bass and C bass, both modeled after Rottenburgh and from Yamaha; and a contra bass Superio by Küng.

He creates a remarkably orchestral texture, and his musicianly arrangements preserve the linear interplay found in Bach's originals. In his description of his arranging process, he explicitly rejects splitting an instrumental line across multiple recorders in a given movement, preferring to make careful choices of octave transpositions so that a part fits on the recorder he chooses for it. You can hear this in detail via the clever mixer interface on his website at <https://recorderdots.com/bach-brandenburg-concerto-2-1-for-8-alto-recorders-a440>. Sample content is available there for free, with full access at the modest price of a \$5 monthly subscription.

I listen to these remarkable recordings and find aesthetic questions emerging. There are so many recordings of the Bach Brandenburgs by so many ensembles—what is the aesthetic value in this work by James Howard Young? For a purist focused on HIP (Historically Informed Performance), the likely response is that these do not convey positive aesthetic values.

However, for the non-purist (likely most of us, functionally at least), there is aesthetic value on several levels. Young points to the long tradition, from Bach's time to the present, of

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There are so many recordings of the Bach Brandenburgs by so many ensembles—what is the aesthetic value in this work by James Howard Young?

arranging works for ensembles that differ from the original. In reducing the timbral variety, Young's work allows us to hear the polyphony in a rather pure, almost abstract state. That alone brings possibilities for insight into Bach's compositions.

Given the context of the global pandemic, I advocate the view that the element of pleasure in hearing this version has great aesthetic merit. Yes, the music comes first—and especially for us recorder players, these recordings are fun, and perhaps even inspiring for our own projects.

Admittedly, this is virtuosic work with all its technologies: audio, video, musical arranging, and playing the recorders. Take note of the rapid scale passages and the articulations just before minute 2 of the Presto movement of *Concerto No. 4* (disk 2, track 3).

These tracks were recorded at the acoustically flattering Korup Church in Odense, Denmark (where Young is the organist). His work with Blue Apple Lyd-design in mastering the recordings yields a balance of dynamics and placement of the instruments in the stereo field that enhances the orchestral presence of his one-person ensemble.

The better audio on the CD than in the downloadable/streaming formats, plus the explanatory notes in the booklet, make the CD purchase a very good choice. ✿

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Bach: The Complete Brandenburg Concertos*. James Howard Young,

recorders. 2021, 2 CDs, 83:20. Gateway Music JNT2101. <https://jnote.com/bach>. CD sold at [www.vonhuene.com/p-7894-bach-complete-brandenburg-concertos-performed-on-recorders-by-james-howard-young.aspx](http://www.vonhuene.com/p-7894-bach-complete-brandenburg-concertos-performed-on-recorders-by-james-howard-young.aspx), \$30+S&H. iTunes mp3, \$18.81. Stream via Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer, Napster, Pandora, YouTube Music and Soundcloud. Videos of his performances of most of these concertos (plus other works) available at [www.youtube.com/c/JamesHowardYoung](http://www.youtube.com/c/JamesHowardYoung), Scores and parts, with accompaniment tracks available from Young's web site at <https://recorderdots.com>. ARS NOVA e-mag article by David Podeschi, "A Multitrack Primer: Multitrack Recording Setup and Concepts," September 2020, archived at [https://americanrecorder.org/ars\\_nova\\_e-mag\\_archive.php](https://americanrecorder.org/ars_nova_e-mag_archive.php).



02

## Songs from Home

*Songs from Home* by recorderist Emily O'Brien and guitarist Michael O'Brien conveys a welcome feeling of hominess. The 14 tracks cover a wide span of time and accomplish a remarkable job of connecting Renaissance, Baroque and Americana styles. I have a feeling that this gives us a sonic experience of music that this daughter and father duo enjoy playing at home.

In their notes for the CD, they make clear that the early music repertory on this disc is interpreted "...in our own

way as it felt naturally to us, rather than strictly adhering to what would be considered correct performance practice for the time period." Though we don't often discuss performance practice in relation to more recent "folk" repertory, they maintain that approach with selections such as *Dill Pickles Rag* (track 12), *Blackberry Blossom* (track 9) and *The Water is Wide* (track 14).

Included on this recording are four pieces composed by Michael O'Brien, which strike me as showing his skilled integration of influences from the styles of the other works here. The four Michael O'Brien compositions—*Homeless* (track 2), *Songs from Home* (track 6), *Soliloquy for a Cat* (track 8) and *Look Away* (track 11)—are tuneful and evocative, complementing the other tracks very well. The sequencing of the music on *Songs from Home* succeeds like a well-chosen multi-course homecooked meal.

Emily O'Brien maintains an active presence in the recorder community via her multitrack video recordings of early music (including most recently her rendition of the 2022 Play-the-Recorder Month special musical selection), as well as her striking work with Mollenhauer's Maarten Helder Harmonic tenor recorder. She is in demand as a performer/teacher/workshop leader. On *Songs from Home* she uses primarily the Helder tenor, but also a Bressan voice flute from the Von Huene Workshop (where she has worked), a Ganassi G alto by Ralf Netsch, a Yamaha soprano, and a Praetorius consort tenor by LiVirghi.

In the CD notes, she describes her choice of instrument for each track and identifies the instruments used.

Michael O'Brien's career in music has many threads related to his daughter's work. His pursuits are in composition, guitar performance and instrument building. On *Songs*

*from Home* he uses a harp guitar and a classical guitar, both from his own workshop.

Kim Person's recording and mastering provides a satisfyingly intimate sound of both instruments. The CD layout is attractive and environmentally-minded in its packaging. I recommend purchasing through the Bandcamp site at the highest quality audio.

Whatever format you choose, enjoy going home with these *Songs from Home*. ✿

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Songs from Home*. Emily O'Brien, recorder; Michael O'Brien, guitar and harp guitar. 2019, 1 CD, 55:46. Cimiron/Rainbird C/RR071; [www.emilydomain.org/Recorderland/product/songs-from-home-download](http://www.emilydomain.org/Recorderland/product/songs-from-home-download), mp3 \$10; CD notes booklet download, free at [www.emilydomain.org/Recorderland/product/songs-from-home-cd](http://www.emilydomain.org/Recorderland/product/songs-from-home-cd); stream free of charge, and download in mp3 and audiophile formats, \$8. CD \$15+S&H at both <https://emilyobrien.bandcamp.com/album/songs-from-home> and [www.vonhuene.com/p-7715-songs-from-home.aspx](http://www.vonhuene.com/p-7715-songs-from-home.aspx). Stream via Spotify, Pandora, Apple Music, Deezer and YouTube Music. Videos of these tracks and others, [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzXdaohiqvWs0BqMTTg-pKsbfh6apLTNR](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzXdaohiqvWs0BqMTTg-pKsbfh6apLTNR).

Emily O'Brien's earlier CD, *Fantasias for a Modern Recorder*, reviewed in AR Spring 2017, <https://americanrecorder.org/docs/ARspring17body.pdf>.

Emily O'Brien playing a multitrack version of the Play-the-Recorder Month commissioned musical selections for 2022 and 2021, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=jID-2OWIwbG&list=PLjsolp5ciq7AaBSh9vCkImjgBgkuDY\\_Hc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jID-2OWIwbG&list=PLjsolp5ciq7AaBSh9vCkImjgBgkuDY_Hc)

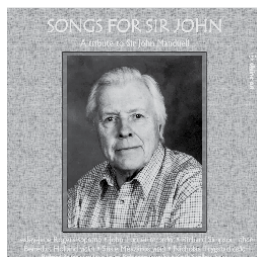
Mollenhauer's Maarten Helder Harmonic tenor recorder played



by Emily O'Brien,

[www.emilydomain.org/](http://www.emilydomain.org/)

**Recorderland**/listen; also in live performance on the 2013 ARS Next Generation Concert at the Boston (MA) Early Music Festival, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=upm5cyb6T0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upm5cyb6T0k)  
Michael O'Brien,  
[www.mkoguitars.com/about](http://www.mkoguitars.com/about)



03

### Songs for Sir John

On *Songs for Sir John* we have the pleasure of hearing British recorder virtuoso John Turner on all 22 tracks of this CD. The compilation comprises works composed in honor of the composer, teacher and arts administrator Sir John Manduell (1928-2017), though none of his works appear here. Fortunately Manduell's work is available, though not widely known in the U.S.

Manduell met Turner when there was a need for a recorder teacher at the Royal Northern College of Music, of which Manduell was principal. Their long friendship yielded a number of works written for Turner. From Manduell's works employing recorder, I recommend *Brief Encounter*, <https://youtu.be/7AoWoUdK-CA>; and *Fantasia on Ca the Yowes*, <https://youtu.be/k8ORy4bTKiQ> (both recordings by John Turner and the Manchester Sinfonia).

Manduell was a composition student of Lennox Berkeley (1903-89; Berkeley's lineage includes studying with the renowned Nadia Boulanger

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The strong lyrical modal vocabulary of British composers such as Benjamin Britten (1913-76) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) is quite present in Manduell's works.

in Paris, France, plus significant influence from Igor Stravinsky and Francis Poulenc). The strong lyrically modal vocabulary of British composers such as Benjamin Britten (1913-76) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) is quite present in Manduell's works.

The 16 pieces by 16 composers on this CD show the further blossoming of that lineage—not as a uniform approach, but in related use of melody, rhythm and timbre, and in the presence of Turner's marvelous playing. One work, Robin Walker's *Four Nursery Rhymes*, is a reissue from 2005. The others were recorded in December 2019 for this disc.

Likely the most familiar (to Americans) among these composers are Sally Beamish (born 1956) and Berkeley. Beamish's elegant *Yeats Interlude* (track 5) is for soprano and alto recorder (one player), oboe, violin and cello, and dates from 2018. It is among the eight works based on W.B. Yeats's poetry that open the CD.

Particularly charming are the *Three Duets* for two recorders (tracks 13-15) from 1938, 1924 and 1955 by Berkeley, edited by his son, composer Michael Berkeley. Laura Robinson joins Turner ably on these duets to create a wonderful duo ensemble sound. On the majority of works on this disc we hear soprano Lesley-Jane Rogers's beautiful singing, in which the texts are clearly audible.

Perhaps my personal favorite piece on *Songs for Sir John* is Jeremy Pike's 2018 setting of Yeats's poem *The*

*Cat and the Moon*, for soprano, alto recorder, oboe, violin and cello.

The recordings from 2005 and 2019 sound great on CD. That is the format I recommend, not only for the audio quality, but for the excellent commentary by the composers and performers provided in the booklet. Once again, Turner and colleagues provide a wonderful collection of music in which the recorder figures prominently. I look forward to more! ❁

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Songs for Sir John: A tribute to Sir John Manduell*. John Turner and Laura Robinson, recorder; Lesley-Jane Rogers, soprano; Richard Simpson, oboe; Benedict Holland, violin; Susie Mészáros, viola; Nicholas Trygstad, cello; Richard Baker, narrator; Keith Swallow, piano. 2020, 1 CD, 72:52. Divine Art [dda25210](https://divineartrecords.com/recording/songs-for-sir-john-a-tribute-to-sir-john-manduell); <https://divineartrecords.com/recording/songs-for-sir-john-a-tribute-to-sir-john-manduell> (including excerpts from each track); CD \$17+S&H; FLAC 16-bit/44k (CD quality download), \$14.99; mp3 320 kbps download \$12.49. iTunes mp3 download \$9.99, with digital booklet; [www.prestomusic.com/classical/products/8803363--songs-for-sir-john](http://www.prestomusic.com/classical/products/8803363--songs-for-sir-john), CD \$14+S&H; FLAC 16-bit/44k (CD quality download), \$12; mp3 download \$10; downloads of individual works and tracks may be purchased. Stream via Apple Music, Amazon Music, Pandora, Deezer, Spotify, YouTube Music, etc. Most recent reviews of recordings by John Turner, Spring 2021 AR, [https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR\\_202103Spring\\_body.pdf](https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AR_202103Spring_body.pdf); in the review of David Ellis: *Chamber Music and Songs*, the text honors Sir John Manduell.

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# A M E R I C A N RECORDER

The mission of the American Recorder Society is to promote the recorder and its music by developing resources to help people of all ages and ability levels to play and study the recorder, presenting the instrument to new constituencies, encouraging increased career opportunities for professional recorder performers and teachers, and enabling and supporting recorder playing as a shared social experience. Besides this journal, ARS publishes a newsletter, a personal study program, a directory, and special musical editions. Society members gather and play together at chapter meetings, weekend and summer workshops, and many ARS-sponsored events throughout the year. In 2019, the Society celebrated 80 years of service to its constituents.

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

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