

# AMERICAN RECORDER

## *Boston Early Music Festival 2015 Double Coverage*

With a theme of “Invention and Discovery,” the **Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF)** was billed as a “once-in-a-lifetime celebration of Monteverdi,” featuring his 1610 *Vespers* plus staged productions of his three surviving operas: *Ulisse*, *Poppea* and *Orfeo*. The 18th biennial BEMF—held June 7-14—also included a week full of fringe events at various locations near the Back Bay area of Boston, MA.

### *The 2015 Operas*

BEMF has a tradition of producing early operas that stretches back to its first effort in 1981. The 2009 centerpiece opera, *The Coronation of Poppea*, was revived for two performances in the “Full Monty” trilogy of Claudio Monteverdi productions this year. An encore of *Orfeo*, from its November 2012 offering, appeared in a single 2015 performance. Read a review at [www.nytimes.com/2015/06/13/arts/music/review-boston-early-music-festival-makes-monteverdi-its-main-attraction.html?smid=fb-share&r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/13/arts/music/review-boston-early-music-festival-makes-monteverdi-its-main-attraction.html?smid=fb-share&r=0).

*Orfeo* was done as a “chamber opera,” a recurring format begun in November 2008 on the BEMF non-Festival concert series. In this case, it meant that there were costumes, fairly elaborate staging, a goodly amount of choreography, but no sets beyond a couple of platforms behind the orchestra, which was onstage with the singers.

Recorder players will want to know that there’s one extensive recorder solo in this opera, played ably by **Alexandra Opsahl**, who was also one of the cornetto players. It was one of the dances in an extended wedding scene. Monteverdi wrote parts for a number of the virtuoso instrumentalists of the Mantuan court, and all parts were all well-played here. The brass choir, which entered the stage via a central door backstage when they were required, was especially enjoyable. (The cornetto players were often seated in the orchestra, but the four trombones came out and played when needed.) Also remarkable was the harp playing of **Maxine Eilander**.

The singing was beautiful—especially **Aaron Sheehan** in the title role, and **Theresa Wakim** as

FOLLOW LINKS TO DAILY REPORTS

**MONDAY, JUNE 8,  
AND TUESDAY, JUNE 9**



**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10  
AND THURSDAY, JUNE 11**



**FRIDAY, JUNE 12**



**SATURDAY, JUNE 13**



**SUNDAY, JUNE 14**



GAIL NICKLESS, EDITOR

WITH SINCERE THANKS TO THESE VOLUNTEER REPORTERS: LAURA CONRAD, SUSAN BURNS, ALAN KARASS, BONNIE KELLY, LAURA KUHLMAN, MARILYN PERLMUTTER, KATHY SHERRICK AND DANIEL SOUSSAN.

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Proserpina. It was also emotionally engaging: more than one person heard sobs during Orfeo's pleading with Caronte to take him across the Styx in Act 3.

As always in BEMF productions, period dance contributed to the evening—the dancing of **Carlos Fittante** as several different gods was especially memorable.

As far as the staging goes, it's possible they tried to go farther than resources warranted. Parts of the staging were not visible everywhere: one person was especially impressed with the flowers, while another in the second row never saw any flowers. A person who had been sitting in the balcony also was annoyed at the incompleteness of her view. Even from the best possible seat, the production was busy and somewhat taxing: watching the singers in the foreground, the orchestra in the middle ground, action on the two platforms behind the orchestra, and the super-titles above the action, all at the same time.

BEMF justifies this kind of staging because it may be similar to that used in the first performance in Mantua in 1607. Some people were annoyed at the prices (about twice what concerts cost) for something that wasn't "staged." Jordan Hall is a wonderful place to see concerts, but a little less wonderful for operas.

The Monteverdi opera *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* was a new production this year. It was a first in several ways: the first time BEMF has offered it (three times during the week, plus being staged along with *Orfeo* in the week following BEMF in the nearby Berkshires). It was also the first time the Boston University Theater was used by BEMF—and possibly for many in the audience, the first time to see it.

The story of the long journey home from the Trojan wars of *Ulisse* (Ulysses) is well-known to readers of *The Odyssey*. The personal and broader interests of the story were presented in a sensitive and emotional way, through admirable and beautiful singing. The personalities—of the hero, his wife Penelope, the suitors and even the smaller parts—were quite clear. As one viewer noted, the musical accompaniment, consisting of strings and continuo instruments, was not grand—but it fit a more intimate staging perfectly.

Penelope and Ulisse were portrayed by two marvelous actors/singers, **Mary-Ellen Nesi** and **Colin Balzer**. Other parts that stood out were Penelope's attendant Melanto, sung by **Danielle Reutter-Harrah**, who had a stage presence and soprano voice that were both captivating. A second notable character, in a cast of many, was **Aaron Sheehan**, cast here as Eurimaco, attendant to Penelope's suitors. Before knowing his role, he was noticeable on stage, projecting an air of being a special character. It was a cohesive cast, with the result a most satisfying experience.

## Monday, June 8

An early starter, **Infusion Baroque** (ARS scholarship winner **Alexa Raine-Wright**, Baroque flute, recorder; **Sallynee Amawat**, Baroque violin; **Camille Paquette-Roy**, Baroque violoncello; **Rona Nadler**, harpsichord) staged a concert billed as a Baroque murder mystery, "Who Killed Leclair?" The group of four poised and elegant musicians, based in Montréal, QC, were winners of the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize at the 2014 Early Music America Baroque Performance Competition.

This concert featured two trio sonatas by Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764) and one by his rival, Jean-Pierre Guignon (1702-74). It was difficult to tell that one composer was superior to the other—apparently, this also wasn't discerned by the employer who offered each of them a job in the Royal Orchestra, and allowed them to share the first chair on an alternating month basis.

One clue to Leclair's personality was that he accepted the job, played first chair for the first month, and then quit rather than play second chair for the second month. The program notes and the dramatization both offered this anecdote as evidence that he may have been a "difficult" person.

Unlike much earlier Baroque music, this was music written for the *Concerts Spirituelle*, one of the first public concert series in existence. It was inaugurated in 1725 to provide entertainment on religious holidays when the theater and opera were closed, as being too worldly for the occasion. In Leclair's time these concerts took place in the Tuileries Palace, and included a mix of sacred choral works and virtuosic instrumental pieces.

Keeping the audience interested for an entire concert of only one instrumentation and style is problematic, and there were several strategies employed by the ensemble to accomplish this. For one thing, they play extremely well: their ensemble is impeccable, and they have an evident love for the music they play. And of course each sonata has movements in several moods, ably conveyed by the performers.

Especially appreciated was the humor of the Badinage movement and the celebratory dancing of the Tambourin movement (which concluded the program) of the *Deuxième récréation de musique*, and the calm flowing of the Adagio of the G major sonata.

The composers themselves seem to have considered this problem, and without introducing new instruments, they did bargain-basement "instrumentation" changes: the Aria Gratoso of the Leclair sonata in G minor had the two solo instruments playing without the continuo, and the Paisane lourdement movement of the Guignon *Sonata in A minor* had the two solo instruments playing in unison.

Most strikingly, Infusion Baroque performed a little play in between pieces dramatizing the police investigation into the murder of Leclair. He was found stabbed to death in the entryway to his house in a suburb of Paris on October 24,

1764. In the play, the police inspector (Nadler) interviews the mercenary gardener (Raine-Wright), the estranged wife (Paquette-Roy), and the aggrieved nephew (Amawat). No one was ever charged with his murder, and the mystery remains unsolved to this day. Before the final piece, the players asked the audience to vote on which “suspect” they believed had committed the murder. (A large majority of the BEMF audience voted for the nephew.)

Perhaps the play was not a great success as theater: one could be happy to hear this group play more music, but might not cross the street to hear them act another play without the music. However, the play did successfully keep the audience more involved in the performance.

Infusion Baroque has as one of its aims to draw a new audience to early music by integrating chamber music and other artistic media. They have performed with a live artist painting stories from the lives of great composers, and to a slide show of Baroque visual art owned by Arcangelo Corelli.

For those who could arrive early enough for Monday events, it would have been worth it just to catch a **benefit concert** early in the evening by **friends of Tom Zajac**, Piffaro member and well-known workshop teacher/instrumentalist who is recovering from surgery. For “Battaglia d’Amor,” recorderist **Dan Meyers** welcomed a large, enthusiastic audience—as well as performing luminaries from the Boston early music community (and beyond), gathered to offer an eclectic program of music from the 12th to 20th centuries.

Lasting well over two hours, the all-star program included performances by the **Boston Shawm and Sackbut Ensemble**, opening with *L’homme arme*; two members of **Tapestry** with 13th and 14th century selections; the Turkish instrumental group **Dünya** offering improvisations; **Wayne Hankin**’s avian rendering of *Ce Fut en Mai* on ocarina; varied songs by Medieval ensemble **Meravelha**; plus Baroque flutist **Na’ama Lion**, lutenist **Doug Freundlich** and harpsichordist **Frances Conover Fitch** with *Diminutions on “Jeune Fillette”*; 13th-century music by **Exsultemus**; **Balint Karosi**, organist at the host venue First Lutheran Church; and **Arcadia Viols** with two pieces by J.S. Bach.

Recorders were featured in an audience favorite, the combined forces of **Renaissomics (John Tyson)** with **Seven**

**Times Salt (Meyers)**. Other favorites were 12th- and 13th-century songs performed by **The Boston Camerata** and a Senleches ballade interpreted by three members of Renaissance choir **Blue Heron**.

Just before the final piece, **Lilli Nye**, Zajac’s wife, spoke eloquently about his battle and of their heartfelt appreciation

for what the community has done out of love and respect to help them. It was also announced that more than **\$52,000** has been raised. **Piffaro** concluded the program with bagpipes, guitar and percussion, performing a joyous *Gayta*.

## **Tuesday, June 9**

**Renaissomics (John Tyson**, recorders, crumhorn, pipe and tabor; **Miyuki Tsurutani**, recorders, harpsichord, percussion; **Douglas Freundlich**, lute, vihuela, cuica; **Laura Gulley**, violin; **Daniel Rowe**, cello) has performed for more than 20 years, with a broad repertoire of Renaissance music from dance tunes to elaborate chamber music. The members are solo performers in their own right, and can improvise virtuoso ornamentation as well as putting across the simple tunes of the dance repertoire with beautiful phrasing and rich variation of tonal colors.

For example, the first piece on this noontime program, “Polyphonic Groove,” at Brown Hall of New England Conservatory (NEC) was *So ben mi cha bon tempop*—known to recorder players as *Questa Dolce Sirena* in Jacob van Eyck’s collection *Der Fluyten Lust-Hof*. The tune appears in Cesare Negri’s *Gratie d’Amore*; Renaissomics takes the Orazio Vecchi four-part setting as their starting point. They begin with the G alto recorder on the top line, finishing with ornamentation fireworks. There’s also a very contemplative lute solo version, a verse with lute and contra bass recorder, a duet of violin and cello, and a conclusion with the whole ensemble together again.

The program continued with several more selections from the Renaissance dance repertoire by Caroso and Praetorius. They then played three of Medieval composer Vincenzo Ruffo’s *Capricci in Musica*, including *La Gamba in Tenor*—where a C bass recorder took the “tenor” line, with the long notes in the middle line, and the cello and fiddle playing decorative outer parts. They used a bass crumhorn on the bass line of *La Danza*.

The next grouping included *Se l’aura spira* by Frescobaldi, demonstrating how well players who normally play earlier polyphony can shift to playing really inventive continuo. The program concluded with a Spanish grouping—finishing with *Riu, Riu Chiu*, where the tambourine percussion is augmented by the *cuica*, an instrument that produces something like a wolf howl. In our era, the *cuica* is associated with Brazilian *Carneval* music, but there are references to it in the 16th century, so using it isn’t anachronistic.

The encore was *O rosetta, che rosetta* from Monteverdi’s *Scherzi in musicali* of 1607, with a particularly beautiful violin variation.

One conclusion recorder players can take from the group’s variety in orchestration is that good Renaissance recorders can hold their own with other instruments. There’s a tradition of always using the smaller recorders on the top line when there are so-called “louder” instruments in the

**Tom’s condition worsened; he died on August 31. His many friends have left condolences at [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org) and on the ARS Facebook group, [www.facebook.com/groups/177397989075511/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/177397989075511/) (including links to some of his performances).**



**Les Bostonades (Héloïse Degrugillier holds recorders, at left; photo by Bonnie Kelly)**

ensemble, but *Renaissomics* often uses a tenor recorder on a middle line with a violin playing above it.

Someone who hadn't heard *Renaissomics* play since the last BEMF two years ago would have noticed that their ensemble is better, and their arrangements more inventive and liberated. When listening to younger ensembles that have been playing together for only a couple of years, one could remember that ensemble playing really gets better with practice.

The stained glass windows of Old South Church's Gordon Chapel provided a lovely backdrop for an early-afternoon concert for a nearly-full hall by **Les Bostonades** (Asako Takeuchi, Emily Dahl, Sarah Darling and Anna Griffis, violin; Héloïse Degrugillier, traverse, recorder; Zoe Kemmerling, viola; Colleen McGary-Smith, violoncello; Andrew Arceci, double bass; Akiko Sato, harpsichord). The ensemble offered "Concerto No. 5"—an aptly-titled program, as all pieces were titled "Concerto no. 5," by varied composers.

Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5* was beautifully performed, with concertino parts ably played by Darling, violin; Degrugillier, traverse; and Sato, harpsichord, all enhanced by the larger ensemble. The second No. 5 was *Recorder Concerto, Op. 17*, by the lesser-known Baroque composer, Jacques-Christophe Naudot. Degrugillier once again shone—this time on soprano and alto recorders—while backed by strings.

Their final piece, Vivaldi's *Violin Concerto, Op. 12*, featured Darling as the violin soloist—virtuosic playing to end a lovely program.

Two years ago, **Duo Marchand** (Marcia Young, voice, harp; Andy Rutherford, English theorbo) had planned an interesting program incorporating special guest **Ruth Cunningham**, voice, recorder, Baroque flute—which then had to be revised at the last minute when Cunningham became ill. This year's BEMF was the fulfillment of that promise from 2013.

While it's a bit of a hike to reach Beacon Hill Friends House, the effort paid off. Soon after taking a seat, the atmosphere changed from 21st-century Boston to 17th-century England as the voices and instruments took flight. All this was produced by three beautifully gifted artists offering "Two Daughters of this Aged Stream."

The acoustics of Friends House are perfect for a spectacular, intimate, mid-afternoon performance of "luscious soprano duets, arias, and instrumental dances for the 17th-century theatrical works of Henry Purcell." The women's voices blended like two matched recorders, floating above the skillful theorbo accompaniment. Even more amazing was the ability of Cunningham (of Anonymous 4) to move quickly from recorder or flute to singing these intricate duet melodies, never missing a beat. Cunningham played recorder, and especially Baroque flute, with perfected agility. Her ornaments were executed with grace and elegance, inspiring at least one audience member to want to dig out that Baroque flute and give it another go!

We all surely agree that the future of early music rests in the hands of today's young performers and the institutions that shape them. For five years **Early Music America** (EMA) has sponsored its **Young Performers Festival** (YPF) to showcase students and ensembles from colleges, universities and conservatories throughout North America at major early music festivals. Support from the National Endowment for the Arts has made it possible for the groups to receive underwriting to travel to Boston and to Berkeley, CA, to perform. Video of 2015 groups and past events can be found at [www.earlymusicamerica.org/endeavors/young-performers-festival](http://www.earlymusicamerica.org/endeavors/young-performers-festival), including the late-afternoon opening concert by the **University of North Texas Baroque Orchestra and Collegium Singers**, conducted by **Paul Leenhouts** and **Richard Sparks**. Other YPF concerts in the multi-day fringe festival, each one attended by 40-50, are covered in each day's events.



**Paul Leenhouts (in grey jacket) visits with students after one of the EMA Young Performers Festival events later in the week**

## Wednesday, June 10

It was back to Beacon Hill Friends House as **Kleine Kammermusik** ([www.kleinekammermusik.com](http://www.kleinekammermusik.com)) presented a concert titled “Flights of Fancy: Virtuoso Chamber Music from the Baroque,” featuring courtly music of the early 18th century. Formed in 2013, the ensemble consists of **Geoffrey Burgess** and **Meg Owens** (both playing Baroque oboe, recorder); **Stephanie Corwin** (bassoon); **Rebecca Humphrey** (cello); and **Leon Schelhase** (harpsichord). (Burgess is also the author of the recent biography of Friedrich von Huene, the latter unfortunately not able to be present.)

Although the program featured works for double reeds and continuo, Burgess and Owens played recorders during the penultimate work, François Couperin’s *Sonate en trio “La Steinkerque.”* This piece commemorates the Battle of Steenkerque, fought in 1692 in the Southern Netherlands, as part of the Nine Years’ War. While most of the eight movements called for two Baroque oboes, the second and fifth movements were played on recorders. As Burgess explained, Couperin may have intended to depict the battle in most of the movements by using oboes (which were frequently used in military bands); the recorders in the slow movements may have been used by Couperin to depict the pastoral countryside of Steenkerque.

Kleine Kammermusik’s performance was commendable as they tackled difficult music with grace and finesse. Especially enjoyable was the continuo team of Corwin, Humphrey and Schelhase, whose playing was warm and expressive—a perfect match for the sensitive playing of Burgess and Owens.

EMA’s YPF continued in the modern chapel at First Church with a Baroque ensemble from **Peabody Conservatory** of Johns Hopkins University (MD), the group **Different Birds**. Like several other youthful groups offered on the YPF, the real stars were very focused string players (including some viol players whose intensity stretched to their wildly-colored socks). Baroque flutist **Aik Shin Tan**, from Malaysia, held his own in the French pieces of the 1600s-1700s. Especially tender and poignant was an interlude for flute, violin and harpsichord in the cantata *Phèdre et Hypolite* by Thomas-Louis Bourgeois (1676-1750).

For any recorder player who not been to BEMF for the several seasons, a better event than the noontime concert couldn’t have been found. The seven performers of **Long and Away** (**Daniel Meyers**, recorder; **Karen Burciaga**, **Jane Hershey**, **Anne Legène**, **Colleen McGary-Smith**, **James Williamson**, viols; **Michael Barrett**, tenor; **Matthew Wright**, lute; [www.longandaway.com](http://www.longandaway.com)) were musicians who obviously enjoyed what they were doing—a positive feeling felt strongly throughout the entire mid-day concert and making the listener a comfortable part of the ensemble.



**Different Birds, with Aik Shin Tan, flute**  
(photo courtesy of Early Music America)



**Aik Shin Tan, flute**  
(photo courtesy of Early Music America)

The pieces on the program, “*The Beggars’ Songbook: Revolt in the Spanish Netherlands*,” were by a variety of composers, all in the same general period. Initially, there seemed a certain sameness to them. That soon changed, as each piece revealed its character.

Particularly pleasing were an anonymous Spanish piece, *Paduana del Re*, the concert opener. *Vive le geus*, later in the program, was a short piece nicely utilizing recorder, three singers and drum. Also lovely was *Slaet op den trommele*, with enthusiastic singers and drum. Both of these are in the *Geuzenliedboek* (*Beggars’ Songbook* of 1581).

Near the end was an uplifting piece for recorder and voice, *Heer als ik denk aan ’t goed* (Lord, when I think of the good). The entire experience was a most pleasant one for the overflow crowd of more than 50 people in the chapel of Arlington Street Church.

A short walk away, an early afternoon program by several ensembles explored repertoire written by composers connected with the center of Italian church music in the 17th century, the Collegio Germanico in Rome—the Vatican’s training center for German-speaking priests. These composers included Tomás Luis de Victoria, Marc-Antoine Charpentier, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina and Giacomo Carissimi.

Held at Church of the Covenant, a large space with beautifully vivid watercolor-like stained glass windows and ornate wood carving throughout, this concert was deeply enjoyable, and made up for its lack of recorders in brassy choral splendor. The acoustics in the church were excellent, highlighting the lower voices especially, though occasionally relegating viols and middle voices to a soft murmur.

Director **Brian Schmidt** had clearly done his homework and explained the *Collegio Germanico* to the audience, highlighting its musical importance in the 17th century. The ensemble then demonstrated why the *Collegio* was so great by translating the notes into gorgeous polyphony with flawless cadences (and not a *bel canto* vibrato to be heard).

The repertoire performed ranged from opulent double-choir motets with instrumental doublings, to small-scale sacred duets with continuo. The program’s centerpiece, the grand *Missa Sancta Mariae Magdalenae* by Giovanni Felice Sances, is scored for six strings, six brass, seven soloists, and seven-part choir.

As the **Duke Vespers** choir called, it was answered by cornetts and sackbuts in full sonority. Often the voices sounded like more than the sum of their parts, as they were supported by the **Mallarmé Chamber Players** and the **Washington Cornett and Sackbutt Ensemble**, and from the continuo organ by **Christopher Jacobson**.

In the last piece, *Regina Caeli* (à8) by Victoria, the brass split up and surrounded the choir from both sides, providing a rousing finish that brought the audience to their feet: the *Collegio Germanico* has power even to this day. Full program details are at <http://mallarmemusic.org/?event=viva-italia-at-the-boston-early-music-festival>.

As Festival-goers dodged security personnel and street barriers near a hotel where Hillary Clinton was staying, it was time to return to EMA’s YPF afternoon concert, by the **Oberlin** (OH) Baroque Ensemble. Again the featured winds were Baroque flutes—played ably by **Zoe Sorrell** and **Sarah Lynn** (daughter of faculty member and wind player **Michael Lynn**). They were allowed to shine in the latter portion of *Chaconne et Tambourin* of Jean-Marie Leclair (from *Deuxième Récréation de Musique pour deux Flutes* of 1737), showing their high energy in the high range.

The major work of the performance was Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s divertissement *Les Plaisirs de Versailles*. With minimal stage props (set up unprepossessingly by ensemble

director **Web Wiggins**), the full ensemble debated the charms of music, conversation and treats like chocolate—which were distributed by the costumed cast to the audience at the end in the form of Hershey’s Kisses.

NEC’s Jordan Hall was the site of the evening Festival performance by **Sequentia**. As part of “The Lost Songs Project,” the trio performed “Frankish Phantoms: Echoes from Carolingian Palaces (8th-10th centuries).” With no music, and only supertitles projected to help the audience, one had to become a musical observer with an open mind—which was apparently the case with the audience of around 700; applause grew, piece by piece, with a favorite being *O mea cella*, a *carmina* by the Anglo-Saxon Alcuinus (who occasionally used the name Horace). Declaiming or singing in Latin and another language (possibly old German), the two baritone voices were sometimes in unison, or with the two occasionally moving in organum.

After being exhorted to “Arise, flute to make a sweet poem,” Rodenkirchen did just that—using only a slender stick as he changed among early flutes and piccolo, providing flowing counterpoint sans leading tone. With changing groupings involving the voices and instruments, there was surprising variety as they moved through poems for David, songs of war and exile, sequentia about the martyr Eulalia and an ode on Cleopatra to the latest work, a praise-song c.1000 for three emperors named Otto.



**Sequentia (l to r):  
Benjamin Bagby, voice, harp;  
Wolodymyr Smishkewych, voice;  
Norbert Rodenkirchen, flutes, cithara**

## Thursday, June 11

Some of the preconceptions about the previous day's **Sequentia** event must surely have applied as **Rodenkirchen** and **Smishkewych** again joined forces for the Festival 11 p.m. event the following day. Both wearing black, and again with no music in sight, the pair unraveled the tale of "Hamelin Anno 1284: On the Trail of the Pied Piper," bringing in sources from the Unghelearte ("unskilled") of 1284 up to the classic fairy tale of the Brothers Grimm.

Playing Medieval transverse flutes, and occasionally a lap harp and ankle bells, Rodenkirchen seemed to improvise melodies on set themes to augment the text that told of the arrival of the rat catcher, his contract to be paid to remove the town's rodents, the town's failure to pay him, and his eventual conjuring that resulted in the disappearance of the town's children. From mysterious and slow tunes that turned back on themselves, to segments that sounded quasi-contemporary or even jazzy, Rodenkirchen's flute playing and Smishkewych's recitations captivated the audience. (Rodenkirchen's various flute versions of the Pied Piper are at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8536pg4TRTI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8536pg4TRTI) and other YouTube channels, and at <http://indianapublicmedia.org/harmonia/hamlin-1284-interview-norbert-rodenkirchen/>.)

The concert ended energetically with an exclamation and the punctuation of a final stomp of the ankle bells; despite the approach of the witching hour, the audience of over 200 was energetic in its appreciation.

Some 12 hours earlier, the day had begun with another EMA YPF event, the Baroque ensembles from **Case Western Reserve University** (OH). Two years ago, wind player **Luke Conklin** was also part of this group—with which he again appeared, now clearly more focused on his Baroque oboe playing than on the recorder. Still, his rendition of director **Julie Andrijeski's** version of the anonymous *Malle Symen*, played on a von Huene Renaissance soprano, allowed him to float above the strings' filigree. A full ensemble ending—Conklin's oboe with five strings and harpsichord plus dancer—was rich in its use of textures as well as visuals.

The afternoon EMA YPF concert was the **McGill University** (QC) Early Music Ensemble in its program "La musique ancienne et moderne." Once again, it was the string players who shone; with no recorder players in this group, the lone wind player was a Baroque oboist with the potential demonstrated by good technique, but not yet showing musicality that may come with more maturity.

The ambitious program of the 2015 BEMF of presenting three Monteverdi operas and his *Vespers* of 1610 was well-received by the BEMF audience—all of those productions were sold out. Those with tickets felt fortunate compared to the long queue of people waiting in line or holding "I need *one* ticket" signs. There was a lot of anticipatory excitement as those with tickets found seats for the *Vespers*.



**Recently-retired ARS Administrative Director Kathy Sherrick shakes hands with Luke Conklin of the Case Western Reserve University ensemble**



**Case Western Reserve University**

This production chose to use the forces available to Monteverdi in 1610: 10 singers, continuo, four strings and five brass players. There is some speculation that he wrote the work for his job-hunting portfolio rather than for actual performance in Mantua, but it's likely that at least some of it was performed at the ducal court of Mantua, with those forces.

The readers of this magazine will want to know about the recorder playing. There is one movement (the *Quia Respexit* from the *Magnificat*) that includes parts for two recorders. You would expect the two cornetto players, already involved in the instrumental group, to switch to recorders—but, in fact, they did something more complicated. One cornetto player, **Alexandra Opsahl**, did pick up a recorder, but

so did one of the sackbut players, **Greg Ingles**. The reason for this became evident a couple of minutes later—they still needed two cornetti, so the other cornetto player, **Kiri Tollaksen**, continued as a cornetto player, but **Mack Ramsey**, who spent the rest of the week playing bass sackbut, shifted to cornetto. Brass players who believe that you can't possibly play two different size mouthpieces should take note that both the sackbut and the cornetto sounded fine when Ramsey played them.

In any case, the recorder was used as it usually is in this period: to create a pastoral, contemplative mood for the words, "He has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

The **BEMF Vocal Ensemble** has developed into a very flexible, well-balanced, and well-blended group. Especially noteworthy in this performance, the alto-range parts were sung by both a male countertenor (**Reginald Mobley**, replacing Nathaniel Medley) and mezzo-soprano **Laura Pudwell**. This allows the sound to blend more completely than groups where the top line is sung by female sopranos and all the other parts by men—another alternative that encourages a blended sound is if you include both men and women on the middle parts. BEMF hasn't yet carried this to the point of using female tenors, but hiring some mezzo-sopranos is a start.

While they've succeeded in getting voices that blend quite well, they don't yet have voices that are equally comfortable with early-17th-century ornamentation techniques. There were several places where one voice was supposed to echo another, and the echo sounded low-fidelity because the second singer wasn't as adept at the diaphragmatic articulation as the first one. This is definitely a minor quibble, when many ensembles have singers with completely different vibrato and vocal timbre.

Another aspect of Baroque performance that BEMF is famous for is the continuo. The flexibility of the large continuo forces was part of the effectiveness of this performance—the movements with smaller vocal forces used only chamber organ (played by **Avi Stein**) and viola da gamba (**Erin Headley**), whereas the ones sung by all 14 singers added the rest of the continuo group: two *chitarroni* (**Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs**), Baroque harp (**Maxine Eilander**), and double bass (**Robert Nairn**).

Speaking of echoes: that was one of the fascinating things to watch in this performance. Most of the singers who had to echo someone else just went offstage and sang from there. However, the cornetti stayed onstage, but the echoing player turned her back to the audience, so that her playing sounded farther away, while she could still have eye contact with the rest of the ensemble.

Boston has seen a number of performances of the *Vespers*, and there are numerous recordings. This one seemed fresh and interesting in unexpected ways.



**Exhibits at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts: serpent and Shepherd playing bagpipes of Francois Boucher (1754)**



***Pentimento (Eric Haas, recorders; Olav Chris Henriksen, lute)***



***Bonnie Kelly (r) announces as Quilisma Consort and tenor Elijah Hopkin set up***



***Part of Quilisma Consort (l to r, Carolyn Jean Smith, Lisa Gay, Elijah Hopkin)***

***Friday, June 12***

The ARS Great Recorder Relay, held all morning at Church of Saint John the Evangelist, also showcased some fresh and unexpected players—but began with a reappearance of an audience favorite, **Pentimento** (Eric Haas, recorders; Olav Chris Henriksen, lute). The two have performed together for some 20 years, which is evident in their tight ensemble. This was especially so in the *Canarios* concluding segment of a set by Heironymous Kapsberger (c.1580-1651), where musical layers built up to result in a syncopated hemiola that left you with a smile at the end.

Also returning to the Relay was the **Quilisma Consort** (Lisa Gay, Carolyn Jean Smith, Melika Fitzhugh), here playing exclusively works by the last member—and this time adding tenor voice (Elijah Hopkin). Fitzhugh’s poignant *Lamentations of an Aztec Poet*, played mostly on SAT Renaissance recorders (occasionally requiring a recorderist to play two simultaneously) was full of percussive chiffs, word-painting of the texts, and Ligeti-like clusters. Hopkin’s vocal gymnastics included slides and leaps to unexpected intervals—difficult for many singers to pull off, yet he did.

Starting with a house of about 20, the audience gained momentum as relatives of young early musicians began to arrive. Teenager **Benjamin Oye**, a student of **Emily O’Brien**, provided an intensity on alto that was appropriate to the large space, making a very effective impression with the difficult *Meditation* by Ryōhei Hirose.

A large group of young musicians trooped to the front for “A Showcase of Students from the **New England Conservatory Preparatory School**,” students of recorderist **Aldo Abreu**—who joined them with Festival featured recorderist **Michael Form** for the final work.

First came two Giuseppe Sammartini trio sonatas played by two set of cousins (the oldest of whom was 11 years of



***Benjamin Oye performs Meditation***

age!). Brothers **Marc** and **David Albrechtskirchinger** confidently played soprano recorder, while their cousins **Eleanor** and **Charlotte Raine** provided solid continuo support.

After young David switched to alto, he added tasteful decorations to a Naudot concerto movement with string members and a harpsichordist from the NEC prep group. The resonant acoustics of the church picked up the whoosh of the wind machine in the next segment, as more students (this time the **Rameau Ensemble**) offered part of the named composer's *Les Boreades*.

Joined by **Form** and **Abreu** on recorder and faculty member **Julie McKenzie** on solo violin, the assembled NEC prep musicians ended with a fun version of the entire *Brandenburg Concerto No. 4* of J.S. Bach—an uplifting and encouraging segment.

More younger players, the **Celebration Recorder Choir** from Third Baptist Church, Lawrence, MA, next offered playing and singing of several selections, starting with a bransle by Gervaise and ending with Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*—first played by tenor recorder solo before the ensemble sang and then played it.

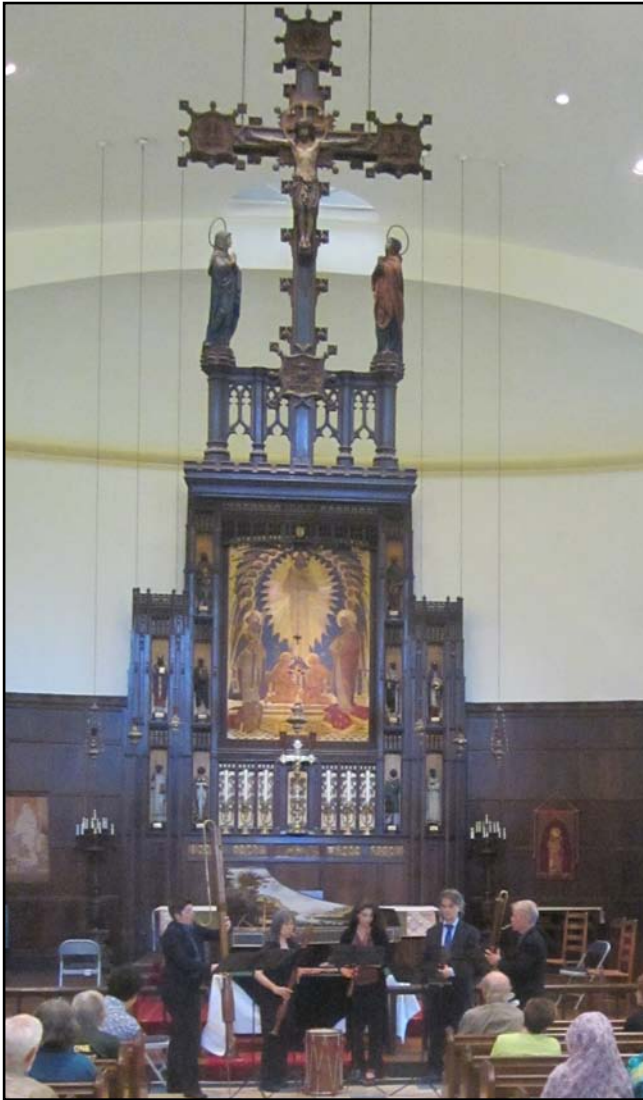
The maiden voyage of the **Boston Common Flutes** (**John Tyson, Aldo Abreu, Sarah Cantor, Emily O'Brien, Miyuki Tsurutani**) ended a full morning with professional renditions of favorites: a Holborne pavane, an eight-foot version of an *Ave Maria* of Josquin des Pres, ending as they began with another Holborne dance set—chiffy and also at eight-foot pitch.

The audience was invited to the church fellowship hall for refreshments and an award ceremony to honor the 2015 recipients of the **ARS Distinguished Achievement Award: Piffaro, The Renaissance Band**. ARS President Laura Kuhlman recounted her long and personal history with the



**Celebration Recorder Choir,**  
**Sybille Gray, director**

**NEC Prep Ensemble (top down):** cousins playing music (Albrechtskirchinger boys, Raine girls); *Les Boreades* (with Aldo Abreu cranking the wind machine); *Brandenburg Concerto No. 4*, Michael Form and Abreu as recorder soloists



***Boston Common Flutes (l to r): Emily O'Brien, Miyuki Tsurutani, Sarah Cantor, Aldo Abreu, John Tyson***



***Members of Piffaro (l to r: Grant and Priscilla Herreid, Joan Kimball, Robert Wiemken) receive the ARS Distinguished Achievement Award from Laura Kuhlman***



***Susan Burns keeps the buffet in order as guests help themselves to refreshments***



***Time to visit with old friends (l to r): (top) Susan Silverman and David Barnert (who have known each other since they were in high school in New Rochelle, NY) with Laura Conrad; (bottom) Aldo Abreu and Marilyn Perlmutter***



*The Black Madonna at St. John the Evangelist (site of the ARS Great Recorder Relay) was carved in Bavaria in the 15th century*

group, after which several members of the band received the award. The opportunity to sit and visit with friends capped off a morning of satisfying music.

The full schedule in the morning precluded hearing at least two events: a school group of fifth- and sixth-graders, possibly in their first concert, at the Exhibition; at the same time as the morning EMA YPF concert by **Forgotten Clefs** from **Indiana University**, in a program featuring settings of popular French tunes from the 15th and 16th centuries on shawms, dulcians, sackbuts, recorders, bagpipes and percussion—both events overlapping the ARS Recorder Relay. The afternoon brought more event collisions.

The final EMA YPF had to warm the hearts of audience members, as **Seattle Historical Arts for Kids** (SHAK, [www.historicalarts.org](http://www.historicalarts.org)) sang and acted a charming adaptation of Handel's *Alcina*. The cast of singers and actors, aged 6-17, were accompanied by a chamber orchestra of professional Baroque violins, cello, theorbo and harpsichord. (**Shulamit**



*View from Beacon Hill*



**Seattle Historical Arts for Kids (courtesy of Early Music America)**



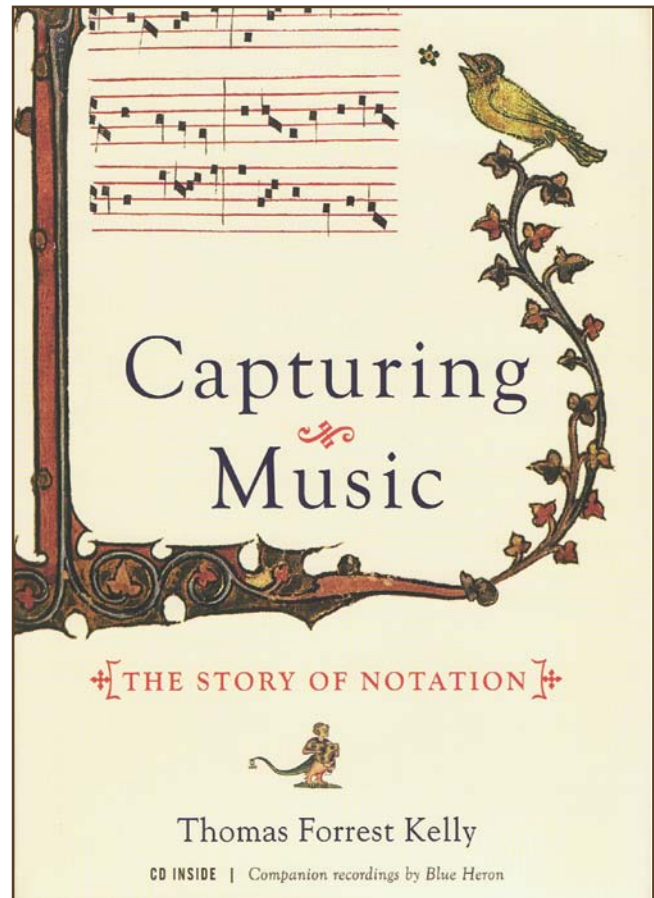
**Monument in back of the Massachusetts State House marking the site of the original beacon pole (on Beacon Hill, while walking back from the ARS Great Recorder Relay)**

**Kleinerman**, director and early string player for SHAK, received EMA's **Laurette Goldberg Award** this year in honor of her achievement in educational outreach). One has to wonder where these fun productions were when we were all growing up!

Later in the afternoon, the Festival lecture/concert, "Capturing Music: Writing and Singing Music in the Middle Ages," was an entertaining and informative presentation by the author of the book of the same name (reviewed in the Summer 2015 *AR*)—**Thomas Forrest Kelly**, Professor of Music at Harvard University. The early music vocal group that provided the musical examples in the CD packaged with the book, **Blue Heron**, also provided the "concert" aspect.

Kelly's presentation was clear and humorous. He showed slides of the earliest music books and their evolution, culminating in the too-often-performed *Sumer is icumen in*. Those attending could see how the earliest books only included words; then dots and slashes were handwritten above the words to help remind the singer whether the melody should go up or down. Next a line was introduced to represent a pitch, and then more lines and spaces until there was a full staff.

Kelly also showed examples of how the rhythm could be determined by the way the square notes were grouped together, and how this could be used for two or three lines of music to determine how the parts fit together. In each step,



Blue Heron sang (magnificently) the example that was projected, and the audience could match the notation to the music. The examples included chant, organum, then early motets, up through *Sumer*.

One of the features of the early motets is that the melody, words, subject and sometimes language were different for each of the two or three lines. Kelly challenged listeners to wonder whether it was really possible to follow two different sets of words simultaneously. Blue Heron's performance of Sesame Street's *Breakfast Time* song, with Cookie Monster and Ernie each singing about their favorite breakfast simultaneously, answered that question. Yes, it's possible to follow multiple sets of words.

Back at the Exhibition at the Marriott Boston Downtown Courtyard, the **Historical Keyboard Society of North America SoundScape Series for Harpsichord Clearing House** featured several pieces played by **Vivian Montgomery**, an early music keyboardist on the Longy School of Music faculty. Included in the mini-concert were Bach's *Sonata for Violin and Obligato Harpsichord, BWV1017*, with Baroque violinist **Yi-Li Chang** and two selections with **Na'ama Lion**, versatile performer on historical flutes. Montgomery and Lion performed *Aire (1990) for Baroque Flute and Harpsichord* by Jorge Ibanez, composed for Lion (adeptly played with much flutter-tonguing, register changes, and a guitar-like accompaniment). This was followed by *Twisted Little Ground*, composed in 1996 by John Howell Morrison (Montgomery's husband). This piece, commissioned by Montgomery and recorderist Cléa Galhano, is written for recorder and harpsichord. Lion capably flew through the quick and intense recorder part.

Meanwhile, in a ballroom near the Exhibition, early music enthusiasts gathered for a multimedia talk by **Geoffrey Burgess**, "Making Early Music: Trans-Atlantic Dialogues between Friedrich von Huene and Frans Brüggen."

**Friedrich von Huene** (born in 1928) is arguably the most important manufacturer of historical woodwinds in the 20th century. Burgess, author of a new biography of von Huene entitled *Well-Tempered Woodwinds* (excerpted in the Fall 2014 *AR*), offered a talk covering not only von Huene's relationship with recorder virtuoso Frans Brüggen, but also how both Brüggen and American recorder player Bernie Krainis influenced von Huene's recordermaking.

This BEMF was conspicuously different from many in the past in that von Huene's poor health kept him from being present in the Von Huene Workshop's booth and from attending events other than an opening reception for exhibitors. It had been hoped that he would be present at Burgess's talk, but that was not to be. His courtly manners and friendly countenance were missed.

Burgess's book puts into perspective just how firmly von Huene has been a part of BEMF since it was conceived in



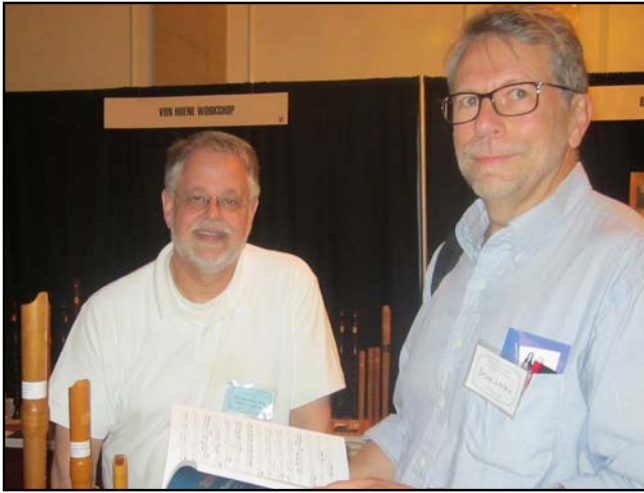
**Geoffrey Burgess (r) visits with audience members for his lecture: Aldo Abreu and John Tyson**



**Daniel Soussan and John Tyson after Burgess's multimedia lecture**



**Kathy Sherrick visits with Anthony Allen from Boulder Early Music Shop (Jon Arkenberg strolls by in the background)**



**Eric Haas helps Bruce Larkin at the Von Huene Workshop/Early Music Shop of New England booth at the exhibition**



**ARS Administrative Director Susan Burns at the ARS table in the Exhibition (photo by Kathy Wittman, Boston Early Music Festival)**

1979 around his dining table (where subsequent meetings were also hashed out). The Festival rosette logo was von Huene's artistic work.

BEMF's first Baroque opera (in 1981) was Monteverdi's *Poppea*—perhaps more homespun than this year's version, but connecting that past with present.

Burgess referred to the correspondence between von Huene and Brüggén (including an “angry and friendly letter” from von Huene about Brüggén's preferences for voicing). There were also sound clips, of early instruments made by von Huene, being played; the earliest was alto no. 3, used by

Krainis on his 1963 album *Sweet Pipes: Five Centuries of Recorder Music* (Columbia MS6475).

A project that became increasingly important in recent years to von Huene was the completion of his arrangements for recorders (occasionally with viol) of the entire *Well-Tempered Clavier* by J.S. Bach. Four musicians ended Burgess's talk by playing von Huene's arrangement of *Prelude and Fugue No. 18 from Book I of Well-Tempered Clavier*: recorderists **Sarah Cantor**, **Lisa Buckland** (in town with her husband, who was singing with Vox Luminis) and **Emily O'Brien**, plus viol player **Carol Lewis** (the last two being employees for some years of the Von Huene Workshop).

(*Well-Tempered Recorders* and Burgess's book *Well-Tempered Woodwinds* are both available from the Early Music Shop of New England, [www.vonhuene.com](http://www.vonhuene.com).)

With a break between the day's events and the late-night concert, there were tourist options: gathering with friends at the Legal for a seafood dinner, or a visit

to the historical instruments housed at the Museum of Fine Arts (only a short stroll or a “T” stop away from NEC).

Fortified with coffee, some 300 recorder and early music enthusiasts converged on Jordan Hall to hear **Musica Pacifica** (**Judith Linsenberg**, recorder; **Elizabeth Blumenstock**, **Robert Mealy**, violin; **David Morris**, gamba/cello; **Charles Weaver**, lute/guitar; **Charles Sherman**, harpsichord; **Danny Mallon**, percussion). The group's CD and the basis for this performance, “Dancing in the Isles” ([www.musicapacific.org/isles.html](http://www.musicapacific.org/isles.html)), has been out for several years, but the program remains fresh and lively. Its fare of Scots tunes, English country dances and traditional Irish tunes may be slightly off the beaten path for the group, but they play these songs with the same blending and technique that they apply to Baroque sonatas.

**Linsenberg**, playing recorders ranging from soprano to tenor, was perfectly in tune in the florid unison riffs with violinists **Blumenstock** and guest **Mealy**. Linsenberg especially seemed to enjoy playing the wild spinning soprano line of *Jack's Maggot* in a set of English country dances.

Despite the late hour, no one was tempted to nap during this rousing romp through music of the British isles.

(What a way to spend your birthdays, Judy and Charles S!)

**A brief version of Burgess's presentation is on the ARS web site, in two formats with sound clips (PPTX file or PDF file); an excerpt from his book appeared in the Fall 2014 AR. Friedrich von Huene was interviewed in the January 1999 AR (when he turned 70), a piece that was excerpted in the May 2009 AR (for his 80th birthday plus the ARS 70th birthday /AR@50).**

## Saturday, June 13

There was time to sleep in the next morning, before ascending the hill to the Goethe-Institut for the **recorder master class**. BEMF usually engages at least one internationally-known recorder player for a Festival concert, and also to teach a master class. This year it was **Michael Form**, who teaches and conducts as well as his activities of playing and recording. (A five-minute segment from the master class appears at <https://youtu.be/BaH5MK5OFDc>.)

The first to play were the **Quilisma Consort (Lisa Gay, Melika Fitzhugh, Carolyn Jean Smith)**, a trio of Boston-area recorder players who had appeared the previous day on the ARS Relay. The group often plays Medieval and Renaissance music, but this time performed a “Baroque-inspired” piece, *Sicilian-ish*, by consort member and composer Fitzhugh. They played it through, and then Form asked the audience what the time signature was. (He had the score; the audience didn’t.)

One gentleman was sure it was either 6/8 or 12/8, because that’s what a *Siciliana* is. Someone farther back in the room did get the right answer: 5/8. But Form pointed out that, since almost everyone in the room was a musician of some sort, and only a couple of people knew the time signature from the performance, the playing should have gotten this across better. He worked with the trio on how to accent the first beat in the measure without destroying the phrasing or other musical aspects of the piece.

Form also told the story of Frans Brüggen’s parting advice to recorder players: “Blow!” He suggested that all the players would have better tone if they were more completely filling the recorder with air.

Next up was an accomplished amateur recorder player, **Henia Yacubowicz**—who seemed very nervous to start, but relaxed as she played her piece, Ciaccona from the *Sonata in F major, Op. 2*, by Benedetto Marcello.

Form’s first reaction was, “This is one of the most cheering-up pieces in the recorder literature.” His second reaction was to ask, “Are you nervous?” She responded with a laugh, “Always.”

Form suggested, “Well, let’s play it together.” As they played it together—sure enough, she was much less nervous. Then they played it antiphonally, with each person playing four measures, and then the other playing the next four measures. It looked like a lot more fun than some of the things that typically happen in master classes.

Next Form told a story. He used to be an oboe player, and one of the standard pieces for oboe is the Richard Strauss oboe concerto. It has a motive very like the one in the Marcello:

The story is that in 1945, a U.S. Army officer who was also a professional oboist went to Strauss, who was by then old and feeble, and asked him to compose an oboe concerto.



**Ann Barclay Rovner dropped by the ARS table and found both Susan Burns and Kathy Sherrick there (and Gail Nickless, behind the camera)**

There was clearly interest but not sufficient motivation, so the officer said, “If you write me an oboe concerto, I’ll give you a thousand dollars.” Strauss’s eyes lit up, and the concerto starts with the orchestra playing a motive with 16th notes in groups of four. Oboists still think of that motive as having the lyrics, “thousand dollar.”



Yacubowicz played that section, and Form shouted, “thousand dollar,” every time the motive came up.

**Benjamin Oye**, a high school senior and a student of **Emily O’Brien**, had also appeared on the ARS Recorder Relay the previous day. He played the Fontana *Sonata No. 6*, accompanied by **Miyuki Tsurutani** (who also assisted Yacubowicz with no notice!). His performance was quite poised and confident.

Form noted that the Fontana sonatas are marked *come sta*, meaning that they should be played as written, and not ornamented to the player’s taste (or lack thereof) as was usual for music of that period. (Fontana died c.1630; the sonatas were published posthumously in 1641.)

Form mostly worked with Oye on a section where Form thought that the continuo should be fairly metronomic, but the soloist should be rhythmically free.

A favorite story of the day was about how, before recording technology became common in the 1920s, nobody had ever heard themselves play. It was as if the mirror had sud-



### **Juilliard415 and Royal Academy of Music**

denly been invented when you were age 50, and you could see what you looked like.

In any case, the recording engineers, who were technicians and not necessarily musicians at all, kept complaining to the performers that their music didn't line up, and eventually the performers accepted that standard. Now we almost always line the parts up vertically, but before about a hundred years ago, nobody did that.

Form also gave Oye a lesson in *messa di voce*, which involves doing a crescendo and decrescendo on a single pitch. There's a long note in the recorder part of the Fontana, which is the climax of the movement. The successful *messa di voce* did indeed make it a more exciting climax.

As an addition to the printed master class list, **Kim Wu-Hacohen** joined the participants. An 11-year-old student of **Sarah Cantor**, she played *Optometrist* from Pete Rose's *Id rather be in Philadelphia*. Form didn't know the piece, so he asked the audience about the title. Someone volunteered that it was on W.C. Field's tombstone, and **Judy Linsenberg**, to whom the piece is dedicated, told the story: she was at her parents' in Philadelphia, PA, and leaving for Europe the next day, but Rose, who lives in New Jersey, was in town and wanted to see her. She explained that she'd love to get together, but she also had a lot of errands to finish that day, so he went around to her errands with her while they talked. He immortalized the day in this piece, with movements *Optometrist*, *Shoe Store*, and *Lunch*.

Kim played with obvious enjoyment of the swing style of the piece (marked *Jazz inegal*). The audience had copies of the version she was playing, in which phrases are marked with stage directions like "waterslide" and "falling down the stairs." Form asked her if she had made up those characterizations; when she said she had, he worked on ways to make some of them even better realizations of her unique ideas.

With time ticking away to make purchases in the **Exhibition**, an aside between two professional recorder players was heard: the discussion centered on whether to purchase a new "modern" recorder. The opinion was that the Eagle is best for sound quality and volume, but the Helder is superior in range.

After lunch at Jacob Wirth Pub ("old-time beer hall ... since 1868"), it was back to Jordan Hall for **Juilliard415** and the **Royal Academy of Music**, conducted by **Masaaki Suzuki**. Among the choir and orchestra from Juilliard School in NY, there were again no recorders—but the winds were hardworking and very evident.

The large ensemble offered a complete program of J.S. Bach cantatas for a mostly-full house (including some young Suzuki-method students). Flutes appeared in expected places, especially as pastorale influences in thirds, in *Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen*, *BWV11*. Particularly noteworthy was a mournful introduction by solo oboe, with only continuo support, to the soprano aria, "*Ich nehme mein Leiden mit Freuden auf mich*" from *Die Elenden sollen essen*, *BWV75*. In the

Sinfonia of Part II of the same cantata, a slide trumpet declaimed the theme over a fuguelike fantasia. The three trumpets were audience-pleasers, being prominently placed at audience left, but it was the oboes (especially **David Dickey**) who received thunderous applause in the standing ovation at the end.

“Strings battle brass” might have been the headline describing the **Saturday late night concert**. In general BEMF usually schedules one concert that features the singers who’ve been singing together in the opera all week—but in a program of lighter fare of the country associated with the opera: German drinking songs if it were a German opera, or bawdy catches for an English one. This performance is usually arranged by Steven Stubbs, who also conducts the opera.

This year, Stubbs was kept busy doing three different operas plus the Monteverdi *Vespers*, so **Robert Mealy**, the long-time concertmaster of the BEMF orchestra (and guest artist with Musica Pacifica the night before), set up a concert of instrumentalists and some dancers performing two-choir music of the late-16th and early-17th centuries. (It wasn’t all originally written for two choirs. Back then they basically thought that anything worth doing at all was worth doing twice—having one choir do it the first time, and the other do it the second, a bargain-basement way of making it two-choir music.)

The stage was set up on audience left with four strings (**Mealy, Julie Andrijeski**, violin; **Laura Jeppesen**, viola; **David Morris**, gamba/cello). In the middle there was a continuo group (**Phoebe Carrai**, cello; **Avi Stein**, harpsichord; **Charles Weaver**, lute/guitar; and for some pieces **Danny Mallon**, percussion). And on audience right was the **Dark Horse Consort** (**Kiri Tollaksen, Alexandra Opsahl**, cornetto; **Greg Ingles, Eric Schmalz, Mack Ramsey**, trombone), mostly playing brass, although once they did all pick up recorders.

The program began with a set from the Venetian two-choir repertoire, by Giovanni Gabrieli, Giaches de Wert and Biaggio Marini. Notable was Mealy’s tender solo in the Marini *Balletto Secondo*, with the entrance of the second theme.

One might have expected that the winds would duel the strings and win, but that wouldn’t be true. This does not mean Dark Horse isn’t a good brass consort. Mealy probably knows who taught the teacher of his teacher’s teacher. If he can’t go back to the 16th century, it’s because we don’t have



### ***Eiji Miki found Tom Prescott in his booth at the exhibition***

the records, not because the tradition doesn’t go back that far. The two cornetto players both learned their art from Bruce Dickey, who learned by reading treatises. There is an advantage to having a long tradition of exciting playing of your repertoire on your instrument.

The next set was from Northern Germany, by an English expatriot whose friends probably called him Bill Brady when he was growing up, but in Germany he worked as Wilhelm Brade. Particularly interesting was the *Paduana XVI*, where instead of strings playing against brass, the low strings played with the high brass and vice versa.

Then there was the Holborne set, which had a bass drum giving a funeral character to the *Pavan: Spero*, followed by a sprightly fairy-round.

Finally, eight dancers entered, wearing costumes. The music for this set comprised the little-known country dance settings from Praetorius’s *Terpsichore*. The concert ended with a Volta, where the men lift the women high in the air, and are rewarded by seeing (and possibly feeling) “more than the ankle.”

In spite of the late hour and the exertions of the week, this high-energy concert left the audience feeling exhilarated.



[www.facebook.com/groups/177397989075511/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/177397989075511/)



[www.youtube.com/user/americanrecordermag](http://www.youtube.com/user/americanrecordermag)



**Michael Form & Friends: the recorderist with Mélanie Flahaut, bassoon; Dirk Börner, harpsichord**

**Sunday, June 14**

One last recorder event capped the Festival: a Sunday matinee recital by **Michael Form & Friends**. We should all have such “friends”—bassoonist **Mélanie Flahaut**, and **Dirk Börner** playing harpsichord and organ. The program, “Vivaldiana: Virtuoso Venetian Chamber Music,” allowed all to shine—but their sense of ensemble, where the timbres combined into one big sound that became more than the sum of the individual parts, was the more notable feature. This was especially true when Börner played a lovely positivo organ, as in the Vivaldi & Ignazio Sieber work, *Sonata a flauto e basso in F minor* (of Estienne Roger, 1716/17). This piece received persistent audience applause and two bows on its own.

Also a busy opera conductor in Europe (primarily Switzerland and Italy), Form has conducted several German first performances of operas by Vivaldi. He knows Vivaldi’s music.

Form’s tone was never forced, even in quick passages where his metronome-like fingers moved in precision. One notices that his body posture and way of moving when playing is very much like that of Marion Verbruggen—perhaps coincidence, since they do not appear to have common influences.

Bassoonist Flahaut was a match for Form when she stepped out of the role of continuo support, as in the bridge she provided from the opening Vivaldi *Sonata in F major, RV52*, to the *Ciaccona in F Major* of Marcello.

The final piece was a whirlwind of scalewise dialog between the alto recorder and bassoon, followed by a conversation continued in arpeggiated fashion, to its concluding *Allegro molto*—after which Form wiped his brow in relief.

The ensemble wasn’t quite through: the enthusiastic audience cajoled them into an encore, which Form described as a collaboration between Marcello and Bach.

After a busy week of early music, we all wiped our brows and headed home!

*Save the dates now for the next biennial Boston Early Music Festival & Exhibition. June 11–18, 2017!*



**The moment after the final bow of the Boston Early Music Festival & Exhibition 2015**