

THE AMERICAN RECORDER SOCIETY

114 East 85th Street, New York 28, N. Y.

Founded in 1939 by Suzanne Bloch

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NEWSLETTER

LaNOUE DAVENPORT *Editor*

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CONCERT BY CARL DOLMETSCH

On Sunday evening, October 6, 1957, the American Recorder Society presented the great English recorder player, Carl Dolmetsch, accompanied by Joseph Saxby, harpsichordist. A large and enthusiastic audience turned out on a very rainy night to hear this first program in a series of concerts which will take Mr. Dolmetsch and his accompanist all over the United States.

The program opened with a performance of the Sonata in F Major for Alto Recorder and Harpsichord by Francesco Maria Veracini, then came Three Pieces for Solo Spinet, played by Mr. Saxby, a Prelude in D Major for Soprano Recorder and Harpsichord, by Nicola Matteis, and an Ayre and Sarabande for Treble Viol by Matthew Locke. After the intermission, Mr. Dolmetsch performed Early Dance Tunes for Sopranino Recorder, accompanied by Tambourin, a Basse Danse by Pierre Attaignant played on the Rebec, and three modern recorder pieces: Variations on Beata Nobis Gaudia by Martin Shaw, for Alto; Pastoral Song for Recorder in C by Cecily Lambert; and the Suite of Anthony Hopkins; also several encores.

The entire concert was a masterful presentation by a gifted and experienced recitalist. Mr. Dolmetsch has all his material under perfect control, knows exactly what he wants to do, and has the requisite technique to carry it off. His moderate, musicianly tempi should be a revelation to those of us who might be tempted into admiration of racing fingers and tongues. Here is a player with all the technique in the world, who plays Allegros at what at first seem to be almost slow tempi, but then the absolute rightness comes through in the beautiful clarity and structure of each movement.

Mr. Dolmetsch thoroughly demonstrated his versatility by expert performance on the treble viol and the rebec. One listener thought there was not nearly enough of these, particularly the rebec, that enchanting, nasal instrument.

Adding great lustre to the evening were the solid, imaginative accompaniments of Joseph Saxby at the harpsichord. Mr. Saxby is possibly the best continuo player extant, not being content to plunk away at "filling" chords, but creating by improvisation an accompaniment which serves as a perfect foil to the playing of the soloist.

The performances were interspersed with perceptive and often witty comments on the music and the instruments by Carl Dolmetsch.

For those who might have missed this event, and for the many who will in all likelihood want to hear these players again, Carl Dolmetsch will give his second and final New York concert on Friday, November 22 at 8:30, at Carnegie Recital Hall. Mr. Dolmetsch will appear under the auspices of Amor Musicae, and the program will include the Handel Sonata in C Major and Couperin's "Le Rossignol en Amour."

It will interest our members, especially those not living in New York City, to learn the full schedule of Carl Dolmetsch's concert tour through the U. S., as far as it has been established up to this writing:

Oct. 10-13, Boston, Mass. / Oct. 14, Utica, N. Y. / Oct. 15, Buffalo, N. Y.
 Oct. 16-18, Cleveland, Ohio / Oct. 21, Battle Creek, Mich. / Oct. 24, Yellow
 Springs, Ohio / Oct. 27, Des Moines, Iowa / Oct. 30, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Nov. 1, Miami, Fla. / Nov. 3-4, New Orleans, La. / Nov. 5, Memphis, Tenn.
 Nov. 6, Fayetteville, Ark. / Nov. 10, Los Angeles, Calif. / Nov. 12, Ojai, Calif.
 Nov. 14, Los Angeles, Calif. / Nov. 15, Portland, Ore. / Nov. 18, Minneapolis, Minn.
 Nov. 20, Detroit, Mich. / Nov. 21, Philadelphia, Pa. / Nov. 22, New York, N. Y.
 Nov. 24, Washington, D. C.

A. R. S. MEETING

The first New York meeting of this season took place on Monday, October 7, 1957, at the New York College of Music. Guest of honor on this occasion was Carl Dolmetsch who started out with an interesting lecture on various aspects of recorder playing and technique and then answered questions from the large audience which filled the recital hall to capacity.

During the second half of the evening, Mr. Dolmetsch conducted the group in several Bach chorales from his own edition and ended with a masterful performance of pieces by Telemann and by the contemporary composer Edmund Rubbra. As in the concert of the preceding evening, he was assisted by his accompanist Joseph Saxby.

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We continue with the series of articles on Technique by A. Rowland Jones, reprinted from the British Recorder News.

INTONATION

The subject of intonation has been treated twice before in "The Recorder News" - by Dr. Bergmann (February 1950) and by Mr. Stanley Taylor (December 1951). To excuse my audacity in following two such authorities I plead the importance of the subject and the likelihood that new members of the Society might not have access to those articles. Moreover, the whole of Mr. Taylor's article and most of Dr. Bergmann's dealt with the complex problem of knowing what note to play -- the precise pitch of a note in relation to the other notes and chords around it and to the systems of natural and "tempered" intonation -- while in this article I shall assume that the player already hears "in his mind's ear" the note he wishes to produce (as all musicians should do before they embark upon singing or playing any note), and I shall expand Dr. Bergmann's comments on the means at a recorder player's disposal of communicating the exact note he has in mind.

Whatever beginners might learn, the thumb and first three fingers of the left-hand on the treble recorder do not necessarily produce a definite note C. If the instrument is "in tune" and warm, and if the player uses medium breath-pressure, he will, however, produce one of the many notes that are conveniently represented by a mark on the second space down on the treble stave, rather than one that would be better represented by the same mark with a sharp or a flat in front of it. The player has the power to cover the whole range of notes that are expressed by this C, starting from the territory uneasily shared with B right up to the foothills of C sharp. He has the freedom of the singer or the violinist, and is not confined, like the pianist, to pushing a button and taking what comes.

Readers of my first article who experimented with extreme breath-pressures on the Note G' will have noticed that the range of intonation on one fingering is surprisingly wide, often well over a full tone. The fact that recorder intonation is so sensitive to changes in breath-pressure is both an advantage and a disadvantage. It is an advantage in so far as small alterations in breath-pressure will move the pitch of a note slightly without a noticeable effect on the volume of sound produced. This enables the player to make minor corrections to the pitch of a note either to keep in tune with other players or to overcome imperfections natural to his own instrument. A treble player might, for example, find that his F' was a little flat and would correct it by blowing harder. One comes to make these modifications automatically when the idiosyncracies of a particular recorder are known -- indeed they must be made on every recorder for it is neither possible nor desirable that a recorder should be constructed absolutely in tune throughout its chromatic register with a stable breath-pressure. In consort playing one should listen intently to at least two other parts and keep making these minute breath-pressure alterations to ensure perfect intonation.

This admirable flexibility of intonation reaches its limits when the changes in breath-pressure become great enough to affect volume: it is obviously musically undesirable that a player with a very flat F' should blurt it out loud (but in tune) every time he comes to it. Conversely, the sensitivity of intonation to breath-pressure becomes a disadvantage when variations in volume are called for by the composer or by the style of the music. True echo effects, for example, are delightful,

but they become hideous if the "echo" is a semi-tone flat! Mr. Dolmetsch has cleverly solved this problem by building recorders with a "pianissimo" key operated by the chin. The gradual depression of this key opens a small hole in the head of the instrument which raises its pitch, so that a note can either be played softly without going flat or can be sharpened without making it louder. Those of us without devices of this kind must seek other means of sharpening or flattening a note.

Shading and Shade-Fingering

The chief technique for flattening a note is called SHADING -- I put it in capital letters because it is so important and so little known. To shade a note means to lower the unused fingers over the open holes until the note is flattened to the extent desired. As an experiment play the note E on the treble loudly and lower the second finger of the left hand over its hole until the stream of air coming from the hole can be felt on the ball of the finger. Now, lowering the finger slowly, press this column of air down into the hole until the finger is just grazing the edges of the hole. Very gradually press the finger home to complete your slide down from E to D. Shading with the uppermost unused finger is extremely critical as a tiny movement affects the note's pitch, and it is less nerve-racking to impinge upon the lesser columns of air emerging from holes lower down: the whole process of shading E with the third finger of the left hand cannot lower it as much as a semi-tone, and the first finger of the right hand has less than a quarter-tone effect. It is perhaps best to shade with all the fingers at one's disposal. Try playing E and moving the unused fingers up and down to produce a controlled slow wavering effect reminiscent of American railway engine whistles. In this exercise the fingers of the right hand may actually cover their holes, but the two left hand shading fingers have to be moved with more care and should never be low enough to touch the instrument. Another method of shading is to place the shading finger on the instrument but at the side of its hole, from where it may roll over towards the hole as required. This method is particularly useful when only one finger is available to do the shading; an example is bottom G which is sometimes a little sharp and can be flattened by placing the little finger, politely bent, on the brink of its half-hole. Middle G' is another note that is often sharp and although it can be shade-fingered I personally find the easiest way to flatten it is to lean the first finger of the left hand against the side of the instrument, keeping the finger quite straight and jutting out over the hole in such a position that bending the top joint causes extra flattening. The other fingers, of course, lie low, and the little finger may actually be on its hole, partly to keep the instrument steady.

Shading may obviously be achieved by covering holes left open, provided that the hole taking the shade-fingering is low down on the instrument in relation to the position of the fingers making the note itself. The most useful fingers for this method of shading are the little finger and the third finger of the right hand, for the degrees of flattening they control are made finer by their double-holes. Little-finger shading is the most delicate of all: shading a note such as E or F' with the little finger scarcely lowers the pitch, but the little finger comes into its own not only on lower notes such as A or C but in the upper octave where the effects of shading are accentuated (compare the effect of adding the little finger to the ordinary B' flat fingering with the same movement an octave down). Another form of shading is the covering of a hole below an ordinary "forked" fingering. Many recorders, for example, produce a sharp C sharp with the normal fingering and the third finger of the right hand has to cover its hole or half-hole to bring the note into tune, or, alternatively, the



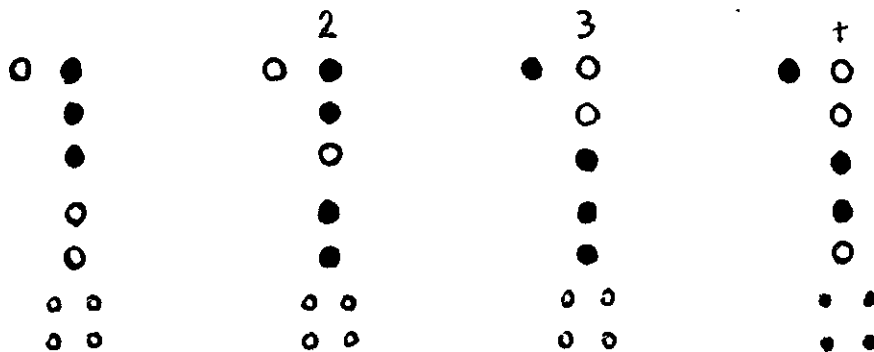
third finger of the left hand may be lowered into the air stream emerging from the open hole beneath it to produce the same flattening effect. The choice of method depends on which comes easier to the player, but as a rough guide I should advise shade-fingering to be applied to notes that are consistently out of tune while the "true-shading" is used for temporary corrections resulting from the exigencies of consort playing, the use of remote keys or the need to play a passage loudly without sharpening.

Slide-Fingering

Sharpening a note without increasing breath-pressure may be achieved only by "slide-fingering". This simply means pulling the lowest of the fingers forming a note to one side to expose some or all of the hole it covered. It is easy enough to do this on a note that is normally a forked fingering, such as B flat or E flat; it is simple, too, in the "pinched" notes of the upper register for if the thumb-hole aperture is widened the note is slightly sharpened -- but care must be taken not to overdo this, otherwise the nodal effect of the pinched hole is spoilt and the note breaks downwards with an ugly crack. Intense concentration is needed, however, if a plain-fingered note such as C is sharpened, for a hair's-breadth moving of the third finger from its hole will send the note up. Control is enhanced if the operating finger is pressed firmly on to the instrument so that every edge of the hole except the fraction being released is felt as the finger is dragged sideways. Alternatively, the finger may be moved upwards, that is, lifted so as to rest lightly on the hole rather than properly cover it, but this method, even more than that of slide-fingering proper, adversely affects tone-quality -- the good round sound of the plain-fingered note is weakened as the pitch rises. It is a device to which one must have recourse only "in extremis."

Refingering

Some notes may be played sharper or flatter by refingering them -- in other words using one of the alternative fingerings that I shall discuss in detail in my next three articles. To illustrate the possibilities and complexities of intonation control let me instance the note F'. Its normal fingering (i.e. thumb and second finger of the left hand) is often a trifle flat. It is easy to make it flatter either by shading with the first or third fingers (or both) of the left hand or by using any of the twelve feasible shade-fingerings available in the right hand (half-holes not counted -- no prizes for correct solutions). It is not, however, an easy note to sharpen, for slide-fingerings in this position are almost impossibly critical. But there are plenty of alternative fingerings for F', with and without the thumb. Here are some of them:-



1 and 3 are the important alternatives. 1 varies considerably from one instrument to another, but generally gives either the same pitch as the normal fingering or is slightly sharper. It can, of course, be flattened by shading either with the thumb (too critical to be safe) or the first finger of the right hand, or by shade-fingering, the most useful being with the second finger of the right hand. As it is a forked fingering it is amenable to sharpening by slide-fingering. If 1 is flat, however, the variant of it shown in 2 can be used, and this, being a double fork, is extremely easy to sharpen further by slide-fingering if necessary. 3 may be a little flat, but, because it is what one may call a "wide fork" (there being two middle holes left open), it is less critical to slide-fingering and one, or even both, of the right hand fingers may be taken off without sending it up to F' sharp. 4 bears the same relation to 3 as 2 does to 1 and is therefore a little sharper than 3. With experimentation you will find at least thirty fingerings (still excluding half-holes) that produce some version of the note F'. In his article Dr. Bergmann illustrated seven ways of playing F' sharp (there are plenty more) and most of the middle notes of the recorder behave similarly. Even though low and high notes offer less opportunity for variations of fingering, intonation control of some kind is obtainable with every note on the recorder. A thoroughly bad recorder, therefore, can be played perfectly in tune, though the result would not justify mastering the difficulties.

Tuning

As it is easier to flatten a note than to sharpen it, the obvious rule for playing with other recorders is to tune to one's flattest note (at medium breath-pressure). If you know that your F' or D is generally on the flat side with the fingering you normally use for it, and you then find it is flatter than the other recorders you are playing with, you must either sharpen your instrument or persuade the other players to pull out a little (a regrettable but sometimes necessary practice). All this assumes that every instrument is warm (and dry -- no warming them with "dragon-puffs"!). In the playing that follows any notes that are likely to be too sharp for correction by lowered breath-pressures may be brought into pitch by shading.

This article is written on the optimistic supposition that the player knows what note he wants to produce: no amount of technical knowledge will compensate for a "bad ear" (but unless you are tone-deaf the assiduous practice of listening to other parts will eventually cure this). Recorder players are lucky in that the "pure-tone" quality of their instrument provides them with the assistance of "beats" and "difference-tones" to check intonation. Beats, which are most noticeable in two-part playing on high instruments, are caused when two recorders are not quite in unison: the beats become faster as the notes get more out of tune and when the two notes are a minor third apart the frequency of the beats has become great enough to form an actual note, or difference-tone, which should be in harmony with the notes producing it. Two descant players could, in theory, play a trio creating their own bass part in difference-tones, but they would have to play most consummately in tune -- and there is no reason why they shouldn't.

HANDEL'S USE OF THE RECORDER (A Postscript)

by Joel Newman

In the listing of those arias from Handel's operas in which he employed the recorders as obbligato instruments (Newsletter No.22), the following Serenatas and Pastorales were inadvertently omitted:

- ACI, GALATEA, E POLIFEMO
1708 (Naples) "S'agita in mezzo all 'onde". Galatea, S. 3/8, F. 2 fl doubling vln, vla, bc. A-f''' (!). In Sect. A the fl follow the violins far out of range; in Sect. B they have an independent part.
- ACIS AND GALATEA, 1720 "Hush, ye pretty warbling quire". Galatea, S. Andante, 3/8, F. fl picc, 2 vln, bc. g' - d'''. The sopranino mostly doubles vln 1 at the 8ve, but has some solo "warbling" work too.
- "O ruddier than the cherry". Polyphemus, B. Allegro, 4/4, g minor. fl, 2 vln, bc. f' - e-flat'''. There has been some doubt whether Handel meant this for sopranino or alto. I believe the dramatic context indicates the alto recorder.
- "Heart, the seat of soft delight". Galatea, S. Larghetto, 4/4, E-flat. 2 fl doubling 2 vln at 8ve, bc. f'-e-flat'''.
- PARNASSO IN FESTA, 1734 "Nel spiegar sua voce al canto". Clio, S. 3/8, d minor. 2 fl or 2 tra, 2 vln unis, bc. g' - d'''. Another "bird piece". Borrowed from the oratorio Athalia (1733), where it is sung by Josabeth as "Through the land as lovely blooming".

Out of the large body of opera and oratorio selections listed previously, only a handful of pieces have appeared in modern editions. These are as follows:

- ACIS AND GALATEA "Heart, the seat of soft delight". Aria for soprano voice, 2 alto recorders and continuo. Ed. by W. Hillemann (H. Moeck, Celle).
- "Hush, ye pretty warbling quire". Aria for soprano voice, sopranino or alto recorder, 2 violins and continuo. (Schott's R.M.S. series, No. 84).
- ALCINA "Tambourin" for soprano recorder, 2 violins and continuo. Ed. by W. Bergmann (Schott's R.M.S. series, No. 410).
- TERPSICHORE "Trio" for 2 alto recorders and violin. Ed. by E. Hunt (Schott's R.M.S. series, No. 250).

I prepared two arias for performance at the A.R.S. annual concert last May: "Dolce nume de' mortali" from SILLA and "On the valleys, dark and cheerless" from The

TRIUMPH OF TIME AND TRUTH, both for soprano voice, recorders, harpsichord and cello. It was necessary first of all to write a keyboard part, since the Handel "Works" gives the bass line only. Then, since Handel's recorder parts usually double the violins at the unison or octave, I dispensed with the latter.

A great many of the arias can be treated similarly, with the original scoring cut down to voice, recorder and keyboard parts. Where a piano is to be used, even the indispensable cello may be omitted.

A.R.S. Edition No. 27

SAMUEL SCHEIDT, Six Chorales, transcribed for four recorders by Erich Katz.

Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654) was a pupil of the great Dutch master Sweelinck, whose tradition he developed in his own way. In ARS Edition No. 8, Bernard Krainis has arranged an earlier example of Scheidt's music, Three Variations on "Warum betrübst du dich." The present edition presents six chorales from Scheidt's Tablature of G^örlitz, 1650. This music, while notated for organ, was at that time also played on various instruments in church as well as in house music. Each one of these simple pieces is a little jewel of harmonic economy and melodic expressiveness. The transcription for recorder consort can be used in various combinations: Sopr. I, Sopr. II or Alto, Alto or Tenor, Tenor and/or Bass.

E. K.

A.R.S. Edition No. 28

ELNA SHERMAN, Suite "For an Oriental Bazaar", for three recorders.

This ARS number is another welcome contribution to contemporary music for recorders, and technically quite easy to play. The composer, who lives in Boston, has worked frequently with Carl Dolmetsch and has been connected with the recorder movement for a long time (see also her report about the Haslemere Festival in this Newsletter). The three pieces of this Suite ("Whispering Reeds" - "Lantern" - "Marionettes' Dance") are mostly based on ostinato figures of pentatonic or whole-tone scale origin and use recorders in an effective way to convey an oriental flavor. Besides their musical interest, they have the additional advantage of being good rhythmical exercises.

E.K.

Music Reviews

Publications received from Hargail Music Press, 147 West 57th Street, New York City, include an edition of La Follia, by Corelli, edited and realized by Colin Sterne. The Hargail edition includes ornamentation suggested by the editor, but has no separate bass part. There is also a Mozart Album for soprano, alto and piano, or soprano, alto and tenor with piano ad lib. Finally, a Trio by Vivaldi, set by Mr. Kolinski for soprano, alto and tenor recorders. This is an arrangement of Vivaldi's trio in G minor for recorder, oboe, and continuo. It has been transposed

from G minor to D minor in this arrangement, which puts the alto part in quite a high register a good deal of the time. It is one of the loveliest pieces in the recorder literature, and well worth anyone's effort. The original scoring may be found in Moeck Edition No. 1047, for those who have the proper facilities. The oboe part may be easily played on a second alto recorder.

This newsletter has for the first time received publications for review from Hug and Co., Zurich. Four editions of Christmas music include Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht, 14 Christmas songs and three little pieces set by Heinrich Leeman; Vom Himmel Hoch, 15 old and new Christmas songs for two C recorders, set by Elsa Helbling; Schweizer Weihnachtslieder, Swiss Christmas songs for piano and singing, or recorder, set by Alfred Stern; Winter- und Weihnachtslieder for C recorder, with an easy piano part set by Erica Richner. Also for Christmas from Moeck--Hausmusik zur Weihnacht, for recorder and keyboard. This is a very interesting edition containing fine pieces by Samuel Scheidt, Melchior Vulpius, Johann Walther, and Buxtehude.

The impact of the recorder on the contemporary musical scene receives further proof with the arrival of some original music from the well-known American composer Vincent Persichetti. Elkan-Vogel Co., Inc., Philadelphia, has put out his "little recorder book", pieces for soprano and alto, with some piano accompaniments. These are for the most part technically simple pieces, and could serve admirably for intermediate pupils to give them a taste of and for contemporary music.

Memphis Chapter

The Memphis Chapter of A.R.S. sends news of a program given by members in that city at the St. Paul Methodist Church on July 21, 1957. Players included Eleanor Griffin, Stanford Kyle, Martha Schultz, William Wilson, Virginia Van Hook, Gladys McCool, Dr. John Davis, Charles Van Hook, James Gunter, Dr. D. C. McCool, William Brice, and soprano Mary Alice Crockett. The program included music by Wilbye, Marenzio, Mozart, Bertali, Aubert, Bach, Handel, Purcell, Buxtehude and Haydn. A large number of people braved the rainy weather to attend the concert.

HASLEMERE FESTIVAL and ROEHAMPTON SUMMER SCHOOL, ENGLAND

Elna Sherman, member of the Boston Chapter of The American Recorder Society, writes from England:

"The 32nd Haslemere Festival, July 13-20, 1957, directed by Carl Dolmetsch and jointly sponsored by the Dolmetsch Foundation and the Arts Council of Great Britain, was an outstanding musical event, which I was very fortunate in attending. Music from the 13th to the early 19th centuries was presented, in which the development of the violin was traced; consorts of viols and of recorders; also, lute, rebec, Celtic harp, early transverse flute, bassoon, and bells were used. Counter-tenor Alfred Deller appeared in Purcell's "The Airy Violin" and in Bach's Cantata "Schlage doch." The performances were superb throughout, and I felt it decidedly worth while to have made the trip to England to hear the Festival.

"Then for good measure, I visited the Summer School for recorder and viol players at Roehampton amid the most delightful surroundings. Here people were playing in groups

scattered about the spacious grounds. I also visited classes and rehearsals at Grove House, the headquarters of the school. A student recital was very well done, and included contemporary pieces as well as early ones. Carl Dolmetsch, Walter Bergmann, Edgar Hunt and others led the recorder groups; Natalie Dolmetsch the viols. All in all I have had a most satisfying and exhilarating experience here, which I heartily recommend to my fellow Recorder Society members. Be sure to apply early, for the Recorder School was booked to capacity by February! Write Mrs. Carl Dolmetsch, Secretary, The Recorder in Education, Jesses, Haslemere, Surrey, England."

Officers' Meeting

An officers' meeting took place on Saturday, September 28, in which the newly drafted constitution and by-laws of the ARS were thoroughly discussed and some changes and additions proposed. As soon as the final form of the draft is established, it will be printed and mailed to all members, for consideration and adoption.

Terminology Revisited

Our valued contributor Joel Newman has sent us a letter in which he speaks up emphatically against the frequent use of the English terms "descant" (for soprano) and "treble" (for alto) recorder in this country - occasionally even in this Newsletter. From his lengthy communication we cite the following sentences:

"Let me explain my strong conviction that soprano and alto are better terms for us to use. That this is already American practice is not the most compelling argument, though it should not be overlooked. The virtue of these terms is that they are deeply imbedded in universal musical practice and possess internationally accepted meaning. The analogy with the terminology of the vocal quartet (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) is inescapable and invaluable. Indeed, musicians employ these terms in a wider sense, as when they speak of polyphonic textures like the fugue." ... "In addition, descant, which has specialized meanings for the music historian and choral director, means nothing at all to the average player. Even less tenable is the case of treble, for we use it to denote all higher voices and instruments. Wise recorder players realize that actually every one of the recorders (even the bass, which really has the contralto's range) is a treble!"...

Miscellaneous

Claudia Lyon reports the formation of an ensemble, Musica Antiqua, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, under the direction of Brigitte Warner, of Colorado College, which has introduced the recorder to audiences in that city. The group includes a string quartet, recorder quartet, oboe and harpsichord. Miss Lyon joined the group for its second concert on August 27, to play the recorder in the Telemann cantata "Locke nur", and the Trio Sonata in C Major by J. J. Quantz.

FOR SALE: Dolmetsch bass with keys, brand new. \$70. Grace Field, 140 West 58th Street, New York, New York.