

# Q&A

## The difference between Renaissance and Baroque recorders, suggestions for 20th-century ensemble repertoire, and finding colleges that offer recorder

**QUESTION:** I am looking for a list of colleges that offer early music instruction, either as a major or just through sympathetic music teachers. Do you have any idea where I could get this information? Do you know specifically of any colleges that do this, in particular for the recorder(s)?—Spencer Hines, [hines@access.digex.net](mailto:hines@access.digex.net)

**ANSWER:** Early Music America is just finishing an update of its list of degree programs in early music. You may contact them at [emaoffice@aol.com](mailto:emaoffice@aol.com). In June 1990 AR did an overview of colleges where you can study recorder (not always early music degree programs), but some of this information may be outdated. Another source of information is the *Directory of Music Faculties in Colleges and Universities, U.S. and Canada*, published by the College Music Society (202 West Spruce St., Missoula, MT 59802; <http://www.music.org/default.htm>). Listings are cross-indexed by instrument and courses taught, so you can easily see which colleges have recorder teachers and a collegium musicum.

**QUESTION:** What is the difference between Renaissance and Baroque recorders, and why are they different? Augusta, Georgia

**ANSWER:** The following information was excerpted from a report written a number of years ago by instrument maker Philip Levin and is used with his permission.

The difference in tonal qualities between the two styles of recorders is attributable to their differing characteristic bore and voicing designs.

What we call "Renaissance music" is primarily polyphonic music of late 15th- to late 16th-century Europe. The music is predominantly vocal, with from two to five or six voices moving independently. The range of each part is seldom more than an octave. For this music, Renaissance recorders are ideal. Typically, they have a less conical bore and much larger tone holes than their Baroque counterparts, playing only an octave and a fifth with simple fingerings.

Also, they usually employ a voicing design that, along with the bore and tone hole configuration, produces an open, strong sound throughout the range. Polyphonic choral music requires the vocalist to control dynamics independently of tessitura (i.e., loud and soft passages can occur anywhere in the vocal range). In whole or broken consort or in mixture with human voices, the Renaissance recorder works well within this context, since the low range of the instrument is roughly equal in strength to the high range, a characteristic not found in Baroque style recorders.

The primary feature in the transition from Renaissance to Baroque musical style is the change from independent polyphony to a new format: a soloist or small ensemble accompanied by a bass instrument and a chordal instrument playing together from a bass line. The soloist, whether voice or instrument, now observes the idiom of the vocal aria, where the premium is on emotional intensity. The high passages are loud, the highest ones climactic, and the low ones subdued. In keeping with this, the design of the Baroque recorder gives it an extended upper register with climactic high notes and less powerful low notes.

**QUESTION:** My recorder group, which has been performing only Renaissance music, would like to add some conservative 20th-century music of moderate difficulty to its repertoire. Can you recommend ten such compositions for four or five players? Where can I buy the music? — C.W., Lexington, Kentucky

**ANSWER FROM CAROLYN PESKIN:** Here are ten of my favorites. Since most of them have several movements, not all of equal difficulty, you can choose the movements best suited to your ensemble. All of these compositions except the ARS Members' Li-

brary and Oriel Library Editions are listed in the Boulder Early Music Shop's 1997 catalog, and many are also available from other dealers and distributors that advertise in *American Recorder*. The ARS Members' Library Edition is available from the ARS office, Box 631, Littleton, CO 80160. The Oriel Library Edition is obtainable from Natalie Palme, 25 Parkman St., Brookline, MA 02146.

Laurie Alberts. *Poinciana Rag* (SATB), ARS Members' Library Edition, 1995. Written in the style of Scott Joplin. Lies well under the fingers.

Andrew Challinger. *Ballad, Blues, and Riffs* (SAATB). Oriel Library Edition, 1986. An exciting work by an English composer. The last movement requires nimble fingers.

Andrew Charlton. *Celtic Fancies* (SAATB). Provincetown Bookshop Editions, 1985. A challenging set of fantasias on folk melodies. Some movements are easier than others.

Andrew Charlton. *Royal Flush* (SAATB). Jolly Robin Press, 1992. Eight stylish, jazz-influenced pieces by a former jazz musician.

Harald Genzmer. *Quartettino* (SATB). Schott, 1958. A skillfully crafted work by a student of Paul Hindemith.

Colin Hand. *Fenland Suite* (SAAT). Schott, 1973. An attractive work by an English composer. All parts are interesting.

Hans Poser. *Rendsburger Tänze*, op. 42 (SATB). Sikorski, 1958. Eight dance-like movements composed for a "music day" in Rendsburg, Germany.

Hans Ulrich Staeps. *Rondelli* (SSAAT). Moeck, 1962. A lively, challenging work by another student of Paul Hindemith.

Hans Ulrich Staeps. *Sieben Flötentänze* (SAAT). Carl Haslinger 1954. Seven movements, each named for a different folk flute. Quite challenging, but well worth the effort.

Peter Warlock. *Capriol Suite* (SAATB/T). Boosey & Hawkes, 1957. Originally an orchestral work based upon tunes in a 16th-century dance tutor, arranged for recorders by Stanley Taylor.

Carolyn Peskin

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