

# Recorder Reporter

Newsletter of two chapters of the American Recorder Society (ARS),  
Chicago Chapter & the West Suburban Early Music Society

October 2009

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## Chicago Chapter News

We opened the 2009-2010 season with our traditional concert from the Oak Park Recorder Society and the wealth of experience that Louise Austin brings to early music. About 25 people attended, including several for the first time, and Ryan Morrison lent his excellent bass-baritone voice. Louise directed us in works by Anthony Holborne, Pachabel, Pepusch, and Brade. We also make good use of our new Recorder Consort music book.



*Louise & the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday cake, ARS Festival in St. Louis*

Our next meeting is October 18 at 2 PM at Covenant Presbyterian. Louise leads us again, and we will enjoy a performance from the Milwaukee Area Recorder Society. Please remember to bring your Rosenberg books!

November 22 Performance	Dennis Sherman, director AND a' 3, Anne Cook, Nancy van Brundt, and Dennis Sherman
December 20	Yuletide Concert
January 17 Performance	John Lanfeld, director TBD
February 21 Performance	John Langfeld, director Dearborn Winds
March 21 Performance	Andrew Schultze, director St. Cecelia Consort
April 25 Performance	Andrew Schultze, director Da CLaN
May 16	Spring Concert



*Louise, the Chicago Chapter, and our new meeting place*



*Our first meeting for our 51<sup>st</sup> year as a chapter*

## West Suburban Early Music Society

The West Suburban Early Music Society met on September 13 for our opening meeting of the 2009-10 playing season. On the agenda was to select officers for the year. But before we could get ourselves up to that task, we had to play first.

We started with Susato's /Mille Regretz/, expressing our profound sadness that our longtime music director Laura Kuhlman is checking out places to live that have mountains. Who needs mountains? After several more Susato dances we were finally able to consider the

board selections. Election observers did not report any irregularities. We continued playing selections out of our Thomas Simpson book. After the break, we played several pieces brought in by Carol Stanger including a Schmelzer sonata for seven recorders.

We are pleased to welcome two new board members, President David Johnson and Vice President Judy Stephens. Continuing board members include Eric Stern, Secretary, Nancy Good, Treasurer, Carol Stanger, Membership, and Nancy Finley, Hospitality. Our next meeting will be on October 11 at 2 PM at the Naperville Covenant Church. Thanks to Laura Kuhlman, the West Suburban Early Music Society will welcome Robert Wiemkem of Piffaro as a guest conductor. Hope to see you there!—*Eric Stern*

### **We Need Your Membership Now!**

So far only 12 members have renewed for the 2009-2010 year for the American Recorder Society and the Chicago Chapter. **Please consider the benefits you gain from the society, and our financial need.** You can buy a joint membership ; for the national ARS the dues are \$45 a year; for the Chicago chapter the dues are \$25, and for West Suburban, \$15. Send \$70 for both memberships to Dale Fitschen (**1029 S. Clinton, Oak Park, IL 60304-1823**) for the Chicago Chapter or \$60 for West Suburban to Nancy Good (**741 Willow, Naperville, IL 60540-7421**). Members are listed in the ARS directory, and receive *The American Recorder* magazine, music, and access to services to help you improve your playing skills.

### **Gamba Workshop**

I spent the last week of July 2009 taking beginner classes at the Viola da Gamba Society of America's annual conclave, hosted at St. Xavier University here in Chicago. The beginner class was offered to community members at no charge, Monday through Saturday late in the morning, ending just in time for lunch. I rearranged my work schedule and took some vacation to make the time available. Even with the daily 75 mile round trip from home to St. Xavier to work and back home, it was worthwhile. The class was about half a dozen people, with wildly varying skill levels and ages. The youngest was 11, the oldest probably into their 60's, with about one a decade in between. Two were cello players, a couple had picked up the gamba on their own, and a few of us were experienced musicians but beginners on this instrument. As far as I could tell, everyone could read notation in a clef appropriate for their instrument.

The first thing we did is learn to hold the instrument correctly. "Viola da gamba" means "viola of the leg,"

and you hold it *on* your legs. You sort of make a cradle with your legs to rest the instrument there, instead of squeezing with your knees, as with a cello. Then, we learned to tune. Tuning strings differs from tuning winds, and you can hear quickly when it's wrong. And if you happen to have perfect pitch (I don't!) you may be in for a disconcerting time, as gambas typically play at A=415, instead of the more common A=440 that modern recorders use. Good thing my tuner is adjustable!

After that, we took off playing! The gamba is fretted on the neck, unlike the violin/viola/cello family, so getting the right pitch is just a matter of getting the right finger on the string and fret at the same time. (Ever notice that "just" is a four letter word?) There are six strings to keep track of, and many pitches can be played on at least two strings, so there are a lot of choices to be made while playing. That's what practice is for!

Then there's the bow. We actually spent quite a lot of time on bowing technique, how to articulate with the bow, how to choose when to down-bow and when to up-bow, and so on. And now I know what some of those funny extra squiggles mean in some of the early music I play—they're editorial hints for string players, suggesting which way the bow should be moving.

By the end of the week I was fairly comfortable playing simple and slow tunes, even sight reading if slow enough and mostly steps and thirds. "In nomine" and "La folia" were recognizable at a respectable speed, even if my tone could use some work. Overall, I had a good time, and can heartily recommend taking advantage of this opportunity if it comes up again!—*Dennis Sherman*

### **Music Coming Up**

The **McKenna Ensemble** will perform *La Comica del Cielo*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century opera by Antonio Maria Abbatini, in a new performance in Italian with English dialog, on Saturday, October 11 at 3 PM, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii, 1224 West Lexington Street in Chicago. The concert is free but contributions will be gratefully accepted. A reception follows the event.

The chamber ensemble the **Callipygian Players** offers a free Dame Myra Hess Memorial concert at Preston Bradley Hall in the Chicago Cultural Center Wednesday, October 21 at 12:15. The Cultural Center is at the corner of Michigan and Washington in the Loop. Martin Davids, David Schrader, and Julia Davids perform Baroque songs and sonatas by Handel, Festing, Purcell, and others.

**Jeffrey Panko**, piano, plays Bach's Goldberg Variations in a free concert on Saturday, October 10 at 2 PM. This is in the elegant and restored St. James Chapel, Archbishop Quigley Center, 103 East Chestnut. The

chapel's entrance is at the corner of Rush & Pearson, a block west of the Hancock Center. The wonderful stained glass windows alone make this worth the trip.

The **Bach Week Festival** for next spring is on April 23, 25, & 30. This wonderful festival, held every year in Evanston since 1974, offers its "**Bachtoberfest**" fundraiser on Sunday, October 11 at 7 PM at 1245 Chicago Avenue in Evanston. For \$50 you get food and drink, outstanding music, and an opportunity to support this excellent early music institution in northern Illinois. Several of the Chicago Chapter's own, including Patrick O'Malley and Laura Osterlund, have graced the stage for the Bach Week Festival in years past.

The Bach works to be performed at the Bachtoberfest benefit include excerpts from an unaccompanied cello suite; the motet "Lobet den Herren," with the Bach Week Festival Chorus and continuo; excerpts from the Concerto for Oboe and Violin in C minor and the Double Violin Concerto in D minor; the chorale "Jesu, joy of man's desiring," from Cantata 147, with the audience invited to sing along; and the complete Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F. The program also includes "The Swan" by Camille Saint-Saëns and works by humorist P.D.Q. Bach (Peter Schickele).

For benefit information and reservations, call 847-648-0813 or visit [www.bachweek.org](http://www.bachweek.org). To order Bachtoberfest tickets by mail, send a check payable to Bach Week Festival and a note indicating how many tickets are desired to Bach Week Festival, P.O. Box 1832, Evanston, IL 60204-1832.

## For Sale

Vintage Baroque Alto Recorder, very nice condition, beautiful wood and bright finish, \$100. Cork light & clean before first waxing recently. Mouthpiece & slight case wear on ridges. Includes original case, "Weiss Superior," made in Germany. This alto sounded and played beautifully in accomplished hands. Arrange a meeting with this instrument! Damien Fosse at [winterclown@hotmail.com](mailto:winterclown@hotmail.com), or call 773-472-2510.

## Recorder Players go Prairie Style

Former members of *Musickes Merrie Companions* (Louise Austin, Nancy Chabala, Ann Greene, Larry Johnson & Carol Stanger) assembled to play recorder and krummhorn in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century costume at the Prairie House Museum and Nature Center's Heritage Faire on Saturday, September 19. This event was sponsored by the *Franzosenbusch* Heritage Project for their annual Prairie Heritage Faire. The Prairie House contains a one-room school house established by German immigrants in the 1850s, the *Franzosenbusch* (French for "Frenchman's

Woods.") The house and museum are at Wolf Road and 31<sup>st</sup> Street in Westchester, near the Wolf Road Prairie, and are open to the public. The music was a big success, and we have been asked to participate again in the future.—  
*Carol Stanger*



*Fleeing the Renaissance, but falling short of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*



*Baron's Noyse, Rockefeller Chapel, University of Chicago*

## Phyllis Buchanan, Old Friend of WSEMS

Phyllis Buchanan, an active and long-time member of the West Suburban Early Music Society, a lover of all music, and a composer, passed away Friday, June 26, 2009. She held the Master of Music degree in voice from Northwestern University, sang for many years in the Pittsburgh Symphony Chorus, and played with the West Winds Consort. After coming to the Chicago area, she began recorder lessons with her husband in 1987, in addition to her singing. She was particularly active in the Hinsdale Women's Music Club, and then gradually increased her participation in the recorder community. She played with the Oak Park Recorder Society, took classes with the Oak Park Recorder School, and was also a regular at the Early Music Festival. In 1995 Phyllis

won first prize in the Chicago Chapter's composition competition for her quartet, *Solemn Reflections*. She is survived by her daughters, Kay and Laurie.—*Bill Nelson*

### Katherine Garland, Chicago Chapter

My friend Kathy Louise Walker-Garland died on May 4<sup>th</sup> after a lengthy battle with bone cancer. She was 62 years old. I don't know how many members remember her. She lived here in Chicago with her husband in the late 1970s till the middle 1980s, and was president of the Chicago chapter during that period. At the age of 12 Kathy's father taught her to play the recorder and from age 13 on they always played with a group or chapter of the ARS. After moving to Philadelphia she played for 15 years with a group called Quintessential. Her husband Tim told me that the four remaining members of the group played at Kathy's memorial service. She also joined the small Hyde Park recorder group and we loved and appreciated her for her quiet ways and competent playing. She will be missed by her husband, two sons, and many friends.—*Hilde Staniulis*

### ArsAntiguaPresents.com

ArsAntiguaPresents.com, directed by Jerry Fuller, is a series of monthly, free audio web cast programs of music from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical eras on period instruments. Programs focus on one composition or a few short works. Go to their web page to listen online, or find the Ars Antigua live concert schedule. November 14 they will be at the Chicago Cultural Center as part of the Chicago Humanities Festival.

### Tuesday Night Recorder Sessions

The Oak Park Recorder Society offers a fine way to gain regular experience in playing with a group. OPRS members meet Tuesday night, 8 to 10 PM, in the basement of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, 460 Lake Street. Go to the back entrance near the parking lot and ring the buzzer for the basement.

### Chapter Information

Our chapters are open to anyone, regardless of musical training, who wants to cultivate and sponsor love and appreciation of the art, history and use of the recorder and related instruments. Our meetings, programs and publications help members to come together and to find others with similar interests.

Chicago Chapter Dues begin September 1, and West Suburban dues cover June 1 through May 31 and are due in September. Both groups include membership in either chapter and in the *American Recorder Society*. Members are listed in the ARS directory, receive *The American Recorder* magazine and this newsletter.

The *Recorder Reporter* newsletter is published monthly from September to May jointly by the Chicago Chapter and the West Suburban Early Music Society.

### Chicago Chapter ARS ([chicagoars.org](http://chicagoars.org))

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**Chicago Chapter meetings:** Usually third Sunday of each month, September through May, 2 PM, at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2012 West Dickens, Chicago. Enter the front door of the parish building immediately west of the church and go to the large fellowship hall on the right.

### West Suburban Early Music Society

President/Chapter Rep:	David Johnson (david.johnson@foresitewireless.com) (630)740-9220
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Hospitality:	Nancy Finley (nfelma3@comcast.net) (630) 554-4363

**WSEMS meetings:** Second Sunday of each month, September through April, first Sunday of May, 2-4:30 PM at the Naperville Evangelical Covenant Church, 1150 Hobson Road, Naperville, southwest corner of Naper Boulevard and Hobson Road. Exit I-88 at Naper Boulevard and travel south. The church entrance is on a side street, more obvious from Hobson Road.

**Mark Dawson, editor**

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