

Recorder Reporter

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

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Chicago Chapter Meeting

In April, we had a light turnout for our chapter meeting in Chicago, six participants, so we worked on the *Bohemian Rhapsody* and otherwise had a fine time together. Many of our friends decided to join the West Suburban Early Music Society instead for their meeting directed by Glen Shannon, an excellent decision.

Our next and final meeting of the season is May 18 at 2 PM, which features our spring concert. We have plans to perform for **Make Music Chicago** on Saturday, June 21 at 12:30 at the French Market, 131 North Clinton Street. At this popular West Loop lunch spot we will be sharing the stage with a variety of other groups, including a bluegrass band, Irish pipes, and a country/folk trio. We are still welcoming participants. Make Music Chicago is a great day-long party; the full schedule will be available soon at MakeMusicChicago.org. Note that the madrigal group, the **Pippins** will also be singing downtown for Make Music Chicago Saturday afternoon, June 21.

West Suburban Early Music Society

We've had a busy month in the West Suburban Early Music Society. Our workshop on March 29 with Vicki Boekman was enjoyable and enlightening. The workshop title was "Recorder Music from around the World," and I might add from around the centuries.



After a warmup of breathing exercises, we began our journey in America with an arrangement of Edward MacDowell's *To a Wild Rose*, a familiar piece to many

piano students. This was a tranquil and gentle introduction to 19th century romantic harmonies.

Next, we hopped over the Atlantic for the African themed piece *Der große Fluss* by modern German composer Sören Sieg from his *Celebrations* suite for 12 voices. Vicki guided us through the unfamiliar rhythms and introduced a recurring theme, of the day: don't overblow your forked fingerings! The piece was a joy to play with its low dark sonorous sections and celebratory high flights. It my favorite piece of the day.



Vicki Boekman directs the WSEMS workshop

Our tour continued in Wales with the suite *West of Severn* by Alyson Lewin based on three traditional Welsh songs incorporating three different affects from the Welsh character. The music was not technically difficult, and Vicki worked with us to bring out the different emotions conveyed in the different sections. On to Norway, with Edvard Grieg's *Våren (The Last Spring)*. We were told that this deeply poignant work could mean either the previous spring or the last spring the listener would live to see.

We worked on the romantic chords and bringing out the contrasts between the quiet anticipatory and fuller blossoming sections. From Scandinavia, we traveled to Dresden and 300 years back to the Renaissance, for a celebratory piece (on buzzies) written by Italian composer Vincenzo Albrici, a musician to the court of Johann Georg of Saxony. In a fitting conclusion to our journey, we returned home in our comfort zone in

Baroque Italy with an epic *Passacaglia* by Johann Christof Pez. Chaconnes and Passacaglias often end the Baroque pieces so this was a perfect conclusion to our day. Thanks Vicki for the wonderful direction and musical education.



A strong turnout in Naperville for the workshop

We were honored and delighted to welcome recorder composer extraordinaire Glen Shannon to lead our April meeting. We started with *Greetings from the East Bay Hills*, a little Bach Chorale style piece he wrote for warm-ups with his chapter in Berkeley, California. Then we worked through his Recorder Quartet Number 2, *Wanderlust*. There are three movements: *Beeline Rondo*, *Stroll*, and *Fugue*, each with its own mood. They were all accessible to our players, and while they make use of modern articulations and rhythms (swing anyone?), they still feel very much at home on the recorder. It was especially good to be directed by the composer, so we could understand the original intent. Thanks Glen for sharing your wonderful music!



Glen Shannon directing WSEMS April 13

We were saddened, though, to find out that Laura Kuhlman, our long-time director, is moving to Portland, Oregon. Lucky Portland! We'll miss you Laura!

Our next meeting will be on 2 PM **May 4th** at the Naperville Covenant Church (not May 11—that's Mother's Day). If you have stacks of music that you would like to hear (such as something you found at Whitewater), bring enough copies of that along. Hope to see everyone there!—*Eric Stern*

Bohemian Rhapsody

In the program notes for his "Recorder by the Numbers" concert April 27 at St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran in Lake View, John Langfeld confesses "I have never really enjoyed playing in or listening to recorder ensembles; too much sonic sameness and stylistic predictability." So John decided to invite musicians and audience both to rise to his musical challenge. "Standard" music—two Baroque pieces, including Telemann—yielded quickly to modern works, seven pieces created in the last 40 years. These included two 21st century compositions, John's own *A Time to Mourn in Praise of War* and Randall Snyder's world premier, *Labyrinth*. No nodding off to soothing melodies this afternoon.



A difficult but fascinating piece, Labyrinth

The program featured 19 recorder players (including John), piano, string bass, and narrator, and nine pieces, a solo, a duet, a trio, a quartet, a quintet, a sextet, two septets, and two eight-parts, in that order. John opened the program, joined, in order, by Chicago chapter friends Lisette Kielson, Patrick O'Malley, Dennis Sherman, Mary Anne Wolff Gardner, and Mirja Lorenz. The ensemble also featured recorder players Brian Sundermeier and Albert Thompson, with Don Mead on piano and Cory Biggerstaff on string bass.

For the final piece of the afternoon, John directed his own arrangement for recorder orchestra of Queen's 1975

rock anthem, *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Filling in the back rows for the orchestra were Larry Johnson, Nadine Petersen, Dale Fitschen, Esther Schechter, Arlene Ghiron, Mark Dawson, Lynette Colmey, Rosalie Guttman, and Kellie Vesely.

Bohemian Rhapsody is all about anger and rebellion, foreign territory for the traditional body of recorder literature that we usually play. I was uncertain when we first learned of the idea last year. But it worked. It more than worked. The music was amazing, in fact, though rather more mellow than the original. And none of us on stage agreed with the closing sentiment of Freddie Mercury's epic ballad, "nothing really matters." What we were doing absolutely mattered. Given their rousing response, the audience felt the same way.



Bohemian Rhapsody

Many thanks to John Langfeld for his devotion to (1) the recorder, (2) local recorder players, and (3) rampaging creativity. Playing *Bohemian Rhapsody* was a blast. And even if a few of us might be a little worried about what John will think of next, we will look forward to that next adventure, and to having a great time on the way.

A Word from the President

Walking through the Musical Instrument Museum in Brussels, amid viols, lutes and krumhorns, I spied an original Rottenburgh alto recorder. I have been playing modern versions of this recorder for many years. The pleasure these instruments have given me is immeasurable.

This year we have made a great start in bringing the recorder to the public, playing at the Harold Washington Library in December, the University of Chicago Folk Music Festival in February, the Oak Park Public Library in March, and Make Music Chicago in June. Our

performances have been very well received. It has been exciting to see the membership participate and demonstrate what the instrument can do.



The quintet performs Cesar Bresgen

Under the musical direction of Lisette Kielson we have been building a solid repertoire. The energy and high standards she has brought with her has been a major contribution to the chapter's process of revitalization.

Looking forward to next year, the board continues to ask for your support. This support can take the form of attendance at chapter meetings, participation in our public performances, or financial contributions. I hope to see you all at the May meeting.--*Ben Eisenstein*

Spring Concert

This year's concert on Sunday, May 18 (2 PM) will be a little different. We will still provide time for a recital, but the bulk of the meeting will be devoted to practicing for Make Music Chicago June 21. If you would like to perform, contact Ben at BenEisenstein@comcast.net or Mark at msjddawson@sbcglobal.net.

Don't forget to bring treats to share! The meeting is at **Covenant Presbyterian Church.**

Early Music Festival, Whitewater

The Early Music Festival returns June 6-8 this year at the University of Wisconsin Whitewater. Recorder players of all levels, gamba players, and singers have been gathering for a weekend of classes, jamming, dance, and performing every June since 1960. We will also have vendors on site providing music, instruments, musical supplies, and repairs. The first event is 7 PM Friday night June 6, and the weekend concludes with a Sunday afternoon concert. The University of Wisconsin Whitewater is about 45 miles southeast of Madison and about 150 miles from Chicago.

Both the Chicago Chapter and the West Suburban Early Music Society have scholarship funds available. Contact Pam Wiese at gcaosapam@gmail.com or call (708) 386-1297. For more information, contact Nancy Chabala [(708) 442-6053] or visit whitewaterearlymusic.org.

Music Coming Up

The **University of Chicago Modern Minstrelsy** will present a concert of Medieval Music on Sunday May 18 a 7 PM. The concert, free to the public, will be at the Logan Center, University of Chicago, 915 East 60th street, in their 9th floor penthouse. It will feature a performance of the 13th century *Li Gieus de Robin and Marion* (the Play of Robin and Marion) by Adam de la Halle, secular songs from the Carmina Burana, and medieval dancing. For more information email Andrew Schultze at aschultze@comcast.net or call (773) 628-7214.

The web site www.earlymusicchicago.org is an excellent resource for information about Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music in the Chicago area.

Chapter Information

This will be the last issue for the season. This newsletter and our monthly meetings resume in September. Visit ChicagoRecorders.org & westsubems.org for current information.

Visit the Yahoo group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChicagoARS>.

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

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.

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 west of the church and go to the large fellowship hall on the right.

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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

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