

# Recorder Reporter

Newsletter of two chapters of the American Recorder Society (ARS),

Chicago Chapter & the West Suburban Early Music Society

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## West Suburban Early Music Society

Members of the West Suburban Early Music Society were supposed to hold their November 8 meeting on Zoom.

Fair weather intervened, however, so we gathered on the grass outside the Friends' Meeting House again instead. Ten members and friends played 13 pieces over two hours, closing with *The Fairie Round* by Anthony Holborne. We played some English works from the Dance Master, pieces by Praetorius, Purcell, and John Dowland and the hymn *God Moves in a Mysterious Way*. Another pleasant afternoon with wind and sun.

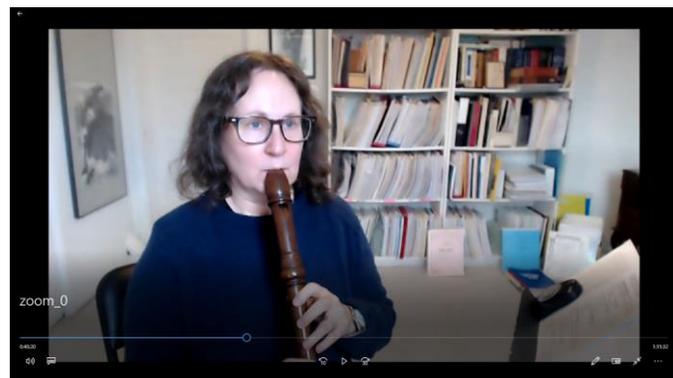


One last gathering for WSEMS for 2020, November 8

The next meeting will be on December 13. This time, an online meeting seems more reasonable. The chapter board will contact members by email or by posting a notice on the web site. Nonmembers who would like to participate can contact Chris Culp at [cg.culp@gmail.com](mailto:cg.culp@gmail.com). Likely our November meeting was the last time we will be able to play quartets live together for a while, but we will hope for a vaccine soon, and playing together indoors in the spring.

## Chicago Chapter Notes

Another splendid turnout for our monthly chapter meeting on November 15, with 17 musicians participating, playing a series of duets and playing very well. This commitment to online gatherings during this era of pandemic offers hope that we can look forward to robust in-person gatherings again next year.



Lisette continued our story-telling theme, describing and demonstrating techniques drawn from Eve O'Kelly's work "The Recorder Today." This work talks about non-standard fingerings, articulation, vibrato, and special effects. We first reviewed the topics we had covered at our September meeting and then focused on articulation. As a result, we experimented with, and listened to, several fingering practices that tended to sound—kind of weird, actually. "Supernatural" was one term offered. One participant asked Lisette when these more exotic methods were actually used. She noted that during the Early Music revival, starting in the 1950s, as Renaissance and Medieval composers and pieces were recovered, along with the recorder itself, some modern composers tried to stretch the recorder to see what it could do. Virtuosos commissioned new 20<sup>th</sup> century works for the instrument, and composers (especially in the Netherlands) regularly turned to avant-garde techniques, producing the sorts of

sounds we generally don't encounter when reading Holborne or Purcell.

The session featured Lance Eccles' work *Three-toed Sloth* and Glen Shannon's *Papillons*, and closed with Soren Seig's work *Umlanjana: Der kleine Bach (The Small Stream)*. The meeting ended with discussion about future plans. The consensus seemed to be to focus on simply getting together to play in monthly meetings in 2021, rather than discussing and practicing playing techniques. We were also interested in playing more music that features lower instruments.

I learned from our November 15<sup>th</sup> event that trying to follow two Zoom meetings at once, one on my iPad and the other on my son's laptop, doesn't work very well. The Chicago chapter meeting was scheduled for the same day, and the same time, as a baby shower for my niece. Meanwhile I was trying to pay attention to my grandson and waiting for results from my latest COVID-19 test (I was negative). But I was still pleased to join all of you, and I look forward to a grand day soon to come when dueling Zoom meetings will be unnecessary.

### Chicago Chapter Yuletide Concert

Don't forget to join us for our annual Yuletide Concert on December 20th at 2 PM! You are invited to perform or just listen. This year, performers will need to be creative, perhaps playing a solo, perhaps playing with a 'music minus one' type of recording. More information on performing suggestions will be provided later. Contact Larry Johnson at [lj\\_johnson1239@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lj_johnson1239@sbcglobal.net). There will be a general playing session afterwards, with music being available in advance on our website.

Mark your calendars for December 20!

### Yuletide Concert Cookie Exchange

The holiday treat break is a hallmark of the Chicago Chapter's annual Yuletide concert. The Board is organizing a cookie exchange to bring back the socializing and real food to this year's online festivities on December 20. Join the fun! Virtual party, real food!

Sign up with our [online form](#) to do one or more of these:

- Have a plate of treats delivered to your home before the concert. You do NOT need to bake OR perform in order to get a plate of treats.
- Bake treats
- Be a Cookie Courier – pick up and deliver treats on Friday and Saturday, December 18 and 19

Please respond by Sunday, December 13. Late sign-ups will be accommodated if possible. The cookie exchange is contact-free. CDC guidance will be followed.

Please contact Jenny Buckley at 608-421-2386 or [jennifer.a.buckley@gmail.com](mailto:jennifer.a.buckley@gmail.com) if you have any questions, or if you don't have Internet access or live outside the Chicago area but would like to participate.

### Special Donations in Hilde's Memory

We have received donations in memory of Hilde Staniulis, who passed away in October. The Board decided to maintain a separate fund for these donations, for recorder education and promotion, as Hilde was deeply involved in sharing her enthusiasm for recorder playing with young students and adults alike. Anyone wishing to contribute to the cause of spreading the "joy of recording" is welcome to donate to the Hilde Staniulis Education Fund. Any size donation would be appreciated.

### Recorder Player of the Month: Rosalie Guttman

Rosalie Sonn was born in London in 1932 and emigrated from England to the United States in May of 1957. "I came originally because I wanted to study archeology," Rosalie said. "I was interested in pre-Columbian studies, and I wanted to go to the University of Mexico. But that was a time of austerity in England. I could only take \$50 out of the country." She came to Chicago instead, to get a job and save money for her future, plans that were soon interrupted. Instead she met Bernard Guttman, they got married in 1958, and had two sons, Phillip and David.

Life was grim in England in the late 1950s. The country required decades to recover from World War II, decades to restore a devastated economy and to rebuild damaged and destroyed buildings and infrastructure. Food and fuel rationing remained in place for over 20 years after the War ended, many consumer goods were hard to find, and for many years travel was difficult and restricted because it was necessary to find and clear mines left in the seas around the English coast. The famed British Museum in London didn't reopen until the mid-1950s.

When she arrived from England, Rosalie had completed a bachelor's degree in medicine, the British equivalent of a pre-med program here. She was interested in archeology and anthropology, psychology and the social sciences, as well as medicine, but she decided she preferred to work in research. So she finished a PhD in Public Health from the University of Illinois, specializing in the new field of gerontology. This degree served to combine her interests, or most of them. She also liked music and art.

Further, her cousin, living in Chicago in 1957, asked Rosalie if she was interested in meeting men. Meeting men was in fact yet another interest of Rosalie's, so her cousin's wife introduced Rosalie to a college classmate of her

husband, a young man named Bernie Guttman. They connected over a French Film called *Forbidden Games* (1952), about children in France making a cemetery for animals in their garden, in the midst of the trauma of war. The film featured a Spanish melody that Rosalie had been working on at the time, as part of lessons she was taking in classical guitar. “I asked Bernie about the music, and he started humming the tune. It was my favorite piece of all time then. We connected on that piece of music, really.”



*Rosalie playing at the March 2009 Chicago chapter meeting*

They liked the same kind of music and films; they both spoke French. Bernie was for a time the Comptroller for the Lyric Opera, so he knew all the stars by their first names, but rather than status, it was music that brought them together. “Of course, he was educated, too, and good looking,” Rosalie added.

Rosalie taught herself to play recorder as a child, playing folk tunes and such by ear. In time she learned to read music; she also played the piano and the guitar. After moving to Chicago, she settled in Hyde Park, and started singing with the University of Chicago Community Chorus. In 1960 the chorus made plans to stage a performance of *Noyse Fluud* by Benjamin Britten, and they announced that they needed recorder players. Rosalie volunteered, and she ended up sitting next to Esther Schechter. That’s how they met.

As a child Rosalie was evacuated from London to Reading in Berkshire in 1940 during the War, and stayed in a small town, Woodley, until 1944. There wasn’t a lot to do in Woodley on Sundays except to go to church, so that was what Rosalie did, even though she was the granddaughter of a rabbi. She loved the singing and joined the choir and ended up learning many Protestant hymns. When she eventually returned to London, a Jewish neighbor asked Rosalie’s mother if she and her siblings could go to the synagogue school. “Oh, they are welcome to go if they wish,” she said. So Rosalie started going to Hebrew school, and learned Hebrew, and all about her Jewish faith. The Episcopalian influence persisted, however. “I told my father I wanted to be a nun,” she recalled. “I asked him,

‘Do you think I would be a good nun?’ He said, ‘You would make a good nun cry.’”



*Jamming in Lyons, Illinois, Saturday November 7 (leaf blower accompaniment)*

Instead, the suffering and destruction caused by the war prompted the young Rosalie to move away from religious practice, like many other people of all religions, and all over Europe. Belgium, for example, watched baptisms and mass attendance collapse to virtually nothing in the 1950s, and interest in religion has never recovered there. Rosalie’s husband Bernie was secular as well. “He thought we ate matzah at Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish new year), but I said ‘no, not until April!’” Bernie’s parents emigrated from Czechoslovakia before the War, but many of his relatives died in the Holocaust. Several of his cousins survived and came to Chicago after the war. They had been hidden in a forest, with local friends bringing them food. At one point they were discovered by some Gestapo officers, but they decided not to arrest them, as one of the cousins was blond and therefore could not, of course, possibly be Jewish. The Gestapo officers left them alone instead.

Bernie Guttman had a PhD in Political Science from the University of Chicago and was a professor in the subject at a small college in Indiana. But he didn’t like teaching, so he went back to school and finished an MBA, and then became an accountant. He liked people who were smart and well educated—unlike the typical undergraduate. But Rosalie met those standards nicely, with a PhD in Public Health from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a masters’ degree in Sociology, from Roosevelt University, and ABD in Clinical Psychology from Roosevelt as well.

In the 1960s Rosalie joined the Hyde Park recorder ensemble led by Hilde Staniulis. The group included Rosalie, Esther Schechter, Hilde, Hilde’s husband

Dominic, Barbara Frei, and Sonia Csaszar, the leader. They regularly met in the basement of the Hyde Park Co-Op grocery store for five or six years. She also took recorder lessons from Louise Austin at the Oak Park Recorder School in the 1970s, and was, with Hilde, part of the very beginning of the Chicago chapter of the American Recorder Society. She needed to drop out for a few years to care for her children but continued to attend festivals, like the one at Milton College, and took recorder lessons at Roosevelt University, studying under Kaye Clements. Esther eventually persuaded her to start attending the Oak Park Recorder Society meetings. Later she played with another group on Sunday mornings at the home of a University of Chicago professor, featuring Elizabeth Sonnenschein, the wife of a former president of the University, and Barbara Flynn Currie, a state representative.

Rosalie taught some classes as an adjunct professor at the University of Illinois, as well as at Concordia College in River Forest, Elgin Community College, and elsewhere. But she worked primarily at the American Medical Association, doing public health research. She edited a newsletter, *Gerontology News and Views*, and set up a weekly support group for AMA employees who were struggling to care for family members with Alzheimer's disease. And she set up internships at the AMA for students from the University of Illinois' School of Public Health. She has also served as a staff writer for the Council on Scientific Affairs.

At 88 years Rosalie is still a young woman compared to Hilde Staniulis, but she, like Hilde, took part in the earliest days of the Chicago chapter of the American Recorder Society. And for many years she has joined friends at the Oak Park Recorder Society and festivals and events like Whitewater and recorder workshops.

## Recorder players get along just fine

Two Italian divas, Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni, were famous in England in the early 18th century, but not merely for their musicianship. During a performance of Giovanni Bononcini's opera *Astianatte* at the King's Theater, Haymarket, in London on June 6, 1727, a riot broke out between competing groups of followers of the two sopranos, and in front of Caroline, Princess of Wales. Bononcini had divided the arias equally between the two leading ladies, but jeers and catcalls drowned out the music whenever either one began to sing.

When the two singers appeared on the stage together the mood of the audience became so heated that a fight broke out in the stalls. The stress was too much for Cuzzoni, who turned on Faustina. The two singers hurled insults at each

other in Italian, then began pulling each other's hair and ripping pieces from their costumes. They had to be dragged from the stage and the performance was abandoned.

To prevent further chaos the theater cancelled Cuzzoni's contract. The King was furious and threatened to withdraw his subsidy, so she was reinstated. The two singers had worked together before in Italy and the following season continued to work together for the Royal Academy until the directors were forced to dissolve it in 1728 owing to mounting debts. One story suggests, however, to finally settle the conflict, Bordoni was offered one guinea more than Cuzzoni for the following year. Cuzzoni reacted to the insult by immediately resigning and returning to Italy. —thanks to Andrew Schultze for this look at music history

## Chapter Information

Note that indoor, in-person meetings of the Oak Park Recorder Society and the two ARS chapters have been suspended indefinitely. When we return to normal activities, we will announce that in future newsletters and on the ARS chapter websites.

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