

Recorder Reporter

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

May 2023

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Chicago Chapter News

The Chicago chapter was on a roll in April 2023. First an excellent April 16 meeting (18 musicians joined us, including four newcomers) and then a terrific day making music with Anne Timberlake for our 2023 spring workshop on Saturday, April 22.

Both events featured William Byrd. Every day should end with William Byrd, though I said that already.

Actually, we opened our April meeting with Byrd, with Nancy Chabala directing. Byrd's *Fantasia #2* and *Ave Verum Corpus* in particular sounded grand, some solid sight reading from an excellent group of musicians performing pieces from one of the finest composers in English history.



Then Lisette returned to lead us, starting with Rooda drills again. Lisette suggests when working on a piece, practice starting in any measure on the page. We worked on the Charpentier *Overture* for our spring concert, and arranged us in sections for that event. We also enjoyed Bach's *Contrapunctus I*. Lisette referred to a performance by the Netherlands Bach Society of this piece, or a set of performances rather, starting with a vocal version of the celebrated work!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6sUIZa-IrU>

Our next meeting is our spring concert on May 21, the last official gathering for the season. After that, we will be in touch by electronic mail with plans for informal jam sessions in the summer months.

Chicago Chapter Spring Concert

We need to hear from you! Make plans to join us for our final meeting of the 2022-2023 season, our spring concert on May 21 at 1 PM. All are invited to perform, or just listen and enjoy, and all types of music are welcome. **If you would like to play in the program, send the names of the performers, the title of the pieces you plan to play, and the name of the composer or composers, to Mark Dawson at msjddawson@sbcglobal.net.** Also feel free to bring some food to share at the reception to follow.

Chicago Chapter April Workshop

We shared a wonderful day of music making on Saturday April 22 with Anne Timberlake, joining us from St. Louis. Anne brought joy and light and energy to a set of 16th through 18th century works of music about music, pieces by Michael Praetorius, Orlando de Lassus, Henry Purcell, J.S. Bach, and more. This was our second workshop with Anne (2017), and our third in a row at our regular meeting place, Covenant Presbyterian Church. We welcomed 22 participants, including several new people, for good food as well as good music, and good fellowship too. "So great to be back, and so great to be together," Anne said.

Anne's favorite ensemble skill is learning how to get back in when you lose your place. "If you fall off the wagon, get back on," she said. And a workshop or chapter meeting would be a fine place to practice this sort of recovery. But it didn't feel like we had much of a chance for this drill on Saturday, because we played really well! Anne complimented us on our playing as a

group, noting that we enjoy the benefit of years of excellent leadership under Lisette Kielson.



Anne talked about how our bodies are an extension of our instrument as recorder players, and provided a series of ideas on how to take care of our instruments:

1. Sit up straight. If standing, keep your hips over your feet and your shoulders over your hips, and then keep your head level. Don't raise your head to play, that introduces strain on the neck muscles. Then, bring your recorder to your posture.
2. Don't press on the recorder holes too hard. If you grip too tightly, you will see the "recorder stigmata," little round spots on your fingertips. Blow gently and grasp gently.
3. You should feel your instrument vibrating in both hands as you play. You provide your instrument's resonating chamber; keep your windway open. Practice yawning before playing a work.
4. The most important skill in making music is listening. This is an acquired skill, listening to the intonation and timing of the musicians around you.

Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656) studied under William Byrd and served with the Chapel Royale in London. As we see so often, Tomkins suffering—the death of his wife, the destruction of his beloved organ at Wooster Cathedral during the English Civil War, led to great art, *A Sad Pavan for These Distracted Times*. We enjoyed a brighter work, *Music Divine*. Works by Ludwig Senfl and Orlando de Lassus followed, and a particularly appealing (and complex!) American work by the self-taught William Billings, *Sing Praises to the Lord*, effectively a Protestant hymn tune in the Shape Note tradition. Thomas Ravenscroft's *Sing we now merrily* took the form of a 10-part round, we played several pieces (including a round) by Henry Purcell. Our two final pieces were particularly wonderful, Byrd's majestic *Sing Joyfully*, and *The Silver Swan*, a slow, measured work, not just beautiful, but a useful contrast to a regular emphasis on articulating notes quickly and playing with sharp precision. In this work, we were asked to think in terms of "playing through honey" instead.

We will definitely plan to revisit several of the pieces we played at this workshop in future chapter meetings and jam sessions. A fine day, beautiful music, good memories shared, and an old and splendid tradition for the chapter.

West Suburban Early Music Society

At our April 2 meeting, the West Suburban Early Music Society played *Apart* by Victor Eijkhout, the fourth in a series of pieces that were used to work on technique, and *A Taste of Honey*, a jazz piece transcribed by member Darleen Kay. Our players also played *Giddy-up!*, an arrangement of a traditional tune, by David Kemp, and *Pifferi Suite* by Edmund Knollys. Following the break, the two breakout groups practiced music for the May concert.



WSEMS plans to host outdoor playing sessions at the Friends Meetinghouse in Downers Grove this summer. If you are not a WSEMS member but are interested in attending, please contact Marguerite Re at 630-415-9559 or at margueritere@comcast.net.

WSEMS Spring Concert

WSEMS is excited to present a concert at 3 PM at the Friends Meetinghouse in Downers Grove on May 7. The group will play several selections, including a jazz tune transcribed by member Darleen Kay. The Da Capo and Alternate Altos will perform, and Laura Osterlund will offer a solo. Refreshments will follow. We invite you to come to our first May concert in several years!

Whitewater Early Music Festival 2023

Online registration is now open for Whitewater, Friday, June 2 through Sunday, June 4. You can also learn about classes and instructors. The campus of the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, is about 100 miles or two hours from the north side of Chicago. Classes range from intermediate to advanced levels for all sizes of recorders, renaissance double reeds, strings and voices. This is a fine way for new recorder players to gain experience playing in a group, and excellent instruction. To learn more visit, <https://www.whitwaterearlymusic.org>.

Lisette Kielson Summer Workshop

From July 11 to 14, **Lisette Kielson** will be teaching at the 9th Annual Madison Bach Musicians Summer Chamber Music Workshop at Christ Presbyterian Church, 944 Gorham Street, Madison, Wisconsin. The workshop features chamber music coaching (both A=440 and 415), recorder ensemble playing, lectures, technique classes, and more. Visit the MBM web site,

<https://madisonbachmusicians.org/summer-chamber-music-workshop/>

Music and Events

Find Anne Timberlake's web page at <https://www.annetimberlake.com>. She offers online instruction, webinars, and a blog. At the blog, scroll down to "In Praise of Amateurs," which belongs in *Atlantic Monthly*.

According to Ye Olde Google, the word "amateur" comes from the Latin "amare," to love. When I listen to amateurs making music, that's what I hear: Love made audible. And I can hear that love even if notes are wrong, chords are sour, or things come apart.

While you are browsing, Lisette Kielson has a web page too, <https://www.lisettekielson.com>.

Here is some nice Renaissance loud band music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AawnxxOfODg>

This piece is by Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548-1611). Visit the home page of **Rabusier** for some medieval

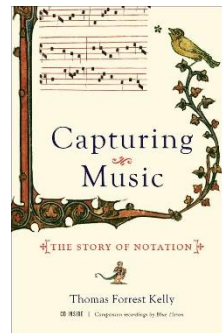
music, only 112 subscribers, including me. They deserve more than that:

<https://www.youtube.com/@Rabusier/videos>

The **Chicago Cultural Center** offers a free summer screenings festival of movies from the Chicago International Film Festival. This year's Wednesday night films run from May 24 to September 20. The schedule will be posted in a few weeks. My wife and I have seen a lot of great movies over the years here. To learn more keep an eye on the film festival web site,

<https://www.chicagofilmfestival.com/summer-screenings/>

True Colors Baroque features Lisette Kielson on recorder and David Schrader on harpsichord, Friday May 12 in Lake Forest and Sunday May 14 in Chicago. <https://www.rendezvousarts.org/true-colors-baroque>.



Paul Schmidt recommends the title **Capturing Music** by Thomas Forrest Kelly (Norton, 2014). This history of the development of music notation, called one of the key inventions in music history, is "charmingly written." The book offers a variety of illustrations and is intended for anyone with an interest in Early Music.

Here is a funny, if somewhat painful, look at how **recorders were introduced into the American educational system**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ET9k10btZ0Y>

I don't remember ever playing a plastic soprano recorder in elementary school myself, and in fact, in speaking with many of you regarding your own musical histories, I don't remember many of you referring to the \$8 recorder in the 4th grade either. When I think of recorder education for children, I think of some really remarkable music teachers I have known like Valerie DePriest and Mona Mann. I also think about the great music we make together regularly.

Still, Europeans tend to think of the recorder's heritage from the Renaissance and Baroque eras, worthy of an artist's attention, while here we view the recorder as a means to teach children music basics until they graduate to a "real" instrument. When Susan and I visited Edinburgh in October of 2021, the local Society of Recorder Players chapter, on their weekly Monday night meeting, drew twice as many musicians as our monthly meetings do for a city a third the size of Chicago, and many of their people were still joining them via Zoom.

Well, we have grand experience in knowing what works of beauty we can create with the recorder. And the video drew similar comments:

- There's a girl at my school who kept up the recorder and has a wooden one, you wouldn't believe how beautiful it sounds!
- As a professional recorder player, the general opinion about the recorder being easy hurts my soul
- Best instrument ever, I love to play it! (and it's NOT easy)
- When the recorder is played well, it sounds beautiful
- I remember playing it at midnight to annoy my parents.....

WFMT's program **Baroque & Before** offers recordings online of two recent concerts.

Thomas Luis de Victoria, April 19, available until May 19

A concert of sacred works by the greatest of all Spanish composers, including madrigals and the Requiem Mass composed for the funeral of Empress Maria.

<https://www.wfmt.com/2023/04/19/corund-ensemble-tomas-luis-de-victoria>

Works for Passiontide, April 5, available until May 5

The vocal ensemble Cardinal's Musick offers works by William Byrd and Thomas Tallis along with Spanish, German, and Italian counterparts, closing with Palestrina's Stabat Mater Dolorosa.

<https://www.wfmt.com/2023/04/05/the-cardinals-musick-works-for-passiontide>

The Renaissance choral ensemble **Schola Antiqua** focuses on sacred works from before 1600. They are currently the artist in residence for the Lumen Christi Institute, a fellowship of Roman Catholic scholars at the University of Chicago. They offer a series of concerts celebrating William Byrd for the 400th anniversary of his death, in October. Guest harpsichordist Jason Moy provides keyboard music from *Nevell's Book* of 1589.

- Friday, October 20, 7:30 PM, TBD
- Saturday, October 21, 8 PM, Bond Chapel, the University of Chicago
- Sunday, October 22, 3 PM, Indian Boundary Park (!), near Lunt & Western in Chicago

Visit <https://www.schola-antiqua.org/season>

One more video—Arcangelo Corelli Sonata #7, harpsichord and recorder:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ajs2g--V76k>

Chapter Information

Our chapters are open to anyone, regardless of musical training, who wants to cultivate appreciation of the art, history and use of the recorder and related instruments.

Chicago Chapter and West Suburban dues begin September 1, West Suburban dues cover June 1 through May 31. Both groups include membership in either chapter as well as this newsletter. The *Recorder Reporter* is published monthly, September to May by the Chicago Chapter & the West Suburban Early Music Society.

Chicago Chapter ARS (ChicagoRecorders.org)

President	Mark Dawson
Vice President	Lynette Colmey
Secretary	Jenifer Buckley
Treasurer	Cheryl Kreiman
Facebook	Hyacinth Egner & Cheryl Kreiman
Web site	Larry Johnson & Peter Beck
Members at Large	Ruth Dunnell
Chapter Representative	Larry Johnson
Music Director:	Lisette Kielson lisettekielson@gmail.com

You can contact the chapter through our web site.

Like us on Facebook: 

<https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoARS>

Chicago Chapter meetings: The third Sunday of each month, September through May, 1 PM, at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2012 West Dickens, Chicago. Enter either door of the parish building west of the church and go to the large fellowship hall.

West Suburban Early Music Society (westsubems.org)

Convener/Chapter Representative:	Kathy Hall-Babis (kathy.hallbabis@gmail.com)
Vice Convener	Linda Schub Lgschub@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Marguerite Re (margueritere@comcast.net)
Secretary/Membership:	Elaine Gillies (Jegillies@comcast.net)
Hospitality:	Norm Adams Norman_adams@frontier.com
Web page support	Chris Culp cg.culp@gmail.com (630) 415-8413

WSEMS meetings: Second Sunday of each month, September through April, first Sunday of May, 2-5 PM at the Downers Grove Friends meeting house, 5710 Lomond Avenue in Downers Grove. The church is located near Maple Avenue and 355. From 355, take the ramp and go east on Maple for 4/10 miles and turn right (south) onto Lomond street. The church is on the right.

Visit us at chicagorecorders.org
Mark Dawson, newsletter editor
msjddawson@sbcglobal.net / (773) 334-6376