

Recorder Reporter

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

Chicago Chapter & the West Suburban Early Music Society

February 2008

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Chicago Meeting Notes

For our February 17 meeting our old friend Louise Austin will lead us. "I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the February meeting," Louise says. "Nothing like playing the recorder to put roses in your cheeks, as opposed to chapped cheeks from the cold. We will take a little tour of John Jenkins music. The Dances and Fantasies still show a lot of promise. I will also introduce some of the lovely transcriptions that Jennifer Lehman produced over the years. Many were never published."

Louise also plans to bring some friends from MARS, the Milwaukee Area Recorder Society, and she hopes these visitors start to join us regularly in the future. They may perform for us briefly, but mostly she wants to bring together "top Midwestern recorder lovers."

"I could, as usual, have another surprise piece up my sleeve, or probably in my folder," Louise says.

For our January meeting we learned about two ways to respond to sub-zero cold:

1. Go bike riding
2. Play recorder

Five intrepid players showed up on January 20. Mark Dawson brought some Sacred Harp hymns from the early 18th to mid 19th centuries, written for unaccompanied choir, to see how they would sound on recorder. Sacred Harp is an early American primitive art form, popular throughout the country until it mostly died out after the Civil War. Southern churches kept the form alive until it suddenly gained national popularity again about 30 years ago. Sacred Harp tunes are all Christian hymns in four-part harmony and with shaped notes—rectangles, diamonds, circles, and triangles—designed to be easy for country folk without a background in music to learn quickly. The singers sit on four sides of a "hollow square," facing the middle, with a leader who changes with each new song. Everyone who comes, sings. No microphones, no starlets, no performance, and also, no nuance.

Sacred Harp singing is all about passion, so the rule is loud is good, and louder is better. The singers really belt it out. So it was hard to get a group of five recorder players to capture the intensity of a Sacred Harp

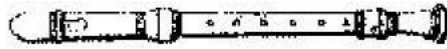
gathering, but we found that the tunes lent themselves well to our instruments regardless. Larry Johnson brought a set of Renaissance pieces, and Dennis Sherman had some six-part works but as we only had five musicians, we couldn't play them! We did get a chance to bring out the krum horns, and some of us gasped away on the capped reeds for the first time. Great fun and great music.



Krum horns in January



The Baron's Noyse & The Pippins, 12th Night Celebration, Province of Tree-Girt Sea (Society for Creative Anachronism), January 26, Irish American Heritage Center. Dennis Sherman directs The Baron's Noyse.



WSEMS Winter Concert

Our friends with the West Suburban Early Music Society offer their annual Winter Concert:

Naperville Evangelical Covenant Church
1150 Hobson Road, Naperville, Illinois
Sunday, February 10, 3 PM, Free

Laura Kuhlman will lead. Join them for excellent music and a reception to follow. For additional information, contact Eric Stern (egstern1@netscape.net). Players should plan to arrive to warm up at 2 PM.

Ars Antiqua Presents

You are invited to to ArsAntiquaPresents.com for world class performances of early music anywhere and anytime. ArsAntiquaPresents.com offers **free, monthly audio webcast programs of Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical music performed on period instruments**, with engaging and enlightening commentary by Peter Van De Graaff. Our inaugural January 2008 program features the modern premiere of Christof Graupner's Overture and Chaconne for viola d'amore, oboe d'amore, traverso, and strings.—*Jerry Fuller, director.*

Save the Date! Whitewater Beckons!

The *Early Music Festival* in Whitewater, Wisconsin is June 6-8, 2008. You do not want to miss this year's workshop. We have the privilege of welcoming *Shelley Gruskin* to our faculty. Shelley was extremely instrumental in the revival of historical instruments (recorder, renaissance flute, krum horn, rauschpfeife and medieval bagpipe) as well as being past President of the ARS from 1980-1988. He will be offering classes with the intriguing titles like "An Evening with Samuel Pepys," and "Recorder at the Edge of Distinction—Sammartini / Czakan repertoire," as well as music of Ludwig Senfl. A class with Shelley transforms your entire concept of interpreting a piece of music, as many members of both chapters who have had the past privilege will attest.

Charles Fischer is another addition to the faculty. He will lead us through playing sessions on Renaissance instruments, as well as a session on the music of Glen Shannon. Our second Gamba instructor this year is *Dr. Phillip Serna*, President of the Chicago Chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America and an active performer and teacher in Chicago and the Midwest who plans to combine the beautiful sounds of early strings with recorder and other early instruments. Here also is your

chance to increase your skills in reading Alto-up, basic Renaissance ornamentation and help with articulation and improving technique to get you through those note-filled passages without fear. *Patrick O'Malley* will offer a class in Music Theory for the Early Musician and explain who put the dots of ink on paper and why. Classes in recorder and gamba are available for all levels, Beginning (bring *The Recorder Guide*) to Advanced. There will also be the usual vocal sessions, Recorder Orchestra and Double Choir, and an exciting Saturday evening event planned by the infamous *Louise Austin*.

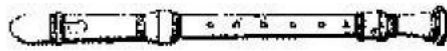
Repairs will be available on site by *Dale Taylor* and music vendors will offer a variety of music, accessories and instruments. For more information or to be added to the mailing list, contact Nancy Chabala, (708) 442-6053, Carol Stanger, cvstanger@aol.com or Pam Wiese, thewieses@sbcglobal.net. Some scholarship assistance may be available - contact Pam Wiese.—*Carol Stanger*

John Langfeld, Recorder at St. Luke's

The Musical Parnassus, featuring Baroque solo and trio sonatas, with John Langfeld, on recorder and with Jason Moy on harpsichord and Jody Livo on violin, plays on Thursday February 21 at 7:30 at St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church. This is the home of the monthly ARS meetings, at 1500 West Belmont. This free concert offers music by Corelli, Sieber, Bach, Handel, and more. Check out www.stlukechicago.org. John Langfeld regularly plays recorder at St. Luke's and also joined Andrew Schultze's production of *Noyse Fludd*, a 13th century English morality play, at the University of Chicago last October. On November 18, after our ARS meeting, we went upstairs to hear Langfeld in a concert featuring pairs of recorder music sonatas and harpsichord concerti from the 18th and 20th centuries.

Composition Competition April 20

Remember that our April 20 ARS meeting will feature performances of the winning recorder compositions for this year's competition. We will also be recording these new works at the meeting. We plan to create a CD of recordings of past composition winners, from all the way back to 1989, when the competition began. Our goal is to have the CDs available in May of 2008. The CD would include this year's winner plus nine past winners, one second place, and a few other recent works. Please plan to join us for this special anniversary event!



Recorder Player of the Month

Nancy Good, WSEMS

When I was growing up, our school was too small to have a band, so I didn't learn typical ensemble instruments. We played tonettes in 5th grade, but I was frustrated that we only did easy stuff. I also had piano lessons, and Mom (Marilyn Linden) listened to classical radio: WFMT. The Renaissance dance music sounded especially fun.

I really missed my piano when I went to college, so I was happy when Mom gave me an alto recorder and *The Recorder Guide* for Christmas. She had started taking lessons from Louise Austin. My friend (and future husband) also got a recorder, so we learned to play. His church had a small group of recorder players. In that group, I often played the bass line on my alto. Piano does teach you both treble and bass clef! It does not address having both C and F fingerings, however. Another group of friends led by Daniel Heiman played recorders together, and he ordered my first tenor for me. I'm happy to say that Daniel and his wife Janene have been coming to our West Suburban chapter for the past few years. They add a lot to the musical and linguistic background of the group.

When I was home for breaks, Mom took me to the West Suburban American Recorder Society chapter. I remember (mid-1970's) that there were three groups who played separately: one advanced, one for not-very-experienced players, and ones in the middle. At the end, I think we all played a piece for each other, but I really only remember the advanced group. They were very impressive and inspiring.

When we returned to the area in 1981, I joined the chapter. Bill Nelson taught all of us a tremendous amount about technique, early music, musicianship, being open to a variety of music, and getting along with each other. Several of us bought bass recorders then, so we could have balanced quartets and more. He tried to teach us about conducting a group, but none of us were very good at that! Most of us also were going to the Whitewater Early Music Festival each year.

We had some sessions with WSEMS to broaden our outlook. We met together with the Fox Valley Folk Harp group one month. Both had practiced our parts ahead of time, but we found that there was a difference in culture: they mostly memorize their music (so they can watch their fingers, I think) and we were strictly read-off-the-paper musicians. Similarly, when I invited singers from

my church choir one time, we discovered that they couldn't sight read complicated music with words at the bottom of the page. Another special event was playing along with a local meeting of the American Guild of Organists. Part of the goal here was to demonstrate to church organists how recorders could be used along with the organ. It was interesting to play Frescobaldi in a blending-with-organ way.

As a chapter and in subgroups we played for others. I was in West Winds, meeting at Dick Eastman's house. We serenaded churches, played for events at the Naper Settlement, the Morton Arboretum, Barrington High School, and several weddings. A real joy to me was when my daughter Eleanor decided finally that she'd like to play the recorder, after having had oboe at school. She buzzed through *The Recorder Guide* in about two weeks and now plays better than I do, although I still have more experience! For a couple of years, my mother, my daughter and I played Shakespearian music before the Naperville Park District outdoor Shakespeare play. We also have great fun playing duets or trios.

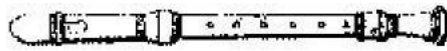
People come and go, and the person with the connection to the church where we met, went. Eventually I got permission from my church in Naperville for us to meet there. Recently, Laura Kuhlman has been leading us. We have been attracting players from the northern suburbs when the weather isn't too bad. For programming at meetings, we primarily rehearse for two programs a year, and have added summer playing sessions as well.

I also try to play various folk instruments, including hammer dulcimer, guitar, and autoharp, since I enjoy other music beyond the early music tradition we normally play as recorder musicians.

Music Coming Up

Grace Lutheran Church of River Forest offers a Bach Cantata Vespers series. The next is on February 24. They plan to offer cantata #93, *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten*, directed by Craig Satterlee of the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. The church is at 7300 Division Street, next to the campus of Concordia University at Harlem & Division. The music starts at 3:45.

The Roosevelt University Women's Chorus, directed by Anne Heider, will offer a concert of (mostly) early choral music on Thursday, February 21 at 7:30 PM. They will feature works by St. Hildegard, Palestrina, Whitacre, Betinis, and Clara Schumann at Roosevelt University's 430 South Michigan Avenue address. Look for them in the Rudolph Ganz Memorial Hall, room 745.



Ars Music Chicago offers an all Handel recital Sunday, February 17 at 7 PM at the DePaul University Art Museum. This is in the Richardson Library at Kenmore at Fullerton, a short walk from the L stop on Fullerton. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for seniors and \$5 for students. To learn more go to Arsmusica.org. The ensemble includes Chicago ARS member Patrick O'Malley on recorder.

The Chicago Early Music Consort plays at the St. James Cathedral on February 17 at 4 PM. The Cathedral is at 65 East Huron in Chicago, near Chicago and State in the Gold Coast (take the L!). The concert, "Music for a While; Beguiling English Songs, Dowland to Purcell," features Renaissance choral and recorder works. For more information go to chicagoearlymusicconsort.org. A donation of \$10 is requested at the door.

The Northwestern Baroque Ensemble offers all six of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos at Northwestern University's Lutkin Hall, February 23 and March 6 at 7:30 PM. Go to www.music.northwestern.edu/calendar.

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 and is the joint effort of the Chicago Chapter and the West Suburban Early Music Society. It is free to chapter members. Subscriptions for nonmembers are available for \$5 through the editor.

Chicago Chapter ARS www.geocities.com/ars2test

Webmaster	Larry Johnson (lljohns@us.ibm.com) (773) 631-6671
President	H. Nadine Petersen (nadptrs@aol.com) (630) 654-2629
First Vice President	Mark Dawson (msjddawson@sbcglobal.net) (773) 334-6376
Second Vice President	Dennis Sherman (dennis_sherman@yahoo.com) (773) 764-1920
Secretary	Ann Greene (anngreene@att.net) (630) 638-0959
Treasurer	Dale Fitschen

Hospitality	(Fitsch@sbcglobal.net) (708) 386-9114 Nancy Chabala
Outreach/Composition Contest	(nchabala@mymailstation.com) (708) 442-6053 Hildé Staniulis (773) 363-7476 and Arlene Ghiron (afghiron@aol.com) (773) 525-4026

Chicago Chapter meetings: Usually third Sunday of each month, September through May, 2 PM, St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1500 Belmont Avenue, Chicago. Enter at door west of main entrance to sanctuary; and go to Founders Hall in the basement.

Oak Park Recorder Society

The Oak Park Recorder Society, a club rather than a chapter of the American Recorder Society, offers a fine way to gain regular experience in playing with a group. OPRS members meet every Tuesday night, 8 to 10 PM, in the basement of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, 460 Lake Street. Players at all levels are welcome, though the music is often challenging. Use the parking lot off Lake or take the L to the Ridgeland stop and walk from there. Go to the back entrance near the parking lot and ring the buzzer for the basement.

West Suburban Early Music Society

Convenor:	Laura Kuhlman (Laura@thekuhlman.com) (630) 462-5427
Vice-Convenor:	Ed Green (edwgreen@aol.com) (630) 983-7251
Secretary:	Eric Stern (egstern1@yahoo.com) (708) 594-9243
Treasurer:	Nancy Good (Good-Naperville@worldnet.att.net) (630) 355-6690
Membership:	Carol Stanger (cvstanger@aol.com) (630) 789-6402
Hospitality:	Carolyn Sparks (cjsnod@ameritech.net) (630) 986-0201

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. The group also holds meetings in the summer months and offers concerts from time to time.

Mark Dawson, editor
2425 W. Leland, Chicago, IL 60625-2913
msjddawson@sbcglobal.net / (773) 334-6376

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