

Recorder Reporter

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

Chicago Chapter & the West Suburban Early Music Society

Our 65th Anniversary Year!

November 2023

Volume 65, Number 3

Chicago Chapter News

We met on October 15, starting the afternoon with the anonymous 16th century English piece, *Alman*, under Nancy Chabala's direction. Then we played O'Carolan's gigue, *Planxty Connor*. Born around 1700, O'Carolan was blinded by smallpox at 18, and turned to playing the harp. He has about 200 compositions listed, including a number that we have played on recorder over many years. Then we had enough time for *Agua e Vinho* by Egberto Gismonti, arranged by Peter Seibert, and *Des biens d'amours* by Martini, a 15th century Italian work.



Lisette led us in playing *La Marche des Rois* ("The March of Kings"), by our own Peter Beck. He heard a recording of this work on single recorder, and was inspired to arrange it for a SATB ensemble. Could he make it sound as good as the original? Seemed fine to us; each part, except tenor, plays the familiar melody at some point in the composition. "I hope that you like it," Peter said. "It is an honor to have music that you wrote played by others." And that's what we will do, perform it at our Yuletide concert on December 17. Lisette will be assigning parts and arranging seating for us for this event. If you could not be with us in October, you will need to join us at our November meeting in order to perform with the chapter. Please contact Lisette at LisetteKielson@gmail.com with any questions.

Lisette also lead us in a pair of Renaissance trios, a 21st century *Fantasia* by Will Ayton based on 14th century

Guillaume de Machaut's *Douce Dame*, and *Persian March* by Johann Strauss Jr. We jumped quite easily from the 14th century Machaut work 500 years into the future to play Johann Strauss.



Lisette leads us again for our November 19 meeting. We plan to open with technique and musical selections in preparation for our participation in University of Chicago's Folk Music Festival on Saturday, February 9. At 2 PM, we will explore a Bach Fugue, a Guami Canzonette, and hold our final rehearsal of Peter Beck's *La Marche des Rois* for our Yuletide Concert.

The Chicago chapter is pleased to welcome Carl Foote as a board member at large. Carl is semi-retired, serving as a software engineer with library and archival applications for the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network. A graduate



of the University of Illinois engineering school, he has spent his adult life in Chicago. He started lessons on piano at age eight, and just like everybody else, he remembers playing recorder in elementary school. But his story is a little different. He came back! And his father, a chemistry professor at Eastern Illinois University in the late 1960s,

used to take young Carl with him to the university recorder club. Carl was delighted to play a borrowed Merck tenor at these events, and during the pandemic he thought of that fine instrument, and decided he would pick up a recorder again. So he has been playing recorder with the Chicago chapter since 2020.

Yuletide Concert

Our annual Yuletide Concert for the Chicago Chapter is in a few weeks, Sunday December 17 at 1 PM. Send the name of your group, the names of the participants, the names of the pieces you plan to play, and the composers, to Mark Dawson at msjddawson@sbcglobal.net. Please feel free to bring some snacks to share, and plan to stay after the concert and holiday festivities to join in some jamming to close the year making music together

Please [renew](#) your membership today!

Please note that after November 1 we will no longer accept membership payments for the national ARS with your regular chapter dues. Please renew your ARS membership at <https://americanrecorder.org/>.

West Suburban Early Music Society

The Western Suburban Early Music Society gathered on Sunday, October 8, in Downers Grove. Guest leader Dennis Sherman guided the group in exploring the world of music of the nightingale, a musical theme that has been popular for generations. In the 1500's the nightingale appeared generally vocal music, mostly sung by the upper classes to entertain themselves at home.

WSEMS examined and played pieces by contemporaries William Byrd (1540-1653) and Alfonso Ferrabosco (1543-1588) who both worked in the English court. This music was reflective of the early days of madrigals in Tudor England. Our third piece, a three part madrigal, was by Thomas Bateson (1570-1630), who spent most of his time in Dublin, far from Tudor influence. We then played a five part arrangement with the nightingale theme by Franco/Flemish composer Rinalde Del Melle (1554-1598). Dennis observed differences and similarities in these four nightingale-themed recorder arrangements.

Following a short break for refreshments, the group split into two groups. The Alternate Altos looked at some Purcell duets, while the DaCapo group played several pieces including arrangements of Greensleeves.

We meet again on November 12 at the Friends Meetinghouse in Downers Grove. Mary Anne Gardner will lead us in music making! Please plan to join us!—
Kathy Hall-Babis



Larry Johnson, our ARS Chapter Representative

The Chicago chapter has an official representative to the national organization. In the last few years, the ARS has regularly scheduled meetings online with chapter reps, and I have been attending. But any interested chapter members may take part. These 90-minute online encounters provide a great opportunity to connect with other recorder players and chapters all over the country, to listen to their experiences, learn about how they are organized, what activities they enjoy as recorder players, and more. This also provides a chance to learn how others are addressing issues common to all chapters, including membership growth, financial concerns, and chapter leadership development.

In past meetings, I've learned what other chapters have done to weather the pandemic, how they get non-profit status in their states, how they program their meetings, what steps they take to promote the recorder and attract new members, and other topics important to any ARS chapter. So you can learn a lot about how other chapters differ from Chicago—and how they don't. Almost everyone has a tough time attracting new members and staying financially solvent! We can gather suggestions that we might want to consider trying out.

I have been representing the Chicago Chapter at these meetings, but I would encourage other members to take part. The next chapter rep meeting will be on Saturday, December 2 at 3 PM; ask me for details if you're interested.—*Larry Johnson*

Music and More

The **Chamber Music Friends** performs at Ganz Hall, Roosevelt University, 430 South Michigan, on Monday November 6 at 7:30 PM. The concert features our own Andrew Schultze.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/chamber-music-friends-concert-tickets-716612596567>

Black Tulip, featuring Mirja Lorenz and Phil Serna of the Viola de Gamba Society, plays live on WFMT Radio from the Fay & Daniel Levin Performance Studio on Monday, November 6 at 8 PM. Some of us attended a live performance of The Chicago Recorder Quartet at WFMT in January of 2019.



Patricia Janečková, Slovak Soprano, 1998-2023

Apollo's Fire returns to Chicago from Cleveland to offer four concerts this season. Of particular interest would be Nights in Venice, November 11 at 7 PM at the Art Institute of Chicago, and November 12 at 3 PM at the Music Institute of Chicago in Evanston. The evenings feature pieces by Vivaldi and Monteverdi, and in particular, Daphna Mor on recorder. To learn more visit <https://apollosfire.org/windy-city-series>.

The **Chicago Recorder Trio** plays at Byron Colby Barn in Grayslake, Illinois on Sunday, December 10 at 4 PM. The trio features three friends of the Chicago chapter, Lisette Kielson, Patrick O'Malley, and Mirja Lorenz. Tickets are \$20 at the door, and free for those under 16. Visit <https://www.lisettekielson.com/upcomingevents> to learn more.

Rockefeller Chapel, 5850 South Woodlawn in Hyde Park, offers Tea and Pipes on Tuesdays at 4 PM. Bach at Bond, Bach cantatas and other music offered at the elegant Bond Chapel on the University of Chicago campus, are on Monday afternoons at 3:30 PM. Both Tea and Pipes and Bach at Bond are free. Rockefeller Chapel Choir offers a Choral Evensong on Thursday November 2 at 7:30 PM with (of course) William Byrd, *Civitas Sancti Tui*. Free, but a \$10 donation accepted at the door. Carillon Tower Tours are offered at the Chapel Tuesday through Friday at 11:30 AM and 4:30 PM through the rest of the term. Check in at the front desk to set off for the 45 minute round trip climb, a rather medieval experience, up a long and narrow winding staircase

Grace Lutheran Church, 7300 West Division in River Forest, offers their 53rd annual **Bach Cantata Vespers** on Sunday afternoons once a month until May 2024, with the next event offered on Sunday November 19. They also provide a 10 AM vespers on Christmas morning, Monday

December 25. Each afternoon gathering opens with a lecture at 3 PM, followed by an organ prelude at 3:45 and the Bach at 4 PM. Visit <https://bachvespers.org/> to learn more and to find the schedule for the upcoming season.

Thinking about William Byrd

William Byrd (1540-1623) was the brightest star of the grand moment of music in the English Renaissance, and he is being celebrated in 2023, the 400th anniversary of his death. So it has been my privilege to enjoy his works repeatedly this year, including twice in the space of three weeks in October, Belle Voce Camerata at Roosevelt University on October 7, and Schola Antiqua at the University of Chicago on October 22.



Belle Voce, Ganz Hall, Roosevelt University



Schola Antiqua, Swift Hall, University of Chicago

William Byrd was a fortunate genius, though as a devoted Catholic in a realm where Catholic practice could be punished with imprisonment or death, he might not have thought in those terms. But Byrd served under Elizabeth I, herself a brilliant monarch and wise enough to recognize Byrd's extraordinary gifts, and those of his mentor organist and composer Thomas Tallis. Byrd probably entered the royal chapel as a boy, a student of

Tallis, and Elizabeth officially appointed him Gentleman of the Chapel Royal 1572. Elizabeth also granted Byrd, and Tallis before him, the royal charter to publish polyphonic music in England for 21 years. She was quite happy to tolerate William Byrd's continuing to attend (and pay fines for attending) illegal Catholic masses.

In 1548 Elizabeth's brother, King Edward VI (1537 – 1553) told the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral that in the future they must sing only in English, and using one note per syllable, entirely unlike the ornate Catholic standard of the time. The Catholic Rite had to be replaced immediately, to the dismay of most Catholic composers at the time.

But Byrd found a way to get along, composing secular music, sacred harmonies for the Church of England, and sacred music for the Catholics of England to use for mass held in secret. "Even his most overtly Catholic music was acquired, performed, and treasured by all sorts of people, many of whom did not share his religious beliefs," according to biographer Kerry McCarthy.

Anyone who wanted to celebrate the Mass in England in Elizabeth's day and earlier had to smuggle in a priest, and then provide a hiding place for that same priest, known as a priest-hole, in case spies working for Francis Walsingham showed up. Walsingham was Secretary of State for England in Byrd's time and a puritanical enemy of all things Rome. Hence the mass for five voices; Byrd wrote it to be performed in secret, and even though published openly, very likely it was often performed with only five voices, as the Mass necessarily served only small gatherings in wealthy parishioner homes.

Both concerts were wonderful, the Belle Voce event noted for its ensemble of gambas complementing the vocalists. Schola Antiqua, the artists in residence for the Lumen Christi Institute, a fellowship of Roman Catholic scholars at the University of Chicago, added pathos to William Byrd's elegance with Chicago actor Jeff Parker reading selections from *An Epistle of Comfort* by Catholic priest Robert Southwell (1561-1595). Southwell sought to encourage English Catholics to remain true to their faith despite persecution, and he himself was martyred by English authorities when he was 34 years old. Byrd lived until he was 83, and at his death he was noted in the Chapel Royal Check Book as being "a Father of Musick," the only chapel member to receive that distinction. And we continue to enjoy William Byrd's grand gifts four centuries later.

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. Our

meetings, programs and publications help members to come together with 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 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	Open
Secretary	Open
Treasurer	Cheryl Kreiman
Facebook	Hyacinth Egner & Cheryl Kreiman
Web site	Larry Johnson & Peter Beck
Members at Large	Ruth Dunnell, Carl Foote
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	Stephanie Duesing (stephdusing@gmail.com)
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

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