

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 News

The Chicago Chapter met on Sunday November 20 and welcomed Andrew Schultze as our director, to lead a session about music from the 18th century Hapsburg Court of Vienna. Andrew was in Vienna in August, lecturing on the early Baroque vocal trillo. He has a long history with the city, with his first visit to Vienna in 1976, where he joined the Vienna Chamber Orchestra at the Schoenbrunn Palace, singing the role of Figaro in a version of the Barber of Seville.

Most of the music we played was composed in the reign of Leopold I (1640-1705) who ruled over the Austrian empire for 48 years, the longest time on the throne for any Hapsburg emperor. An accomplished musician himself, Andrew sang a song that Leopold composed in 1695, featuring all of the official languages of the Hapsburg court, German, French, Spanish, Italian, and Latin.

The Hapsburgs ruled over a vast empire, home to many different ethnicities and languages, was an often restless place, conflict between groups and yearning for independence. To the Hapsburg mind pomp and ritualized grandeur played an important role in maintaining their authority, and thus music was not just a feature of their court, but almost seen as essential. Compositions and performances celebrated normal court life as well as great events, like the plague of Vienna in 1679 and the defeat of the Turks before the walls of the city in 1683. So we sampled 28 pages of this music over two hours, and talked about the origin of croissants and cappuccino, emerging from the successful war against the Turks. We played music composed by musician Max Augustin who got drunk one night during the plague year and went to sleep in a gutter. Gravediggers found him and, assuming he was dead, tossed him, with his instrument, into a mass grave outside the city walls. He woke up the next morning surrounded by bodies, and unable to scramble out on his own, he started playing his bagpipes, leading to his rescue. And we talked about the minuet, Louis XIV's favorite dance, and the French style of performance (evidently imitated in Vienna), where the dance started with the king dancing alone, and then his wife and oldest son, and then the same son and a princess, and then the royal family together. Only then did the rest of the French court dare to join in. Many thanks to Andrew Schultze for another wonderful afternoon of music, and music history.

Yuletide Concert

Our annual Yuletide Concert for the Chicago Chapter is on Sunday December 18 at 1 PM. Send the name of your group and the participants, and the names of the pieces you plan to play, to msjddawson@sbcglobal.net. Please feel free to bring some snacks to share. Then, plan to stay after the concert and holiday festivities to join in some jamming to close the year making music together.

The Chicago chapter will plan to play these two pieces for Yuletide.

- *Ecce quomodo moritur*, Jacob Handl (1550-1591), German/Austrian
- *Suite I fur Blockflotenquartett*, Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741), German

If you would like to join us, let me know, we can still make room for some more musicians.

Please print these pieces from the Chicago chapter web site and bring them with you. You will find them under our October meeting downloads, Resources/Meeting Downloads at chicagorecorders.org.

West Suburban Early Music Society

Dennis Sherman returned to lead the West Suburban Early Music Society in November with a program called "The Two Giovannis." The two men were about the same age, both born in the mid-1500s, and both lived in Venice. Giovanni Gabrielli composed for the Basilica San Marco, writing instrumental and choral music. Giovanni Bassano was a talented musician who led the instrumental ensemble playing Gabrielli's music at San Marco. Bassano published *Ricercate/Passaggiet Cadentie* in 1585, which included a detailed compendium of ornaments a musician could play based upon a sequence of whole or half notes.

We played several canzoni written by Gabrielli. In the *Canzon quarta*, Dennis posed the question of whether several eighth note passages were ornamentation that had been written into the music and then incorporated into what became the modern edition. We also played *Cantate Domino* from a six-part choral motet. Another choral

piece was *Miserere mei Deus a 6* which we noted sounded homophonic, with chord progressions aligned among the parts. We contrasted that with the canzoni which were polyphonic, with the lines intertwined and repeating themes from each other.



We meet again on December 11th at 2 PM in the Friends Meetinghouse in Downers Grove. The group will play holiday music from our binders and remain together for the entire afternoon. Members of the Friends Meetinghouse have been invited to join us to share in the music making! If you want to play a piece that is not in the binder, please bring at least 15 copies. And please feel free to bring treats to share during the break. Beverages will be provided.

Finally, we are eagerly looking forward to January when our new director, Laura Ostjerna Klehr, joins our group. We are excited about the direction and possibilities that await us!—*Kathy Hall-Babis*

An old friend of the West Suburban Early Music Society, Marilyn Linden, died on November 19. I would like to publish a tribute to Marilyn in the next issue of this newsletter. This will give you time to participate. I am looking for people who can share memories and photos of Marilyn with me. Contact Mark Dawson, (773) 334-6376 or msjddawson@sbcglobal.net.

The Newberry Consort and Jewish Music from 17th Century Italy

In October the Newberry Consort offered “Madama Europa at the Gonzaga Court,” featuring works by Claudio Monteverdi, Salamone Rossi, Giovanni Gastoldi, and others, from the Italian city of Mantua before 1630. The featured 17th century artist was Europa Rossi, sister to the celebrated Jewish composer Salamone Rossi (1570 - 1630) and nicknamed Madama Europa.

The city of Mantua under the Gonzaga court at the time was a haven for Jewish artists, actors, poets, writers, and scholars, and the court in particular featured a thriving community of Jewish musicians. Mantua and Venice welcomed Jewish refugees who were expelled from Spain in 1492, as did Sultan Bayezid II of the Ottoman Empire (1481 – 1512), who settled them mostly in the Balkans. Bayezid II observed to his courtiers at the time “You venture to call Ferdinand a wise ruler, he who has impoverished his own country and enriched mine!”

Like other Italian cities at the time, Mantua expected their Jews to live in a ghetto and wear yellow badges. They were forbidden to own property and were restricted from most trades, so they tended to turn to banking, one of the few professions open to them. But the Gonzaga court hired a great many Jewish musicians because court officials wanted the best performers they could find. Many of court singers could double on an instrument, such as violin, harp, or cornetto, and many were celebrated. But Madama Europa shown above them all. According to people who heard her sing at the time, Europa, a rare Jewish woman found singing in court and opera, she was celebrated for her secular music at high-profile events and held her audiences spellbound. And of the many who admired her, they didn’t mention that she was Jewish. Europa would have been a regular at the frequent concerts sponsored by the court. She took part in the festivities for the wedding of Francesco Gonzaga and Margherita of Savoy in 1608, an event with new music and partying that for four or five days. It was so expensive that apparently the Gonzaga’s didn’t have enough cash to sponsor the carnival that followed later that year, so the Jewish Guild was “asked” to organize the event, and pay for it.

Despite the relative tolerance they enjoyed, Jewish residents of Mantua at the time were still under pressure to convert. Those Jews who did become Catholic were treated as such—they were allowed to discard the yellow badge, live anywhere, own real estate, and pursue any profession they liked. But these benefits came at a price. The Jewish converts were obliged to submit to a public baptism and adopt a new name. Besides being ostracized from their friends and family, the new name makes it difficult today to track the ancestry of later Italians who were descended from these Jewish converts. With a new Christian name, these Jewish residents of Mantua, including the celebrated Jewish musicians of the Gonzaga court, tended to be effectively erased from history.

Salamone Rossi’s services to the Gonzaga Court in Mantua were so prized that he was not required to wear the yellow badge identifying him as a Jew. But he was also known for writing synagogue music in Hebrew, sung

by choirs of men and boys, but with an Italian madrigal style. Not much other Jewish sacred music from that era survives. And the era of magnanimity didn't survive Rossi either. Austrian troops sacked Mantua, and the city's Jewish ghetto, in 1630, and brought the plague with them. Salmone Rossi and his sister Europa disappear from the narrative at that point; they probably both died during the invasion or the epidemic that followed.

The Newberry Consort next offers their popular Mexican Christmas concerts December 9, 10, and 11, music for advent from Mexico City in the 17th century. Visit www.newberryconsort.org to learn more.

April 2023 Workshop, Anne Timberlake

Many of you will remember Anne Timberlake leading us for our workshop in April of 2017, and we are pleased that she returns on April 22, 2023. We will gather at our regular meeting place, Covenant Presbyterian Church, at 9:30 and play until 4 PM with a break for lunch.

We will explore the surprisingly rich tradition of music about—music. Over hundreds of years and across a broad swatch of geography, Composers have crafted musical paeans to the glory of their art. We'll explore music about the power of music, the art of song, and even specific instruments, penned by a diverse array of Renaissance and Baroque composers including Ludwig Senfl, Henry Purcell, William Byrd, and Thomas Tompkins. The fee will be \$75 for members and \$85 for non-members. Look for a flyer from the chapter soon.

Music Coming up

Rembrandt Chamber Players offer their Holiday Baroque festivities shortly, Friday December 2 at 7:30 PM at the Epiphany Center, 201 South Ashland, and Sunday December 6 at 3 PM at the Alice Millar Chapel at Northwestern University in Evanston. Featured for the evening are works by Handel, Purcell, Telemann, and Bach. The Epiphany Center was formerly the Epiphany Episcopal Church, a handsome 1885 Romanesque landmark converted into an events space and performance venue in 2019. The Epiphany Center is worth the visit just for the architecture and to learn about future events, besides some great chamber music. To learn more visit their web site rembrandtchambermusicians.org.

The **Handel Week Festival** of Oak Park returns in the winter of 2023, with each of the three concerts held on Sunday at 3 PM at Pilgrim Congregational Church, 460 Lake Street in Oak Park. The church is a reasonable walk from the Ridgeland Avenue L stop on the Green line and the Oak Park Metra station. Sunday February 19 includes favorite Handel arias, Sunday February 26, the Intimate Handel, works for soprano, harpsichord, recorder and

cello, and Sunday March 5, orchestral works, Handel's *The Foundling Hospital Anthem* and Purcell's *The Indian Queen*. Visit www.handelweek.com to learn more.

English scholar and musician **David Munrow** (1942 – 1976) was one of the most important figures in bringing about the Early Music revival in England and elsewhere. He released over 50 records, and toured the world with Christopher Hogwood and the Early Music Consort of London, which he founded. He also taught at the University of Leicester and at Kings College London. Thanks to Paul Schmidt for a link to a YouTube channel featuring Munrow performing:

www.youtube.com/@davidgriffith256/videos

An unusual recorder collaboration

On November 5 the Duneland Early Music Consort of northern Indiana, with one ringer from the Chicago ARS, played a Renaissance recorder quartet at Valparaiso University's chapel, joining the Windiana community concert band, based in Valparaiso. Windiana includes players with a wide range of experience on modern brass, reeds, flutes and piccolos, percussion, keyboard and string bass.

Windiana enjoys a professional relationship with Johan de Meij, an award-winning Dutch composer. Mr. de Meij created a piece titled *Da Vinci* which in one section features a lone recorder quartet alternating with short passages by the full wind ensemble. The five sections are references to Leonardo Da Vinci: *The Vitruvian Man*, *Mona Lisa*, *Vola, vola!*, *Macchinario* and a *Vola, vola!* reprise. *Mona Lisa* contains the recorder quartet performing a Josquin de Prez psalm setting, to include music from Da Vinci's lifetime, yet interspersed with modern passages. Mr. de Meij traveled from the Netherlands to Valparaiso to rehearse the concert pieces on Friday night and Saturday morning, and then conduct the Saturday afternoon performance.

Da Vinci was commissioned by a wind orchestra in Tokyo, Japan. The subtitle, "A Study on Ivory Keys for wind orchestra", indicates no accidentals are used in the entire piece, except possibly by some transposing horns, and it ends with a huge, multi-octave C Major chord. Learn more at the composer's web site, <https://johandemeij.com/music/profile/1110>.

The Duneland Early Music Consort was founded by Kris and Rob Sturgeon and includes Laura Unger, all of Indiana. Sometimes members of the Chicago ARS, such as Nancy Chabala and myself, are invited to join them for events. I was invited to play in the Duneland performance because the other usual members were already playing trombone and percussion in the wind band.

For us recorder players, it was a uniquely rewarding experience, to be included in such a large scale modern work, and featured in a section that recalls the music of Leonardo Da Vinci's 15th century world. It was at first a little daunting to know we'd appear in a professional performance with only two rehearsals within 24 hours of the concert. But Mr. de Meij is a friendly, encouraging and tolerant conductor, who elicited a wonderful performance from the wind ensemble and the recorders.

The concert also included two other works for wind band by de Meij, "Fellini" and "Symphony No. 2: The Big Apple". The audience thoroughly enjoyed all three interesting and unusual works, which they very enthusiastically received.— *Larry Johnson*



This is a Dolceola, sort of a combined portable piano and accordion and built by the Toledo Symphony Company of Toledo, Ohio in 1903. The Toledo Symphony Company built about 5000 Dolceolas, selling for \$25 each and intended for picnics, parades, and church gatherings, from 1903 until the company went out of business in 1907. About 40 are known to survive today. Seen at a concert sponsored by the Fox Valley Folklore Society in Hinsdale, Illinois, November 5, 2022. The Society is making plans to bring back the annual Fox Valley Folk Music Festival at Island Park in Geneva, Illinois next Labor Day weekend, 2023.

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	Lynette Colmey
Secretary	Jenifer Buckley
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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.

The **Oak Park Recorder Society** continues to meet on Tuesday nights online. Contact the Chicago chapter for details.

West Suburban Early Music Society (westsubems.org)

Convener/Chapter Representative:	Kathy Hall-Babis (kathy.hallbabis@gmail.com)
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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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