

AMERICAN RECORDER

WINTER 2013

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THE AMERICAN RECORDER SOCIETY
 Founded in 1939
 by SUZANNE BLOCH

DR. CARLETON SPRAGUE SMITH
 Honorary President

HAROLD NEWMAN, Director
 2995 Botanical Square
 New York, N. Y.

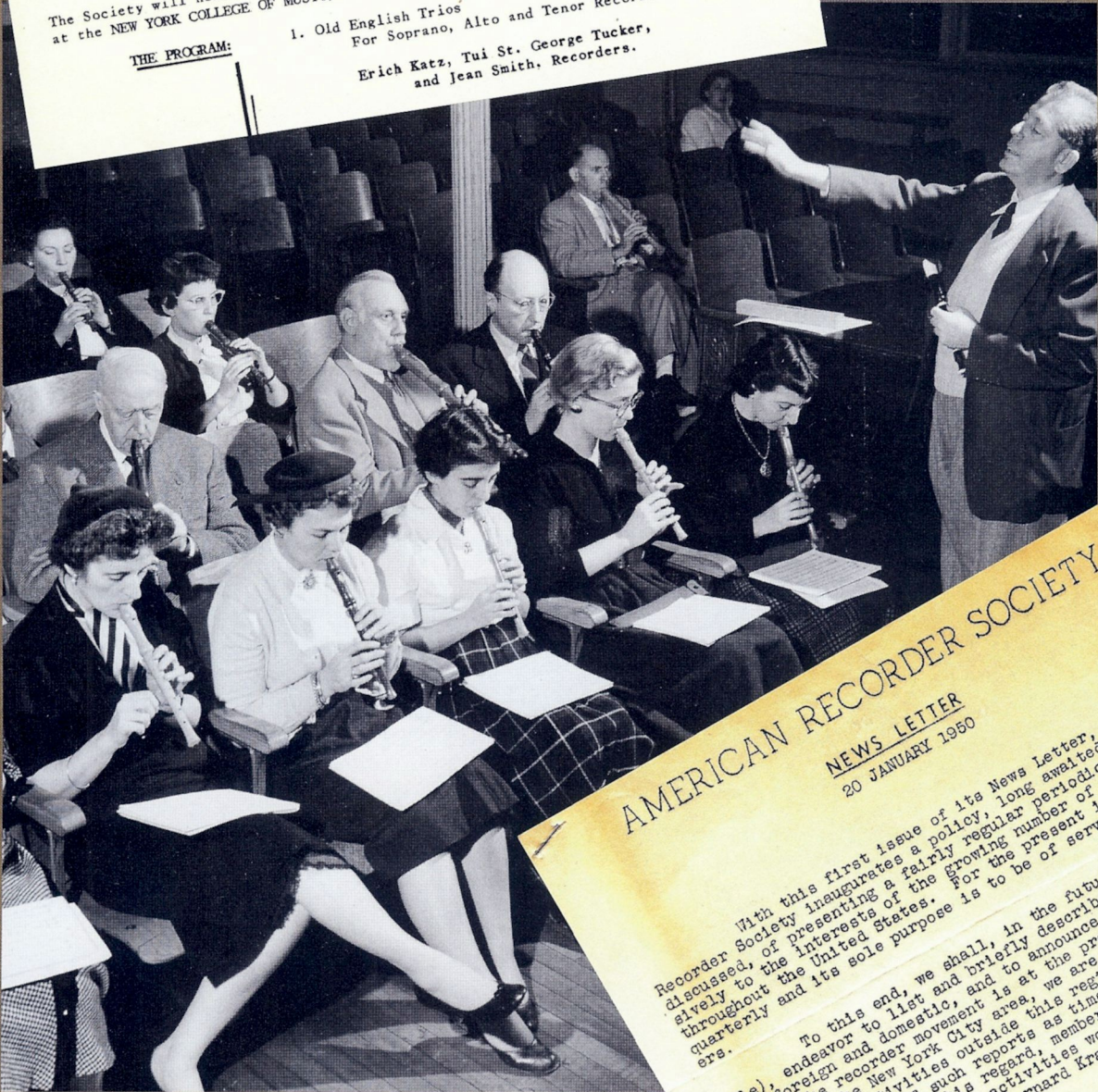
A. R. S. NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 1947

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The Society will hold its first postwar meeting on Wednesday evening, October 29 at the NEW YORK COLLEGE OF MUSIC, 114 East 85 Street (room 14) at 8:30 p.m.

THE PROGRAM:

1. Old English Trios
 For Soprano, Alto and Tenor Recorders
 Erich Katz, Tui St. George Tucker,
 and Jean Smith, Recorders.



AMERICAN RECORDER SOCIETY No. 1

NEWS LETTER
 20 JANUARY 1950

With this first issue of its News Letter, the American Recorder Society inaugurates a policy, long awaited and hopefully discussed, of presenting a fairly regular periodical devoted exclusively to the interests of the growing number of recorder players throughout the United States. For the present it is to be printed quarterly and its sole purpose is to be of service to recorder players.

To this end, we shall, in the future (insofar as we are able), endeavor to list and briefly describe all new recorder music both foreign and domestic, and to announce concerts of interest, though the recorder movement is at the present time mainly concentrated in the New York City area, we are interested in receiving reports of recorder activities outside this region and hope to print an increasing number of such reports as time goes on. (It would be appreciated if, in this regard, members and others reading the Letter who know of such activities would kindly drop a note to them to the editor: Bernard Krainis, 392 East 170th Street, Bronx 56, New York.)

We also hope to keep our readers informed of especially in England where the recorder movement has some space will be at the disposal of members of general interest. Questions received by the editor of those reply shall appear in the News Letter as possible. The editor is composed of all sorts of members of all sorts of and of general

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue gives us several chances to look at the recorder and the ARS from our heritage to our horizons.

Surely that scope describes the impact of **John Turner** on recorder music today—with over 500 commissioned recorder works, as pointed out by **Carson Cooman** in his interview with Turner (page 13, with Turner's *Discography* following). Turner's birthday also gives us the opportunity to read a cross-section of **Reviews** of recent music where **Turner's influence** can be felt (page 26) and some of his CDs (page 10).

Also looking to our horizons, **Tim Broege** writes about another recorder that is designed to take its place alongside modern concert instruments: **Adriana Breukink's Eagle** (page 38; notice that its head's color mimics that of its namesake).

The big event that embraces both our heritage and horizons is the 2014 **ARS is 75!** celebration. The 2014 music for **Recorder Day!** and **Play-the-Recorder Month** (page 22) looks back to earlier days—a work by our first President and a signer of the ARS's official incorporation papers, **LaNoue Davenport**. This issue's cover incorporates a photo from the late 1940s of **Erich Katz**—composer, conductor, musicologist and our Honorary President, whose guidance looked to early horizons of the ARS.

Gail Nickless

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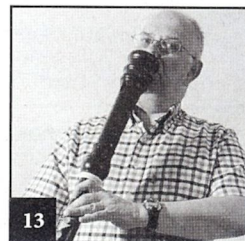
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GAIL NICKLESS, EDITOR

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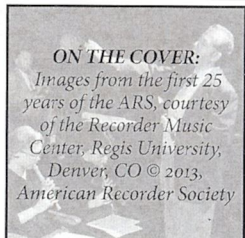
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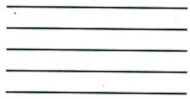
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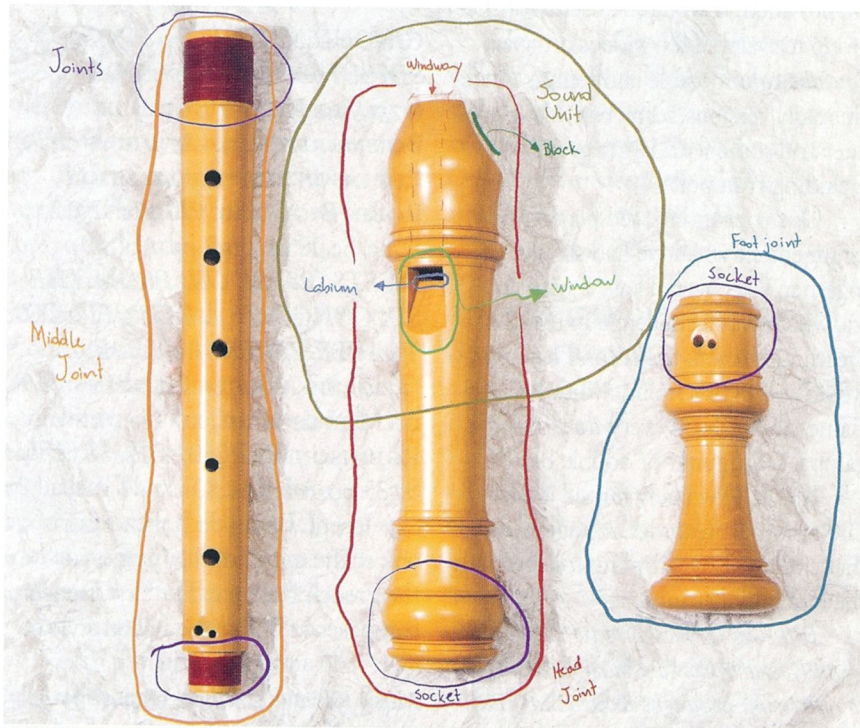
ON THE COVER:
Images from the first 25 years of the ARS, courtesy of the Recorder Music Center, Regis University, Denver, CO © 2013, American Recorder Society

EDUCATION



Basic Recorder Care

Text and photos by
Gustavo de Francisco, São Paulo, Brazil



I have heard recurring questions among recorder players about how to care for the instrument, how to clean it, when to oil it and which oil should be used, what to do when the recorder clogs, and many others. This article is the first of a series dealing with various subjects, to clarify some of these questions.

First, I shall distinguish among the recorders themselves, because the care differs for plastic and for wooden ones. All care applied to plastic instruments also applies to wood instruments, unless stated otherwise.

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Symphony Series Recorders pictured

Plastic or resin recorders

All wind instruments tend to condense water inside when played. This is due to the temperature difference between the air being blown and the air outside the instrument, as well as the temperature of the instrument itself. It is the same phenomenon that happens on the outside of a cold glass bottle, on the bathroom wall when one takes a hot bath, or on a window when it fogs up after blowing on it. In these three examples, the hot air, in contact with a colder surface, causes the moisture to condense and to form water droplets.



The environment inside the instrument—high humidity, low light and warm air temperature—is ripe for bacteria, germs and fungus to proliferate, if we do not take proper care of the instrument by cleaning it. These are basic precautions we must take:

- Brush your teeth before you start to play. Although spit is not the main cause of water accumulation in the instrument, we cannot say that no spit will collect inside the instrument when it is played. The largest number of microorganisms in the human body lives in the mouth. Even a tiny piece of food, if trapped inside your recorder, directly compromises the sound quality, and can carry disease.
- Wash your hands before playing.
- Cut your nails, especially that of the left thumb, which is used to close the hole on the back of the recorder. If that nail is not well-trimmed, it is impossible to produce clear high notes,
- Do not wear lipstick. In addition to dirtying the recorder, in such a way that makes it impossible to remove after a while, lipstick accumulated in the mouthpiece becomes a deposit of microorganisms, made worse by the lipstick's viscosity.
- Keep your recorder dry and clean.

After you finish playing, always dry the recorder inside and out before storing. Drying can be done with a thin, absorbent cloth, or even by leaving the recorder in a vertical

position in open air for 30 or 40 minutes. Storing the recorder while it is humid or wet prevents it from drying out, and will cause bacteria and fungus to accumulate inside the instrument.

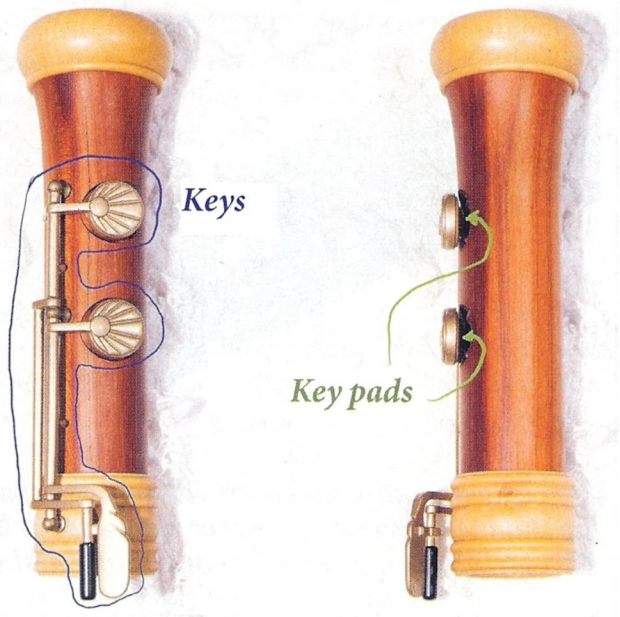
Wash the recorder with water and detergent regularly (read below about doing this with a wooden recorder). It is important to wash the recorder inside and out, but special care is needed when washing the **mouthpiece**, the **window** (or **labium**) and the **air channel**. These areas should be clean—but they are the most sensitive parts of the instrument and, therefore, must be very carefully cleaned without abrasion or pressure.

If the recorder begins to smell, wash as described above—but, ideally, it needs to be washed *before* you notice a smell. If the smell continues, even after washing, apply a few drops of an antiseptic mouthwash (containing a chloride compound) or sodium hypochlorite (the main ingredient in laundry bleach) into the channel before washing, leaving the drops there for 5-10 minutes.

Then wash with soap and water. These products should only be used in extreme situations; usually washing with water and detergent is enough. After washing, dry the recorder completely before storing.

Protect the **window** (also called **labium**) from careless hands, falls or bumps. This is the most sensitive external part of the recorder. Any damage in this region will certainly affect sound quality.

If your recorder clogs with condensation, first try blowing strongly through the window. This causes the accumulated water in the channel to be expelled out of the instrument rather than into the instrument. Moreover, using this method avoids the possibility of putting a finger in the window, which would damage the area (as explained above).



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Always use white Vaseline or the grease that came with the recorder to lubricate the joints. This practice decreases friction, increasing the life of the instrument, and also helps to seal the joints when they are no longer new.

When the recorder is old and the joints become loose, you can wrap cotton thread (or for plastic recorders, a strand of hair) around the joint to keep it tight until you can have the recorder repaired (*see photos, previous page*).

Warm up the instrument before playing. Keep the recorder's headjoint in your pocket, or slowly blow hot air in the window for few minutes before

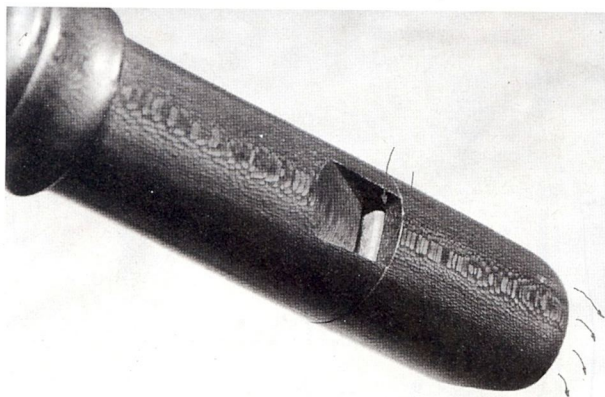
If the recorder is the same temperature as your body, water does not accumulate by condensation.

playing, or even hold the recorder in your warm hand, especially at the top near the channel and the window. This is very useful, on cold days, and will help you stay in tune while playing the recorder—and it also prevents water accumulation inside the instrument. If the recorder is the same temperature as your body, water does not accumulate by condensation.

Wooden recorders

Wood is a living, breathing material. Besides all the care used for plastic instruments, wooden recorders require some extra attention—but the superior sound quality compensates for the necessary precautions. The care for wooden recorders differs from that outlined above for plastic recorders:

- Since wood is a porous material, all precautions regarding cleaning must be observed strictly because dirt, bacteria and fungi can penetrate the wood. To prevent this, we must oil wooden instruments, but I will not discuss how to do that in this article; oiling a recorder is the topic of another article in this series.
- It is not advisable to wash a wooden recorder in the same way that you would wash a plastic recorder. This makes it even more important to take special care as described above, preventing the instrument from accumulating dirt of all kinds, and also preventing excessive moisture from damaging the wood. Cleaning a wooden recorder will be covered later in this series.



TIP:

To keep your recorder from becoming clogged, use an anti-condensing agent. Rather than buying a commercial product, make one yourself: 1 part liquid detergent to 10 parts water. Put the solution into a bottle with a dropper. Before playing, turn the recorder upside down (with the mouthpiece at the bottom), closing the channel with your finger. Put a few anti-condensing drops through the window in the channel, then open the mouthpiece and the window to allow the excess to flow out.

Using an anti-condenser will help avoid droplets being formed by the condensed water in the channel. Instead, the water forms a thin layer of liquid, which does not interfere with sound. This method can be used in both plastic and wooden recorders.

Extra care for wooden recorders:

A new wooden recorder has to be “played in.” In order to stabilize the wood with breath, temperature and humidity, it is necessary to “play in” a new recorder every day, not exceeding 20 minutes per day. Some makers even recommend that you play for five minutes per day in the first week, 10 the second, 15 the third, and so on until you reach an hour per day. Then you can use the new recorder to its full capacity.

The same care is needed to “play in” a recorder that is very old, after a long period in which it has not been played.

The wood of a recorder tends to change when the instrument has not been used for a while or is new, causing changes in the sound. Makers know this, and often make the channel a little bigger than it should be, with the block slightly lower than the ideal point. When “playing in” a recorder, the block rises and swells, thus reaching the required point. Sometimes the block goes higher than expected; in this case, it is necessary to make a small adjustment, which can be made by the manufacturer or the maker.

Protect your recorder from sudden temperature variations, or extreme temperatures (below 50 and above 95 degrees Fahrenheit). Temperature variation causes the wood to change its dimensions, which can cause cracking on the recorder body. Depending on where these cracks appear, they can make the instrument unusable. In addition, very high temperatures (such as those inside a vehicle left in the sun) can melt the paraffin used in the treatment of the wood, in the case of factory recorders.

Each handmade recorder should be sent back to its maker after one year of use. The wood warps and changes its dimensions with time, in response to the effects described above. Even if these changes are imperceptible, they affect the sound of the instrument. The maker will do the necessary adjustments to the recorder to restore its best sound.

When traveling by air, it is better to carry instruments disassembled in your hand luggage inside the cabin. If you have to ship an instrument, store it in sealed plastic bags (like Ziplocs) inside an impact- and temperature-resistant case. I know more than one situation where a friend of mine, traveling with recorders in checked luggage, has reached the destination to find that the recorder was cracked—yet there was no evidence of the luggage being dropped or hit.

Recorders should always travel disassembled. It is very common for the expansion or contraction of the wood due to change in temperature or pressure to crack the instrument's tenons.

Thinking about tenons: they must be tight, but easy to handle—that is, easy to assemble and disassemble, but without gaps and without any risk that they may come apart while playing. If the socket is too hard to assemble, use cork grease or Vaseline. If it is too loose, wrap cotton thread over



the existing cork. Always take care that the tenons are not too tight, as this may cause cracking. When the thread is in place, use beeswax or paraffin to make it waterproof, because the thread swells when wet—which can also crack the tenons. Grip the tenon with your hand, and your body heat will melt the wax into the thread.

On a recorder with keys, special attention must be paid to them so they are not forced in any way. We must also take care not to put anything oily on key pads, as there is a risk that they can stick to the instrument.

Gustavo de Francisco founded the Quinta Essentia Recorder Quartet in 2006. Based in Brazil, the group has performed tours in Europe (2009, 2010), China (2010) and Namibia (2012); released two albums, La Marca (2008) and Falando Brasileiro (2013); and organized three of the seven editions of the ENFLAMA National Recorder Meeting. Francisco studied with Ricardo Kanji, Paul Leenhouts, Pierre Hamon, Pierre Boragno, Gwenaél Bihan, Christoph Ehram and Rachel Brown; in 2012 he began his teacher training in the Suzuki Recorder methodology, attending training courses for teachers in Brazil and Peru. An engineer and a photographer, as a member and guest he contributes to the work of several chamber music groups: Raro Tempero, Mosaico Harmônico and Audi Coelum in São Paulo, and Oficina Barroca in Campinas. He is currently studying the recorder's acoustic properties.

Quinta Essentia's members are (l to r above): Fernanda de Castro, Felipe Araújo, Gustavo de Francisco and Renata Pereira.