



Notes

December, 2025

www.washingtonrecordersociety.org

Dear WRS members,

Happy Holidays to everyone! We have two meetings coming up. The first is our in-person holiday party on Saturday, December 13 with Leo and Adéla leading, and the next is on Sunday, January 25, 2026, with the exciting Sarah Jeffery! More information will follow. In the meantime, I wish you all a peaceful and healthy holiday season.

Monica Boruch, President

In-person meetings are held at St. Columba's Episcopal Church, 4201 Albemarle St. NW, Washington DC 20016. The closest Metro stop is Tenleytown on the Red Line. Online sessions are held on Zoom.

2025-2026 Schedule

Date	Type	Schedule	Description
Sat, 12/13/25	In person	10:00am-1:00pm	Holiday party and music playing led Leo Angulo & Adéla Balima
Sat, 01/17/26	In person	10:00-10:30am 10:30am-12:30pm	Meet and greet Play music with Leo Angulo and Adéla Balima
Sun, 01/25/26	Online	1:30-2:00pm 2:00-3:30pm	Virtual Happy Hour NOTE: DATE and TIME Session led by Sarah Jeffery
Sat, 02/07/26	In person	10:00-10:30am 10:30am-12:30pm	Meet and greet Play music with Leo Angulo and Adéla Balima
Sat, 03/07/26	In person	10:00-10:30am 10:30am-12:30pm	Meet and greet Play music with Leo Angulo and Adéla Balima
Mon, 03/16/26	Online	7:00-7:30pm 7:30-9:00pm	Virtual Happy Hour Session led by Anne Timberlake
Sat and Sun, 04/11-12/26	Amherst Spring Break Workshop		St George's Episcopal
Sat, 04/18/26	In person	10:00-10:30am 10:30am-12:30pm	Meet and Greet Play music with Leo Angulo and Adéla Balima
Sat, 05/16/26	In person	3:00-5:00pm	Recital
Mon, 06/01/26	Online	7:00-7:30 7:30-9:00	Virtual Happy Hour and Annual Business Meeting Session led by Gwyn Roberts

American Recorder Society Grant to WRS

WRS received a generous grant from the American Recorder Society to offer a collaborative meeting between the Washington Recorder Society and the Philadelphia Recorder Society. At the WRS first meeting of the year on October 11, 2025, the music leaders were Rainer Beckmann, music director of the Philadelphia Recorder Society and Helen-Jean Talbott, a member of both the Philadelphia and the Washington recorder societies.

In the words of Rainer, “as the music director of the Philadelphia Recorder Society, I’m always interested in programming music, original recorder compositions as well as recorder arrangements, written by members and friends of the chapter. In my view, it is just another way of building community and keeping things interesting for everyone.” He adds, “Inviting Helen-Jean to be a part of this special WRS meeting will be an opportunity to recognize her contribution to the recorder orchestra repertoire and will add further context to the two pieces of hers on the program. As in-residence composer, she will be able to provide background information on the source materials used for the two arrangements, offer insight into the compositional process at work and answer specific questions that will come up from the members. With this collaboration and recognition, we hope to encourage Helen-Jean to continue writing original recorder orchestra compositions and arrangements for WRS, PRS and other chapters to enjoy in the future.”



To attest to this collaboration, one member wrote, “Rainer and Helen Jean, were a great team. Helen-Jean’s talent for composing shone through her original arrangements of the Grainger and Purcell pieces played under Rainer’s enthusiastic conducting”. The meeting was truly enjoyed by all and a great way to begin our playing season together. Many thanks to ARS and to Rainer and Helen-Jean for making this meeting possible.

The Washington Recorder Society is a chapter of the American Recorder Society. ARS provides many resources for all recorder players, including its own YouTube channel, which has many free videos and information. The ARS site also has free music and play-alongs.

Washington Recorder Society

Holiday Party and Playing

*Saturday, December 13
10:30am to 12:30pm*

*Join us for Holiday music conducted by
Adéla Balima and Leo Angulo*

Refreshments will be served

Where to Hear Early Music

Look for Announcements Online for 2025-2026 Season

Washington Bach Consort <https://bachconsort.org/calendar/>

Folger Consort <https://www.folger.edu/performances-events>

Tempesta di Mare <https://tempestadimare.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket/#/>

Capitol Early Music <https://capitolearlymusic.org/>

Piffaro—The Renaissance Band <https://www.piffaro.org>

Music and Dance of the French Baroque

Capitol Early Music will present a concert and workshop on January 10 and 11, 2026 at St. George's Episcopal Church at 915 N. Oakland, Arlington, VA.

The Saturday workshop, *Playing Dance Music in Character*, on January 10 runs from 9:30am to 4:30pm. Instructors Anne Timberlake and Caroline Copeland will provide insights into the character of traditional baroque dances. The workshop is open to upper intermediate and advanced players of recorders and other early instruments. The January 11 concert will feature renowned dancers Caroline Copeland and Julian Donahue. Google capitolearlymusic.org for information about reservations and ticketing.

Out and About Recorder Players

Recorder Play-ins at Asbury

One of the Board members, Carolyn Lincoln, has started a monthly recorder play-in at Asbury Methodist Village where she lives. She had heard from multiple people that they used to play the recorder but had let it lapse. Figuring that they just needed an excuse to play, she arranged for and then advertised a monthly play-in held in an activity room. Interested residents can come and play or just listen. For those who have played other instruments but are new to the recorder, Carolyn provides a list of resources such where to buy a recorder and how to learn to play it (videos, books, classes, etc.) She picks easy and mostly familiar tunes and posts them to a Google Drive where the attendees can download and print them. She and Jayme Sokolow (another WRS member) play tenor and bass so the group can hear the full range of harmonies. Each meeting includes some old and some new music. It is very informal, usually lasts about an hour, and there is no performance. Contact Carolyn (carolyn.lincoln@verizon.net) if you want to learn more and think about starting something similar in your community. Let's spread the recorder joy!

Children's Program at St. Augustine's

The after-school music class at St. Augustine's Catholic School in Ward 1 Washington, DC kicked off their 2025-2026 academic year this past October. Betty Landesman of WRS and Anna Granger will be working with first to fifth graders to learn the foundational skills of playing the recorder. This year, the class will be divided such that the younger students learn soprano recorder with Anna while three older students work with Betty to learn alto recorder. These older students will have the opportunity to take their instruments home to develop the responsibility and habits of regular independent practice. What's more, a separate group of students will learn ukulele with Anna's husband, Whitten Granger.

Become a Better Player

Local Instructors

ADÉLA BALIMA Kensington, MD Phone : 240-688-2809 Email: adelabalima@gmail.com Website: http://adelabalima.com	RACHEL ISAACSON Arlington, VA Phone : 571-338-4606 Email : isaacson.rachel@gmail.com	CAROLE ROGENTINE Bethesda, MD Phones: 301-530-6386 (home); 301-523-5515 (cell) Email: crogentine@gmail.com
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Review of the Sigo Tenor Recorder

I have some right-hand mobility issues. The Sigo Baroque Tenor Recorder has given me the courage to put aside tradition and retrain myself to happily play in a left-hand-down position. I am grateful for the manufacturer's innovation and open-minded consideration. No longer do I need to suffer through pain, a sub-standard instrument or a wonky, make it work hand position.

I ordered the left-handed version of the Sigo, which was available directly from Kunath in Germany. It was the same price and was described on the website as having mirrored fingering. The tone holes on my Sigo have a slightly irregular roundness and appear to be hand-finished.



The Sigo Baroque Tenor Recorder 442 HZ was designed by Swiss recorder maker Geri Bollinger and manufactured in collaboration with Kunath Instrumentenbau. The cost including shipping was \$178.00 in July of 2025. Bollinger worked for three years designing a new tenor recorder that could be played with a smaller hand span, was lightweight and ergonomic. The Sigo is indeed all of that with its two-piece serpentine construction, angled head joint, built-in thumb rest and raised C/C# keys. It includes a feature called a coin slot which expands this tenor recorder's range without the need to close the bell with the knee. The Sigo measures 17 3/8 inches and weighs a trim eight ounces.

The Sigo utilizes 3D printing technology and a material called RESONA, which was developed by Kunath. It is a closed surface resin, created to have the comparable density of rosewood from renewable raw materials. Sigo's matte black surface features a maintenance-free wax and linseed oil finish. It is indeed very ergonomic and plays easily. The tone holes' spacing and placement makes the hand position when playing the Sigo as effortless as playing a soprano. However, it does require the same air quantity and support as any tenor recorder.

I am relatively new to the recorder and was able to play up to A5 with ease and confidence. I found the tone to be bright, sweet, and flexible. The only negative is that my instrument clogs quicker than other plastic recorders I have played. I have tried to play my Sigo in 1 1/2 hour stretches. Kunath sells anti-condensation drops which I need and recommend purchasing along with the instrument. It arrived in a black cotton zippered case with grease and an informational brochure containing the fingering chart. There are no explicit instructions as to how the instrument should be cleaned, only that it should be dried after playing. I rinse it out after a few plays.

—Theresa Christian

Whence the Recorder—Adéla Balima

Do you have a musical family?

My grandfather was a professional violist who played in an orchestra and taught at the conservatory. I never got to know him because he passed away when I was two, but I always felt that a part of his musical nature stayed with me. My father played guitar in his free time, and both my parents loved music. They took me to concerts from a young age, so music was simply a natural part of our home.

Did you sing or play other instruments before you took up recorder?

Recorder was actually my first instrument. Even though I wanted to play piano, we didn't have space for one at home, so I started with recorder — and I ended up loving it. Later, I started playing modern flute (and studied it with a wonderful teacher), but early music eventually spoke to me more strongly, and the recorder became my main instrument.

Do you sing or play instruments other than recorder now?

I learned piano at the conservatory (it was part of the studies), and although I started late, I appreciated how it strengthened my harmonic awareness. I rarely play it now, but I still value the foundation it gave me. We also had a choir class, which enriched me as well. Sometimes I also pick up the modern flute and have tried traverso, but I'm not currently intensive with this instrument.

Do you compose or arrange music?

Informally, I've worked on Renaissance-style preludes and diminutions, which gave me some insight into the style. Today, when I have a musical idea, I prefer to explore it through improvisation rather than writing it down. Thanks to harmony and counterpoint classes, I learned the basic principles (it sometimes felt like mathematics). But composing a large or orchestral piece isn't my motivation now. Still, perhaps one day it would be fun to put something on paper, but most likely in a medieval or Renaissance style. Goal for 2026.

Do you think there's any type of music that doesn't sound good on the recorder?

I think the recorder sounds best in early music — medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque — where it historically belongs. Each period requires a different type of recorder, and the repertoire naturally fits the instruments of its time. Later repertoire, especially from the Classical era, doesn't always feel natural on recorder to me, although with good musicianship almost anything can work. For French Baroque, I sometimes prefer hearing it on traverso, if that's the instrument it was written for, but many pieces can also sound beautiful on recorder.

Modern music can be controversial and fun. Some contemporary pieces written for recorder are really nice; others feel more like demonstrations of extended techniques — enjoyable for the performer, maybe less so for the audience. But new approaches, such as delay or looping (for example, pieces by Sören Sieg or Annette Ziegemeyer) open wonderful new possibilities.

I once performed a piece where I had to stop in the middle and shout a German poem by Christian Morgenstern, surrounded by wild modern techniques. That was outside my comfort zone — and many modern pieces for recorder feel like that. But in a strange way, these experiments can inspire and even support early-music playing. I'm quite conservative by nature, but as an occasional exercise that pushes us forward, why not?

What's your approach to playing recorder? My approach combines structure and imagination. When I begin a new piece, I start with what I call a "zero approach": I play it completely neutrally, without expression. Then I explore pulsing, harmony, phrasing, articulations, and tone color, section by section. Another part of my approach is reconnecting with the instrument itself: playing long tones, rediscovering its colors, and settling into its sound if I haven't played for a while. This can feel like meditation. I try to integrate all aspects of practice — listening, singing, dancing, thinking, improvising — anything that helps me understand and shape the piece. And there is also the technical drill, which is best to approach like sport.

How do you find the time?

It's not easy 😊 I've always had many interests, so balancing everything has always been a challenge. But that may be what pushed me to practice more efficiently. I learned that the more actively I think about the process, and realize what happens in the body impacting the technique, the faster things sink in. I also believe that practicing regularly, even for just five minutes a day, is far better than practicing once a week. What helps me get to playing are my instruments. Whenever I walk past them, I feel drawn to their sound, and that desire helps me find time even on the busiest days.

Do you have a teacher?

I've had around four teachers who shaped me deeply. My main conservatory teacher left a strong inner voice in me — a kind of internal guide that still influences how I play and make musical decisions. There are many wonderful recorder players I would love to have a lesson with one day.

Do you play duets or in larger ensembles? Do you attend workshops?

I enjoy everything: duets or groups (usually around 5). I like the challenge of intonation and blend. I also very much enjoy playing in mixed ensembles, because the recorder blends beautifully with other instruments. Workshops have been an important part of my musical life. I had the opportunity to attend the Amherst week twice, and both times were deeply inspiring. In the Czech Republic, I also had the chance to attend many workshops led by some of Europe's finest recorder players. Learning from such high-level musicians was always enriching. I must say, there are things I learned there that still stay with me.

Do you approach performance with enthusiasm or dread?

With enthusiasm — always. But nerves are always present, and stage fright has been part of my life. I learned techniques that helped me manage it. And of course, the more often I perform, the easier it becomes.

How long have you been a member of WRS?

I joined WRS around 2017, shortly after moving to the United States. My first meeting at Cedar Lane made a strong impression on me because of the sense of community and how naturally people connected. Through WRS, I've built friendships and learned a lot about listening, communication, and playing

Has membership benefited you in ways you didn't anticipate?

I've always enjoyed all the sessions, and now, as music leader, I experience them from a new perspective. The most enriching part is the community and the friendships — when wonderful people come together, something very special happens. I especially love the gatherings and the recitals.

Is there a performer—solo or group—that has inspired you throughout your recorder-playing life?

Many performers have inspired me — through recordings, performances, and personal encounters. My greatest inspiration has come from my teachers: one of them awakened my enthusiasm for the recorder when I was a child, and the other helped me develop technically. I also think that the folk group I played with back in the Czech Republic shaped my playing as well — I discovered more about pulsing and freer, more natural playing.

What are your 3 favorite recordings featuring recorder?

It's hard to pick just 3. These albums come to my mind as highly inspirational (the complete list would be very long):

Seldom Sene: *Goldberg Variations*
Dan Laurin: *Early Italian Chamber Music*
Corina Marti: *Winter*
Les Musiciens de Saint Julien :
Doux Silence, Beauté Barbare
Saskia Coolen: *Driftwood*

Marion Verbruggen: *The Art of the Recorder*
Flautando Koln: *Musica Hispanica*
Eric Boosgraf: *Van Eyck*
Voix Humaines (all albums)
Dorothee Oberlinger: *the Passion of Music*

If you were a castaway on a desert island, which one of your recorders would you hope you had with you? Ganassi g-alto 😊

WRS Website

The WRS website, <https://www.washingtonrecordersociety.org/>, has lots of useful information. The main page introduces the organization and provides the latest news. The footer has links to the meeting schedule and newsletters. The menu and the buttons both take you to more detailed information such as links to handy websites. Check out the Members Only section for a directory of members and the Roger Morris Collection of recorder music. Email carolyn.lincoln@verizon.net if you have renewed your membership and need the password, which changed September 1.

Classified

Looking for an alto recorder teacher for our aftercare program for one hour- from 3:30-4:30pm each Wednesday. The position pays \$30.00/hr. Alto recorder students are in the 4th through 8th grades. Please consider this position. It would help us out tremendously! Anna Granger, head teacher, St Augustine's Catholic School., Washington DC. To reply, contact Monica Boruch: fmboruch@comcast.net

WRS In-Person Meetings—Revised COVID Policy Modified 11/20/22

WRS leadership will stay informed and cautious about COVID-19 risks. We will make every effort to keep the membership updated about COVID-related changes in our schedule or plans. The WRS Board recommends that members follow current CDC guidelines for vaccination. In addition, participants in WRS in-person meetings must:

- Be free of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Have no recent exposure to individuals known to be infected with COVID-19
- Play only their own instruments during sessions

Board of Directors

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