



Notes

May, 2026

www.washingtonrecordersociety.org

Dear WRS Members,

We are finishing up another wonderful year of playing recorder together! How lucky are we!? Please plan on coming to this year's WRS recital on Saturday, May 16 from 3-5 PM at St. Columba's Church and watch for Board elections, which will be held the last couple weeks of May. Happy Summer to all.
-- 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, 5/16	In person	3:00-5:00 pm	Recital
Mon, 6/01	Online	7:00-7:30 pm 7:30-9:00 pm	Virtual Happy Hour and Annual Business Meeting Session led by Gwyn Roberts

WRS Annual Spring Recital

Play, enjoy the music, and bring your friends and family to the WRS recital to be held at St. Columba's Episcopal Church on Saturday May 16 at 3pm. The address of the church is 4201 Albemarle St. NW, Washington DC 20016, Tenleytown metro stop. Refreshments will be served after the recital.

Upcoming Election of WRS Board Members

Members will be sent an email in mid-May to cast their votes for members running for the Board. WRS will announce the election results at its final online meeting with Gwyn Roberts on Monday, June 1, 2026. A short business meeting will also take place at that time. If you are interested in running for the Board, please contact Monica Boruch at fmboruch@comcast.net

Out and About Recorders

WRS once again participated in the national “Play the Recorder” month, with about 60 third graders at Oakland Terrace Elementary School in Silver Spring, MD. On March 5, 2026, three WRS members, Judy McGraw, Gabriel Johnson, and Monica Boruch joined the school music staff and played several pieces for a recorder assembly along with the students, who learned and played a piece for soprano recorder. It was a good time for all involved! The students asked dozens of excellent questions, all related to recorders. We plan on going back next March.



Become a Better Player

Local Instructors

LEOPOLDO ANGULO DC, MD, VA Recorder and Piano Lessons, Conducting Lessons, Coaching Sessions Ph: 240-204-3355 leoang2000@gmail.com	ADÉLA BALIMA Kensington, MD Ph: 240-688-2809 adelabalima@gmail.com http://adelabalima.com	RACHEL ISAACSON Arlington, VA Ph: 571-338-4606 isaacson.rachel@gmail.com	CAROLE ROGENTINE Bethesda, MD Ph: 301-530-6386-h 301-523-5515-c crogentine@gmail.com
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Consider a Workshop for Summer Fun and Recorder Playing

Immerse yourself in the world of early music and improve your playing this summer at one of the many workshops being offered by renowned teachers and musical professionals.

Mountain Collegium from June 28 to July 4 – A weeklong workshop directed by Jody Miller, with programs for all levels of early musicians and folk musicians. It will be held on the campus of Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. For more information, go to Mountain Collegium 2026 online.

Amherst Early Music -- Week 1 from July 12 to 19/Week 2 from July 19-26

The Amherst Early Music Festival will be held at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania. It offers a bounty of classes, concerts, drop-in sessions, and opportunities for impromptu music making. Gain new skills, insights, and inspiration in classes taught by over 60 faculty members from the United States and Europe. This year the festival focuses on the music of France and England from the 11th to the 18th centuries. To register, go to Amherst Early Music Festival online.

Next Level Recorder Retreat Southeast from August 23-28

Intensive workshop on technique and ensemble playing, and more, for intermediate to advanced recorder players with Tish Berlin and Frances Blaker in Orkney Springs, Virginia. You can find more information by checking online: [tibiaduo](#) or [Frances Blaker's site](#).

Whence Recorder – Betty Landesman

Do you have a musical family?

Not really. I understand that my parents took lessons as children (my mother piano, my father violin), but that was a very long time ago. We acquired a piano at some time when I was around 12 because having your children take piano lessons seemed “the thing to do.”

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

Interesting question, with a possibly unusual answer. When I started junior high school at age 11, I was put into the orchestra class. Note that I didn't say “string” or “wind”; it was the one-room schoolhouse version. I needed an instrument to play. We were totally ignorant of how to rent or borrow an instrument, but one day the violin that my father had played as a boy showed up, probably from an aunt who collected stuff. So voila, problem solved. Except that I had less than no gift for the violin and inflicted 2 years of pain when practicing. When I got to high school, I took piano lessons. At least if you hit the right keys, it didn't sound hideous. Then I got into choral singing, which I did for probably 10 years. I was a soprano at the time; unfortunately, my voice began to go downhill in every sense, and I'm a tenor now. Sometime in my 30s, I saw a flyer about learning the recorder for free at a center for adult education. I went, learned some notes on the alto recorder, and was hooked. I now play and own soprano, soprano, alto, tenor, and bass--plus low pitch (415) alto and soprano.

Do you sing or play instruments other than recorders now?

I have occasionally dabbled in choral singing, for example, Encore Creativity, a singing group for older adults.

Do you compose or arrange music? No

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

Very modern or chromatic may not be as pleasing to my ear; I'm a Baroque person.

What's your approach to playing recorder? Practice!

How do you find the time?

I am retired now, so it's easier to make time. I also travel to as many workshops as feasible, where I can devote time to nothing but music.

Do you have a teacher?

I was studying with Gwyn Roberts before Covid hit but, alas, haven't started up again.

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

I play occasional duets with other members of WRS but would very much like to play with larger ensembles as well. If you read this and have room in your consort for another player, PLEASE let me know! I have attended the summer Amherst Early Workshop for 30 years, gone to some out-of-town weekend workshops, and I attend local classes and workshops.

Do you approach performance with enthusiasm or dread? I LOVE to perform!

How long have you been a member of WRS?

I belonged for several years some time ago and rejoined 3 years ago.

Do you have any good stories about meetings, recitals, or other group activities over the years?

One year at the Amherst Early Music summer workshop, I participated in the inaugural Baroque Orchestra, played at 415 pitch, led by Gwyn Roberts. We had mostly violins and recorders. I played a bass recorder borrowed from a faculty member. This bass had a peg at the end. It rested on the floor, so I had to sit while playing. Everyone else played while standing. I was situated between 2 tall young men playing violas, their bows whizzing over my head. I think only the top of my head was visible to the audience.

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

I had no idea what the recorder could sound like until I was exposed to the Flanders Quartet, Reine-Marie Verhagen, the late Scott Reiss, and many more. Gwyn Roberts is my idol.

What are your 3 favorite recordings featuring the recorder? Anything with Bach or Telemann

If you were a castaway on a desert island, which one of your recorders would you hope you had with you? My 415 alto

Common Threads Music and Craft Workshop

As WRS members, we're all interested in recorders and early music. If you're also a knitter, crocheter, weaver, or spinner, I've got a workshop that will interest you! Common Threads was conceived by recorder teacher and fiber-crafts-practitioner Emily O'Brien, harpist Kelly Stewart, and Celtic musician and bagpiper Rosalind Buda, when they were discussing how they and many other workshop attendees were knitting or crocheting between classes. They added early music performer and knitter Joan Kimball and created a workshop with classes in early music, folk music, and crafting, held at the Shepherd's Spring Retreat Center outside of Hagerstown, only about an hour from DC.

The workshop is held over a four-day weekend in February. In the first year, 2024, spinning was the featured fiber craft, and we learned about the history of spinning and how to use a drop spindle and distaff. The following year, weaving was the theme, and we learned how to assemble and use a backstrap loom.

The fun begins with a meet-and-greet (and show off your projects) on Thursday evening, followed by time to sit and knit while listening to the harpists have a jam session. The next three days each begin with two morning music classes. There is a third music class after lunch, and the fourth period each day is a craft class.

The music tracks are divided between early music and traditional music. This year the recorder early music players had topics like Consort Class, Renaissance Favorites, French Songs and Dances, Sacred Music, and bird-themed songs. The traditional music track had harp, bagpipes, playing by ear, and a variety of Celtic music. You can mix and match the types of music as well. There were two viol players in the consort with the recorders this year and a piper for the Renaissance Collegium.

Friday evening featured a lecture on weaving and backstrap looms by Emily. Saturday evening was Open Mic and Open Gallery night, where anyone could get up and perform. Everyone brought fiber craft projects to show off. At the end of the third music period on Sunday, the groups met to perform for each other. Sunday night was the faculty concert, which included harp, several types of bagpipes, all sizes of recorders, and very large krumphorns.

All had a wonderful time. I don't know yet what craft will be featured next year, but I'll be going back if anyone wants to carpool! I'm also looking for someone who would like to share a ride to the Mideast Recorder Workshop in Pittsburgh in July, if anyone is going that way.

-- Mary Anne Espenshade

American Recorder Society

Making music with others is one of the biggest joys of playing the recorder. The ARS helps you connect with recorder players around the world and with local chapters, consorts, and recorder orchestras in your area. Gather and share in the musical and social experience of the much-loved activity of recorder playing. Dues is normally \$60 per year. ARS is currently running \$15 dues special for new members. WRS is affiliated with the American Recorder Society. Search for American Recorder Society online for more information.

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.

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, and play only their own instruments during sessions

Board of Directors

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