

January 20, 2024

“Celebrate the New Year with the Music of John Dowland and Johann Sebastian Bach!”

Led by Deborah Booth

Back in October of 2023 at Amherst Early Music’s CityRecorder Weekend, two of the topics assigned to me were:

1. Semper Dowland, Semper Dolens? Not always! The late Renaissance composer John Dowland could tear your heartstrings, to be sure, but he could also set your feet and spirit dancing.
2. Point/Counterpoint: J.S. Bach. With every style of music that he touched, Bach expanded its capacities. Composing in nearly every instrumental and vocal genre of the high Baroque, Bach wrote many works that sound brilliant on recorder consort. These were very enjoyable, and I found many pieces in my research that we were unable to play in that weekend. So, we shall return to this lovely music! (Thanks to Wendy Powers and Valerie Horst for the class descriptions and ideas.)

February 10, 2024

"North and South: Genre, style, and playing technique in 16th- and early 17th-century music"

Led by Lewis R. Baratz

Repertory & Piece Features:

1. Josquin des Prez, Mille Regretz [Homorhythm, ensemble warm-up, tuning]
2. J. Arcadelt, Donna beat' e bella [Basic polyphony]
3. Jacobus Vaet, O quam gloriosum est regnum [Imitative counterpoint]
4. Luzzasco Luzzaschi, Ricercare del primo tuono [Instrumental imitative counterpoint]
5. Adriano Banchieri, Canzona [Instrumental imitative counterpoint with idiomatic figurations]
6. Praetorius, Courante MM Wustrow [Dance piece with ornamented lines and a great workout for the bass recorder]
7. Praetorius, Pavane de Spaigne [ATTB, with a particularly low-note workout for Tenor 2]
8. Praetorius, Courante 121 [A very fast-moving dance piece with a challenging soprano part]
9. Praetorius, Bransle le Roy [A quick read through a substantial and elegant multi-section courtly dance]

March 16, 2024

"Sing We and Chant it – A Spring Celebration”

Led by Daphna Mor

Spring is almost here (officially starting March 19th)! Let’s celebrate the renewal of nature and spirit with love songs and madrigals by Thomas Morley, John Farmer, Adrian Willaert, Philippe Verdelot, and more. We will be sure to add some lively dances for the Shepherds and Nymphs. “How happy is the day...we see why all round, troops of friends are assembled here...”

April 20, 2024

"One of Each – Music of the Renaissance and Baroque"

Led by Deborah Booth

In our January session this year we focused on the music of John Dowland and Johann Sebastian Bach. Many of you mentioned that you liked playing pieces by only those two composers, so I will try this idea again. For this session I would like to explore music of Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594), a leading composer of the late Renaissance in the Franco-Flemish school. His music varies a great deal in style and genres, which gave him unprecedented popularity throughout Europe. Our Baroque composer will be Georg Philip Telemann (1681-1767), one of the most prolific composers in music history.

May 18, 2024

"To Spring and Spirit...and More"

Led by David Hurd

On May 18th, we will play in the reverberant acoustics of the nave of the church. An assortment of seasonal music including spring-referencing works and, since it is the Eve of Pentecost, pieces referencing the Holy Spirit will be played. Works transcribed from choral and organ pieces as well as some originally intended for recorders, baroque to modern, are included. Composers include J. S. Bach, Nicolas de Grigny, Stephen Foster, David Hurd, Frank Shirley, Healey Willan, and Alec Wyton.

September 21, 2024

"Welcome Back – Recorder Music for a Fresh Start!"

Led by Deborah Booth

We are planning two one-hour sessions for our first Saturday, September 21st. The first hour we will explore music of the Renaissance with increasing levels of complexity as we move through the class. For the second session we will study Baroque pieces of various national styles, culminating with J. S. Bach. English Renaissance selections will include pieces by Robert Fayrfax, John Dowland, and Henry Stonings. The Stonings piece is called a "Browning," a terrific ensemble challenge and quite beautiful to play. We will explore this selection throughout our year with the thought to performing it in our final session in May. The Fayrfax and Dowland pieces will be good steppingstones for approaching the more difficult quintet by Stonings. Baroque selections include a J. S. Bach chorale with a fully ornamented variation in all four parts. It is a wonderful technical workout for each of our instruments - SATB. This could also serve as a performance piece later in the season. Preceding this I will present a "Baroque Sampler" with music by Thomas Arne and Jean-Baptiste Lully to introduce the Bach chorale and variation.

October 12, 2024

Led by Gene Murrow

One of the great monuments of "early music" is William Byrd's lamentation upon the death of his teacher, Thomas Tallis. We'll work on three of Tallis' gorgeous, shorter pieces to understand why Byrd, and generations of music lovers since, have revered Tallis. Gene will also include two pieces introduced by Deborah Booth at the September opening session.

The first is Henry Stonings' "Browning my dear" and the second is a chorale and variation on "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her" by Johann Sebastian Bach.

November 9, 2024

"Music for Singing, Playing, and Dancing"

Led by David Hurd

Thomas Tallis – If ye love me

Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her

Chorale:

Michael Praetorius (1609)

Johann Sebastian Bach

371/#46 – based on Christmas Oratorio, No.9

371/#344 – based on Christmas Oratorio, No. 23 [manuscript
of BWV 606]

BWV 606 – from Orgelbüchlein

David Hurd – Duets: 5 Variations

Browning my dear – Henry Stonings

Two Dances

Phalèse – Passemezo du Roy

(?) – Passamezzo d'Italie

December 7, 2024

"Music both Vertical & Horizontal – Harmony and Counterpoint"

Led by David Hurd

Thomas Tallis – If ye love me

Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her

Michael Praetorius (1609)

Johann Sebastian Bach – BWV 606 – from Orgelbüchlein

David Hurd – Fugal Duet

Girolamo Frescobaldi – Canzona Terza detta la Crivelli

Frank Shirley – Fughetta No. 1

Henry Stonings – Browning my dear

Johann Sebastian Bach – Bricht an, du schönes Morgenlicht [Ermuntre dich, stanza 9]

(Break forth, o beauteous heavenly light)