



NEWSLETTER

May 2009

Vol. 33 No.3

Meeting: May 9th

This is the final meeting of RSLI's 2008/09 season and time for our annual meeting and member's concert.

The Recorder Society of Long Island, Inc. regularly meets on the second Saturday of each month (Sept. through May) from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Dix Hills, NY. Playing begins at 10 a.m. with a refreshment break at 11:15 a.m.

Directions to St. Luke's Lutheran Church:

Deer Park Ave. south from Northern State Pkwy. (Exit 42) or north from the L.I.E. (Exit 51). Turn east onto Vanderbilt Pkwy. and after a very short distance turn right onto Candlewood Path; St. Luke's will be directly in front of you. Follow the driveway on the left of the church to the rear parking lot. Meetings are held in the education building, ground floor, rear



On the web at:

www.RSLI.info

A Message from RSLI's Music Director

Dear Friends —

As Spring blooms into being, the end of our playing meetings for the 2008/2009 season approaches! Yes, it's time for our special end-of-year meeting, which features, in addition to our usual large-ensemble playing, a short concert of pieces performed by various ensembles and individuals from our membership. So far, I'm happy to report that we already have a solo, a duet, and 3 ensembles performing. We do have room for more, though, so if you'd like to be more than audience for this part of the meeting, please let me know as soon as possible what you'd like to play for us.

It's been a very special year for us as a chapter, with new members joining, and our playing meetings and workshops being led by a variety of different musicians, from familiar faces that feel like family to fresh ones that inspire us anew. Our visitors, coming from three states, have included Deborah Booth, Gene Murrow, Valerie Horst, Larry Lipnik, Wendy Powers, Rainer Beckman, Ann Bies and Larry Zukof, and it's been an honor and a pleasure to have them join me in leading our chapter's music-making. Our mentor program continues to be a success (Thank you, Patsy!) and our chapter is regarded by my colleagues as one of the best (in terms of playing level) and healthiest in the country. Bravo!

I look forward to making music with you all again on May 9, and wish you a very happy summer of music-making!

— Rachel

Workshop for Advanced and Upper Intermediate players with members of the Flanders Recorder Quartet June 15-17, 2009

Brookhaven Hamlet (near Bellport)

There are still places available at this very special workshop for advanced and upper intermediate players. You may attend for 1, 2 or all 3 days.

Please contact Rachel Begley for further information.

www.rachelbegleyrecorder@yahoo.com

**The Recorder
Society
of
Long Island**

Directory of Officers 2008/2009

Rachel Begley, Music Director

Barbara Zotz, President

Sue Hahn, Vice President

Pat Cassin, Sec./Treasurer

Margaret Brown, Workshop Coordinator

Diana Foster, Newsletter Editor

Patricia Laurencot, Web Manager

Patsy Rogers, Librarian

Karen Wexler, Librarian

Godlind Johnson, Librarian

Sheila Regan, Refreshments

“*Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.*”

— J. S. BACH



President's Message

Dear Friends,

It's a lovely sunny day and the forsythia, daffodils and cherries stand in bright contrast to the newly green grass. It hardly seems possible that the year has rolled around and I am completing my first as your president. The time has flown. RSLI has had a great year with many of us managing to get to every meeting, no small feat. We have added several new members to our roster. Welcome to you all, and we hope you'll be with us for a long time! Our meetings have been conducted by terrific leaders, who have led us in truly inspirational music. Also, we are so lucky to have among us members who play larger recorders, thus enriching the timbre of the ensemble as well as adding to our listening pleasure. We even had a guest conductor who sang as we played, making it hard to keep playing for want of listening to his beautiful voice.

Joseph Shortsle, a new member, posted an article about RSLI this past winter on beyourart.com. In it, he encourages people to take up recorder playing and presents a nice history of our chapter. We

are pleased to include a reprint below. Did you know that we are over 30 years old and that we will be honored at the annual American Recorder Society meeting this coming July? Donna Basile will be there to take a bow on our behalf. By the way, the ARS itself is in its 70th year.

Congratulations to all who went “green” this year and brought mugs from home for coffee and tea. Thanks to all those generous cooks for all those delicacies- with a special nod to Gerry Major, pastry chef supreme! Thanks to Sheila Regan who sends us those cute reminders and guest conductor biographies. And, thanks to the members of the Board, who are happy to serve you.

Finally, a big thank you to our musical director, Rachel Begley, who found us the best guest conductors, not always an easy task, as many of them are performers with busy schedules. And thank you loyal members who come and play each month.

Have a super summer; be safe and healthy and happy. See you all in Sep-

Return to Music, Recorder Style by Joseph Shortsle

*Article originally co-published with the North Shoreian Magazine and BeYourArt.com in February of 2009.
Reproduced here by permission of BeYourArt.com.*

I understand things. Making music is fun and satisfying, but it can be a daunting prospect starting out. Assuming you can already read music at a basic level, major concerns are usually the cost of buying an instrument, deciding whether or not to take lessons, and finding opportunities to play the music that you enjoy. If these concerns are what are stopping you from pursuing music, either as a hobby or more seriously, I suggest you consider learning to play the recorder.

I understand our elementary school musical education. The recorder is ideal as a beginning instrument because the fundamentals of the instrument are easy to grasp. That's not to say that the recorder is a “simple” instrument. It is just as nuanced and faceted as many of our modern instruments affordable that most student instruments, as well. You can pick up a good set of plastic Yamaha recorders (called a consort and comprised of a soprano, alto, tenor, and bass recorder) for what you might expect to pay for a decent trumpet or clarinet.

There's another reason for my suggesting the recorder, too. Long Island is home to many local and amateur ensembles, including a chapter of the American Recorder Society. RSLI, the Recorder Society of Long Island, “consists of a group of music-loving recorder players of all ages and levels, ranging from beginner to advanced,” according to Margaret Brown, former President of RSLI. The musical director is Rachel Begley, but each month features a different guest conductor. Ms. Begley is a professional recorder artist who holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in recorder and early music from SUNY, Stony Brook. RSLI has been in existence since the 1970's

Concert Reviews: The Buzz from Far Western Long Island

Baroque Mash-up in Williamsburg – La Didone

When NY Times theater critic Ben Brantley reviews a 1641 Baroque opera, you know something special is happening. The cutting-edge Wooster Group mounted a production of a little-known opera by Francesco Cavalli based on the Dido and Aeneas theme mashed up with a presentation based on a oldie sci fi movie at St. Anne's Warehouse. This venue is located in trendy DUMBO (Down under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass) on the waterfront in Brooklyn. I had reservations about attending, given that electronics and amps were involved, but an email from harpsichordist (and assistant director of this production) — Jennifer Greisbach — was enough of a nudge. Plus the easy walk from my Brooklyn neighborhood to the space left me no excuse. The performing area was set up with the Baroque musicians (including electric guitar!) on the left, directed by Griesbach from an electronic keyboard, and the sci fi sound effects and technical wizardry on the right. At the beginning the plots unfolded in alternation, then the action and the performers began to intermesh, but two sets of supertitles help keep things relatively clear to the audience. The two concurrent plots had a lot in common: two “shipwrecks”, two captains, and two alien lands – ancient Carthage and a mysterious planet with immaterial vampire-like beings. The doomed love affair between Aeneas the Trojan War hero and Dido, the queen of Carthage, was beautifully sung by John Young and Hai-Ting Chinn. The sci fi troupe was quite wonderful with an early Star Trek affect (though their sets were much more au courant techie). As the Baroque singers and the space crew began to play parts in each other's production, it was hard to keep focus, but it did make a loopy kind of sense: the plot machinations of the Greek gods were paralleled by the

effects of non-visible space vampires on the spaceship crew. Importantly, the theater was filled with relatively young people – for sure I was the oldest by far. So over a four week time span, lots of newbies were introduced to Baroque opera. Let's hope they aren't disappointed by plain vanilla stagings in the future.

Jonathan Miller's Staging of St Matthew at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM)

How do you visualize a staging of Bach's St. Matthew's Passion? A bunch of performers in tuxedos and gowns behind music stands performing Bach? Jonathan Miller has a different vision. All performers are dressed in street clothes. The small Baroque orchestra is arrayed on the stage at BAM's Harvey Theater in a large circle. The soloists and chorus have the music memorized and “act” the events of the passion of Christ within the circle, with audience seated behind and in front of the orchestra. For some of the vocal solos, the corresponding instrumentalist stands or moves around engaging the singer in a musical dialog. Oboist Stephen Hammer, flautist Sandra Miller and violinist Jörg-Michael Schwarz played beautifully and compellingly while performing in this mode. FYI: Miller also doubled on recorder in this performance. Vocal soloists Curtis Streetman, as Jesus, and Rufus Muller (a special favorite of mine), as the evangelist, were truly outstanding. The audience was totally focused and silent. This was one of the most emotionally compelling performances of any musical event I've ever attended. If it comes around again, go!

— *Nancy M. Tooney*

Shortsle

ers, physicians, scientists, homemakers, lawyers, information technology people, college professors, and artists.”

Music does not have to be a full-time profession. You can add a little music to your life with a modest financial investment and a little practice at home. Dues for the American Recorder Society are \$40 per year and RSLI charges \$10 per session as a playing fee (which compensates the guest conductors for their time). Visitors and new-comers are invited to play “for free” on their first visit. The RSLI meets once a month and is invaluable both for guidance (ask to be paired with a mentor if you're feeling unsure of yourself) and for being able to play with a full ensemble. I can speak from experience that RSLI's members are welcoming, generous, and genuinely want you to succeed.

Exploring music is a worthwhile and fulfilling activity. Don't be afraid to test the waters! Inquire about affordable lessons at your local music store or college campus, check online for affordable instruments, and check the bulletin boards at libraries and community centers for beginner's courses. If you've been looking for an opportunity to play music casually, or if you've been looking for opportunities to play early music repertoire, I urge you to go www.rslinfo.com and contact RSLI. You'll find that Long Island is home to a wonderful and supportive group of musicians who “just like to have fun playing together.”

The Recorder Society of Long Island will hold its annual meeting on May 9, 2009 and will elect officers and board members to serve for 2009-2010.

The proposed slate is as follows:

Rachel Begley – Music Director
Barbara Zotz – President
Sue Hahn – Vice President
Pat Cassin – Secretary/Treasurer
Diana Foster – Newsletter Editor
Margaret Brown – Workshop Coordinator
Godlind Johnson – Librarian
Karen Wexler - Librarian
Patsy Rogers – Librarian
Sheila Regan – Refreshments
Patricia Laurencot – Web Manager

**Don't forget the
2009 Boston Early Music Festival!
June 6-14
(attend for 1-9 days)**

A true feast of early music, including many concerts with recorders and an exhibition featuring makers and music shops from around the world!

Concerts, exhibition, workshops, master-classes, some days have concerts from 9 in the morning until 11 at night!

The festival has become a biannual pilgrimage for many of our chapter members. See and hear for yourself what brings them back time and time again.
www.bemf.org 617-868-BEMF

Treasurer's Report: September 1, 2008—March 31, 2009

Balance Aug. 31, 2008	\$3677.86		
Income		Expenses	
Member Dues	\$1120.00	Conductor fees	\$1325.00
Misc. purchases (music, instruments, etc.)	198.98	Newsletter expenses	124.32
Playing fees	1290.00	Postage	6.00
Santa Oops! sale	136.00	Refreshments	68.44
Swing band rent	45.00	Rent	810.00
Workshop Participant Fee	715.00	Workshop rent	125.00
		Workshop Conductor fees	600.00
		Secretary expense (binder)	9.01
Total Income	\$3504.98	Total Expenses	\$3067.77
Balance March 31, 2009	\$4115.07		