I have chosen to write about changes in our view of recorder history over the last 50 years because Edgar Hunt’s *The Recorder and its Music* was published exactly 50 years ago in 1962. This book was the first published piece of writing of significant length devoted to the entire history of the recorder. (An American dissertation by Lloyd Schmidt, submitted in 1959, had covered the territory better, but it was never published, in whole or in part.)

And despite the overview provided by the collection of essays in *The Cambridge Companion to the Recorder*, published in 1992, Hunt’s book wasn’t superseded until 2007, with the publication of János Bali’s *A furulya*, which is based on the latest research. You might be interested in making your own comparison of Hunt’s book with Bali’s, except that Bali’s happens to be in Hungarian, a language that few Americans speak. I will make my own comparison of Hunt’s view of recorder history 50 years ago with ours today.

I began my acquaintance with the history of the recorder by buying Hunt’s book in its year of publication, when I was 15, and reading it over and over from cover to cover. Over the next few years, I wrote comments in the margins, such as “Speculation,” “Source?” and “Nonsense.” My research career had begun....

He recently won the Frances Densmore Prize from the American Musical Instrument Society for the most distinguished article-length work in English published in 2010 for his two-part article “New Light on the Early History of the Keyed Bugle.” Since he retired from his position as Head of Reference Services in the Cook Music Library at Indiana University in January 2011, he has been devoting himself to many unfinished writings and editions, to his own publishing company Instant Harmony, and to the practice of energy medicine. See his web site, www.instantharmony.net.

What is a Recorder?

Hunt began his book with a chapter called “The Origin of the Recorder,” which is also about definitions, names and sizes. He defines the instrument this way: “The recorder is a tube, one end of which is partly blocked, and shaped to form a ‘whistle’ mouthpiece. Here the tube is almost closed by a plug called the ‘fipple,’ leaving a narrow channel or ‘windway’ through which the player’s breath is directed, across an opening in one side of the tube, against the sharp edge of the ‘lip,’ setting up vibrations.... The chief difference which separates [the recorder] from other fipple flutes ... is the fact that the recorder has a thumb hole in addition to seven finger holes.” This definition still works for us, except that the terms “fipple” and “fipple flute” have been abandoned, because scholars couldn’t agree on what part of the instrument a fipple is. So now we speak of “the block” and “duct flutes.”

Hunt added that the recorder has a “tapering bore ... generally cylindrical near the mouthpiece, getting smaller in the part with the finger holes, some-
times straightening out again towards the other end.” And he went on to say that “The average recorder is made in three parts, known respectively as the head, which includes the mouthpiece, fipple or block, and the lip....” We can see that he was describing the Baroque type of recorder, at least as interpreted by 20th-century makers up to the early 1960s. Nowadays we need to consider Medieval, Renaissance, Classical, Romantic, modern and ultra-modern recorders, too.

In his chapter on design, Hunt does discuss recorders of the 16th century, mentioning only one design: “a gentle narrowing follows the line of the inner bore most of the way down before gently flaring out.... The inner bore of these renaissance recorders is wide in proportion to the length, mainly because the taper is not as acute as is the case with the later instruments.” Despite his familiarity with Ganassi, Hunt also stated that such instruments have a compass of an octave and a sixth.

As for the name “recorder,” which often brings up questions at parties and on the Internet, Hunt noted “the generally accepted derivation ... from the root verb ‘to record,’ which has many meanings besides the basic one of ‘to write down something in order that it can be remembered later.’ One of these is ‘to sing like a bird....’” Hunt was misled by Brian Trowell’s discovery of a payment for “i. [una] fistula nomine Ricordo” (one pipe named Ricordo) in the household accounts for 1388 of the future King Henry IV of England, and Trowell’s conclusion that “ricordo” was Italian, meaning ‘memento.’ Anthony Rowland-Jones has gone back to the original accounts to discover that they refer to, not “ricordo” but “Ricordour,” thus demolishing Trowell’s theory in one fell swoop.

Modern authorities do derive “recorder” from the verb to record, stemming first of all from the verb recorder in Anglo-French, the dialect of French spoken in England after the Norman Conquest. Then the word goes back to the Old French recorder, and ultimately the Latin recordari, to remember (re-, back, plus cor, from cor, heart or mind; thus, to bring back to mind). The Middle English Dictionary sets out no fewer than seven families of meanings for “to record” in the 14th century, deriving the instrument from the definition “repeat, reiterate, recite, rehearse (a song).” The other definition that Hunt mentions, “to sing like a bird,” is not actually recorded until the early 16th century (forgive the pun).

My research has shown that in other countries in the late 14th century and early 15th, the Medieval terms for tabor-pipe, such as the French flauté, were taken over by the new recorder: for example, French flûte or flute. That seems to have been true in England as well, where flute and recorder overlapped until about 1430. After that the new term took over. Why did England need a new word for a soft duct flute? Perhaps because it lacked any term for duct flute—not even the French term flalot, the origin of flageolet.

Hunt noted that “The recorder has had many different names in different languages ... deriving from the instrument’s various features: its beak, the fipple or block, its sweetness of tone, the fact that it is held straight in front of the player, possible English origins, and to distinguish it from the German flute.” Here he forgot to take into account a term he well knew, the 16th-century French flûte à neuf trous, “flute with nine holes,” which derived from the doubled bottom hole on early recorders, allowing for playing with left hand or right hand on top.

He mentioned in connection with Jacob van Eyck, but didn’t consider here, the terms handflûte and handtff, found in Dutch sources from the 16th and 17th centuries, and their German equivalent, Handflûte, in a German inventory of 1582. He skipped over flauta d’Italianno, an alternative name given by Philibert Jambe de Fer, and he didn’t know about flauta all’italiana, in an inventory from Siena in 1548, or flauto italiano, in Bartolomeo Bismantova’s treatise of 1677/1694, all of which mean “Italian flute.” He also didn’t know flauto da 8 [otto] fori, “flute with eight holes,” found in a 17th-century Italian tutor, or the Florentine term zufolo, found in inventories from 1463 to 1700, which derives from the verb zufolare, “to blow” or “to whistle.”

Hunt’s idea about possible English origins for the recorder presumably relates to the accounts of 1388. An earlier probable reference has now turned up in a letter from 1378 written by the Infante (Crown Prince) Juan of Catalunya–Aragón, mentioning that his ambassador was going to Valencia: “and send us the lutes and the flabutes as quickly as possible.” Unfortunately, it’s not clear whether the flabutes had been made in Valencia or obtained elsewhere. Anthony Rowland-Jones has shown that the earliest incontrovertible depictions of the recorder are in paintings from the Catalan court of Aragón in Barcelona from about 1390, particularly from the workshop of the Serra brothers (below).
Nevertheless, Nicholas Lander, who is a botanist as well as a recorder player, has rightly pointed out that we need to change our mentality about the origins of such an instrument: “If we are to speculate, could it not be that the recorder family is polyphyletic [a group of organisms that are classified into the same group but came from different ancestors] rather than monophyletic [organisms that share recent common ancestors], that it emerged at a variety of different times, in a number of places, in a variety of forms each of which underwent subsequent development and modification? This conjecture would account for the disparate morphology [form and structure] of the surviving fragments (that is, both open vs end-stopped, cylindrically vs obconically bored), for the various distinctive external forms depicted in illustrations of the medieval and early Renaissance period (cylindrical, near-cylindrical, flared-bell), and for the variety of presumed internal bores associated with these forms (cylindrical, wide-bore, choke bore, etc.).”

Hunt was aware of the soprano-sized “Dordrecht recorder,” probably from the late 14th century (photo at top). Some other early specimens have since been discovered:

- a sopranino-sized instrument in Tartu, Estonia, from the second half of the 14th century with a range of a ninth, perhaps imported from north Germany
- a similar size in Göttingen of dubious dating that has a semitone for its first step and a range of three octaves
- a soprano-sized instrument in Nysa, Poland, reportedly from the 14th century
- another soprano-sized instrument in Elblag in Poland (left) from the mid-15th century, again with a semitone for its first step
- a fragment from a monastery in Esslingen, near Stuttgart; a more doubtful fragment in Würzburg.

The Recorder in the Renaissance
Hunt rapidly moved on from what he called “the doubts of the Middle Ages.” But we have new evidence of sets of three or four recorders in the early 15th century. For example, an inventory of Juan of Catalunya–Aragón’s brother and successor, King Martí, in 1410 mentions “tres flautes, dues grosses e una negra petita” (two flautes: two large and one small black one). Perhaps these instruments included the ones bought for the Infante in 1378. In any case, these instruments apparently constitute a set of three in two different sizes—good for playing the three-part consort music of the day.

The Court of Burgundy bought sets of four recorders in 1426 and 1443, about the time the Court composer Gilles Binchois started writing chansons in four parts (his Filles à marier dates from the 1430s). The royal minstrel Verdelet, a celebrated player of the flajolet, perhaps actually the flute (recorder), died in 1436.

Flutes were played at the Court in circumstances that strongly suggest sets of recorders. At a great banquet in 1454, “four minstrels with flutes played most melodiously.” Fourteen years later at a royal wedding, there were “four wolves having flutes in their paws, and the said wolves began to play a chanson.” The wolves were directly followed by four singers who “sang a chanson in four parts.” Therefore, the wolves probably played a four-part chanson on recorders.

We can now identify a number of professional recorder players of the 15th century, such as the blind German organist and composer Conrad Paumann, and several city minstrels of Bruges.

Hunt knew the reference at the English Court to Henry VII’s payment in 1492 to “the child that pleyeth on the records.” He didn’t know the payment in 1501 to Guiliam van der Burgh, a Flemish member of the trombone and shawm consort at Court, “for new recorders.”

He noted a list of seven recorder players at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, including five members of the Venetian Bassano family. I have devoted a whole book to the Bassano family, showing how five brothers immigrated to England in the 1530s. Beginning in 1539, they constituted a five-part recorder consort, which expanded to six members in 1550. Remarkably, that consort lasted until the amalgamation of the various wind consorts around 1630—about 90 years. Most of the consort’s members came from three generations of the Bassano family. The Bassanos in England and Venice were also well-known woodwind makers.

Hunt cited five 16th-century inventories that included vast numbers of recorders, beginning with Henry VIII’s inventory of 1547, which includes 76. I started to make a listing of the references to members of the flute family in such inventories as well as records of purchases, and I ended up compiling an article of 100 pages and a book of 350 pages.
that also included newspaper advertisements in the 18th century. These listings present raw evidence about the history of the recorder quite different from treatises, tutors, and literary sources. I have drawn on that evidence to discuss sizes, consorts, makers and pitches.

Hunt was familiar with the important recorder treatises of the 16th and early 17th centuries by Virdung (1511), Agricola (1528 and 1545), Ganassi (1535), Jambe de Fer (1556), Praetorius (1618–19), and Mersenne (1636). Some other treatises have shown up since in manuscript. A Swiss manuscript of around 1510, headed “Discant,” gives fingerings for a discant recorder. Hunt wrote confidently about Ganassi that “There never was a second Fontegara.” But we have three new Italian sources. The important treatise by Girolamo Cardano (c.1546) refers to and builds on Ganassi; it includes such modern-sounding devices as tongue vibrato and controlling the pitch or intonation by closing the bell hole. Aurelio Virgiliano’s collection of ricercars, Il dolcimelo, includes a fingering chart for the discant recorder. The treatise by Bartolomeo Bismantova (written in 1677, revised in 1694) contains a section on the recorder. He still knew the discant in G, even though it was by then in three joints, and his articulation syllables are similar to the Renaissance ones, adding two new smooth ones that presumably reflect violin technique.

To go back to the early 16th century, Virdung discussed three sizes of recorder: discant in G, tenor in C, and bass in F. Hunt wrote that “by the beginning of the seventeenth century the families of instruments outlined by Virdung had grown,” although he later amends this statement: “Although Praetorius is writing in 161[8], he is not telling his readers about new instruments but ones that were well established in his day, made and played probably fifty or sixty years earlier.” Hunt also cites a Verona inventory of 1569, which mentions crooks for the three largest of 22 recorders, and he notes that a double-bass instrument has survived.

Both the surviving recorders and the inventories of the period discovered since Hunt was writing confirm that the extra sizes were not a product of the early 17th century. An inventory made at the Medici court in Florence in 1520 mentions “three new large recorders for the bass part” (tri flauti grandi, novi, da contrabasso). Identical terminology is found in a set of recorders that the celebrated wind player Wolff Gans is said to have bought in Augsburg for the Brussels court in 1535: “one for the bass part the height of a man.” A surviving extended great bass recorder by Hans Rauch, evidently dating from the same time, is the height of the tallest of men, 2.433 m (about 8 feet). The same size of recorder is mentioned as the bottom member of a consort in an inventory from the Madrid court in 1559: “four recorders, one very large about three baras in length, and the others each decreasingly smaller.” This recorder was also about 8 feet long. The consort would presumably have consisted of extended great bass, (extended) bass, basset and tenor sizes.

Mersenne depicted large recorders “sent from England to one of our kings.” I have shown that they were almost certainly made by the Bassanos.

Cardano mentions a higher size, in D, for the first time in a treatise. Such a size had already been listed in an Antwerp inventory of 1532 under the name bovensanck. Both soprano and sopranino sizes appear in inventories from Graz, 1577 (khlainere discantl and khlaine flöttlen), and Berlin, 1582 (Dischantt Pfeifflein and klein Dischantt Pfeifflein). The distinction between C and D sopranos, however, is not apparently made in an inventory until Hechingen, 1609 (alt, discant, bobe discant) and Kassel, 1613 (Alt, Soprani, höhere Soprani).

Hunt commented that “The makers of the sixteenth century, with the exception of Rauch von Schrattenbach, are known to us only by their marks and initials.” Adrian Brown and I have written a long summary of what is now known about these makers: as well as the Rauch family, there are the
Schnitzer family, the Hess brothers, the Bassano family, Hieronymus, and the Rafi family. I have also written about some major players of that century: Benvenuto Cellini and his father Giovanni, Hans Nagel, Tielm Susato, Sylvestro Ganassi, Simone Nodi, and the Gans family.

As I mentioned before, Hunt knew only one kind of Renaissance recorder: wide bore with gentle flare and restricted range. Adrian Brown has since examined about 120 of the 200 surviving instruments from the 16th century, dividing them into three types based on their inner bore:

- More or less conical: approximately from the mouthpiece to around the thumb hole, contracting in an irregular cone to around the lowest tone hole, then expanding gently to the bell in an obconic or counter-conical fashion (“flared bell”). This bore type is found in the majority of surviving Renaissance recorders, of all sizes.

- Cylindrical, or near-cylindrical, but often with a more pronounced expansion between the seventh tone hole and the end of the bell. Recorders with this type of bore have a more open sound, richer in harmonics than those with a conical bore. Moreover, they can often play more notes in the higher register, although it is debatable whether this was the original goal of the makers. The main limitation of recorders with the cylindrical type of bore is that the physical constraints it imposes on the positioning of the tone holes make larger sizes impossible.

- The so-called “choke” bore, or what Brown calls the “step” bore: cylindrical from the mouthpiece to a point around the seventh tone hole, then a short, but steep conical section, creating an abrupt “stepped” contraction in the bore. It gives a rather sedate character to the instrument, weaker lower notes than the conical and cylindrical counterparts, but the ability to play several more notes in the high register using fingerings close to our modern “Baroque” fingerings. Janbe de Fer already gives several variants of these fingerings in 1556, so they antedate the Baroque recorder by a good hundred years.

Incidentally, we now have a wonderful catalog of the 43 surviving Renaissance recorders in the Kunsthistorische Museum in Vienna, Austria.

**The Golden Age**

Hunt said little about Renaissance repertoire. In a long and brilliant article, Peter Van Heyghen has demonstrated how recorders played mostly vocal repertoire, not in “arrangements” but taking the music straight from the vocal parts. “The prime concern in tuning Renaissance recorders [of all types] seems to have been the intervallic relationships of a fifth between all adjacent sizes within a consort or set. Since a basic four-part recorder consort was always comprised of three adjacent sizes only ... all Renaissance recorders, regardless of their nominal and sounding pitches, could be considered virtual sizes in F, C, and G.” Players could shift “registers” by changing clefs while still imagining their instruments to be “in” F, C or G (which correspond to the “soft,” “natural” and “hard” hexachords), regardless of their size.

Hunt apparently knew a handful of depictions of the recorder in works of art. In the last 50 years we have seen enormous progress in recorder iconography. On his Recorder Home Page, Nicholas Lander has an ongoing catalog of depictions that contains more than 4,300 entries.

Anthony Rowland-Jones, in particular, has written no fewer than 16 articles on iconography, from the Middle Ages through the 17th century, discussing eloquently the light the depictions shed on the instrument’s physical forms, symbolism, and social history.

The new sources for the history of the recorder confirm that, at least from the 16th century onwards, three classes of people have played the instrument: professionals, amateurs and children.

Besides discussing Praetorius and Mersenne, Hunt devoted only three pages to the recorder between 1600 and 1660: music by anonymous (in Breslau), Antonio Bertali, Johann Heinrich Schmelzer, Heinrich Biber and Jacob van Eyck. In another brilliant article, Peter Van Heyghen showed that the recorder was rare in Italy in the first half of the 17th century and there wasn’t as much freedom of instrumentation as we have thought.
contrast, I have shown that a recorder consort featured prominently in London theater music of this period, and was also used by city musicians (the waits) and musicians of noblemen.

Hunt assumed that the “preparatory” recorder instructions found in some of the surviving copies of Van Eyck’s Der Fluyten Lust-böck stemmed from him. Thanks to the researches of Thiemo Wind, we know that they originated with the publisher, Paulus Mattysz. Wind, with some help from Ruth Van Baak Griffioen, has researched Van Eyck and his milieu in enormous detail, the fruits of which have been included in his recent book, Jacob van Eyck and the Others (the “others” being some contemporary Dutchmen who also composed solo pieces for the recorder).

Wind stresses that Van Eyck wrote sets of variations, not frozen improvisations, and that some of his variation technique stemmed from his main employment as a player of the carillon (sets of tuned bells hung from church towers). The psalm tunes, which modern players tend to find boring, were put in explicitly for publication because of their popularity among the Calvinist audience of the day.

From J. S. Manifold’s book The Music in English Drama: From Shakespeare to Purcell (1956) Hunt was familiar with five different associations of recorders in music for the theater: funerals, the supernatural, love scenes, pastorals, and imitation of birds. About the pastoral he put forward his theory that “the shepherd’s pipe, the portable instrument with which he passes the time while tending his sheep, although in fact more probably a bagpipe or simple reed instrument, can be figuratively a flute of some kind, and so a recorder.” I have shown in my recent book on early writings about members of the flute family that shepherds played duct flutes at least as far back as the 13th century. And there’s a beautiful quote about the recorder in a French play of 1453:

Bergier qui a penettiere / bien douant, ferme et entiere, / c’est un petit roy. / Bergier qui ha penettiere / a bons douans par derriere, / fermant par bonne maniere, / que lui faut il, quoy?
/ Il a son chappeau d’oie, / son poinsson, son aleiniere, / son crog, / sa boullete chiere, / sa boiste au terquoy / beau gippon sur soy, / et, pour l’esbonoy, / sa grosse flute pleniere, / souliers de courroy / a beaux tasseaux par derriere. / Face feste et bonne chiere: / c’est un petit roy!

(The shepherd who has a bread basket that closes tightly and is firm and intact, he is a little king. The shepherd who has a bread basket with good clasps in back, closing the right way, what more does he need? He has his wicker gar­land, his awl, his awl case, his hook, his dear crook, his box of pitch, a fine long-sleeved tunic, and, for amusement, his grosse flute pleniere, wears leather shoes with fine tassels in back. Happy face and good cheer: he is a little king.)

I have explored the English theater music of the first half of the 17th century, finding that recorders were used in three contexts:
- apparently representing “the music of the spheres,” they were associated with the supernatural, death, and appearances of or portents from the gods
- they expressed love, whether supernatural or mortal
- they announced entrances of royalty or nobility.

Who made the first Baroque recorder?
In describing the achievements of the Hotteterre family, who originated in the village of La Couture-Boussey west of Paris, Hunt clearly wanted to tell a good story, but had to hedge: “By far the most important contributions of the Hotteterre family to music are the improvements in the making of wood-wind instruments which have been ascribed to them.... The Hotteterres are said to have given the hautboy, flute and recorder their characteristic joints....

It is probable that in this village of La Couture-Boussey, the baroque recorder, with its bulging joints and tapering bore (similar to that of the one-keyed flute), was evolved in time for Bach and Telemann to use to the full....”

We have already noted a similar bore and fingerings to the Baroque type of recorder in the mid-16th century. The creation of the Baroque recorder has nevertheless often been attributed to the Hotteterre family, and particularly to Jean Hotteterre I (fl.1628–1692?), although there seem to be only two main pieces of written evidence.

First, Borjon de Sceller (1672) wrote that Jean was “unique as maker of all kinds of instruments made from wood, ivory, and ebony, such as musettes, recorders, flageolets, oboes, cromornes, and even for making complete consorts of all these same instruments. His sons are hardly inferior to him in the practice of this art.” This only establishes that the Hotteterres were important woodwind makers: the sons no less than the father.

Second, the celebrated flutist Michel de La Barre (c.1675–1745)—writing several decades after the fact, perhaps as late as 1740—claimed that Jean-Baptiste Lully’s “promotion [at Court] meant the downfall of all the old instruments except the hautboy, thanks to the Philidors and Hotteterres, who spoiled so much wood and played so much music that they finally succeeded in rendering it useable in ensembles. From that time on, musettes were left to she­pherds, and violins, recorders, theorboes, and viols took their place, for the transverse flute did not arrive until later.” This belated account maintains that both the Hotteterres and the Philidors were responsible for transforming the shawm into the oboe (the instruments have the same name in French); recorders are mentioned only among the instruments that replaced the musettes.
Anthony Baines did point out in his influential book *Woodwind Instruments and their History* (1957; third edition, 1967) that Jean Hotteterre was primarily a maker of musettes (bagpipes), the irregular profile of which is reminiscent of the Baroque recorder. The new instrument certainly developed the reputation of being French: the name *flûte douce* quickly spread into England, Germany, and The Netherlands. On the other hand, Bismantova in 1677/94 depicts a similar recorder in G, calling it *flauto italiano*.

Hunt wrote that “The most illustrious member of this family was Jacques Hotteterre le Romain who was probably born about 1680 and lived to about 1760. Where ‘le Romain’ originated is not known—it was probably acquired as a result of a visit to Italy.”

We now know Jacques’s dates (1673–1763) and that he did work in Italy from 1698 to 1700, at the court of Prince Ruspoli. By the way, two other Frenchmen, not mentioned by Hunt, wrote methods for the recorder before Hotteterre: Etienne Loulié (1680s, revised 1701/2) and Jean-Pierre Freillon-Poncein (1700).

Jean-Baptiste Lully was mentioned by Hunt only in conjunction with the royal wind band. Thanks to the work of Laurence Pottier and Anthony Rowland-Jones (*right*), we now know that Lully wrote parts for the recorder on 60 occasions. Rowland-Jones has noted: “They are spread across seventeen ballets, masquerades, and divertissements, five *comédies-ballets* (mainly with Molière), and all but one ... of his fourteen completed *tragédies en musique*... In the process Lully employed most of the recorder’s uniquely wide range of associations and symbolisms”: earthly (pastoral, sensual, love, sleep, water, birds) and heavenly (magic, gods, sacrifices, death, Mercury, Muses, conflict)—generally more than one symbolism for each occasion. It may seem obvious, but it’s worth stressing that Lully was responsible for integrating the new woodwind instruments into the strings, thus creating the standard Baroque orchestra.

Other important French composers of the late Baroque not mentioned by Hunt, such as Marc-Antoine Charpentier, Michel-Richard de Lalande, and Michel Pignolet de Montéclair, included recorder parts in their vocal music.

Hunt devoted two pages to the enthusiasm the diarist Samuel Pepys had for the recorder in 1668. Certainly Pepys wrote a celebrated striking account of the effect on him of what seems to have been a recorder consort providing incidental music for a play: “But that which did please me beyond any thing in the whole world was the wind-musique when the angel comes down, which is so sweet that it ravished me, and indeed, in a word, did wrap up my soul so that it make me really sick, just as I have formerly been when in love with my wife; that neither then, nor all the evening going home, and at home, I was able to think of any thing, but remained all night transported, so as I could not believe that ever any musique hath that real command over the soul of a man as did this upon me.”

Hunt speculated that Pepys might have heard “the new *flûtes douces*, which looked and sounded different from the early types—instruments made in the three joints and with the characteristic bulges and turnings which we now take for granted....”

I have put forward a different theory: the theater had been banned in England during the Civil War and Commonwealth (1642–60). When it returned, the links to the old music tradition, including recorder consorts, had been strained. Therefore, Pepys was probably hearing such a consort for the first time—but it would still have been one of Renaissance-type recorders.

There is strong evidence that the Baroque recorder arrived from France in 1673 with James Paisible and his colleagues. The instrument immediately changed its English name from recorder to *flute douce* or plain *flute*, thus causing confusion in the minds of modern writers who know only the later meaning of the word “flute.”

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**Baroque Music and Makers**

Hunt mentioned Drumbley, the London maker from whom Pepys bought a recorder. I have shown that Samuel Drumbley formed part of a large network of woodwind makers who belonged to the Turners Company of London. That network included such well-known makers as Thomas Stanesby Sr. and Jr., but not foreign makers working in London such as Peter Bressan and the Schucharts.

Although thorough in his treatment of Henry Purcell’s recorder music, Hunt benefitted from a thorough article on the subject by Walter Bergmann. He also briefly covered Daniel Purcell, Henry’s lesser-known younger brother, Paisible, and John Banister I (who was actually a flageolet player), before heading on to a few English tutors.

In his next chapter he began with the alleged introduction of the Baroque flute to England by John Loeillet around 1705. In fact it was already mentioned in the James Talbot manuscript of around 1695. Much of what Hunt said about the Loeillet family has now been superseded.

Hunt complained that little was known about the life of Robert Valentine, but that is true no longer. Baptized in Leicester in 1674, he went to Rome at an early age and worked there until his death in 1747.

The little that Hunt said about Johann Christian Schickhardt “of Hamburg” has also been augmented by my researches. Schickhardt was born in Germany and did spend a little time in Hamburg, but most of his career was spent in The Netherlands and Scandinavia. A woodwind player himself, Schickhardt produced instruction manuals for both the recorder and oboe, but he was known primarily through his popular chamber music. Hunt didn’t know, but you may know, Schickhardt’s 24 sonatas in all the keys for recorder, flute or violin and basso continuo, published in London around 1732.

Hunt mentioned the concertos for small recorders of William Babell, John Baston and Robert Woodcock. Again, we have more biographical information on these composers, mostly from my own research. Hunt discusses The Division Flute and briefly mentions that some of the divisions had appeared previously in a tutor. I have collected all the instances of divisions in recorder music, showing the extent of the practice in England and on the Continent in the late Baroque.

Hunt devoted more space than I would have done to the recorder music of Johann Christoph Pepusch, which is generally dull enough that Hans Ulrich Staeps recommended recomposing it. As for George Frideric Handel, Hunt mentioned the cantata Nel dolce dell’oblio, the masque Acis and Galatea, the recorder sonatas, two trio sonatas, a couple of short pieces in two operas, and Alexander’s Feast. Evidently, Hunt didn’t go through the complete works of Handel, or he would have realized the full extent of Handel’s contribution to the history of the recorder: recorder parts in no fewer than 27 operas, a masque, nine oratorios, six cantatas, three sacred works, and three orchestral works, besides the sonatas and trio sonatas. The autograph manuscripts of the recorder sonatas have been discovered, and editions, including my own, made from them rather than the untrustworthy prints of Walsh. The sonatas seem to have been written for Handel to play with his royal pupils, Princess Anne and her sisters Amelia and Caroline Elizabeth.

Hunt knew some recorder music by Giuseppe Sammartini, Alessandro Scarlatti and Antonio Vivaldi. No fewer than 29 recorder sonatas by Sammartini have turned up in two manuscripts; a complete edition is slowly coming out. Eleven chamber cantatas by Scarlatti include recorder parts, and he also wrote seven so-called sonatas for recorder and strings.

Hunt wrote: “Much further research is needed to decide which works, from the quantity of Vivaldi’s instrumental music being published by Ricordi, are rightly for the transverse flute, and which really belong to the recorder.... It is known that the six concertos of his Op. 10 were originally for recorder, but published by Vivaldi as for the traversa when the instrument became so much more popular.” For one of my earliest research projects, I took up Hunt’s challenge and wrote an article about Vivaldi’s recorder music. Over the next few years, I made the first editions of the concertos and chamber music that had not been previously available outside the complete works of the composer.

Now we have Francesco Maria Sardelli’s book-length study of Vivaldi’s flute and recorder music, which also shows for the first time the extent of the recorder’s involvement in the composer’s vocal music.

Hunt did do justice to the recorder music of Johann Sebastian Bach, covering Brandenburg Concertos No. 2 and 4, the F major version of the latter, the St. Matthew Passion, and 23 cantatas, concluding that “these cantatas of Bach are the richest store for the recorder player to explore, and every performance enhances one’s love for their music.” He was familiar with the transposition problems caused by differences in pitch between the organ and wind parts of the vocal works.

And he brought up the vexing problem of what Bach meant by fiauti d’Ebo in Brandenburg No. 4, without coming to a conclusion. More ink has been spilled over this question than any other in recorder history, which apparently cannot be entirely resolved. The echoes in the recorder parts in the second movement may have been real or figurative or both. A double recorder—two joined recorders of different tonal properties—was known and may or may not have been intended by Bach.
The recorders could have been in G or F or both.

The value of Telemann’s recorder was well understood by Hunt, who knew virtually all the instrument music: the sonatas, duets, trio sonatas, quartets, A-minor suite, and concertos, as well as the cantatas of Der harmonische Gottesdienst. The Neue Sonatinen have since been rediscovered, at first without their bass part. Ulrike Teske-Spellerberg has discussed how Telemann employed the recorder in no fewer than 93 cantatas and vocal serenades written between 1716 and 1762, but concentrated primarily in the years 1720–31.

Hunt couldn’t mention one of the most important Baroque composers for the recorder, whose work has remained virtually unknown until the last few years: Reinhard Keiser, the main composer at the Hamburg Opera from 1696 to 1728. He wrote 66 operas, of which only 22 have survived, but only two of those do not contain recorder parts. Collectively these operas include 59 arias and eight other movements with recorder parts.

Keiser uses recorders with the same symbolisms and associations as other composers: the representation of nature (wind, flowers, forest), birds, sleep, and love fulfilled. But he also puts recorders in what Lucia Carpena calls “unusual contexts”: love that is unfulfilled, suffering or unhappy; farewell, lament or despair; irony; and magic.

The mass of published sonatas and concertos for single recorders can easily lead modern recorder players to conclude that the recorder consort had died out well before the late Baroque. Howard Mayer Brown, in The Cambridge Companion to the Recorder, even went so far as to state: “The Renaissance can be said to close when recorders ceased to be played in consorts.” Yet we have already noted recorder consorts in England through the 1660s; occasional pieces survive in vocal music by Lully, Charpentier, Montéclair, Telemann and Galliard; and we have records of consorts in three parts being purchased in 1685 (Richard Haka for the Swedish Navy), 1699 (for the Court of Anhalt-Zerbst), 1710 and c.1720 (Jacob Denner for a duke and a monastery).

My book A Listing of Inventories, Sales, and Advertisements Relating to Flutes, Recorders, and Flageolets, 1631–1800, includes a number of instances of recorder consorts in inventories and private sales as late as 1774. The most interesting is a consort of 16 recorders (four sopraninos, four sopranos, four altos, two tenors, and two bassets) made by Haka, in a Florentine inventory of 1700.

Hunt was acquainted with a number of Baroque recorder makers, although he knew little of their biography: the Stanesbys, Bressan, Schuchart, Bradbury, Haka, de Jager, van Heerde, Rottenburgh, Boekhout, Beukers, Wijne, Scherer, Rippert, Heitz, Kyn-
Researchers have turned up more and more evidence that the recorder continued to be played ... into the 19th century and beyond.

and to a modest extent by professionals, from its supposed demise around 1730 or 1740 into the 19th century and beyond. For example, I have shown how recorders were listed in advertisement in the U.S. from 1716 to 1815. The evidence does suggest that the larger sizes generally dropped out during the course of the 18th century, leaving sizes from alto up to soprano.

Hunt knew a method for the csakan from around 1830, noting that the instrument “had the seven finger-holes and thumb-hole of the recorder with the addition of a D sharp key.” He never came right out and said that it was a recorder, although it meets his definition. About other instruments of the Classical and Romantic periods, he cited some novelty instruments, then skipped on to the flageolet and double flageolet, which he called a “musical toy,” even though it was depicted on the spine of the dust cover of his book.

A great deal of research on the csakan has been done by Marianne Betz and by Nikolaj Tarasov, who has also developed a new perspective on duct flutes in the 19th century. What we would recognize as a recorder—a duct flute with an octaving thumb hole and seven finger holes—was performed right through the 19th century and overlapped with the 20th-century so-called “revival.” The csakan was simply a recorder, in the unusual key of A?, originally with walking-stick attachment, and associated primarily with the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The English flageolet began in the late 18th century with six finger holes, then developed a seventh finger hole and a thumb hole. Anyone say “recorder”?

The most successful instrument—mostly because it was louder—was the French flageolet, which retained its earlier arrangement of two thumb holes and four finger holes. All these instruments eventually developed keywork and an extended range, in the manner of contemporary flutes and oboes—not to mention novel ways of dealing with clogging. The csakan, then the French flageolet, enjoyed widespread popularity, attracting a number of charismatic professionals.

Hunt moved on from the csakan to “the revival of the recorder,” seeing it largely from an English viewpoint and especially his own involvement with it. I could say a great deal about what we now know about recorder revival, but that would take a lot more space.

Suffice it to say here that Arnold Dolmetsch was by no means the only modern maker who took up the early instrument, and the Dolmetsch family were far from alone in presenting it to the public in concert, as in the first Haslemere festival of 1925. For example, Martin Kirnbauer has written up the astonishing history of the Bogenhausen Künstlerkapelle in Germany, which performed early music on recorders and other instruments from 1899 to 1939.

There will be a stimulating chapter about the history of the recorder in the 20th century by Robert Ehrlich in a book we are writing with Nikolaj Tarasov for Yale University Press. Yes, I know this book has been 10 years in gestation, and people are getting tired of waiting for it—but it would have been premature to go to press 10 years ago, when so much essential research has been done since. Certainly, the view of recorder history presented in the Yale book will be vastly different from Edgar Hunt’s 50 years ago.

I am delighted to have been part of recorder research after Hunt and to have shared a quick overview of that research with you.
Bibliography of Major Sources: “What We Have learned about the History of the Recorder in the Last 50 Years,” by David Lasocki (American Recorder, 53, no. 5, Winter 2012)


**Sources Solely by the Author**


