

MANIFESTO:

THE RECORDER IN THE 21st CENTURY

FIRST DRAFT

Preamble

P/1. Aims of the Manifesto

The manifesto is based on a broad consensus and is intended as a document to serve as:

- * information for the public
- * information to support discussions concerning educational policies
- * the basis for further discussions and developments in the recorder world

P/2. Creation

The manifesto should be discussed broadly (using the internet) and finally agreed upon during the European ERTA-Conferences

SECTION A: PAST AND PRESENT

Chapter I: On the History of the Recorder

I/1. Middle Ages and Renaissance

We know that the recorder was used in the middle ages, but we don't (really) know (yet) how (which kind of instruments, which music, how it was performed). A challenge for future research and interpretational adventures!

In the renaissance the recorder was one of the most respected instruments. There is an abundance of wonderful music still to be discovered and performed (together with other instruments or in an ensemble of recorders)...

I/2. Baroque

The late baroque solo and chamber music for recorder forms the backbone of its repertoire; but also the canzonas and sonatas of the early baroque (even if not primarily for the recorder) have been brought to light by recorder players and integrated in the recorder's wider repertoire. The best part of the repertoire may already be known and published, but there is still music to be discovered (like the recorder parts in the baroque opera). Further research will shed new light on the transition of the instrument from its renaissance and early baroque construction to the late baroque type.

An important feature of baroque recorder music (next to its brilliance and virtuosity) is its relation to the doctrine of the affects, which allows a direct access to the emotional content of music (see also III/1 and III/2).

It is generally assumed that the recorder "disappeared" from the music scene in the middle of the 18th century - this is true in the sense that the important composers of the classical and

romantic period did not leave us works for the recorder. Closer inspection however shows that there has been an after life for the recorder, and some lovely music may lead to using the flageolet and the csakan (other instruments?) by recorder players...

I/3. The 20th Century

I/3a. The Recorder in Music Education

The interest in the recorder at the beginning of the 20th century was connected to the early music revival. It is true though that its popularity and rapid spread is due to its use as an instrument in (and for) teaching (with the collateral damage that the recorder still suffers from its image as a children's instrument). In Germany, movements like the Jugendbewegung led to the wide use (and sometimes abuse) of the recorder. After the middle of the century professional teaching (combined with professional playing, see I/3b) developed on all levels. At the end of the century highly trained, professionally educated recorder teachers set the standards (but there are still people teaching the recorder who are hardly more advanced than their students).

I/3b. The Recorder in Concert

It was some time before recorder playing in the 20th century reached professional standards (equal to those of the established instruments). After the middle of the century a series of important performers explored the virtuosic and expressive possibilities of the instruments, but also investigated new sounds and new playing techniques. This development was fostered by the now fast growing interest in early music but also by composers of the so called avant-garde who discovered the recorder (and its devoted players) as partners in their own search for new sounds and structures. The charismatic Frans Brüggen contributed widely to these developments and also to the general acceptance of the recorder in the world of music.

In the second half of the 20th century the technique of recorder playing has been steadily developed and refined, learning from performing more and more difficult recently written pieces but also applied to the traditional repertoire, which at the same time has been broadened and become established. Research has been devoted to the history of the recorder: to the instruments and to the style of playing during its earlier periods.

Chapter II: The present situation - An Analysis

II/1. Recorder Teaching

Music schools - private teaching - jobs? - group teaching - ensemble teaching - literature for teaching...

“In my country...”

II/2. The Recorder in Concert

Years of study - concerts and careers - making a living? - repertoire and specialisation - finding or founding an ensemble...

II/3. Institutions and Organisations

Universities - conservatories - music school organisations - public authorities employing teachers, determining curriculums and schedules...

The NGOs of the recorder: SRP, ERTA, ARTA, ...

SECTION B: PROPOSITIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Chapter III: Recorder teaching

III/1. Learning Music as a Desideratum in a Humane Education

To hear, play, and get to know music is a basic human right (even if not mentioned explicitly in the European Convention on Human Rights) and should need no further argument. Many have tried, however, again and again to support the necessity of learning music by pointing to its effects on human behaviour. Indeed recent findings in the neuro sciences show quite clearly that learning an instrument contributes to the emotional development, to the connection of the left and right hemispheres and to a healthy psyche...

And there is the fact that the instrumental teacher often (at least for a certain time) is the most important person in the life of a child - a person available with certainty once a week for 45 minutes, unlike some parents...

III/2. The Specific Qualities of the Instrument Recorder

First results immediately (at the same time inviting the prejudice that it is so easy..!) – encourages gaining a sense for tone quality, articulation, phrasing, intonation from the very first moment - ensemble playing is possible from the first minute - direct access to the emotional content of music (affects in baroque music) - (almost) unlimited repertoire...

III/3. Recorder Teaching at Elementary and Medium-Advanced Level

What if recorder students turn to other instruments? What if they stop learning an instrument altogether? How should recorder teaching be done to provide the greatest reward to students moving out, moving sideways, moving upwards? - possibilities and conditions - goals and strategies - what else is there to teach besides where to put the fingers and which end to blow in (experiencing and understanding music? the grammar of music? other things?)...

III/4. The Recorder as Beginner's Instrument

Some 50 years ago teachers of modern wind instruments would not teach young children but send them to learn the recorder first - often to the frustration of ambitious recorder teachers. In the meantime all instruments have discovered the potential (and the market) for teaching the very young, so recorder teachers lost part of the cake. But market considerations set aside the question remains: is the recorder is an ideal instrument to begin with?

III/5. The Recorder and Elementary Music Education

When elementary music education started to become a discipline in its own right the recorder seemed the natural instrument to use. Today elementary music education has become a highly developed discipline combining singing, moving, listening, creating and playing music using different media and instruments of which the recorder is just one. But still there is an affinity between elementary recorder teaching and elementary music teaching which should be pursued in many ways...

III/6. The Recorder in Adult Education

There are many adults who want to learn to play an instrument. Why (not) the recorder?...

And there are music schools looking for students willing (and able) to pay...

And there are professional recorder players and teachers who might like (or not?) to share their knowledge...

III/7. The Recorder in the Various Education Facilities

III/7a. The Recorder in the Music School

A music school would be the ideal environment for teaching the recorder, if only...

III/7b. The Recorder in School

How do you teach an instrument in school? When and how do students practice? What

can and cannot be achieved? What happens if the school curriculum becomes too full for music to play a role? How could teaching instruments (and the recorder specially) be integrated?

III/8. Lesson Plans

Individual lessons - ensemble teaching - group teaching - classroom teaching? - pros and cons - goals to achieve and traps to avoid ...

III/9. The Didactics of the Recorder

Recorder teachers receive a respectable amount of pedagogical instruction during their study (do they, everywhere?). Magazine articles can be found on almost every aspect of teaching the recorder - new recorder tutors are published every year - new recorder music to serve all levels is published every day:

The level of recorder teaching should be at an all time high - is it?

III/10. Repertoire

There is an abundance of recorder music published for every level, period and style. How much of it is really “good”? (What does “good” mean?) How do you find the music you are looking for? Using what you already know, or spending half your salary buying music which turns out to be scrap?

Towards a canon of recorder music useful for teaching. How to encourage the best composers to write literature suitable for learners?

The extended repertoire: arrangements, jazzy music, recorder orchestra...

III/11. Curriculums and Exams

Curriculums may be experienced as welcome guidelines and a source of inspiration, or as a chain on creativity and freedom. (Who should make them, anyway?)

Examinations may be encouragements for students or threats. They may be a welcome challenge or a paralyzing menace... Examinations, if you want to take them (like with the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, Trinity-Guildhall etc.), is it for everybody? (They are not intended as professional training or meant for use at a tertiary level!)

Chapter IV: The Recorder in Concert

IV/1. Fields of Activity

Soloist - ensemble - baroque orchestra - ensemble for contemporary music...

IV/2. Repertoire

How to deal with an ever growing repertoire - sifting the wheat from the chaff - new horizons still ahead - competent from medieval music to the music of tomorrow? - specialisation: if, when and how - finding out what you have to say - finding your niche...

IV/3. Working Conditions

Where to play: festivals, concert series, churches, others - what to earn - managers and self organization - self exploitation as the basis of a career? - the CD “market” -

Chapter V: Professional education

V/1. The Recorder Person: Player and Teacher

It's a fact that every recorder player does (and has to, in order to make a living) teach. You may not need pedagogic training to teach adult students to become performers, but you will need it if you have to teach children aged 5 or 6 in groups!

Many recorder students combine modules leading to a teaching diploma and to a performer's diploma, where such a choice is possible. Some universities allow performance studies only after a teacher's diploma has been achieved; some universities don't offer pedagogic subjects at all...

The deliberate choice between becoming a recorder teacher or a recorder player...

V/2. The Pyramid: From Elementary to Tertiary Level

As with all the other instruments, a healthy music education system would see recorder teaching on all levels, from music school to university, profitable both ways, up and down. There are countries though which allow the recorder in music schools, to the age of 12, but after that there is nothing...

In my country...

V/3. Contents of the Curriculum

V/3a. Technique, Understanding music, Emotional Content, Repertoire

How it is (or should be) with any other instrument...

Generalist or specialist? (Specializing when?)...

V/3b. Historic Performance Practice

Performing early music: the necessity and the freedom of recorder players to make their own decisions - being historically informed is a process - rereading the sources - learning from singers and other instruments - ...

V/3c. Pedagogical Training

Obligatory or voluntary - what's needed, what's wanted? - to lay a basis for life long learning - ...

V/3d. Adjacent Fields of Study and Working

In all probability recorder players will be better off in their later professional life, if they have achieved additional skills outside their recorder lessons...

V/4. And then: Making a Living

Over-educated – under-valued and underpaid...

Chapter VI: Future Developments

VI/1. Repertoire

In which directions will/should the repertoire be going?

VI/2. Recorder Making

What do we want from instrument makers - what can we learn from them and they from us? - historic instruments and copies –

VI/3. Publishers

Why we need them - what we pay for - the responsibility of publishers and consumers - towards a new partnership -

VI/4. Organisations

All of us need ERTA!

VI/5. Improving the Image

Yes, we need it.

Ideas?