

The Hobart Society of Recorder Players Inc.

<https://hobartrecorderplayers.com>

Newsletter December 2020



What's been happening

End of Year Get Together Sunday 13th December

Sunday the 13th December saw a different approach to the Society's annual Christmas function. Instead of being in close quarters at the Civic Club this year we were out in the open air at Ancanthe Park, Lenah Valley. This proved to be very successful, except maybe for the first of the Christmas Carols which stretched everyone with the keys. Our newest member, Henry, volunteered with great enthusiasm to act as our "Father Christmas".

It was suggested that maybe we should repeat this approach for next year's end of year Christmas event.





Up-date on Claire's composition

Great News: Claire has now finished her commission for the Society, a composition for eleven different parts, titled "Circadian Rhythm".

On Sunday 20th December Claire met with the Committee to officially hand over the finished project. Over a glass of Champagne, the committee gratefully accepted this wonderful new work written especially for us.

We look forward to working on it further and hopefully we will be able to give it its World Premiere sometime later in a concert in 2021.



Reminder: February 20/21 Weekend, 2021

As this will be a casual affair you will be able to just drop in for a day, an afternoon, the whole weekend, or whatever suits.

A small fee of \$10 per participant will be charged to go towards covering the hire fee regardless of the amount of time you attend.

Watch out for updated information closer to the time. We will also be spending some of this time to work further on Claire's piece.

First Playing date for 2021

The first playing date for 2021 will be Monday 18th January at the Civic Club. Unless there are changes to Covid requirements we will, for the moment, be continuing along the same basis as 2020 with members needing to book in to ensure we have the correct number of people present.

Watch out for an email re playing mid-January.

An Interesting Article

At our committee get together last Sunday discussion included the Helder recorder. I, for one, did not know of this recorder and was quite interested. Nicholas has very kindly sent this detailed information for you to read.

THE HELDER EVO TENOR RECORDER

Some 40 years ago, a study of certain pre-war German recorders with unhistorical long bores and the characteristic that over-blowing the bottom or second note produced a true set of harmonics drawn to his attention by recorder player Nikolai Tarasov, led the American maker Friedrich von Huene to explore the use of additional keywork to close fairly large tone holes far down the instrument out of reach of the little finger thereby extending the range downwards and creating many new fingering possibilities for higher notes. A tenor recorder made along these lines has a range of two octaves and a sixth from b to g[#], the same as a modern oboe.

Later, Tarasov collaborated with Dutch recorder maker Maarten Helder to construct a recorder with harmonics tuned in such a way as to make it possible to play strong and stable low notes with a tone quality matching that of its higher registers. Indeed, their so-called Harmonic Tenor Recorder boasted a range of three octaves from b-c^{'''}, with 4 keys and an optional piano key. It also implemented an adjustable block patented earlier by Arnfred Strathmann which could be adjusted by a twist of the hand, even during a short pause, allowing the player to alter the voicing for maximum tone quality or special sound effects. Production of this instrument was undertaken by Mollenhauer.



Helder Harmonic Tenor recorder

The Harmonic Alto Recorder, a companion instrument to the Harmonic Tenor Recorder, with similar range, features, and performance characteristics, was

developed. Like its predecessor, this unique and radically new instrument was a collaborative effort between the Dutch recorder maker Maarten Helder and Mollenhauer. A novel feature of this instrument was the inclusion of a number of interchangeable wind-canals. These may be of different materials or different shapes. Like the Harmonic Tenor Recorder, the Harmonic Alto Recorder also included an adjustable block, and a sophisticated keywork for the lower tone holes.



Helder Harmonic Alto recorder

The Mollenhauer/Helder Harmonic recorder incorporated a removable windway system, a lip-operated mechanism which can raise or lower the floor of the windway during playing, and an adjustable block which slightly alters the depth of the windway exit and the height of the windway roof above the labium. The result enables extensive experimentation with the sound produced by the instrument.



Harmonic recorder sound unit, by Mollenhauer



Harmonic recorder sound unit, by Mollenhauer – internal details

In a sense, experiments with adjustable blocks were anticipated by the distinguished French organ builder Aristide Cavallé-Coll (1840) who suggested that the historic recorder could have been improved with a sliding bevel operated by a system of keywork.

Recently, Mollenhauer, in cooperation with Susanne Fröhlich, have launched a highly revised version of the Helder Harmonic Tenor Recorder which they call the Helder Evo Tenor recorder. Amongst many improvements, this instrument extends the range further from b to e''' . The tones of the instrument's foot-joint now overblow to their natural partials, thus stabilizing the recorder's sound in any register, rendering it more flexible in combination with modern orchestral instruments. A metal tuning slide allows a secure intonation within a wider pitch range. The Sound-Unit now allows many tonal parameters to be regulated either before the playing or altered during the performance. The piano or register key has been improved to better facilitate variable pitch control as well as the response of the highest registers. The middle-joint is now equipped with alternative keys for f , $f\#$ and $g\#$. Several new features support a perfectly balanced playing position, namely the knick-system head-joint, the vertically and horizontally adjustable special thumb rest and the elastic neck strap.



Helder Evo Tenor Recorder, by Mollenhauer

To learn more about these interesting advances in recorder design and to hear them being played, YouTube is your friend via the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Susanne+Fr%C3%B6hlich+Helder



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.