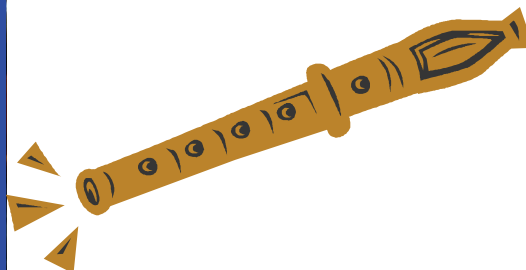




Recorders Plus Workshop



South Bay Adult School STORIES

Outside on the Mira Costa campus you hear the sounds of 2008 -- kids talking on cell phones, an occasional skateboarder zipping by, a car alarm going off. Inside Room 2 on Wednesday evenings, it's more like 1508—Renaissance instruments playing songs that Henry VIII could dance to. These sounds are coming from members of the South Bay Adult School's Recorders Plus Workshop, a class that has been going strong since 1976. Known as *La Mer Consort* when performing, these musicians have become a South Bay tradition. They play outdoors for Renaissance fairs, give concerts at Trinity Lutheran Church or the Manhattan Beach Joslyn Center and entertain senior groups.

When the group's founder Elizabeth Zuehlke retired, Brenda Bittner, who had been a longtime student in the class, took over as instructor. Brenda invites anyone who can read music to join the class. Many of her students have been in the group for years. Mr. Burckhard joined more than thirty years ago. He grew up in Germany, where everyone learned the recorder in the first grade. "It's an instrument that even small children can play because the finger holes are close together. I learned how to read music and play melodies and I never really stopped."

Nina Talbott is 91, the oldest member of the class. She played the trumpet in the Women's Army Corps band during World War II. Now she plays the sackbut, an instrument that looks like an anorexic trombone. In fact, rather than buy an authentic period sackbut, Nina had a trombone cut down, and that works just fine. One of the youngest members is Geoff Bohrer, a musician who started coming to the class when he was between jobs. The newest member is a flutist who attended the group's concert on May 18 in the Joslyn Center and was inspired by their performance to join.

Recorders range from the tiny soprano through the great bass—six different sizes. But there are other instruments, too. Besides the sackbut, there's the krumphorn (curved and buzzy sounding), dulcian (precursor to the bassoon), cornetto (a brass instrument fingered like a recorder) and a couple of strings—a vielle (a medieval instrument) and a lute.

All of the musicians love the sounds of these early instruments and enjoy the easy camaraderie in the class. Who doesn't want to step out of time now and then?

Recorder Plus meets at Mira Costa on Wednesday evenings. The class will start up again in the fall.