

A M E R I C A N R E C O R D E R

ON THE COVER

Sören Sieg with his beloved recorders.



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42 **Recordings • Streams of English and Related Music by Tom Bickley** Acanthus Baroque demonstrates the art of the Baroque Recorder in England between 1685 and 1740 in *the flutefancier's delight*; Flanders Recorder Duo and friends play music by Vaughan Williams and others on bamboo fipple flutes; and ensemble feurvogel's new recording of cinquecento consort music offers a portrait of the musical life of Venice

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02

A 99 Years Celebration of the International Pipers' Guilds

I doubt that many of us recorder players know that there is an active community of musicians not only playing repertory familiar to us on bamboo pipes, but even more remarkably, using instruments they build themselves! Flanders Recorder Duo – Tom Beets and Joris van Goethem – gathered with Rose Atkinson, Brigit de Klerk, Bert Honig, and Pieter Campo, all playing bamboo pipes, along with Josje Lodder, piano, and Stijn Kuppens, cello and electronics, to create a delightful recording celebrating this instrument so closely related to the recorder in both construction and repertory.

This music on this album demonstrates the breadth of repertory of these pipes, as well as the musicianship and technical building skills of the players. One very important aspect of this recording is that it provides Ralph Vaughan Williams's complete oeuvre for pipes! The music is so familiar as played by recorders, yet the slightly different timbre of the bamboo instruments gives a freshness to this attractive music. The sound of the pipe quartet on Vaughan Williams's *Suite for Pipes* (tracks 1–4) from 1939 is sumptuously engaging. As well as the three substantial works by RVW, we hear late Medieval, Baroque, 20th- and 21st-century pieces. Landini's *Fa Metter Bando* (track 15) works well at

a contemplative tempo. Henk Badings, a significant Dutch composer noted for sophisticated music, wrote music also for the Dutch Pipers' Guild for use at their summer camps. His *Quartet V* (tracks 21–24) is a playful work. The last track of the album, *Ou beau chastel, Woodstock 4* (track 25) is a new work by Belgian cellist and composer Stijn Kuppens, based on a chanson from the Leuven Chansonnier. In it, the composer and Tom Beets, with gentle electronic treatment of their sound, use pitches and rhythms reminiscent of both medieval European and present Arabic-world music to create a lovely, spacious soundscape.

In the engaging album booklet, listeners find a brief history of these bamboo pipes and the particular instruments used on this recording as well as detailed yet concise essays on the individual pieces of music recorded. Biographical information about the performers follows, and the attractively laid-out booklet is illustrated with images of pipes being played and built, and the players. The texts in the booklet are especially meaningful as they reflect the personal experience of the performers. I'm particularly intrigued by the DIY aspect of this bamboo pipe world! Tom Beets notes this recording project has been a dream of his since he built his first bamboo pipe in 2015.

There are various traditions in music cultures around the world of making flutes from bamboo. I am most familiar with the tradition of the bamboo shakuhachi, an end-blown flute from Japan. As in the recorder world, makers, over long years of study, develop their own specialized practice of making shakuhachi. The bamboo pipes on this recording are in the tradition of instruments developed in the 1920s by English music teacher Margaret James. Using a Sicilian shepherd's pipe as a prototype, James used a piece of bamboo to build instruments for her

students in an impoverished school in London. For more details I recommend Margaret C. Galloway's *Making and Playing Bamboo Pipes* (Dryad Press, 1963) available in some libraries and on the used book market. There are pipers' guilds in many countries, some linked in the Wikipedia article.

A 99 years celebration of the International Pipers' Guilds gives delightful insight into both Ralph Vaughan Williams's music and an amazing world of sound. It's rather like discovering an unknown branch of our family, and discovering we really like them.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect is the pleasure of hearing these charming instruments played so very well and with such enthusiasm and musicianship! ❁

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

A 99 Years Celebration of the International Pipers' Guilds. *Flanders Recorder Duo (Tom Beets, Joris van Goethem) and friends (Rose Atkinson, Brigit de Klerk, Bert Honig, Pieter Campo, bamboo pipes; Josje Lodder, piano; Stijn Kuppens, cello & electronics)*. 2025, 1 CD, 59:00. *Het Nederlandse Pijpers Gilde bamboefluiten*. nl vh1061 CD \$17.98 USD \$19.58 USD audio files on USB stick + shipping from shop.flanders-recorder-quartet.be/en/product-category/bamboo-en/ Video of live performance of Vaughan Williams's *Suite for [four] pipes* available at youtu.be/9YFdznzm-5vnA?si=SQK4_M9OD4XOX3k0