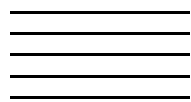


TIDINGS



Taking Recorders Back to Kenya, and to Syrian Refugees in Jordan

By Nina Stern, New York City, NY

In June 2010, I made my first trip to Nairobi, Kenya, to introduce the **S’Cool Sounds** recorder program to children living in the Kibera slum—a trip that I wrote about in these pages (see the November 2010 *AR*). I have traveled there again on six occasions, working with hundreds of children, and have helped to establish our program in five schools in Kibera.

It has been my privilege to partner in this endeavor with **Crossing Thresholds**, a humanitarian organization that helps to build schools for children living in desperate conditions, providing them with a safe environment in which to learn and grow. Our program is now based at the “Facing the Future” school (FAFU), under the leadership of a young and immensely talented musician and teacher, **Jacob Saya**. Saya’s infectious enthusiasm and

love of music have permeated all of FAFU—visitors to the school are serenaded with song, dance, poetry reading, and recorder playing. The children play SATB recorders, all of which have been donated through the years by supporters of **S’Cool Sounds** and **Crossing Thresholds**. Saya is a demanding teacher, seriously training his young recorder students, who won first prize in Kenya’s August 2016 national music competition (*photo, above right*).

In my most recent trip in June 2016, I went first to Kenya to check on the recorder programs that I helped to start in the Kibera slum there. Then I traveled to Amman, Jordan, where I met up with a team of volunteers assembled by **Lexi Shershewsky** and **Demetri Blaisdell**, the dynamic young founders of the **The Syria Fund**.

Shershewsky had contacted me last winter, inquiring about my interest in partnering with them to develop a music program for Syrian refugees

The Recorder takes a Stand for Syrian Refugees in Jordan, Louise Austin (1930-2016), Bits & Pieces



in Jordan. Our team included **Matilda Giampietro**, an esteemed Orff Schulerwerk and Montessori music educator and **S’Cool Sounds** partner.

From Amman we drove about 80 kilometers eastward, to Azraq—the site of one of the largest United Nations-administered camps built for refugees of the Syrian Civil War.

The Syria Fund’s efforts focus on families living *outside* of the camps; we would be working at a school established by one of their local partners, the South Azraq Women’s Association. The school consists of a small building and three caravan classrooms, and serves 110 children—most of whom have missed years of school because of displacement caused by the war.

We had brought a duffel bag full of new recorders for the children (*at left, l to r, a classroom teacher and a Syria Fund volunteer sorting donated recorders*) and had purchased some percussion instruments locally in Amman. For five days I taught recorder to a



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group of children during the day and had training sessions with their teachers in the evening (at left, Stern, center, demon-



teachers and local musicians, who performed both traditional Syrian songs and ones we brought from the U.S.

Since then, the Syria Fund has hired **Owais Omari**, a talented local musician and music teacher, to supervise our program, "Songs for Syrians." Omari has already begun teaching music at the school in Azraq. He will expand the program to additional schools in

Jordan in collaboration with another local Syria Fund partner, the Middle East Children's Institute (MECI).

We will continue to train and stay in touch with Omari through Skype, and look forward to returning to Jordan late this year, or in spring 2017.

To help in these humanitarian efforts involving music, by donating either money or recorders, please visit <http://scoolsounds.org/donate.html>.

strates blowing techniques). My **S'Cool Sounds** partner Giampietro simultaneously worked with other groups, teaching songs, dances and music literacy.

The whole school gathered each morning to sing *Tik Tik Ya Um Suleiman*, a beloved Syrian song. We added guitar, recorder and a percussion section to the ensemble.

The workshop culminated in a concert and joyous celebration for the wider community, featuring our students,

Memorial Service for Friedrich von Huene (1929-2016)

An uplifting memorial service for **Friedrich von Huene** was held October 2 at All Saints Parish Episcopal Church in Brookline, MA. Over 300 were present, many of them recorder players (even traveling from the U.S. West Coast or across the Atlantic). Memorable prelude music by the **Flanders Recorder Quartet** included Pieter Campo's *Meditation* (2013) and Sören Sieg's *Inxaxbeba* (2016; its second movement means "Sorrow"). The service's seamless transitions were due to **Rev. Dr. Richard Burden**, rector, and to organist **Christian Lane**'s improvisations, linking one work's ending motive with the next piece.

Richard Wood of the UK gave an engaging eulogy about his longtime friend's sense of adventure, deep curiosity, and willingness to enter fully into any activity. He described the discovery, purchase and transportation of an 18th-century French cannon (later set up at the family's Maine home, where—using 10 pounds of black powder—it greets visitors). Wood mentioned Friedrich's fascination with cannons, which "looked a bit like a recorder but made so much more noise."

A remembrance from Boston musician **Joel Cohen** highlighted Friedrich's talents as a performer, sometimes overshadowed by his prominence as an instrument maker. Cohen conveyed Friedrich's passion for making music, and made observers laugh with an example of Friedrich's occasional absentmindedness—arriving to perform, only to discover that he had left his instruments behind!

Inge von Huene shared how the family ended up at All Saints. Their former pastor in Maine recommended his colleague, then rector of All Saints, to the von Huenes. They invited him to visit; as often happened in the von Huene household, they and their guest made music together, thus forming a bond that led to a long friendship.

The recessional hymn, *For all the Saints*, was described as exhilarating, with so many musical voices in the congregation.

Passing Notes

Sir Neville Marriner (1924-2016) died on October 2. He studied violin at the Royal College of Music and the Paris Conservatoire. While playing in the London Symphony Orchestra, he created the **Academy of St. Martin in the Fields** in 1958. A chamber group from London's finest players—friends rehearsing in his home—the Academy gave its debut concert in its namesake church in Trafalgar Square. His years (1958-2011) with the group may be the most recorded of any orchestra or conductor.

Marriner played under some of the greatest conductors of the mid-20th century—Arturo Toscanini, Wilhelm Furtwängler, George Szell, Leopold Stokowski. Marriner began his conducting career in 1969, after studies in the U.S. with mentor Pierre Monteux. He founded the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra while enlarging the size and repertoire of the Academy. In 1979 he became music director/principal conductor of both the Minnesota Orchestra and Südwest Deutsche Radio Orchestra, positions he held until the late 1980s, while also working with orchestras worldwide. He was honored over the years by Germany, France, Sweden and his native UK—he was made a Companion of Honour by Her Majesty The Queen, 2015. See more at www.asmf.org/sir-neville-marriner/.