



**AMERICAN RECORDER SOCIETY  
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Glen Shannon, Editor

**Bruce Perkins  
He Talks,  
She Talks**

*for Alto and Tenor Recorders*

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# He Talks, She Talks

By Bruce Perkins

## PREFACE

*“You and I ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other.”*

*John Adams (1735–1826), U.S. statesman, president. Letter, July 15, 1813, to Thomas Jefferson.*

**The first time I played this duet**, I knew the ARS membership would enjoy it as part of this Series. The concept is not new but the simplicity of the composer’s craftsmanship creates a literal illustration of the scene he describes below: two people taking each other for granted, expecting to be heard but not listening in return — yet still connecting with each other nonverbally. It’s an amusing story despite the technical challenges.



Bruce Perkins (b. 1950) studied guitar with David Grimes and Reed Gilchrist at Cal State Fullerton, whose classical guitar program was an early adopter of the guitar as a legitimate, mainstream instrument. He performed solo concerts and played with The Friends of La Habra guitar ensemble, led by Reed Gilchrist. In later musical pursuits, Mr. Perkins was a member of the Los Angeles Recorder Orchestra (LARO) in southern California, and more recently, the American Recorder Orchestra of the West (AROW) in the San Francisco Bay Area.

To sketch out the imagery in this duet for us, the composer writes, “The opening is a bit chaotic, not unlike an elderly couple in rocking chairs on their front porch, speaking to each other simultaneously, yet neither listening to the other. In the final system, life slows down, and somehow each voice has been heard.”

—Glen Shannon



**Performance notes:** This composition’s core feature is the different time signatures in each part. Because the parts have unequal numbers of measures, each system is numbered rather than each measure. The common unit is the quarter-note, but the phrasing incongruity caused by the triple meter against the duple heightens the sense of disconnect. Players should endeavor to sound as dissimilar as possible, using the different timbres of the two recorder sizes to inject their personalities into the mix.

Slurs are phrasing indicators, not necessarily actual slurs. However, breaks between phrases are important to the musical conversation, and can be articulated by slightly shortening the final note of a phrase and possibly taking a breath.

The nearly monochromatic “mezzo” dynamic markings, which appear below the part they affect, serve as cues for subtle shifts of focus between the players. Neither part should dominate; rather, the two lines are intertwined in a dance of equal partnership, each in turn advancing and receding. Good communication between the players is essential to staying together without betraying any direct interaction. At most, the audience should believe the players have only a vague awareness of each other’s presence.

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Bruce Perkins (2004)

$\text{♩} = 160$

Alto *mf*

Tenor *mp* *mf*

2 *mp* *mf*

3 *mp*

4 *mf*

5 *mp*

6