

HISTORY AND TRIBUTES

LOOKING BACK: FRANS BRÜGGEN (1934-2014)

MEMORIES COLLECTED AND INTRODUCED BY CLÉA GALHANO

In this double anniversary year, the “Recorder Player of the [20th] Century,” as well as his significant influence, is recalled by several who knew him.



Brazilian recorder player Cléa Galhano is an internationally renowned performer of early,

contemporary and Brazilian music. Galhano has performed in the U.S., Canada and South America as a chamber musician, and as soloist with orchestras. She has played twice at Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City, NY: in 2010, and in 2013 with the Cuban guitarist René Izquierdo.

Galhano studied at Brazil's Faculdade Santa Marcelina; the Royal Conservatory, The Hague, Netherlands; and in Boston, MA, at the New England Conservatory of Music, earning a LASPAU (Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities) Fulbright Scholarship and Dutch government support.

As an advocate for recorder music and educational initiatives, she served for six years on the international ARS Board, and is the music director of the Recorder Orchestra of the Midwest. She was the 2023 recipient of the ARS Presidential Special Honor Award.

Galhano has recordings on Dorian, Ten Thousand Lakes and Eldorado labels. Visit <http://cleagalhano.com>.

I have always believed that the universe sends special talents to inspire artists around the world, in order to shake it up and make it a better and more meaningful place. You can see this happening in all of the arts, as well as in many other subjects, and it is no different in music.

The early music movement started in England with the Dolmetsch family near the beginning of 20th century. This family was crucial in rediscovering early instruments and repertory. However, it was only when a young Dutch recorder player, Frans Brüggen, started interacting with the recorder in a novel way, with such intelligence and curiosity, that the world took notice. He brought a different voice to the recorder, approaching early music in a completely new way.

By doing this, Frans changed the concept of recorder playing, of early music, and of music in general. His influence was enormous, and contemporary composers were incredibly inspired by him. This resulted in a large number of wonderful compositions for the recorder dedicated to him.

Students from all around the globe began to study at the Royal Conser-

vatory in The Hague, in order to have lessons with Frans. He graduated a brilliant first cohort of students, including Marion Verbruggen, Ricardo Kanji, Walter van Hauwe, Kees Boeke, Eva Legêne and others. These students then continued spreading the beauty of Frans's teachings.

In the 1980s, I received a Dutch scholarship to study at the Royal Conservatory. Frans was no longer teaching there; my recorder teacher was Ricardo Kanji, a fellow Brazilian. Through Ricardo, I met Frans several times, in green rooms of theaters, operas, etc. I was always enchanted by his artistry.

Years later, in 2001, when I was already living in the U.S. and serving on the ARS Board of Directors, I had the privilege of presenting to Frans the ARS Distinguished Achievement Award at his house in Amsterdam. I was accompanied by Marion Verbruggen and the harpsichordist Jacques Ogg. We were welcomed by Frans, his wife Machtelt and his two daughters. It was an incredibly inspiring three-hour visit. Frans was very generous, and also showed us the church next to his house. He talked about the opera that he had just conducted in Sweden

(in the same Baroque theater where Ingmar Bergman's 1975 film *The Magic Flute* was shot), as well as his future trips.

It was an unforgettable visit. I feel so lucky to have spent those hours with him, in an intimate family setting, where I could truly see the person behind the genius and recorder star.

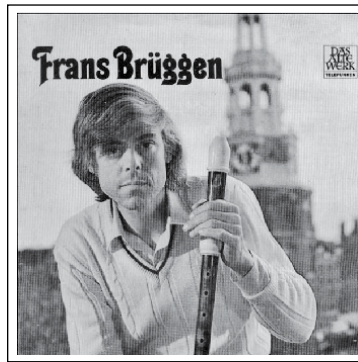
After a brief biography of Frans Brüggen, for this Feature article I have gathered memories of him from people who knew him. In these memories, you will read testimonials from all over the world. Throughout all of these, there is a common thread: how deeply Frans influenced their lives, careers and playing.

Thank you, Frans, for inspiring us all with this magical instrument, and for leaving a beautiful legacy of music making. ✿

Frans Brüggen: his life

Born October 30, 1934, youngest in a musical family of nine children in Amsterdam, Frans (Franciscus Jozef) Brüggen was introduced to recorder basics by his eldest brother in about 1940—just as Germany began to occupy the Netherlands early in World War II. He studied the recorder with Kees Otten (1924-2008) at the Amsterdam Muzieklyceum. Frans's father insisted that he also study the transverse flute, as there were few job prospects for recorder players at that time. He worked hard on both instruments and received his recorder diploma in 1953 (only the second recorder player to do so from the Muzieklyceum).

It was a fortuitous time in the recorder's 20th-century history, as the Dutch authorities began to provide support for recorder diploma study at state music conservatories—possibly with the goal of raising the quality of recorder training for teachers in the Dutch public schools. Indeed, Dutch support of the arts in general paved the way for Frans's career, as well as for recorder players



▲ This LP, c.1978, came in a box set that included a poster of Frans Brüggen.

from all over the world to study in the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s.

At age 21, Brüggen was appointed professor of recorder at the Royal Conservatory, The Hague. He later held professorships at Harvard University and at the University of Berkeley, making him one of the youngest musical scholars of the time.

His recordings in the 1960s and '70s inspired a generation to take up the recorder and enter the world of early music, likely causing him to be voted by ARS members as "Recorder Player of the Century" in 2000.

At age 27, he released his first recordings, including *The Virtuoso Recorder* (selections streamable), which a review by Marvin Rosenberg in *AR Spring 1961* hailed for its "eye-opening technical virtuosity."

His bravura recorder technique propelled him to near-cult popularity; posters of him, issued by his record label Telefunken, adorned bedroom walls. Employing breath vibrato and rubato for expressive effect, Brüggen coaxed unexpected nuances and tone colors from his recorder. He traced his unorthodox playing to treatises from the 17th and 18th centuries. "One of the first duties of a melody instrument player is to play the instrument freely," he explained in a 1983 interview.

His long legs were always nonchalantly crossed and shoulders slumped



as he played.

In 1972, with Kees Boeke and Walter van Hauwe, he formed the avant-garde recorder trio Sour Cream. Besides playing music seriously,

they were known for their counter-culture antics: a Keystone Kops-style chase around the stage, or Brüggen wearing sunglasses while reclining on a chaise and reading a newspaper.

He commissioned many custom instruments to be made, especially copies of historical recorders: "to capture the soul of the model," as he said in 1983. His recordings of early music after the mid-1960s were made on original instruments or copies built by Friedrich von Huene or Fred Morgan.

He also commissioned composers to write works for recorder. Once Luciano Berio had composed *Gesti* (1966) for Brüggen, it was impossible to dismiss the recorder's possibilities for 20th-century music.

In 1981, he and Lucy van Dael (with Sieuwert Verster as manager), co-founded the period-instrument Orchestra of the 18th Century, a Dutch ensemble of 40-60 early musicians who shared proceeds from concerts. "I earn the same as the second clarinet," Brüggen once quipped. Along with other orchestras that he guest conducted, he led the Orchestra of the 18th Century for the rest of his life; after his health declined, he conducted his last concert from a wheelchair.

In 2001 Brüggen received the ARS Distinguished Achievement Award. ✿

Compiled from online sources, and also *The Recorder* by David Lasocki and Robert Ehrlich (Yale University Press: 2022), chapter five, "The Recorder in the Twentieth Century."



Memories from around the world

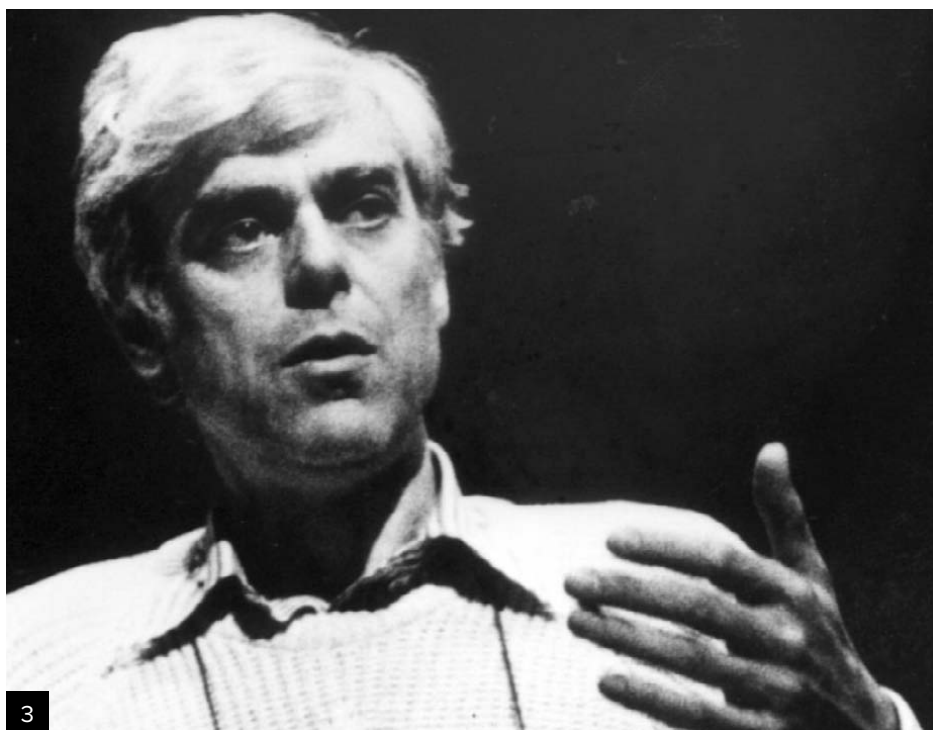
ADDITIONAL WORDS
FROM THE NETHERLANDS BY:
Kees Boeke

I first met Frans when I auditioned for him to be his pupil in 1961. I was 11 years young and he was 27. It was my former teacher, Klaas Bolt, who advised me to go to him and give it a try. I did not choose Frans myself as a teacher. This was because, since we did not have a turntable at home at the time, I was pretty unaware of his playing or fame, or of what was going on in the recorder world in those days.

I only understood that I was going to see the grand maestro of the recorder, in Amsterdam. It was only later that I was overwhelmed by his playing, as were many others, older than me.

He was my teacher first and mentor later, and most generous in sharing his thoughts, ideas and novelties with me. As a teacher, Frans never was interested in making you play exactly as he played himself (which was impossible, anyway), but always provided you with new material and challenges. He liked playing duets.

By the time Walter van Hauwe and I finished our conservatory studies,



1: Kees Otten's Amsterdam Recorder Ensemble, 1954.

Frans Brüggen is playing bass.

2: Sour Cream, 1977. (left to right) Walter van Hauwe, Frans Brüggen, Kees Boeke. Courtesy of www.semibrevity.com/2014/06/frans-bruggen-the-early-years-1942-1959-with-his-teacher-kees-otten

3: Frans Brüggen as conductor of the Orchestra of the 18th Century, early 1980s.

we had all become friends and colleagues; a few years later, we became the trio known as Sour Cream.

Those were glorious years that created a bond for life. When I moved to Tuscany in 1980, Frans followed a year or so later. Our houses were 40 minutes apart, enabling us to stay in contact over the years.

When he died in 2014, I lost a friend that I had had for 53 years, and with whom I never had a single disagreement. Our friendship was a blessing!

Now that bond continues with his widow Machtelt and their two daughters, Eos and Zephyr. We all keep his memory alive. ❀

Kees Boeke is a former student of Frans Brüggen and a co-founder of Sour Cream. <https://o-livemusic.com>

ADDITIONAL WORDS FROM BRAZIL BY:

Ricardo Kanji

Nobody had a bigger influence in my life than my former teacher and friend Frans Brüggen.

It was the year 1966 when I met him, at a summer workshop in Saratoga Springs, NY. The place was loaded with the most prominent American and European recorder teachers and players—but the one who made a big impression on me was Frans. I was 18, he was 32. He played *Sweet* by Louis Andriessen, a crazy piece for recorder and tape—it shocked everyone, me included.

Some years later, in 1969, I was studying modern flute at the Peabody Institute of Music (in Baltimore, MD), when he came to Boston (MA) in November to play with the keyboardist Gustav Leonhardt. I met him and said that I was longing to study recorder and Baroque music. He told me to go to Holland and study with him.

At the time, attending the Royal Conservatory of The Hague was free,

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His way of breathing and phrasing astounded and inspired me.

subsidized by the government. By the end of December 1969, I was there, and started the course in January 1970. I had memorable lessons with him and learned a lot from his knowledge and his playing—partly because we played a lot of duets. His way of breathing and phrasing astounded and inspired me.

By the end of 1972, I finished the course and received my “Soloist Diploma,” as it was then called.

Soon afterwards he said to me: “Look here, Ricardo, I’ve been teaching here for 10 years now, my career is demanding a large amount of time. I’ll have to stop. Will you take my place?” I was flabbergasted and took the job, which caused me to stay for 23 years more, living in The Hague and teaching at the Conservatory. During that time I had hundreds of students from all over the world. I also had a quite active life as a performer, playing with most of the existing Baroque orchestras in Holland and Belgium.

In late 1980, Frans called me and asked: “How is your traverso playing?” I said it was fine, and he invited me to play in his new orchestra, the Orchestra of the 18th Century. In this orchestra, we played under his amazing leadership, creating a revolution in the performance of music of the 18th and early 19th century. We traveled a lot, around the whole world. Frans and I shared very nice, friendly encounters, including dinners and drinks together.

In the early 1990s, he played his arrangement of a Bach concerto on a fourth flute by Fred Morgan. I fell in love with his interpretation, the piece and the flute. We frequently talked

about the rich offers he had to buy his collection of old instruments. I told him that, if at some time he would ever consider selling that particular flute, I would be very interested.

I did not have the impression that he was ever going to do that. In 2014, some months before he died, we would have had a tour with the orchestra, but he was too weak to travel. I went to visit him, in his overheated room and with the ashtray full of cigarettes. He was extremely friendly and suddenly gave me that Morgan recorder, saying that it was a present to me, an old and faithful friend, and that he had the feeling that he should to do something nice before he died....

I went away crying and smiling, and played that Bach concerto many times, inspired by his still-living breath in that instrument. ❀

Ricardo Kanji is a former student and friend of Frans Brüggen, and traverso player in the Orchestra of the 18th Century. ricardokanji@gmail.com

Memories from North America

ADDITIONAL WORDS BY: **Michael Lynn**

As a young highschooler, seriously interested in the recorder, I had no concept of the expressive possibilities of the recorder—until I heard Frans Brüggen’s recordings. I remember in particular his recordings of Hotteterre and the Francesco Barsanti *Sonata No. 2 in C* as being truly eye-opening.

As I progressed as a player, I constantly had an ear towards what Brüggen was doing. In my third year of undergraduate study, I transferred to Oakland University (MI), where I could major in recorder. A side benefit of being there was that it was near Ann Arbor, which had the Ars Musica Baroque Orchestra. During their

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early years they invited a number of major European players to solo with the orchestra, including oboist Bruce Haynes and also Frans Brüggen.

In about 1974, I arranged to come to the pre-concert afternoon rehearsal and met Frans for the first time. I was very intimidated, as he was a huge idol figure to me, but he was extremely kind. We had a long conversation, which left me buzzing with excitement.

The second time I met him, maybe a year later, he was performing in Detroit, and invited me to play on the original 18th-century flute he was using on that concert. It was my first experience playing an original Baroque flute!

Fast forward a few years, and I was then the solo flutist and recorder player for Ars Musica; we again had Frans as a guest. I had the remarkable opportunity of performing the Telemann E minor double concerto with him a number of times and was able to spend a good portion of four days with him. He was incredibly generous with his time and willing to discuss almost anything I had on my mind.

At one point in rehearsals of the Bach concerto, which he transcribed for third flute (recorder in A), he told me he wanted to work with the strings. He asked me to sight-read the recorder part while he did that. Gulp ... luckily, I'm a good sight-reader, but the parts were written in his hand with various signs to repeat measures that were not in my normal reading situation. It went fine, and it was exciting to play on his Fred Morgan third flute.

Over the years, I met up with him quite a few times during his U.S. tours. Once, I showed up to hear his solo lecture/concert at a college in Cleveland. He asked if I had my recorder and a duet we could play on the concert. Sadly, I didn't have my recorder or any duets with me.

Later he was in Oberlin with Dutch keyboardist Gustav Leonhardt and Dutch cellist Anner Bylsma and gave an

excellent master class with my students.

The last time I saw him was after a concert in Cleveland with his orchestra. We went out and had a wonderful time. I dropped him at his hotel, and he turned and said, "Goodbye, amigo." I certainly miss him. ✿

Michael Lynn teaches recorder and Baroque flute at Oberlin Conservatory and writes articles for AR.

ADDITIONAL WORDS BY: Marc Destrubé

I had the great privilege of joining Frans Brüggen's Orchestra of the 18th Century from its very first tour in November 1981. At the time I had developed an interest in and some ability on the Baroque violin, as one of the original members of Tafelmusik in Toronto, ON. It was completely thrilling to be part of this groundbreaking adventure, as one of the first orchestras to play classical repertoire on period instruments.

Those first years involved intense rehearsals in the old wooden *Amstelkerk* in Amsterdam (where Frans later lived when it was converted from a church into apartments and offices). The sessions involved a lot of discussion (and sometimes arguments), long coffee breaks, many opinions. Somehow Frans—through his charisma, inspiring musical vision and intense focus—had the ability to channel all these ideas into a wonderfully coherent and thrilling performance.

The rehearsal weeks were followed by long tours, one program played many times—always with a concentrated hour or two of rehearsal beforehand, improving on the previous night's performance. In the early years, we had two buses, one for smokers, one for non- (with double the wine consumption on the smokers' bus); Frans had his constant companion of red Marlboros (filter broken off). On the first tours,

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There was always a recorder concerto on the program to sell the concert—the hall half-filled with bouquet-bearing Frans-idolizing recorder players.

there was always a recorder concerto on the program to sell the concert—the hall half-filled with bouquet-bearing Frans-idolizing recorder players. Then there was the shock for them of hearing Mozart like never before, or at least not since the 18th century, by an orchestra modeled on the luxurious Mannheim orchestra of Mozart's time.

I had heard Frans play the recorder some years earlier, in a giant, sold-out church in Düsseldorf in western Germany, where I was studying at the time. There was just him sitting, legs crossed, next to a table with a few recorders large and small, which he used to fill that space with sound and magically draw each person in the audience into his musical world. As a conductor, he used that same power to draw us all into his musical vision—a fresh yet profound look at the great symphonies of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and later Schubert and Mendelssohn, as well as suites by Bach and Rameau.

Over the years, the number of smokers dwindled, and we rehearsed more soberly and with more discipline. Frans retained his magnetic, breath-filled vision (and the Marlboros), until those melancholy final notes of Rameau. He conducted them almost 10 years ago with his beloved orchestra, along with students from the Hague Conservatory. He was, and remains, my most important and treasured musical godfather. ❁

Canadian violinist Marc Destrubé formerly served as co-concertmaster of the Orchestra of the 18th Century. www.marcdestrube.com



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4: Friedrich von Huene (left) in deep discussion with Frans Brüggen, 1982.

5: Michael Lynn (right) with Frans Brüggen, about 1980.

6: After the presentation of the 2001 ARS Distinguished Achievement Award at Frans Brüggen's home in Holland, Jacques Ogg took this casual photo.

Cléa Galhano and Frans are at center, flanked by his daughters, Zephyr (left) and Eos; his wife Machtelt is at far left, and Marion Verbruggen is at far right.



RECOLLECTIONS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN FRANS BRÜGGEN AND THE VON HUENE FAMILY BY:

Patrick von Huene

Frans's relationship with the von Huenes began in 1962 with an order for a Chevalier flute, pitched at A=415 [a one-keyed traverso, c.1700, made by Chevalier; Friedrich von Huene copied the one in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts]. This instrument appears on the front cover of *Frans Brüggen, Volume 2* (Das Alte Werk SAW 9622M, Telefunken, 1974, *above*).

Friedrich and Frans finally met in 1965 at a U.S. music workshop, where Frans created quite a stir—this new, young, hot recorder player from Holland, blowing so uniquely. His amazing technique with new sounds and expressiveness had not yet been heard before in the U.S. Wow!

Friedrich and Frans immediately established a long professional and personal friendship. Friedrich was delighted to talk about and share his growing collection of original instruments. They spoke together on music, interpretations, recorders past and present, and of future needs for players—increased volume, range, keywork, etc.

Frans was always our distinguished guest when in town. He had his own special room, where he could practice and be undisturbed. Inge would make sure phone calls were vetted so Frans could have some peace. Frans's room became a mecca for many players, soloists and rising stars who were welcome in our home, Cléa Galhano

among them. All understood the special meaning and honor of the place.

Inge, always concerned about our guest, would knit a sweater for Frans because he complained about often being cold while playing in churches.

Friedrich, Inge and Frans took long walks around our local reservoir, and relaxed in our sitting room by the fireplace, having plenty of wine and lively discussions. My brother Andreas, a budding engineering whiz, discussed technical upgrades with Frans for his Italian villa's needs in Tuscany. Friedrich and Inge would be guests there, as Frans was with us. I had lessons with Frans, focusing on breathing, flexibility and expressiveness (both understanding

that I did not aspire to be a performer).

We had lively dinners with our whole family there. At one dinner, Patrick's girlfriend, sitting next to Frans, just wanted to run her fingers through his luxuriant hair. Oh, what fun we had!

We had lavish parties at the house—in particular, one with the Orchestra of the 18th Century after a performance at the acclaimed Boston Symphony Hall.

Thank you, Frans, for your inspirations and genuine warm friendship with our family. Your spirit remains with us all. ❁

Patrick von Huene has overseen production for over 30 years at the Von Huene Workshop.



▲ 7: A von Huene dinner with Frans Brüggen, 1981. (left to right) unknown visitor (Andreas's girlfriend), Friedrich, Patrick's girlfriend Lorna and Patrick (standing), Frans, Inge, Nikolaus (standing), Andreas.

LINKS OF INTEREST:

- Frans Brüggen: www.fransbruggen.com; obituaries: <https://americanrecorder.org/docs/Winter14body.pdf> (also memories and suggested recordings); www.theguardian.com/music/2014/aug/17/frans-bruggen
- Mentions of Frans Brüggen over the years in AR and its Newsletter predecessor include: "Recorder Player of the Century": https://americanrecorder.org/docs/AmerRec_2000Jan.pdf; ARS Distinguished Achievement Award: <https://americanrecorder.org/docs/ARmay01body.PDF>; (a short list of other articles is at <https://americanrecorder.org/extra>).
- Frans Brüggen conducts the Orchestra of the 18th Century playing Rameau in 1986: www.youtube.com/watch?v=GB0byfN2qCc
- Sour Cream: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sour_Cream_\(band\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sour_Cream_(band)); Kees Boeke: <https://o-livemusic.com/kees>; Walter van Hauwe: www.waltervanhauwe.org