

VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY PACIFICA GAMBA NEWS

Volume 34, No. 4 • December, 2018

Join us for our next Play Day with coach Roy Whelden Saturday, Dec. 8th

- 9- 9:30 am – Set up, coffee/tea. **Be ready to play by 9:30.**
- 9:30- 12:30 – Group session w/ coach, then 1-on-a-part coached consorts
- 12:30 – Bring a bag lunch to enjoy with us
- 1- 2:30 pm – Uncoached DIY consort playing

Hillside Swedenborgian Community Church
1422 Navellier Street, El Cerrito, CA 94530

FREE – a great membership benefit!



been published in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, *Indiana Theory Review*, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, and *Perspectives in New Music*.

Roy Whelden, composer and viola da gamba/vielle player, has performed and recorded with many internationally known ensembles, including *Sequentia* (Cologne).

As a composer, he has received commissions for diverse compositions—chamber music, song cycles, choral works, incidental music for plays, etc. Early commissions include works for the Montreal viol duo *Les Voix Humaines*. Recent works include a St. Cecilia Ode for chorus and string orchestra commissioned by the Corona del Mar Baroque Festival. Some of Whelden's compositions/arrangements involving viola da gamba have been recorded for the New Albion, Innova and Nonesuch labels. His work as a composer requires research into topics of theoretical music; the results have

In 2005 Roy founded the Galax Quartet—2 violins, cello and gamba—a string quartet based on the performance practice of Carl Friedrich Abel, the late eighteenth century gamba virtuoso. In February, the Galax Quartet will release (on *Music and Arts*) a new recording, *Dream Drapery*, of quartets by Marc Mellits, Robert Morris and, with contralto Karen Clark, a song cycle by Joseph Schwantner.

The repertoire for our December 8 Play Day will be drawn from several of J.S. Bach's works, focusing on settings of the Christmas hymn *Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her*, but also including some of the 14 Puzzle Canons from Bach's own copy of the Goldberg Variations (BWV 1087).

>> Important! RSVP to Cindi by Thurs. Dec. 6 to guarantee your seat

Send her the info below so that she has time to copy sufficient music and to organize consort groups.

1. Will you attend the 9:30 am group session?
2. Will you attend the late-morning consort session? If so, would you prefer to play double on a part?
3. Viol sizes you will bring _____
4. If you are new to our Play Days, please include your playing level (Refer to the self-rating guide at <https://vdgsa.org/pgs/selfrate.html>)
5. Send this info to cindi.olwell@gmail.com (You can even copy and paste into an email from here.)

Upcoming Events

Virtuoso Baroque Concertos Voices of Music

Sun. Dec. 23, Berkeley

7:30 PM, St. Mary Magdalen Church

Dominic Favia, Lisa Grodin, Katherine Heater, Kati Kyme, Augusta McKay Lodge, Carla Moore, Farley Pearce, Hanneke van Proosdij, David Tayler, Tanya Tomkins, William Skeen, Amy Wang, Gabrielle Wunsch & Alana Youssefian

Join us for a festive evening of baroque trumpet and violin concertos.

For ticket information:

<https://voicesofmusic.org/Concerts.html>

Semper Phantasticus! Ars Lyrica Houston

Fri. Jan. 12, Berkeley

7:30 PM, St. Mark's Parish Hall

Elizabeth Blumenstock, *baroque violin*
Mary Springfels, *viola da gamba*
Matthew Dirst, *Director, harpsichord*

Semper Phantasticus explores that most avant-garde mode of music-making among German composers of the 17th and early 18th centuries, with extravagant works for violin, viola da gamba, and harpsichord. All three instruments are featured individually and in combination on this program, in sonatas by Dietrich Buxtehude and Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, two of the best-known exponents of the "fantastical style," alongside works by August Kerzinger, Philipp Heinrich Erlebach, Johann Jakob Walther, and Johann Sebastian Bach.

For tickets and more information:

http://sfems.org/?page_id=13522

Sponsored by **San Francisco Early Music Society**



The Silver Swan: Music for 3,4,5, and 6 *viols by Orlando Gibbons* Barefoot All-Stars with Wendy Gillespie

Fri., Jan. 4, El Cerrito

6:30 PM, Hillside Community Church

Last season's all-Ferrabosco program was so successful, we have been encouraged to repeat the experiment, this time with the music of the great Orlando Gibbons. Music historians regard him as a vital link between the music of Byrd and what came next. We don't understand that really, but that's what they say. All we know is, he wrote the most amazing music, in 3, 4, 5, and 6 parts. To make this truly delicious program possible, we are delighted to have been able to import the world's most sought-after treble viol player (not to mention the world's most-travelled treble viol player), the legendary Wendy Gillespie, who will help us to make this project an evening to remember.

Wine and snacks!

\$25 (Free admission for 18 & under)

Tickets at the door or order online (recommended) at

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3614334>

Sponsored by **Barefoot Chamber concerts**

Advanced Viol workshop with John Dornenburg

Sat. Jan. 19, El Cerrito

Hillside Community Church

John writes that he will be leading a one-day workshop for advanced viol players on Saturday Jan. 19 at the Hillside Community Church in El Cerrito. The focus will be on Marin Marais' *Le Labyrinthe* and two pieces by Antoine Forqueray. John will be in the U.S. for performances with the group Mensa Sonora in San Luis Obispo Mission on Jan. 25 & 26. For more information on the workshop or the concerts, write to John at bassviol@stanford.edu.

Viol Meet-up on the Road in NC

This fall I went on a trip to Raleigh/Durham, North Carolina, a part of the country I've neither visited nor have any familiarity with, but where I would have 2 days of free time. After studying a map so I knew what other towns were close by, I looked up in the *Directory of Members* of the **Viola da Gamba Society of America's** geographic index. Finding the names of some viol players in that area, I emailed them 3 weeks ahead **to see if anyone would like to set up a playing session**. I mentioned my playing level, where I live, that I am active in the Pacifica chapter, that I would have a rental car and could come to wherever worked for them, and waited to see whether anything would happen.

I got a response from one of the people in the email and she set up a playing session for the afternoon of one of the days I was free. I easily carried my treble viol on the Alaska Air plane and actually had quite an audience when asked whether it was a violin as I hauled it from the overhead compartment. Same at the rental car place, where the attendant was also a musician.

What fun to play with these folks! There were six of us altogether; they all knew each other, but were happy to welcome someone new. We started with fairly simple music and worked our way through **spiral-bound part books with copies of music for 6 parts from the IMSLP website**. By the time we were getting to the music that was really challenging for me, we were all pretty tired out, so the timing was good from that point of view.

Lessons and coachings, oh my!

From Jan. 1 -8 Wendy Gillespie will be available for consort coaching and individual lessons.

Wendy Gillespie taught early bowed strings, historical performance and early notation at Indiana University for more than 30 years. As a member of the viol consorts Fretwork and Phantasm, she shared three Gramophone awards. She has participated in 100 recordings for Linn, Harmonia Mundi, EMI and Virgin Classics. She received Early Music America's Thomas Binkley Award in 2011, and is past President of the Viola da Gamba Society of America.

To schedule a lesson or coaching with Wendy, contact Julie Jeffrey at jjeffrey@berkeley.edu.

Many of the pieces chosen for inclusion in this collection were previously unknown to me, though some were old favorites, like the Gibbons 6-part Fantasia I think of as "Breaking Dawn" that I have played often during the Play Day afternoons here—it was a favorite of Dalton Cantey's. But it was **lovely to have a new group to play with and new music to read through—very energizing**.

What a brilliant idea to assemble those part books from a lot of music printed from the online IMSLP! That made it **so easy to play all afternoon by just turning to the right page, rather than hauling out folder after folder or book after book, and figuring out each time what composer or book to do next**. The part book I used was about an inch thick, had **tabs showing where the music was for different combinations of instruments** (the majority was for ttTTBB), and was a very eclectic mix of **fantasias, various dances, madrigals, chansons, In Nomines, movements from Masses**, etc. They were clearly familiar with it, but most of it was new to me.

The hostess for the afternoon has a son who lives in San Francisco, so I encouraged her to get in touch with me when she plans a visit here if she will have free time and might want to play. Maybe I can arrange a playing session that will be as much fun for her as she was able to provide for me. Alas, I didn't remember to take pictures of my enjoyable afternoon—we were too busy having fun!

– Ellen Fisher

Oberlin's Baroque Performance Institute- The Wenzinger Years – a new iBook

Oberlin's Baroque Performance Institute has been at the epicenter of the historical performance world for nearly fifty years. This memoir details the earliest years when August Wenzinger, James Caldwell, and Catharina Meints created the summer program. With stories, pictures, and embedded audio recordings of previously unreleased music, it is a treasure chest of remembrances.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/oberlin-baroque-performance-institute/id1399961854?mt=11>



Cathy writes: "I am particularly proud of a viol player who had started to play with Jim [Caldwell] as an Oberlin College Student. **Leslie Gold** was not in the Conservatory, but she was a loyal member of his student consort. Eventually she and her husband

launched a **publishing company, PRB, [based in Albany CA] which has become one of the most important sources of music for viol players.** They have produced dozens of editions of viol music not previously published in excellent formats that are easy to use and well edited, historically."

Report from Hidden Valley

Road Scholar's Early Music Workshops in Carmel Valley not only offer the occasion to **work on viol technique but also provide the opportunity to play with a mixed consort of instruments.** I attended both weeks this year, both quite different, and can heartily recommend the program.

David Morris was our viol teacher in week 1, Oct 28 – Nov 3. **His popularity and expertise in viol performance drew a record breaking 10 viol players** out of 32 workshop participants. Every morning started with a viol consort/technique class. David helped us shape and phrase the music using text as a guide. After analyzing the poetry, we started to look at the music. It was amazing how the text painting made our first read musical. There truly is more to phrasing than just looking at punctuation marks.

The rest of the day was for small mixed consorts. I especially liked the broken consort class in which we played music by Matthew Holmes. The lute sang sweetly above the recorders, viols and harpsichord.

Every afternoon ended with orchestra conducted by Frances Blaker. This year's selection included a movement of Frances' *Winds and Waves* composition. It was so exciting to be conducted by the composer herself.

Alexa Haynes-Pilon was our viol consort/technique teacher for week 2. We started with exercises from her yet-to-be-published viol workbook, which has a very systematic approach to warming up the fingers and getting the arm ready for all bow strokes. We did string touches with double stops, swooping bow strokes, staccato and legato octave jumps, string crossing jumps, scales with cadential endings leading to following scales, finger agility training and string crossing with push down and pull up bowing. We also sightread and worked on viol consort music. Alexa was very encouraging in her teaching and had us sight-read at least 2-3 new pieces every day. I understand Alexa led a Pacifica chapter PlayDay in 2017. I hope we get Alexa back soon!

Week 2 has included dulcians and shawm in recent years. We were 6 viols and 6 shawm/dulcian players out of a total of 28 participants. The grand finale of this week's orchestra was literally a blast with those double reeds!

Both weeks included a free Wednesday afternoon. Some stayed to work on workshop music, others ventured to explore the Carmel Valley area. The fact that there are many repeat participants testifies to the success of this workshop. I highly recommend attending this Hidden Valley workshop next year.

– **Diana Fischer**

Summer viol adventure in Muskoka, Ontario

Every June, Remi and I fly northward to my native land to renew friendships, involve ourselves with the quite different Canadian lifestyle, and just kick back on the shore of Lake Joseph, where I've spent every summer since age 10.

While there, I don't want to give up viol adventures, so this year I hooked up with Carol, a wonderfully engaging person in Toronto who is very organized, hosting various consorts every week. She had an extra bass viol that she was happy to lend me for the whole summer. After collecting the viol, I agreed to drive to Toronto once a week to play with 4 to 6 gambists who meet at her house to play for 3 hours with one short break. I knew one of the regulars from former summers, and the others were to become my new friends. Excellent sight readers all, we were destined to have some very fun hours together. And as a bonus, one of these people is also an excellent baker; she brought an ancient tin box filled with a different treat at every meet-up. On top of all this, Carol and the others welcomed Remi, who sat under my chair, absorbing



the music and enjoying the companionship. This weekly fun necessitated a 2-hour drive each way on the freeway and some jostling on city streets. But as we had such fun in Toronto, it was well worth the effort.

Carol is also a recorder player and has various other plucked, bowed and wind instruments in her small music room. She is a very busy person, always looking for new opportunities to play.

Some of you know my friend, Shelley, who lives in Muskoka, about 20 km from my cottage. Shelley plays recorders and her friends play harpsichord, recorders, cello and violin. So she sets up playing sessions with these various forces, while I play bass viol or sometimes the tenor viol which she keeps at her house all year. A bonus of these fun sessions is lunch after we've finished, often with produce from her big garden along with other good things, and have time to catch up on local news.

I am also the **producer of a series of weekly summer programs at our local village museum**. I choose speakers who present on a wide range of subjects that include pictures and often, samples of their work—everything from porcupine quill baskets and artwork to authors, painters and historians. Remi makes himself at home and is now considered the official dog at the museum.



This area of Ontario is considered to be a premier summer destination for many Americans and Europeans as well as Canadians, with thousands of clear lakes and rivers offering many recreational opportunities. My cottage is a few meters from one such lake; my boat and kayak bob at the dock; the water is warm, the swimming excellent. The sunsets and night sky are both beautiful in Muskoka, far from any city, with little light leakage from artificial sources. (The movement called Dark Skies is well-known in this area.) The Milky Way is prominent and the Northern Lights dazzle us.

Being together and making music with friends, some from my childhood in Hamilton; attending to the daily crossword puzzle and, happily, the Sunday *New York Times*, which the local bookstore gets for me—this is a snapshot of my Muskoka life.

— Heather Wilson

Pacifica Viols 2018-19

Play Days / Coaches

Sept. 8, 2018: **Farley Pearce**

Oct. 13, 2018: **Frances Blaker**

Nov. 10, 2018: **Julie Jeffrey**

Dec. 8, 2018: **Roy Whelden**

Jan. 12, 2019: **Gretchen Claassen**

Feb. 9, 2019: **Amy Brodo**

Mar. 9, 2019: **Erik Andersen**

Apr. 13, 2019: **Shira Kammen**

May 11, 2019: **David Morris**

Jun. 8, 2019: **Members' BASH**

Come to the Revels!

This year's California Revels is set around 1600; its theme is the quest for the era of *La Convivencia*, a time when, purportedly all three cultures - Muslim, Jewish, and Christian - lived in a spirit of tolerance and peace. A timely piece indeed!

Music Director Shira Kammen has invited several chorus members to join the band; Sue Jones, for example, will play gamba for three numbers. Get your tickets now for a performance at Oakland's Scottish Rite Theater on **Dec. 8, 9, 14, 15, 16**, including Sat. and Sun. matinees. Use discount code SUEJ when ordering tickets online. *Or call the box office and use the YULE18 code as well to get a double discount!*

510-452-9334

Open Mondays – Thursdays, 11 am to 3 pm

<http://www.californiarevels.org/show>

SAVE THE DATES

• Conclave: July, 2019

The next **Conclave** (annual conference of the Viola da Gamba Society of America) will be held in Forest Grove, Oregon (outside Portland) July 21-29, 2019.

• Viols West: Summer, 2020

Our next **Viols West** gathering will be in 2020, since it is not scheduled on years when Conclave is held on the west coast.

Music in Germany

While this is not strictly gamba news, readers might be interested in Nick Jones's report about his and Sue Jones's recent Road Scholar trip to Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden, with a classical music theme. The bottom line is how reliably arts organizations in the former East Germany are supported by their city, state, and nation. Americans have a great deal to learn about the importance of the arts in civic well-being!

<https://clevelandclassical.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/110218ReportFromGermanyNJ.pdf>

Note: Nick is a staff writer with San Francisco Classical Voice, www.sfcv.org.

Your Pacifica Chapter Contacts 2018 - 2019

President: Cindi Olwell cindi.olwell@gmail.com

Vice President: Ricardo Hofer
hofer52@gmail.com

Secretary: Nick Jones nrjones360@gmail.com

Treasurer and Membership List Coordinator:
Ellen Fisher erfisher@gmail.com

Viol Rental Coordinator: Carolyn D'Almeida
dalmeida.carolyn@juno.com

Play Day Coach Liaison: Alice Benedict
rozeta@adianta.com

Newsletter Editor: Sue Jones
scjones360@gmail.com

Webmaster: Rose Miller oceannarose@gmail.com

VdGSA Chapter Representatives:
Ellen Fisher erfisher@gmail.com
and Carolyn Butler sparkyb@sonic.net

Pacifica Chapter Website: <http://pacificaviols.org>

Viola da Gamba Society of America:
<http://vdgsa.org>

The VdGS Pacifica Chapter is an Affiliate of the San Francisco Early Music Society (SFEMS).