

# VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY PACIFICA GAMBA NEWS

Volume 34, No. 9 • May, 2019

## Join us for our next Play Day with coach Alexa Haynes-Pilon, Saturday, May 11th

- 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!**

**Note that Alexa's appearance is a change from our original schedule.**



A performer on baroque cello, viola da gamba, baroque bassoon and dulcian, **Alexa Haynes-Pilon** was recently described by Early Music America as “a special artist with a brilliant future.” She plays regularly with American Bach Soloists, Con Gioia, Ergo Musica, and as principal cellist of Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra. She has performed with Tafelmusik, Rezonance, Accenti Vocali, and the American Contemporary Ballet. Co-founder of LA-based Ensemble Bizarria, she also co-founded and is Artistic Director of Los Angeles Baroque. She has been on faculty at the San Francisco Early Music Society workshops, and at the Road Scholar Hidden Valley workshop in Carmel Valley, CA.

At the U. of Toronto, Alexa studied baroque cello with Christina Mahler and viola da gamba with Jöelle Morton. She recently finished her doctoral studies at U. of S. California, studying baroque cello and viola da gamba with William Skeen.

<https://www.alexahaynespilon.com/>

***Our group session will focus on the foundational chamber music skills of blending and sound production. We will start by working on matching bow speeds and articulation as a group. Once we have matched sounds, we will explore various ways of bringing out individual lines while still blending overall. Specifically, we will work on creating different articulations to make a musical line pop! We'll practice these techniques using pieces by Gibbons and Ferrabosco II.***

## >> Important! RSVP to Cindi by Thurs. May 9 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/Self-RatingGuide.pdf>.)
5. Send this info to [cindi.olwell@gmail.com](mailto:cindi.olwell@gmail.com).



## NOW OPEN: CONCLAVE REGISTRATION

The annual viol extravaganza produced by the Viola da Gamba Society of America is an amazing gathering. It will be held July 21-18 in Forest Grove, Oregon, on the campus of Pacific University, about 30 minutes west of Portland.

There are hundreds of viol players, special classes for beginners, and pages of class choices for everyone else. Take a look at the online brochure which lists faculty, classes, programs and fees:

<https://vdgsa.org/cgi-bin/conclave-2019/2019conclave.cgi>

Considering going to Conclave for the first time? Have a look at these videos of folks at Conclave telling us all about it.

[https://vdgsa.org/cgi-bin/conclave\\_testimonials/ct.cgi](https://vdgsa.org/cgi-bin/conclave_testimonials/ct.cgi)

## Faculty

Erik Andersen	Adaiha MacAdam-Somer
Jack Ashworth	Martha McGaughey
Joanna Blendulf	John Moran
John Cox	Rosamund Morley
Julie Elhard	David Morris
David Ellis	Ellisabeth Reed
Wendy Gillespie	Marie Szuts
Patty Halverson	Arnie Tanimoto
Erin Headley	Lisa Terry
Jane Hershey	Brent Wissick
Julie Jeffrey	Shanon Zusman

## Wanted: Loaner Viols & Transportation

Many folks will be flying to Conclave from all over the US, from Canada, Australia, and other countries; this makes it difficult to bring instruments. For this reason, Kathleen Merfeld of VdGSA coordinates an **instrument lending program**; its primary purpose is to make gambas available for beginners and faculty; its second priority is to lend to people who come without an instrument.

However, at the last Conclave there were enough loaner viols to also supply those who left their instruments with the Viol Doctor. Not having to worry about finishing a repair in time for the owner's next class makes the Viol Doctor's job easier, and makes for less stress for players as well!

But all this depends on having enough supply to meet the demand. Can you help?

- Do you have a viol that can be lent?
- Can you help transport any to Forest Grove?

Kathleen has evolved a good system for tracking the instruments and making sure they get returned.

The borrower signs and is responsible for its care while they have the viol.

I have both lent and borrowed viols before, and been happy to get mine back in great condition (once with a new string!), very careful with someone else's instrument, and very grateful for opportunities to try an instrument that is not mine and see what I think of the subtle differences in size, strings, bow, etc.

So, **if you think you might be driving** to Forest Grove, Oregon for Conclave and have room to take one or more viols, or **if you have one or more viols that you are willing to lend** (or both!) please send me an email and let me know!

Thank you!

**Ellen Fisher**, Pacifica's VdGSA Chapter Rep  
[erfisher@gmail.com](mailto:erfisher@gmail.com)

## Flying to Conclave?

Check out Airplane Travel Tips on our website:  
<http://www.pacificaviols.org/guide.html#airplane>

## Upcoming Events

### Antic Faces

#### *Joyne Hands: Elizabethan entertainments for mixed consort*



#### **Fri. May 10, Palo Alto**

8:00 PM, First Presbyterian Church

#### **Sat. May 11, Berkeley**

7:30 PM, St. Mark's Episcopal Church

#### **Sun. May 12, San Francisco**

4:00 PM, St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Peter Hallifax, *viol and bandora*

Julie Jeffrey, *viol and cittern*

Shira Kammen, *violin and viol*

John Lenti, *lute and viol*; David Morris, *viol*

Mindy Rosenfeld, *flute*

The exciting new Renaissance band *Antic Faces* recreates the unique sound of the English mixed consort, the iconic Elizabethan ensemble-grouping which draws from different instrument families (winds, bowed strings, plucked and strummed strings). The playful dialogue between the violin and Renaissance flute, the virtuosic flash of the lute, the lushly intertwining support of the bass viol, against the shimmering backdrop of the wire-strung bandora and cittern: this truly irresistible combination, endowed with endless possibilities of invention and variety, became a centerpiece of courtly and theatrical entertainments.

*(continued on next column)*

The program will feature the best of the English mixed consort repertoire, based on songs and dances of the day, running the gamut in mood from rollicking to refined, including music of Dowland, Byrd, Morley, Phillips, Allison and Coprario. Selections for the big band will be mixed with moments showcasing the artistry of individual soloists. For textural contrast, the string consort (violin and viols) will intersperse a selection of Orlando Gibbon's sonorous and sophisticated proto-sonatas, the Great Dooble Bass Fantasies.

*For tickets and more information:*

[http://sfems.org/?page\\_id=13495](http://sfems.org/?page_id=13495)

Sponsored by **San Francisco Early Music Society**

### *Early Music Open Mic Night*

#### **Wed., May 22, El Cerrito (4th Wednesday)**

7 - 9 PM, Hillside Swedenborgian Church

This is your opportunity to perform early music in a friendly cabaret style setting. Soloists, groups, Instrumentalists, singers, students, youngsters—amateurs and professionals—all welcome!

- Bring your own music stand (and a stand light if you need it).
- A state-of-the-art Roland harpsichord/organ is available as well as a piano.
- Six time slots (max 15 min.) available per night.
- **To request a spot for a future Open Mic, email Heather Wilson at [hi2dougan@gmail.com](mailto:hi2dougan@gmail.com).**
- Donation of \$5 is accepted to cover refreshments and venue rental.

### **VOTE for VdGSA Board**

if you are a member of our national Viola da Gamba Society, it's time to vote for the board. We note that Melita Denny, Administrative Director of Viols West, is running as a first-time candidate. If you are not yet a member, we urge you to join this terrific organization. [www.vdgsa.org](http://www.vdgsa.org)



**Come play!**  
**Pacifica Annual Bash • Sat. June 8**  
**Music / Potluck/ Party**

**Pacifica members— gather some of your viol friends and prepare some music to play for our annual Bash.**

Where? At our usual Play Day location: Hillside Swedenborgian Community Church in El Cerrito.

**>> Sign up to play by June 1**

**Even if you are not performing, please come, bring friends and a potluck lunch contribution.**

**9am-10:15 Set-up, coffee/tea & conversation** in the Sanctuary.  
(At this time, performing groups may rehearse downstairs in the classrooms.)

**10:30 Performances begin** in the Sanctuary. During performance time, please feel free to dine on our always wonderful potluck lunch. (Wine is allowed but please take home your bottles.)

**After lunch consort playing** using music from our Pacifica Library. Even if you are not part of a pre-formed group, please join us. We can continue playing until 2:15.

**2:15 Cleanup.** We must be out of the church by 3:00 pm.

**DEADLINE JUNE 1**  
**to sign up for your BASH performance**

Email the following info to coordinator Robin Easterbrook at [reasterbrook@mac.com](mailto:reasterbrook@mac.com):

- Names of group's players & instruments
- Title of music your group will perform

**Marin Headlands workshop**  
**welcomes viol players**

*The East Bay Recorder Society has an annual workshop for intermediate and advanced players of recorders and other related instruments at the beautiful Marin Headlands. This year they particularly want to encourage viol players to come; all classes are open to viols as well as recorders. Since the brochure was prepared, they have hired **gambist Amy Brodo, who will offer two classes on Saturday afternoon, one on dances of Holborne, the other a Charpentier suite.***



**Dates: Friday May 17- Sunday May 19, 2019**  
*Note: players can choose which days to attend.*

**Faculty** includes Frances Blaker, who has been a coach at Pacifica Play Days.

**Cost:** Ranges from \$120 for Saturday only (includes meals) to \$280 for the full weekend, with 5 options altogether.

**Location:** Point Bonita YMCA at Marin Headlands, a beautiful location with short walks to views of the bay, ocean, and beaches.

**If you have questions or would like a copy of the full brochure emailed to you, contact workshop registrar Merlyn Katechis: [merlynk@berkeleymusic.com](mailto:merlynk@berkeleymusic.com)**

## News from John Dornenburg

"Louise and I found a house in a lovely Cotswold village that has a medieval church, a good pub, a small shop, an active village hall, and most surprisingly, a summer opera festival that is completely sold out! As many of you know, the Cotswold area is famous for its beautiful countryside and many charming villages of golden stone and we feel lucky to have settled here. We are only half an hour from Stratford-upon-Avon (Royal Shakespeare Company) and a 35-minute train journey from Oxford. We have been to London several times and even took part in the million-person march for a second referendum vote on the disastrous Brexit.

"On the home front we have completely re-designed our walled garden and plan to do a kitchen extension later in the summer. This Spring we will have several visitors from California, and in May we will meet up with Tish Berlin and Frances Blaker in Barcelona.

"The English early music scene is huge, of course, with nearly constant concerts in London's famous Wigmore Hall or St. John Smith's Square and many concerts across the country - there are so many viol players, and lots of young professionals. We recently heard Stanford music graduate Mahan Esfahani perform brilliantly on the harpsichord at St. George's in Bristol.

"Louise has decided to retire from performing, but I have been doing concerts in Ireland (Kilkenny Castle) and Bristol (St. Mary Redcliffe) with future bookings now stretching to June 2020. It has been such a pleasure to play in the natural acoustics of very old buildings again! **I have been giving some Skype lessons**, and while the sound quality is not great, I have found it possible to make what I hope are constructive comments.

"We will be in California again in September of this year; on Sept. 21st I will offer another one-day workshop for advanced viol players to follow up on our successful workshop back in January. We will work on Marin Marais' *Couplets de folies* and two pieces by Charles Dollé. We plan to be in the Bay Area from Sept. 16-24. **Send me an email if you're interested!**"

Email: [jd.lac@att.net](mailto:jd.lac@att.net) or [bassviol@stanford.edu](mailto:bassviol@stanford.edu)

Address:

Greyes  
Old Rectory Gardens  
Longborough GL56 0QF  
U.K.

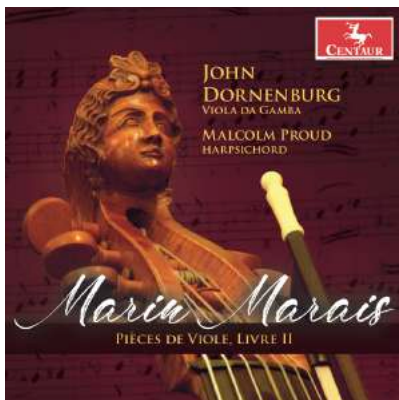
Home phone from USA (011 44) 1451 833567

Mobile phone from USA (011 44) 7391 047240

Mobile phone from within the U.K. 07391 047240

John's new CD just received this rave review in the English Viola da Gamba Society newsletter.

**Congratulations, John!**



"Gambist John Dornenburg and harpsichordist Malcolm Proud are two of the finest period instrument performers of our day."

AMAZON Editorial Review

## The Viol No 54 Spring 2019 CD Reviews

### Marin Marais Pièces de Viole, Livre II

John Dornenburg *Viola da Gamba*  
Malcolm Proud *Harpsichord*  
Centaur records – CRC3703

Marais is such a major star in the viol firmament that while lesser mortals may shy away from tackling this mountain peak, star performers love to give us their view from the summit. With a composer of vast output, it's no surprise that we are generally offered recital selections of each player's favourite or party pieces. This tends to mean that the same numbers reappear in the catalogue, and we don't see the full picture of Marais' *œuvre*. Full credit then to John Dornenburg and Malcolm Proud for, instead, allowing us to hear Marais' second volume of pieces in its entirety.

Written at a key stage in Marais' career (1701), this collection shows the composer at once emerging from the shadow of his teacher Sainte Colombe and moving forward stylistically into pastures new. There are five suites of two to five pieces, each with a *Prélude*, followed by dances, character pieces and chaconnes supplemented by two magnificent *Tombeaux*.

The challenges in performing this repertoire are many – technical and musical – and the players here are well up to the task. The music is played with authority and a sure sense of the rhetoric of French Baroque music. They are especially successful in interpreting the *Préludes*, by turns improvisatory and meditative and then dynamic and dramatic. The extended chaconnes require the players to turn on a sixpence and Dornenburg and Proud have mastered the art of switching mood, speed, and figuration in the blink of an eye without losing a sense of forward

movement and overall structure. (The E major Suite, for me, is the most wholly satisfactory demonstration of these features.)

The more characterful numbers are each presented with their unique personality made clear and yet the playing, lacking (as it does) any exaggeration or overkill, achieves a well-judged balance between the eccentric and the prosaic. The ensemble throughout is superb: a really creative partnership – each player responding, apparently freely and spontaneously, to the other in a telling way that keeps the music alive and vivid. Nowhere is this better heard than in the *Tombeaux*, those enigmatic pieces somewhere between a personal expression of grief and a funeral oration. If M de Ste Colombe is remembered in heartfelt tones, M de Lully is reflected upon in a much more formal way, the players responding to every musical and emotional twist and turn that Marais throws at them. (As a bonus we also have Proud's beautiful rendering of the *Tombeau de Mr. de Chambonnières* by d'Anglebert).

In performing the music of this multi-faceted composer it's all too easy to indulge in over-the-top virtuosity or speed for its own sake, or to distort the music for tuppence coloured effects in the search for an 'original' take on it. Dornenburg and Proud, on the other hand, are ready to run the risk that at a first hearing the playing may sound rather restrained, for their studied and poised manner allows the music to speak for itself without being at all 'in your face'. Indeed on repeated listening (to any or all of the disc) their approach reaps considerable rewards as it draws us ever closer to a fuller appreciation of the true genius behind the music.

Philip Redfern



## Pacifica Viols 2018-19 Play Days / Coaches

(\*note changes to April and May 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: **David Morris\***

May 11, 2019: **Alexa Haynes-Pilon\***

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

## Your Pacifica Chapter Contacts 2018 - 2019

### Board of Directors:

President: Cindi Olwell [cindi.olwell@gmail.com](mailto:cindi.olwell@gmail.com)

Vice President: Ricardo Hofer  
[hofer52@gmail.com](mailto:hofer52@gmail.com)

Secretary: Nick Jones [nrjones360@gmail.com](mailto:nrjones360@gmail.com)

Treasurer and Membership List Coordinator:  
Ellen Fisher [erfisher@gmail.com](mailto:erfisher@gmail.com)

### Board members at large:

Peter Ballinger, Robin Easterbrook, Mary Elliott,  
Julie Jeffrey, Elisabeth Reed

Viol Rental Coordinator: Carolyn D'Almeida  
[dalmeida.carolyn@juno.com](mailto:dalmeida.carolyn@juno.com)

Play Day Coach Liaison: Alice Benedict  
[rozeta@adianta.com](mailto:rozeta@adianta.com)

Newsletter Editor: Sue Jones  
[scjones360@gmail.com](mailto:scjones360@gmail.com)

Webmaster: Rose Miller [oceannarose@gmail.com](mailto:oceannarose@gmail.com)

VdGSA Chapter Representative:  
Ellen Fisher [erfisher@gmail.com](mailto:erfisher@gmail.com)

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).



Courtesy of *Early Music America*

### Updating our Website

We are planning to update our Pacifica website. If you have any suggestions or comments, please email Sue Jones at [scjones360@gmail.com](mailto:scjones360@gmail.com).