

# GAMBA NEWS

Volume 13, Number 11

Viola da Gamba Society/Pacifica

September 2001

## Coming up in 2001-02

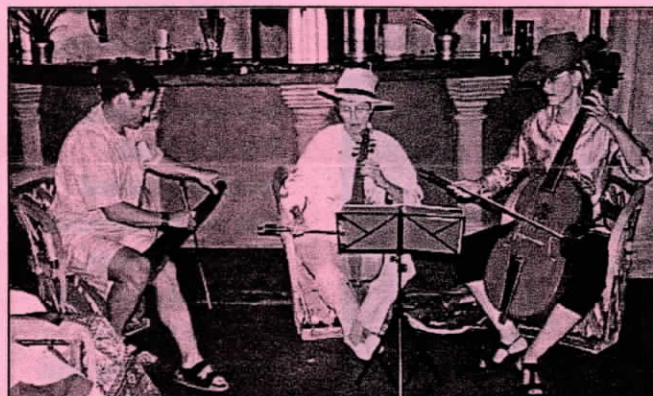
### *Some highlights of the season*

Players and aficionados of the viol, here is advance warning of some upcoming concerts and events.

On September 28, 29 and 30, **Sex Chordae of Viols** will join Magnificat in a concert of Schein. The **Kambe Consort** of Japan will give a concert on February 16, 2002, at St. Alban's Church, Albany, and some kind of master class or demonstration that morning. **Paolo Pandolfo** will play in Berkeley, sponsored by SFEMS, on April 20, and may offer a master class the following day; at this summer's Conclave, the reviews of Pandolfo's Boston master class were raves. The annual East Bay/American Recorder Society **Marin Headlands workshop**, which welcomes viols, will be held the weekend of May 3-5. And VdGSA/Pacifica will involve itself with the **Berkeley Early Music Festival and Exhibition**, the first week of June.

Along with the usual array of summer workshops will be an all-viol workshop held in early July somewhere in the Pacific Northwest, headed by **Margriet Tindemans**.

There, your calendar is half filled already. Stay tuned (to 415).



### **What is David Dreyfuss (left) playing?**

*See Page 4.*

### **PACIFICA PLAY DAY SCHEDULE**

All play days except those at Stanford are held at Zion Lutheran Church, 5201 Park Boulevard, Oakland.

The church is just west of the Park Boulevard exit off Highway 13. We meet at 9:30 a.m. for the coached session. Lunch break is at 12:30; players can go to nearby restaurants or bring lunch from home. Uncoached afternoon playing goes on till 4:00 p.m.

Sheet music, coffee and tea will be supplied. Please bring a music stand and any music of your own you'd like to play. Consorts are formed based on the information you provide on the enclosed postcard. **Please mail it in immediately!** Or e-mail your data to **John Mark**, mark\_bach8@hotmail.com.

Newcomers and rank beginners are welcome. If you're coming for the first time, please phone ahead: (510) 531-1471

DATE	COACH
September 15	Julie Jeffrey
October 13	David Morris
November 17	Roy Whelden
December 8	Amy Brodo
January 12, 2002	Elizabeth Reed
February 2002*	John Dornenburg, Stanford campus
March 9, 2002	TBA
April 12-14	Annual North/South Viol Meet, Fresno
May 11, 2002	TBA

\* Date TBA



# Report from Viols West, 2001

*Story by Lyle York  
Photos by Bill Lazar*

August's Viols West workshop, at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, broke all kinds of records. At-



**The Unsinkable Carol Herman resigned as director after 17 years, turning over the Ooga Horn of Office to Rosamund Morley**

tending were 66 players, including about 10 newcomers, and 12 faculty. But the heart-breaking record was set by director **Carol Herman**, who said this year that she was resigning (as she had before, but no one believed her), and made it stick. Carol is going to concentrate on her number one love, the stage. And she is very good up there.

It is almost impossible to imagine Viols West without Carol,

who has been director since 1984. (That year, there were 14 attendees.) But the joyful news that **Rosamund Morley** of Brooklyn will be the new director, assisted by **Alice Renken**, who served as Carol's able assistant director this year, brought great relief. (Now that a New Yorker is going to run Viols West, we know e-mail is here to stay.)

Carol's last workshop came off as always—well organized, good-natured and highly educational. The attendees learned how to play in weather alternating between blazing sun and fog, and to tune with air conditioners and campus weed whackers.

They learned to distinguish between coaches **Larry Lipkis** and **Larry Lipnik** by calling them



**Brent Wissick with his cats, Lyle York and Anna Schoettle**



**Larry Lipkis and Larry Lipnik (trying to hide under mantilla) play a tenor viol with four hands**

Kiss and Nick.

As usual, the Viols West class offerings were varied and excellent. An attempt was made to get students to tune before class, a good idea but not universally enforced by the coaches. The daily Voices and Viols class, with **David Morris**,



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brought the Purcell verse anthem "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem" to performance level. David also contributed to the general wellbeing by setting up his room as Princess Lucky's Tea House, refreshing us in a way befitting a dry campus.

Wednesday night's faculty concert, which is traditionally all sight-read, had a record dozen players, the "Bowers of the Lost Arc." In addition to Holborne, Purcell, Ward and Lawes, highlights were Brahms organ preludes based on "Innsbruck," published by **Peter Ballinger's** PRB Productions; a prelude and gigue by Charpentier; an 8-part double-chorus piece by Friuli; and "Five for Seven," five pieces for seven viols by **Peter Siebert** (attending the workshop), all on a descending five-note motive. The practice of sight-reading at this concert spares the faculty hours of rehearsal and gives the students the thrill of witnessing their coaches' mistakes and disagreements. When the 8-part Friuli collapsed, David Morris announced, "This is your favorite part." Catcalls from the audience: "We made it a lot farther than that," and "Is there a coach in the house?"

The Friday evening student performances ended with **Tina Chancey's** blues class doing "Saint Louis Blues," with singers and swing danc-

ers. The evening then descended into frivolity, with songs by Carol and piano by **Rebecca Gifford**—a sample, "You've got a Nick and a Kiss, so how can you miss?" The two above-mentioned Larrys, disguised by a rose in the teeth and a mantilla as Duo Ceviche, performed a duet on tenor viol with four hands, an act that can't be described in a family newsletter. **Brent Wissick** sang a newly discovered original version of the well-known Hume song, "Tabasco." There was a skit involving Brent as a beginning viol player with two sensitive cats. But the heart of the evening was farewells to and from Carol. **Sarah Mead** wrote a beautiful sonnet, "For Carol." Carol read her own farewell poem and presented the sacred director's ooga horn to Ros Morley. The faculty presented Carol with a golden Oscar, a plaque and a song, "Carol Herman," to the tune of "That's Amore." At this point, Carol, who had held up so far, broke down and reminded us all of the first rule of performance: "Always tuck a Kleenex in your sleeve."

After that catharsis, the perfect winding-down of the evening was some English country dancing led by **Martha Bixler**, accompanied by fiddles and baroque flute.

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## Southwest Viol Workshop returning to Tucson

After the success of last year's Southwest Viol Workshop in Tucson, we are glad to report that **Ulrich Michael** is organizing another for November 2-5. This workshop, running from Friday at 3:00 p.m. to Sunday at noon, will feature instrumental and vocal music of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.

**Margriet Tindemans** will be workshop director; other faculty will be **Alison Crum**, **John Dornenburg**, **Julie Jeffrey** and **Roy Marks**. Because of the small size of classrooms, enrollment will be limited to 30. Please register early!

The workshop will be held at the Hampton Inn

& Suites in the Catalina Foothills. Registrants should call the Hampton to make their own reservations (800-426-7866), under the group code "VSA." Rooms range from \$79 to \$89 (plus tax) and can be shared. Separate tuition is \$225, seniors (60+) and students \$205. Register before October 1 to receive a \$15 discount. Two catered suppers will cost \$20.

Please contact Ulrich Michael, [ufmichael@theriver.com](mailto:ufmichael@theriver.com), or Jean Iverson, (520) 578-0647, for details and a registration form.



# Bowing in the redwood forest

ROARING CAMP,  
FELTON, CALIFORNIA  
JULY 15, 2001

By David Dreyfuss

The gamba societies of the world have long supported the playing of early bowed string instruments of all sorts, but I recently discovered another world of early bowed instruments without strings that we have not supported. Here in the land of *big* trees, where lumber yield is measured in houses per tree, I attended the 24th annual conclave ("picnic and music festival") of the California Saw Players Association (CSPA), complete with an international performance competition.

This year's contest was won by the president of the French sister society, Sylvain Pichet. In France, the instrument is now called *la lame sonore* (the singing blade). A group of young players, ages 9-14, came from New York City with their teacher (who was from Shanghai), prompting the organizers to create a junior division for the competition, but the typical participants were overall-clad men over 70.

So what is a musical saw? Well, that depends



## Sawing Away

**Above: Mr. Hej (Tom Spearance) of Santa Cruz plays a mini-bass Blacklock saw to take second place in the 2001 performance competition.**

**The photo on Page 1 was taken by Peter Payzant at the July VdGSA Conclave banquet in Fort Worth. Dreyfuss is playing a tenor saw, Harriet Wold, treble viol and Karen Hall, bass viol.**

**They are performing Harriet's *Mozortiziana a la Texas*, subtitled *In Nominame That Tune*, based on a cantus firmus better known to most saw players as "Home on the Range."**

**Their performance was a big hit, and several introductory saw lessons were given (mostly to Conclave faculty) the next day.**

on who you are and what you want it to be. Most players have, of necessity, developed their own technique. Roughly speaking, you bend the saw into an S-curve with a straight section in the middle that vibrates. The more bend, the shorter the straight section and the higher the pitch. You can excite the vibration with a hammer, but a bow applied near the bottom of the straight section produces a more pleasing sound. The best bowing location moves with pitch, so you'll see a saw player's bow moving up and down the blade. You can buy a good cheap carpenter's saw at the hardware store (\$5-\$10 – the thinner the blade, the better). Or you can step up to a specialty instrument such as those made by the Valley Saw Company of San Jose, to the specifications of long-time President of the CSPA,



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Charlie Blacklock (who's in his mid-80s and going strong). Charlie offers a consort of four sizes priced in the \$35 range, along with fiberglass cello bows (\$36). He recommends black hair and Hill's dark rosin. I myself play a saw by Mussehl and Westphal of Wisconsin, "instructors of novelty musical instruments," formerly played by my wife's grandfather (now in his 90s – maybe there's something healthy about this saw-playing ...).

In Europe and Japan, players are trying to shed the image of the saw as a novelty musical instrument. Not only have they changed the name, but they now favor "blades" without teeth (which play no role acoustically anyway). These sell for relatively princely sums (\$300-400). Personally, I prefer a real saw, staying closer to the historical original. (Folks started playing the saw sometime in the 19th century; Mussehl and Westphal started making special "musical" saws in 1921 – up to 30,000 a year at peak popularity.) Morgan Cowin, Vice President of the CSPA, says he likes to "warm up" his instrument by stirring the campfire first (after cutting the wood, I suppose), saying it helps get those molecules moving.

The basic range of the saw is roughly like that of a soprano recorder. Larger instruments extend the range downward, and a three-plus octave range is then possible. The sound is an ethereal ringing tone. You need a good ear to play, of course, since the pitch is infinitely adjustable (though saw players say they favor sharp keys). Many sawyers use a lot of vibrato, a useful crutch to hide tuning inaccuracies, but others favor little or none. The instrument has been used to play all sorts of music. Most commonly it is used as a melody instrument, and slower melodies are usually more successful. Most players find it helpful to have other instruments (or a CD) playing along or accompanying to help provide a pitch reference, but the gathering at Roaring Camp also included the sound of about 30 saws in a mass play-in.

So grab a saw from your toolbox, get out your viol bow (most any size will do) and start playing! Some good tips for starting out can be found on the internet at [www.mtco.com/~wentwrth/musicsaw/tips.html](http://www.mtco.com/~wentwrth/musicsaw/tips.html).

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*David Dreyfuss is editor of the VdGSA News.*

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## A new early music program in the Central Valley

Kristina Herrick of Fresno, a teacher of piano, guitar, voice and recorder and veteran of many viol workshops (in addition to viol, she performs on recorders, crumhorns, psaltery and percussion instruments), is also an announcer/producer for Valley Public Radio, the National Public Radio station in the Central Valley–KVPR in Fresno and KPRX in Bakersfield. The two stations serve about 70,000 listeners. Herrick has been asked to create a new program of early music.

"Since this is my passion, I'm especially excited and delighted to develop this program," says Herrick. "I am still in the early stage of gathering ideas and materials."

Herrick wants to feature the flourishing San

Francisco early music scene in an upcoming program. She is asking Bay Area professional musicians with recently released CDs to please send one to her.

Want to name her program? Send in suggestions. The winner will receive on-air credit. "We want a name that will entice the listener who thinks she/he doesn't like early music," says Herrick, "or thinks it's something we play early in the morning."

She also welcomes ideas for other future programs. Contact her at Valley Public Radio, 3437 West Shaw Avenue, Suite 101, Fresno, CA 93711. (559) 275-0764. E-mail: [Kristina@kvpr.org](mailto:Kristina@kvpr.org).



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# Random Notes

**Contributors wanted:** Send *Gamba News* your concert listings and reviews, opinions, workshop experiences, CD reviews, drawings, photos, poems or out-of-body episodes. Send all contributions to **Lyle York**, Editor, 1932 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Berkeley, CA 94707, or via e-mail: [lleyork@earthlink.net](mailto:lleyork@earthlink.net). Phone (510) 559-9273. Short classified advertisements in plain text to be placed in *Gamba News* are free to VdGS/Pacifica members. For non-members, ads are \$5 per issue. Please mail your check for \$5 to **Lyle York** (address above), made out to VdGS/Pacifica. Deadline for calendar submissions, classified ads and all editorial contributions for a given month's newsletter is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month (e.g., the deadline for the April issue is March 15).

**Newsletters by e-mail:** If you'd like to receive your monthly *Gamba News* on-line, please e-mail **Lyle York** at [lleyork@earthlink.net](mailto:lleyork@earthlink.net). Your reply postcard will take e-mail form as well.

**Join VdGS/Pacifica!** The annual membership rates are: Playing Members, \$25 (can attend regular coached consort meetings free, receive *Gamba News*, and get a discount on special consort-coaching sessions); Two-Person Memberships, \$35 (two playing members in the same household); Newsletter-Only Members, \$10.

For a membership form, contact **Annette Barnett**, 2502 Hearst Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602; (510) 482-8649; [annette.barnett@esis.com](mailto:annette.barnett@esis.com).

Another way to join is from the Pacifica web site, <http://home.pacbell.net/hesuome>. Click on "Join the Chapter."

## Pacifica chapter officers are:

President, **Julie Jeffrey**; Vice-President, **Lyle York**; Secretary, **Annette Barnett**; Treasurer, **Helen Tyrrell**; Members at Large: **Cindy Share**, Coaching Liaison; **John Mark**, Rental Program Coordinator; **Lee McRae**, VdGSA Chapter Representative; **John Dornenburg**, **Alvin Roper**, and **Ellen Farwell**.

**Information, please:** Our VdGS/Pacifica chapter Web site, <http://home.pacbell.net/hesuome>, is maintained and regularly updated by **Helen Tyrrell**. It contains the Viol Players' Calendar, which is often more up to date than the *Gamba News* calendar — along with a list of local teachers, sources for music, supplies, inexpensive viols, repairs, and travel tips. The VdGSA (national) Web site is [www.vdgsa.org](http://www.vdgsa.org).

**Rent a viol:** Pacifica has trebles, tenors and basses to rent. Donations of viols and bows to our rental program are extremely welcome — we'll accept them in any condition. Rental fees range from \$10 to \$25 per month. In charge of rentals is **John Mark**, at 10 Holyrood Manor, Oakland, CA 94611; (510) 531-1471; [mark\\_bach8@hotmail.com](mailto:mark_bach8@hotmail.com).

The VdGSA, Pacifica's parent organization, also rents viols. For VdGSA members, rates are \$250 per year for trebles and tenors, \$300 for basses, and \$750 for a complete consort of viols. For more information, contact **Stephen Morris**, 2615 Tanglewood Road, Decatur, GA 30033-2729; (404) 325-2709; [mmorris@mindspring.com](mailto:mmorris@mindspring.com).

The VdGSA recently instituted a Rent-To-Own program. If interested, contact **John Mark**, address above.

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# Classifieds

**VIOLS MADE** by **Alexandra Saur**. Beautiful copies of Bertrand, Jaye, and Hoskins masterpieces. (510) 558-6927, (510) 559-9563.

**TREBLE VIOL** by Dominic Shann, 1981, after English models; 38 cm string length. Coopered top, double purfling, inlaid fretboard and tailpiece, open scroll, tiger maple sides and back. Very light construction. Baroque blackwood bow with ivory nut by Ralph Ashmead; hard case by Early Music Shop (UK), extra gut strings by Damien Dlugolecki. Asking \$4,500 for viol, case and bow. Contact **Oliver Iberien**, (510) 834-6062; [oliver.iberien@mindspring.com](mailto:oliver.iberien@mindspring.com).

**TENOR VIOL:** Uebel, 1974, English style. Excellent condition. Warm tone. With hard case. \$2700. Contact **Celia Doris Bartram**, [celia@quadrivium-labs.com](mailto:celia@quadrivium-labs.com) (510) 336-0865.

**TREBLE VIOL** by Higgins; neck replacement by him; viol in excellent condition. Early ratchet bow by Neil Hendricks and hard case "arranged" by Herb Myers. \$1,500 for viol, bow, and case. Contact **Kris Montague**, (650) 969-1668.

**SEEKING A BOW:** I am looking for a good tenor bow. Contact **Bill Lazar**, [jblazar@aol.com](mailto:jblazar@aol.com); (408) 737-8228.

**WANT TO TRY AN ALTO?** Pacifica has an alto viol available for short-term loan, not rental, to any of our experienced members wanting to try such an unusual instrument. It is tuned A to a, one step up from a tenor. Contact **John Mark**, (510) 531-1471; [mark\\_bach8@hotmail.com](mailto:mark_bach8@hotmail.com).

## THREE EARLY MUSIC INSTRUMENTS FOR SALE:

- **VIOLA DA GAMBA** – 6 strings, made by Kauvad Leauhardt, Munich, Germany, 1951/45. Very beautiful craftsmanship and woods. Inlaid back, ornate carved-out scroll and floral cut-out on top. Fantastic tone. Top notch gamba players have highly praised it. Informally appraised at \$20,000. Price – \$20,000 O.B.O.
- **VIOLONE** – 6 strings, made by Karl Roy, Geigenmeister, Mittenwald, 1958. Also very beautiful wood and craftsmanship. Wonderful tone. Price undecided at this time. Will get appraisal.
- **BAROQUE BASS** – 5 string, friction pegs, made by Karl Roy, 1958. Perhaps the best tone of the three. Price – \$17,500. O.B.O.

Contact **Raphael Mendel**, (415) 457-4005.



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# Mark your calendar

## SEPTEMBER 5, 2001

**MID-PENINSULA RECORDER ORCHESTRA:** Regular bi-monthly meeting, to which viols are welcome. Music is provided; bring a stand.

*Jane Lathrop Middle School, music room number 2, 480 E. Meadow Drive, Palo Alto. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Information: (650) 591-3648.*

## SEPTEMBER 14 & 30, 2001

**HIS MAJESTIE'S MUSICIANS:** Alison Alstatt, soprano, Lee McRae and Ralph Prince, various instruments including viols, play music from the 9<sup>th</sup> century in Spain through the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the New World.

SEPTEMBER 14: *Livermore Public Library, 1000 South Livermore Avenue. 8:00 p.m. Free.*

SEPTEMBER 30: *San Francisco Public Library, Main Branch, 2:00 p.m. Free.*

## SEPTEMBER 16, 2001

**DISTANT OAKS:** With Julie Jeffrey, viola da gamba, performs a Celtic and Early Music program.

*Davis Community Church, 412 C Street, Davis. 4:00 p.m. Information: (707) 545-6676.*

## SEPTEMBER 19, 2001

**MID-PENINSULA RECORDER ORCHESTRA:** Regular bi-monthly meeting, to which viols are welcome. See September 5 listing.

## SEPTEMBER 28, 29 & 30, 2001

**MAGNIFICAT,** Warren Stewart, director, with the **SEX CHORDAE OF VIOLS**, John Dornenburg, director: "Opella Nova," music of Johann Hermann Schein. Preconcert lecture 45 minutes before the performance.

SEPTEMBER 28: *First Lutheran Church, 600 Homer at Webster, Palo Alto, 8:00 p.m. Tickets \$12-\$25. Information: (415) 979-4500; [www.magnificatsf.com](http://www.magnificatsf.com).*

SEPTEMBER 29: *First Congregational Church, Dana and Durant, Berkeley. 8:00 p.m.*

SEPTEMBER 30: *St. Gregory Nyssen, 500 DeHaro at Mariposa, San Francisco. 4:00 p.m.*

## SEPTEMBER 29, 2001

**HAUSMUSIK:** "Le Cirque des Animaux," humorous masterworks by Rameau, Biber, Farina, Vivaldi, et al. Phebe Craig, harpsichord; Judith Linsenberg, recorders; David Morris, baroque cello and viola da gamba; Michael Sand, baroque violin.

*St. Alban's Parish Hall, 1501 Washington St., Albany. 8:00 p.m. Tickets \$18/\$15. Information: (510) 527-9029 or [fran-fel@aol.com](mailto:fran-fel@aol.com).*

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c/o Barnett, 2502 Hearst Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602

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