

GAMBA NEWS

Volume 14, Number 3

Viola da Gamba Society/Pacifica

November 2001

Lutes and Viols

How to play them together

Recently a group of Pacifica players invited several local lutenists to play Dowland's *Lachrimae* collection, which includes the "Seaven Teares" and additional pavans, almains and galliards. Dowland published this collection "for the lute, viols, or violons," but these words have been variously interpreted – to mean that lutes were an integral part of the ensemble, or would play an *ad lib* continuo, or would play independently. The Schott edition notes that the Seaven Teares were originally printed "consort way," or in a design that enabled five or six players to place the same book flat on a table and play in a circle.

Our group (too large for "consort way") played from ordinary modern parts by Schott, the lute part in tablature. The experience proved enjoyable for both parties.

Although there are a number of sources for consort music for lutes and viols, "any multi-part viol piece with a bass line is fair game for a lutenist," says Michael Peterson, a Fremont surgeon who describes himself as a "lute evangelist" for the Northern California Chapter of the Lute Society of America. "All we need is a bass line and the complete score to improvise a part – either a fast bass line, or chordal accompaniment – to give that spe-

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
November 17	Roy Whelden
December 8	Amy Brodo
January 12, 2002	Elisabeth 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

cial 'plucked percussion' sound that fills out the overall sound," Peterson says. "It takes a little careful listening, but when you are attuned, it adds a lot to the music."

For viol/lute playing sessions, Peterson recommends, besides Dowland, the mixed consort music of Morley, available in modern editions. It was originally written for a variety of instruments, including cittern, lute, and bandora (a wire-strung bass lute), but can be modified to fit whatever instruments are present.

Hoping for future joint ventures, Peterson inquired on the Lute Net, based at Dartmouth Col-

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() - _____
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\$ _____ **Playing Member (\$25):** You can attend monthly consort meetings for free, you get a free subscription to Gamba News, and you get a discount on consort-coaching sessions.

\$ _____ **Two-Person Membership (\$35):** Two playing members in the same household. You share all the rights and privileges of a Playing Member.

\$ _____ **Newsletter-Only Membership (\$10)**

\$ _____ **Donations (\$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 or more!)** to VdGS/Pacifica will help us buy sheet music and rental instruments.

\$ _____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED**

Make out checks to *VdGS/Pacifica*.
Mail them with this form to:
Helen Tyrrell, Treasurer
VdGS/Pacifica
P.O. Box 188
Orinda, CA 94563

lege (the site can be reached via <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lute>), for advice on other good pieces to play with viols. What are some ideal pieces for combined lutes and viols? How can lutes work themselves into pieces scored for other instruments?

An especially informative note from the lute point of view came from Stewart McCoy of the English Lute Society, a lute instructor in the UK.

McCoy begins by recommending Holborne's *Pavans, Galliards and Almains* (London, 1599) for five bowed instruments (viols or violins). There is no tablature part, but lutenists can make their own lute part in the same way Dowland did for his music. McCoy has arranged many of Holborne's dances in this way.

"The important thing," writes McCoy, "is for the lute to track the viol/violin parts, more or less, duplicating as far as reasonably possible what they do. All notes are covered by the string parts, so the lute can afford to leave out anything which might cause technical problems. It may be best not to double the Cantus, i.e., the highest part.

"However, Holborne's part-writing, particularly the Tenor and Quintus, is not awfully brilliant. Bernard Thomas, who edited the edition for London Pro Musica, refers to Holborne's Quintus as 'the silly part' – a part that is not very melodic, and was probably composed after the other parts had been composed just as a chord-filler. A conscientious lutenist should not try to track banal stuff like that accurately.

"For this music I believe it is not authentic to play a continuo part from the bass line, filling in suitable chords without reference to the inner parts. Dowland didn't do that with his music, just as surviving organ parts didn't do that in English consort music for viols. Doubling parts is the order of the day, because this clarifies the part-writing, i.e. the polyphony. Improvising chords over the bass is more a baroque practice, where the continuo instrument fills out the texture and clarifies the harmony, but has the effect of obscuring the part-writing.

"That's the theory, but in practice it is appropriate to bend this rule according to what works best on the lute. Dowland would fill out chords

here and there; sometimes he might intabulate notes up or down an octave from the pitch of the viols; but his tablature parts are essentially intabulations, and are conceived in terms of the polyphony.

“As with Dowland, the lute can usefully embellish final notes of sections. Other embellishments are possible, but should be used sparingly.

“If you are looking for surviving tablature that might be used with viols, you could dip into the five manuscripts of Edward Paston. I suspect he used a lute as an alternative for viols, rather than to be played with viols, but his arrangements may be used either way. His repertoire was vast; his manuscripts include a huge number of sacred and secular songs and instrumental pieces. Generally speaking, the lute doubles the notes of all the parts except the Cantus.

“There is a modern edition of eight consort songs by William Byrd which I edited for Fretwork

Editions, where there is a lute part in tablature which may be used with viols. The tablature is not original, but is very similar to the arrangements of consort songs in Edward Paston’s manuscripts.”

And how should viol players adapt to lutes?

Gamba News asked this question of **Greg Barnett**, who plays both instruments. When playing lute with viols, said Barnett, he perceived that “the decay of each note was completely buried by the sound of the viols. The attack of each note was clearly audible, though. The combined effect was that each note began with a lute attack and finished with the sound of a viol, like some aggregate plucked/bowed instrument. It was really cool.”

The lutenist should use “the roundest, cleanest possible attack” to best achieve this effect, Barnett says. “A noisy attack or the sharpness and brightness that come from fingernails will lessen the effect. Very clean attacks from the viols help a lot, too.”

Viols welcome at SFEMS evening collegiums

The SFEMS Education Programs is presenting a series of Wednesday-night “collegium evenings,” informal community music-making events for amateur singers and instrumentalists. Viols of any size are particularly welcome.

Each evening focuses on one or two medieval, Renaissance or baroque pieces, led by a Bay Area early music specialist. Parts are available, by telephone request, two weeks prior to the event.

The next session, on January 23, will be led by **Frances Feldon**, who will conduct the *Missa Cela Sans Plus* of Jacob Obrecht.

On February 27, Eileen Hadidian presents “*Nueva España: Renaissance Music in the New Worlds.*”

March 27’s evening will be conducted by Frances Blaker—music of J.S. Bach and the North Germans.

On April 24, Phebe Craig leads “*Cori Zezzati: 17th century polychoral music of Dominique Phinot and Hans Leo Hassler.*”

The May collegium has been canceled.

Please call ahead to reserve a space for yourself by the 15th of the month for each event, or register now for single or multiple events. For a brochure/registration form, contact Frances Feldon, program director, below.

All collegium evenings take place at the Parish Hall of St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. The church is located at 1501 Washington Avenue in Albany (near Santa Fe and Solano).

Tuition is \$12 per session.

For a collegium evening brochure, or to request advance copies of music for an upcoming evening, call Frances weekdays at (510) 527-9029 or e-mail her at franfel@aol.com.

Classifieds

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

BASS VIOL with bow and hard case, \$2000. Contact **Gwen Rodman**, grod3608@aol.com or (909) 981-1633.

TREBLE VIOL by Dominic Shann, 1981, after English models; 38 cm string length. Cooped 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.

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; (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.

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.

Mark your calendar

NOVEMBER 3, 2001

THIRD ANNUAL SACRAMENTO/DAVIS EARLY MUSIC MIXED CONSORT MIXER:

A one-day get-together for early music musicians from the Sacramento-Davis area to participate in organized jam sessions and a big group play-in. All levels, instruments and singers welcome. For information: (916) 731-5626 or zadekia@pacbell.net.

9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Davis Community Church, 412 C Street, Davis.

NOVEMBER 4-10, 2001

ELDERHOSTEL, INC.: A week-long workshop for players of recorder, viola da gamba and harpsichord. Faculty are members of the Farallon Recorder Quartet (Letitia Berlin, Frances Blaker, Louise Carslake and Hanneke van Proosdij), plus early string specialist Shira Kammen. For information: (510) 559-4670 or tish-feb@mindspring.com. To register: hvms@aol.com.

Hidden Valley Music Seminar, Carmel Valley, CA.

NOVEMBER 10, 2001

VIOLS WEST COACHED PLAYDAY:

Carol Herman's home, 357 West 10th Street, Claremont, CA. Bring your own lunch. If you'd like to attend, please contact Ed Harris to make sure he has your current phone number and/or e-mail address in case of change of venue. Please RSVP to Carol Herman by November 5: (909) 621-2367; chgamba@aol.com. For information, directions, etc., contact Ed Harris: (562) 596-4892; eharris@sulb.edu. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 357 West 10th Street, Claremont, CA.

NOVEMBER 10, 2001

MID-PENINSULA RECORDER ORCHESTRA FALL WORKSHOP:

"Old Wine in New Bottles." The workshop, directed by Shelley Gruskin, will trace the development of musical forms such as "prelude," "aria," and "pastoral," and explore the evolution of each from the Renaissance through the present. Recorders, viols, lutes, krummhorns and soft Renaissance double reeds are invited. Registration before November 3 is \$39 general, \$36 for MPRO and SFEMS members. After November 3, \$42.00/\$39.00.

Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church, 600 West 42nd Avenue, San Mateo, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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: lyleyork@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 15th 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 lyleyork@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.

See Page 2 for a membership form.

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.

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.

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; smmorris@mindspring.com.

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

Gamba NEWS

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♪ Mary Elliott
920 Ventura Avenue
Albany, CA 94707

