

GAMBA NEWS

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Viola da Gamba Society/Pacifica

December 2001

Flying with Viols

The latest news

By Lyle York

In light of the terrible changes that have taken place in our world, the news on air travel with viols is surprising: It's not so bad.

The question wasn't so much about basses, since the only options for them are checking or a purchased seat. I wondered how the changes in airport rules would affect carrying tenors and trebles.

Tenor and treble players used to play a kind of roulette every time they flew. The strategy was to carry one's small viol all the way to the boarding tube of the plane. It might be taken away at that point, but would at least be ensured hand-carrying on and off. In my experience flying with a tenor, the odds were a little better than 50-50 that I could get it on the plane and stashed in the overhead bin. The odds depended on how full the plane was, the amount of bin space available, and the mood of the flight attendant.

My question, asked on the viols mailing list (<http://sandwich.net/mailman/listinfo.cgi/viols>), managed by **Alice Renken**, was: Are the days of gate-checking over? And are carry-on regulations now so strict that a smaller viol might have to be checked, even confiscated as a potential weapon?

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
December 8	Amy Brodo
January 12, 2002	Elisabeth Reed
February 9	John Dornenburg, Stanford campus
March 9	TBA
April 12-14	Annual North/South Viol Meet, Fresno
May 11	TBA

If you just muttered, "Only a badly-played treble," please be quiet and listen.

The pleasant surprise was that the new rules – only one carry-on bag – and the new reality – that many fewer people are flying – make it now easier to carry on a smaller viol and find bin space. One might also surmise that airline personnel, flying in half-filled planes, are less harried and more accommodating.

Ken Perlow reported a problem-free flight on Continental to a workshop in England at the beginning of October. His viol went through the scanner with the rest of his carry-ons for the trip over, but nobody ever asked him to open the case. "On the way back, with FBI warnings of new possible terrorist attacks, even after the regular carry-on scan

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everything carried on the plane was searched," Ken said. "The security guy in London was fascinated by the viol and asked what it was. Well, I babbled on much longer than he had time for, but he thanked me for the info."

Mary Anne Ballard of the Baltimore Consort provided useful general advice on boarding a plane with a tenor or treble.

"How to perform sleight-of-hand with a gate attendant:

"Obviously a tenor in a hard case wouldn't begin to fit into one of those sizing boxes, and even trebles are too long. But they do fit into the overhead on all medium and large planes. I walk to the gate holding the instrument in the hand opposite the ticket-taker, and with the small end of the case protruding forward so they can't see the bulkier part. I am holding my ticket and driver's license out in the hand nearest the attendant so that he/she can take care of me quickly and maybe not even look at my whole instrument. One is still allowed to carry an additional item—purse, briefcase or computer case—so I have one on my shoulder, which I shove around on my back to minimize the appearance of bulk.

"On the smaller planes, where you have to walk on the tarmac from the gate to the plane, they take gate-tagged luggage at the foot of the plane steps. In this situation you can talk to the luggage handler and tell him the instrument is fragile and should be put right side up and on top of the pile. I have done this often (with a hard case, of course) when the plane has no overhead bins, and I have never had a mishap."

For **Wendy Gillespie** of Fretwork, all has not been roses. "I've traveled in both the US and Europe recently," she said. I had no problem getting a treble viol on the plane, but everything *else* has been a problem.

"Fretwork have had to check tenors (after taking them to the gate), even when we have bought seats for basses and the tenors would fit in the overhead compartment just fine. We even had all our nail clippers confiscated! Can you imagine trying to kill someone with nail clippers?"

Shira Kammen and Elisabeth Reed to coach at Fresno

Since we're trying to plan ahead in these days of too-rapidly-filling calendars, here is a heads-up: Our 27th annual North/South Viol Meet in Fresno will be April 12-14. Coaches will be **Shira Kammen** and **Elisabeth Reed**.

Many of us know Shira, who coached at Fresno in 1998. She is an internationally known strings wizard (vielle, viol, violin, viola, medieval harp, rebec, and God knows what else) and an excellent coach.

Most of us have not yet had the pleasure of working with Elisabeth, who will coach our regular play day on January 12. Elisabeth studied Baroque cello at the Oberlin Conservatory with Catharina Meints and later at Indiana University's Early Music Institute. She encountered the viol while on sabbatical from graduate work at the Eastman School of Music. "Anne Marie Morgan, who teaches at Peabody, found me an instrument to use and gave me some lessons," she says.

Elisabeth now plays all sizes of viol except violone. She founded and directed the Viols for

Youth program in Seattle (along with the Pacific Northwest chapter of the VdGSA and the Early Music Guild) and coached play days with the Pacific Northwest chapter.

A year and a half ago Elisabeth moved from Seattle to Oakland, and now teaches viol at the University of California, Berkeley, for a class organized by the bassoonist and music historian Kate Van Orden. Kate had a plan to teach a class in amateur music making in which the viol would be the instrument students would learn. Kate was a beginning viol player herself, so she hired Elisabeth to teach the class viol technique. Together, Elisabeth says, "we teach the class so that people learn to play as much as possible the way people might have learned to play originally—we use original treatises and have them play from the original notation and from partbooks."

Elisabeth also gives private lessons in cello, baroque cello, viol, and the Feldenkrais Method.

Flyers for Fresno registration will be mailed in January.

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**, gro3608@aol.com or (909) 981-1633.

TREBLE VIOL Kelischek workshop with Mettal bow, lined wooden hard case and extra Dlugolecki strings. \$2500. Contact **Cindy Share**, (925) 939-3551.

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**, jbblazar@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 or 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.

- **VICLONE** – 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.

FRETTING

By John Mark

What's behind that mysterious magnetic board?

For the October play day we had a good turnout, enough for four consorts to be coached by Roy Whelden. Everyone had notified me by mid-week, and what's more, *everyone who signed up showed up*.

People had the chance to play on their instrument(s) of choice, without being requested to bring another size. So what's my beef?

None in October, but what I wish to fret about happens on too many play days, when no-shows occur (MDs and dentists charge for that), or someone unexpected appears with an instrument in hand.

Please know that I don't use a dart board when I make up the consorts. I try to arrange compatible ensembles on Friday evening before play day using that wonderful magnetic board Peter Ballinger created.

If there are sometimes no large groups, it is because I feel that ensemble playing becomes nearly exponentially difficult with each additional mem-

Don't fret – write!

A couple of years ago, Oliver Iberien, then editor of *Gamba News*, asked John Mark to write about the lengths of gut or fishline tied around the neck of the gamba, which he did, calling the column Fretting.

John has now expanded the scope of that title, opening the column to another definition of fretting: to be agitated, irritated or excited by anything related to our club activities or gamba playing.

Contributions to Fretting from any reader are welcome.

ber. However, doubling helps people who have not yet experienced a challenging work. Providing your counting is good, a few notes skipped in a large ensemble might not be missed.

In contrast, lines in works for smaller ensembles are clearer, but are more exposed and in that sense may be more demanding.

Whatever the size of ensemble you may be assigned, remember that *readjusting ensembles at 10 a.m. on play days becomes a real hassle*. Please continue to notify me early – by card, e-mail, or telephone. Letting me know whether you intend to stay all day

also helps.

If you really need to cancel at the last moment, 8 a.m. on play day is not too late to call.

If you have suggestions regarding play day groupings, or wish to take over this task, or if you have a musical topic or a gripe suitable for the "Fretting" forum, contact *Gamba News*.

A few more words about lutes and lutenists

Michael Peterson, who contributed to our November story on playing with lutes, sent some further information that was too late to include.

Here are two web addresses useful to viol players in search of lutenists to play with:

Lute Society of America:

<http://www.cs.Dartmouth.edu/~Isa/index.html>

San Francisco Bay Area Lute page:

<http://mclasen.com/lute/balute.html>

November's Tucson workshop

Nancy Fahringer took this photo of the faculty (minus one) and organizers of the 2nd Fall Viol Workshop in Tucson, November 2-5.

The long weekend was a rousing success, marred only by the sudden illness of director Margriet Tindemans, who could not be in the photo (she has recovered).



From left: Brigitte Michael, Jean Iverson, John Dornenburg, Roy Marks, Alison Crum, Julie Jeffrey, and Ulrich Michael.

Photo by Nancy Fahringer

Mark your calendar

JANUARY 5, 2002

HAUSMUSIK CONCERT: "Twelfth Night," a potpourri of medieval, Renaissance and traditional Celtic music for midwinter and the changing of the seasons. Kristin Womack, mezzo-soprano; Eileen Hadidian, recorder/flute/harp; Shira Kammen, vielle/violin; Natalie Cox, lever harp; Julie Jeffrey, viola da gamba. Tickets: \$18/15. For info: (510) 527-9029 or franfel@aol.com, 8 p.m., St. Alban's Episcopal Church, 1501 Washington Avenue, Albany.

JANUARY 23, 2002

EARLY MUSIC COLLEGIUM: Frances Feldon conducts Jacob Obrecht's *Missa Cella Sans Plus*. Fee: \$12. Please call ahead and reserve your space if you haven't previously registered. For info and reservations: Frances Feldon, (510) 527-9029 or franfel@aol.com. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., St. Alban's Episcopal Church, 1501 Washington Avenue, Albany.

JANUARY 26, 2002

MID-PENINSULA RECORDER ORCHESTRA WORKSHOP: "The Splendor of Venice," featuring Venetian music from the Renaissance and Baroque with works by Ciconia, Giovanni Gabrieli, Monteverdi, Vivaldi and composers represented in Petrucci's *Odhecaton*. Viols, lutes and singers are encouraged to attend. The workshop will be directed by Letitia Berlin. Registration fees: MPRO and SFEMS members, \$27 by January 19, \$32 after; non-members, \$32/\$37. Information: Mary Carrigan, 420 Crestlake Drive, San Francisco, CA 94132; (415) 664-9050. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Union Church of Cupertino, 20900 Stevens Creek Boulevard, Cupertino.

FEBRUARY 9, 2002

VDGS/PACIFICA PLAY DAY AT STANFORD: The date is now set and nearly 100% certain. John Dornenburg will coach at Braun Music Center, on the Stanford campus, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fee is \$10. Details and any date change will be announced in the January *Gamba News*.

FEBRUARY 23, 2002

JOHN DORNENBURG, VIOLA DA GAMBA, AND YUKO TANAKA, HARP-SICHORD: Concert of music by Caix d'Herlevois, Marin Marais, St. Colombe, and Antoine Forqueray. Tickets: \$8. For information: (650) 725-2787. 8 p.m., Memorial Church, Stanford University.

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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: 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**, **Ellen Farwell** and **Robin Easterbrook**.

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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