

GAMBA NEWS

Volume 15, Number 1

Viola da Gamba Society/Pacifica

January 2002

Members' news

Catching up with Carol Herman, Ellen Alexander and Kathryn Smith Derksen

By Lyle York

At the start of a new year— and good riddance to the old one — *Gamba News* can report recent news from three of our members:

CAROL HERMAN

A synopsis of Carol Herman's life since her last turn as Viols/West workshop organizer in August 2001 reads seriocomically. This is altogether fitting because Carol has decided to devote herself full-time to the stage. "It's one audition after another," she says. "Unfortunately, the opportunities for A Woman of a Certain Age are less than optimal . . . but I'm stubborn."

September 2001

I just got picked up by a new-to-me agency, so I now have both commercial and theatrical representation. I don't think either Bea Arthur or Judi Dench has to worry, but if ever I get sent out for those myriad "under fives," as teensy roles are

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
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

called, at least I'll have an experience I haven't had before.

I'll submit for next summer's Utah Shakespeare Festival in Cedar City, which is doing its usual mix of plays, Bard and otherwise. Since they're doing *Cymbeline* and *Harvey*, both of which have older-women roles—and I have my own Inland Valley Theatre Award for my performance as Veta Louise in *Harvey*—I'll add to the 1500 others who'll be filling up the mailbox in Utah.

For my role in *Harvey*, I experienced a giggle provoking "Oscar night" with swelling music and a followspot as we walked down the aisle for our

Continued on Page 3

INSIDE: *The VdGS/Pacifica mailing list, which includes members and friends in the U.S. and Canada.*

Yes! I want to join VdGS/Pacifica!

Just fill out the form below, write a check and mail them both in.

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CITY, STATE AND ZIP

YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

() -
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\$ _____ **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*

GAMBA NEWS

Published nine times a year by the Pacifica chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society. It goes on vacation during the months of June, July and August.

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Contributions welcome: Send concert listings and reviews, opinions, workshop experiences, CD reviews, drawings, or photos to **Lyle York**, Editor, 1932 Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Berkeley, CA 94707, or via e-mail: lyleyork@earthlink.net. Phone (510) 559-9273.

Classified ads: Short classified text advertisements in *Gamba News* are free to VdGS/Pacifica members. For non-members, ads are \$5 per issue. Please mail your check to **Lyle York** (address above), made out to VdGS/Pacifica.

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.

Web site: 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.

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Inland Valley awards. I'm glad I got my Viols/West Oscar to grace my studio!

Tomorrow I'm going to audition in Hollywood yet again, which always sounds more exciting than it probably will be. I remember one such audition for an original play where the husband had recently started on Viagra, and the wife (the part for which I was auditioning) was getting pretty damn tired, so she hired a hooker to take up the slack (or non-slack?) and they sat and discussed what the husband liked, what the hooker would or would not do... Then the hooker said, "Hey—maybe we can have a threesome." For the life of me I couldn't think of a single person I'd want to come see me if I'd landed the role. So I crossed my name off the list and went on to the next audition.

That was an unprecedented day: I had three auditions, each a total loser! At the Stella Adler Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard, an aud for Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, I told the directing pair from New York that I lived in Claremont. There were looks exchanged. At that minute I knew I hadn't a chance.

"Is that in the Valley?"

"Personally, I've never driven east of Pasadena."

I drove on to the next aud., in NoHo, which is what a section of North Hollywood importantly calls itself. This was a play so disorganized that the director hadn't yet made up her mind whether to cast all white or all African-American.

Just recently I went back to NoHo to audition for a musical. I thought "trendy little theater" and it turned out to be the basement of Faith Lutheran Church. Now, Garrison and I really have nothing against Lutherans – but – 30 seats in a musty basement, after the elegance of 850 seats and full pro everything this past summer – *well*.

The piano player melted onto the keyboard at the sight of five sharps. So we ended up doing my song in two different keys. I was in the correct one, but I have no idea where she was.

And what was my professional performance last summer? It was as Ouiser in *Steel Magnolias*. I refused to burp on cue, which the director wanted, no doubt because Shirley MacLaine did it in the movie.

Then there was a bit of "business" of popping open a Coke can on a certain word, and I am not in the habit of popping cans. Seeing my ineptitude, he threatened to throw the business out. Challenged, I told him to give me the 4th of July holiday to work on it, and I went to a supermarket and bought a six-pack of junk cola and practiced popping, pouring the cola out in my hotel sink. Never missed a pop in performance!

It's called method acting.

December 2001

I can't report that I'm in a show – though it isn't for lack of trying! I passed on a four-night production at a theater on the second floor of a strip mall in L.A., over an ice cream store, a laundromat, and the Lava Lounge. Belatedly I realized I might have tried to convince the Lounge to feature electric viols.

About a month ago I auditioned for a feature film with Alan Arkin that was shooting in Portland. I did a fine read for the judge role, but the casting director told me the director thought maybe it should be "a man—perhaps of color." Try as I might, I can't do man of color.

However, I cackled, growled and snarled for a recently completed course in advanced animation voiceover. My accomplishments included the following character voices: a witch, a petulant Southern twit, a Brit nanny, a little kid, Robonanny Model #104, an insufferable East Coast snob, and Ratty from *Wind in the Willows*.

I will audition January 5 for the Utah Shakespeare Festival, hugely happy to have made the first cut. In four minutes of audition they need a Shakespeare monologue, a contemporary one, and a bit of song. Put me on fast forward! Keep your toes crossed!

ELLEN ALEXANDER

We are sad to report that Ellen Alexander lost her daughter Saralinda Rhodes in a car accident this past July, and suffered a stroke in late November. Ellen is recovering well from the stroke with the help of a speech therapist and untiring attention from her daughter Elise Stone. Ellen and her husband, Robert, are now settled in a pleasant assisted-living home in Sonoma. Elise reports that Ellen and Robert won't be able to return to their Oakland home.

Ellen was cheered by the cards and calls she has received from her friends, and by a collection of CDs gathered from Pacifica members by **Oliver Iberien**. She still has trouble with speech and writing, but sends thanks and love to all her friends.

Ellen's address: Sonoma Serenity Home,
17575 Carriger Road, Sonoma, CA 95476.
(707) 939-1318.

KATHRYN SMITH DERKSEN

Kathryn Smith Derksen e-mails occasional dispatches from rural northern Uganda, where she and her husband, Dan, are serving a three-year term with the Mennonite Central Committee in Kitgum. The committee works with the peace and reconciliation ministry of the Church of Uganda in an area devastated by warfare, poverty, and disease. Excerpted below is a letter to her friends at Thanksgiving.

Since Gamba News last reported on Kathryn in October 2000, a baby was born, John Clair, and Kathryn gave a recital on the viola da gamba. She doesn't go into musical news in her Thanksgiving letter, but the following story is riveting.

Thieves in the Night

God continues to sustain us in conspicuous ways. In the quiet wake of the rebels' absence, there's been a flush of robberies and local violent incidents. It's believed that individual soldiers are often behind robberies, picking out young men who know their way around and supplying them with a weapon and instructions to force themselves into houses to steal. We've often been reminded that we're the only foreigners living in the

district who don't have a fence or a night watchman. Fencing this large piece of land would be a lot of money that might be better spent in other ways, and we really don't want to be responsible for a night watchman's life in exchange for our own. If there were phones, it might make sense because a watchman could call for help, but that's not a possibility yet. There have been small frustrations with living so "open," but we consider it part of our witness to live without the protection the "rich" of Kitgum enjoy.

We've had several things disappear from our compound out of vehicles

and out of our shed, and then last month we caught some thieves red-handed in the middle of the night. I found them when I went out to the latrine, and once they realized they couldn't hide, they took my flashlight and grabbed my

arm, asking for money and pushing me towards the house. I pretended not to understand Acholi and was purposely slow until I got to the door, and then I quickly slipped in and locked the door before they could follow me. I thought they weren't armed and had seemed more confused by my appearance than aggressive, so after a few minutes we decided Dan would go out to talk to them. One guy did hold his hand behind his back the whole time, but we don't know if he actually had a weapon. They talked to him in fairly good English. One of them kept saying to not come close and not to talk too much, because they had their "gang" close by. Dan asked who they were, and he replied, "We are wrong guys, you could call us street kids." He said they had been sent to get money. Dan indicated the empty pockets of his sleepwear and said, "If you

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want money, why do you come at night? Go away and come back tomorrow.” He also asked them to give back the flashlight, which they did. Dan said he would meet them at 5:00 the next day, then he shook their hands and they left. After that, we had a restless night, and the next day, as expected, they didn’t come back. We made a police report of the incident, for whatever that’s worth.

We’ve since realized that talking to them might not have been the response you all would have wanted us to take, but at the time personalizing ourselves to the thieves seemed important. We didn’t want them walking by here the next time and not knowing that we had names and faces and occupations. Dan’s first reaction had been to grab a wooden kitchen utensil to carry with him, but when I pointed out how ridiculous that looked he readily agreed and dropped it.

So we would like to say that the incident was a victory for pacifism, but now we’re not sure that’s the valid reason that the encounter ended without violence. Several people have laughed at our naïveté, and say that the only reason the young men were not aggressive with us is because they believed the old truth that “all white men have guns.” And when I view the incident in that light, of course: Man comes out of the house to get back his flashlight and fearlessly reprimands the thieves, because his wife is standing at the open doorway with a gun, right? How else could he have such audacity? And I wasn’t going to leave the house with little John Clair sleeping inside, just to prove we didn’t have a gun. So now my question is: Can we point to the power of pacifism in this situation if the truth is that the thieves backed away because they feared we were armed? Probably not, but at least we felt sincere about the way we reacted.

We realize that Americans are grappling with their role in the “war on terrorism” and that there are many questions floating around out there about pacifism and when to apply the almighty Might. One thing I do know is that no matter what the rea-

son was for the thieves leaving without forcing their way into our home, they now know who we are. Dan introduced us by name, explained what we were doing in Uganda and about our work, and warmly invited them back, much as we do with new acquaintances. Is it that little bit of humanity that can change the course of things? I remember from my work in criminal justice that thieves don’t like to see pictures of those they are robbing; they don’t like to be reminded of humanity. It is the same for terrorists, and then for those who go after terrorists. No one wants to remember humanness.

I have always believed that Might does not make right, and after this incident, I can see it:

Only relationships can make right.

The relationship may start with a reprimand and then not continue, but by welcoming the possibility of a

relationship, we are somehow bettering a bad situation, and that does seem right. There can be conflict in relationship, and relationships can end, but if relationship is not offered, then it becomes too easy to be inhumane. I could make some reference to pilgrims and native peoples here, but I’ve gone on long enough.

Thank you for your prayers. Please pray that the phone network will come to Kitgum.... Things have otherwise been quiet in the area, so we can offer our thanksgiving for that.

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New lineup for 2002 Medieval-Renaissance workshop

Many new faculty members have been announced for this year's SFEMS Medieval-Renaissance Workshop, to be held July 7-13 at Meadowlands, Dominican University, in San Rafael. The workshop's new directors, Hanneke von Proosdij and Louise Carslake, have announced their intention to rotate the workshop's faculty each year in order to offer new topics. New viol teachers will be **Wendy Gillespie** and **Elisabeth Reed**.

The announced faculty for 2002: Anne Azema, voice; Frances Blaker, recorder; Louise Carslake, recorder and Renaissance flute; Bruce Dickey, cornetto; Wendy Gillespie, viol and vielle; Shira Kammen, vielle and medieval strings; Jennifer Lane, voice; Robert Mealy, vielle and Renaissance strings; Hanneke van Proosdij, organ, harpsichord, and recorder; Elisabeth Reed, viol and cello; Dan Stillman, early reeds and sackbut; David Tayler, Collegium director and lute; Tom Zajac, sackbut, Renaissance winds, and percussion.

Highlights of class offerings include:

- Collegium (vocal and instrumental) led by David Tayler, with sacred works by Tomas Luis de Victoria and Claudio Monteverdi.
- A 750th anniversary celebration of the *Cantigas de Sancta Maria* offered by Anne Azema and Shira Kammen, with a special performance on Saturday morning.
- A 400th anniversary celebration of Caccini's *Le Nuove Musiche*, offered by Jennifer Lane.
- A Spanish brass project.
- A Spanish 16th century keyboard survey class for harpsichord, organ, and clavichord.
- Guaranteed class for ensembles (minimum four players); must apply before May 7.

The directors recommend early applications. If you aren't on the SFEMS mailing list, contact Hanneke or Louise through SFEMS, P.O. Box 10151, Berkeley, CA 94709, (510) 528-1725, or sfems@sfems.org. Application forms will be mailed in late February.

John Dornenburg to coach February 9 at Stanford

February 9 is the definite date for Dr. Dornenburg's Annual Remedial Viol Technique Clinic. Play will start at 9:30 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. Fee for the day, for members and non-members, is \$10.

Reply postcards for this play day will be in February's *Gamba News*, but if you know you are coming you can contact John anytime at

jdrnbrg@concentric.net. Directions to the music center will be printed in February's *Gamba News*. Players gather in Room 102, next to the office, at the Braun Music Center, Stanford campus.

Parking on campus is free on Saturdays, including permit zones. Players can buy lunch on campus at the Union Coffee Shop or Mexican restaurant, both close to the music department.

Mark your calendar

JANUARY 5

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 9

MID-PENINSULA RECORDER ORCHESTRA regular meeting, for players of recorder, early winds or early strings. Bring your instrument and music stand. For information: (650) 591-3648.

8 to 10 p.m., *Music Room 2, J.L. Stanford Middle School, 480 E. Meadow, Palo Alto.*

JANUARY 23, 2002

EARLY MUSIC COLLEGIUM: Frances Feldon conducts Jacob Obrecht's *Missa Cela 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: John Dornenburg will coach at Braun Music Center, on the Stanford campus, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee is \$10.

FEBRUARY 16, 2002

THE YUKIMI KAMBE VIOL CONSORT: A lecture-demonstration entitled "The Magical Charm of the Viola da Gamba in Historical and Contemporary Music." (510) 848-5591. Donation requested.

2 p.m., *MusicSources, 1000 The Alameda, Berkeley.*

FEBRUARY 16, 2002

THE YUKIMI KAMBE VIOL CONSORT: "Buffet delle Quattro Viole da Gamba - Music for the Viola da Gamba from Japan and the West." \$18/\$15. (510) 848-5591.

8 p.m., *St. Albans Episcopal Church, Curtis and Washington streets, Albany.*

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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Classifieds

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TREBLE VIOL Kelischek workshop with Metal 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),

(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 or mark_bach8@hotmail.com (408) 737-8228.

LOOKING TO BUY A SEVEN-STRING GAMBA: My first choice is a historical instrument, but I will also consider a contemporary instrument. Whatever I buy, it needs to be a professional quality instrument with which I can fall in love. Contact **Barbara Bailey-Metz** at (480) 350-9827 or JohnRMetz@aol.com.

BASS VIOL BOW FOR SALE: Excellent condition, like new. Snakewood. Sturdy, plays well on a six-string. Made in 2000 by Christopher English. \$1300. For information: **Marina Vidor**, (413) 585-6085, starting 1/28/02.

Gamba NEWS

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♪ Mary Elliott
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