

GAMIBA NEWS

Volume 16, No. 6

Viola da Gamba Society-Pacifica

February 2003

John Dornenburg will coach February 8 at Stanford

It's time for Dr. Dornenburg's Annual Remedial Clinic! In all seriousness, after we take our medicine we also enjoy playing and analyzing fine consort music. Please mail your reply card ASAP to **John Dornenburg**, who will coach Pacifica's play day Saturday February 8 at Stanford. You can also email him at jdrnbg@concentric.net.



Dr. Dornenburg

Play will start at 9:30 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. At press time, no public coaching session is planned, but John will lead a brief discussion about string contact and will clarify and review some of the excellent points made by Gail Ann Schroeder in her November master class. The fee for the day, for members and non-members, is \$10.

Players gather in Room 102, next to the office, at the Braun Music Center, on the Stanford campus.

From the East Bay, take the Dumbarton Bridge (84) and exit left on University, which crosses 101 and becomes Palm Drive at the campus. Turn left onto Campus Drive East. Turn right on Mayfield to the Braun Music Center. From 101, exit University and follow directions above. From

280, exit at Sand Hill Road; turn right on Junipero Serra; bear left on Campus Drive East; turn left on Mayfield.

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.

PACIFICA PLAY DAY SCHEDULE, 2003

This month's play day will be held on the Stanford campus. Please see the story at left. (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.)

Sheet music 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 immediately! Or email your data to John Dornenburg, jdrnbg@concentric.net.**

Newcomers and rank beginners are welcome. If you're coming for the first time, please phone ahead: (510) 530-3202.

DATE	COACH
Feb. 8	JOHN DORNENBURG AT STANFORD
March 8	DAVID MORRIS
April 12	GEORGE HOULE
May 17	STEVE LEHNING
June 14	ELISABETH REED

January play day's doubleheader — Elisabeth Reed and Peter Hüttnannberger

By Mary Elliott

On our January 11 playday, viol builder Peter Hüttnannberger came all the way from Austria and **Elisabeth Reed** came all the way from Oakland to edify and inspire us!

In one of the morning private coaching sessions, Elisabeth analyzed the different rhetorical sections of the consort piece. The first section was majestic, characterized by canzona entrances and longer note values. The second was more active, with shorter note values and greater intervallic leaps. The third section was calm, with mixed note val-

ues, few leaps, and a more homophonic texture.

She showed us how to locate and identify these sections and suggested ways of emphasizing their respective affects. These techniques included detached bowings for shorter notes and legato bowings for longer notes but, at the same time, the maintenance of bow contact with all note values.

She suggested that rather than leaning away from the instrument when fast passages appear (an involuntary "fight or flee" response in which fleeing wins), that we lean into the viol, using more pressure and less bow to manage

the notes.

For the group lesson that followed, Elisabeth tried (with some success) to help us to breathe. She believes that awareness of breathing plays a major role in sound quality. Without music, she led us through an exercise in which we exhaled while using a push bow on the top string, then inhaled while using a pull bow on the second string. We continued this pattern by pushing again on the top, pulling on the third string,

(Continued on page 6)

'Musicke apt both for voyals and voyces'

March workshop in Tucson with Alison Crum, Larry Lipnik and Roy Marks

By Lyle York

The VdGS-Southern Arizona chapter is offering a workshop March 7-10. **Pacifica members are urged to contact the organizers ASAP if they'd like to attend.** See below for contact information.

Alison Crum is musical director; other faculty are **Larry Lipnik**, **Roy Marks**, and further faculty TBA. Early morning classes will emphasize technical proficiency. Later classes will be spent exploring consort pieces for viol from England and the continent. Late afternoon and evening sessions will fea-

ture music for voices and viols by Byrd, Dowland, Gibbons, Tomkins, Weelkes, Wilbye and others.

The workshop will be held at the Best Western Inn at the Airport at Tucson, which organizer **Ulrich Michael** (known as an trustworthy man) describes as "luxury accommodations at an affordable price." A free shuttle is available from the airport to the inn. Amenities include a pool and spa, lighted tennis court and volleyball court.

Ulrich asks Pacificans interested to please contact him as soon as possible, for two reasons: He may hire additional

faculty if the registration numbers warrant, and the number of attendees will be limited by the size of the playing rooms.

Pacificans should note that, unfortunately, this workshop coincides with Pacifica's play day on March 8, coached by **David Morris**.

Visit the chapter's web site for further information and updates: <http://personal.riverusers.com/~ufmichael>. For information and registration, please call Jean Iverson at (520) 578-0647 or email Ulrich Michael at ufmichael@theriver.com.

VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY-PACIFICA

GAMBA NEWS

GAMBA NEWS is published 10 times a year by the Pacifica chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society. It vacations in 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. Or to **Ellen Farwell**, Associate Editor, 1807 Butte Street, Richmond, CA 94804-5217; (510) 524-3327; lbfarwell@earthlink.net.

Classified ads: Short classified 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. 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.

HEADS-UP FOR SUMMER: This year's SFEMS Medieval-Renaissance Workshop, "Music from England, France and The Netherlands," July 13-19, will be especially attractive for viol students.

This workshop, known for its informal, friendly tone and good company, will offer several viol consort classes for advanced and intermediate players. Classes are also offered in lute, harp, vielle, recorder, voice, brass and reeds. Bass viol players can take part in broken Renaissance consorts.

All classes are held at Meadowlands (the Victorian residence hall) on the campus of Dominican University in San Rafael. This is an ideal commute for many in the Bay Area.

If you can't bear the commute, you can register for a room at Meadowlands for the week. The rates are not low — they are comparable to a San Rafael motel room— but having a room on campus makes it easier to take rests during the day and to take part in spontaneous evening consorts. For more accommodations information, contact Hanneke van Proosdij (below) to be put on a brochure/registration mailing list.

This year the Med-Ren organizers, Hanneke and Louise Carslake, are making a special effort to encourage the attendance of pre-formed consorts. Groups (a minimum of four players) applying before May 10 will be guaranteed a daily class.

Viol faculty are **John Dornenburg**, **Julie Jeffrey** and **Elisabeth Reed**. They will focus on English repertory. Need we say more?

Well, we can say more: You might also consider the SFEMS Baroque Workshop, June 22-29. The week features master classes, coached ensembles, baroque orchestra and chorus, and faculty and student concerts. Viol classes will be taught by the excellent **Martha McGaughey**. Details on the

VIOL TALK

ANNOUNCEMENTS, GOSSIP & RUMORS

Baroque workshop will be printed in the March issue of *Gamba News*.

Faculty for the 2003 Medieval-Renaissance Workshop includes:

- **Louise Carslake**, recorder and renaissance flute
- **John Dornenburg**, viol
- **Julie Jeffrey**, viol
- **Daniel Johnson**, voice
- **Jennifer Lane**, voice
- **Robert Mealy**, vielle and violin
- **Herb Myers**, renaissance reeds and strings
- **Nigel North**, lute
- **Hanneke van Proosdij**, recorder and harpsichord
- **Elisabeth Reed**, viol and cello
- **Dan Stillman**, early reeds and sackbut
- **David Tayler**, Collegium Director and lute
- **Marcia Young**, medieval harp and voice
- **Tom Zajac**, sackbut and renaissance winds

Other highlights include: "The Play of Daniel," a theater project including staged student performance on Friday evening with Daniel Johnson and Robert Mealy; Collegium (vocal and instrumental) led by David Tayler

with works by Josquin, Isaac and Byrd; French and English lute song project with Jennifer Lane, Nigel North and David Tayler; a Monday evening lecture by John Dornenburg on the role of the viol in England and English consort music; and an after-lunch movement class, taught by certified Feldenkreis practitioner Elisabeth Reed.

For more information, see the SFEMS web site: www.sfems.org. Or contact Hanneke van Proosdij, (510) 236-9808, or medren@lanset.com.

DEATH OF A BEST FRIEND: We are sad to report the death of **Al Roper's** little dog, **Alex**. As most of you know, Alex traveled everywhere with Al. We all grew to love that terrier face and spirit.

CAROL HERMAN, legendary former director of the Viols West workshop, announces that she is a grandmother of twins: "Katherine Herman Swanson (Kate) and Elizabeth Herman Swanson (Liza) arrived on December 9. Dads Paul Herman and Ed Swanson made it to the hospital in Glendale just in time for all the excitement!"

"The girls were big and strong for preemies, so they could leave the neonatal intensive care unit in a bit to spend days with their ecstatic grandparents in Claremont. Now all are back home in San Francisco, which means Gram Carol will surely become a Southwest Airlines frequent flyer."

Since Carol finished five weekends as Grandma in two Edward Albee one-acts in an LA theater on December 15, life became real theater of the absurd around the Herman household for a while. Carol also just got her Screen Actors Guild (SAG) card.

Reed and Hütmannsberger (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

pushing on the top, pulling on the fourth string, all the while maintaining the original breathing pattern, until we'd reached the sixth string. Next, we reversed the pattern, pulling on the top string and pushing on the second, and so forth. The exercise was relaxing and also helped us to prepare for the string crossing that each note required. Elisabeth emphasized that the goal of the exercise was awareness, something we could practice in all of our playing situations.

She also made another point: how much easier it is for viol players to reach the top strings and bottom strings with their left (fingering) hands and right (bowing) hands by rotating the trunk of the body toward the left or the right, respectively. This relieves the fingers of both hands of having to make all the adjustments in motions up or down the strings. "The arm begins at the spine," she said, and then had us focus on moving first our left hands and then right hands up and down the strings using only trunk rotation.

Next, Peter Ballinger, Leslie Gold, and I played a fantasy from the C minor suite of Matthew Locke's Flat Consort. The piece offered many contrasting sections, and in our rehearsals, we practiced exaggerating those contrasts as much as possible. Elisabeth felt that the sectional contrasts were clear but that the connections between sections could have been clarified as well. For example, shortening the pauses between sections would have helped to integrate the sections.

Following a magnificent potluck, Peter Hütmannsberger presented Julie Jeffrey with her new Barak Norman treble and me with my new Bertrand 7-string French bass. Both of us are delighted with our instruments. The evenness of their response and the openness of the sound would be wonderful qualities even in mature instruments, and the fact that they sound mature, even at this very new stage, is remarkable. As Julie succinctly put it, "They're no longer trees!"

Then Peter discussed some differences between French, Austrian, and English viol makers. A report on these differences will appear in the March *Gamba News*.

Throughout the presentation, Peter provided fascinating details about materials.

WOOD. He uses pine for the fronts, maple for the sides, back, and neck, ebony veneer for the fingerboard, and spruce for all other parts. Peter's favorite source of maple is Bosnia. However, because of the tragic war in that region, it is difficult to find Bosnian wood without bullets embedded in it. Purfling, the decoration around the edges and back of certain models, is made of three pieces of wood—ebony on the outside and maple sandwiched in the center—glued together and inserted into 1.3 mm slots in the body of the viol. Interestingly, the Dutch use fishbone for the inner layer. Purfling is not only decorative; it also prevents cracks.

VARNISH. Peter uses alcohol-soluble spirit varnish, which contains natural

resins, from a recipe that was "passed on." It tends to be softer than such varnishes as turpentine-soluble oil varnish. Hard varnishes develop a "jacket" and change the sound of the instrument because they penetrate the wood. Peter prefers the sound of the softer varnish. Some historical instruments that have been coated with spirit varnish remain relatively soft hundreds of years after they were made!

SOUNDPOST PLACEMENT. Peter commented on the new fashion of setting the soundpost right under the bridge. He feels this squeezes the belly and damps the vibration. The advantage of this soundpost setting is that it permits clear initial attacks, but it stops the bridge from vibrating and reduces the vibrations passed through the soundpost to the back. This is critical because the back plays a large role in creating the color of the viol's sound.

In general, instruments become more resonant as they are played and as they age. The patterns and latitudes of vibrations created in playing a new instrument will set up corresponding patterns in the range of response of the wood molecules. This means that the instrument of someone with an aggressive playing style will ultimately develop a different sound from the instrument of a more reticent player. A daunting thought for those of us with new instruments!

Overall, this was a splendid, well-attended, and much-enjoyed play day. Thank you, Elisabeth and Peter.

Yayoi Isaacson play day (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

with a combination of reverence and terror, Yayoi's fearlessness was refreshing and encouraging.

Following the large-group playing of Handel and Marais pieces, we moved into the public-coaching portion of the schedule. Yayoi coached a quartet (Lee McRae, Ellen Farwell, John Mark,

and Robin Easterbrook) in a prelude, sarabande, and gigue from a Charpentier suite for viols. She encouraged the group to stress the second beat of *each bar* in the sarabande and to connect the four-bar phrases together with less separation between them. This resulted in a smoother texture, as did her suggestion to play the gigue at a faster

tempo.

Yayoi provided us with a delightful and productive play day, making efficient use of our time to improve our ensemble techniques and expand our range of interpretive ideas. We welcome her return in the future!

Mark your calendar

**FEBRUARY 5, 19; MARCH 5, 19;
APRIL 2, 16, 30; MAY 7, 15, 21, 28**

MID-PENINSULA RECORDER ORCHESTRA regular meetings. Early strings and winds are invited to join the recorders. Please bring a music stand. For information: Frederic Palmer, (650) 591-3648. 8:00 p.m., J.L. Stanford Middle School, Music Room 2, 480 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto.

MARCH 7-10

VDGS-SOUTHERN ARIZONA SPRING WORKSHOP: Tucson, AZ. Musical director, Alison Crum; other faculty, Roy Marks and Larry Lipnik. (See page 2.)

For information contact: Ulrich Michael, ufmichael@theriver.com, or Jean Iverson, (520) 578-0647.

APRIL 13-19

HIDDEN VALLEY MUSIC SEMINAR FOR RECORDER, VIOLA DA GAMBA AND HARP-SICHORD WORKSHOP: Features master classes for recorder, viola da gamba and harpsichord, coached Baroque chamber ensembles, separate Renaissance consort

classes for recorder and viols, and continuo classes for harpsichordists. For advanced amateurs and pre-professionals. Enrollment limited; inquire early.

In Carmel Valley, CA. For information contact: Letitia Berlin, (510) 559-4670; tish-feb@mindspring.com. To register or to inquire about fees and accommodations, Peter Meckel, (831) 659-3115.

APRIL 25-27

ANNUAL NORTH-SOUTH VIOL MEET, Fresno. Details TBA.

For information contact: Stu Elliott, (626) 798-2912; selliott625@earthlink.net.

MAY 9-11

MARIN HEADLANDS EAST BAY-AMERICAN RECORDER SOCIETY WORKSHOP FOR RECORDERS AND VIOLS.

For information contact Britt Ascher: brittascher@attbi.com.

JUNE 22-29

SFEMS BAROQUE WORKSHOP: Martha McGaughey, viol (among others). (See page 3.) Dominican University, San Rafael. For information contact: Phebe Craig, (510) 540-7415, or phebec@aol.com.

JULY 13-19

SFEMS MEDIEVAL-RENAISSANCE WORKSHOP: John Dornenburg, Julie Jeffrey and Elisabeth Reed, viols (among others). (See page 3.) Dominican University, San Rafael.

Contact: Hanneke van Proosdij, (510) 236-9808, or medren@janset.com.

JULY 27-AUGUST 3

VDGSA CONCLAVE: St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN. Details TBA.

Contact: Alice Renken, (760) 729-6679, fax (760) 729-6680; arenken@sandwich.net.

AUGUST 10-16

VIOLS WEST WORKSHOP, CalPoly campus, San Luis Obispo. Directed by Rosamund Morley. Details TBA.

Contact: Alice Renken, (760) 729-6679, fax (760) 729-6680; arenken@sandwich.net.

Yes! I want to join VdGS-Pacifica! Or renew!

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

YOUR FIRST AND LAST NAME

YOUR MAILING ADDRESS

CITY, STATE AND ZIP

YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

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Make out checks to *VdGS-Pacifica*. Mail them with this form to:

Helen Tyrrell, Treasurer
VdGS-Pacifica
P.O. Box 188
Orinda, CA 94563

\$ _____ **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)**

\$ _____ **Donation to VdGS-Pacifica** will help us buy sheet music and rental instruments and fatten our scholarship fund.

\$ _____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED**

Classifieds

SEEKING CONSORT

BASS PLAYER, hemidemi beginner, fairly good at sight-reading, seeks to play in consorts of any size. Could play in my home (Rockridge) or willing to go to others' homes in the Bay Area. Flexible schedule, days or evenings. **Ricardo Hofer**, (510) 428-1430; hofermr@earthlink.net.

FOR SALE

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

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.

BASS VIOL FOR SALE: Bass viol, 6 string, German-made in the 1970s. With bow and hard case. \$3500. Contact **Helen Tyrrell**, (925) 253-1782; hesuome@pacbell.net.

THREE LOVELY 20TH-CENTURY VIOLS: These instruments were purchased in the 1970s, and have been used infrequently over the last 25 years. **TREBLE**: This instrument is branded with a stylized "AH," and the scroll features a unique carving of a woman's head. It comes in a soft case with a Lothar Seifert bow. Asking \$2,500. **TENOR**: This was possibly made by Karl Roy, and comes with hard case. Asking \$2,000. **BASS**: A 1966 instrument made by J. M. Samann in Dresden, it comes with a Lothar Seifert bow and hard case. Asking \$4,000. Contact **Richard Berman**, (510) 536-8457, or rjberman@hotmail.com.

BASS VIOL BOW FOR SALE: Figured snakewood, made by Linda Shortridge. \$495. Contact **Don Groves**, (503) 631-7806, dgroves@ccwebster.net.

BASS VIOL BOW FOR SALE: I purchased this bow from Ralph Ashmead for \$1650 at the 2002 Berkeley Early Music Festival Exhibition. Asking \$1500, as I am in need of new camera equipment! This snakewood bow sits very firmly on the string and is beautifully made, which is typical of Ralph. Contact **Karen Ande**, (415) 586-5285 or kande@jgc.org.

OFFERS

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

HOW TO PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD

Short classified advertisements in GAMBA NEWS are free to VdGS-Pacific members.

For non-members, ads are \$5 per issue. Please mail your check to:

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GAMBA NEWS
1932 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Berkeley, CA 94707-1638.

Make checks out to to VdGS-Pacific.

Gamba NEWS

c/o Becker, 3049 23rd Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602



HANUKKAH USA 37



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