

VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY PACIFICA VOLUME 18, NO. 5 JANUARY 2005

GAMBA NEWS

The Feet of a Dancer *Play day with Yayoi Isaacson*

Julie Morrisett

Yayoi Isaacson presided over a festive play day on December 4. A performance by the Youth Viols, a mass playing of the Pastorale from Handel's Messiah, and Yayoi's boundless energy all ushered in the holiday season in fine style.

The day started with an especially lengthy tuning session, thanks to the chilly temperature. Yayoi mentioned that recorder players put their recorders under their shirts in order to counteract the ambient temperature. Few of us had viols small enough or shirts big enough to accomplish this, however. When the actual playing began, Yayoi worked with us on bringing coherence to our ensemble. We started off with Dowland's Lachrymae, a familiar piece which allowed us to concentrate on musical expression and group unity. After we had all sat down somewhat hap-



Gail Ann Schroeder will coach the January 8 play day. See back page for details.

hazardly in a vaguely polyhedral shape, Yayoi promptly rearranged us so that the instruments were in size order; then she had us move into a tighter, more defined circle. As we were in the large meeting room, this simple correction

allowed us to hear one another more easily.

Yayoi suggested that the acoustics of the room must also be taken into account when deciding how to interpret the music. A large room, for instance, will make it difficult to hear the moving notes. Limiting crescendo on long notes, and only crescendoing at the end of the long note, will help bring out the faster passages. Another tendency in groups is to speed up at times when everyone is musically busy; resisting this will also help clarify the moving passages.

After our group switched to Holborne, Yayoi emphasized that dances should be played with dancing in mind. Downbeats in quarter note passages can be emphasized with either more bow, a heavier arm, or both. Bringing out

continued on page three

Pacifica Play Day Schedule, 2004-2005

Each month, as soon as you receive your Gamba News (or before), please call or email John Mark, our peerless consort arranger, to tell him you will attend the upcoming play day and what size(s) you will bring. (510) 531-1471; mark_bach8@hotmail.com.

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 9:15 am for the coached session.

Sheet music, coffee and tea will be supplied. Please bring either a sack lunch for yourself or a dish or drinks to share at our customary potluck. The church has a microwave we can use. There is also a Mexican restaurant close by.

Please bring a music stand and any consort music of your own you'd like to play. Consorts are formed based on the information you provide to John Mark. Newcomers and rank beginners are welcome.

DATE	COACH
January 8, 2005	Gail Ann Schroeder (includes master class)
February 12, Stanford	John Dornenburg
March 12	Shira Kammen
April 22-24, Fresno	Elisabeth Reed and Shira Kammen
May 7	David Morris
June 11	Amy Brodo

For Sale

Bass Viola da Gamba bow by Ralph Ashmead; \$1,500 or best offer. Contact **Elisabeth Reed**, (510) 482-1684.

Visit Your Local Viol Builder! 7-string bass, Bertrand model, rich sound. 6-string bass, Jaye model, bright and delightful to play. Treble, Hoskins model. Tenors and other bass models also available. Soft and hard cases custom-fitted to your instrument. Repairs. Come by to try an instrument, take a shop tour and learn about building viols, or for idle chit-chat. **Alexandra Saur**, (510) 558-6927; (510) 559-9563, in Albany.

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

Lazar's Early Music

Moeck (recorders and early winds), Kueng, Mollenhauer, Yamaha, Aesthe, Dolmetsch Millenium Recorders, and others in the near future. Competitive prices, instruments sent on approval, personalized service and advice. **Bill Lazar**, (408) 737-8228.

Bass viol, Peter Tourin, Jericho, VT. English division bass after Henry Jaye; no. 49, 1983. With decorated fingerboard and tail-piece, carved rose. 67.3 cm free string length. Very nice condition with a few chips to the finish on the edges. It sold in 1983 for \$3225 for the decorative work. The viol would sell now for about \$9-10,000, according to Peter Tourin. Comes with a nice custom-fitted hard case and bow. Asking \$7000.

Bass viol, Wolfgang Uebel, Celle, Germany, 1977. With carved rose on sound board; 64 cm free string length. Very nice condition. Asking \$6000 with unpadding soft case. Bows available separately.

Treble viol, Neil Hendricks, Reno, CA, 1973. With gear tuning machines. Suitable for a beginner. Asking \$450, with Hendricks 'ratchet' bow, no case.

Bows (4): Chris English, octagonal/round stick, 60 cm free hair length, 74 gms., asking \$1000; **Harry Grabenstein/Tourin bow** (1983), ebony frog/nut, 60 cm free hair length, 68 gms., new hair, asking \$1000; **William Monical**, octagonal stick, ebony frog/nut, 60.5 cm free hair length, 59 gms., new hair, asking \$800; **H.R. Pffretschner**, 61 cm free hair length, 59 gms., new hair, asking \$700.

Pictures of all are available on my website (www.bill-lazar.com) on the 'used instruments' page. Contact **Bill Lazar**, jblazar@aol.com, (408) 730-2238 for more information.

continued on page three

Gamba News is published 10 times a year by the Pacifica chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society. It vacations in July and August.

PACIFICA CHAPTER BOARD

President	Ellen Farwell lbfarwell@earthlink.net
Vice President	Lyle York lleyork@earthlink.net
Secretary	Marilyn Becker becker3049@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Penni (Pj) Savage psavage205@aol.com

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Rental Coordinator	John Mark mark_bach8@hotmail.com
VdGSA chapter Representative	Lee McRae LmcR@aol.com
Coaching Liaison / Associate Newsletter Editor	Mary Elliott marell3@earthlink.net
Webmaster	Helen Tyrrell hesuome@pacbell.net
Newsletter Editor	Julie Morrisett jmorrisett@sbcglobal.net
Peter Ballinger	prbprdns@aol.com
John Dornenburg	jdornbrg@concentric.net
Robin Easterbrook	reasterbrook@mac.com
Ricardo Hofer	hofermr@sbcglobal.net
Julie Jeffrey	jjeffrey@library.berkeley.edu
Elisabeth Reed	ereed@eskimo.com
Alexandra Saur	asaur@sonic.net
Colin Shipman	mrshipman@aol.com

Contributions Welcome

Send concert listings and reviews, opinions, workshop experiences, CD reviews, drawings, or photos to Julie Morrisett, Editor, 412 Arkansas Street, San Francisco, CA 94107, or jmorrisett@sbcglobal.net; (415) 648-1138.

Correction

December's feature article on Joanna Blendulf was co-written by Mary Elliott and Lyle York.

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 made out to VdGS-Pacifica to Julie Morrisett, Editor, 412 Arkansas Street, San Francisco, CA 94107.

www.pacificaviols.org

Our VdGS-Pacifica chapter website is maintained and regularly updated by Helen Tyrrell. It contains the Viol Player's Calendar, along with a list of local teachers, sources for music, supplies, inexpensive viols, repairs, and travel tips. The VdGSA (national) website 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 \$15 to \$30 per month. In charge of rentals is John Mark, 10 Holyrood Manor, Oakland, CA 94611; (510) 531-1471; mark_bach8@hotmail.com.

Donating to VdGS-Pacifica

The Pacifica Chapter is an affiliate of the San Francisco Early Music Society (SFEMS), and along with other privileges this affiliation confers, we can receive tax-deductible donations. These include not only cash but viols, bows, musical scores, method books, tuners, stands and other viol paraphernalia. Especially since we now have a Youth Project working to teach young people the viol, please remember the chapter when you are cleaning out your music room.

Cash donations can be used for new rental instruments and bows, new music for the chapter playing library, the Pacifica Youth Project, or our scholarship fund.

To ensure that your donation will be tax-deductible, please make out the check to SFEMS with a note on the lower left corner: "for VdGS-Pacifica." Then send your donation check to Penni Savage, Treasurer, VdGS-Pacifica, 436 Hudson Street, Oakland, CA 94618. She will forward your check to SFEMS.

SFEMS will accept and record the donation, then transfer the funds to us. You will receive an acknowledgment letter from SFEMS for your tax records.

When you donate a viol or other materials, you will receive a letter citing the estimated value of the instrument or materials for your tax records.

Yayoi Isaacson, continued from page one

the dance beat in this way will also bring out the inside consort voices.

The Holborne was a perfect segue into the next part of the day, the performance by the Youth Viols. After introducing the four (Imogen Poropat, Emily Judd, Catherine Berner and Zuriah Meachem), their coach, Elisabeth Reed, thanked the Board, and Lee McRae and John Mark in particular, for helping create this teaching opportunity. John also arranged for the lending of the instruments, as well as performing repairs as needed. Several parents were also present for the performance and they, too, were extremely appreciative to all involved. The Youth Viols played two Praetorius dances, the King and Queen. The poise and musicality of the group impressed everyone in the audience. Yayoi spoke to the group on the subject of playing dance music. She suggested that musicians must have the head of a drummer and the feet of a dancer. The beat controls the dance; stronger bows should be used on downbeats. The Youth Viols then played again with this in mind, and the audience participated by clapping on the initial downbeats.

Following the Praetorius, we all (including the Youth Viols) participated in Handel's Pastoral. John Mark led us through his arrangement, which featured trills for treble and tenor. Yayoi suggested that when trilling on a long note, the suspension note can be held slightly longer, the reverse being true when trilling on a short note. Trills are also challenging as it is difficult for all to hold a trill for the same amount of time. A trill preceded by an ornament on a weak beat is especially difficult, and we spent some time practicing this figure together.

The day passed quickly, and indeed, Yayoi commented that the hardest part of coaching was having enough time for everyone. The best thing about coaching, "having fun with everyone," was certainly the best thing about the day overall, and a wonderful start to the holidays.

Viol Talk

All sympathy to Joan Lounsbury on the death of her mother.

The next Pacifica board meeting will be held on Friday, January 21, at the home of Lyle York. All are welcome to attend! 1932 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Berkeley (510) 559-9273.

For Sale, cont'd

Ruby Instruments

The world's first production model of a 7-string solid body electric viola da gamba! Play traditional and crossover music on one instrument! To hear and play the Ruby, contact Kirby, (510) 317-0834 or (510) 332-0834 (24-hour message); gambaguy@msn.com.



Happy New Year!



Mark Your Calendar

January 5, 19; February 2, 16; March 2, 9, 23;
April 6, 20; May 4, 18; June 1

Meeting dates of the mid-Peninsula Recorder Orchestra, which welcomes early strings and winds. Please bring a music stand. Music will be provided at the meeting. For information call Frederic Palmer, (650) 591-3648, or visit the orchestra website at www.sfems.org/mpro.

8:00 pm, Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School Music Room 050, 480 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto

Saturday, February 5

John Dornenburg, viola da gamba, and Yuko Tanaka, harpsichord. Music by Carolus Hacquart, Marin Marais, Antoine Forqueray, and others. \$10/\$5.

8:00 pm, Memorial Church, Stanford University Campus, Stanford. Tickets at the door.

May 20-22

Marin Headlands Workshop for Recorders and Viols, sponsored by East Bay Chapter, American Recorder Society, at Pt. Bonita YMCA. Sixteen playing sessions, featuring conductors Cindy Beitmen, Letitia Berlin, Tom Bickley, Louise Carslake, Frances Feldon, Adam Gilbert, Shira Kammen, Judith Linsenberg, Fred Palmer, Hanneke von Proosdij. Entire weekend or partial attendance. For information contact Susan Richardson at 510-526-7861, susanvrichardson@yahoo.com, or Britt Ascher at 925-283-7134, brittascher@comcast.net.

Point Bonita YMCA, Marin.



Join VdGS-Pacifica or renew for 2004-2005

First and last name _____
Mailing address _____
City, State and Zip _____
e-mail address _____
Phone number, including area code _____

_____ Playing Member (\$25): You can attend monthly consort meetings 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

Make out check to VdGS-Pacifica. Mail it with this form to:

Penni (Pj) Savage, Treasurer
VdGS-Pacifica
436 Hudson Street
Oakland, CA 94618

January 8, 2005 Play Day

with Gail Ann Schroeder

We will once again welcome Gail Ann Schroeder as our coach for the January 8 play day. Please inform Mary Elliott if you who would like to participate in the master class portion of this day. Solos, duets, or consorts are welcome--this is an opportunity to get focused instruction from a wonderful teacher.

Schroeder studied with Wieland Kuijken at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels, where she served for 14 years as his teaching assistant and earned the First Prize and Higher Diploma. Her solo CD, Pièces de viole du troisième livre by Marin Marais, was released in 1998 on the TMD label.

Schroeder is skillful at helping players to identify various musical affects and to use the bow to achieve the maximum from those moments. If you do not choose to participate in the master class, which we will hold in the afternoon, please come and observe. She is an extraordinarily intuitive teacher who knows how to focus on playing issues in an inspirational and encouraging way. Some established teachers in our local gamba community have observed her master classes and expressed their respect for the skillful way in which she communicated complex technical and musical ideas to the participants.

~

Gamba News
c/o 3049 23rd Avenue
Oakland, CA 94602



Mary Elliott
920 Ventura Avenue
Albany, CA 94707

94707+2123 42

