

VIOLADA GAMBA SOCIETY PACIFICA VOLUME 18, NO. 6 FEBRUARY 2005

GAMBA NEWS

John Dornenburg to coach February 12 Play Day

John Dornenburg, who has just released a solo viol CD (see right), will coach play day February 12 at Stanford.

Play will start at 9:30 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. 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.

Please email John Dornenburg at jdornbrg@concentric.net your RSVP.

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



John Dornenburg
"Solo Viola da Gamba"

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.

"John Dornenburg, Solo Viola da Gamba" new CD Release

The CD includes music by Abel, Hume, Sainte-Colombe, Kühnel, Simpson, and Marais - all for unaccompanied bass viol.

Recorded at Mont la Salle Chapel in Napa, it features liner notes by George Houle. CDs are available immediately from John (jdornbrg@concentric.net) or directly from Centaur (www.centaur-records.com) catalog number CRC 2713; they can also be found at the usual shops such as Amazon and Tower Records.

Lyle York, one satisfied listener, describes the CD succinctly: "Zowie! Killer!"

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
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. Pfrezschner**, 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.

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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

The correct date for John Dornenburg's concert at Stanford is Monday, February 7.

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.



Letter from Neil Hendricks

dateline: Reno, Nevada

"In December, our Nevada Barefoot Consort made a rare public appearance. We played for the Reno Friends Meeting (Quakers) at 9 am Sunday, December 5. Miraculously, a roomful of people showed up to hear us. They were most sympathetic and forgiving of our amateur failings. We were well received—a happy occasion.

"Most of our audience were familiar with recorders, of course, though not many had seen a bass. But most of them had never even heard of a viol.

"We presented a varied program of viols, voices, and recorders, featuring Holborne, Morley, East, Dowland, Attaignant, Hingeston, Byrd, Frescobaldi, Tallis, Marais, White, Locke, Jenkins and Maschera. Our director, Natalie Sera, did a good job of explaining our instruments and music. Besides Natalie, our group includes Peter Grant, Gail Petersen, Pamela Dallas, Mark Macabe and myself. We normally meet at Pamela's home twice a week.

"Now retired from teaching, Natalie is quite active in other areas, including Esperanto. The next big project on her horizon is organizing and directing a cat show, scheduled for next April in Reno. Besides viols, she is very much into cats."

Viol Talk

From the Board Meeting

You may have read the information on page three regarding donating to the society, which includes mention of the scholarship fund. This fund will be offered to the directors of California viol workshops, so that they may offer aid at their discretion.

The next board meeting will be held in April, date TBA—all are invited!

Summer Workshops

The 2005 SFEMS Medieval Renaissance workshop, entitled "La Dolce Vita: Music from Italy, Spain and Portugal," will be held at Dominican University in San Rafael from June 26 -July 2. www.sfems.org/medren05.htm

The annual VdGSA conclave will be held in Worcester, MA, at College of the Holy Cross. The dates are July 24th-30th.

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.

Gail Ann Schroeder

Play Day, Master Class, and Bowing Presentation

On January 8th, Gail Ann Schroeder presided over an incredible play day. The first order of business for many of us was remembering how to play in consorts after the holidays, which is not quite like riding a bike, but similar. After the morning's playing, Gail coached a master class and gave a lecture on bowing.

Master Class

Ellen Farwell

Gail Schroeder's master class portion of our play day began with Mary Prout and Mary Elliott playing a rondeau for two basses by Boismortier. The indication at the top was "Gracieusement," and a very graceful piece it was. The two Marys exchanged parts on the repeat of each section, so that they were equally challenged. They played the piece with considerable skill, enhanced even more by Gail's suggestions.

Gail worked with them on producing more contrasts in articulation and dynamics, giving the piece a more lilting character for the most part, interspersed with somewhat forceful or legato sections. Gail felt that the 3/8 tempo called for a one-beat-per-measure feeling. It should sound "dancey," but performers should still be thinking of the longer phrases. In fact, it's usually better not to emphasize the first note or even the first measure too much, but rather to lead toward the important notes, Gail said.

She offered a technique for bringing out the "gracieusement" character of the piece, which has frequent "long-short," "tirer-pousser" patterns in triple meter. Although you need to dig in a little with the bow at the beginning of

the stronger, longer note with a push bow, you can still taper that note and lighten it considerably toward the end. Then you can also lighten the quick pull bow which follows (you know how hard it can be to avoid that "hiccup" effect) by using your ring finger to lift some of the weight of the bow.



Gail Ann Schroeder, Felicia McFall and Mary Elliott

Gail also emphasized how important it is for two or more performers to agree on matters of interpretation, such as articulation and dynamics, in order to achieve that tight ensemble sound.

Next, Felicia McFall played Abel's Sonata in E Minor, transposed for treble viol, with Mary Elliott playing the bass line. Felicia is a violinist who has not been playing the viol very long. She did remarkably well.

As a newcomer to the viol, Felicia needed a little help feeling comfortable with the instrument and handling the bow to best advantage. Gail coaxed her to lower and relax her shoulder and arm so that her bow could stay closer to the bridge, and also advised her on keeping the bow parallel to the bridge. She offered Felicia a chamois cloth for her lap to help her hold the viol more securely. She encouraged Felicia to use her

fourth finger more often, particularly when a string-crossing seems awkward, as in slurring, or when leaping to an open string makes you cross more strings than you need to, or in a place where the discrepancy in tone color doesn't feel right.

Gail encouraged Felicia to experiment with different bowings and articulations, and to find ways to increase the sound without using quite so much energy as a violinist might be tempted to do. She discussed the German Baroque style, which she felt was more straightforward and less "gracieuse" than the French. In the Adagio movement of the Abel, Gail suggested a rather sentimental character, which

Felicia interpreted as "less Hungarian" than what she had been doing. She replayed it with more expression and less vigor, and it sounded lovely.

On Bowing:

Back to Basics, and Beyond

Lyle York

On Pacifica's play day and master class, Gail Schroeder revisited the topic of bow contact, her theme when she coached us last year. This was no problem, since we can't seem to get enough of the subject.

As Gail outlined last year, the three factors producing sound are bow speed, bow pressure on the string, and the bow's distance from the bridge and position relative to the bridge. These three factors must remain in balance. For instance, we bow slower when close to the bridge, faster and lighter when farther from it.

Bow contact can be felt—through the weight of the arm and the grip of the bow hair on the string—but even more important, heard. Our ears should listen for a full tone from the beginning of each bow stroke. Too often, when we are sightreading notes or performing, with all the attendant distractions, we put all of our attention into our eyes; it is important to save some attention for our ears.

As for the bow's position relative to the bridge: The bow must stay parallel to the bridge, or, worded another way, perpendicular to the string. The bow makes a perfect T with the string. The correct angle for each string varies because of the curve of the bridge.

There are a couple of ways to monitor bow angle. The best is to play in front of a mirror. If you must practice without one, there is a second way to maintain the correct angle for each string, and that is to look down at the bridge and observe the shape created between the bow hair and the top of the bridge. It should be an elliptical shape cut in half, with the two sides of the half-ellipse equal. Gail drew us a diagram showing this shape. (For readers who did not see this drawing, Alison Crum has a similar diagram in her book *Play the Viol*. She calls the shape a half-moon.)

The bow makes a drastic angle at the top string and the opposite drastic angle at the bottom. One way to test the sharpness of the angle is to pretend the bow is much longer than it is, and to keep drawing it in the air, following the same plane, after the bow leaves the string. You must maintain the necessary angle for the full length of your bow, watching that the tip doesn't go too far up or down.

Next, Gail focused on the familiar discussion of the elbow, the shoulder, the wrist and the fingers. Which one manages the bow?

She believes that the best way to play is from the forearm, keeping the elbow loose and "open." Some people focus on the shoulder and the fingers, which do play their part, but it is the forearm that keeps the best bow contact and best governs one's rhythm.

Playing the top string, one extends the fingers on a push bow to maintain the proper bow angle; with a pull bow, one contracts the fingers. These movements are gradual. To teach the body these movements, Gail suggested this exercise: Bow a long,

causes the bow arm to contract, as if to protect the body from a hostile world—thus pulling the bow away from the bridge and lightening its necessary weight on the string. Of course, relaxing and breathing are good procedures for any instrumentalist, but Gail said tension is an especially severe problem for viol players because it is a hard instrument to hold. Asked if her students in The Netherlands have the same problems we have, she said, "Tension is a worldwide disease."

It was a comfort to know we are not alone. And once again we felt that our technique had been given a dose of bracing medicine.

Gail has prepared a brief pamphlet on how to practice that she generously offers to mail free to anyone who requests it. Email her at gsch@worldonline.nl.

*"Tension is a worldwide disease."
—Gail Ann Schroeder*



Bill Lazar, Alvin Roper, Felicia McFall, Joan Lounsbery, Ellen Farwell, Lee McRae and Mary Prout

Photographs by Robin Easterbrook

slow push with a free elbow, then a short pull and a short push at the frog. Reverse this with a long, slow pull, then a short push and pull at the tip.

Finally, one more principle that will free up the bowing arm: Relax and keep breathing! Tension

Mark Your Calendar

**February 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, 2005

SFEMS Medieval Renaissance Workshop presents **Collegium Afternoon: Music at the courts of Emperor Charles V and Phillips II.** Workshop directors Hanneke van Proosdij, Louise Carslake and Annette Bauer will conduct music from the Flemish and Spanish Courts and Chapels of Charles V and Philip II. Composers from this "Golden Age" will include Manchicourt, Morales, Escobar, Crecquillon, and Gombert.

We invite singers, recorder players, gambists, violinists, cellists, lutenists, renaissance reed and brass players to join us for a fun afternoon of music making.

All proceeds will benefit scholarships to the Medieval Renaissance 2005 Workshop. We are asking for a donation of \$35 to attend the collegium—this includes music. To register please send a check for \$35 payable to SFEMS to: Louise Carslake, 3931 Linwood Ave, Oakland, CA 94602. For more information: (510) 530-3202 or jdmnrbg@concentric.net.

2:00-5:00 pm, *the choir room at St Johns Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Ave (at Garber) in Berkeley.*

**Saturday, February 5, 8:00 pm
Sunday, February 6, 4:00 pm**

Healing Muses presents "**Bringing Light to the Darkness,**" a celebration of winter and the coming of spring through medieval, Renaissance and Celtic song and dance. Proceeds benefit Healing Muses' hospital music project. Contact: (510) 524-5661 *3, www.healingmuses.org.

Susan Rode Morris, soprano; Eileen Hadidian, recorder & flute; Shira Kammen, violin & vielle; Julie Jeffrey, viola da gamba; Maureen Brennan, Celtic harp. \$15-\$18

St. Alban's Episcopal Church, 1501 Washington St. (between Curtis & Neilson), in Albany, one block north of Solano Ave. Advance reservations recommended. Wheelchair accessible.

Monday, February 7*

**Note: This is the correct date!*

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.*

Saturday, March 19

Healing With Music: a workshop led by Eileen Hadidian (recorder & flute) and Maureen Brennan (Celtic harp), presented by Healing Muses with the assistance of the East Bay Recorder Society.

This day-long workshop is open to a variety of instruments (low recorders, flute, viol, harp, guitar, dulcimer), and is a wonderful opportunity to learn new repertoire, meet players of other instruments and establish ensembles for playing healing music. We will use a combination of medieval, Renaissance, Celtic and traditional repertoires to explore the ways various types of music may be used for healing. Participants will be able to use the music packet, resource materials, and new connections to play music for healing in new ways and in new venues, enriching their lives and bringing comfort to others.

Fee: \$45 (general), \$40 (members of local American Recorder Society chapters, Viola da Gamba Society, Bay Area Folk Harp Society and San Francisco Early Music Society). Includes music packets, resource materials and refreshments. Participants bring instruments, music stand, pencil and sack lunch.

Information: Eileen Hadidian. (510) 524-5661; ehmuse@comcast.net. Registrar: Britt Ascher. (925) 283-7134; brittascher@comcast.net.

9:00 am - 4:00 pm, *Skyline Community Church, 12540 Skyline Blvd, Oakland*

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 Linsenber, 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.



New Pacifica Member

Nelda Smith

Nelda Smith studied piano and violin as a child, has played viola and cello, but considers the organ her principal instrument. She does volunteer work for Stockton-area music organizations and dabbles in musical hermeneutics, particularly the renaissance. She has just bought a "Wendy" bass and is looking forward to learning to play. She was born and raised in Oakland and has lived in France, Lebanon, Massachusetts and Illinois. Her off-and-on day jobs have run the gamut. Music is a family interest: husband Reuben plays tuba and string bass in several bands; daughter Meg is an organist and piano teacher in Hartford, CT; son Walter, an oceanographic geophysicist, sings bass in the DC area, daughter-in-law Michelle, an attorney, is a clarinetist; elder granddaughter Gillian, 3, leads the singing at her pre-school; 7-month-old Fiona will have to follow suit.

Nelda Smith, holding her new "Wendy" bass viol
Photograph by Robin Easterbrook



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:

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