

GAMBA NEWS

Newsletter of the Pacifica Chapter
of the Viola da Gamba Society of America
Volume 10, Number 5 • February 1998

Upcoming concerts

John Dornenberg, gamba; **Louise Carslake**, baroque flute; and **Phebe Craig**, harpsichord, present "Bach and So Forth," including works by J.S. Bach, Telemann, Leclair and Marais, on Mar. 1 at 3:00 PM at 6389 Florio St., Oakland. Tickets are \$18. For more information, contact Florio Street Concerts, (510) 601-9631.

John Dornenburg, violone, and **Mary Springfels**, viol, will participate in Philharmonia Baroque's concert of 18th-century English music on the evenings of Feb. 12-15. For locations, times and prices, call (415) 392-4400.

For the installation of Rector Andrew Walmisley, All Souls Parish will present a two movements from the four-voice William Byrd mass accompanied by four viols. All Souls is located at Spruce and Cedar streets in Berkeley. The service begins at 4:00 PM, the music at 3:45. For more information, call (510) 848-1755.

Upcoming Workshops

David Morris will conduct a SFEMS Collegium evening of the music of Henry Purcell, on Feb. 18, at 7:30 at St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Albany. Collegium evenings are community early-music making events open to all early instrumentalists. The music is available for practice, by telephone request, two weeks prior. For advance reservations, call (510) 527-9029.

Serenading the unfortunate

Several local charitable organizations give amateur musicians the opportunity to perform acts of kindness. Bread & Roses brings entertainment to children's hospitals, shelters for the homeless, correctional institutions and others. For more information, call Marion Hubler at (415) 831-0320. The "No Penny Opera" provides musical entertainment to the H.I.V.-positive; for information, contact Ralph Saver at (415) 241-0288. The Bayview/Hunters Point Adult Health Center needs music-group leaders for the frail and disabled elderly; call Jaye Richardson at (415) 836-4774.

Our **FEBRUARY 14 MEETING** will be held at Zion Lutheran Church, 5201 Park Blvd., Oakland, at 9:30 AM. The church is just downhill from Highway 13.

Mary Springfels will be our guest coach. There will be an additional coaching fee of \$15 for Pacifica members, \$20 for all others. **Pre-formed groups** are encouraged to come and participate in her informal public-coaching session. They will be given time and a room in which to work privately before the public coaching.



In attendance at the **FEB. 1 BOARD MEETING** were president **Julie Jeffrey**, vice-president **John Mark**, treasurer **Joseph Kimbel**, secretary **Annette Barnett** and members **John Dornenburg**, **Oliver Iberien**, **Peter Ballinger**, **Lyle York** and **Lee McRae**.

The most important question facing the board and the society is, how can we attract new players or coax back the ones who have quit the society? Our survival rests on the answer. We will be conducting a survey of our lapsed members, but would also like you, please, to respond to the questions on this month's reply card.

The board decided to seek non-profit status through affiliation either with SFEMS or the national VdGSA. This is in part so that we can raise some money for the purchase of student instruments, of which we currently have very few. Our first action has been to set aside part of our treasury to begin a fund for this purpose.

Should any members have instruments or bows of any quality which they would like to donate or make available for rental, would like to help with fund-raising or instrument procurement, or simply have any bright ideas, please contact John Mark by phone at (510) 531-1471, or Annette Barnett by e-mail at <annette@esis.e-mail.com>.

What shall we do for the 1998 Berkeley Exhibition? Before we decide on any events, we want to involve the national Gamba Society as much as possible, and perhaps share a space with them for viol related events and displays. We will start to prepare media packets and pursue what options we have to get media coverage for amateur viol playing. And we will start work on informational pamphlets for distribution at the Exhibition and afterward.

Finally, the board decided to keep tabs on visits to the area by out-of-town viol players, so we might snag them for possible mas-

ter classes, coaching sessions, lectures and so on. We will also try to organize consort meetings with a specific "theme du jour".



Elections to the Pacifica board (president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and members-at-large) will be held in June. Members should send in nominations on the reply cards in the next months' newsletters, but they must have the approval of the nominee before the name is put on the ballot.



FRETTING (says John Mark) about efficient tuning and pure thirds has been a way of calling attention to the problems of pitch that are basic to making a consort sound good. Accustomed as we are to equally-tempered intervals on modern instruments, the narrowed fifths, widened fourths and especially major thirds may be less tolerated when played without vibrato on viols with the usual graduated fret setup. If adjusting cadential major thirds by finger seems unreliable, another solution would be to reposition frets, as practiced by such consorts as Fretwork.

One enthusiast for relocating frets is Fred Reinagel, designer of the VioLab tuner, which is capable of sounding in 17 different temperaments. In response to my remarks on training our ears to use a single reference pitch for tuning, he wrote me a two-page letter in response. Without detailing our exchange since then regarding beats, cents, commas, widening fifths, etc. (which is available to anyone interested), Fred says he maintains his consort bass in $1/5$ meantone temperament. Even if no one else readjusts frets, the consort plays more "in tune", he feels, providing that all members set their open strings to his fretted pitches.

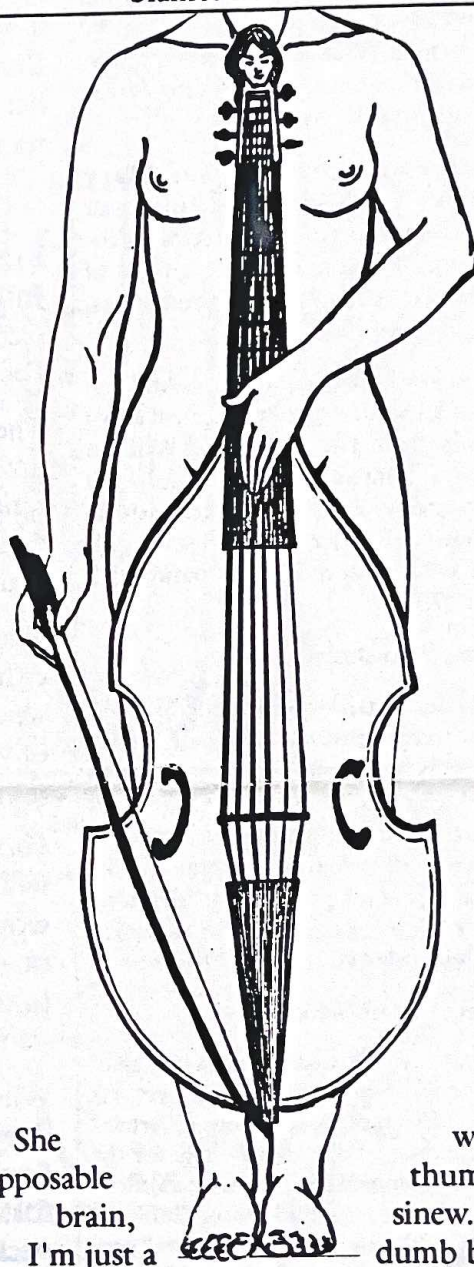
Taking Fred's cue (and his tuner), I have been experimenting with two simple adjustments on my treble: splitting the first fret, and moving the fourth towards the nut, in order to try to obtain truer $f\sharp$, $c\sharp$, $g\sharp$, and $b\flat$ on the most frequently played strings. Only for pieces in three flats is the fourth fret returned to a higher position. For me, this compromise between equal and meantone temperaments allows playing much of the consort repertoire with fewer finger adjustments and is more in consonance with viols keeping "normally" placed frets. If professional consorts move frets, shouldn't more of us amateurs experiment with it also?



In honor of Valentine's Day
a poem by member Judith Lyle York:

A lonesome viol's valentine

Under silk
In the coffin
Rosin dust rises and falls.
Wood breathes forever even in old age,
Abandoned.
Unfaithful, ill-strung, she says.
And I say it's a poor workman
blames her tool.



She
opposable
brain,
I'm just a ~~scribble~~
with
thumb,
sinew.
dumb box,
what do I know but
Give me horsehair, Mistress!
Please,
I'd sing
Between your knees.

TWENTY ————— FOURTH ANNUAL NORTH SOUTH VIOL MEET

Piccadilly Inn

Fresno, April 17-19, 1998.

The Piccadilly Inn is located at 2305 West Shaw Ave. in Fresno, on the south side, at the corner of North Sequoia Ave., about three miles east of the Shaw Ave. exit on Highway 99. Send the reservation form with your deposit to meet coordinator Julie Jeffrey by March 31.

Our professional coaches are Carol Herman (South) and Shira Kammen (North). Carol is a teacher of, a performer on, and a writer about the viola da gamba. She is a frequent faculty member at early-music workshops, including VdGSA conclaves and viol courses in Australia and New Zealand. Carol has coached viols at USC and UC-Riverside, and directs the Viols West summer workshop. She has performed throughout North America and Mexico.

Shira Kammen
has played with Ensemble Alcatraz, Project Ars Nova, Medieval Strings, Sequentia, Hesperion XX and the King's Noyse, and she is the founder of Class V Music, a group that performs on river-rafting trips. She has performed and taught in the United States, Canada, Europe, Israel, Morocco and Japan, and on the Colorado and Rogue rivers.

We will meet on Friday evening at 8:00 in the Executive room for our initial organizational meeting, and large group playing. On Saturday at 9:00 AM we meet again in the Executive Room, followed by morning (9:30) and afternoon (2:00) consort playing, and a large group session at 8:00 PM. On Sunday we will again meet at 9:00 AM, followed by consort playing again at 9:30 AM and 2:00 PM. Participants are urged to bring, and conduct if they wish, pieces for the Friday evening and Saturday evening large group sessions.

Please bring your own consort music and music stand. We hope that you decide to take advantage of the Piccadilly Inn's discount rate for our group (see reverse). Those who decide to make separate arrangements will be charged a day-use fee of \$15.00 toward the rental cost of the Executive Room.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail address (optional): _____ Will bring your: Treble: ☐ Tenor: ☐ Bass: ☐ ?

Your VdGSA RATING is: L.I.: ☐ M.I.: ☐ U.I. ☐ Adv.: ☐ Consort Music: _____

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A HOTEL ROOM:

Room rates are \$79.10 (tax incl.) per person per night for a single room; \$39.55 per person per night for a shared double.

I would like a ☐ single room a ☐ double room for ☐ Friday & Saturday ☐ Saturday only.

I would like a roommate who ☐ does ☐ does not smoke.

I have agreed to share a room with: _____

REGISTRATION FEES:

Registration fees are \$35 per person for Pacifica members, \$40 for nonmembers (which includes a Pacifica newsletter membership). An additional \$15 day use fee is charged to each participant who arranges his or her own accommodation.

_____ Pacifica members @ \$35: \$ _____

_____ Nonmembers @ \$40: \$ _____

_____ Single occup. @ \$79.10/night: \$ _____

_____ Double occup. @ \$39.55/night: \$ _____

_____ Day-use fees @ \$15: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Please make checks payable to "Viola da Gamba Society/Pacifica" and mail them with this form by March 31 to Julie Jeffrey, Meet Coordinator, 1521 Sequoia Ave., Richmond, CA 94805-1666

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Hwy. 168

Piccadilly Inn

Shaw Ave.

Highway 99

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GAMBA NEWS

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