

Gamba NEWS

Volume 11, Number 4 • December 1998

Ten years of PRB Productions

Local publisher thrives on less-well- known consort music

In 1998 PRB Productions, the Albany, Calif. publisher of music named for its founder and proprietor, Peter Ballinger, celebrated its tenth year. "Festivities were muted," says Peter.

This is not because business is bad, but because Peter, a retired chemist, is nothing if not low-key. He is slightly embarrassed about what he calls "such a 'Los Angeles' style of nomenclature" – using his initials – but did so on the spur of the moment on finding that a publishing company bearing his name, devoted to books about modern weapon technology, already existed.

So the tenth anniversary of the company, whose catalog has grown to 150 titles, much of it music for viols, was marked by quiet satisfaction. Peter was amused to receive junk mail proclaiming that PRB Productions had outlasted the majority of business startups by seven years.

PRB began by publishing contemporary as well as early music for viols, because Peter believes that "the viol still has a present and a future as well as a distinguished past, and needs new sustenance for its journey into the next millennium." Although much early music for viol consorts had been published elsewhere by the time of PRB's founding, Peter recognized several

lesser-known composers with individual styles and a challenge for viol players who had played the famous consorts of Jenkins and Gibbons almost too often; among them Hingeston and Cranford. He has published all of the Hingeston's consort music for three to six viols, as well as Cranford's quirky consorts for five and six viols. He has also published new music by British and American composers, including a trio and a quartet of his own composition; the former was a finalist in a VdGSA competition, the latter a commission for an annual workshop at Charney Manor, England.

A professional recorder player and teacher for more than ten years, his love for the viol began in 1964 with the purchase of a new treble for \$150 ("including bow and soft case!"), at a time when early musicians were starting to reach out beyond the recorder for other instrumental sonorities. Peter's devotion to legible music calligraphy began in his clarinet-playing student days, when he prepared handwritten copies of symphony parts. He still rankles at the recollection at a performance of Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor" in 1953 at which "I was called upon to play from the virtually unreadable parts owned by the Carl Rosa Opera Company," and spent two weeks copying

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out both clarinet parts for the entire opera. Later, during the last 18 of his 28 years as a chemist with Chevron, he added enough computer skills to tackle the processes involved in "engraving" music with a computer to his personal satisfaction.

PRB is working on other, much larger projects, extending the time line well into the 18th century. The largest of these is the publication, for the first time since the composer himself engraved the music in 1731, of the 72 cantatas for voice, instruments and continuo by Telemann (edited by Jeanne Swack). Although none of the obbligato instruments include the viol, there are two that specify "violetta", an instrument whose exact nature seems to vary with the decade, country and whichever musicologist is asked for a definition. Not a viola, which Telemann specifies in many of the cantatas, but with a similar range: eminently suitable for the tenor viol.

Another project is the first edition, edited by Richard Charteris, of two splendid rediscovered motets for voice(s) and orchestra by Bach's son Johann Christian. Balancing these large projects, PRB is still bringing out old and new music for viol consort, including the first edition of three six-part consorts by Orlando Gibbons, and an engaging suite for seven viols by Seattle composer and gambist, Peter Seibert. With assistance and valuable suggestions from his wife, Leslie Gold, PRB Productions now looks forward to the next decade of publishing what Peter calls "new 'new' as well as new 'old' music."

—*Oliver Iberien and Peter Ballinger*

Viols West date settled; Carol Herman update

The 1999 Viols West Workshop – The Amazing Viol – will be held Aug. 8-14 on the campus of Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

In addition to director Carol Herman, faculty members will be John Dornenburg, David Douglass. Wendy Gillespie, Julie Jeffrey, Liz

Liddle, David Morris, Ray Nurse, and Mary Springfels. Anticipating a full turnout for this 1 workshop of the century, I have increased the enrollment limit to 48 and the faculty to nine. Please note that there will be no Viols West workshop in 2000 – we don't want to conflict with the west-coast Conclave that year. Brochures will be mailed to VdGSA and chapter members in the western states in early Spring. For more information, or to be added to our mailing list, phone Carol at 909-621-2367, or send e-mail to <chgamba@aol.com>.

I am SO happy to have this faculty! It was a long time a-comin', as they say – whomever *they* are. Hope all is well up there. I am just finishing a five-weekend run of *My Fair Lady* with Pacific Coast Civic Light Opera, playing Mrs. Pearce. It's the most pro thing I've done – Higgins and Doolittle played by Brits who've done the show in London and on Broadway. Our Eliza is a fantastically talented 17 yr. old (tomorrow) who's already a senior @ UCLA. She'll go far!! Big stage – orchestra, etc. It's a great experience – but I sure spend my life driving the freeways!

—*Carol Herman*

11% increase in Pacifica Memberships

Membership in VdGS/Pacifica has risen compared with the previous year. Last year we had playing members and 16 newsletter members. This year we have 41 playing members and 18 newsletter members. We hope that our membership will find this encouraging and believe the things *Gamba News* prints about all our effort

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Directory of Local Viol Teachers

San Francisco

Pearce, Farley 415-750-1536

South Bay

Blackman, Martha 650-493-0243

Dornenburg, John* 510-530-3202

Miloradovitch, Hazelle* ... 650-854-3818

**VdGS/Pacifica Members*

Santa Cruz

Lombardi, Luciana* 408-476-1131

East Bay

Kammen, Shira 510-524-7952

Brodo, Amy* 510-482-3470

Dornenburg, John* 510-530-3202

Morris, David 510-658-3382

Tetenbaum, Lynn* 510-271-8041

Jeffrey, Julie* 510-237-8579

Advertisements, Concert Listings, and Contributions

Ads may be placed in Gamba News on the following reasonable terms: \$5 per ad, to be printed either as plain text, or as a graphic no larger than a standard business card. All graphics must be sent ready to print as GIF, JPEG or Mac-compatible EPS files. Checks should be made out to VdGS/Pacifica. Ads advertising viols for rent, placed by individuals, are free. Member contributions are also welcome.

Please send us your concert listings. Any concert featuring any viol, no matter how small or how submerged the viol may be, is eligible.

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Schedule Meetings

Dec. 5, 1998*

Jan. 9, 1999*

Feb.-Date TBA†

Mar. 13, 1999*

Apr.-Fresno Meet

May 8, 1999

June 12, 1999

with David Morris
with John Dornenburg
Stanford

Next meeting Dec. 5

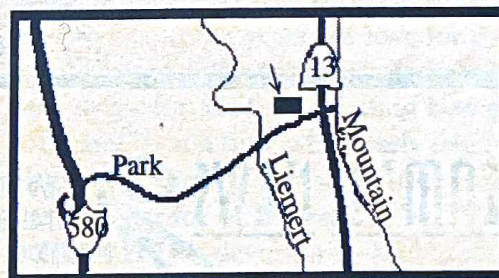
Our Dec. 5 meeting will be held at Zion Lutheran Church, 5201 Park Blvd., Oakland, at 9:30 AM.

The church is just downhill from Highway 13. Please consult the sketch map to

the right. Please bring a music stand; coffee, music and consort groupings (by request) are available, the latter based on the information you send on your reply postcards.

David Morris will really be the consort coach this time. *Gamba News* is sorry that we got it wrong last time and failed to consult the schedule we print every month. We are even more appalled that our crack team of copyeditors didn't, either.

For those of you who are similarly inattentive, David is a popular conclave and American Recorder Society coach who has taught at UC-



Berkeley, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Crowden School in Berkeley, and Mills College. He is the founder and music director of the baroque-opera company "Teatro Bacchino" and has recorded for Harmonia Mundi, New Albion and New World labels.

TWENTY FIFTH ANNUAL NORTH SOUTH VIOL MEET

Piccadilly Inn

Fresno, April 16-18, 1999.

For more information:

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