

# VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY PACIFICA GAMMA NEWS

VOLUME 18, NO. 8 APRIL 2005

## New! The 'Good Dog' Viol School

Robin Easterbrook and Lyle York

Photographs by Robin Easterbrook

Bay Area dogs, long resigned to watching their companions play viol without them, can rejoice. They now have a school of their own! L'Ecole des Chiens de la Viole (aka The "Good Dog" Viol School) has opened in the Sonoma wine country.

*"Let us play!  
Let us Play"*

-Eager student at the  
'Good Dog' Viol School

The school's founder and Dean, the internationally renowned performer and teacher Jorge LaBall, discovered that Camp K-9 was closing its doors and bought the 50-acre facility, situated in a delightful valley of grass and oaks and with good access to vineyard tasting rooms. (For more information contact the school's web site, [www.goodglassofwine.edu](http://www.goodglassofwine.edu).)

*Turn to page four for detailed information on the school's faculty, class offerings, and student testimonials.*



Dean Jorge LaBall, Ph.D., D.D., DVM,  
University of Canalunya, Schola Cantorum Canensis;  
awarded Grand Prix de l'Academie du Biscuit Lyrique;  
Ordre des Farts et Betes; Croix de Francois d'Assise



**Coming in May**  
Our annual  
swimsuit issue!

(If you would prefer to opt out of receiving this issue, please turn to page 11 for contact information)

## 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.

**Bow Rehair** Alexandra Saur is now offering rehairing for both modern and early bows. Top quality hair and quick turnaround! 510-559-9563, bowrehair@alexandrasaur.com.

**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 unpadded 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. Pfretzschner,** 61 cm free hair length, 59 gms., new hair, asking \$700.

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## GAMMA 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.

### PACIFICA CHAPTER BOARD

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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.



### 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](http://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](mailto: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.

## Viol Talk

### Fresno: Shira Kammen and Elisabeth Reed



Shira Kammen



Elisabeth Reed

The fabulous combination of Elisabeth Reed and Shira Kammen will preside over this year's North/South Viol Meet in Fresno, April 22-24.

### All Are Invited!

The next board meeting will be held Monday, April 11, 7:30 pm, at the home of Ellen Farwell, 1807 Butte St., Richmond (~ one mile from El Cerrito Plaza BART.)

### Last Call for VdGSA Ballots

TAX DAY, April 15, will also be the last day VdGSA members can send in ballots. As usual, Board candidates have been chosen to represent diverse roles in Society activities as well as from different areas of the country. Retiring from the Board after 6 years, I will continue to manage what little still remains in the rent-to-own program. —John Mark

### Conclave

Though far away in Massachusetts, consider Conclave participation this July. Scheduled tentatively for St Olaf next year, the Conclave will likely be in Tacoma again in 2007. Speak up if you know of a more likely West Coast site. And...if you're not already a member of VdGSA, it is time to join. I am certain that our chapter will be expected to be the Society's local representative in the biennial Berkeley Early Music Festival and Exhibit. —John Mark

## For Sale, cont'd

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

### 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](mailto:gambaguy@msn.com).

# École de Viole pour de Bons Chiens

*continued from page one*

Pictured are members of the distinguished faculty. The school offers a variety of classes especially designed for dogs, such as Pawvans (LI) by



## Professor Dandy Morsel

Class: Pawvans (LI)

*"Everyone is welcome in my class!  
Felines too! (Note: no more than  
two on a drool cup.)"*

## Professor Tizzie Peed

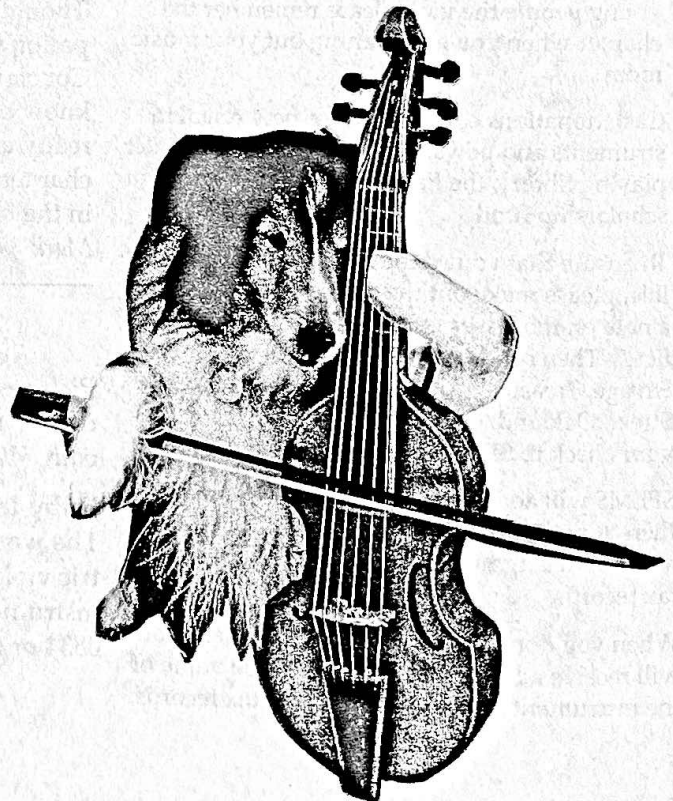
Class: The Bow Leg

*"Lassie? No, she's over in the violone section.  
But whatever your size, feel the weight of  
your foreleg on the strings. Relax your paw."*

Professor Morsel; The Bow Leg, by Professor Peed; String Contact for the Four-Legged, by Professor Dornenbark; The Art of Sit and Stay (UI and Advanced) by Professor Fierce; Fetching and Rolling Over With the Modes (Advanced) by Professor LaBall; and Scratching When Appropriate and The Elusive Flea (doubling possible) by Professor La Geoffroi. All students must purchase and use Professor LaBall's classic work, *Practicing for the Dogged*.

The students' favorite composer, of course, is Thomas Lupo. Professor Fierce, despite his name, is quite popular, but one or two students (who requested that their names not be used) complained that they have to do too many exercises. "Scales are a special challenge for the paw," one remarked. Why? "You try playing them without a thumb," he said.

"Scales!" snorted another student. "Scales are for cats. Up and down, down and back. We are dogs. We bark! We run with wolves! We topple garbage cans! Give us music! Let us play! Let us play!"



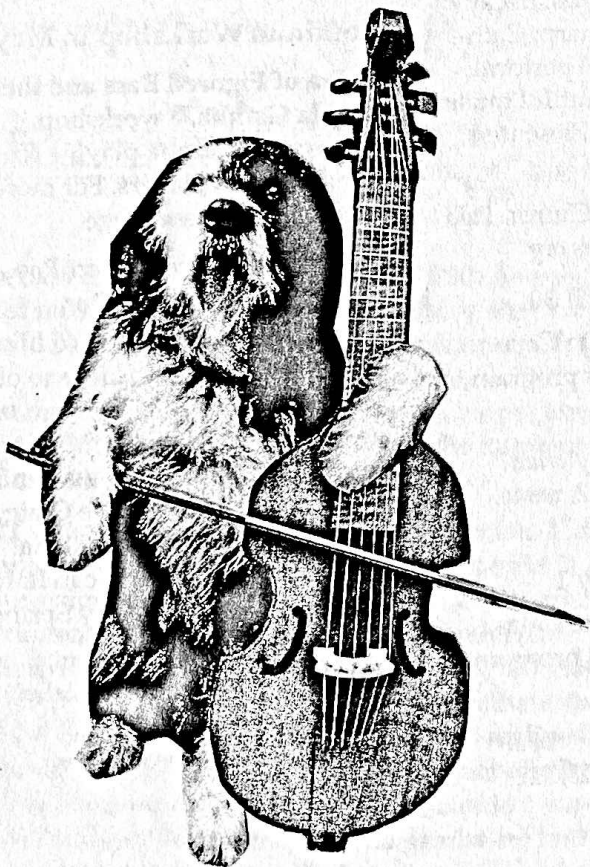




### **Dean Jorge LaBall**

Class: Fetching and Rolling Over  
with the Modes (Advanced)

*"On a besoin d'un petit peu Française."*



### **Professor Droolie La Geoffroi**

Class: Scratching When Appropriate and  
the Elusive Flea (doubling possible)

*"Good dogs do not play well without rewards."*

*Stay hydrated and avoid chewing  
on the fretboard."*



### **Professor Pawley Fierce**

The Art of Sit and Stay  
(UI and Advanced)

*"I don't care if your parents  
were Pongo and Purdy."*

*You'll need more  
than a pedigree and a  
wagging tail to make  
it in my class."*

### **Professor Johann Dornenbark**

Class: String Contact  
for the Four-Legged

*"It is most important to herd  
all the viols in a consort  
to a unified sound."*

# Mark Your Calendar

## Upcoming Playing Opportunities, Concerts and Workshops

The most wonderful time of the year is fast approaching. Holiday Season? No! Summertime. Time to quit your day job and play your viol all day, every day.

### Sunday, April 10

**Music for Three Bass Viols, Wildcat Viols** (Joanna Blendulf, Julie Jeffrey, Elisabeth Reed). Luscious music by Hingeston, Purcell, Nicolai, Marais and others. Reception to follow.

5:00 pm, *First Presbyterian Church of Alameda*, 2001 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda. Suggested donation: \$15/\$10 (510) 522-1477; [www.alamedachurch.com/news/](http://www.alamedachurch.com/news/)

### April 15-18

**Viols in the Blooming Desert**, presented by the Viola da Gamba Society of Southern Arizona and directed by Alison Crum. Faculty includes Laury Gutierrez, Roy Marks and Lynn Tetenbaum. Limited to 24 participants.

Tucson, Arizona. \$180-\$250. <http://personal.riverusers.com/~ufmichael>; Ulrich Michael, [ufmichael@theriver.com](mailto:ufmichael@theriver.com); Jean Iverson (520) 578-0647

### Sunday, April 17

**"On the Slopes of Parnassus, the Life and Times of Georg Muffat,"** a musical tour of the countries and composers who inspired this cosmopolitan baroque composer, with works by Lully, Corelli, Muffat and Schmelzer. David Wilson, violin; Lisa Grodin, violin & viola; Tekla Cunningham, violin & viola; Farley Pearce, viola da gamba & cello; Katherine Heater, harpsichord.

4:00 pm, *St. Alban's Episcopal Church*, 1501 Washington St. (at Neilson), Albany. Wheelchair accessible. \$18/\$15 Advance reservations recommended. (510) 524-5661; [www.healingmuses.org](http://www.healingmuses.org)

### April 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](http://www.sfems.org/mpro).

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

### April 22-24

**The annual North/South Viol Meet**, coached by Elisabeth Reed and Shira Kammen.

Fresno, CA. [selliott625@earthlink.net](mailto:selliott625@earthlink.net)

### Friday, April 29

**"Passion and Pain,"** The Catacoustic Consort (Annalisa Pappano, lirone, treble viola da gamba; Michael Leopold, theorbo; Becky Baxter, baroque triple harp; Catherine Webster, soprano) perform "the most achingly beautiful music of the Italian Baroque. Presented by SFEMS.

8:00 pm, *First Lutheran Church*, Palo Alto. \$25/\$22. [www.sfems.org](http://www.sfems.org)

### Saturday, April 30

**"Passion and Pain,"** The Catacoustic Consort repeats program of April 29.

8:00 pm, *St. John's Presbyterian Church*, Berkeley. \$25/\$22. [www.sfems.org](http://www.sfems.org)

### Sunday, May 1

**"Passion and Pain,"** The Catacoustic Consort repeats program of April 29.

4:00 pm, *St. Gregory's Episcopal Church*, San Francisco. \$25/\$22. [www.sfems.org](http://www.sfems.org)

### May 20-22

**Marin Headlands Workshop for Recorders and Viols**, classes, large-group playing sessions, and impromptu playing sessions. Faculty includes Cindy Beitmen, Letitia Berlin, Louise Carslake, Frances Feldon, Shira Kammen, Judith Linsenberg, Fred Palmer, Hanneke van Proosdij, Tom Bickley, and Adam Gilbert.

Point Bonita YMCA, Marin. Information: Susan Richardson (510) 526-7861, [susanvrichardson@yahoo.com](mailto:susanvrichardson@yahoo.com), or Britt Ascher (915) 283-7134, [brittascher@comcast.net](mailto:brittascher@comcast.net).

### Saturday, May 28

**"Forqueray Rules at St. Albans,"** Peter Hallifax, Julie Jeffrey; violas da gamba.

8:00 pm, *St. Alban's Church Parish Hall*, Berkeley. \$15/\$10 suggested donation. [forquerayrules@earthlink.net](mailto:forquerayrules@earthlink.net)

### Continuo Workshop in May

**The Era of Figured Bass and the Viola da Gamba**, a workshop focusing on continuo playing for viola da gamba players. For more information see next page.

For more information, contact Roy Whelden at (510) 601-1370 or [roywhelden@mac.com](mailto:roywhelden@mac.com).

### June 19-25

**The San Francisco Early Music Society 2005 Baroque Music and Dance Workshop**, Phoebe Craig, director. "Fiori musicali d'Italia! -- The Flowering of Music in Italy." Viol faculty includes Mary Springfels.

Dominican University, San Rafael. [phebec@aol.com](mailto:phebec@aol.com); (510) 525-2396, (510) 684-5177; [www.sfems.org](http://www.sfems.org)



## June 26-July 2

**The San Francisco Early Music Society 2005 Medieval and Renaissance Workshop**, Annette Bauer, Louise Carslake, Hanneke van Proosdij, directors. "La Dolce Vita: Music from Italy, Spain and Portugal." Viol faculty includes David Morris and Gail Ann Schroeder.

*Dominican University, San Rafael. medren2005@sbcglobal.net; (510) 236-9808; www.sfems.org*

## July 10-16

**Port Townsend Early Music Workshop**, Margriet Tindemans, director. Presented by the Seattle Recorder Society. Viol faculty includes Jack Ashworth, Larry Lipnik, Rosamund Morley, David Morris, Margriet Tindemans and Brent Wissick.

## Port Townsend, continued

*Fort Worden State Park Conference Center, Port Townsend, WA. (206) 784-5518; www.seattle-recorder.org*

## July 24-31

**The 43rd Annual VdGSA Conclave, "The Spirit of Gambo."** Viol faculty too numerous to list. Registration deadline June 24.

*Holy Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts. www.vdgsa.org*

## August 7-13

**Viols West, "The Divided Viol."** Rosamund Morley, director. Registration opens April 15.

*Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo, California. www.violswest.org*

## August 13-19

**Hidden Valley Institute of the Arts Early Music Seminar**, Seminar for recorder, viola da gamba, and harpsichord. Renaissance recorder consort, viol consort, continuo class for harpsichordists, baroque ensembles and collegium for all. For advanced players. Some scholarship assistance available. Faculty includes Geert Van Gele, Letitia Berlin, David Morris and Webb Wiggins.

*Carmel Valley, CA. Information: Peter Meckel, General Director, Hidden Valley Institute of the Arts, Box 116, Carmel Valley, CA 93924. (831) 659-3115. Fax: (831) 659-7442; hvms@aol.com; hiddenvalleymusic.org.*

*Concurrent youth recorder academy seeks loan of viols for beginning viol class. Please contact Letitia Berlin at (510) 559-4670.*

# The Era of Figured Bass and the Viola da gamba

## May Workshop with Roy Whelden

Let's consider the following segment of music:



The bass line was written in the early 18th century. Most musicians would expect, reasonably, that there would be at least one sustaining instrument, perhaps cello or viola da gamba, playing the bass; and at least one chordal instrument, perhaps a harpsichord, playing both the bass line and adding the harmonies indicated by the numerical symbols.

But I've withheld some important information. This sample of music is from Handel's early oratorio "La Resurrezione." The composer indicated a very specific instrumentation for this aria: viola da gamba (con violoncello) senza cembalo. In other words, the viol is expected to function as the keyboard instrument does in the usual continuo combination: it must realize the harmonies implied by the figured bass symbols. Thus, while accompanying this tenor aria "Quando è parto," the violoncello and the viola da gamba are both responsible for performing the bass line, but rendering the harmonies is the responsibility of the viol.

This situation, where the viol is used to realize a bass line and add the harmonies indicated by the figures, is a characteristic of this particular oratorio, but is not all that uncommon in the Baroque repertoire in general. Indeed, some

of the earliest repertoire using figured bass was immediately taken up and performed by viol players with complete command of the new notation and its harmonic demands. Such is the case with Caccini's *Le Nuove Musiche* of 1601, a collection which appeared within about a decade after the invention of figured bass. I would expect that most viol players of the time would have been prepared to realize solo viol accompaniments for the arias in Caccini's collection, as well as to read and perform unfigured bass lines. The Baroque era has been called the age of the figured bass; certainly, figured bass notation or thoroughbass, as it is also called, is one of the most flexible and suggestive musical notations ever developed.

In May of 2005 I will conduct a workshop with the focus on continuo playing for viola da gamba players. The purpose of this workshop will be to (1) acquaint viol players with the principles of thoroughbass; (2)

*continued page 10*

# Membership Updates

## New

Carolyn Butler  
833 Limerick Lane  
Healdsburg, CA 95448

(707) 433-4322

## Renewal

Joan Lounsbery  
3929 Alta Vista Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

(707) 546-8505

joanl@sonic.net

## Update

Mary Elliot  
new email: marell3@sbcglobal.net

## Era of Figured Bass Workshop, *continued from page seven*

develop some facility in reading figures; (3) study some famous pieces of music which specify the viol as the performer of thoroughbass (including Caccini, Handel and J.S. Bach); (4) study the use of figures in improvisation; and (5) examine some of the famous treatises on thoroughbass practice.

Details for this workshop, which will take place in Berkeley, will be available in the coming weeks. For more information, please contact me at (510) 601-1370 or roywhelden@mac.com.

Roy Whelden is a performer on the viola da gamba and vielle, a composer and a music theorist living in the San Francisco Bay Area. He studied early music performance at the Indiana University School of Music, where he was a student and assistant to the early music legend, Thomas Binkley. Whelden is a founding member of the American Baroque ensemble which is known for its acclaimed performances of Baroque masterpieces and the premieres and recordings of many new works. Early Music America called Whelden "a key figure in the world of new music for gamba" and several of his compositions can be heard on recordings issued by New Albion. He is a proponent of extending the repertoire of the viola da gamba using 21st century idioms, as well as exploring the full range of the music of its past.

## Gamba News

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