

Come to our PlayDay with coach Frances Blaker

Sat., Sept. 9, 9:30 am-12:30 pm

- 9-9:30 am – Set up (bring a stand, tune) and conversation. Be ready to play by 9:30.
- 9:30-10:45 – Group session with coach
- 11:00-12:30 – Coached consorts
- 12:30 pm – Bring a bag lunch to enjoy
- 1-2:30 pm – Uncoached DIY consort playing

Frances Blaker is a recorder player, teacher, conductor and composer. In 2022 she and Letitia Berlin jointly received the American Recorder Society's Distinguished Achievement Award.

Although she does not play viola da gamba herself, Frances has a great love of the instrument and its sonorities. Her viol experience consists of several lessons on bass viol, which ceased because of having to descend five flights of stairs, walk two blocks, then ascend another five flights of stairs, all while carrying a heavy bass viol case...no elevators.

Other viol experience: many hours listening to both live and recorded viol performances (what a great instrument!), as well as playing recorder with viols. Most recently Frances had the great pleasure to rehearse and perform as a member of Farallon recorder quartet together with Parthenia Viol Consort in New York in May 2023. She is looking forward to another performance with Farallon and Parthenia in March, 2024.

Water

is often on our minds here in California. It may come from eyes in the form of tears, so we'll begin our session with the flowing tones of *Non val acqua al mio gran focco* (*There's not enough water for my great fire*), a love song by Bartolomeo Tromboncino. Isabella d'Este, one of the earliest viol enthusiasts, attracted many musicians to her court, including Tromboncino. Perhaps this very piece was played one evening at her court.

We'll also play a favorite piece of 16th c. viol player Diego Ortiz: Jacques Arcadelt's *O felici occhi miei* (Oh happy eyes..). We'll play the four-voice madrigal, savoring the beautiful interplay of its lines. Those who want to try Ortiz's ornamented version (either treble or bass) will be welcome to play along with the rest of us on the original madrigal.

Finally, who better to finish our tutti session with than John Dowland? His set of seven sorrowful pavans, the Seven Teares, are based on his own hit tune, *Flow my Tears*. We'll play the first one, *Lachrimae Antiquae*. One of the landmarks of consort music, this pavan will give us scope to use all our technical and expressive means, pleasing the hand, the ear and the heart.



Registering for our PlayDay

Deadline: NOON, WEDNESDAY, September 6

1. Go to [our website](#) and log in*. (Note: each member logs in and signs up separately.)
2. Under Events / PlayDay Registration, fill out and submit the form. A confirmation email will follow.



SFEMS presents—

Ensemble Mirable

Beyond Bach and Handel: More Baroque Gems

Friday Sept. 29, Palo Alto

7:30 PM, First Presbyterian Church

Sat., Sept. 30, Berkeley

7:30 PM, First Congregational Church

Sun. Oct. 1, San Francisco

4:30 PM, St Mark's Lutheran Church

Elisabeth Blumenstock, Kati Kyme—violin
Joanna Blendulf—cello/viola da gamba
Kevin Cooper—guitar
JungHae Kim—harpsichord

Ensemble Mirable offers a treasure trove of under-appreciated Baroque favorites composed by familiar names such as Dieterich Buxtehude and Arcangelo Corelli as well as Biagio Marini, Jean Zewalt Triemer, Sylvius Leopold Weiss, Dietrich Becker, Andrea Falconieri, and many more to create a fascinating mosaic of Baroque masterworks.

For tickets:

<https://www.sfems.org/ensemble-mirable>

Wanted to Buy – Bass Viol

Contact Rachel Bradley:

rachelbradleywood@hotmail.com

510 / 363-6325

SFEMS announces new pay-what-you-can ticket policy!

“We have some big news about ticketing for this coming season! We're taking a bold leap to fill our halls for our beloved concerts with a new "pay-what-you-can" ticketing model to increase arts accessibility for all.

“However, to make this sustainable, we need your help! **Consider buying a regular subscription, as in the past, or a pay-it-forward subscription** to help us become everyone's portal to early music in the Bay Area. Your subscription support will go directly to ensuring that we can make the advertising efforts necessary to build a new community of concertgoers.”

For more information on SFEMS' new season:

<https://www.sfems.org/concerts>

Early Music Open Mic Night

Wed. Sept. 27, El Cerrito

7-9 pm, Hillside Community Church

This friendly event is your opportunity to perform early music in a friendly cabaret style setting. Sign up ahead of time as a soloist or group, instrumentalist or singer. Amateurs and professionals, students, youngsters—all welcome!

There's no charge to perform or to listen, but **a small donation by attendees is appreciated** to help cover the venue cost.

Join us for light snax and wine!

- Six time slots (max 15 min.) available.
- 4 music stands are available; bring a stand light if you need it.
- A harpsichord may be available on request.
- To request a spot in a future Early Music Open Mic, email Heather Wilson: hi2dougan@gmail.com.

Plan ahead—reserve your spot!

Upcoming dates: Oct. 25, Nov. 22...
as always, the 4th Wed. of each month.

June 10— our Bash was live...

for the first time since 2020!

- Thanks to our host Julie Jeffrey and all the performers for a fun day, including a potluck lunch and good conversation.
- Thanks also to donors of free music (especially Ellen Farwell) which we took turns choosing.

Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society

Annual Bash • June 10, 2023
Hillside, an Urban Refuge • El Cerrito, CA

Fantasia #4 Orlando Gibbons
Galliard with great double bass Gibbons

Susanne Hering, Nick Jones, John Phillips

Pavan Richard Mico
Pavan, Almain John Jenkins
Alice Benedict, Karen Lassen, Heather Wilson, Sal Blaker*

Adagio, Allegro, Adagio, Allegro—Sonata No. 3 Johann Schenck
Mary Elliott, Sue Jones

Fantasia No. 17 Jenkins
Fantasia No. 11 Jenkins
Alice Benedict, Heather Wilson, Jason Schulterbrandt, Branson Stephens

Inventions in C, d, e, F J.S. Bach
Duetto in F major Bach
Rowan O'Neal, Jeff Ridenour*

Suite No. 1 in G minor Matthew Locke
Karen Lassen, Cindi Olwell*, Heather Wilson*

Diminutions on Palestrina's "Io Son Ferito" Giovanni Bovicelli
Elegy from "The Erynnies" Jules Massenet
Michael Relland

Five Part Fantasia No. 5 Thomas Lupo
Fantasy No. 7 Jenkins
Mary Prout, Peter Ballinger, Leslie Gold, Linda Quan, Sue Jones

Pavan from Suite No. 6 in F Locke
Browning John Baldwin
Cindi Olwell, Nick Jones, Sue Jones

* violin



L to R: Jeff Ridenour, Rowan O'Neal



Performers, L to R: Mary Prout, Peter Ballinger, Leslie Gold, Linda Quan, Sue Jones

Bash performers (almost all of them)



L to R: John Phillips, Susanne Hering, Nick Jones



L to R: Alice Benedict, Heather Wilson, Branson Stephens, Jason Schulerbrandt



L to R: Karen Lassen, Heather Wilson, Cindi Olwell



L to R: Heather Wilson, Alice Benedict, Karen Lassen, Sal Blaker



L to R: Cindi Olwell, Sue Jones, Nick Jones



Michael Relland



Viols West celebrated its 50th year

Aug. 7-11 on the CalPoly campus.

Ros Morley with her Jenkins vs. Lawes class.

From L to R:
Ros,
Carol Deihl,
Scott Mason,
Kim Shrier,
Linda Quan,
Cindi Olwell,
Zoe Tokar



Cindi Olwell, thrilled to be back after several years away!



Faculty Julie Jeffrey, Larry Lipnick



Faculty sight-reading concert

A newbie at Viols West

- by Caroline Armitage

In mid-June, one of my friends tried talking me into attending Viols West. I was pretty sure it wasn't going to happen. I was very green, having just purchased a bass viol and taken two lessons at the end of April. Although I had been practicing religiously for all of May and a bit beyond, I was still stabbing myself in the knee with my bow, hitting unwanted strings, and making lots of squeaky and scratchy noises. But by the end of July, with the help of a new bow hold suggested by another friend, I was able to make a decent tone on my instrument on five of my six strings. Progress! I was ready to play outside the safety of my home – why not Viols West?

When I arrived, I was stunned by the beauty of the setting. My dorm room overlooked the golden foothills of San Luis Obispo and a lovely salt water pool. My suite-mates were super-friendly and super-talented – I couldn't believe how lucky I was!

My teachers that week were excellent. You could tell they really enjoy teaching – and have the patience to reach students of all levels. They created a warm, supportive space for learning and I was free to ask any technical questions of any of my teachers, and their answers addressed my issues perfectly.

I became addicted to consort music during the evening sessions. I was “thrown into the deep end” the first evening playing 6-part Lawes, then 6-part Jenkins another night. I have to admit I probably only played fifty percent of the notes, but it was still a thrilling adventure!

Every night, I could tell I was improving by leaps and bounds. I was appreciating the quality of every line – this was egalitarian music! Playing classical quartets was pleasurable, but sometimes gave me a little bit of guilt as I was frequently the first violinist getting to play concerto material while everyone else accompanied. I found comfort knowing that in consort music, everyone gets an interesting, beautiful line.

At the faculty concert, I was enchanted by the sound of viols together. These extremely talented folks played five-part music, doubled, and each part sounded as one magnificently resonant instrument. You wouldn't be able to tell that there was a lot of sightreading going on. It was an inspiring performance.

Some other highlights: David Morris' Princess Lucky's Teatime (delicious brewing of high quality teas, served with a smile and a whack of the gong), trying out instruments made by Warren Shingleton, our resident viol doctor and luthier (and unexpectedly taking a treble home with me!), going to the beach and Downtown SLO's market with my new buddies, and getting to know many of the wonderful participants at mealtime and breaks.

I've told some people that my first Viols West was a life-changing event for me. I was just at the beginning of my love affair with the viol, and here were many other people who've also been bitten by the bug. I shared with (Director) Ros Morley that I felt I had found my “tribe.” These are the folks who love the instrument, the music, and the camaraderie that comes with all of it. I'm so grateful to be a part of this world now.

Reports from Conclave-

From Ellen Fisher—

I went to Conclave in Kingston, RI, at the University of Rhode Island this year, and it was a delightful, if exhausting experience! Conclave is the 7-day play-fest of the Viola da Gamba Society of America (are you a member?), held every year at the end of July, in the East, Mid-West, or West of the US on a rotating basis.

Imagine 200 people (plus or minus), all interested in the viol, gathering on a college campus, and let the wonder of the music, the instruments, the fellowship, and the fun just wash over you! Then add in new and used instruments and music for sale – delightful!

I applied to do work-study this year to lower the cost, and that is what made it exhausting. **Custodes**, as we are known, arrive early to set up rooms to function as music classrooms, post signs to help you find your way around, greet you as you arrive, help organize the auction and other daily events, move chairs and stands for concerts, and all sorts of other jobs, and then, at the end, put everything back the way it was. It was exhausting but also exhilarating and fun to be part of the organization of the event, even on that level—we didn't have to make any major decisions, just do the jobs we chose or were assigned.

And, of course, I got to choose 3 or 4 classes a day (I did 4!), all of which involved the music I love. This year we celebrated the 400th anniversary of the death of William Byrd (and Thomas Weelkes as well). I was trying out treble viols to buy at the same time, so most days I had a different instrument to try – I was very grateful for the comments from the other players in my consorts about what they heard!

Since **Conclave will be held on the west coast next July 21-28 in Oregon**, Viols West will not happen. I hope many of Pacifica members will attend, since it is a lot closer and easier for us to get there. Hope to see you there!

From Linda Quan—

This summer, I was fortunate enough to attend **both Conclave and Viols West**. On June 30 my husband, our dog, Kitsu, and I began a cross-country drive, stopping at 5 National Parks and visiting 7 sets of friends along the way, and ending up in Rhode Island for Conclave. By driving, I had the advantage of taking my own bass viol 🤗. I've attended several Conclaves before, but was still surprised at the number of participants — about 200. I took 3 wonderful classes taught by 3 great teachers, moseyed around the exhibits, and met new friends. In the evenings, events included a lecture, several concerts, a fun live auction as well a silent auction and a banquet to wrap things up. The dorms were...well, dorms, but the food was plentiful (and better, I thought, than your usual college fare). My daughter lives nearby in Providence, so on the "night off," we got to hang out together and eat at the famous Matunuck Oyster Bar nearby.

When Conclave was over, we hightailed it back to the west coast; just a few days later I ventured down to San Luis Obispo for **Viols West** where there was a much more intimate atmosphere of **about 55 participants**, which I really appreciated; I took 3 wonderful classes with 3 great teachers. The schedule was similar to Conclave, but with a little more time to do your own thing (swim in the salt water pool or hike around the gorgeous landscape) and time for more casual consort playing. I particularly liked the faculty-joined sessions of doubled consorts. The dorms were fine and meals ample and "healthy," all enjoyed al fresco.

Both workshops were very well and smoothly run by the directors and administrative staff, and special efforts were made to make us campers happy, which was well appreciated. I was inspired get to work on trying to play better. My **ONLY** complaint was the horrible chairs at both venues — "sitting in a trash can syndrome" —some were even on wheels!

All in all, I had a wonderful summer of travel with my family and quality time with my viol.

Note from our Prez

—Pat Jennerjohn

Just as I complete my series of summer adventures (on the big island of Hawaii, and at Viols West) I notice that fall is rapidly approaching! In addition to the Amaryllis Belladonna flowers (aka "Naked Lady") popping up everywhere, the sycamore trees are beginning to look a bit tired, and the daylight hours are starting to shorten.

I have to say that my July visit to the "Big Island" was quite amazing, as close as I could get to visiting an alien planet. Earth is definitely still "under construction" in this part of the world. I stayed at The Volcano House, a hotel right on the rim of the Kilauea crater (see *photo*) in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. From my room I could see the steaming crater (it had erupted a few weeks before). On my hikes, I saw a few musical instruments "in the wild" so to speak - great big Koa trees; their wood is often used for ukeleles (and for surfboards). I think that Warren Shingleton has used this wood for some of his viols.

My hotel was right in the climate zone where the rare and endangered nene goose lives, and my first night there, a flock of them flew past the hotel restaurant window, honking loudly. As I live in Oakland and see (and hear) Canada



geese all the time, it took me a minute to realize that I had just had a rare experience.

Virtually every climate zone on the planet is represented on this island - deserts, Alpine terrain, tropical rain forests, and grassy plains. There was plenty of birdsong from the honeycreepers, and evening serenading by the (non-native) coqui frogs - the size of a quarter with a mighty voice ("co QUI!"). And of course, I did go to a luau (down in Kona, where I stayed for the last day) - fun to hear cheerful hula music and watch the skilled dancers.

I will leave it up to my colleagues to describe their experiences at Viols West. I'll just say that it was wonderful, and I learned a lot!

I'm very excited about our roster of coaches as our new season begins and hope to attend as many PlayDays as possible!

Viol Sphere 2 - Viols in a Desert Oasis

Biosphere Conference Center, Oracle, AZ
Thur. Oct. 12 - Mon. Oct. 16, 2023

Larry Lipnik & Mary Springfels, Artistic Directors

with faculty Malachai Bandy, Joanna Blendulf, and David Morris

The year 2023 marks the 400th year since the deaths of two beloved Elizabethan composers, William Byrd and Thomas Weelkes, Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal. Between the two of them

they left a vast, varied repertoire of instrumental and vocal works which will be featured for contrast and comparison in consorts and large-group sessions.

Early morning classes will concentrate on warm-up and technique. Later classes will explore consort music for viols from England and the European continent; evening sessions will feature relaxed consort playing with faculty joining in.

Find out more at:

<http://vdgs-saz.org>

Celebrating PRB Productions

On Sunday afternoon, June 18, Pacifica members and special guests gathered at Linda Quan and Marc Schachman's home in El Cerrito to honor Peter Ballinger and Leslie Gold as they approached June 30, the closing date of PRB Productions, the beloved music publishing business they have run from their home in Albany for 34 years.

Julie Jeffrey gathered a sextet of local professional viol players to play a representative selection from PRB's music. The audience was thrilled with the pieces she chose – by Coperario, Scriabin, a Lee Inman tango, a Bach fugue and a Weelkes madrigal.



L to R: David Morris, Marie Szuts, Julie Jeffrey, Elisabeth Reed, Peter Hallifax, Lynn Tetenbaum



Editor's sidebar note:

I recently discovered this interview with Marie Szuts about her varied interests, including the gamba and spoon carving. (Start at 7:00 to hear about her musical life.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55LpmjMwkh4>

Call for Conference Papers–

The Spirit of Gambo: the state of viol research

Conference dates: March 15–17, 2024

Location: University of California, Berkeley

Submission deadline: October 15

Following its renewed popularity in the second half of the twentieth century, the viola da gamba (viol) family is firmly ensconced within twenty-first century musical life. First-rate performances and recordings are readily available, critical editions of many key repertoires have appeared, instruction is available at many universities, and a global community of amateur players is thriving and growing. But what of scholarly research into the viol, its music, and the cultures of playing surrounding it?

The Spirit of Gambo: the state of viol research seeks to assess the current state of viol research, and to suggest new paths forward for scholars and performers.

The three-day conference, co-chaired by David H. Miller (University of California, Berkeley) and Zoe Weiss (University of Denver), will include **paper sessions, roundtables, and lecture recitals, a keynote address** by Kate van Orden (Dwight P. Robinson Jr. Professor of Music at Harvard University), a **concert** featuring Elisabeth Reed and members of the Bay Area viol community, **open consort playing sessions**, and a **conference dinner**. Selected papers delivered at the conference will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*.

We welcome proposals for individual papers (20 minutes), roundtables of 2-4 papers (10 minutes per participant), and lecture-recitals (40 minutes) that speak to the viol family, related instruments (e.g., lirone, baryton), and/or related repertoires.

We encourage submissions not only from musicologists and music theorists, but also from those who can speak to perspectives beyond academia, including but not limited to performers, instrument makers, luthiers, and composers. We are particularly interested in work that pushes viol scholarship past its traditional bounds, including such possible topic areas as:

- Viols outside of Europe and North America
- Forgotten histories of viol repertoire and/or viol players
- 20th-century re-workings and re-imaginings of viol music
- The viol's place in the HIP movement
- Composing new music for the viol
- New analytical approaches to viol music

Note that these topics are included only as examples and should not be considered an exhaustive list; any and all submissions that relate broadly to the conference theme are welcomed.

Submission details:

Abstracts of up to 300 words for individual papers and lecture-recitals (and up to 600 words for roundtables) should be submitted to submissions.spiritofgambo24@gmail.com.

Proposals for roundtables should include a brief description of the roundtable's topic as well as abstracts for individual presentations and should be submitted as a single document.

- All submissions must include contact information for all participants in the body of the email, while abstracts should be submitted as attachments without any identifying information.
- Submissions are due by October 15; acceptance decisions will be communicated by November 1.

Questions about the submission process or the conference can be directed to spiritofgambo24@gmail.com.

Alice Benedict has organized a full lineup of great coaches for our monthly PlayDays, which this year are meeting in person and now include coached consorts again!

Pacifica Viols PlayDays 2023-2024

Sept. 9: Frances Blaker

Oct. 14: Josh Lee

Nov. 11: Lisa Terry

Dec. 9: Shira Kammen

Jan. 13: Alexa Pilon

Feb. 10: Shanon Zusman

Mar. 9: David Miller

Apr. 13: David Morris*

May 11: Julie Jeffrey

June 8: Pacifica BASH

**Voices and Viols*



AEM Online Classes

For info about Amherst Early Music's classes:
<https://www.amherstearlymusic.org/online-classes>

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