

Join us at our PlayDay with coach Wendy Gillespie

Sat., Jan. 10

Hillside—An Urban Sanctuary

1422 Navellier St., El Cerrito CA 94530

- 9-9:30 AM – Set up (bring a stand, tune), coffee, snacks and conversation.
- Be ready to play by 9:30.
- 9:30-10:45 AM – 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

As a child, **Wendy Gillespie** heard the New York Pro Musica in concert and was inexplicably attracted to polyphony long before she learned the word. She was already a string player, so the viol was the obvious instrument to pursue. In the ensuing decades, she has performed on five continents, most often as a founding member of the viol consort Fretwork and long-time member of the ensemble Phantasm, but also as a bass viol soloist, and not least as a contented continuo player.

More recently, Wendy has been specializing in renaissance viols and early repertory with the consort Nota Bene and appearing regularly with The Barefoot Allstars of California and the not yet discovered trio Lyra Waye. In 2017, after 32 years on the faculty of Indiana University, Gillespie graduated to *Professor Emerita*. Since then she has been on a journey to learn more about life, the universe, and everything.



A peaceful PlayDay

To get the first PlayDay of the new year off to a peaceful start, let us sink together into a warm bath of gorgeous six-part Renaissance polyphony by Costanzo Festa, Alfonso Ferrabosco I, and Orlando di Lasso with motets built around the antiphon “Da pacem Domine” (“Give peace in our time”).

Is it possible to hear six individual lines of a polyphonic piece? Is a gaggle of viols supposed to aspire to sound like an organ? What can individual players do to help? We’ll search for a magic ensemble sound and get acquainted with some beautiful new old music.

Players of all sizes of viol and all abilities warmly welcomed!

Registering for our PlayDay

Deadline: NOON, WEDNESDAY, Jan. 7

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.



Winterlude!

On Dec. 18, an overflow audience heard almost 30 local vocalists and instrumentalists present “Winterlude.” The eclectic, uplifting evening of medieval, Renaissance and folk tunes celebrating the season was the brainchild of Early Music Open Mic organizers Heather Wilson and Nancy Grant as an alternative to the usual December EMOM.

Shira Kammen created and directed the program, which included viol players Caroline Armitage, Allison Balberg, Alice Benedict, Sue Jones and Heather Wilson. The evening concluded with vocal and instrumental variations of Praetorius’ *In Dulci Jubilo* – à2, à3, à4 and finally à8.

Winterlude was dedicated to Early Music Open Mic founder Sally Blaker, who moved from El Cerrito to North Carolina a year ago.

PlayDay SNAX

This month those with **last names H to N** are asked to please bring a snack – either savory or sweet – to share at our Jan. 10 PlayDay during our 9-9:30 and mid-morning breaks. Thanks!

COFFEE pickup for PlayDay

In the last few months we’ve started using a new plan for coffee at our Playdays. On our registration form, you’ll see a check box

New time slot – Third Friday

Early Music Open Mic Night

Fri. Jan. 16, El Cerrito

7-8:30 PM, Hillside – An Urban Refuge
1422 Navellier St., El Cerrito CA 94530

This friendly event is your opportunity to perform early music (before 1750) in a casual cabaret-style setting. Sign up ahead of time as a soloist or group, instrumentalist or singer. Amateurs and professionals, students—all welcome! Join us for light snax and wine!

- Five time slots available (max 15 minutes)

4 music stands are available; BYO stand light. Donations by performers and audience members are appreciated to help cover the cost of the venue.

Upcoming dates: Fri., Feb. 20, Mar. 20

To reserve your slot, contact Heather Wilson
hi2dougan@gmail.com.

where **we ask for a volunteer to pick up coffee** the morning of the PlayDay and bring it by 9:15 AM latest.

Our PlayDay Coordinator Allison will pre-order and pre-pay for it. The volunteer would then pick up the box of brewed coffee (and the cups, sugar, creamer & stirrers that come with) that morning from a local coffee shop.

If more than one person volunteers, Allison will choose one, and email them the receipt.

If no one volunteers... no coffee!



**Barefoot Chamber Concerts
presents the Barefoot All-Stars –
The Consort Music of Orlando
Gibbons**

Fri. Jan. 9, Berkeley

6:30 PM, Saint Mary Magdalen Church Parish Hall
2005 Berryman St., Berkeley

Wendy Gillespie, Peter Hallifax, Julie Jeffrey,
Shira Kammen, David Morris and Lynn
Tetenbaum – viols

This year's midwinter viol consort concert features a return to the music of the great Orlando Gibbons 400 years (and a few days) after his passing in 1625. We'll play his amazing six-part consorts and the rarely-heard consorts that call for the "great dooble bass" viol.

A musical insider at the court of James I, Orlando Gibbons, the most famous scion of a well-employed family of musicians, was best known in his time for his skill as a keyboard player, and best remembered today as a composer of highly regarded and widely circulated sacred vocal music. But his position in the Prince of Wales' musical household, a lesser-celebrated aspect of his career, has won him a special place in the hearts of today's viol players. In this intimate setting, working within a small, musically-stimulating circle of England's best and brightest viol players, Gibbons created ensemble masterpieces of rare beauty, variety, and range of expression.

\$25 (no one turned away for lack of funds).

As this mid-winter viol concert has been extremely popular in the past, we recommend reserving seats.

Email info@barefootchamberconcerts.com,
then pay at the door.

Pacifica Viols **GambaNews**

Celebrate Twelfth Night!

Viol players are cordially invited to the annual East Bay Recorder Society's Twelfth Night celebration—

Sun., Jan. 4, El Cerrito

3:30 PM, Hillside—An Urban Refuge
1422 Navellier St.

Playing will commence at 3:30 under the direction of Shira Kamen, followed by a delicious potluck. Come early to set up!

If you would like to come, please email Linda Skory

(travisskory@gmail.com) ASAP to receive the music pdfs that you print out.

Jan. 9 deadline!

Early Music America's Mini-Grants for Early Music Month (March)

Mini-grants of \$500 will be awarded for projects to be held in North America in March as part of this year's [Early Music Month](#). Successful projects will seek to expand the reach of early music in your community.

EMA welcomes and encourages creative proposals for in-person, virtual, and hybrid events. The application is open to EMA members and non-members.

Mini-Grant applications are due January 9.

Recipients will be notified by the end of January; funds will be dispersed in early February.

For more information:

<https://www.earlymusicamerica.org/early-music-month/emm-mini-grants/>

January, 2026

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Several Friends

EARLY MUSIC IN THE HIGH DESERT

WAITLIST OPEN—

Several Friends workshop "For Ye Violls on the Pecos"

An intensive long weekend workshop for players at all levels in historic northern New Mexico—

Thu. Feb. 12 to Sun. Feb. 15

**Benedictine Abbey
Pecos, New Mexico**
(~20 mi. East of Santa Fe)

Faculty Mary Springfels, Larry Lipnick and David Morris

Full information can be found on their website SeveralFriends.org.



A Hit Show on Queer Time and Baroque Instruments

In one rousing scene from a much-lauded work of music-theater, *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* — which had its North American premiere at [New York's Park Avenue Armory](#) — a boom box and disco-inspired strobe light are interspersed with theorbo, harpsichord, and viola da gamba.

'Paradoxically, historical instruments bring a quality of timelessness'

The article published Dec. 7 in EMA's online magazine promises revelations—

<https://www.earlymusicamerica.org/web-articles/queer-time-and-baroque-instruments-a-hit-show-comes-to-new-york/>

SAVE THE DATES!

SFEMS Announces Summer Workshops

Two of the San Francisco Early Music Society's summer workshops will be of interest to viol players—

Baroque Workshop – July 6-12

Medieval/Renaissance Workshop – July 12-18

Each workshop has unique features, annual themes, wonderful faculty, many opportunities to play, to make friends and to learn more about historical music performance.

All workshops will be held in Berkeley.

Check here later for details—

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

Thank you to Alice Benedict for recruiting great coaches for this season!

Pacifica Viols PlayDays 2025-2026

Sept. 13: Julie Jeffrey
Oct. 11: Elisabeth Reed
Nov. 8: Melita Denny
Dec. 13: David Miller
Jan. 10: Wendy Gillespie
Feb. 14: Erik Andersen
Mar. 14: Shira Kammen
Apr. 11: David Morris*
May 9: Farley Pearce
June 13: Pacifica BASH

**Voices and Viols*



Karl Friedrich Abel, by Thomas Gainsborough

Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society is a not-for-profit corporation, tax-exempt under IRS regulation 501(c)(3). To donate, click [here](#).

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