

PACIFICA VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY GAMBA NEWS

June, 2026 • Vol. 41, No. 10

Join us at our end-of-season Bash / potluck / play-in with our emcee Julie Jeffrey



Sat., June 13

Hillside – An Urban Sanctuary
1422 Navellier St., El Cerrito CA

• **9:30 AM**

- Arrive. Players tune.
- Browse tables of donated music.
- Take potluck items to kitchen.

• **10:00 AM**

The playing begins!

• Also—

- Sheet music give-away*
- Group playing session
- Potluck lunch

**Thanks to friends such as Billie Hamilton for music donations!*

Performers: DEADLINE to sign up: SAT., JUNE 6

(No need to sign up /register unless you are performing)

○ Send Allison your program info (names of performers, composer, name of piece/movements) by June 6

allisonbalberg@gmail.com

○ Limit 15 minutes per group.

○ Each group includes at least one gamba; add other instruments and/or singers and welcome!

Non-performers—

Just come... and bring your gamba for our group playing session.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED—

- Bring coffee
- Set up / cleanup
- Large tablecloths
- Plates, utensils, napkins, cups

If you can help, email Allison by June 6:
allisonbalberg@gmail.com.

This GambaNews closes our season until September. See you then!

BFX • June 6 - 14

Berkeley Festival & Exhibition

- **Twenty-one MainStage concerts, special events, a 3-day exhibition, community workshops and dozens of Fringe concerts**

For more info: <https://www.berkeleyfestival.org/>

FRINGE CONCERTS w/ Viols

Ensemble Garibaldi

16-18th c. Music for viols & theorbo

Sat., June 6, 1:30 PM

Berkeley Piano Club, Berkeley

- Jason Schulterbrandt & Branson Stephens, bass viols
- Kevin Kishimoto, theorbo

Works by Marin Marais, St. Colombe, Diego Ortiz, Robert de Visée, and Michel Corrette. Pieces for the complete trio, a beautiful solo theorbo collection and a lush viol duet.

Recommended donation: \$15

Alphabet Baroque Cookies!

Tues., June 9, 11 AM

Berkeley Piano Club, Berkeley

- Maria Caswell, violin and tenor viol
- Judiyaba, treble viol
- Gwyneth Davis, bass viol
- Phebe Craig, harpsichord

The Alphabet Baroque Club is back with a concert of sweet and tasty music, accompanied by sweet and tasty homemade cookies! Our program is a confection of lovely pieces, including lesser known composers such as Wm. Young, Dietrich Becker and Solomon Eccles, as well as crowd favorites Henry Purcell, Matthew Locke and John Blow.

Bring a dozen homemade cookies to share and get in free! Or, just Pay-What-You-Can!



BFX MAIN STAGE CONCERT

Voice of the Viol– Dowland 400

Tues., June 9, 7:30 PM

First Congregational Church, Berkeley

In this celebration of the 400th anniversary of Dowland's death, Voice of the Viol (a project of the Bay Area's beloved Voices of Music featuring voice, lute and a viol consort) presents an intimate survey of the intricate and ever-compelling work of the master of grief.

- Danielle Reutter-Harrah, soprano
- David Tayler & Hanneke van Proosdij, directors
- Elisabeth Reed, Voice of the Viol director

Tickets: <https://sfems.app.getcuebox.com/o/Q84D69WB/shows/I7BL5DQ4>

NOTE NEW TIME!

Fantasy Suites & Divisions: Music for Viols & Organ by Lawes and Simpson

Tues., June 9, 1 PM

St. Mary Magdalen Church, Berkeley

- Peter Hallifax & Julie Jeffrey, viols
- Andrew Canepa, guest organist

Rarely heard Fantasie-Suites by Lawes, Divisions on Ground Basses by Simpson.

\$20 at the door (no-one turned away for lack of funds).

The concert will be about 45 min.

Sal Blaker Memorial Concert

2 PM, Fri. June 12

First Congregational Church, Berkeley

Sally Blaker lived in the SF Bay Area for almost 90 years, and was an enthusiastic lover of early music, sharing her joy with innumerable people. She began her musical pursuits with classical guitar studies while raising her 6 kids in Berkeley, then around age 40 she took up the cello so that she could play music with other people. And that's what she did! Joining and starting ensembles throughout the rest of her life. She attended countless SFEMS and other workshops and always encouraged others to pursue their musical dreams. Later in life she learned to play viola da gamba and became quite accomplished, inspiring so many people of all ages.

Sally produced multiple very popular and lively baroque opera performances, including operas by Purcell and Charpentier. In her 80s she had

a brilliant idea—Early Music Open Mic which provides camaraderie and performance opportunities to early music players throughout the bay area. Early Music Open Mic continues today under the leadership of Sal's friend, Heather Wilson. Sal's love of music and friendship, and her inimitable way of being have lit a lamp that can be carried on by all of us. Let's honor Sally by continuing to embrace our special early music community.

Sally's musician daughters, Frances Blaker and Barbara Krumdieck, have put together a performance of some of Sal's favorite pieces, including music by JS Bach, Johann Christoph Bach, Couperin and Kapsberger, played for you by a few of the Bay Area musicians who had special relationships, musically and personally, with Sally. Sally loved flamboyant clothing (including western wear)! The musicians will be dressed accordingly and the audience is invited to join in on the fun in Sal's memory. Sal's motto: "Fun Above All!"— *From SFEMS website*

Register for Viols West!

August 9-15, 2026
at UC Santa Barbara

Directors Ros Morley & Lawrence Lipnik

Faculty

Malachai Bandy, Joanna Blendulf, Julie Jeffrey, Lawrence Lipnik, Eva Lymenstull, Rosamund Morley, Caroline Nicolas, Elisabeth Reed, Shanon Zusman

Our brochure including workshop information, list of class offerings, transportation info and faculty bios is [HERE](#).

Questions? Contact Melita Denny at violswestworkshop@gmail.com



• Discounts for SFEMS members

Baroque Workshop

July 6-12

BritBachs!

A Summer Baroque Adventure Across the Pond

Director: Lindsey Strand-Polyak

Gamba & cello faculty: Erik Andersen

<https://www.sfems.org/baroque-workshop>

Med/Ren Workshop

July 12-18

Songs of Love and War

Director: Adam Knight Gilbert

Viol faculty: David Morris & Malachai Bandy

<https://www.sfems.org/medren-workshop>

\$\$\$ GRANTS \$\$\$

Pacifica chapter grants for Viols West and Conclave

The Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society has made a limited number of scholarship grants of up to \$500 available for attendance at [Viols West](#) or at [Conclave](#) this summer.

While the grants are available to all, we would especially welcome any students or younger players—teachers, please let your students know about this and encourage them!

Applications should be sent to Nick Jones, Pacifica Viola da Gamba Treasurer, nrjones360@gmail.com as soon as possible, but no later than June 15.

Include a paragraph outlining your experience on the viol, including present or recent teachers, and your interest in attending Viols West or Conclave.

Scholarship recipients are encouraged to become active members of the Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society (pacificaviols.org).



Conclave registration is closed!

July 26- August 2, 2026

For changes to registration, or to request a late registration, please email Conclave Management.

conclave.manager@gmail.com

Gifts to Treasure

This issue of the newsletter gives us an opportunity to acknowledge an extraordinary act of generosity from longtime Pacifica member Billie Hamilton.

Following the passing of her partner, Dorothy Orolin, Billie recently donated a remarkable collection of viols, bows, music, and related materials to our Pacifica Chapter as she prepares for a move into assisted living.

Several Pacifica members assisted in transporting the collection from Sacramento, and the experience of seeing so many instruments gathered together — each with its own history, sound, and musical life — was deeply moving.

Many of these instruments and bows will help strengthen Pacifica's rental program and support future players in our community. Others may eventually help support the chapter in other ways as the collection is evaluated and organized. In every case, Billie's generosity represents an investment in the future of viol playing in Northern California.

Those of us involved in early music know that instruments often carry stories with them. They pass from teacher to student, from friends to colleagues, from one household and musical circle into another. What Billie has given Pacifica is more than a collection of objects. She has entrusted us with part of a musical legacy built over many years of playing, learning, friendship, and shared music-making.

On behalf of the Pacifica Board, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to Billie for this remarkable gift, and also acknowledge Dorothy's memory as part of that legacy. We are honored by the trust Billie has placed in our community, and we look forward to seeing these instruments continue their musical lives in new hands for many years to come.

Pat Jennerjohn

Pacifica Viols President



The way of the PlayDay

Since landing in the bay three years ago, one of my favorite things about the Pacifica PlayDays is how it continually feeds our community-minded gamba norms. All gambists are welcome and have a place to be in the large group session and breakout session.

I've gotten to meet new people and be reacquainted with folks I've met at other workshops like Conclave and Viols West. It also gives me joy to network with fellow gambists.

Some folks are new to gamba in the past year or two, coming from other string instruments and gamba-curious for a while, while other folks may be OG gambists who used to be more involved in the scene but meandered in life (e.g. raising kids or moving to different cities) and recently returned to PlayDays again, dusting off their cases.

We're cross-generational, cross-instrumental, and crosstown for some members trekking into the east bay on second Saturdays.

I recently got to meet with Alice Benedict, Mary Elliott, Sue Jones and Julie Jeffrey, in a PlayDay subcommittee we formed, to talk about our current PlayDays and how their format came to be, and review how they're going.

I had only met Mary in passing before, so it was good to learn from her about chapter surveys she and others conducted twenty years ago about the PlayDays, which is how we landed on our current format.

We're open to suggestions if you'd like to share them with us. I also got to hear from everyone in the room about our historical gamba culture in which we value opportunities to gather and musick with each other across all levels and experiences. Especially when new people join and we rely on our seasoned Pacifica players to show them the way. That's been done for me, and I see members do this for others, and I've newly caught onto the idea that I can do this too.

**– Alison Ballberg,
Pacifica PlayDay Coordinator**

allisonbalberg@gmail.com

Early Music Open Mic Night

is on summer break – see you in August!

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*

Forwarded by Michael and Edith Kimbell...

Problems with strings? Solved!
Problems with slippery trousers? Solved as well!
Lucas Kilian, Neues Gradesca Büchlein, Augsburg, 1607



Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society

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Pacifica Viols Chapter Website
<https://pacificaviols.org>

Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society
is a Chapter of the
[Viola da Gamba Society of America](https://www.violasociety.org)

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