PACIFICA VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY
# GAMBA NEWS

Nov, 2026 • Vol. 42, No. 3

## Join us at our PlayDay with coach Wendy Gillespie

## Sat., Nov. 14

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

Wendy Gillespie is a founding member of the viol consorts Les Filles de Sainte-Colombe and Fretwork as well as a long-time member of the ensemble Phantasm. Over five decades, she has made over 100 recordings and played with many ensembles from Sequentia to the Metropolitan Opera.

More recently, she's been specializing in renaissance viols with the consort Nota Bene and musicking with The Barefoot Allstars of California, the Voices of Music, and the not-yet-discovered trio Lyra Waye.

Wendy received Early Music America's Thomas Binkley Award in 2011 and the Wellesley College Alumnae Achievement Award in 2012. She is Past President of the Viola da Gamba Society, honored with a lifetime membership in 2023. In 2017, after 32 years on the faculty of Indiana University she graduated to *Professor Emerita.*

Our PlayDay begins as we awaken our instruments and warm up our bow arms, gradually coming into presence by tuning together, then playing beautiful, unmeasured chant in unison. (How on earth can we stay together if there's nothing to count? You might well ask…)

Our ears will then be ready for a 3-part piece by Alexander Agricola that takes the chant we just played and renders it in (mostly) equal measured notes with a part above and a part below. Finally with our ears on full alert, we'll revel in a 6-part multi-texted motet by Costanzo Festa with that same chant buried deep within.

In both polyphonic pieces, the part carrying the chant moves more slowly than the others, perfect for less experienced players. More advanced players, meanwhile, gain a whole new perspective on the piece playing the voice which looks deceptively easy. Wherever you are in your playing — your first PlayDay or your fiftieth — there's a part for you.

Come spend a morning watching one simple tune grow into something rich and strange!

## Registering for our PlayDay

***Deadline: NOON, WEDNESDAY, Nov. 11***

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.

## Barefoot Chamber Concerts

### *The Barefoot All-Stars*
### *Dowland's Lachrimae (& more)*

Fri., Nov. 13, 6:30 PM

St. Mary Magdalen Parish Hall

2005 Berryman, Berkeley

Erik Andersen, Wendy Gillespie, Peter Hallifax, Julie Jeffrey, Lynn Tetenbaum- viols

with John Lenti, lute

It is 400 years since John Dowland, England's most famous lutenist and an extraordinary composer, died. His life was full: he lived and worked in England, France, Germany, Italy, and Denmark. He wrote four books of lute songs, innumerable complex pieces for the lute, and many other compositions, including psalms, lamentations and other chamber music. But his most revered work, and the centerpiece of tonight's concert, is the seven "passionate pavans" of "Lachrimae, or Seven Teares."

The program will include other compositions, some by Dowland, some by other early 17th century composers that refer to and reflect the great legacy of the original pavan.

Admission $25. Reserve a seat in advance (info@barefootchamberconcerts.com), and pay at the door for best seating.

For more info:
https://barefootchamberconcerts.com/concert/sept-11-2026-stepping-across-blavet-couperin-rameau-telemann-bach/

---

## A SFEMS Special Event

### Ensemble Correspondances

***French Baroque: Charpentier– Messe de minuit & more***

Sun., Dec. 6, 4 PM

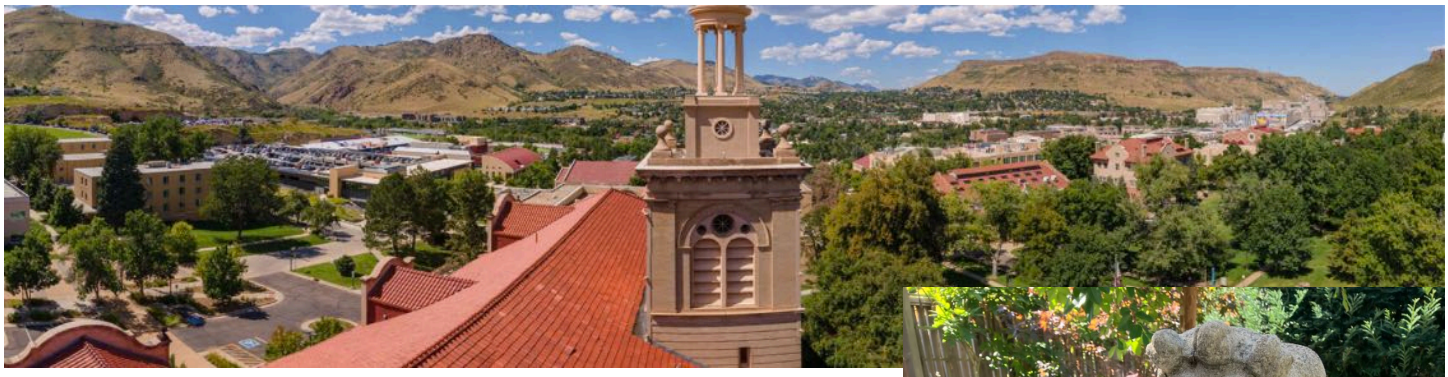
First Church, Berkeley

Under the direction of the harpsichordist and organist Sébastien Daucé, the singers and instrumentalists of Ensemble Correspondances have become a benchmark ensemble for seventeenth-century French repertory.

The ensemble will usher in a joyful holiday season in a one-night-only special event with a program featuring Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Messe de minuit pour Noël* (Midnight mass for Christmas). Other celebratory and seasonal pieces by Charpentier round out this can't-miss holiday program!

*For Pay-It -Forward reserved seating or Pay-What-You-Can general admission–*

https://sfems.app.getcuebox.com/o/Q84D69WB/shows/KFG5YTR0



## *From Team FretKnot–*

## 2027 Conclave

We are pleased to announce that the 65th annual Conclave will be held at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, CO., just east of Denver.

### Dates: July 25- August 1, 2027

More information will be posted to the VdGSA website ahead of registration in the spring, as usual.

---

## Early Music Podcasts

A quick look on the web finds these early music podcasts–

**Now We Listen** from *Early Music America*

A 5-episode podcast celebrating traditionally underrepresented performers, scholars, and research topics in early music and historically informed performance.

https://www.earlymusicamerica.org/nowwelisten/

**The Early Music Podcast** on *Spotify*

The Early Music Podcast is a series dedicated to what's been happening in the Early Music sector in Europe, brought to you by REMA, the Early Music Network!

Short interviews with specialists of the cultural field that bring a new perspective to your professional practices and goals!

https://open.spotify.com/show/1SqxTOEWwWegvx6H7hWPX3

*I've been practicing…*
*Do you think I could go?*

## A Spotify Playlist for viol lovers

### *Renaissance Viola da Gamba Music*

Early renaissance music for consorts of viols and solo viol.

This playlist includes 365 'songs,' about 14 hours worth of heaven!

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0uyc27sPFpBgDZz8jI0si3

You will need to download the free Spotify app if you don't already have it.

https://www.spotify.com/us/download/mac/?referrer=dwp

## Early Music Open Mic Night

**Friday, Nov. 20 • 7-8:30 PM**

Hillside – An Urban Refuge
1422 Navellier St., El Cerrito CA 94530

Sign up ahead of time as a soloist or group, instrumentalist or singer. Music from 1750 or earlier. Amateurs, professionals, students—all welcome!

Join us for light snax and wine!

- Five time slots available (max. 15 minutes)
- Four music stands available; BYO stand light.

Donations by performers and audience are welcome to help cover the venue cost.

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

**Next up: Winterlude Wed. Dec. 16**

## Winterlude

**Wed. Dec. 16, 7 PM**

Hillside – An Urban Refuge
1422 Navellier St., El Cerrito CA 94530

Heather Wilson and Nancy Grant, organizers of Early Music Open Mic, have announced its second seasonal Winterlude program.

"Once again we will be led by **Maestra Shira Kammen**! Last year's wonderful celebration of music featured many of our regular performers playing and/or singing."

For more info, contact Nancy at ncgrant.work@gmail.com.

## Pacifica Board news

Pacifica Viols' president Pat Jennerjohn has stepped down at the end of her second term as president. Pat saw us through many important decisions over the six years of her leadership, including seeing our society through the pandemic. She continues her work as a financial planner and as president of our "sister" organization, California Bach Society.

We thank Pat for her years of service to Pacifica Viols (including her inspiring "Prez Notes" for this newsletter.)

The board is currently considering candidates for the position of president. If you would like to nominate someone (including yourself), please contact Cindi Olwell, the chair of our Nominating Committee.
cindi.olwell@gmail.com

## Free PR for Viol performers!

Our newsletter strives to increase audiences for concerts featuring viols.

So… ***LET ME KNOW!***

Send me details about your upcoming concerts this year – it's never too early to let me know! Pix definitely welcome.

We'll publish your gig up to 2 months ahead.

Thanks,
Sue Jones, GambaNews editor

scjones360@gmail.com

## More Teaching Videos–

Viola da Gamba Society of America

We're again drawing your attention to these invaluable videos because they are free, useful and we love watchng our favorite teachers! Plus we all want to improve, right?

The VdGSA's library of teaching videos can be found under "Resources" on their website:

https://www.vdgsa.org/teaching-videos

Check out more videos on that page such as:

- "Shifting on the Viol" with John Moran
- "Getting Comfortable with the Extremes of Your Instrument" with Elisabeth Reed"
- "String Replacement" with John Pringle

Use these buttons to filter the topics by–

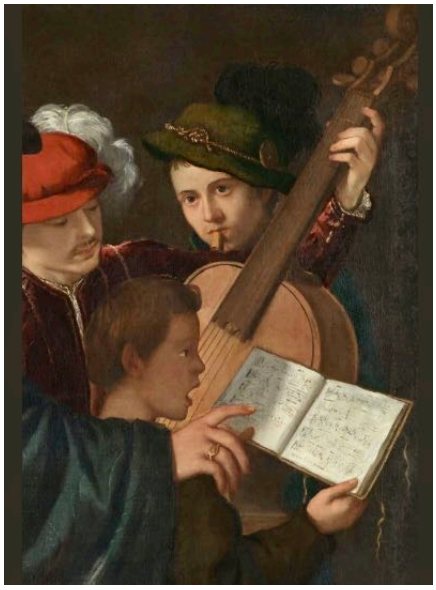
- Treble/ Tenor/ Bass
- Beginner/ Intermediate/ Advanced
- Left Hand/ Bow Hand/ Whole body
- Phrasing/ Tuning
- Ensemble
- Exercises
- Practicing Strategies

## FACEBOOK TIDBITS

Another find from the Facebook page "Viola da gamba"–

Loren Ludwig recently posted this image with a question; some intriguing answers followed…

https://www.facebook.com/groups/violadagamba.it/permalink/2903683627926534/



*Not a link, just hoping to pique your interest…*

## PlayDay SNAX

This month those with **last names O to Z** are asked to bring a snack – savory or sweet – to share at our PlayDay during our 9-9:30 AM and mid-morning breaks. Thanks!

## COFFEE pickup for PlayDay

On our registration form, **you can volunteer to pick up coffee** for our PlayDay, bringing it by 9:15 AM at the latest.

Our PlayDay Coordinator Allison will pre-order and pre-pay for it. The volunteer then picks 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!***

**Thanks for your help!**

# Amherst Early Music

## *Online classes with AEM*

### Easier Fantasias for Viols

with Amy Domingues, viol

Nov. 7, noon-1:30 PM PST

Explore the rich and inventive world of sixteenth-century fantasias by Thomas Lupo and Giovanni Bassano. We'll play a selection of their fantasias, including more approachable pieces for players who are newer to consort playing.

Through guided score study and ensemble playing, we'll explore imitation, rhythm, articulation, and phrasing, with an emphasis on developing confidence and bringing these wonderful works to life. Designed for lower-intermediate and intermediate viol players.
Pitch: A=415.

Fee $35; Student discount rate $20

To register:

https://www.amherstearlymusic.org/aem-online-nov-2026

---

### Music Publications

Amherst Early Music has published four player-friendly editions of music. The books lie flat on the music stand and the pieces have no page turns. The repertoire is accessible and playable for a number of different instruments, and is not available in other modern editions. All four are important musical sources that tell us a lot about historical practices at the time they were written or printed.

https://www.amherstearlymusic.org/publications

### Precision and Passion in Performance of Passaggi

with Patricia Ann Neely, viol

Nov. 8, 10:00-11:30 AM PST

Italy experienced a remarkable era of musical innovation in the 17th century. It was at this time that the country emerged as a center for a new revolution in both vocal and instrumental musical styles called passaggi di musica, the art of ornamenting music. Italian composers were skillful in blending text and music. This dedication to expressive artistry was further enhanced by the meticulous use of ornamentation, which allowed musicians to add an emotional nuance to performances.

We will explore the art of playing passaggi with a focus on how to implement emotional nuance with a choice of two settings of Ancor che col partire (treble and bass/bastarda) by Giovanni Battista Bovicelli and Richardo Rogniono and an ensemble setting of Susanne un jour, attributed to Ippolito Chamateròin in which passaggi are infused in all four parts. Music will be sent in advance.

For violas da gamba, (trebles, tenors reading treble clef, and basses reading alto and bass clef); also recorders, and dulcians.
High intermediate to advanced.
Pitch: A=440.

Fee $35; Student discount rate $20

To register:

https://www.amherstearlymusic.org/aem-online-nov-2026

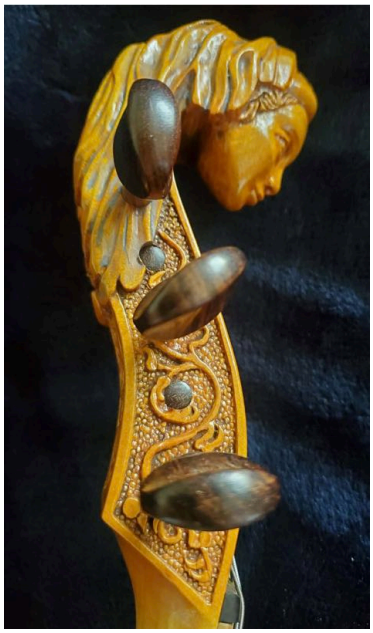
**Thank you to Alice Benedict for recruiting great coaches for this season!**

## Pacifica Viols
## PlayDays 2026-2027

**Sept. 12: Erik Andersen**
**Oct. 10: Alexa Haynes-Pilon**
**Nov. 14: Wendy Gillespie**
**Dec. 12: Julie Jeffrey**
**Jan. 9: Shira Kammen**
**Feb. 13: Melita Denny**
**Mar. 13: Mary Springfels**
**Apr. 10: David Morris***
**May 8: Bill Skeen**
**June 12: Pacifica BASH**

**Voices and Viols*

*Pretty please–*



**Donate to Pacifica's scholarship fund**

https://pacificaviols.org/donate/

*Thank you!*

## Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society

**Board of Directors:**

President: *to be filled*

Vice President: Allison Balberg
allisonbalberg@gmail.com

Secretary: Branson Stephens
branson.c.stephens@gmail.com

Treasurer: Nick Jones
nrjones360@gmail.com

**Board members at large:**

Mary Elliott, Ellen Fisher, Julie Jeffrey, Cindi Olwell, Elisabeth Reed

---

Membership Coordinator: Ellen Fisher
erfisher@gmail.com

Viol Rental Coordinator: Carolyn d'Almeida
dalmeida.carolyn@gmail.com

PlayDay Coach Liaison: Alice Benedict
rozeta@adianta.com

PlayDay Coordinator: Allison Balberg
allisonbalberg@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Sue Jones
scjones360@gmail.com

Webmaster: Nick Jones
nrjones360@gmail.com

VdGSA Chapter Rep: Ellen Fisher
erfisher@gmail.com

Pacifica Viols Chapter Website
https://pacificaviols.org

**Pacifica Viola da Gamba Society**
is a Chapter of the
Viola da Gamba Society of America

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