

THE SOUNDPOST

Newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Viols – A chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America
On the web: WWW.PNVIOLS.ORG

President's Message

Lee Inman

It occurs to me that we viol players too easily forget that making music is very much a collaborative endeavor. By that, I don't mean we ignore or overlook those four or five colleagues with whom we may sit down periodically to essay some Jenkins or Ward or Byrd. I mean, instead, the collaboration between us, the players of the viol, and those who've created all the tools we use. I suspect that we too rarely give these artists their due. Without a viol, its strings, and its well-mated bow, all our efforts would of course come to naught. Highly-skilled luthiers and archetiers, some of whom have never actually used their own creations, magically transform inert wood, horsehair, sheep-gut and metal into something with the ability to rouse the air to music, to speak to our hearts and souls. Speaking for myself, I must somewhat shamefully admit that the act of removing my viol and bow from their case is too often a casual, unmindful act, and that I pay close attention to the viol only if I'm annoyed by a struggle to tune it, or to the bow if it tells me it needs a swipe of rosin.

Sadly, two beloved magicians have recently left us: Jess Wells, and Dominic Zuchowicz. I never met Dom, but I know his instruments are treasured by those fortunate to play on them. Jess, on the other hand, did make an instrument for me, a red-orange division-size bass that he bigheartedly handed over to my care thirty-plus years ago. Over the course of those years, Jess' bass and I have partnered in countless hours of practice, hundreds of rehearsals, scores of concerts. I've attempted everything from Hume to Marais to Abel on it, and it's faithfully responded to every stroke of the bow, every touch of my fingers, instantly chiding me when I fumble or falter, and cheering my occasional successes. It has always honestly reflected back to me my expertise, or lack thereof. I remain grateful beyond words for its companionship.

The same can undoubtedly be said of all of the fine instruments we use. We can create art because acts of artistic creation by master makers preceded ours. The loss of these two talented artists, Jess and Dom, impoverishes us all. Yet, their creations are likely to outlive all of us, and to continue to provide joy to many future generations of musicians and audiences.

So, I have a request for all of you. The next time you retrieve your prized viol and bow – but before you get to the necessary business of tuning, rosinning, opening music – please take just a moment to admire them; The just-so curve of the stick, the warm sheen of the varnish, the grace of the sound-holes and scroll, the precision of the purfling, the intricacy of the carvings. If the makers are still living, you might also consider sending them messages of sincere thanks for the loving care they've invested in the creation of these beautiful objects.

I also want to invite all the talented 'living room consorts' in our midst to support Saint James' outreach program – and to **help fulfill PNV's obligation to Saint James for our use of their splendid facilities for our Play Days – by volunteering to perform this year at one of the two retirement homes: Chancery Place or Horizon House.** Those of you who've already offered your time, and your love of music, to do so already know what a pleasure it is to play for these very appreciative audiences. You'll find an article elsewhere in this edition with the details.

Our Play Day on March 5 will bring us some new insights from the world of the Baroque cello, as Nathan Whitaker comes to conduct the morning presentation. The same evening, at 8 PM, we'll be privileged to attend a **concert by the magnificent Paolo Pandolfo at Town Hall.** These are two events not to be missed.

Nathan Whittaker Leads March 5th Play Day

Text and photo lifted from Cornish College's website.



Nathan Whittaker, cello, has been described as “a soloist that was not merely good but rather extraordinary”, with “musicianship of the highest order.” (SSJT) As a member of Plaine & Easie, he won the Grand “Unicorn” Prize in the 2009 EMA Medieval and Renaissance Competition. Mr. Whittaker has served on the faculty at the Indiana University String academy, the principle cellist of the Columbus Indiana Philharmonic and associate principle cellist with the Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra and has performed in early music festivals in Bloomington and Vancouver, as well as the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Currently, Mr. Whittaker is a member of the Seattle Baroque Orchestra and Pacific Baroque Orchestra, and teaches at Cornish College of the Arts and the Academy of Music Northwest. He can be heard on CBC broadcasts, and has recorded with the NPR and ATMA Classique labels. Having graduating Cum Laude from Indiana University with a Bachelor and Masters of Music Degree in Cello Performance, Mr.

Whittaker is currently a DMA candidate in cello performance with Toby Saks at the University of Washington. His private instructors have included Helga Winold, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, Stanley Ritchie, and Peter Wiley.

Board (Bored) Stiff? Never!!!

Sandy Haas

With two PNV Board members leaving at the end of this season, the OPPORTUNITY opens for you to serve on your Pacific Northwest Viols Board. The depth of knowledge and experience in this board is incredible. The Board handles all business and planning so smoothly that they make it appear easy. Further, members interact with great respect and caring, for each other's talents and opinions, as well as, for the quality and health of our PNV programs.

Be a part of this Board! The behind-the-scenes work is exciting and rewarding. Is it all work and no play? Volunteer and find out that there is considerable fun in this work because of the collective sense of humor and enjoyment, not to mention the great cookies and other treats at each meeting. Please consider volunteering for a position on the Board, contributing your time and talent to helping keep PNV strong.

Elections to fill these positions will be held at our May Play Day. Contact Liisa Peterson liisapeterson@gmail.com or Noreen Jacky Noreen@speakeasy.net to put your name on the list. Or be a real friend and volunteer a friend!

Chancery Place and Horizon House Performance Opportunities

Noreen Jacky

Its time to organize our outreach performances at Chancery Place and Horizon House. We are arranging the programs for ease and enjoyment of all.

- This year we plan to repeat the same program at both places, one day apart.
- The program will be one hour and will be divided into approximately four 15-minute sections.
- For ease of rehearsal, groups that already play or practice together will organize their own 15-minute segment.
- Soloists, duos, trios and larger consorts are all encouraged to volunteer.

Dates: Chancery Place Thursday, April 28, 1:30PM

Horizon House Friday, April 29, 3:30PM

This is great opportunity to give your group a goal to work towards, to share your music with an appreciative audience, to mingle with your fellow viol players, and, of course, to help PNV pay the rent.

Reserve your place in the program by letting us know no later than March 12. If you have questions please contact Noreen Jacky, noreen@speakeasy.net, (206) 783-1612; or Vicki Hoffman, mikeandvicki@quest.net, (206) 842-2559.

PNV on Facebook!

Liisa Peterson ripped this right out of her email inbox. Printed with permission.

Hi All,

I loaded some photos of Play Days on the PNV page and announced the Paolo masterclass. Note the group photo in the upper left corner!

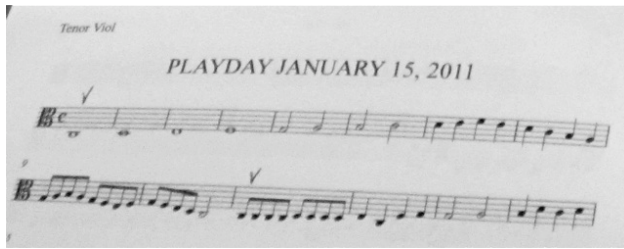
www.facebook.com/?tid=1856477012917&sk=messages#!/group.php?gid=131442482402

I cc'd this to members who I could think of on the spur of the moment, but we should tell ALL our members and potentially interested friends that the page exists and to visit the page and say something nice or funny, eh?

I'll be loading some of the older Play Days/workshop photos subsequently.

Any other suggestions for increasing our visibility?

Lee T



Toni Seales

Photos by Lee Talner

January is officially "Technique Month" in Margriet's calendar, I am certain of it now. Thankfully she always makes it fun and useful. "The bow is like a singer's breath" is a beautiful image to start off on the right foot. Lung. Push or pull. Whatever.



She demystified bow division in this session. It's only obvious that if you play a half note with a whole bow, then a quarter would use half that length. I've always known that, just like I've known that 'half' is somewhere between the tip and, and.....

Equally obvious, you cannot play a whole note with one bow length, then a half note with the same amount of bow and have them sound like they are part of a coherent phrase. Duh. Been doing just that for a few years now.

We even got a Secret Tip: does anyone else get anxious when unequal notes are coming up and you know there will be no bow at the end for that longer cadence note? Just look ahead and steal a smidgeon of extra return on each short note as you go and those stolen inches will be waiting for you.

Another secret: the composer probably knows (ok, *knew* for most of our faves!) that longer notes will take a slower bow and thus be softer. I always thought I was going too slowly if I couldn't keep up the same volume of sound when the slow bits came.

Then the ever-inspiring Coffee Madrigal: Did *I* go for coffee; or did I **GO** for coffee?? And do you make that bold italic by chomping fervently on the bow like a cheap steak? Or maybe by retaking a push; or maybe, by bow length alone? Lovely to have choices.



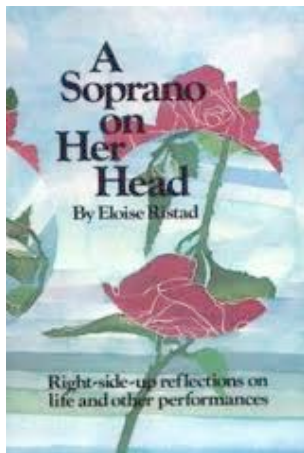
I think I actually 'got' something this time; my quarter notes use a lot less bow - exactly around about a quarter-ish bow length.



Book Reviews

Noreen Jacky and Liisa Peterson

Read any good ones lately? Noreen and I have. We'd like to share these terrific music reads. If you have read something that our membership would enjoy, do tell!



A Soprano on Her Head: Right-side-up reflections on life and other performances by Eloise Ristad

Looking at the reviews on Amazon - several people who wrote reviews were assigned to read this book by their voice teachers. One woman writes, "Anybody who has lost their love of singing because of the need to 'get it right,' anybody with stage fright (or even just a severely stiff stage presence) should read this book".



The Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture by Frank Wilson

In this book there is a little bit of fascinating everything (music, evolution, puppetry, practice, the brain...) about our hands - and much of it about the musician's hand. Frank Wilson, a neurologist blessed with curiosity, took up piano to understand his musician clients and went on to explore the human hand in a profound way. He provides a wonderful bibliography for deeper study on many topics.

"... the hand speaks to the brain as surely as the brain speaks to the hand. Self-generated movement is the foundation of thought and willed action, the underlying mechanism by which the physical and psychological coordinates of the self come into being," page 291.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Pacific Northwest Viols 2010-2011 Season

Play Day Dates

- ❖ October 2, 2010—Cathedral Place; Led by Shanon Zusman
- ❖ **December 4, 2010--Pastoral Outreach Center. ARRIVE EARLY FOR PARKING. There is another event going that weekend.**
- ❖ January 15, 2011--Cathedral Place; Led by Margriet Tindemans
- ❖ March 5, 2011--Cathedral Place; Led by Nathan Whittaker
- ❖ May 7, 2011--Pastoral Outreach Center

*\$20 Fee per participant
A = 415*

Play Day Location for January 15
Cathedral Place at St. James (PNV Customary Venue)
803 Terry Avenue
Seattle, Washington

Parking available in O'Dea High School lot (free) and in the Parkade at Boren and Marion Streets (\$)

Pacific Northwest Viols, Board Members 2010 – 2011

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|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ❖ Lee Inman, President | ❖ Bill Warren |
| ❖ Charlie Nagel, Vice President | ❖ Noreen Jacky, Programs |
| ❖ Sandra Haas, Secretary | ❖ Jon Brenner, Programs |
| ❖ Michael LaGaly, Treasurer | ❖ Olga Hauptman, Instrument Rental |
| ❖ Lee Talner, Outreach | ❖ Liisa Peterson, Communications |

*The **Soundpost** welcomes reader contributions of any kind: articles, commentary, personal stories, event reportage. E-Mail is preferred, but postal mail or napkin scribbblings are all gladly received, as well. **Email:** liisapetereson@gmail.com.*