

# 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*

"Setting my mind on a musical instrument was like falling in love. All the world seemed bright and changed."

W.C. Handy

As rewarding and inspiring as summer music workshops and seminars can be, I personally find making and hearing music during the chilly months to be far more satisfying. The viol, in particular, is a fine rainy-day companion – right up there with macaroni and cheese, a cup of hot spiced apple cider, and a crackling fire. Joining with companions to read through an elegant Jenkins Fantasy, or to contend with an invigorating Lawes Sett, warms both the heart and body, and lets us ignore for a moment the darkness, rain and bluster on the other side of the windowpane. I wish all of you a fine fall and winter spent engaged in thoughtful musical conversation with your best-loved composers and colleagues.

As many of you may already be aware, our dear friend and favorite teacher, Margriet Tindemans, is undergoing a period of medical turmoil. As a result, she is unable to be our presenter at Play Day on November 10. I've been asked to stand in for her that day, and I'm happy to bring something interesting and fun to the group. Exactly what that something is will be – as of this writing – a surprise to everyone, including myself. Please send Margriet your best wishes and thoughts. My hope is that she'll be sufficiently recovered to return to us in March with her customary challenges!

I'm happy to report that our outreach program this year is off to a fine start. Thanks to Noreen Jacky and other folks, performances by various groups are already being planned at several of our usual venues. Details forthcoming, of course, but I'm quite pleased that this important commitment to Saint James is receiving new emphasis and support from members of the chapter. I know our audiences are always glad to see us, and...we to see them!

I'll wager none of you have forgotten that **Jordi Savall is performing at Town Hall the evening of November 10**. I hope many of you already have tickets. We'll try to wrap up the day promptly, so that those attending will have plenty of time to prepare for the evening.

Finally, I've been alerted that Saint James will be hosting a number of events on November 10. As a result, parking may not be as convenient as we usually enjoy, so please plan accordingly. The parkade at the corner of Boren and Marion offers all-day parking at a reasonable price, and Jim Savage has noted that there are also some parking opportunities in the lot on the corner of Terry and Cherry. If you choose to try your luck there, be sure to avoid parking in the reserved spaces.

**See you all in November!**

### Play Day Schedule

- ❖ 9:30 AM: Check in, signup for consorts, tuning, announcements
- ❖ 10:00 AM: Grand Consort, Presentation
- ❖ 11:30 AM: Lunch break
- ❖ 1:00 PM: Session I: Informal Consorts or Coached Consort
- ❖ 2:30 PM: Session II: Informal consorts or Coached Consort
- ❖ 4:00 PM: Clean up

*\$20 Fee per participant  
A = 415*

**Location for the Nov. 10, 2012  
Play Day  
Cathedral Place  
803 Terry Ave.  
Seattle, Washington**

## Hail to the Chief! November 10

*Bio information shamelessly stolen from  
Early Music America's website*

Lee Inman began playing cello at the age of 10. During his university years, Lee felt drawn to the viol, and was primarily self-taught, until a posting by the US Air Force to what was then West Berlin brought him under the guidance of Dr. Richard Klemm, of the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. In the mid-1970's, he both taught viola da gamba as a member of the adjunct faculty of the Cornish School, and performed on viol and Baroque cello with Randall McCarty, Steven Stubbs, Stanley Ritchie, and other Seattle early music pioneers, appearing regularly with the Seattle Bach Ensemble, Prackticall Musicke and Fiori Musicali.



*Amazing what one can find by Googling!*

Later, while living in Minneapolis, he became a founding member of the Lyra Concert as its principal and solo cellist and gambist, and supported a number of the Twin Cities' active early-music chamber groups as a continuo specialist. Lee returned to Seattle in 1990, and continues to participate actively in Seattle's rapidly-expanding early-music scene.

As a freelance performer, composer, teacher and ensemble coach, he has presented frequently at Pacific Northwest Viols' Play Days, and at summer workshops in Arizona and Washington states. Lee has presented in master classes with Anner Bylsma, Jeanne Lamon, and Laurence Dreyfuss. He has also appeared in concert with Jack Ashworth, Julie Jeffries, Mary Springfels, Craig Trompeter, and Brent Wissick, as well as with Margriet Tindemans, Olga Hauptman and other notable Seattle performers and teachers.

Lee, Joanna Blendulf, Tim Scott, and Max Fuller, make up The Portland Viol Consort. They have been delighting audiences in Portland and Seattle.

## Play Day Parking HEADS UP

*Information provided by Dr. Savage,  
Director of Music at St. James Cathedral via Bill Warren*

There will be two other meetings at St. James on Saturday morning, November 10. There will be a parking crunch after 9:00 that morning.

However there are **22 parking places in the Cherry and Terry lot**. The entrance to the Cherry and Terry lot is south of the Frye **on Cherry between Boren and Terry Avenues**. The unassigned spaces are clearly marked. They will not want to park in reserved parking places. *Please note: this is not the Frye lot across Terry to the west labeled Frye Parking.* And there is always the parkade at Boren and Marion.

## The Roosevelt High School Viol Program-Year 5

*Lee Talner, October 2012*



*Back Row: Lee, Katie, Iain, Elizabeth, Ellen,  
Chris, Eddie, Mac;  
Front Row: Christy, Daphne, Cassady, Nick;  
In Front: Jayme;  
Missing: Max*

In previous issues of Soundpost we summarized our recent experiences teaching viol as an elective to orchestral string players at Seattle's Roosevelt High School over the previous four years. To our great joy, eleven students appeared on the first day of our spring 2012 class, including two returnees from 2011!

Bravely, Ellen Seibert and I planned two classes weekly for ten weeks despite knowing that we would both be away at the same time for two of the weeks. To the rescue came Chris Briden, fresh from his Indiana University viol studies, who quickly became a true teaching partner. His enthusiasm, knowledge and sense of humor endeared him to the students. We've selected some highlights, issues and lessons learned from our 2012 adventure that may prove useful to anyone teaching viol to a group of teenagers.

**8:00 AM start time:** Among the new challenges this year was the 8 AM start time of first period (previous classes were mid day or after school). How would we wake up this group of yawning, sleepy eyed teenagers? Drawing on devices from our own viol teachers, we introduced viol tricks and games that proved useful for pulling them out of their dream state.

To cite one example, we asked students in turn to say a polysyllabic word and then bow it on one string, using push bow to bring out the stressed syllable(s) and pull bow to deemphasize the unstressed syllable(s). Of course our kids relished the challenge and chose crowd pleasing, quirky, smile-producing words including 'tedious', 'subwoofer', 'chimerical', 'vocabulary', 'hippopotamus', 'Alaska' (student lives in Homer, Alaska), 'buffalo', and as an homage to one-up-man-ship, 'antidisestablishmentarianism'. One student chose the word 'cow'. Although not quite polysyllabic, it gave us nevertheless a perfect opening to explore 'soft' and 'hard' beginnings of the bow stroke.

Another 'game' proved rather useful as we worked on left hand fingering. Each student was asked to compose and then play a unique four note sequence using a, b, c, d on the a string. The next student in line was asked to repeat the sequence and then compose one of his/her own, and the process was repeated. In effect, the 'game' addressed listening skills, improvisation, and left hand finger action.

**Preparing notebooks!** For a large class with a limited number of sessions, preparing notebooks for each student, with music in order, saved valuable time fumbling through loose sheet music.

**Frequency of classes:** Two classes on consecutive days was a major benefit. With an interval of 2 or 3 days, or worse, a week, the capacity of teenagers to pick up right where they left off is significantly compromised.

**Choosing a piece for a large group:** The Holborne Galliard Farewell in C major arranged for 3 parts (**need the edition**) worked well for such a large group because it decreased the amount of time that each 'team' had to sit twiddling its thumbs. Having 3 or 4 on a part also gave plenty of support to the weaker players. Each section (tr, tn, bass) began to see itself as a team in which the stronger players helped and encouraged their less advanced team members. Towards the end of the course, we introduced the Holborne Pavan 'Sedet Sola', as a contrast and companion to the galliard.

To see how the tricky rhythms of the Holborne galliard fit together, clapping and then plucking notes can't be beat! We introduced several variations of this approach. First, we had the entire class clap in turn the rhythm of each of the three parts. Next, each team (i.e., players on the same part) had the chance to pluck its part while the other two teams clapped their own rhythms. Then each team bowed its part while the other two teams plucked their parts. These sequential exercises proved useful for achieving a clear sense of the piece's rhythmic complexities.



*Back Row: Mac, Daphne, Cassady, Elizabeth, Jayme, Nick  
Front Row: Ellen, Katie, Max, Iain, Christy, Lee*

For a change of pace, once a piece had been worked on sufficiently, we occasionally picked one-on-a-part trios to play for the rest of the class, giving all students the chance to show their mastery of notes and phrasing. Although we worried whether putting the more slowly progressing kids on the spot might be stressful and counterproductive, we soon understood that all the students actually liked the opportunity to show off their developing skills and were happy to celebrate their triumphs and laugh at their own mistakes.

**Polyphonic vs. dance repertoire:** In prior years, we chose polyphonic pieces rather than dances. Upon reflection, we now believe that the spirit of the dance form provided an extra level of delight that helped keep our students smiling and fully engaged, especially at 8 am. Plucking dance tunes is more upbeat than plucking a non-dance polyphonic piece. Our kids loved the sound of plucked viols so much that they asked to perform the galliard both plucked and bowed during their concert.

**Team teaching:** Chris, Ellen and I took turns leading the class through exercises, games and music while the other two circulated. Clearly it's a luxury to have circulating teachers for hands-on help. All of us were comfortable chiming in spontaneously with bits of information, clarification, emphasis, and ideas related to the moment. The arrangement also allowed us to observe and evaluate different teaching strategies.

**Setting a goal at the beginning:** With strong encouragement from Anna Edwards, the RHS orchestra director and crucial advocate of our program, we advised our students early on that they would be performing towards the end of the course. Setting a performance goal is ideal to maintain focus and guarantee progress over a ten week period, especially for older students with 'senioritis'. Several students expressed enthusiasm about playing viol for family and friends, and none regretted the commitment. After only twelve sessions, our class gave an informal evening concert that included brief student presentations about the viol family of instruments and the pieces to be played. (<https://vimeo.com/41631967>).

**Some things that didn't work:** Did our teacher trio try tactics that proved unproductive? Yes indeed, but huddling promptly at the end of each session enabled us to correct course quickly, and we often followed up with email ideas and suggestions for the next class. An example: after just six classes, and rather optimistically, we introduced 'Propter Veritatum' by Matthias Gratitz, taken from the VdGSA website pieces supplied by Sarah Mead and Wendy Gillespie. The piece is without bar lines and introduces double whole notes and rests. Although a few students 'got it', others were completely at sea and frustrated. At the next session we divided the class into more and less advanced groups, aiming to tailor our teaching to their differing abilities. But during our subsequent debriefing, we concluded that this approach risked ruining class camaraderie and certainly undercut the 'team' feeling of 3 or 4 on each part. We returned to the more manageable 3 part music, with bar lines and a small range of notes, for the remainder of the course, with positive results.

**Sitting Well:** Although we reminded the class about correct posture throughout the course, we should have spent more time initially making sure that each student had a chair of appropriate height. Eventually, stacking chairs allowed a few of our long limbed kids to achieve a better setup, but we regretted not focusing on this earlier

**Surprises:** Perhaps we shouldn't have been surprised that most of the class was short on knowledge of harmonic theory and terminology. For example, the terms 'dissonance' and 'consonance' were not yet in their musical vocabulary. One student volunteered to define 'dissonance' as 'weird sounding', rather apt.

We worked hard on building students' ability to function as a consort with full appreciation of the democracy and independence of parts. The students soon realized that their orchestral experience of relying on an entire section for support allowed them to get away with sloppy counting that just doesn't work in a viol consort.

Towards the end of the course, Anna asked the students to write up their experience. We'll share excerpts in the next issue of Soundpost.



*A high-five viol moment!*

## We Sounded Good

*Jon Brenner*

For our first Play Day of the 2012-2013 season, we were fortunate to have Ronnie Fullerton as our presenter. The focus of this presentation was French ornaments. A very informative handout about de Machy's ornaments was provided. These were put to good use on a delightful suite by Couperin. Ronnie very carefully demonstrated the way to play all of the ornaments that were used.

I can say for myself that it was incredibly informative. Following the break, we resumed with two great sessions led by Ronnee where we could apply the newly learned ornaments to great use.

## Aquila Strings Available Again

*Peter Stewart*

I was dismayed last spring, to learn that Aquila gut strings were no longer made, and elated this fall to learn that they are again available through Aquila USA in Portland. Look for <http://www.aquilausa.com>.

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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**



### **Pacific Northwest Viols 2012-2013 Season**

#### **PNV Dates**

- ❖ September 8, 2012 — Play Day at the Pastoral Outreach Center led by Ronnee Fullerton
- ❖ **November 10, 2012 — Play Day at Cathedral Place led by Lee Inman.**
- ❖ Board Meeting: December 2 at 1:30. All are welcome. Email [liisapeterson@gmail.com](mailto:liisapeterson@gmail.com) for more info.
- ❖ January 19, 2013 — Play Day at Cathedral Place led by Joanna Blendulf.
- ❖ March 9, 2013 — Play Day at Cathedral Place leader TBA.
- ❖ May 11, 2013 — Play Day at Cathedral Place led by Josh Lee.

A = 415

November Play Day Location  
St. James Cathedral Place  
803 Terry Ave.  
(Across Terry from O'Dea High School)  
Seattle, Washington

### **Pacific Northwest Viols, Board Members 2012 – 2013**

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|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ❖ Lee Inman, President               | ❖ Chris Briden, Member at Large    |
| ❖ Jon Brenner, Secretary, Programs   | ❖ Noreen Jacky, Programs           |
| ❖ Michael LaGaly, Treasurer          | ❖ Vicki Hoffman, Programs          |
| ❖ Lee Talner, Outreach               | ❖ Olga Hauptman, Instrument Rental |
| ❖ Bill Warren, St. James Coordinator | ❖ 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 scribbles are all gladly received, as well.*  
**Email:** [liisapeterson@gmail.com](mailto:liisapeterson@gmail.com).