

# THE SOUNDPOST

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

## The President's Message

Lee Inman



And so, on May 14, we will come to the close of another successful Play Day Season, our first in our new venue of Queen Anne Christian Church. I'm so pleased that the PNV partnership with the church is working so very well. We are deeply grateful to have found such a welcoming host and fine facility for our meetings. In addition, playing for the church's services has turned out to be rewarding for everyone, in every possible way, and I'd like to thank all of you who offered your skills this year.

Spring is lovely, of course, but not without its downside. Just before I sat down to assemble this message, I received an e-mail from a student whose viol had unfortunately celebrated the sudden warming and drying of the air with a hasty and complete spin-out of its strings, and an impulsive tumble of its soundpost. This state of affairs is a fine example of fifteenth-century technology at its best, and we wouldn't put up with these little quirks if we didn't love these fiddles so very much.

Another drawback of such fine days is that it's devilishly difficult to abandon one's sun-drenched garden, deck or patio to march inside and plant oneself in a chair for practice. (By "one", I naturally mean "me".) I can accomplish the trek upstairs only after I remind myself that being fully-prepared to make music with other folks is the one joy that, for me, could possibly equal a sunny afternoon with a book and a chilled beverage. Perhaps that will serve to inspire you in a similar way!

Our presenter for the May Play Day is Wendy Gillespie, whose reputation as a teacher and performer certainly needs no embellishment. It isn't often that we welcome teachers from east of the Mississippi River, and we are very fortunate that Wendy's calendar, and her health, permitted her to visit us. I know her program won't be anything other than engaging and enlightening.

### Play Day Schedule

- 9:30 am - Check in, sign up for consorts, tune
- 10:00 am - Grand Consort Presentation
- 11:30 am - Annual Meeting
- 12:00 pm - Lunch Break
- 1:00 pm - First Consort Session
- 2:30 pm - Second Consort Session
- 4:00 pm - Clean up

\$20 Fee per participant  
 A = 415

**Saturday, May 14th: Wendy Gillespie**

### Play Day Location

**Queen Anne Christian Church**  
 1316 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. W  
 Seattle, Washington



If you require yet another reason to attend the next Play Day, do keep in mind that the schedule for the last Play Day of the season always includes the annual members' meeting. This is your opportunity to get comprehensive updates from the board, to ask any questions, and to offer suggestions and ideas for future Play Day seasons.

Also part of the agenda – elections. Both Bill Warren and Michael King have agreed to run for re-election for another three-year term on the PNV board. Many thanks to them for doing so, and for their significant contributions to the smooth operation of our chapter during their last term. Floor nominations are always welcome, as you know, so if you would like to nominate a fellow member for a board position, or even nominate yourself, we would be happy to add your name to the ballot.

Finally: a really early heads-up for the 2016 fall season. Tina Chancey and John Mark Rozendaal – fine musicians and teachers we rarely have a chance to work with, even at Conclave – will be in the Pacific Northwest in September of this year. They will give two concerts, one in Portland, and one in Seattle under the auspices of the Early Music Guild. Their Portland performance will be in conjunction with a one-day workshop, sponsored by the Cascadia chapter. Unfortunately, the timing of their tour doesn't permit arranging for a comparable one-dayer in Seattle. So, I would like to strongly encourage all of you to consider attending the Cascadia chapter's workshop. If you cannot do so, then PNV may be able to facilitate private lessons or ensemble coaching sessions with them during their Seattle stay. We'll have more details on all of these events as the dates draw closer.

Hope to see you all on May 14. In the meantime, do enjoy this incredible springtime weather....and don't forget to practice!

--Lee

## Wendy Gillespie to lead May 14<sup>th</sup> Play Day!

Bio and photo from <http://info.music.indiana.edu>



Professor Wendy Gillespie teaches viola da gamba, historical performance, and early music notation, in addition to coaching and directing chamber music and larger ensembles at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

A performer of medieval, renaissance, baroque, and contemporary music, she has performed with ensembles worldwide ranging from the English Concert to Ensemble Sequentia. Gillespie has participated in about 100 commercial recordings for Linn, Harmonia Mundi, EMI, Virgin Classics, and other companies. As a member of the viol consorts Fretwork and Phantasm, she has shared three Gramophone awards, many Gramophone and Grammy nominations and "Recordings of the Month," and two Grands Prix du Disque with her colleagues.

Professor Gillespie has served on the jury for the Bach-Abel International Viola da Gamba Competition in Kôthen, Germany since its inception in 2000. In 2011, Gillespie received Early Music America's Thomas Binkley Award for outstanding achievement in performance and scholarship by the director of a university or college early music ensemble. She was honored by her alma mater, Wellesley College, with an Alumnae Achievement Award in 2012.

Professor Gillespie is much in demand at workshops and seminars in early music performance in the United States and Europe. She has served as president of the Viola da Gamba Society of America and on the Executive Board of IU's Medieval Studies Institute, and for many years, she has been a member of the Higher Education Committee of Early Music America.

## **Review of March 5<sup>th</sup> Play Day with Joanna Blendulf**

*Toni Antonia*

For our last Play Day, we had the pleasure of welcoming back a familiar, friendly (and patient!) face, Joanna Blendulf. We were surprised and delighted when she announced that she and her delightful husband will be relocating to our outstanding area of the country in the near future!

We had plenty of room to spread out (missed you all!) for the morning presentation. We played four Spanish pieces in very different styles. (I never get enough Spanish composers!) We enjoyed two pieces from "Sonets y Villancicos" by Juan Vasquez where a technical tip was to "hug the string"; a Villancico I recognized was "Pasa, el agoa, ma Juliete, dama"; and "Cortens espada afilidas" by the famous Anon.

Joanna worked her magic and we were doing the two against three rhythms effortlessly. I had the pleasure of sitting next to my new charming Canadian friend whose name escapes me, and also learned that Tenor II lines are great for practicing easy shifting.

In the afternoon, some of the groups worked on Purcell fantasias; Coperario Fantasias for 4; and the coached group did Tomkins Fantasias. Finally, we ended up together to once again enjoy rhythmic puzzles in the Fantasias of Ward. My favorite Blendulfism: "sliminess" as a smooth phrasing technique. A-ha!, the strong beat may or may not be the 'FIRST' beat of the "measure". Gotta love that texted stuff. Lovely sun for the lunchtime stroll added to the relaxing day.

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## The Viol Curmudgeon: Viols and Wolf Notes

*Bill Monical, courtesy of Bill Monical and Cascadia Viols*



While usually mentioned as a problem found in cellos, wolf notes are common to all members of the violin and viola da gamba families. A wolf note is created by instability between the musical pitch of an instrument's body resonance interacting with a nearly identical bowed note being played on a vibrating string. As these slightly different notes cancel each other out, the result is a beating, burbling, or stuttering sound. In all bowed instruments, complex body resonance is a major element of sound projection that also amplifies the wolf note effect. As a result, great sounding instruments and wolf notes go together. When an instrument is in accurate adjustment and at its musical and resonant best, the wolf note also becomes more pronounced.

The presence of a wolf note is heard mainly on the lower strings of instruments and is not directly caused by the model, style of construction, design, repair, or age. However, some excellent instruments do not seem to have a wolf because the "beating" is not activated by any specific note. For example, if the wolf occurs between two notes (i.e. between F# on the D-VI string and open G on the G-V string of a bass viol), the problem is rarely noticed. This is why a wolf may suddenly appear when playing at a 415 or 440hz, but usually not both.

### Some Practical Solutions

Using the example above, an open G wolf on the G-V string can be diminished by simultaneously fingering the octave g on the e-III string, which is also in sympathetic vibration with the wolf pitch. A traditional cellist's solution is to gently squeeze the ribs while playing, changing body resonance, but this is rarely effective on the viol. Soundpost adjustment, combined with using a lighter gauge of lower G-V & D-VI string (having less tension), will also sometimes diminish the wolf. But never place a cork under the fingerboard or tailpiece; doing so will both mute the entire instrument and lead to damage and the development of cracks and warping.

The wolf problem can also be intensified by seasonal temperature and humidity changes. Drier and colder conditions can result in increased soundpost tension, causing musical quality to be more focused and also increasing wolf difficulties. Gently relaxing soundpost tension by adjustment will usually be helpful in diminishing wolfish prominence.

There are two basic types of commercial wolf eliminators. The first is a weighted metal tube, available in many sizes and placed on one or both lower strings between the bridge and tailpiece. These change string mass, are tunable, and are quite inexpensive. The second type is a permanent device, tuned to the problem note, that completely absorbs the beating effect. It is not usually appropriate for viols and must be fitted very precisely inside an instrument, which can be quite costly to install. To reduce or eliminate wolfishness, always bring the viol with related questions to the attention of an instrument professional for diagnosis. Usually a minimally invasive practical solution can be found if the wolf is unrelated to and not caused by other physical instrument problems.

All best wishes, Cascadia Viols Curmudgeon  
Bill Monical [info@cascadiaviols.com](mailto:info@cascadiaviols.com)

## Baroque Music in Bolivia?

Toni Antonia, photos from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caporales>



I went to Bolivia (just the Eastern part of Santa Cruz) for two weeks in February to fulfill a promise to my father's "familia en Cristo"; I also wanted to see Carnival, which I had seen when I was 20. The Carnivals of Bolivia are nothing like the Carnivals of New Orleans or Rio; they contain the entire history of the country re-enacted in a ritual that begins millennia before European colonization. My 'hermanito' Jean Paul performs in several Caporales groups. Caporales is a traditional Andean dance, and when performing for Carnival, the dancers perform

for about 5 hours. They make their own costumes which are very heavy. Everybody who isn't participating in some way watches the Oruro carnival (google Oruro!) live on TV and has a nice BBQ at home; funny it was the same day as the Super Bowl! Some things are universal, I guess. Every city's Carnival is different. Next day, we went to a friend's party. Francisco hired a nice brass band (everyone knows all the words to the tunes; apparently not all G rated!). I loved the Santa Cruz music. Eventually, you end up at Mass, of course.

If I had done a bit more research, I would have gone in April or August. There is the International Festival of Baroque Music every even year in May, and the Bolivian festival of music and theater every year in August. This is about the Jesuit missions abandoned by the Europeans after only a century. The missions have been lovingly restored and are a popular tourist attraction. Thousands of pages of original music manuscripts have been brought back to life by dedicated musicologists and musicians from both South America and around the world.

<http://www.boliviabella.com/baroque-music-festival.html>

Could such a trip be more fabulous? Perhaps by being immediately near to natural reserves in the jungle that rank among the world's best for bird and butterfly species? Gorgeous rock formations and panoramas? Oh, and the people are really nice and food is wonderful and cheap. Getting into Bolivia is a bit of a hassle.

(I said the people are nice, not the tourist bureaucracy.)



I'm accepting "applications" from anyone who would like to be my travel buddy next trip, which I plan for the music festival in 2018. The family I visited is well equipped to help travelers at a fraction of tourist agency rates. They enjoy traveling and showing people the country, know the ins and outs of skipping the junk and seeing the special places, and speak excellent English.

Who would like to join me to go down there for one of the music festivals, hiking and birdwatching, and an amazing country that is a true adventure? This eastern side of the country is peaceful and friendly, far from the protests and politicking of the capital area La Paz. The other regions of Bolivia have completely different amazing sights and experiences.

## VdGSA Conclave 2016

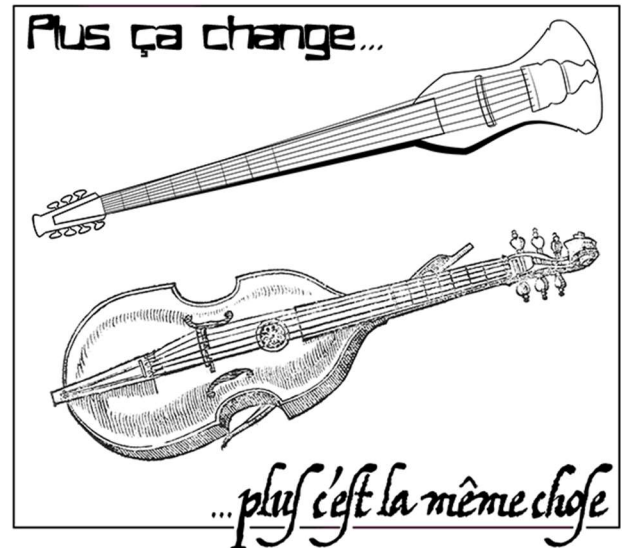
Michael King, with info from [vdgsa.org](http://vdgsa.org)

A reminder to our members that registration for the 54<sup>th</sup> VdGSA Conclave being held from July 24<sup>th</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup> at Pacific University in Forest Grove, OR is currently open! We are so very fortunate to have it happening on our coast this year! The faculty includes the following:

Joanna Blendulf, Tina Chancey,  
Sarah Cunningham, Wendy Gillespie,  
Janet Haas, Jane Hershey,  
Julie Jeffrey, Martha McGaughey, Sarah Mead,  
Catharina Meints, John Moran,  
Rosamund Morley, David Morris,  
Patricia Ann Neely, Elisabeth Reed,  
John Mark Rozendaal, Mary Springfels,  
Lisa Terry, Lynn Tetenbaum,  
Emily Walhout, Brent Wissick

As you can tell from the title the theme of this conclave is change and metamorphosis – and perhaps the fact that “the more things change, the more they remain the same”.

Late registration fees apply after May 15<sup>th</sup>, and registration formally closes on June 15<sup>th</sup>. To register, click on the Conclave link on the left of the [vdgsa.org](http://vdgsa.org) website, or call Kate Shuldiner at 847-894-7562.



Pacific  
Northwest  
Viol  
Workshop  
Lee  
Inman,  
Director



## Pacific Northwest Viols Workshop 2016

Michael King with info from [pnviols.org](http://pnviols.org)

Pacific Northwest Viols will hold its seventh weeklong residential viol workshop July 10–16, 2016, on the beautiful and comfortable campus of the University of Puget Sound, in Tacoma, Washington.

Music Director Lee Inman will host an outstanding faculty, offering a rich variety of classes. The theme of the week will be *The Versatile Viol* — the viol in its many guises and roles across both space and time.

Aaron Cain will return to conduct daily sessions of music for voices and viols, and special focus will be given mid-week on sight-reading skills and tips. Other class topics will include exploration of Madrigals and Madrigal Fantasies, Late Renaissance Mannerism, the vocabulary of the viol, dance music, fluency in clef-reading and transposition, and works by specific composers, such as Jenkins and Lawes. Do join us for this intensive and enjoyable week with some of the finest teachers of our beloved instrument.

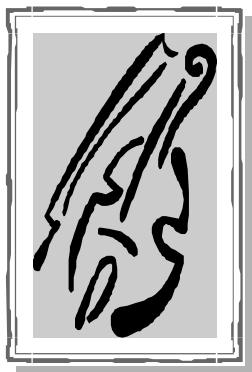
Faculty is scheduled to include Joanna Blendulf, Lee Inman, Lawrence Lipnik, Sarah Mead, Rosamund Morley, Mary Springfels, and Aaron Cain (the wonderful and very talented husband of Joanna Blendulf).

The registration form and deposit must be received by May 13, 2016, with the balance of fees due by June 10, 2016. However, since space is very limited we encourage you to register as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

You can find the registration form online at <http://pnviols.org/Workshops.html>.

**Pacific Northwest Viols**  
2328 233<sup>rd</sup> Ave. NE  
Sammamish, WA 98074

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



**Pacific Northwest Viols - 2015-2016 Season**

**PNV Play Day Dates:**

*\$20 Fee per participant  
A = 415*

- ❖ October 3, 2015: Nancy Zylstra
- ❖ November 21, 2015: Lee Inman
- ❖ January 23, 2016: Mary Springfels
- ❖ May 5, 2016: Joanna Blendulf
- ❖ **May 14, 2016: Wendy Gillespie**

***Play Day location is at our NEW  
venue:***

***Queen Anne Christian Church  
1316 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. W  
Seattle, Washington***

**Pacific Northwest Viols, Board Members (2015-2016)**

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ❖ Lee Inman, President             | ❖ Chris Briden, Outreach   |
| ❖ Jon Brenner, Secretary, Programs | ❖ Michael King, Communications & Member At Large                 |
| ❖ Bill Warren, Venue Coordinator   | ❖ Vicki Hoffman, Programs  |
| ❖ Michael LaGaly, Treasurer        | ❖ Olga Hauptman, Instrument Rental & Membership Roster Custodian |
| ❖ Janet Slack, Member at Large     |  |

***Find Pacific Northwest Viols on the web at: <http://www.pnviols.org> and on Facebook***

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

***Email: [miking@microsoft.com](mailto:miking@microsoft.com)***