

# THE SOUNDPOST

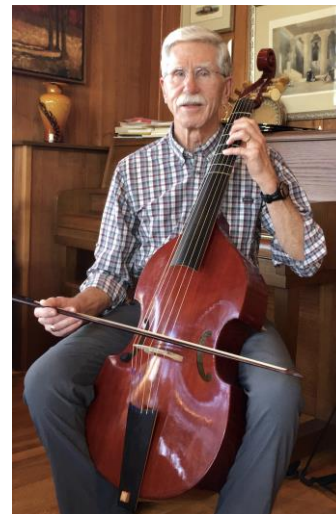
Newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Viols – A chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America  
On the web: WWW.PNVIOLS.ORG

## The President's Message

*Bill Warren*

Wow, what a wild wet cold spring! This has resulted in several slides on steep slopes close to our house that have temporarily blocked the Burke-Gilman trail. I am looking forward to a break in the weather coming up with some warmer temperatures and sun! I just returned from two weeks of biking and hiking in Tucson with 80-degree weather and lots of sun, so our weather this past week was quite a change.

Another thing we have to look forward to is our last Play Day of the year on Saturday, May 5th with Mary Springfels. Mary returns for the second half of the VdGSA-sponsored circuit rider program, the first being our January Play Day. Mary plans to be here the day before Play Day for lessons and the day after for small group classes on selected topics. Be thinking about what topic(s) would be of interest to you and communicate your ideas to Vicki Hoffman.



I will be asking for your thoughts about the circuit rider program at our annual meeting that will occur just after Mary's morning session and before lunch, so come prepared to express your opinions as we think about the Play Day programs for next year. Not only does the circuit rider program pay for the airfare for our presenter, allowing us to bring presenters from distant cities, it has also ensured that we have that person for an extra day or two for private and group lessons. I hope that many of you have been able to take advantage of that opportunity. We plan to continue this concept of expanding all our Play Days to include an extra day with the presenter to offer lessons. It can be especially beneficial for your consort to get guidance in preparing a musical selection for the QACC performance at their worship service as payback for our use of their facility for our Play Days.

### Play Day Schedule

- 9:30 am - Check in, sign up for consorts, tune
- 10:00 am - Grand Consort Presentation
- 11:45am – Annual Membership Meeting
- 12:30 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 5th: Mary Springfels**

**Play Day Location**

**Queen Anne Christian Church**

1316 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. W  
Seattle, WA 98119

At our annual meeting (which we'll hold at our May 5<sup>th</sup> Play Day) we will have reports from all the PNV Board committees. We will also be electing new board members to replace the three who are retiring after many years of service—Lee Inman, Olga Hauptman, and Chris Briden. I would like to thank them for their many years of invaluable service on the PNV Board. The continued vitality and success of PNV depends on volunteer board members such as these

three. I encourage you to volunteer your services in this capacity as we look to replace these outgoing board members. Contact me or any of the other board members to volunteer for this opportunity to serve.

I hope to see all of you Saturday May 5!

Bill Warren  
President, PNV

## Mary Springfels leads Play Day – Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>

*Michael King, Biography from <https://www.folger.edu/cast/mary-springfels>*

Mary Springfels is the founder and former director of the Newberry Consort. A veteran of the early music movement in America, she has performed and recorded extensively with such ensembles as the New York Pro Musica, the Waverly Consort, Concert Royal, Sequentia, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, Musica Sacra, the Marlborough Festival, the New York City Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater, where she served as an artistic advisor. She is much in demand as a teacher and player in summer festivals throughout the US, among them the San Francisco and Amherst early music festivals, the Conclave of the Viola da Gamba Society of America, the Pinewoods Early Music Week, and the Texas Toot. She has recently performed with the Sonoma Bach Festival, the Arizona Bach Festival, the Dallas Bach Festival, and Ars Lyrica of Houston.



Mary's Saturday morning presentation will focus on Tudor motets by composers such as Byrd, Cornish, and Plummer. We will be forwarding music to members for review prior to the Play Day!

## PNV Circuit Rider Lessons with Mary Springfels

*Vicki Hoffman*

Mary, as our Circuit Rider teacher this year, will be offering individual lessons, consort coaching, and a series of classes on Friday, May 4 and Sunday, May 6 at the home of Bill Warren. The individual lessons and pre-formed consort coaching will be scheduled on May 4.

On Sunday, May 6, Mary is offering three classes, similar to the types of classes offered at a typical viol workshop. The three classes are: Treble Technique Class with focus on left hand stretching and shifting; a Rhythm/Bowing Class titled "Polyphonic Bowing" with focus on consort playing techniques; and a Bass Technique Class with focus on string crossings and consort playing. The Treble Technique class is scheduled from 10:30 - 12:00; the Polyphonic Bowing class will be held from 1:00 - 2:30; and the Bass Technique Class will run from 3:00 - 4:30.

Because the lessons, consort coaching, and classes are being provided through the Circuit Rider program, the total cost for each lesson or class is \$50.00 per hour, regardless of the number of students in a consort or class. This is an opportunity you do not want to miss. You may sign up for as many lessons, consort coaching, and classes as you wish. To schedule May 4 lessons and to sign up for the May 6 classes, please contact Vicki Hoffman no later than Monday, April 30 at: mikeandvicki@q.com. For lessons on Friday, May 4, please indicate what time(s) of day will work for you.

## Report from March 3<sup>rd</sup> Play Day with Sarah Mead

Toni Seales

We had the pleasure of Sarah Mead as our presenter this last playday, despite stormy travel issues on her part! Turnout was a nice full room, with a couple of our Canadian friends and others from afar. I enjoyed having the music provided ahead of time via e-mail, even though I didn't have time to play much of it (less suspense for a rusty player!).

Most of the morning was spent on Psalm settings with the theme being "Singing with your Bow", as the voice is the ultimate instrument and we tried to sound like it with its consonants and vowels, accents, and rhetorical devices.

We started with *Maria wallt zum Heiligtum* by Johann Eccard, 1553-1611. Of course, it had lots of hefty German consonants to bow! We then worked on *Psaume 119* by Paschal d'Estocart, 1539-1584+. This French piece was completely different in style of playing with French words, different accents and elisions for bowing challenges.

Next, we played an old friend -- a dose of Byrd's *Blessed is he that fears the Lord*, Psalm 112. Originally this piece only had one vocal line--lousy for marketing by Byrd's publishing house--so the text was put under the other parts, making for some repeated parts on other lines.

Last, we got back to the Continent with two Italian sonnets, *XXI Quando quell'empio* and *XXII Ond'ei cadde nel dolce (secunda parte)* by Pietro Vinci, 1525-1584. Lots of strong and weak syllables!

During the first coached session, I was able to spend more time working on the Vinci. Since these pieces are short and we all got scores, I look forward to revisiting some of them in an uncoached session or outside a play day. A fun and informative time was had by all, and we hope to have Sarah back again soon!



## Reflections on our November 4<sup>th</sup> Play Day with David Morris

*Olga Hauptman*

David Morris is a highly respected performer and teacher in our community and in the wide world beyond us! He is also known for his imagination and for his articulate sense of humor. So, I was a little disappointed in the turnout on November 4<sup>th</sup>! Perhaps some were afraid of the music he planned to teach, by Carl Nielsen (1865-1931), from his 29 Little Preludes, Op.51, CNW 96, originally written for organ, and transcribed for viol quartet by Peter Ballinger. This music may have been in a language unfamiliar to us, and a little mystifying to read one part at home in preparation for the lesson. But when we put all the parts together, and with some encouraging conducting from David, it was much easier than expected, quite accessible and very lovely. Another pleasant surprise of the day was seeing and hearing David's lirone which he'd brought to show us its remarkable sound and capabilities! You never know what you're going to miss!

## Treble Viol for Sale

*Helen Mater*

Treble Viol for Sale. Asking \$900. Built in 1978 by Larry Higgins of Higgins & Sons, San Francisco. Includes handmade cow hide case.

Contact:

Helen Van Mater

206 979-1225

[vanmaterh@icloud.com](mailto:vanmaterh@icloud.com).



## **PNV March 4<sup>th</sup> Performance at Queen Anne Christian Church**

*Olga Hauptman*

PNV continues to honor its commitment to contribute live music to Queen Anne Christian Church as an expression of the chapter's gratitude for the generous use of the church for our Play Days. Generally, we have arranged for performances to occur the day after each Play Day. On March 4, the congregation heard a 3-part consort consisting of Anne Dennis, Toni Seales, and Vicki Hoffman. I asked the players how the performance went, and below are excerpts from their responses.

From Anne:

"It was a delight, from working it up, to the coaching, to the performance, and the response from audience, a couple of whom seemed sincerely moved by the piece we played... And it was really fun. I hope we can do that again some time."

From Toni:

"Everyone was sooo nice, how could one not like it? I really appreciated the motivation to work on a piece; Sarah Meade was very helpful, and playing with Vicki and Anne is always a delight. We'll start playing together a little more often and will be ready to do our part next year ..."

From Vicki:

"We had excellent coaching from Sarah during the play day on the Dufay pieces we had chosen to play. On the whole, the music went quite well on Sunday, we had fun playing, and the congregation seemed very appreciative. There is something about the sound of that very early music that seemed just right for the "reflection" time. It truly was our pleasure...Yes, we'd do it again."

From Olga:

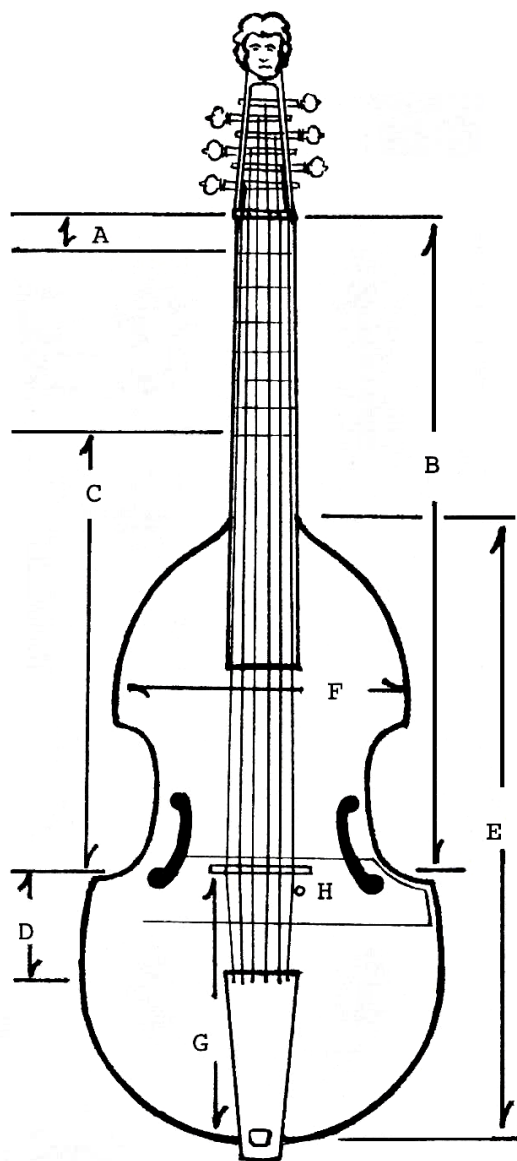
One of the benefits of playing for QACC is a guaranteed coaching session on the Play Day before the service. Vicki told me that the half-hour Sarah coached the trio had a major impact on the next day's performance. Five minutes of music is all that need be prepared, and almost any Sunday is possible, though it is very nice to get that coaching the day before. The Church has expressed real enthusiasm for our music, so I hope members won't be shy about letting me ([olga415@comcast.net](mailto:olga415@comcast.net)) know when they would like to play there!

Thank you, Anne, Toni, and Vicki!

## The Viol Curmudgeon: Aspects of Classical 17<sup>th</sup> Century English Bass Viol Proportions

Bill Monical, courtesy of Cascadia Viols

*Editor's Note: Remember, Bill invites you to submit any questions that come to mind; please send them to Cascadia Viols newsletter editor, Karen Bartlett, at [dagamba@ucsbalum.net](mailto:dagamba@ucsbalum.net).*



Basic instrument proportions of construction combined with a practical vibrating string length provide a wealth of interpretive information. This data can be used to influence playability, sound adjustment, response, and improvements to existing instruments, and also to inform the design of new viols.

**Fret Location:** The location of each fret is calculated from a ratio of 1:18. So 1/18th of the open string length (B) will locate the first fret (A), and 1/18th of the string length from the 1st fret will be placement for the 2nd, etc. Distance from the 7th fret to bridge is found by dividing the vibrating string length (B) by 1.488 for placement (C).

**Bridge Location:** Instrument outline will often indicate bridge placement, as the maximum width of the upper bouts (F) is frequently close to or identical to the distance from bridge to bottom of the instrument (G). An original soundpost bar\* (H) is usually centered on the soundpost from which bridge placement can also be determined.

**Tailpiece Length:** String length behind the bridge (D)—measured from the back of the bridge to the front of the tailpiece hole—is critical to sound quality and response under the bow.

Over time, this string length has undergone changes, probably caused by improvements in string technology, and has evolved so that it uses the same relationship universally found in the modern violin

family: by dividing the string length (B) by 6, the musical pitch will be 2 octaves and a perfect fifth above the open string.

**Proportion of String to Body Length:** In most viols of classical proportions, the vibrating string length (B) is roughly equal to or at most 1 or 2 centimeters longer than the body length (E). In many instruments the string length generally will not exceed 70cm (27 ½ inches), as many

musicians find a string length much over 70cm to be awkward for facility in performance of the solo literature with an extended stretch of the left hand. However, for execution of single line continuo, longer string lengths can be negotiated, which suggests clues to performance practice on instruments depicted in iconography with unusually long necks.

While these relationships are more often found in period English bass viols, the elements of fret location, vibrating string length, and tailpiece length combined with accurate string gauge choices and soundpost adjustments can immensely improve instrument performance for all members of the viol family.

The Viol Curmudgeon  
Bill Monical

*Editor's Note: From Bill -- the soundpost bar is a thin, broad reinforcing plate made of spruce; if you look through the soundholes of your instrument, you will see this plate glued on the back of the instrument between the lower corner blocks. It has two functions: 1) it distributes string vibrations from the table through the soundpost to the back, which, like the table, is also a resonating plate for sound amplification; 2) it also reinforces the very thin, flat back that would otherwise crack from string pressure transmitted by the soundpost.*

## **The Viol Curmudgeon wants your questions!**

*Jeanne Collins, Cascadia Viols Newsletter Editor with Michael King*

Although Bill Monical will no longer be attending workshops, he says he would be delighted to help Cascadia Viols in any way he can – and that includes answering your questions or clarifying anything that arises at workshops. Of course, it would be of benefit to everyone to share his sage advice and encyclopedic knowledge via the newsletter, so please send any questions or topics of interest you have to Karen Bartlett, newsletter editor, [dagamba@ucsbalum.net](mailto:dagamba@ucsbalum.net), and she will make sure Bill gets them.

We are so very fortunate to have Bill in our midst, and eager to contribute to our society; We have heard from other organizations around the country how envious they are that Cascadia Viols has Bill as a local resource, so please take advantage of this opportunity! If he does not hear from us, we will not hear from him; he would really like to receive specific questions from us in order to know what we are interested in.

*[Editor's Note: We are INDEED fortunate to have Bill in the area and to benefit from his Viol Curmudgeon information and advice! Let's let Bill know how thankful we are for him and keep him fed with great questions about the instruments that viols that we love!]*

## **PNV Member Spotlight: Janey Bennett, Member Since 2015**

*Olga Hauptman*

Janey was a 4th grade student when she took up the cello. She continued playing for four years, quit and then, 50 years later, took it up again! She became a student of Martin Bonham, who inspired her to take up the baroque cello, and who further encouraged her to study the bass viol. Originally from San Diego, Janey earned a BA in Theater Arts with a minor in Folklore and Classics at UCLA. In the following years she was married and adopted two children. During this time she was also training and showing horses in 3-Day Eventing and Dressage.

Following seventeen years of domesticity, Janey had all sorts of adventures. She went back to school to study architecture and got an MA degree in architecture history. Her thesis on the work of Finnish architect Erik Bryggman led to further writing on Finnish architecture, a Fulbright Grant, and travels to Finland for extensive study and writing in the world of architecture there.

In the late 1980s, she formed a landscape design company, WATER-LESS GARDENS, in Carmel, California, specializing in gardens of sculpted dry-stream beds with spot-irrigated minimal plantings. Her interest in landscape design led her to travel to Brazil in 1993 to meet with Roberto Burle-Marx, whose brilliant design work she still admires. She taught English and literacy for five winters to Buddhist nuns in northern Thailand! While there, she wrote an award-winning novel, THE PALE SURFACE OF THINGS, set on the Greek island of Crete.

In 1993 she wrote an article about the architect Mark Mills, which led, 14 years later, to a book, THE FANTASTIC SEASHELL OF THE MIND: THE ARCHITECTURE OF MARK MILLS, published last October by ORO Editions. The book has just won an Independent Publisher Book Award for Architecture.

Janey now lives in Bellingham, travels to Victoria for lessons with Martin, and is going soon to attend Denman Baroque, a 9-day workshop with vocalists and instrumentalists leading to a production of Monteverde's *L'Orfeo*. She has joined the board of Bellingham Music Club and is actively programming their upcoming season. She has introduced Early Music into their schedule and intends to continue to program at least one Early Music program in future seasons. She plays cello in the Bayshore Symphony, a community orchestra in Mount Vernon, and has been seen playing Baroque music on cello with organist Barbara King at the United Methodist Church in Anacortes.



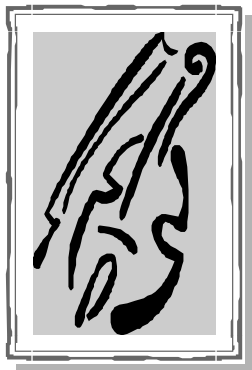
## **Need some viol adjustments and will be at Play Day or the Concert Rider Session?**

*Linda Shortridge*

Linda Shortridge, both a PNV member and local luthier, will be attending our Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> Play Day as well as the Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup> workshop sessions. She will be available to take on any viol adjustments you might need. Feel free to reach out to Linda at 360-328-8881 or to e-mail her at [lindashortridge@aol.com](mailto:lindashortridge@aol.com).

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

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



### **Pacific Northwest Viols – 2017-2018 Season**

**PNV Play Day Dates (Saturdays):**

- ❖ September 23, 2017: Lee Inman
- ❖ November 4, 2017: David Morris
- ❖ January 13, 2018: Mary Springfels
- ❖ March 3, 2018: Sarah Mead
- ❖ **May 5, 2018: Mary Springfels**

*\$20 Fee per participant*  
*A = 415*

***Play Day location:***

***Queen Anne Christian Church***

*1316 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. W  
Seattle, WA 98119*

### **Pacific Northwest Viols, Board Members (2017-2018)**

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

**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 scribbblings are all gladly received, as well.

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