

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

We are definitely into the fall weather in the Pacific Northwest with the return of our rain, wind, and gray skies, which promotes indoor activities like playing the viol. Hopefully all of you have managed to form or join an ensemble of other viol players who get together regularly to play the wonderful music from the early music period that is so fitting for viol ensembles. Play Days are a good opportunity to network with other viol players and arrange to get together to play.

For our next Play Day Saturday November 10 our presenter Jonathan Oddie is going to have us “wresting”, “turning”, and “carrying on” with the fantasias of Coprario and Gibbons as he helps us understand how they composed these works. See more information about Jonathan later in the newsletter. We are in for a very interesting morning session exploring the fantasias of these composers, so be sure to come.

Several of us including Nancy Wright, Ellen Seibert, Mary Ann Hagan, and Linda Shortridge attended the four-day VdGS Southern Arizona workshop at Biosphere 2 this past weekend. Biosphere 2 is a great venue for this type of workshop and is located close to Tucson. It is about 1000 feet higher in elevation, so it is considerably cooler than in Tucson, which made for ideal playing conditions. See the review(s) of the workshop in this newsletter, which hopefully will encourage you to put this workshop on your to-do list for next October.

Our program chair Vicki Hoffman has now finalized the presenters for the remaining Play Days for this season. Sarah Mead will be our presenter for January and March, and she will be available for lessons/classes the day before and possibly the day after Play Day. Caroline Nicolas will be our presenter in May. Caroline was featured in the



Play Day Schedule

- 9:30 am - Check in, sign up for consorts, tune
- 10:00 am - Grand Consort Presentation
- 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, November 10th: Jonathan Oddie

Play Day Location
Queen Anne Christian Church

1316 3rd Ave. W
Seattle, WA 98119

September Soundpost newsletter, and we are pleased to welcome her to Seattle. She is a professional baroque cellist and viola da gambist and is available for lessons—a great opportunity for all of us! Feel free to contact her if you are interested.

I hope that all of you will be able to make it to Play Day on Saturday, November 10. I think we are in for a very interesting session!

Bill Warren
President, PNV

Jonathan Oddie and “The Art and Invention” of the Fantasia

Jonathan Oddie

About the Play Day:

Thomas Morley famously described the fantasia as a type of piece in which the composer takes a "point" -- a theme or subject -- and "wrests and turns it as he list, making either much or little of it according as shall seem best in his own conceit". Almost 50 years later, Christopher Simpson expressed the same idea when he wrote that the fantasy composer should employ "all his Art and Invention solely about the bringing in and carrying on of Fuges".

For our November 10th Play Day, we will explore the great variety of ways in which 17th-century composers of consort music "wrested", "turned" and "carried on" their fugues. Our starting point will be the work of John Coprario, one of the few English composers of this period who left a detailed and practical guide to fantasia-style composition in four parts. Coprario's manuscript "Rules how to Compose" concludes with a series of blueprints for writing a point of imitation: simplified examples of the same formal plans he uses most frequently in his four-part consort fantasias.

After playing through some of Coprario's examples, we'll see how they can help us understand his compositions by working through one three-part and one four-part fantasia. We'll then move on to the music of Orlando Gibbons -- Coprario's colleague in the private musical establishment of Prince Charles -- and see how Gibbons's three-part fantasias reveal a very different approach to imitative composition. My hope is that analysing and working on these pieces together will allow us to appreciate more of the "art and invention" even in well-known pieces like the Gibbons fantasies, while also revealing that there is more to Coprario's less-celebrated music than immediately meets the ear.

About Jonathan:

Harpsichordist and musicologist Jonathan Oddie studied piano and harpsichord performance at Indiana University, where his teachers included Elisabeth Wright, Jean-Louis Haguener and Edmund Battersby. He also holds a doctorate in musicology from the University of Oxford, where he studied under Laurence Dreyfus while researching the instrumental music of Orlando Gibbons and its relationship to seventeenth-century theories of composition. Since moving to Seattle in 2014, he has appeared as a featured



soloist with the Saratoga Orchestra and at the Whidbey Island Music Festival, and has played continuo for ensembles including the Seattle Symphony, Pacific MusicWorks, Philharmonia Northwest, and the North Corner Chamber Orchestra, as well as numerous chamber ensembles. He has published articles and reviews in the journals *Early Music* and *Historical Performance*, and is the recipient of awards including a Performer's Certificate from Indiana University and a Frank Huntington Beebe Fellowship.

Help us fill our obligation to QACC – sign up to play for a service!

Toni Seales

Play with friends on occasion? Please consider helping us fulfill our obligation to the church for using their space for our Play Days. You only need to prepare a single piece, about 3 minutes in length, and the congregants are always very appreciative!

We need people to play on the following dates: Sunday, January 27, 2019, Sunday, March 17, 2019, and Sunday, May 12, 2019. As an incentive, you get coaching on your piece during the Play Day the day before! Contact Toni Seales, antonia509@gmail.com, or let any board member know if you have questions or would like to play!

Report on the Violsphere Workshop

Nancy Wright

Got the October blues? Tired of grey skies? Next year, consider going to the 4 1/2-day "Violsphere" workshop sponsored by the Viola da Gamba Society of Southern Arizona. It's located at the University of Arizona managed "Biosphere" conference center near Oracle, about 30 miles from Tucson. In addition to the scenery, sunshine, and opportunity to visit the 'Biosphere 2' facility, you will enjoy comfortable "casita" rooms, catered meals (nothing fancy - but filling), and small classes (max of 6) taught by an outstanding faculty.



This year four people from Seattle attended - Bill Warren, Ellen Siebert, Mary Ann Hagan, and me. The Tucson people kindly loaned tenor and bass instruments. The instructors included Mary Springfels (musical director), Larry Lipnik, David Morris, Sarah Mead, and Sarah Walder. Both students and faculty were reshuffled for the daily classes and the evening activities. Of course, there was a wonderful faculty concert as well. We were challenged by composers familiar and unfamiliar (Byrd, Jenkins, Encina, la Rue, Compere, Arcadelt, etc). I even participated in evening ensembles with an organ (played by Mary Ann to accompany music of Peerson) and a singer (Gibbons madrigals).

A highlight of the closing group session was playing a beautiful setting of three Shakespeare sonnets by Peter Siebert, directed by Larry Lipnik, and sung by David Morris. If you can arrange to stay a couple of extra days, there is plenty to do in the Tucson area - hiking, biking, museums, parks, and beautiful desert scenery.

Concert Report: Music for “The Althorp Virtuosi” by the Luchkow-Jarvis-Stadlen Trio

Janey Bennett

On October 20, at the chapel in Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria (BC), I saw a stunning performance of music composed in the 18th century for The Althorp Virtuosi, by the Luchkow-Jarvis-Stadlen Trio, a freshly-formed trio of Violin, Fortepiano, and Viola da Gamba players.

This was not (Baroque) Early Music, but music from Mozart’s time, composed and performed for the Spencer family (Princess Di’s family) in Althorp, their stately home. Michael Jarvis, *fortepiano*, and Paul Luchkow, *violin*, are well known to audiences in British Columbia. They have played beautifully together for some time, (hear their CD of the Michel Corrette Sonatas for violin and harpsichord, Opus 25, Marquis MAR81475). The addition of viol player, Sam Stadlen, brings a complexity of sound that is stunning. Rare ensemble playing, this is! Meet the Luchkow-Jarvis-Stadlen Trio and keep your eye on them!

They programmed two of the three Opus 30 sonatas by Tommaso Giordani, which were composed for and dedicated to Lady Lavinia Spencer of Althorp in 1782.

This is music of its own tradition, a time of experimenting with instruments and ideas looking both forward and back. The fortepiano was a new development and the gamba was a revival from the recent past. The combination of old and new in this music for what must have been an intelligent audience created an intense musical experience for this present-day audience!

The Luchkow-Jarvis-Stadlen Trio is recording all three Giordani sonatas over the next few weeks and will release a CD of them on Marquis Classics in the spring of 2019. Watch for it!

A Review of our September 29th Play Day with Lee Inman

Abbie Crane

At the PNV Play Day on September 29th, Lee Inman presented a workshop called “Overthinking the Bow.” In the next hour and a half, we spent time thinking deeply about using the bow to make our playing more interesting, musical, and satisfying.

Lee began by asking us, “What are the things you need to play the viol?” The answer, of course, is that three things are required: a left hand, a right hand, and a brain. The left hand is the “engineer”, and it needs to be precise and accurate in engaging the string. The right hand is the “poet”—whose job is to express the emotional content of the note, with nuance, details, and clarity. Lee quoted Jean Baptiste Forqueray, who said the bow “should express all the passions; it is the bow that stirs the soul: finally, it is the bow that gives the character of all types of music.”

As an opening exercise, Lee asked us to play a 2-octave scale. Lee then said that we had probably all used our “go-to” bow stroke—the one that we use often for warming up, sight-reading, and scales. This “plain vanilla” bow stroke is one that we worked hard to attain as beginners, and we are comfortable with it. However, Lee stated that we overuse this stroke for expediency’s sake. If we would consider, in advance, different ways to make a bow stroke, we would enhance the musicality of the piece we’re playing.

He then asked us to play the scale again, this time planning what kind of stroke we would use in advance. Perhaps we would start a note differently or decide how long we would make the notes. I noticed that the scale did sound much better this time!

Lee then helped us think about the many dimensions of a bow stroke. He called them “decision points we have at our disposal.” First and foremost, he said, never draw the bow without preparation. Determine in advance the character of the sound you want to make, by first analyzing the piece from a both stylistic and technical perspectives. These will include attack, duration, shape, and finish of the bow stroke.

Next, Lee asked us to consider the bow angle. Is the bow at a right angle to the strings? Is the frog slightly angled to the floor? How much bow hair is engaged? Is the bow moving in an arc over the strings? Another important consideration is the proximity to the bridge. The books often say the bow should be 2-3” from the strings, but Lee said that is useless advice. Listen to the sound and decide. If you want a softer sound, the bow should be farther from the bridge. For a louder sound, it should be closer. He also reminded us to breathe, not bend over the instrument, and sit up while playing.

Another choice to make is the amount of bow to use—the frog, mid, tip, or whole bow. Will we use the whole bow, or tiny slices of the bow? Normally, we use about 40% of the bow. How much bow pressure will we use? Will it be light and floating, or really “into” the string? Remember to balance the variables of bow pressure with bow speed, using more pressure if it’s a fast bow stroke. Of course, each string has such different qualities that we must adapt the amount of pressure for each string.

Bow direction is a decision that trips up a lot of people. Once again, we were reminded that you may base that decision on the sound you want to get, as there is no hard and fast rule about it. He suggested that if you’re having issues with a note or group of notes, try adapting the bow direction. Consider that the bow is lighter at the tip and heavier at the hand end when making decisions about bow direction.

We now proceeded to apply these principles to playing some “Fantasia” pieces, which Lee had brought for us to play. Since I am relatively new to the viol, I was very glad that Bill Warren had sent the pieces out ahead of time so that I could prepare a little in advance.

The first piece we played was “Ein Frolich Wesenth” by Heinrich Isaac (1450-1517). In the bass part, there were many very long notes, so we shaped the notes as we went along. By playing through the piece first with our “go-to” bow stroke, then playing it again after choosing bow options, we could hear an improvement in the piece.

The next “Fantasia” we played together was by Henry Loosemore (1600-1670). Again, the bass part had long notes that we worked on shaping, and sometimes starting with a pull stroke made shaping the notes easier.

The last piece was “Fantasia” by Robert Chetwood. This was a sectional piece, with a calm part and a speedy part, so we worked on bow techniques to show the difference. There were chromatics in this piece, and Lee suggested using the bow to add some “spikiness” to those

notes by using very short, snappy bow strokes. This made for a more interesting musical effect than a bland bow stroke did.

I enjoyed this presentation very much. It was so helpful to try the options for bow use, in a group, while playing the music Lee had chosen for us.

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.



(More) Viols for Sale!

Toni Seales

Student model, John Pringle treble with bow and Pegheds, \$1000.

Chinese-made, bass viol from Bill Lazar. \$1800. Bass viol bow, \$1200.

Contact Toni Seales

360-633-9929, antonia509@gmail.com

Treble Viol for Sale

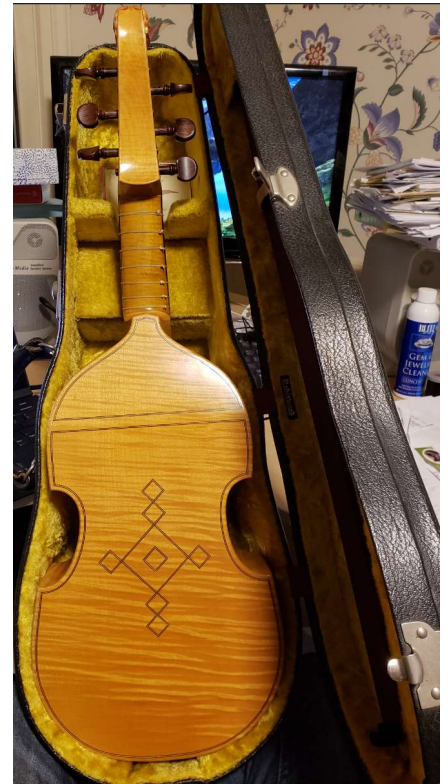
Michael King

Ronald Prentice, 1972, London.
Includes original Robinwood hard
case. No bow.

\$5000 OBO

Contact:

Michael King, 425-269-8219,
miking@microsoft.com



Be sure to renew your Pacific Northwest Viols Membership

Michael King

Attached is a membership form that you can use to renew your membership if you haven't already done so! Thank you very much for being a part of PNV!

Pacific Northwest Viols

Membership Form

Yes! I want to be a member of Pacific Northwest Viols!

As a member you'll receive the newsletter by e-mail, have library privileges, have a vote at business meetings, be eligible to join the PNV Board, and have the satisfaction of supporting viol playing in the Pacific Northwest.

Membership period is for one year, from July 1 – June 30.

I am (check one):

- Renewing my membership
- Joining as a new member
- Not interested in membership at this time but would like to subscribe to the *Soundpost* newsletter.

Please enter your contact information below

Renewing members: If your address, phone and email information are unchanged, please enter only your name.

Name: _____ (as you would like to include it in the member list)

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

How did you learn about PNV? _____

PNV sends an electronic copy of the current membership to all members via e-mail.

Check this box if you do **NOT** wish PNV to share your information with other PNV members.

PNV occasionally shares information from our mailing list with various concert and workshop sponsoring organizations.

Check this box if you do **NOT** wish PNV to share your information outside the PNV membership.

I volunteer to help discharge PNV's residency obligation by participating in outreach performances scheduled by the chapter.

I would be interested in hosting a visiting (out-of-town) presenter.

Payments may be submitted either by check (**payable to "PNV"**) to the address listed below, or by cash or check to the PNV Treasurer at the Play Day registration desk. Please indicate your desired payment category below:

- \$20 for full annual membership (includes *Sound Post* subscription, which is delivered by e-mail)
- \$10 for full *student* annual membership (includes *Sound Post* subscription, which is delivered by e-mail)
- \$5 for *Sound Post* subscription only (*Canadians may remit in either US or Canadian funds.*)

I want to further support PNV, a non-profit [501(c)(3)] organization. I would like to make a tax-deductible donation in the amount of \$_____.

Thank you!

Please mail all checks (Payable to "PNV") to:

Janet Slack
6823 185th St. SW
Lynnwood, WA 98037

Pacific Northwest Viols
2328 233rd Ave. NE
Sammamish, WA 98074

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Pacific Northwest Viols – 2018-2019 Season

PNV Play Day Dates (Saturdays):

- ❖ September 29, 2018: Lee Inman
- ❖ **November 10, 2018: Jonathan Oddie**
- ❖ January 26, 2018: Sarah Mead
- ❖ March 16, 2018: Sarah Mead
- ❖ May 11, 2018: Caroline Nicolas

*\$20 Fee per participant
A = 415*

Play Day location:

***Queen Anne Christian
Church***
1316 3rd Ave. W
Seattle, WA 98119

Pacific Northwest Viols, Board Members (2018-2019)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
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| ❖ Michael LaGaly, Treasurer | ❖ Jon Brenner, Programs |
| ❖ Janet Slack, Membership Custodian | ❖ Toni Seals, QACC Coordinator |

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 scribbles are all gladly received, as well.

Email: miking@microsoft.com