

# The Soundpost

Newsletter of Pacific Northwest Viols—A chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America



Cornelis De Heem, *Vanitas Still-Life with Musical Instruments*

## 2020–2021 PNV PLAY DAYS

September 26, 2020 | Ros Morley  
 November 7, 2020 | Caroline Nicolas  
**January 16, 2021 | Arnie Tanimoto**  
 March 6, 2021 | Julie Elhard  
 May 1, 2021 | TBD

Free for members, \$10 for non-members  
 A = 415

Saturday Play Days will be held virtually  
 via Zoom for the 2020-2021 Season

## The President's Message

by **Bill Warren**

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our ability to get together in person. Therefore, our January 16th Play Day will be virtual once again. Access to our virtual Play Days is a continuing benefit of your membership at no additional cost, so be sure to take advantage of this opportunity.

Arnie Tanimoto will be our presenter for the January Play Day. Arnie is an excellent teacher, having trained at Oberlin Conservatory, the Eastman School of Music, The Juilliard School, and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. The music that Arnie is presenting will be sent out to you shortly. I am really looking forward to his session.

We will be using Zoom for the online session as we did for our September and November Play Days. Michael King will be providing instructions and technical support for getting online. He will send out a link for access to the Zoom session. We are encouraging everyone to get online at 9:30 a.m., 30 minutes before the start time of 10 a.m., in order to make sure everyone gets connected and also to have some chat time with other members.

The official VdGSA Circuit Rider program has been cancelled for the indefinite future because of the COVID pandemic. However, Ros Morley has agreed to be our unofficial Circuit Rider for 2021. Her online lessons will

alternate months with 2021 Play Days so that PNV has an activity every month January-June 2021. I hope that you will take advantage of the opportunity for continuity of lessons with Ros from now until June 2021. I have found that online lessons with her have worked really well. A notice to sign-up for online lessons with Ros for February will be sent out in a couple of weeks.

You may notice that we have a new format for the SoundPost newsletter, thanks to Jenny Wilkson, who is Communications Co-Chair with Michael King. Jenny has also created an event for our Play Days on the [PNV Facebook](#) page. Be sure to check it out. Also be sure to check out the [PNV website](#) where you will find links to viola da gamba sheet music and resources.

A reminder to send in your membership dues of \$20, which provides access to all of the virtual Play Day sessions for 2020-2021 as a benefit of membership during this COVID pandemic. A membership renewal form is attached to the end of this newsletter for your convenience. A reminder also that recordings of the music for our September and November Play Days were previously sent to you so that you can continue to practice that music using the music-minus-one format.

The PNViols Board has made a decision to offer a free viola da gamba lesson with our own Caroline Nicolas for new members. I hope you will encourage your friends to join and take advantage of this opportunity. Caroline is also available for private lessons for you. Contact her at [carolinenicolas35@gmail.com](mailto:carolinenicolas35@gmail.com) if you would like to schedule a lesson.

A vibrant and successful viola da gamba chapter depends on membership participation in our Play Days and also willingness to volunteer to be on the PNV Board. We are fortunate to have seven committed people serving right now, but we could use 2-3 more people to join us to help out. Contact me at [info@pnviols.org](mailto:info@pnviols.org) if you would be willing to join the board.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you online Saturday January 16 for our next virtual Play Day with Arnie Tanimoto.

**Bill Warren**

*President, Pacific Northwest Viols*



# Strengthening Your Inner Musician with Creative Practice

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by **Caroline Nicolas**

For November 7th's Play Day, I guided participants through various exercises that I thought would be helpful during pandemic practicing. As we all play alone, it is easy for bad habits and tension to creep up. We worked through all seven movements of William Byrd's *Ave Maris Stella*. I briefly spoke about William Byrd and his consort writing, and about the *Ave Maris Stella* theme. Then we dove right into playing!

Here is a list of exercises and ideas I shared during my Play Day, *Strengthening your Inner Musician with Creative Practice*. In this time of musical isolation, it's particularly important for us to take responsibility and actively seek out inspiration in the practice room. I shared exercises in the hopes of expanding the participants' musical "toolboxes".

## Stretches

I always begin my practice session with stretches. This not only warms up your muscles for playing, but most importantly, it assists in preventing injury. Hold all stretches for at least 30 seconds and then repeat on the opposite side.

**1. Arm stretch:** Start standing or sitting tall. Extend your one hand in front of you. Lift your fingertips up so that your palm is facing ahead. Pull your extended fingertips towards you using your opposite hand.



**2. Neck stretch:** Start standing, and place one hand on your lower back. Take the other hand and place that hand on the opposite

side of your head. Gently pull your head toward your shoulder, until you feel a stretch.

**3. Shoulder stretch:** Start standing. Grab one arm just above your elbow with the other hand. Bring your upper arm in towards your chest.

## Warmups

We warmed up by playing long tones on open strings. I added the element of having the participants do various arm motions with their left hands as we pushed and pulled our bows. Often, I see students tackle a “one-handed” problem without making the connection that you will eventually be using both hands when you play your pieces on the gamba. It doesn’t help to play beautiful open strings with your right hand if your left hand is in a tight fist while you play! Keep both hands relaxed!

## Exercises

**Noodles and trills:** I do this often, either by playing pieces I am learning in trills (i.e. trilling from note to note), or even simply trilling scales or simple melodies. It can be helpful to do this right after the bow hand warm-up (above), if you add it with the intention of maintaining a fluid bow stroke as you add the left hand.

**Bow aim:** We did various exercises that focused on consistently aiming the tip of the bow to hit the same spot as we did various bow strokes. You can even hold your left hand out (palm facing inwards), and “aim” your bow at one specific spot on your hand.

## Rhythm Exercise with Metronome:

I suggested working with the metronome in a variety of settings to work on steadying your inner pulse. For example, play the same piece three times, with the metronome going at:

- 120 to the quarter note
- 60 to the half note
- 30 to the whole note

**Bow setting:** We worked on consistently setting the bow on various parts of the bow (tip, middle and frog). Work on going up and down, from the lowest string to the highest string, then back down, working on gracefully setting your bow on the string without it bouncing. Eventually, work your way up to alternating strings and setting points.





## Join Us for our January 16th Play Day featuring Arnie Tanimoto

by **Arnie Tanimoto**

This Play Day will be divided into two parts: one on technique and the other on repertoire. In the first part we will work on a number of technical exercises to improve fluidity and control of both hands. In the second part we will conduct an in-depth exploration of one Abel's "Pembroke" sonatas for viol (treble, tenor, or bass!) and continuo. We will focus on phrasing, articulation, shaping, and style in both the solo and continuo parts.

Arnie Tanimoto is the Gold medalist of the 7th International Bach-Abel Competition, Equally at home on the viola da gamba and baroque cello and described by The New York Times as a “fine instrumental soloist” he regularly performs in venues across the United States, Canada, and Japan. The recipient of a 2017 Frank Huntington Beebe Fund Fellowship he has also performed and recorded with the Boston Early Music Festival Ensemble, the Smithsonian Consort of Viols, and ARTEK. As a teacher, Arnie serves on faculty at the Mountainside Baroque Summer Academy as well as maintaining a private studio. He holds degrees and certificates from Oberlin Conservatory, the Eastman School of Music, The Juilliard School, and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

# Online Play Days? Online Dues via PayPal now an option! (or continue to pay via check and snail mail)

by Michael LaGaly & Michael King

Since coronavirus protocols are going to prevent us from meeting in-person for at least the next few months, the board has decided to go to a virtual Play Day format. For these



online Play Days, we have decided that for paid members, attendance will be free-of-charge. Dues are, as last year, \$20.00. For those not wishing to pay membership dues, you are welcome to attend any of our Play Days for a \$10.00 guest fee.

We will be accepting dues via both PayPal and traditional check/membership form. For PayPal, please send the payment to our treasurer, Michael LaGaly, by doing the following:

1. Log into PayPal
2. Click on “Send”
3. Enter mlagaly@gmail.com
4. Enter the amount to be sent, such as \$20.00
5. Add a note for tracking purposes, such as “PNV 2020 Dues” or “PNV Play Day”
6. Click on Continue
7. When asked “What is this payment for,” click on “Sending to a friend”
8. Choose the method you will use to pay—note, there is no fee for using your linked bank account, but there are small fees for using credit cards.

If you would prefer to send your membership dues in via check and the mail, please use the attached membership form and submit to our membership coordinator, Amy Warren, at the address on the form. Looking forward to seeing you online at our next Play Day!

# Do you have a viol collecting dust?

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by **Michael King**

PNV currently has nearly our entire inventory of instruments out for rent! While this is outstanding, it means we may not have instruments for new renters!. If you have a spare viol or two that are collecting some dust, perhaps you could see them becoming a part of our rental instrument fleet – either on an individual case or a sustained basis? Options would include making your instrument available for a period of time for rental (loaning to PNV), permanently (donating instrument to PNV), or on an individual case basis (we've identified a particular need and you have an instrument that might be the right fit – say for an advanced student or someone needing to work on entrance to a conservatory program!).

Please reach out to our rental coordinator, Olga Hauptman at [rentals@pnviols.org](mailto:rentals@pnviols.org) and let her know if you can help!



# Always looking for Play Day Presenter Hosts

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by **Michael King**

We are hopeful that we may be able to conduct in-person Play Days in the not-too-distant future. We are still in need of volunteers to help host our Play Day presenters who visit us from out of town! This can be the full-service package including transportation to and from airport, meals, and even providing a space

for lessons, or a lightweight version such as providing a place to sleep and a ride to and from Play Day. Fairly typical is an arrival on a Thursday or Friday, with a Play Day on Saturday and a departure on Sunday or Monday. If you are in a position to be able to assist, please reach out to Michael King at [soundpost@pnviols.org](mailto:soundpost@pnviols.org) to discuss.

# PNV Classifieds

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## Bass Viol for Sale

Bass Viol for Sale by Larry Higgins of Higgins & Sons, San Francisco, 1975. Includes cloth gig bag.

Asking \$850.

Please contact:

Doug Knutson:  
(206) 527-1428  
[douknu@msn.com](mailto:douknu@msn.com)

Please let me know if you would like to place a classified ad for our membership. Viols and related instruments, bows, cases, etc. are always welcome. Feel free to contact me at [soundpost@pviols.org](mailto:soundpost@pviols.org), and include picture(s), description, price, and contact information for the ad, or a description of what you are looking to buy if you are in the market.





# Pacific Northwest Viols Membership Form

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

As a member you will 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.

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:

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 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 501c3 organization. I would like to make a tax-deductible donation in the amount of \$ .

Please mail all checks (Payable to "PNV") to:  
Amy Warren, 1851 S. Brandon Place, Seattle,  
WA 98108-2376. Thank you!

## Pacific Northwest Viols 2020–2021 Board

Bill Warren, President  
Chu-Lan Chiong, Secretary  
Michael LaGaly, Treasurer  
Amy Warren, Membership Coordinator & Librarian  
Caroline Nicolas, Beginner Coach & Play Day Presenter Coordinator  
Michael King & Jenny Wilkson, Communications  
TBD: Programs & Play Day Location Coordinator

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

[soundpost@pnviols.org](mailto:soundpost@pnviols.org)