

The Soundpost

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

2023–2024 PNV SEASON

Saturday, September 9 | Play Day #1 with Elisabeth Reed

October 20–22 | Circuit Rider #3 with Wendy Gillespie

Saturday, November 18 | Play Day #2 with Josh Lee

December 8–10 | Circuit Rider #4 with Wendy Gillespie

Saturday, January 13, 2024 | Play Day #3 with Mary Springfels

Saturday, March 9 or 16, 2024 | Play Day #4 with Erik Andersen (specific date TBA)

Saturday, May 11, 2024 | Play Day #5 with David Morris

Calendar subject to change.

All events take place at Maple Leaf Lutheran Church, 10032 31st Ave NE, Seattle 98125 unless otherwise noted.

Play Days consist of a morning session from 10am–12pm and afternoon breakout sessions from 1–4pm.

Play Day check in begins at 9:30am and the fee is \$25. A=415.

MUSIC LIBRARIES *for* PNV MEMBERS

[Physical Sheet Music Library](#) housed at Maple Leaf Lutheran Church | [Online Sheet Music](#)

The President's Message

by **Michael King**

Hello! If I am not mistaken, this is the first time in recent memory that we have not sent a SoundPost out before our season has started! We decided to postpone the release until we had made arrangements for all of our season's presenters. I am happy to announce that we do have a full slate of terrific presenters, as you can see from our schedule above.

We had a great first Play Day of the season with Elisabeth Reed, and were pleased to see so many of you (I believe there were about 15 of us), including three from Victoria, BC who made the trip down. We enjoyed a terrific session on how to play the viol comfortably—Elisabeth is a

skilled teacher of the Feldenkrais Method, and were introduced to Thomas Baeté’s “The Natural Violist” exercise book from which Elisabeth demonstrated techniques like using “sticky fingers” of the sticky tree frog, the “round fingers” of owl hour, and the pivoting of the tarantula dance! I’ve done a little write-up of the Play Day in this issue.

We enjoyed our 3rd Circuit Rider visit of 2023 with Wendy Gillespie from October 20th–22nd, with a number of members able to take advantage of her visit. Make sure to note Wendy’s 4th visit on your calendars: Friday, December 8th through Sunday, December 10th. I’ll send a SignUp Genius link out a few weeks prior. Note, this will be Wendy’s final visit of the 2023 Circuit Rider.

The board has decided that PNV is going to take a hiatus from the Circuit Rider program in 2024, but is open to resuming participation in the future if there is interest from our membership. There are a number of reasons for our decision, perhaps the largest being relatively low utilization by a very few members. Please reach out to us to let us know how the circuit rider program has benefited you, and what changes you might like to see to make the program more relevant for you going forward!

I am happy to announce that our next Play Day is on Saturday, November 18th with presenter Josh Lee, whom we have not had the pleasure of seeing in Seattle for several years—a Play Day in 2013 and at the Bastyr workshop in July 2014. Has it really been that long? We’re tickled pink to have Josh here with us again! His Play Day session is entitled “Strong, Weak, and the Art of the Bow Gesture”, and you can read a bit more about the Play Day (and Josh) below.

Best regards,

Michael King

President, Pacific Northwest Viol





Upcoming November 18 Play Day with Josh Lee

by **Michael King**

Josh's Play Day presentation is entitled, "Strong, Weak, and the Art of the Bow Gesture." Josh describes the session as follows:

One of the first things we learn as viol players is the idea of the strong and weak bow stroke, something most of us lose sight of as we advance in our playing. During our session I'll revisit this fundamental principle of the viol and expand upon it, discussing

the use of "bow gestures" and how this approach can elevate your bow technique, leading to better musical organization and expression. We will begin with some simple musical exercises before applying these skills in consort—no practice required!

Josh will be using some Tomkins and Gibbons to let us put our bowing skills to work. As always, we'll send music to members to review prior to the Play Day. Make sure to print out the parts you'll need and bring them with you.

Schedule for Saturday, November 18th at Maple Leaf Lutheran Church Sanctuary

- 9:30—Sign in and pay \$25 fee
- 10:00-12:00—Grand Consort
- 1:00-4:00—Group Consort Playing
- 4:00-4:15—Clean up

Josh Lee's viol playing has been called "a tour-de-force" (Vancouver Classical), and has garnered acclaim from audiences across five continents. Josh is sought after as a soloist and chamber artist, and has appeared with Portland Baroque Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Musica Pacifica, Orchester Wiener Akademie, Festival Casals, Les Délices, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Pacific Music Works, American Bach Soloists, Boston Early Music Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, Four Nations, TENET, and the Seattle Symphony. Praised as "a master of the score's wandering and acrobatic

itinerary” (Cleveland Plain Dealer), Josh’s performances have been heard on Performance Today, FluxFM, Harmonia, and Österreichischen Rundfunk, and RAI.

Outside of early music Josh works as an arranger and composer, as well as with veteran indie band Radical Face, playing viol, keyboards, and bass guitar. Their collaborations have been used in TV, film, and advertising, most recently featured in an international campaign by Google, and the season 8 finale of NBC’s “The Blacklist.” Josh calls San Francisco home.

September 9th’s Play Day with Elisabeth Reed

by **Michael King**

I can’t recall the last time we enjoyed Elisabeth’s presence here in Seattle—the last time I had the pleasure of working with her was at Conclave in Forest Grove in 2016. My, how time flies! In any case, it was wonderful to see her again and great to see so many of our members—including three who made the journey all the way from Victoria, BC!

Elisabeth is a skilled practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method®, and has her own practice called SoundBodies—working with musicians and groups to be in tune with their bodies and their instruments. Our Play Day started with something simple—making sure our chairs were at the right height so that our hips and knees could be inline. Elisabeth had us think about our skeletons—our upper torso, our hips and pelvis, our legs—and how these provide essential support for all that we do. When we sit, we should be centered on our sitz bones, with a long spine, and a little forward lean, maintaining a normal lumbar arch. We don’t want too much arch, as this leads to tight muscles and makes it difficult to rotate your torso. Basically, your abs and lumber muscles should feel as if they are at rest, with your spine holding you up—not your muscles. When our muscles have to act as bones they get tired!

Elisabeth noted that there is a common misperception that fine movement and sensation and awareness start at the periphery. She says the core body can be just as sensitive—but it just needs training. She noted that many of us lean in with our head and our eyes—but that it is



much better to start from the pelvis and sitz bones rather than moving your torso, shoulders and head. If you move from the hips the torso will follow naturally. Likewise, we can look around the room without having to turn our heads, but can rather do so from the sitz bones, sliding them forward / backward on opposite sides, again with the torso and head following.

When holding our instruments, we want the weight of our arms to power the instrument—helping pull the fingers into the fingerboard, to pull the bow into the strings, etc. The fingers, after all, are at the end of the arm and help us transfer this power—but aren't the source of it.

Elisabeth used a number of exercises from Thomas Baeté's "The Natural Violist" book of viol exercises. This is a lovely book with cleverly named exercises with equally clever illustrations. It is published by Edition Walhall of Germany, but is in English—and available from a number of early music sources like Boulder Early Music, Von Huene, and Honeysuckle Music.

Music for Maple Leaf Church Services

by [Abbie Crane](#)

As a way of showing our gratitude to Maple Leaf Lutheran Church for their hospitality in letting us use their facility for our Play Days, Pacific Northwest Viols has agreed to provide music for their church service five times through the year. This reciprocal arrangement is our way of thanking them and gives our members an opportunity to have an enjoyable way to share a 3–5 minute solo, duet, or consort piece with others. If you are working with a group on a piece or have a special piece that you'd be willing to share, please email me at bluecrane3@comcast.net.

Do you have a viol collecting dust?

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 collecting some dust, perhaps you could see them becoming a part of our rental instrument fleet. Options include making your instrument available for a period of time for rental (loaning to PNV), permanently donating it to PNV, or on a special basis (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 if you can help!



Circuit Rider with Wendy Gillespie

by [Michael King](#) and [Abbie Crane](#)

We have enjoyed 3 of 4 visits from Wendy, with our latest having happened October 20th-22nd. Our final visit of this rider will be held from Friday, December 8th to Sunday, December 10th, with a SignUp Genius to be sent to members about 2 weeks prior.

Wendy will offer a mix of private lessons and consort coaching, and we'll also plan to have a Play Along session with Wendy where we can explore some pieces from our library and benefit from her coaching and doubling!

Wendy Gillespie has been a string player since childhood and began playing the viola da gamba as an undergraduate. She has performed on five continents and is a founding member of Fretwork and a member of Phantasm. She was a faculty member of the Historical Performance Institute at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University, for 32 years. As our Circuit Rider teacher, she welcomes both advanced and beginner students with warmth and enthusiasm.

Abbie Crane shares the following about her experience working with Wendy:

This year, Chu-Lan and I have taken lessons from Wendy during each of her three visits, and we plan to take one more during her December visit. We focused our lessons on two duets by Michael East for two

bass viols. The duets provided the springboard for Wendy to help us with bow management, dynamics, fingerings, and other issues. She taught us a deceptively simple but very useful string-crossing exercise that I have incorporated into my daily practice warm-ups. I recommend taking advantage of the great opportunity to have a lesson with Wendy.

PNV Classifieds and Other Musings

by **Michael King**

Please let us know if you would like to place a classified ad for our membership. For sale and wanted ads for viols and related instruments, bows, cases, etc. are always welcome. Email soundpost@pnviols.org with picture(s), description, price, and contact information, or a description of what you are looking to buy.



For Sale: Lu-Mi Tenor Viol

made by Wang Zhi Ming in 2006
scroll pegbox, 22-inch scale
molded FRP hard case

Asking \$2250. Contact Doug Knutson at douknu@msn.com

Viol Lessons

Tess Roberts is offering absolute beginning to intermediate viol lessons in both group and private settings. She can be reached at tess.roberts.271@gmail.com

Seeking Play Day Presenter Hosts

If you are in a position to be able to assist presenters with rides, lesson space, and or a place to sleep, please reach out to Michael King at info@pnviols.org to discuss.



For Sale: Bow, fluted

formerly owned by Margriet Tindemanns
Likely Chinese manufacture
length overall: 29 inches
Asking \$200. Contact Doug Knutson at douknu@msn.com

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:

\$25 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 \$.

Mail checks (Payable to "PNV") to: Chu-Lan Chiong, 7714 16th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Or, contact Michael LaGaly at mlagaly@gmail.com for PayPal instructions.

Pacific Northwest Viols 2023–2024 Board

Michael King, President
Joan Roberts, Secretary
Michael LaGaly, Treasurer
Chu-Lan Chiong, Membership Coordinator
Jenny Wilkson & Michael King, Communications
Vacant, PNV Program Chair
Abbie Crane, Church Program Coordinator
Bill Warren & Lindsey Strand-Polyak, at large

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