

President's Message

Charlie Nagel

Welcome back! I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer. The VdGSA conclave at Franklin Pierce U. in Rindge, NH, was my main viol event. The gathering of the clan seemed somewhat more subdued than in years past, though the festivities did include a mock coronation of Wendy Gillespie as the new president of the organization.

2008-2009 Season

Play Day Dates and Presenters

- ❖ **October 4** - Shanon Zusman
- ❖ **November 22**– Rachel Mathews
- ❖ **January 17** – 1-Day Workshop, "Songs Without Words", with Margriet Tindemans and faculty
- ❖ **March 14** – TBA
- ❖ **May 16** – TBA

Play Day Schedule –

- ❖ 9:30 AM: Check in, signup for consorts, and tuning
- ❖ 10:00 AM: Grand Consort, Presentation
- ❖ 11:30 AM: **Lunch break**
- ❖ 1:00 PM: First session: Informal Consorts and technique class
- ❖ 2:30 PM: Second session: Informal consorts and a coached consort
- ❖ 4:00 PM: Cleanup

*\$15 Fee per participant
A = 415*

Play Day Location –

**Cathedral Place at St. James
(PNV customary Venue)**
803 Terry Avenue
Seattle, Washington

Parking available in O'Dea High School lot
(free)

And in the Parkade at Boren and Marion
Streets (\$)

For me, one of the high points (if you'll excuse the expression) was the discovery in Grace Feldman's treble technique class that it's possible to play the "c" above the top fret of the instrument and count on it being in tune!

Our season starts with a special treat, Shanon Zusman up from California to present the program. What he plans for the morning grand consort is an exploration of Italian madrigals that were favorites in their own time. His afternoon technique class will be based on revisiting the original tutors -- Ganassi, Ortiz, and Simpson -- with a fresh look at what sort of helpful suggestions might be gleaned from these writers. Classes that Shanon taught at the conclave using some of this material were hugely successful, and we are indeed fortunate to have him join us.

Your board wants to send a big "thank you" to all of the members who gave us such thoughtful replies to last spring's questionnaire. I think it was Newton who first formulated one of the great Laws of Nature: "For every Homily, there is an equal and opposite Proverb." In the case of PNV, on one hand we could say "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." On the other hand, conventional wisdom dictates "If you aren't moving forward, you're falling behind."

In the case of our play day format, there was overwhelming support for it to stay "as is" and at the same time there was a sense that perhaps some elements needed a second look. We decided to go with the idea of "moving forward" and modify some features of the afternoon schedule.

The first afternoon period, in addition to the usual informal uncoached consorts, will include an open-to-everyone "technique" class. What's changed is that there will be no extra charge for this, and we expect that it will appeal to both seasoned players and less experienced ones.

The second period will include the usual self-selected consorts plus a "coached consort", but what's new is that it will be open to up to 12 players, with doubling encouraged. Again, there won't be any added fee for the consort. Our intention was to provide an experience that's meaningful to members who have been playing the viol for a while and at the same time maintain our commitment to create an opportunity for relative newcomers to the instrument to feel comfortable playing in a consort setting. Frequently, seasoned participants in play days have enjoyed mentoring less confident ones by doubling their parts, and our thinking was that by structuring the coached consort this way, it would encourage the process even further.

Be sure to save the date of **January 17, 2009**, for a one day workshop directed by Margriet Tindemans. It will be held in the beautiful St. James Pastoral Care Center, intimate and filled with light, which was so popular when we had a play day there. Details will be announced later. Spending a day with friends immersed in music in a cozy setting will be a great way to restore ourselves after the hustle and bustle of the holidays.

See you in October!

Get Acquainted with Shanon Zusman

Shanon Zusman is a graduate of the Early Music Performance doctoral program at the USC Thornton School of Music, where he studied viola da gamba and violone with James Tyler. Shanon became interested in early music while doing independent study of the history of the double bass in Vienna on a Fulbright grant (1998-1999).

As a specialist in instrumental music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he has performed with *Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra*, *Camerata Pacifica Baroque*, *Los Angeles Bach Society*, *Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra*, San Diego's *Bach Collegium* and Seattle's *Benevolent Order for Music of the Baroque*.

In addition to his duties at the USC Thornton School, he is currently an Instructor of Viola da Gamba at Claremont Graduate University and serves as an Adjunct Professor at Santa Monica College, Pasadena City College, and El Camino College. Shanon was the Faculty Apprentice at the VdGSA Conclave in 2006 and has taught as a regular member of the Conclave faculty for the past two years.

Survey Results Summarized

Sharon Young

Twenty-five PNV members responded to last May's survey. While there are exceptions in most areas, overall we're happy with the status quo.

Most members like play day number and format as is, and have been happy with the mix of presenters. Workshops are popular, with high support for both one-day and week long.

The fee structure of low annual dues with pay per play day is preferred, many willing for each to be a little higher if necessary, including paying more at play days if necessary to support coaching. (This year we are trying something a little different with coaching and classes. See the "President's Message" in this newsletter.)

Many would like assistance in finding playing companions outside of play days, with nearly as many suggestions on how to accomplish this as there were respondents. The board would welcome one or two people to step forward to institute and manage this project.

About half responded to the library questions, with some interest in exploring a mail checkout system, little interest in managing.

For Sale in Seattle:

Bass Viola da Gamba made by **Ronald Prentiss** of London in 1973. It has a warm and lovely tone, and is made of beautiful light wood. Hard case included.

Asking \$5,000.00, OBO.

For further information, please contact Catherine Carey at [clausencarey @ gmail.com](mailto:clausencarey@gmail.com)

ANTIK to Debut in December

Lee Inman

Seattle's newest period ensemble, *Antik*, will perform two debut concerts in Seattle in December. *Antik* features gambists Margriet Tindemans, Ronnee Fullerton, and Lee Inman.

The debut performances at Queen Anne Christian Church are entitled "A Holiday Garland", and will highlight works by English and German composers in celebration of the holiday season. Soprano Linda Strandberg will join *Antik* for this special event.

Concert dates are December 23rd at 7:30 PM, and December 28th at 3:00 PM. The audience is also invited to share spiced cider and holiday sweets with the performers at a brief post-concert reception.

Mark your calendar!

Dartington International Festival a Stand-out

Noreen Jacky

From July 26 to August 2 my husband and I attended a week of the 61st season of the Dartington International Summer School. The facility, Dartington Hall, was built in the 14th century by John Holand, half-brother to Richard II. The property was bought by Sir Arthur Champernowne in 1559 and the estate was owned by his family for over 300 years. In 1915, Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst bought the estate, initiated a decade of reconstruction, and invited creative people – dancers, musicians, potters – to use the facility. In 1953 William Glock brought his Summer School to Dartington and initiated one of the largest music festivals in the world.

There were several choices for housing; ranging from the luxurious Mediaeval Courtyard to dorm rooms, to a designated camp-out area. Each living area had designated 'house parents', who were the first people that we met when we arrived to check in, and whose duties included supplying towels, replacing lost keys, and generally making us feel at home. The school also has instruments available for student use, and I was happy that I did not have to transport a bass viol.

There was a nice dining room next door to the dorm room Jon and I shared, where we had our meals. One pleasure of the week for us was the opportunity for mealtime discussions with the other students, a multigenerational and international group.

Most of the courses were open to everyone, but the lute, voice and harpsichord master classes were open only to advanced participants by audition. I attended two sessions per day of the viol consort course; coached by members of the *Rose Consort*, and a session of chamber music in the afternoon. I was excited to have an opportunity to try a baroque cello for this session. My husband Jon also attended a medieval and renaissance recorder course coached by members of the *Dufey Collective*, a course on Gamelan Music, and participated in the chamber music session with me, coached by members of the *Henschel String Quartet*. Many students also organized their own viol

concerts during any free time, and I was lucky to be able to join in a couple of those.

The viol consort sessions were expertly run by Alison Crum, who reorganized groups every day so that one played with different people each session. She also organized the coaching so that groups had a different member of the Rose Consort as a coach for each session. Although the coaches had different communication styles, they all encouraged us to pay attention to phrasing, to entrances, balance and to the themes being played.

A variety of concerts were scheduled three times per day. There variety was truly amazing, ranging from solo piano music, to string quartets, to Indian music, to consort music, to jazz. The Rose Consort performed twice, and I especially enjoyed listening to the Rose Consort's performance of a Deering *Fantasia* that some of us students had worked on in one of the coached sessions earlier. Singer Evelyn Tubb was a pleasure to listen to, and the concerts by the Dufey Collective and the Herschel String Quartet both stood out for us as exceptional.

The exciting week was capped by a Friday night performance of works by Schutz featuring about half the students, followed by student Gamelan and African drumming concerts, and a student jazz concert.

I particularly enjoyed being able to work on both my consort skills, and the chance to try a Baroque cello, about which I would like to learn more. One student that I met during the week arrived playing only the bass viol, and by the end of the week he was playing tenor and treble.

Scholarship assistance is available. Availability of awards is limited, but up to 90 percent of the fees can be covered. Disabled participants can also apply for assistance to cover the cost of their helpers.

For more information on the Dartington International Summer School see the webpage www.dartington.org/summer-school.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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*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:** mafac@msn.com.*