

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

Lee Inman

I was reminded at the last Play Day – I'll not say by whom – of the frequent allegation that viol players like to construct a 'nest' for themselves when it's time to sit to play. First, one sets up one's favorite chair or stool in a well-lit spot, tops it with a comfy cushion, then surrounds it with a music stand at the preferred height, perhaps a little bag containing one's favored rosin and reliable tuner, and maybe even a little snack. Some place a bottle of water, or a cup of tea nearby. The 'nest' thus constructed, one starts to tune up and get mentally prepared to tackle some music.

I can't really object to this 'nesting instinct' – honestly, I'm often guilty myself. But it is also, I think, a small manifestation of a mindset that too many of us often surrender to: the maintenance of a 'comfort zone' around our viol playing. For example, we often select the music of composers with whom we're already familiar, and are happiest when we're playing with people we already know well. We sometimes assign ourselves the same technically-approachable part ("I always play Bass II in Gibbons."). Or, we find ourselves unable to start a piece without first counting-in, and typically at the same moderately-slow tempo we find ideally comfortable.

These habits have their use, I suppose, but we can quickly become their hostages.

So, I'd like to encourage everyone, myself included, to use every consort gathering as an opportunity to challenge our habits. Put Gibbons and Jenkins aside for a session, and jump into some Cranford or Peerson. Actively seek out people with whom we've never played in ensemble and ask to join them – Play Days and Conclave are great places to do just that. Jump into a second tenor part on your bass, or a first treble part, even if it goes up to a high C-sharp! Dive into the 'in nomine' line, and resolve to play it as musically as you can. Try starting a piece with a shared breath or a glance, and be brave (even foolhardy once in a while) with tempos both slower and faster than our usual 'groove'. Look for Fantasies with lots of flats or sharps in the key signature, and a heaping helping of sixteenth-notes, as well. Make "Explode the Comfort Zone!" your new rallying cry.

Play Day Schedule

- 9:30 am - Check in, sign up for consorts, tune
- 10:00 am - Grand Consort Presentation
- 11:30 am - Annual Meeting
- 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

March 5th: Joanna Blendulf

Play Day Location
Queen Anne Christian Church
1316 3rd Ave. W
Seattle, Washington



Those of us who want to learn to play the viol have already accepted a significant challenge. Why not magnify the challenge every time we sit to play? That's the way we grow, after all.

My good friend Joanna Blendulf is our presenter in March. She is a favorite teacher for many of us, and is always prepared to pose us a challenge, and to offer a solution. I hope you can all be there.

Also: chapter members should check their in-boxes in the next couple of weeks for an early heads-up about the Summer PNV workshop. We'll have a fine faculty, and I'm beginning to receive proposals from them for some really intriguing courses.

See you on March 5th!

--Lee

Joanna Blendulf to lead March 5th Play Day!

Bio and photo from VdGSA.org



Joanna Blendulf has performed in leading period instrument ensembles throughout the United States and abroad, including the Catacoustic Consort, Ensemble Electra, Ensemble Mirable, Nota Bene Viol Consort, Parthenia, Portland Baroque Orchestra and Wildcat Viols. Ms. Blendulf's summer engagements have included performances at Tage Alter Musik Regensburg, Musica Antigua en Villa de Lleyva in Colombia, the Boston and Berkeley Early Music Festivals, the Ojai Music Festival, and the Carmel and Oregon Bach Festivals. Joanna is also sought after as a private teacher and workshop instructor and has served as Instructor at the University of Indiana Jacobs School of Music and the University of Oregon.

Lessons and Coaching with Joanna!

There will opportunities for viol players to take lessons and receive coaching from Joanna while she is in town for our Play Day. Please contact Joanna at jblendulf@gmail.com to arrange a lesson or coaching session.

PNV Outreach at Queen Anne Christian Church

Olga Hauptman

As you all know, PNV was given rent-free space for our Play Days by St James Cathedral in exchange for our performing concerts for senior residences associated with St James, in other similar venues, and also in public as representatives of St James. When we moved to Queen Anne Christian Church, we planned to continue in this fashion, as Pastor Laurie Rudel was pleased to learn. However, Pastor Rudel thought we could contribute more directly to the church by adding our music to worship services.

This arrangement is much easier to manage for our Board Outreach Administrators, Chris Briden and Janet Slack. Instead of having to find a group to play and then find a date for the performance, we have been given a list of dates, and the amount of music that is needed is usually only four short pieces or movements.

The first performance was given on November 21 by Chris Briden on bass viol and me on baroque violin. We played a Handel Violin Sonata: fast movements opened and closed the service, and the slow movements were played as contemplative interludes within it. We had just the right amount of music without taking any of the repeats!

After the service, members of the congregation came up to express appreciation and to thank us. They got an additional treat in the fellowship hall afterwards, when so much interest was expressed in Chris's instrument that he sat down and played more during the coffee hour. This was a very pleasant experience for the performers who felt rewarded by the enthusiastic reaction of the listeners.

PNV Performs at Queen Anne Christian Church

Lee Inman

On January 31st, Chris Briden and Lee Inman joined forces to provide music for Queen Anne Christian's service that day. We selected music of Johann Schenck – movements from the sonata for two bass viols in D – for the occasion.

Schenck proved to be an ideal choice, as the various moods of that particular sonata seemed to be exactly right to support the moments in the service for which music was required – prelude, offertory, meditation, and postlude.

Just as they have been in the past, the congregation that day was very appreciative of our playing, and we were, in turn, very pleased to have such enthusiastic listeners. The acoustic properties of Queen Anne's sanctuary, and the pleasure the congregation takes in hearing viol music there, make it a joy to play in that space for those lovely people. We would like to thank everyone there for their support, and we very much look forward to playing for them again.

Pacific Northwest Viols
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Pacific Northwest Viols - 2015-2016 Season

PNV Play Day Dates:

*\$20 Fee per participant
A = 415*

- ❖ October 3, 2015: Nancy Zylstra
- ❖ November 21, 2015: Lee Inman
- ❖ January 23, 2016: Mary Springfels
- ❖ **March 5, 2016: Joanna Blendulf**
- ❖ May 14, 2016: Wendy Gillespie

***Play Day location is at our NEW
venue:***

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

Pacific Northwest Viols, Board Members (2015-2016)

- ❖ Lee Inman, President
- ❖ Jon Brenner, Secretary, Programs
- ❖ Bill Warren, Venue Coordinator
- ❖ Michael LaGaly, Treasurer
- ❖ Janet Slack, Member at Large
- ❖ Chris Briden, Outreach
- ❖ Michael King, Communications & Member At Large
- ❖ Vicki Hoffman, Programs
- ❖ Olga Hauptman, Instrument Rental & Membership Roster 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 scribbings are all gladly received, as well.

Email: miking@microsoft.com