

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, March 9, 2024 | Play Day #4 with Erik Andersen

Saturday, April 20, 2024 | rescheduled Play Day #3 “Take Two” with Mary Springfels

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 for participation is \$25 / \$10 students. 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**

Greetings! It was great to see everyone at our last Play Day with Erik Andersen, whom we hadn’t seen up here since before COVID. We received a preview of what Erik has in store for us this summer at Conclave, which will be held July 21–28th at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, and for which registration should be opening soon. You can read more about our Play Day with Erik inside.

As you’ll recall, we had to postpone our January Play Day with Mary Springfels due to the possibility of Mary having contracted COVID. Thankfully, she tested negative, and we were able



to reschedule her visit for Saturday, April 20th—which is less than two weeks away as I write! More on this Play Day below! We’re working with David Morris on details for his Play Day on Saturday, May 11th and I’ll forward information on this via e-mail as soon as it is available. With both Mary and David, these are guaranteed to be great sessions, so please plan on being there and save the date on your calendars for both!

I hope you’ll be able to join us for our final two Play Days of the season and look forward to seeing you soon!

Best regards,

Michael King

President, Pacific Northwest Viols

Upcoming April 20th Play Day with Mary Springfels

by **Michael King**

Mary is looking forward to returning to Seattle to lead us in our upcoming Play Day on Saturday, April 20th. She notes that she is very much in a William Byrd phase, even though his Festival year is over (2023 was the 400th year anniversary of his passing). Mary has chosen Byrd’s *Mass for 5 voices*—Christ Church, Oxford Mus. 489-493, London, 1592-3—as the piece we’ll be focusing on in the morning’s Grand Consort. We’ll continue in the afternoon with Byrd’s *Triumph, with pleasant melody*—Dow Partbooks, Christ Church, 1580s, Oxford MSS 984-988. You’ll receive a copy of the music for familiarization prior to the Play Day. Be sure to print and bring the part(s) that you’ll need.



Schedule for Saturday, April 20th 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

Maple Leaf Lutheran Church is located at 10005 32nd Ave. NE in Seattle. Parking is available adjacent to the Church and across the street in their large parking lot. The sanctuary is up the steps and through the doors to the left as facing the front of the Church. Everyone is welcome—you don't need to be a gamba player to join us—just be sure that you are able to tune your instrument to A=415.

Mary Springfels is a veteran of the American Early Music Movement. She is a native of Los Angeles, but moved to New York at the age of 21 to join the New York Pro Musica as their viola da gambist. From that time on, Mary has been an active participant in prominent early music ensembles, including the Waverly Concert, Concert Royal, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, The Folger Consort (Washington, DC), Ars Lyrica Houston, and the Texas Early Music Project (Austin). Mary directed the Newberry Consort in Chicago for 20 years, during which time the group made a number of critically-acclaimed recordings. She has also been a continuo player for the Chicago Opera Theater, Central City Opera, and the New York City Opera. Currently, she is a co-director of Severall Friends, an early music ensemble based in Santa Fe. Mary teaches all over the country.

March 9th Play Day with Erik Andersen: A Sneak Peek of VdGSA Conclave 2024

by **Michael King**

It was great to be able to welcome Erik and his pardessus back to Seattle. Erik and Derek Tam gave a wonderful viol and harpsichord recital featuring works by Bach and Abel on Friday evening the 8th at Epiphany Parish Church that was attended by a number of our members, and Erik proceeded to coach us for an outstanding Play Day on Saturday the 9th. Erik hails from San Francisco, and this is the second time we've had the pleasure of having him coach us—the first time just as COVID was striking us in March 2020. Erik recalled, “My visit came at a very strange time, as COVID-19 had just struck King County. Seattle became the first city in the US to take proactive measures to stop the spread and flatten the curve. While the empty roads made travel to Queen Anne's Church a breeze, the drive over with Mike King was mostly preoccupied with concerns as to whether there would be anyone playing at the Play Day at all. Fortunately, we ended up with more than a few of you braving both the virus and the new coach!” As you may recall, we worked on three madrigals by the Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů that he had

composed in the 1930s and 40s—not exactly your typical viol fare, but something that ended up being a joy to play all the same.

Erik's plan for this Play Day was to share with us some of the music he planned to use for the three classes he will teach at this summer's VdGSA Conclave in Forest Grove. We worked on three pieces, Claudio Monteverdi's *Sfogava con le stelle*, Michael East's *Amavi* from his *Fantasias for 5 Viols*, and last but not least, Arthur Sullivan's famous part song, *The Long Day Closes*. Published in 1868, the latter is certainly more modern than what we typically play on the viol, but it turned out to be a wonderful fit for 4 viols.



Erik had us start by working on our bowing. He had us play a single note with a whole bow, then two half notes, then 4 quarter notes, 8 eighth notes, 16 sixteenth notes. He asked us to make the transitions between notes as seamless as possible, as well as the changes between up and down bows. He had us then work on other subdivisions like 3 half notes—two on one bow and one on the other, noticing what we had to do with our bow speed and pressure. For example, playing farther from the bridge when using large amounts of bow and closer to the bridge when using smaller amounts, or moving the bow faster (or both!) to ensure that our tone remained even regardless of how many notes we were playing (or in what direction the bow was moving). It was a lot of fun, even if a bit uncomfortable at first—something like trying to pay your head and rub your belly at the same time.

In the morning session we worked on the Monteverdi and the Sullivan. *Sfogava con le stelle*, from Monteverdi's 4th book of madrigals for 5 voices published in 1603. The lyrics are about a lovesick man turning to the stars of the evening sky to find solace. We followed with Sullivan's *The Long Day Closes*, whose lyrics contain a stirring meditation on death:

*No star is o'er the lake
Its pale watch keeping
The moon is half awake
Through gray mist creeping
The last red leaves fall round
The porch of roses
The clock hath ceased to sound
The long day closes*

*Sit by the silent hearth
In calm endeavour
To count the sounds of mirth
Now dumb for ever*

*Heed not how hope believes
And fate disposes:
Shadow is round the eaves
The long day closes*

*The lighted windows dim
Are fading slowly
The fire that was so trim
Now quivers lowly
Go to the dreamless bed
Where grief reposes;
Thy book of toil is read
The long day closes*

We put our bowing skills to work as we tried to both ensure we were using the right direction and the right amount of bows to bring out the phrasing and natural areas of emphasis suggested by the texts. This is where it is wonderful to have lyrics to accompany music, as they can help us better understand how the music should be played.

I honestly cannot remember much from the afternoon session—our numbers dwindled a bit, and I believe we first played through the Michael East *Amavi* and then on some 5-part pieces we pulled from the library. Deciding these were a bit too challenging for our tiring minds, we ended up playing 4-part Byrd (from the trusty Northwood edition) enjoying the rest of the afternoon making music together with Erik's skillful coaching. We called it a day a little before 4pm, having thoroughly enjoyed the experience and having been glad to spend some time with one of the great young teachers of the viol community. Thank you, Erik—we look forward to seeing you again!

Who would you like to learn from in 2024 and 2025?

by [Abbie Crane and Michael King](#)

While we still have two more Play Days this season, it is never too early to think ahead to our 2024–2025 season which will start this Fall. The engagement of PNV members is a key to making these special events successful, and we need your input!

Recently, we've had Play Days with presenters Josh Lee and Erik Andersen with good attendance by members and interested community members. We plan to continue this high level of enthusiastic participation by bringing excellent presenters to future Play Days. Presenters could focus on any number of different topics—possibilities might include specific skills related to bowing, phrasing, or dynamics; background on a specific composer; bow and viol care; Renaissance polyphony—the list is endless! What we as a Board would like is your input! What topics would you like to have covered? Is there a specific teacher you would love to have as a presenter?

If you are a person with an artistic vision for future Play Days, would you like to be part of a team who helps plan them, in conjunction with the Board? If you are good at organizing and arranging logistics, would you be willing to help with the travel arrangements and accommodation for our presenters?

The Board is considering the idea of having presenters give an evening recital performance while they are here in town for the Play Day weekend. This might be offered in a member's home or possibly at Maple Leaf Church. Would you be interested in attending these events?

The mission of Pacific Northwest Viols is, in part, to provide educational opportunities for members, and Play Days are our current means of doing that. If you would like to be involved with this important part of our program, please reach out to the Board by emailing us at info@pnaviols.org. Thank you!

President's Note: This also extends to our future participation in VdGSA programs like the Circuit Rider program, which brings a teacher to our area 4 times per calendar year to conduct lessons. As I mentioned in our November *SoundPost*, the board has decided for us to not participate in the Circuit Rider program for 2024, giving us a chance both as board and membership to evaluate what our members need from the Circuit Rider program and how we might more effectively use it going forward. We will have an opportunity to apply for the Circuit Rider program in the fall of this year, so your feedback is needed in this area as well. Who would you like to see as our 2025 Circuit Rider? Feel free to send your thoughts to info@pnaviols.org to share with the Board.

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. We provide this music when the Maple Leaf choir is on their summer break – typically during the months of July and August. 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**

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 making it available 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 would like to help!

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.

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.

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. Alternatively, you can send funds to mlagaly@gmail.com via PayPal.

Pacific Northwest Viols 2023–2024 Board

Michael King, President
Joan Roberts, Secretary
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Jenny Wilkson & Michael King, Communications
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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