



NEWSLETTER

Viola da Gamba Society--New England

March 2017

President's Letter

It's Spring... well almost. We've already had early hints of it, but before we say goodbye to winter, let's look back to January 21 and thank all of the people who helped organize and execute a very successful winter workshop. Loren Ludwig led the way, and Janet Haas helped out as local coordinator. Jane Hershey also stepped in to help organize the classes. Of course, we owe thanks to many others -- too numerous to mention -- who helped to make everything go smoothly. The 22 attendees enjoyed a wonderful day of playing music by Cranford, Peerson, Gibbons, and others. Then John Mark Rozendaal topped it all off with a wonderful play-in at the end. An added bonus was the weather, which turned out to be quite balmy for January!

Our spring workshop will take place on Saturday, April 22 at Trinity Episcopal Church in Concord, a venue that is familiar to all of you who have attended recorder workshops there. Sarah Mead is the organizer, and Sybil Kevy will help out as local coordinator. Sarah has chosen a fun and interesting topic -- "Getting Out of Hand: Expressive Chromaticism on the Viol". There will be music for all levels. Please do come and remember to send in your workshop application early!

Our new website is progressing. It should be fully launched some time this summer. We'll keep you posted!

The **Boston Early Music Festival** is coming up: June 11-18, 2017. Many volunteers will be needed to help out with the three events

organized by the VdGSA. Volunteering is a great way to be part of the festival, and you can commit to as much or as little time as you wish. Here's what's happening:

The VdGSA BOOTH will be set up from Wednesday, June 14 through Saturday, June 17. We are looking for helpers to man the booth and enthusiastically engage with the public. To sign up, please get in touch with Anne Legêne: alegene@simons-rock.edu or 413-528-5311.

The GAMBA GARDEN (our version of a viol "Petting Zoo") will take place at the Goethe Institute in Boston on Saturday, June 17, 2017 from 11 am to 2pm. We need volunteers to come and help beginners, including students from Boston Community Music School, to try out the viol. To sign up for the Gamba Garden, contact Hannah Davidson: [hrdadavidson39@gmail.com](mailto:hردادavidson39@gmail.com) or 617-489-0003.

The GAMBA GAMUT is a showcase of short performances by viol soloists and ensembles, and is an official Fringe Event at BEMF 2017. The performances will take place at Gordon Chapel of Old South Church on Friday, June 16, 2017 from 11 am to 3:30 pm. Proposals are due by April 1, 2017. Contact Karen Burciaga to find out more or to help with the event: tarboltonlass@hotmail.com or 508-878-7028. We hope to hear from you soon!

That's all the news for now. Wishing you all a happy and musical spring!

- Rosalind Stowe

Lari Smith 1926–2017



Lari Smith enlivened our viol consorts with wise comments on the work we were doing and wonderful anecdotes about the prowess of her grandchildren. She was the keenest listener to concerts in the Boston area, and described to us in detail the high and low points of ensembles playing repertoire from medieval times to the present day. Often the newspaper reviewer the following day echoed her judgments.

Lari—who rarely used her given name, Claire—was educated at the University of Wisconsin and at the Longy School of Music and had a professional career as a singer in churches and synagogues until her voice betrayed her and she turned to the viol for her music-making. She loved working on early notation as well as on the standard viol repertoire, and we spent hours puzzling out the ligatures and coloration in our facsimiles.

A many-faceted woman, she wrote poetry of depth and poignancy and was fascinated by linguistics and the structure of languages, learning the basics of the speech of the many countries she visited with her husband. For some time she edited ESL textbooks, finding examples to illustrate grammatical problems and rigorously proofing the result. In recent years she attended a weekly study group working its way through *Finnegans Wake*. She also played a long-running computer Scrabble game with Sarah Mead.

Above all there was her family, participants in joyous Christmas celebrations, in sailing and gardening and carpentry projects, such as renovating a house in Maine where she would spend weeks in the summer. When it was clear that her husband could not survive in a nursing facility following a stroke she took him home and nursed him herself for the four years until his death. She loved and appreciated the support of her three children, who all lived nearby and gave her a rousing 90th birthday party last October. They stood by her during this difficult period of declining health, which she faced with her usual clarity and realism. She died on February 15 and we will miss her mightily.

- Martha Davidson

Sarah Mead, her long-time teacher, adds the following: Lari was the ideal student, arriving at every lesson brimming with excitement about her latest discovery in her ongoing exploration of the viol. "I had the BEST time working on that exercise!" she would declare - music to a teacher's ears. The wonderful interview that Lari did for the VdGSA "Story Chord" project can be seen at <https://vdgsa.org/pgs/mp4/story/Smith-SC.mp4> exemplifies the joy she found in the viola da gamba.

World Fellowship Early Music Week

'Tis Nature's Voice: Images of Nature in Music and Dance

June 22-29, 2017, Early Music Week at the World Fellowship Center, Conway NH for more info. go to EarlyMusicWeek.org

Nature has provided musicians with inexhaustible inspiration since the days of Pythagoras. Natural imagery informed the lyrics of many medieval songs and musicians expanded their music by imitating the sounds of birds and animals, whose physical gestures also inspired new dance movements. In the Renaissance, the dynamics of wind and water gained their musical counterparts, and it wasn't long before madrigals were turning landscapes, with their mountains, valleys, plains, heat and cold, heights and depths, into song. The inner aspects of human nature, such as pulse, breath, sleep, excitement, rage, melancholy, and sorrow, came to be represented as well, often in a pastoral setting, with the help of musical-rhetorical figures. In the resulting form, opera, instrumental music and dance (along with costumes and scenery) brought the natural and human worlds together.

At World Fellowship's Early Music Week, 2017, we will explore this fruitful and multifaceted perspective on the performing arts with the help of our talented and energetic faculty, inspired by the breath-taking natural surroundings of Mount Chocorua and Whitton Pond, and sustained by the garden-fresh organic vegetables on our dinner plates, Héloïse Degrugillier, recorder, and Ken Pierce, historical dance, will be our returning guest faculty, joining Jane Hershey, Anne Legêne, viols, and Josh Schreiber-Shalem, viols and Feldenkrais™ body work, Roy Sansom, recorder, Pamela Dellal, voice, and Larry Wallach, keyboard. Join us and discover your inner natural musician.

Silbiger Grant

Our chapter sponsors the yearly Gian Lyman Silbiger Grant for the performance of music for viols and voices. The application period will begin by March, with the deadline for applications on May 1 and notification by July 1. We invite our members to send us names and email addresses of church and synagogue choir directors, singers and other performing organizations that might want to take advantage of this generous and exciting grant opportunity. While our grant is always well-used and appreciated, the Silbiger Grant committee is always interested in expanding and updating our mailing list; solicitation and application are now done entirely via our website, vdgsne.org and questions and new addresses can be sent to SilbigerGrant@vdgsne.org.

A Call for Volunteers

For many years now Sybil Kevy has managed our supplies for workshop lunches. She maintains a list of current supplies – plates, forks, knives, spoons, napkins, paper towels, cleaning supplies, etc. – and purchases necessary replacements. She washes tablecloths (which she also donated) and makes sure the serving platters have been cleaned. She stores all the supplies at her house and brings them to each workshop and supervises their setting out. She would be very happy if someone else stepped up to do this job and would even donate the dollies she uses to load the supplies.

Our lunches are a distinctive part of the workshop, giving people a chance to socialize over sandwiches supplied by the society and treats brought by participants. They offer more community than the solution of brownbag lunches sometimes proposed, but they do entail extra work. Please consider helping out and letting Sybil have a well-deserved vacation.

Thirteen Students in Viol Class at Somerville High School

The Somerville High School viol class is meeting again this spring – we’ve just started for the semester, having been delayed by snow and February vacation. There are thirteen students this year! These are all members of the SHS string orchestra, which meets four times a week as a regular class during the school day. Five students who started last year have come back for a second round this year, and there are eight new ones, among them violinists, a double bass player and a guitarist, all enthusiastic and a pleasure to teach. This year’s program was made possible by a grant from Early Music America, and when it became apparent that we would need more instruments than we had available (the school owns seven, and we’ve borrowed a tenor from Amherst Early Music and a couple of other viols from friends), we were fortunate to receive a further grant from the Viola da Gamba Society-New England, making it possible for us to rent three more viols from Powers Music School. Our class will be performing on Tuesday May 16 at 6:30 pm in the Somerville High School library, as part of the annual Chamber Music Concert. Admission is free. If you’d like more information or if you have any questions about the viol class at SHS, please get in touch with me at catlines@aol.com. Any donations of instruments or bows you don’t need are appreciated! We are so grateful to the VdGS-NE as well as Early Music America and Amherst Early Music for helping to make this all happen.

- Carol Lewis

Concert announcements for Spring 2017:

“Gallant Fantasies”

Music by Telemann, Baron, Weiss & Abel, including some newly discovered fantasies by Telemann and Weiss performed by **Duo Maresienne** (Carol Lewis, viols; Olav Chris Henriksen, baroque lute)

Two performances:

Thursday, April 27, 2017 at 8:00 pm in Lindsay Chapel, First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, 11 Garden St. (entrance on Mason St.), Cambridge, MA. For information, call (617)776-0692 or go to www.duomaresienne.com

Sunday, April 30, 2017 at 3:00 pm at the Somerville Museum, Central St. at Westwood Road (entrance on Westwood Road), Somerville, MA. For information, call (617)666-9810 or go to www.somervillemuseum.org

Also:

“Music for Louis Q”

French baroque song and dance from the time of Louis XIV, including works of Laurent, Jacquet de la Guerre, Charpentier & others performed by Capella Clausura (Amy LeClair, director) with **El Dorado Ensemble** (Carol Lewis, Janet Haas, Paul Johnson, Mai-Lan Broekman & Alice Mroszczyk, viols; Olav Chris Henriksen, theorbo & baroque guitar) and featuring baroque dancers Ken Pierce and Camilla Finlay

Two performances:

Saturday, May 13, 2017 at 8:00 pm in Lindsay Chapel, Emmanuel Church, Boston MA.

Sunday, May 14, 2017 at 4:00 pm at Eliot Church, Newton MA

For information call (617)993-0013 or go to www.clausura.org