



NEWSLETTER

Viola da Gamba Society--New England

September 2022



President's Letter

Dear Members,

Happy Fall! I hope you all had interesting and fulfilling summers. I enjoyed my first time teaching at Early Music Week at Pinewoods, and came back exhausted and happy.

I write this having just watched Queen Elizabeth II's funeral service. I was struck by the different styles of music so carefully rehearsed and beautifully performed, from early music (natural trumpets heralding the procession, Gibbons and Bach on the organ) to choral favorites (Vaughan Williams and Parry) to the modern day (Judith Weir's stunning anthem composed for this service). I would like to quote the Queen's hopeful words at the start of the pandemic, "We will meet again." Indeed, we will!

VdGS-NE will continue to offer special topics classes online, and we are planning a scaled-down in-person fall workshop in the Boston area, with details coming soon. In this newsletter you'll find information about online sessions such as Practice Saturdays, and plans for a community conversation about diversity and inclusion, as well as news about the Silbiger Grant and other concerts.

A section of this newsletter is dedicated to Hannah Davidson, who passed away at the end of May. We miss Hannah greatly, and are still reeling in her absence. Below, you'll find remembrances of Hannah shared by several friends.

It was wonderful seeing many of you at the Davidson memorial and open house last month. A big thank you to Jane Hershey and everyone who helped make it happen. Playing together in a house that has been so full of music over the years was really special, and I'm glad that several of Hannah and Martha's instruments have made their way to new happy homes. James Williamson and Sarah Mead are working tirelessly to organize the Davidson's extensive sheet music collection that the VdGS-Ne inherited. Items will be sold at a discount and will be offered first to new teachers and young players

needing to build their music libraries--we feel this honors the Davidson spirit of generosity--and later to the general public. We'll be sure to alert you, in case you need more music to play!

In the meantime, I'd love to hear from you if you have an idea for a class or want to host a playing session in your area.

Be well, happy playing, and I hope to see you soon.

~Karen

VdGS-NE Online Practice Sessions

We hope you'll join friends on line when on a Saturday morning or afternoon you are taking out your viol (or any other instrument!) to enjoy some playing. You'll very likely find it encouraging and motivating, and a lot of fun to work in the company of others. No worries... everyone is muted!

Come for as long as you like; check in even if just to chat in the last half hour of each session, when we unmute and enjoy catching up with each other.

To join this ongoing community activity on line, simply click on the Zoom link that gets sent out every week. The only thing required is that you have a Zoom account. (And who doesn't after two+ years of pandemic?) Do check it out! Below is the schedule. Times of day and each week's host are listed. See you there!

Sept.24, morning 10-12, Anne Legêne_
Oct. 1, afternoon 3-5, Anne Stevens
Oct.8, morning 10-12, Karen Burciaga_
Oct.15, afternoon 3-5, James Williamson
Oct.22, morning 10-12, Alice Robbins_
Oct.29, afternoon 3-5, Carol Lewis
Nov.5, morning 10-12, James Peretta
Nov.12, afternoon 3-5, Sarah Mead
Nov.19, morning 10-12, John Thier
Nov.27, Thanksgiving: no session
Dec.3, morning 10-12, Karen Burciaga_
Dec.10, afternoon 3-5, Anne Stevens
Dec.17, morning 10-12, John Their

A huge Thank You to board member Mai-Lan Broekman for organizing the schedule and sending out the notices, and to all the board members who will be hosting!

Membership Renewal

Yearly membership of the VdGS-NE runs from September through August. Have you renewed your membership for this year? In order to keep receiving this newsletter, and remain on the member mailing list, please make sure your membership is renewed.

Visit <https://vdgsne.org/membership/> to renew on line, or send your \$20 membership dues to Viola da Gamba Society – New England, c/o Glen Legere, 1 Sherman Ln., Bedford, MA 01730
Thank you!!

Diversity and inclusion at VdGS-NE

Community Conversation

October 19, 7:00 PM on Zoom

What can we, a society of viola da gamba lovers, do to invite people from more diverse communities to experience the musical camaraderie that lies at the center of our organization? Given that we would like to expand the type of communities we reach, how committed are we to developing programs and opportunities for newcomers to discover the VdGS-NE and all we have to offer?

These questions will be at the core of a community conversation discussing aspects of the report issued by the Advisory Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to the VdGS-NE board. All members are warmly invited to participate in this important discussion, and are encouraged to read the report, which will be sent out via email. Look for the Zoom link in the email.

Member input gathered at this event will help determine the decisions of the Board, and shape the future of the VdGS-NE.

The Gian Lyman Silbiger Concerts

This year's VdGS-NE Silbiger Grant was awarded to organizers Elise Groves and Anne Legêne for two planned concerts and a concert video featuring four singers and Long & Away, a consort of viols. The concerts took place on June 10 and 11, at the Shirley Meeting House in Shirley, MA and in Moseley Hall at the Church of the Advent in Boston.

The mostly joyful and occasionally serious program "[So trinken wir alle](#)" celebrated spring, love, nature, and dancing. It featured works by Lassus, Senfl, Marenzio and others, full of morning birdsong, nighttime meditations, musings on love, lusty songs in praise of wine, and French and Italian dance tunes. Some jolly use of props, lively acting from the singers, occasional percussion and the unexpected addition of soprano recorder engaged and entertained the audience beyond pure enjoyment of the music.

The singers were: Elise Groves, soprano; Sophie Michaux, mezzo-soprano; Corey Dalton Hart, tenor and recorder; and Stephan Griffin, bass. Long & Away featured viol players Karen Burciaga, treble (and voice); Anne Legêne, treble and tenor; Carol Lewis, tenor; James Perretta, bass; and Jane Hershey, bass.

The concerts were very well received by small but appreciative live audiences. The second concert was expertly video-recorded by Sam Gossner, with additional financial support from the VdGS-NE, to make it available to a wider audience. The gorgeous edited video had its virtual premiere July 1 on YouTube, and remained available to viewers on line through Sept. 5, where it received 462 views.

The musicians very much enjoyed working together (especially after not having played concerts for two years!), and audiences were well pleased. Many thanks to the VdGS-NE for making it possible!

~Elise Groves and Anne Legêne

2022-23 Silbiger Grant awarded to Il Concerto di Salamone Rossi Hebreo

Friday, December 16, 2022, 6:30 PM at Temple Beth David, 7 Clapboardtree Street, Westwood, MA

Temple Beth David of Westwood will be offering a special Jewish Sabbath service with singers and viol players, recipients of this year's VdGS-NE Silbiger Grant. The Shabbat service will also be live-streamed on the temple website. All are welcome - please check COVID protocols on the website beforehand if you plan to attend in person.

The singers are members of the vocal octet *Il Concerto di Salamone Rossi Hebreo* are Cantor Louise Treitman and Rich Lustig (co-founders and co-directors), Betty Bauman, Anne Levy, Deborah Melkin, Phyllis Werlin, Steve Ebstein, and Kyler Taustin. Cantor Treitman is also Cantor Emerita of Temple Beth David and a former viol player. The viola da gamba players are Carol Lewis (coordinator), Karen Burciaga, James Perretta, Mai-Lan Broekman, and Alice Mroszczyk. They will be joined by Olav Chris Henriksen on chitarrone.

The music will include selections from Salamone Rossi's 1622 publication *HaShirim Asher LiShlomo* (the first Jewish choral compositions) as well as instrumental and madrigal music of Rossi. (<https://www.templebethdavid.net/livestream.html>)

How does the Gian Lyman Silbiger Grant work?

The Silbiger Grant was initiated in 1995 with the goal of fostering music for viols and voices, and reaching out to educate the wider community about our wonderful repertoire. Our Grant recipients range from tiny churches such as Church of our Savior in Milford, NH to Boston's Emmanuel Church and Harvard University's Memorial Church. Recently, the Grant was opened up to organizations sponsoring concerts, as well as musicians in churches and synagogues. For more information about previous recipients and Gian Silbiger see: <https://vdgsne.org/silbiger-grant/>

The Grant is awarded each year by a small, anonymous volunteer Selection Committee appointed by our Board. It is made up of viol professionals and choral directors who have knowledge of the repertoire. To apply for the grant, a viol player organizer teams up with a choral director to submit a proposal. The Selection Committee, which changes every year, meets to settle on which team of applicants should receive the Grant. The criteria are musical excellence and outreach to new communities, all drawn from the New England states. While the consort players can be amateur or professional, most of the performers tend to be drawn from our cadre of local professionals who are familiar faces in our community. We encourage those not awarded in any given year to reapply the following year.

The VdGS-NE also relies on its members to spread the word about the Silbiger Grant, and for financial support. To submit names to our administrative committee or to donate to the Grant, please contact the Chairperson, Jane Hershey, at janelhershey@gmail.com.

~The Silbiger Grant Administrative Committee
Jane Hershey
Mai Lan Broekman
Suzanne Cleverdon
Alexandra Hawley

In Memoriam: Hannah Davidson

It is painful to address the recent loss, so soon one after the other, of Hannah and Martha Davidson, as it cuts so close to the core of the VdGS-NE, and follows other recent poignant losses of then president Janet Haas and past president and board member Joan Boorstein. The Davidsons were deeply involved in and dedicated to the society for many, many years; over 4 decades in Martha's case! Both served terms as president of the society. One sensed that a big and important part of their life revolved around their generous and tireless work on the board and their enthusiastic participation in workshops and events. With their warm sense of community, friendly, unpretentious, down to earth interactions with others, their infectious love of all things viol, lots of good will and sound input, Martha and Hannah inspired the society in a way that often made me feel that they carried the torch and were the heart of it. They will be so sorely missed.

At workshops Hannah and Martha more often than not functioned both as organizers, (bringing the donut holes and coffee, organizing the food, providing beautifully lettered name tags), and as experienced players. In recent years Hannah directed a workshop and often taught as well, taking a special interest in designing and shaping a successful program for beginners. Hannah kept the minutes of the board meetings and edited the VdGS-NE newsletter. She designed the workshop flyers, choosing beautiful images to illustrate the subject of the workshop. She was also the chapter liaison to the VdGSA. Martha was corresponding secretary for the society, taking care of most of the communication and the members lists for many years. She also kept the board informed and on top of dates, rules, and actions as prescribed in the bylaws, and kept track of who was up for re-election. She continued to work till very close to her death. Afterward Martha's tasks were taken over by Hannah, continued conscientiously till days before her passing. Hannah did not like to call attention to the fact that she was and had been very ill, and the news that she was receiving hospice care, and her death soon after, came as a shock to many.

Martha and Hannah were remarkably close as mother and daughter, sharing similar brilliant minds, and the same passion for music. They made their home into a happy gathering place for weekly consort sessions of which many people have fond memories. I was in awe of their profound knowledge of the repertoire. The huge music library they collected attests to their consummate love of the viol and a lifetime of countless hours of playing. How happy and fulfilled Hannah was in the years when she followed her dream and earned her master's degree at Longy, forging lasting friendships and partnerships with colleagues. Much of the sadness comes with knowing that she passed away so early.

In remarkable and deeply moving ways Hannah and Martha's guardianship of the society continues posthumously through the amazing generosity of Hannah's sister Elizabeth. Elizabeth donated the large Davidson music library to the VdGS-NE. She hosted a wonderful memorial play-in, and was mainly concerned about the Davidson instruments finding new owners who would continue to play them. On top of all that, she sent the VdGS-NE a surprise gift of a large amount of money. We cannot thank Elizabeth enough for sharing so much of the selfless Davidson spirit with us.

May Hannah and Martha rest in peace, and may their memory, our love and our profound gratitude to them continue to inspire us all.

~Anne Legêne

Consort time with Hannah was always special. Conversations were also fun. Hannah especially liked to talk of the joys of gardening. I will always picture her enjoying the aroma of fresh herbs.

~ Barbara Oliver

I was lucky enough to play consort music every Sunday at the Davidsons' for the past twenty years. We would arrive at 10 AM, and, as we unpacked our instruments, we could hear Hannah coming down the stairs to join us. Meanwhile, delicious scents emanated from the kitchen below – where Bruce, for many years, was preparing that day's feast for their extended family gathering, held every Sunday afternoon without fail.

Hannah and Martha were the core and the rock of these Sunday consorts. They could play any repertoire, on any instrument – whatever was called for. Martha kept our schedule, and provided the music from her vast library, unless we were field-testing new arrangements that Hannah or Martha were preparing. Hannah, of course, was infinitely more skilled than the rest of us. And yet she seemed to truly enjoy playing with us. It seemed to me that she drew great pleasure from simply being steeped in the repertoire. Hannah did not take on the role of an active coach for the group. Instead, by virtue of her excellent playing, and the well-placed comment here and there, she exerted a quiet, steady leadership, elevating the level of our playing, and making the music all that more accessible and beautiful.

As with so much of life, our sessions stopped upon the onset of the Covid pandemic; Martha passed away. After the vaccines became available, I was thrilled when Hannah called us back to reconvene on Sunday mornings. I was so looking forward to many, many more years of music-making with Hannah.

~ Margo Stark

I first met Hannah during our mutual association with Marleen Montgomery and Quadrivium, a seminal time for both of us. But it was during her long, multi-faceted career at Longy that we spent the most time together. Hannah contributed her talents to ensembles and classes, and eventually completed both a Master of Music degree in viola da gamba, and an Artist Diploma in harpsichord. She was an enormous asset to the Historical Performance department, and a trusted colleague to her fellow students.

Hannah and I worked well together, and a particular project comes to mind: The weeklong Wieland Kuijken Residency in March, 2011, sponsored by the VdGSA and our local chapter. The workshop had two distinct facets - a daily morning session for local players with Mary Springfels, and a full day program with Wieland for young professionals. I relied heavily on Hannah to help me make it all come together, and to participate. She rescued me more than once, over many months, with good suggestions and work-arounds. Her faithful dedication to the VdGS-New England over many years made my life better.

Through the phases of our lives we worked together, first as student and teacher, and later as collaborators and colleagues. I always felt love and respect for Hannah. I remember her vividly for her musical intelligence, talent and wit, her impressive writing and editing skills, her kindness, generosity, and her commitment to her family and the early music community. Her passing leaves an enormous hole that many of us are scrambling to find a way to fill.

~Jane Hershey

Hannah, Martha, Ruth Markowitz and I were a foursome starting in the late 1980s. We had a rotating fifth, but inevitably it didn't work out, until Susan Potter joined us and then we were five, until I moved away in 2005. There were two trips to the UK to work with Fretwork, including the 1995 Lawes conference in Oxford; many self-organized concerts and church services, workshops and coaching sessions; and ever so many regular weekly consort meetings that concluded with a drink and a chat. Those were golden days, and I feel fortunate and honored to have been part of that group and welcomed into the Davidson's home on a regular basis. Hannah, Martha and Ruth, you are in my heart forever.

~Tracy Hoover

I first met Hannah at an Amherst weekend workshop in the 1990's, before I moved to Boston. Little did I realize then what pleasure and enrichment awaited me as I got to know her better, played with her, and applauded her impressive accomplishments.

Hannah was a private person. In her quiet way, she was compassionate and could give a warm hug just when it mattered most. She was capable, very generous with her time and above all, she was kind and very brave.

At least twice weekly for two decades, I had the pleasure of making music with Hannah in consorts of various combinations. She was a versatile and solid musician, and I always felt a satisfying musical communication when we played. A dedicated member of A Joyful Noyse, Hannah most frequently played the harpsichord in that group, but could also perform on recorder, racket, crumhorn and of course viol whenever needed. Her leadership evolved over time, and she earned a degree in both viol and harpsichord at Longy School.

In addition to her many musical activities, Hannah enjoyed spending time in the garden at the family home in Framingham. Among other produce, she planted and harvested potatoes, which she made into her signature potato salad – the tastiest I have ever eaten! She always appreciated the sights and sounds of nature in her daily morning walks.

It was a great privilege to have known Hannah, and I will miss her.

~Susan Potter

Concert Announcements

The Orpheus Story in Early Baroque Music: Love Lost, Love Regained.

Ensemble 44

September 30, 8pm at Lindsay Chapel, First Church, 11 Garden St, Cambridge, MA

October 1, 8 pm at First Parish, 14 Bedford Rd, Lincoln, MA

October 2, 7:30 at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 24 St Peter St, Salem, MA

Suggested donation \$20

Ensemble 44 will be giving a series of concerts dedicated to Hannah Davidson, viola da gambist extraordinaire and long-time member of Ensemble 44, who passed away earlier this year. The program includes excerpts from Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo* and Peri's opera *Euridice*, as well as sonatas by Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre and Isabella Leonarda, madrigals by Morley and Dowland, recercadas by Ortiz, trios by Michael East, and more! Ensemble 44 comprises Kathleen McDougald-Lee (harpsichord and director), Caitlin Laird (soprano), Bruce Larkin (baritone and recorders), Carol Lewis (viola da gamba), Nouri Newman (recorders), and Ishmael Stefanov-Wagner (violin and tenor). For more information, contact Nouri at nourinewman@comcast.net or visit our website:

http://studio44boston.com/ensemble_44.html or our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/ensemble44>

The Thirsty Scholar

Seven Times Salt

October 2 at 7:30pm at Church of the Good Shepherd, 9 Russell Ave. Watertown, MA

Suggested donation \$20. Masks and proof of vaccination required.

Seven Times Salt celebrates life, love, and music as we open our 20th concert season. Inspired by our late friend Scott Harney's poetry, we present love songs of 17th-c Italy along with choice Renaissance dance tunes, then enjoy a brief visit to Elizabethan England. Finally, we take a sea voyage to southern Italy to tour the city of Naples and sample its delights. In between, you'll hear several of Scott's poems read aloud by the musicians. Join us outside for wine and cheese after the concert!

Seven Times Salt: Angie Tyler, soprano; Karen Burciaga, violin, guitar; Dan Meyers, recorders, flute, percussion, baritone; Rebecca Shaw, bass viol; Matthew Wright, lute

www.seventimesalt.com

The Corners of the Moon: Uncanny Music for Hallowmas

Seven Times Salt

November 5 at 7:30pm at Grace Episcopal Church, 114 Boltwood Ave. Amherst, MA

November 6 at 7:30pm at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 838 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA

Suggested donation \$20. 11/5 FREE for college students with ID. Masks required.

This delightful spooky program for the Hallowmas season depicts ghost encounters, witches' dances, mad songs, fantastic beasts and more. You'll hear ghoulish masquing tunes by Campion and Johnson, bizarre instrumental works by Picforth and Lawes, eerie tales of supernatural beings and fairy mayhem, and we'll take a 17th-century trip to the Moon. We round out this unearthly program with our original settings of broadside ballads about Tom o' Bedlam's deranged exploits and the midnight antics of mischievous Robin Goodfellow. Will good magic win in the end?

Seven Times Salt: Agnes Coakley Cox, soprano, percussion; Karen Burciaga, violin, guitar; Dan Meyers, recorder, flute, cornamuse, percussion, baritone; David H. Miller, bass viol, baritone; Nathaniel Cox, theorbo; Matthew Wright, lute

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