



Newsletter

Viola da Gamba Society - New England

September 2024



President's Letter

Dear fellow viol players of New England,

Welcome to a new fall season and more chances for viol players to gather in person. Our chapter has a number of projects planned: a Saturday workshop coached by Arcadia Viols, a masterclass coached by Venetian visitor Cristiano Contadin open to solo and ensemble players as well as auditors, a Play-in at Powers Music School, and a workshop of Dowland's music in the spring. Read on to find more details. There are also concerts with viols, including the Silbiger Grant awardee, this Fall.

In more somber news, we have once again lost some longtime members of our viol-playing community. Chester Pearlman was a staunch friend and supporter of the VdGS-NE—not to mention our most reliable sender of workshop music! Lisle Kuhlback was a respected New England gambist and performer of Medieval and Sephardic music. Both will be greatly missed, and we share more about them both later in this newsletter.

We hope you are ready to get busy after a fulfilling summer, wherever it took you. In this letter we also have reports of workshops and the Annual VdGSA Conclave which was in Forest Grove, WA and was attended by a few of us. Read on and be inspired to join in, whether playing or listening!

—Alice Robbins, President, VdGS-NE

Membership Renewal

Yearly membership in the VdGS-NE runs from September through August. Have you renewed your membership for the coming year? In order to remain on the member email list, please make sure your membership is current for the 2024-25 year. Visit <https://vdgsne.org/membership> to renew online, or mail the form and your \$20 membership dues to us. Welcome back!

Youth Early Music Ensemble at Powers

This was the first year of Potentiae Collegium, the youth early music ensemble at the Powers Music School in Belmont, MA, which includes students from ages 10 to 18. This project, which has been in my mind and heart for a long time, has had a profound impact on the students. I didn't get to study historical performance practice until I was in university, so making this practice available to the

new young generation and seeing the transformation it brings means a lot to me.

There are so many people I have to thank. I am so thankful for your advice, teachings, donations, support, help, and belief that I could do this. Your contributions have been integral to the success of this project. I also want to thank Gavin Ferrell, Meghan Miller, and the Powers Music School Team. Your belief and trust in me have been invaluable. Enjoy some photos from the recent performance at the board of directors' event at Belmont with my youth ensemble. Kind regards,

—Job Salazar Fonseca, faculty, Powers Music School



Seeking a Treasurer to join the Board

We want YOU to be an officer! Our current Treasurer is stepping down next year and we'll need to replace him. Any current member of our VdGS-NE chapter can fill this role. Basic requirements include:

–Experience with spreadsheets (e.g. OpenOffice, Excel) and routine personal banking. Double-entry accounting tool experience is *not* required.

--Attendance at 3-4 online Board of Directors meetings and 1 online Members Meeting per year; emails/calls with the smaller executive committee as needed

Duties include:

–Use PayPal and bank account to pay/reimburse chapter receipts, outlays for membership fees, workshop admission fees/payments and miscellaneous expenses

–Prepare fiscal year-end tax and 401 (c)(3) non-profit organization reports (with guidance)

–Prepare society finance reports to present at Board meetings and annual Members' Meeting

If you are interested in volunteering for this valuable duty, please contact Alice Robbins at president@vdgsne.org.

Gabbing Gambas

Did you attend any of our monthly Saturday online meetings over the past year? Do you want these to continue? Please tell us your thoughts! You can email vdgsnehost@gmail.com and let us know. As a reminder, we meet for an hour the first Saturday of each month. Attendees are welcome to stay for as long or as little as they want.

Absent Friends

Our Society was sorry to hear of the loss of two members of the viola da gamba community early in the summer.

Chester Pearlman was a very special part of our chapter's community as well as an influential and respected figure in Boston's early music scene for decades. Chester passed away on June 4, 2024 and you can read more about his life at <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/brookline-ma/chester-pearlman-11847951>. We've also gathered some recollections and photos in the attached In Memoriam document.

Lisle Kulbach's friends, family, colleagues and students were saddened by her passing on June 7, 2024. Lisle was a vibrant and multi-talented player, known for her performances on harpsichord, piano, recorder, violin, viol and harp. A brilliant and intuitive musician, her singing was also featured as part of her work over many years with Voice of the Turtle, dedicated to discovery and performance music of the Jewish diaspora. A Celebration of Life for Lisle will be held at the Powers Music School in Belmont, MA in October. For more information about her life and work, see:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/bostonglobe/name/elizabeth-kulbach-obituary?id=55307592>

Notes from Summer Workshops

Various members reported on their summer playing experiences:

“This past summer of 2024 was a joyous season of viol playing for me as a new player. In July I made it to my first VDGSA Conclave in Oregon thanks in part to support from our New England chapter. Classes on improvisation, bowing technique and lots and lots of consort playing into the wee hours came in a close second to making wonderful personal connections as highlights of that week. In August, I returned to Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth, MA for Early Music Week, surrounded by friends and beautiful ponds. Midnight viols and diving into playing treble with confidence for the first time made a beautiful week all the sweeter!”

–Eleanor Lincoln, Northampton, MA

“I was happy to have an opportunity to attend Conclave on the West Coast for my first time. It was great to get to know gambists from around the country as well as western Canada. In fact, we celebrated the foundation of BC viols with Sarah Poon. My consciousness was raised about the many West Coast chapters. There were an amazing number of newbies in attendance. One was our own Conclave voucher recipient for this year, Eleanor Lincoln, although in total there were only four New Englanders. I taught three classes, two of which were rather large, increasing my familiarity with new faces. As is often the case, I over prepared, gathering a great number of pieces for my survey of Pop Tunes of the Renaissance. I need to visit that again somewhere to get to the many pieces we didn't have time for; maybe a project for viol players in western Mass.”

–Alice Robbins, Amherst, MA

“After spending the past two Conclaves on staff, this year I enjoyed more free time and relaxation, attending as a regular participant. Being more relaxed was aided by a week of absolutely bucolic weather, providing a very welcome respite from oppressive heat and humidity of the north-east. Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon is also an ideal location for the VdGSA's annual meeting as it has suite-style living arrangements with plenty of living room space for smaller classes and late night playing, and a compact and very walkable campus. It is also serendipitous that Forest Grove holds its weekly farmer's market on Wednesdays which happens to be Conclave's free afternoon. Many of us took advantage of this chance to sample the excellent local fruit and get dinner from the many food vendors.

Musically, there was an illuminating lecture from local Byrd scholar Kerry McCarthy who used snippets of archival material to paint a picture of what life was like as a professional musician in early-modern England. The faculty concert was an ear-opening double header presentation by Wildcat viols with Annalisa Pappano performing Purcell and Locke (repertoire that they recorded in 2017) and Quaver viols performing their usual eclectic mix of unexpected repertoire. For student

presentations, the Consort Cooperative was given an evening concert this year and performed with aplomb and the student concert was relatively short but quite well done. Finally, at the closing banquet, the VdGSA celebrated Peter Ballinger and Leslie Gold of the recently shuttered PRB productions publishing house and Jane Furth, newsletter editor extraordinaire by giving them lifetime memberships. Additionally, there was a handover of organizational power as Chrissy Spencer was inaugurated as the new president of the society, and our own Sarah Mead retook the reins as Conclave music director after an eight year hiatus. The next morning we returned to the regular world where we have to explain what's in our weird instrument cases, invigorated and renewed by a wonderful week of music and camaraderie.”
–James Williamson, Quebec, QC

“My second time at Pinewoods Early Music week was an absolute blast. Our theme was *Fantasy, Beasts, and Love* and the repertoire (and occasional costumes) did not disappoint. Most of my teaching duties were on violin, but I did manage to join several consort sessions with viol players—and sometimes recorders, voices, and even sackbuts! The Midnight Viols, as these pick-up sessions are dubbed, were ably organized by David Hunt, a gambist familiar to many of you, who’d driven up from South Carolina with a car full of friends, viols, and sheet music. It was a real treat hearing gambists of all levels share their week’s music at the final student concert, and I even took a brief and unexpected turn on tenor viol during our pre-Banquet music. The faculty concert included gambists Lisa Terry, Niccolo Seligmann, Sarah Mead, and David Hunt in works by Weelkes and Isaac and selections from the Glogauer Liederbuch. I joined them to play a complex and thrilling fantasia a5 by Lupo—quite a feat given the passing thunderstorm that brought us a blanket of humidity and gusting winds that evening. I can’t wait for more music in the woods next year.”
–Karen Burciaga, Medford, MA

“In June I attended, for the first time, the Baroque Performance Institute at Oberlin College. I had known of this for many years but had never considered attending—I always felt that it was intended for professionals, pre-professionals, and hot-shot music students. I considered it this year for three reasons: there was to be a new program for viol players and recorder players interested in consort playing; the “theme” this year was Music of Paris and Versailles, 1660-1760 (definitely my era!); and Catharina Meints was offering a special class for those interested in playing, or learning to play, the pardessus de viole (my instrument of choice in recent years). I still wondered whether the demographic would be appropriate for me. Cathy Meints’ responses were more than welcoming: certainly there would be the hot-shot music students and young professionals, but there would also be a cohort of “adult learners.” So I decided to take the plunge.

I was placed in a baroque ensemble in which we worked on a Boismortier quartet sonata: two violins, pardessus, bass gamba, and harpsichord. We were well-

matched in abilities if not in ages, and I had a ball. My second ensemble was a six-part viol consort in which we worked on music by William Whyte. (In the student concert, in deference to the theme, we renamed him Guillaume le Blanc. Another consort, following suit, played a Lachrimae Pavan by Jean Douleu—I’m sure that everyone can figure that out.) I started out playing treble, but our coach (Cat Slowik, who was wonderful) suggested that I switch to pardessus. I was delighted: one less instrument to schlep around, and I didn’t have to spend the first eight bars of the pieces trying to figure out where ‘G’ was on the instrument I was playing. There were daily master classes for each category of instrument; I played in the cello/gamba class on the day Cathy Meints was the “Master.” I played a couple of movements of a “violin” sonata by Jacques Aubert (contemporary of Bach). Most of the bass gambists played Marais. If one needed an accompanist, all one had to do was fill out a form and a well-prepared harpsichordist would then magically appear at your session!

I had one private lesson with Cathy, and in retrospect wished that I had signed up for more. The other marvelous things were the daily afternoon recitals and lectures by the faculty, and the full-length faculty concert on Friday evening. And then there was the marathon student concert on Saturday evening. I was blown away by the high level of the performances by students in all age groups. I left on Sunday morning, and it took me several days to come down to earth again.”
–June Matthews, Lincoln, MA

👉 VdGS-NE Events 👈

Fall Workshop “Come Away, Come Away”

VdGS-NE will offer an in-person workshop led by Arcadia Viols: Robert Eisenstein, Jane Hershey, Anne Legêne, and Alice Robbins. This workshop honors Will Ayton, esteemed composer, viol player, and Emeritus professor at Roger Williams University. We’ll explore the nine fantasias that Will composed for viol consort based on lute songs by Ferrabosco, Lawes and others, purposely for three class periods at three different levels. He wrote in an imitative style incorporating elements of a borrowed tune, a compositional technique that was commonly used by composers of the Renaissance and later periods. Will has also prepared a lecture demonstrating his process of composing a fantasia on the well-known tune Greensleeves. Bob Eisenstein will present the lecture along with musical examples performed by Arcadia Viols with member Doug Kelley. Will plans to join us that day!

Sat. October 19 from 9:30am-4pm

Pratt Hall at Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA
\$80 members / \$100 nonmembers. Reduced fee available (contact kc1zt@yahoo.com to inquire) \$25 Introduction to the Viol (free for Five College students)

Schedule and details at <https://vdgsne.org/>

Register by September 28 to reserve a spot! Late registrants will be accepted only if space is available.

Viola da Gamba Masterclass with Venetian gambist Cristiano Contadin. Cristiano performed with his ensemble Opera Prima on last year's BEMF concert series and appears with Boston Purcell Society next month. The event will take place at the home of Laura Jeppesen in Newton, MA. Open to performers and auditors alike. Contact president@vdgsne.org to sign up to perform. Light refreshments will be provided.

October 27 from 12-3pm

Free for performers; soloists and ensembles welcome. Auditors may attend for \$25; details coming soon.

Silbiger Concert - Music of the Jewish Baroque

Announcing this year's recipients of the Gian Lyman Silbiger Grant: The Longy School of Music Viol Consort will present a program of music by Jewish composers. Viol players Kevin Lubin, Guinevere Conner, Matthew Dunn, and Julian Bernal join singers Katja Pennypacker and Cannon McClure. Their program features works of Leonora Duarte and Salamone Rossi, rarely performed sacred music by Abraham Caceres, selections by composers employed in synagogues such as Cristiano Lidarti, new arrangements of Jewish folk tunes, mostly Ladino in origin, for viol consort, Sephardic music and Yiddish songs which may be familiar to listeners.

November 17 at 6pm

Kehillat Israel, 348 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA

Play-In at Powers

The VdGS-NE will host an afternoon play-in at Powers Music School, organized by James Perretta. At this informal, fun event participants can take part in two playing sessions with a brief break in between for socializing. The repertoire is TBA and is sure to span the Gamut! Open to all viol players. A=415. Registration information will be announced soon.

November 24 from 1:30-4:30pm

Powers Music School, 160 Lexington St. Belmont, MA
\$40 members, \$60 nonmembers

👉 Other Upcoming Events 👈

See www.neemcalendar.org for more early music events.

Palma Choralis Research Group & Early Music Ensemble

Marcello Mazzetti & Livio Ticli, guest performers; with UMass faculty Jamie-Rose Guarrine, soprano; William Hite, tenor, Robert Eisenstein, viola da gamba
Palma Choralis specializes in music of the Italian Seicento. The ensemble spent the past week in residence at UMass Amherst and will give a collaborative concert this Sunday. Among classes in music history and literature they also visited vocal masterclasses and the 5 College Early Music Program's beginning viol class.

September 22 at 4:30pm

Bezanson Recital Hall, UMass Amherst, 151 Presidents Drive, Amherst, MA

Free admission

<https://www.umass.edu/music-dance/events/guest-artists-palma-choralis-early-music-ensemble>

Winchendon Music Festival

Andrew Arceci, viola da gamba, bass, with WMF artists

September 29 at 7pm

Murdock-Whitney House, 151 Front St. Winchendon MA

Free admission

winchendonmusicfestival@gmail.com

The Mysterious 7 Sinfonias of Leonora Duarte

Kevin Lubin, presenter, viol, Apollo Appolito, voice, Julian Bernal, viol, Itzel Orellana Sierra, cello

The first woman to publish music for the viola da gamba was Leonora Duarte, member of a wealthy Portuguese converso family. This lecture will explore the intimate genre of viol consort music and the fascinating home life of the Duartes, with performances of her music.

October 1 at 7:30 PM

Lehrhaus, 425 Washington St, Somerville, MA

Tickets start at \$10

<https://www.lehr.haus/classes/the-mysterious-7-sinfonias-of-leonora-duarte>

Dietrich Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri*

Elm City Consort and Yale Choral Artists directed by Jeffrey Douma

This monumental work by organist and composer Dietrich Buxtehude is a cycle of seven cantatas for chorus, soloists and instruments. Drawn from medieval Latin verse and biblical texts, each cantata is a meditation about Jesus's body on the cross.

October 13 at 4pm

Christ Church, 84 Broadway, New Haven, CT

<https://www.elmcityconsort.org/2024-2025-season>

Early Music Day at Powers

Job Salazar Fonseca, violin; Ken Pierce, Renaissance dance; James Perretta, viola da gamba; Sarah Freiberg, cello; Sachin Shukla, music theory; and members of Blue Heron (Scott Metcalfe, director)

Powers Music School has hand-crafted a special day devoted just to early music, with opportunities for all experience levels. Immerse yourself in the world of early music and imagine what it would have been like to play and hear Baroque and Renaissance music over three hundred years ago. See, hear, and feel the historical instruments, rhythms, and dances that delighted audiences both then and now. Have fun trying it for yourself!

October 20 from 12:00-5:00pm

Powers Music School, 160 Lexington St. Belmont, MA
\$25

<https://powersmusic.org/early-music-day/>

Macbeth's Witches: A Halloween Masquerade & Ball

Henry Purcell Society of Boston: Ian Watson, harpsichord, conductor; Cristiano Contadin, viola da gamba, harpsichord; Jesse Irons, Amy Rawstron, violins; Joy Grimes, viola; Daniel Meyers, Roy Sansom, recorders; Emily Marvosh, alto; Emily Siar, soprano, David Thomas Mather, baritone, as The Witches; Jacob Cooper, baritone, as Hecate; Tina Fores-Hitt, Zoe Carey, dancers; and cameos by special guests.

Come in your best Bridgerton dress or as you like, whether it is as a masquerader or lover of live music, food and community! We reprise music of the witches taken directly from Eccles' "Macbeth." Dancers will enchant you in this fully staged presentation while you sip cocktails from the cauldron. Tickets include a dance lesson by baroque dance teacher Ken Pierce. Take part or watch as others step into the circle! Stage director Kirsten Z. Cairns will speak on women in Restoration Theatre and the roles of Macbeth's singing witches.

October 27 at 7pm

Beech Street Center, Belmont MA

Tickets: \$95 until Oct. 1, then price goes up to \$125

<https://bostonpurcell.org/witches>

Secret Byrd

The Gesualdo Six and Abendmusik

Revels joins forces with Concert Theatre Works to create an immersive musical experience. Witness an extraordinary theatrical concert which celebrates the 400-year legacy of William Byrd, one of England's finest composers, through an immersive performance by candlelight. He was a recusant Catholic writing secret masses to be sung by worshippers during the Reformation in their homes with smuggled priests and hidden Catholic artifacts. Byrd's courage in using his art to allow people the freedom of belief inspires us today, when three quarters of the world's population still live in countries with some form of religious intolerance. Celebrate Byrd's activism by entering a living museum—a concert experience like never before.

October 31 at 6pm and 9pm

November 1 at 6pm and 9pm

November 2 at 6pm and 9pm

Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 138 Tremont Street, Boston
\$70-90

<https://revels.org/event/secretbyrd/>

Les Bostonades with Reginald Mobley, Countertenor

Emily Dahl Irons & Anna Griffiths, violins, Rebecca Shaw, viola da gamba & cello, Akiko Sato, harpsichord
Enjoy the music of Purcell, Handel, & Sancho in our season opener. Grammy-nominated, world-renowned countertenor Reginald Mobley will delight audiences with favorites by Purcell and Handel as well as vocal and instrumental music by Ignatius Sancho, a composer and polymath who was the first person of African descent to vote in a British Parliamentary election.

November 1 at 7:30pm

Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury St. Boston, MA

Tickets \$20-30

<https://www.bostonades.org/>

At Home in Sweden

Lyraclac: Ashley Mulcahy, mezzo soprano, James Perretta, lyra viol, Julia Bengtsson, baroque dance, Lindsey Clark, nyckelharpa

Welcome the sweater weather and cozy up with tea and cookies to enjoy music and dance for a Swedish living room! We'll explore how music from 17th-c. Europe's

courts, theatres, churches, and street corners all made its way into the same pages where it delighted communities of friends and family in Sweden's living rooms.

November 9 at 3pm

United First Parish Church 1306 Hancock St, Quincy MA

November 10 at 3pm

Somerville Music Spaces, 1060 Broadway, Somerville
\$10-20

www.lyraclacmusic.com

Of Trolls and Men

Duo Maresienne: Carol Lewis, bass, pardessus & lyra viols; Olav Chris Henriksen, baroque guitar & cittern
Music from 18th-century Norway, with folk songs, dances, sonatas and suites by Schenck, Storm, Winding and others.

November 17 at 3:00pm

Somerville Museum, Central St. at Westwood Road
(entrance on Westwood Road), Somerville, MA.

(617)666-9810 or www.somervillemuseum.org

November 22 at 8:00pm

Lindsay Chapel, First Church Congregational, 11 Garden St. (entrance on Mason St.), Cambridge, MA

(617)776-0692 or www.duomaresienne.com

Deux Violons: Music for Violin Duo

Elm City Consort: Daniel Lee, Mandy Wolman, violins
This program explores musical gems written and arranged for two violins, including those by 18th-century virtuoso violinists Jean-Marie Leclair and Jean-Pierre Guignon, the dueling rivals in the king's orchestra in Paris.

November 22 at 5pm

Dwight Chapel, 67 High St., New Haven, CT

<https://www.elmcityconsort.org/2024-2025-season>

Contributions to the Newsletter

Have an announcement? Want to review a music edition, concert, or recording? Is your playing group looking for new members or planning a viol event? Consider writing a brief article for the newsletter; we are always looking for content. Email tarboltonlass@hotmail.com.

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