



Viols, Rebecs, and Fiddles: String Consorts at the Tudor Courts, 1515-1558

Saturday, October 10, 2026
9:30am-4:30pm

Mount Holyoke College, Pratt Hall
South Hadley, MA

Allison Monroe (director),
James Perretta (local coordinator),
Robert Eisenstein, Cat Slowik, Emily Walhout

Registration deadline: September 28

Join us in the Pioneer Valley for a full-day workshop led by Allison Monroe, Director of the Five College Early Music Program, along with coaches James Perretta, Robert Eisenstein, Cat Slowik, and Emily Walhout.

Elizabeth I's reign arguably (or perhaps even inarguably) represents the golden age of the string consort in England. This can lead us to the mistaken impression that these consorts miraculously sprang up only in the later 16th century. Yet they had been a part of the royal English establishment since her father's day. Henry VIII employed "the old viol players" early in his reign. Then in 1540 he imported "the new viols" from Italy, which were likely not viols at all, but violins. Alongside these "viol" players, Henry also employed between two and five rebec players. Who were these disparate string players, and what was their function at court? How much interaction might there have been between the ensembles? And what repertoires might they have played? At this October workshop, we will explore these questions, reconstructing and reimagining the earliest stages of the developing English string consort.

Because we are looking at the interaction between **viols and violins and rebecs**, players of any of these instruments are welcome to participate.

Schedule

9:30-10:00am	Check-in & coffee
10:00-10:45am	Lecture/Demonstration
11:00am-12:15pm	Class 1
12:15-1:15pm	Lunch
1:15-2:30pm	Class 2
2:45-4:00pm	Class 3
4:10-4:30pm	Play-in for All

Pitch is A=415

- ***Bring your own lunch!*** Coffee will be provided. You are welcome to bring cookies or other food to share, but let us know *in advance* if your item requires any serving or individual portion size utensils, plates, or bowls.
- Bring a music stand.
- Beginning players are welcome. We will offer Intro to the Viol if there is enough interest.
- Music PDFs will be available for you to print at home or download to your tablet ahead of time.
- Don't attend if you feel unwell; your payment will be refunded or applied to a future event, or you may make it a donation to VdGS-NE.
- Parking is a five minute walk away in the Gorse Lot, and there are limited accessible spots near the building.

Register by September 28 to reserve your spot! Late registrants will be accepted only if space is available. You can pay online at <https://vdgsne.org/> (preferred) or by mail and check with the form below.

Classes No need to select specific classes! Together we'll travel chronologically from Henry VIII's court to the first days of Elizabeth I's reign. Registrants will be grouped into varying consorts by level for each period.

- **Lecture-Demo:** Allison Monroe will give some historical background on the era, the composers and players involved, and the instruments used at the time, accompanied by live musical demonstrations by the coaches.
- **Class 1: 1515-1540, The Old Viols, Rebecs and Fiddles:** The string consorts at Henry VIII's court
- **Class 2: 1540-1550, New Arrivals:** Italian violinists arrive in England
- **Class 3: 1550-1558, A Time of Transition:** Anticipating the viol consort's golden age

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

_____*This is a new or changed address.*

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Please circle your level for the instrument(s) you wish to play and the clefs that you are cheerfully willing to read for each instrument. *A self-rating guide is available on the national website, vdgsa.org.*

<i>Treble:</i>	B	LI	I	HI	A	<i>Clefs:</i>	Treble	Treble8	Alto		
<i>Tenor:</i>	B	LI	I	HI	A	<i>Clefs:</i>	Treble	Treble8	Alto	Tenor	Bass
<i>Bass:</i>	B	LI	I	HI	A	<i>Clefs:</i>	Treble	Treble8	Alto	Tenor	Bass
<i>Violin:</i>	B	LI	I	HI	A	<i>Rebec:</i>	B	LI	I	HI	A

I am currently studying viol: Y / N Teacher(s) _____

☐ I would like to play in Introduction to the Viol (one session; no viol experience expected. You can stay and audit other sessions as you wish.)

☐ I enjoy someone doubling my part. ☐ I enjoy being challenged.

☐ I will help with morning set-up. ☐ I will help clean up at the end of the day.

☐ We would like to play as a pre-formed consort for **one** period. Players in your consort:

Fees

☐ Member (\$80) ☐ Non-member (\$100, includes dues!) ☐ College student (FREE)

☐ Reduced fee for those in need: contact treasurer@vdgsne.org to inquire.

☐ Introduction to the Viol (1 session \$25, free for college students) Beginners: pay only this fee. Viols may be available for beginners; please let us know if you need an instrument, and what size would be best.

☐ Dues only (2026-2027) (\$20)

☐ I want to support the VdGS-NE's 50th anniversary season with a contribution:

☐ \$25 Friend

☐ \$50 Sponsor

☐ \$100 Patron

☐ \$250 Donor

\$_____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED.** Make check payable to VdGS-NE and send with this form to P.O. Box 192,

Belmont, MA 02478.



Registration deadline: September 28, 2026

