

Australian Viola da Gamba Society Newsletter

Spring 2016

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WELCOME!

A warm welcome to all members of the Australian Viola da Gamba Society to the Summer 2016 edition of the newsletter. Thanks to contributors to this edition.

How the year has got away from us! Apologies to all members for the delay in getting to this newsletter to you. John was away overseas for two months this year (in June and September) and Patrice has also been away overseas. It's been hard to find the time to collect and then lay out the newsletter for you.

This edition of the newsletter, however, is packed with interesting reading as we come into spring. Rosemary Parle, who died this year, is remembered in two obituaries; Patrice reports on her visit to the Irish Viol and Recorder Course; Michael O'Loughlin gives us an insight into the newly rediscovered Telemann fantasias for solo viol; Heidi Gröger reports on the Schloß Seehaus workshop on the music of Jenkins; Jenny Eriksson reflects on her recent visit to Sweden; and we have photos from the Easter Viol School and other events. There are also the minutes of the AGM, held at the Viol School, and the financial records presented at the AGM.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter!

—JOHN WERETKA AND PATRICE CONNELLY

VIOLS IN IRELAND

I'm writing this at the end of a month in Ireland. There are viols here, but they tend not to join the main societies in England and America, keeping a low profile. But, once you've found one, you find others.

In Dublin I had the pleasure of playing with Andrew Robinson, who has been one of the main teachers of viol in Ireland for some years. He also composes, has edited recorder music, and he teaches a local choir with ukeleles! He's retired now, but with his wife and niece, plus her husband, they have a consort, and also play with other local friends. We did two sessions: one playing duets on various sizes of viol (he owns seven), and comparing our various discoveries of favourite repertoire. The next evening I made up a five part consort, playing Coperario, Lawes and Scheidt, all of which was very enjoyable. The house was also really interesting. It was about 150 years old, and when it was built, the young Ernest Shackleton (yes, THAT one) lived in it for a few years before the family moved to London. It has a blue plaque on the outside to prove it.

From there I went to sell music at the 45th Irish Recorder and Viol Course, at An-Grianan in Termonfeckin, County Louth. With approximately 76 attendees, about 18 of them were viol players. They came from Austria, Germany and England as well as around Ireland. There were six tutors, including Ibi Aziz who taught at our Easter Viol School in Sydney in 2012, and also Emma Murphy, Phillip Thorby and others. At each session, all tutors needed to spend half their time with one group then go on to another.

Meals were amazing, though laden with potato. At least two types served both lunch and dinner had some of us wondering, but I was told "It's an Irish

thing”. We were waited on by the most efficient and pleasant kitchen staff I’ve ever encountered. Nothing was too much trouble, and the meals were pretty solid. Compared with one or two (un)memorable gastronomic experiences I’ve had at some US early music courses over the years, this was definitely a highlight.

The setting is lovely too. An-Grianan is a sort of community centre run by the Irish Countrywomen’s Association, and the music course takes over the whole place for a week. Surrounded by trees and lawns, and, as I found all over Ireland, hanging baskets of flowers, it’s a very pleasant place to spend a week. Some of the classrooms are a bit pedestrian, but groups also used the drawing room, conference room and the Kellogg Hall (so named because the Kellogg Foundation donated money for its construction) which are very elegant places to play. As I was selling, I didn’t take part in any of the tutored sessions. I did give a few free viol lessons, and got to know lots of people. At night there was choir, and that was followed by massed playing until 9.30. The whole day here runs much later than we’re used to, with breakfast only starting at 8.30 and the tutored sessions ending at 6pm.

Various entertainments were staged; at one dinner we were serenaded by a loud band, consisting of three cornetti and three sackbuts, of which four instruments were played by women. There was a sandcastle building competition on the nearby beach on Tuesday, and a Ceilidh on Thursday night with dancing and some amateur dramatics.

There was an arranger’s competition. Six entries were judged by the tutors on Thursday, with some very direct comments (helpfully meant, but perhaps confronting to some of the participants) given before the winner was announced.

The only drawback was appalling wi-fi. I had to take the phone and laptop a fair distance to reception early in the morning to conquer the nine hour time difference between Ireland and home. Because of the thick tree cover surrounding the building, the signal is very weak.

But for someone contemplating a trip to Ireland around August, give the course a go. Very smoothly run by Pamela Flanagan (whose mother Pat was one of the founders of the course), it’s a fun week with some extremely friendly faces. Just do pack warm clothes and an umbrella though.



As usual with these trips, I ran at a loss on sales, but as at least half the participants hadn't heard of Saraband Music, I remedied that on the first night by making an announcement during the intros. They are all now very aware of Saraband Music, and I've had plenty of people sidling up to me either confessing that they have visited Australia, or asking about workshops here.

— PATRICE CONNELLY



SCHLOSS SEEHAUS MASTERCLASS 2016

An idyllic hidden castle, five days, thirteen musicians, 23 violas da gamba, and a thousand resonances. The fourth masterclass for viola da gamba at Schloss Seehaus took as its theme the chamber and consort music of John Jenkins (1592–1678). The organiser, Heidi Gröger, succeeded in attracting a very special maestro to lead the masterclass: Laurence Dreyfus, founder and director of the renowned gamba consort *Phantasm*. Masterclass participants savoured the chance of gaining a close insight into 'professional' consort playing and had ample opportunity to discuss mood, scores, tuning, as well as to learn how this kind of ensemble rehearses. For example, they learned that *Phantasm* performs using their own editions, without bar lines. This way of playing was adopted during the course and, although new to some of the participants, it led to an instant simplification of the phrasing and increased musicality in the consort.

Divided into two groups, the participants arrived having prepared in advance the five- and six-part fantasies and pavaues that they had received beforehand. Heidi and Laurence took it in turns to lead the groups, occasionally also leading the sessions together.



The space itself and the extraordinary organisational skills of the course organiser made it possible not only to take part in the consort ensemble sessions and one-on-one lessons, but also to work on the extremely extensive and challenging range of chamber music that John Jenkins wrote for formations of varying sizes, facilitated by a comprehensive set of instruments which were made available to the participants. So it was possible, for example, to work on the divisions for two bass viols and organ, the fantasia-suites for treble viol, two bass viols and organ, and the lyra viol consorts for treble, bass, lyra viol and keyboard. In the wonderful acoustics of the castle's chapel these pieces were successfully steered by accompanist Eveyln Laib.

The evening educational programme consisted of an impressive teacher's concert and lectures about the history of the music being played during the course as well as the practical aspects of performing such music. On two occasions, Laurence Dreyfus reverted to his other role as a professor of musicology and gave fascinating lectures based on his personal research. At the end of the course, all these elements came together in a final concert, with contributions from the teaching team centred on a selection of consort and chamber music pieces studied during the week, enhanced by a historically informed and interesting introduction to the pieces given by Jochen Thesmann. One thing is certain: when Jenkins' ghost is awoken, it is no longer possible to make it disappear, which is why another Jenkins masterclass with Heidi Gröger has been programmed, for those who have fallen under the Jenkins charm, and for all those who wish to do so.

24-28 February 2017, D-93087 Alteglofsheim (Bavaria)
Seminar: Course in Baroque dance, Recorder, viola da gamba, cembalo, lute, Baroque violin with Heidi Gröger (viola da gamba) (masterclass and consort (Jenkins))
Info: <http://www.barocktanz.com/fasching-gambe.html>

— HEIDI GRÖGER

ROSEMARY PARLE OBITUARIES

Rosemary Parle was a woman of extraordinary talent with a desire to live life to the full. Rosemary's passion for music brought her into contact with many lifelong friends and professional musicians. This eclectic circle were all part of an adventure which involved creating music, building instruments and celebrating music in the special 'Rosemary Way'.

Rosemary loved all music but was especially passionate about early music. She built several harpsichords for professional players and friends. The harpsichord she built for the Macquarie Baroque players was greatly loved by many performers and delighted their audiences. Her son Nicholas Parle, now a professor of harpsichord at the Hochschule in Leipzig, was brought up on Rosemary's instruments and again showed their beauty in many concerts.

Rosemary loved the viol and she was a devoted consort member. Mastering Jenkins and Lawes was a commitment she shared with lifelong friends.

Being a part of groups such as the gamba society and the Early Music Association meant that Rosemary could be involved, and also help so many people in their search for knowledge and enjoyment of early music.

Making music at home was very important for Rosemary and many have shared her wonderful hospitality where music brought together such a wide variety of people from all walks of life.

Early music in the 1970s and 1980s was in its early stages and Rosemary was at the heart of its development particularly with her work in harpsichord building. The foundations she has helped lay have set a very vibrant scene in Australia.

Rosemary will be treasured as an innovator with an enormous capacity for giving and sharing and most importantly as someone who brought people together in the most special way through music.

— KAREN CAREY

Rosemary Parle was a vivacious mover and shaker in the Sydney early music scene and so many of us benefited from her generosity and kindness. But most of all, Rosemary was simply fun to be around.

I first met Rosemary in the early 1980s, through my friendship with her son, the harpsichordist Nick Parle. We were both students at the University of Sydney's Bachelor of Music and it was partly because I was often Nick's page turner that I became caught up in the world of early music and period instruments. (There was the small matter of

being introduced to the beautiful sound of gut strings on the baroque violin but that's another story.) Nick was and is an extraordinary gifted player: his understanding of style, technique and sound production was unusually sophisticated for those days but I soon noticed that Rosemary had a similarly refined sense. I was amazed to discover that Rosemary had more or less taught herself to build harpsichords and other early keyboard instruments and so perhaps it was no wonder she felt quite at home in that world.

Their house was overflowing with early instruments: virginals, harpsichords, organs, recorders, crumhorns, viols; seemingly thousands of early music LPs and books...and people! Everyone involved in the early music scene seem to have been there and Rosemary was famously a hostess with the mostess for her fabulous early music parties. Whatever Rosemary threw herself into, whether it was making a delicious pumpkin soup, building a chamber organ or writing a thesis on psychological perceptions of music of the spheres, it was with great gusto and often much hilarity.

Many years later when I became interested in the viol, Rosemary immediately offered her treble on a short-term loan. I was soon conscripted into Ruth Kelly's Friday night viols group where, thanks to Rosemary, we sampled equal parts Jenkins, Lawes and exceptionally nice wine... Admittedly this did get a little out of hand sometimes! I raise my glass to you now Rosemary, wherever you are, wishing you the best of everything; hoping you are hearing heavenly music played heavenly, high in the heavens...

— BROOKE GREEN

REDISCOVERY AND PUBLICATION OF THE LONG-LOST TELEMANN FANTASIAS FOR BASS VIOL SOLO

Hidden away in a North German archive for 280 years, the *FANTASIES pour la BASSE de VIOLLE* by Telemann have been found! A 1735 catalogue announced the publication of these works, but until now no copies were known. I've been playing through these for the last couple of days, and they are I believe the most exciting find for gambists since the rediscovery of the Berlin Sing-Akademie archive in 1990. Each of the 12 fantasias has a different key, and seems to have a different character, from the Bach-like complexity of the C minor through the straightforward beer-drinking honesty of the B flat to the rustic charm of the G major. These works are in two or three movements, whereby the typical three-movement forms, both slow-fast-fast and fast-slow-fast, predominate. Within these designs is an astonishing variety of styles and topics, from highly intellectual counterpoint (including a fugue in the C major) or implied counterpoint to simple binary dance forms. There is a high level of double-stopping throughout, but it is so well-written for the viol that it is hard to imagine that Telemann was not a skilled player of this instrument. Outside of the French *violistes*, I can't think of a composer whose works are challenging enough to be interesting for the advanced player, but lie so well under the fingers. Less advanced players will also find very playable movements here.

In almost every fantasia, the first movement is the most highly developed and interesting structurally and musically. It is usually followed by a couple of shorter, lighter binary movements, which may present fewer technical challenges but still offer splendid and varied musical experiences. I'll offer a brief discussion of the first movement of the Fantasia No 1 in C minor, because its first page can be found on the publisher's website (see below). This movement has a tonic-dominant polarity at different levels simultaneously. It's in two sections, each comprising a short *adagio* introduction and an extended *allegro* main section. There are two main subjects, the first being a strong arpeggio statement in *adagio* which appears in the first bar in the tonic and is immediately repeated in the dominant, finishing on a rather confronting bare tritone which is not mellowed into a nice dominant seventh by any other chord notes. The second subject, also in the tonic C minor but in *allegro*, is a rising chromatic fourth which sounds like it will be a fugue subject but isn't. As early as bars 6 and 7 the two are brought together, the first transformed into the *allegro* tempo and the second cleverly disguised as the higher voice of an implied two-voice chromatic passage, but already in the dominant! This is followed a section of discursive tonality with many beautiful and subtle passages which would not be out of place in the sonatas and partitas of J.S. Bach, and the section cadences in the dominant. The second section commences with a repeat

of the *adagio* introduction in the dominant, but then Telemann inverts the second subject, turning it into that ubiquitous Baroque rhetorical statement, the descending chromatic fourth, also known as *passus duriusculus*. It occurs again in the disguised version, but taking us back to the tonic. Around these main themes, the movement is a compendium of typical Baroque rhetorical devices — *batteries*, scale passages, broken chords, *style brisé*, pedal point, broken chords — but each visited only briefly so there is no question of boring repetition or sequences. This movement would reward a much more detailed analysis than this, but it never sounds academic.

I could go on, but I won't. This is a really varied and interesting set of pieces by one of the finest masters. The many players who love the numerous existing gamba works of Telemann — the solos with basso continuo, the trios, quartets and concertos — will surely welcome the filling of this final gap in the repertoire.

The twelve fantasias by Telemann have been published by Edition Güntersberg in both facsimile and modern edition with a long and informative foreword in German and English by the German scholar/gambist Thomas Fritzsich. Thomas has also recorded the entire set.

<http://www.guentersberg.de/noten/en/g281.php>

DISCLAIMER: I had no involvement in the preparation of this edition, but I do work with Edition Güntersberg as an editor on other projects. This article is not a review, but rather an honest personal opinion.

— MICHAEL O'LOGHLIN

IMAGES FROM THE 2016 NATIONAL EASTER VIOL SCHOOL

Thanks to Patrice Connolly for all images!



Lisa Terry leading the large group rehearsal.



Miriam Morris leads the beginners' class.



John Weretka, Peter Hawkins, Janet Norman, Lyn Hawkins and Victoria Watts rehearsing White's Fantasy à 5 with two basses.



Simon Rickard puts a group through its paces!



Lisa Terry leads a consort group playing one of Byrd's motets.



Miriam Morris and one of the beginners' consorts.



Lisa Terry leads one of the big group rehearsals.



Peter Hawkins, Rachel Walker and Laura Vaughan in action.

CHRISTOPHER SIMPSON – AYRES AND GRACES

Chelys Consort of Viols with Dan Tidhar and James Akers, BIS-2153 SACD

This is a lovely CD from the Chelys Consort, comprising Ibi Aziz, Alison Kinder, Emily Ashton and Jennifer Bullock, with guests on keyboard and theorbo/baroque guitar. The repertoire is twenty ayres for two trebles and two basses, plus four sets of divisions, two for two bass viols (F major and C major), and two for treble and bass viol (both A minor). The viols have been strung in plain gut throughout.

The recording follows publication of the 20 ayres by the VdGS GB in 2010, and the group was commissioned to make the recording in 2013, though the CD was not issued until 2015. Shades of the delay in issuing the second edition of Simpson's *Division viol* during Cromwell's era!

The ayres are arranged into the equivalent of five mini-suites of dances. This is not easy music, but it is very competently and musically performed by the players, and makes for an exceptionally pleasant listening experience.

The booklet notes are succinct, in English, German and French, and contain some photos, as well as illustrations from the *Division viol*. Total time is 59'39".

— PATRICE CONNELLY

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 SM122 Sweelinck: Praeludium. \$11 A keyboard work in 4 parts arr. for TrTrTB viols. Gorgeous piece and not too difficult.
 SM121 Gombert: Changeons Propos, for 6 viols (alt. parts provided for flexibility) \$22. Text for the madrigal provided. Good for voices & viols
 SM121 Carreira: Fantasia in La-Re. \$11 For TrTrTB. Great piece!

Saraband Music is now a local agent for Charlie Ogle's viols. Made in the Beijing workshop, they're quality viols at a good price. Details on my website



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THE MARAIS PROJECT AND SOUNDS BAROQUE: MUSIC-MAKING AND FACT-FINDING IN SCANDINAVIA

Musical ambassador meets a real ambassador

I am just back from three weeks of concerts, workshops and musical 'fact finding' in Sweden and Norway. Although my grandfather was Swedish and I have visited many times over the years, this was the first time I have performed professionally there. Besides appearing with some great players I enjoyed visiting two amazing artistic institutions: the first being Stockholm University College of Music Education (Stockholms Musikpedagogiska Institut, SMI) which is headed by an Australian, Ian Plaude, and the second, Norway's RijksKonsertene (Concerts Norway), whose leader is an American, Scott Rogers. Concerts Norway presents more than 9,000 concerts per year across Norway's schools and local regions and, increasingly, in several European countries.

At SMI I got to present a concert, which was attended by the Australian Ambassador to Sweden, Gerald Thomson, with our recently assembled early chamber music group. What a surprise, although I had met him in 2015. I then gave a workshop on baroque music for string players. For those interested in obscure instruments, at SMI I played for the first time with the nyckelharpa, a Swedish keyed fiddle that is popular in both folk and, increasingly, contemporary music. (Just as an aside, one of the finest nyckelharpa players of the new generation is Emilia Amper, whose CDs are available online.) The viol and the nyckelharpa sounded great together although the poor guy had to tune down to 415.

At Concerts Norway, however, I was simply a welcome colleague. I greatly appreciated the four hours (!) Concerts Norway Director Scott Rogers spent with me and the time his producers gave to answering my questions.

Drottningholm Slottsteater

In between my time in Sweden and Norway I was invited to a dress rehearsal of *Don Giovanni* at

Stockholm's famous Drottningholm Slottsteater, the oldest functioning Baroque-era opera house in Europe. The stage equipment, for example, has never been updated except for the lighting. In terms of early music, this is really authentic. On a tour through the building last year I actually got to work the thunder machine backstage, which consists of a bunch of rocks rumbling around in a large, metal box. They limit the number of performances in the Slottsteater so as to lessen the impact on what is a fragile, timber building.

The Swedish viol scene

When I visited Sweden last August I met up with a number of local viol players including Australian Keren Bruce, who is now back in Melbourne, and we even played a day of consorts together. The contacts I had made came in handy when my gamba arrived late, having had an unscheduled holiday in Dubai. I was thus able to borrow an instrument for rehearsals while frantically dealing with the airline, whose customer service practices left much to be desired!

The overall standard of the early music scene in Sweden is high. For our first concert I was privileged to work with Annastina Malm, mezzosoprano, Kristine West, a very talented flute and recorder player, Katarina Bengtson Dennis, a gifted Baroque violinist married to a Baroque violinist, and Simon Linné, theorbo, who is a joy to play with. They made me feel incredibly welcome. Kristine and Katarina are both runners so we had that in common as well.

Toward the end of my trip I also met Leif Henrikson, an accomplished Swedish viol player. Leif is, by coincidence, a long-term friend of Australian/Swedish lutenist, Tommie Andersson, having shared a house with him in Basel when they were students there. Leif studied viol with Jordi Savall in Basel and I am pleased to have been given several of his CDs that I am currently enjoying listening to.

We can never stop innovating

So what did I learn? Being a professional musician is

tough everywhere — including Europe — but I was struck, as I have been before, by how committed the Scandinavians are to ensuring their culture is not left behind in a rush for efficiency and economic success.

We also have to continue to be bold and innovative in all that we do. In some areas of the arts, such as early music, we can consider our approach in Australia to provide a lead. I took back to Sweden several of my group The Marais Project's arrangements of jazz, and even Swedish folk music, and the audiences loved them! (Tommie Andersson did the arrangements). Several people told us that our first performance in Stockholm — which sold out — was the best early music concert they had been to. The audience loved the creative programming and the chance to hear old instruments perform newer music.

Concerts Norway are unique

As to Concerts Norway, there is much to learn in so many ways. Their approach to presenting fine music of all kinds to kids is leading edge. I've been a proud part of Musica Viva in Schools for more than 27 years so I know a bit about this topic. Our Musica Viva in Schools group, Sounds Baroque, consists of two singers, harpsichord and viola da gamba. Over the years I have given some 2,200 concerts for school children introducing them to Baroque opera, opera-style voices, the viol family and the harpsichord. Yet one of the Concerts Norway producers really challenged me to change my thinking on the very basics of how we have gone about constructing shows for children in the past.

In summary, I had a great time professionally and personally. Special thanks to my musical colleagues and to my gorgeous, generous relatives who put me up, and put up with me, in Stockholm and Oskarshamn.

— JENNY ERIKSSON

Thanks to Jenny Eriksson and Philip Pogson for the photos of Jenny's tour to Sweden on this and the following page.





MASTER AND PUPIL — THE MARAIS PROJECT

The *Prelude in Tea* concerts in the Independent Theatre at North Sydney are an especially civilised way of spending a Sunday afternoon. A substantial afternoon tea is provided prior to an enticing series of concerts.

The Marais Project generally strives to present programs that add a novel dimension to the music they perform. Their *Master and Pupil* concert took as its starting point the 1990s French film *Tous les matins du monde* that featured Gerard Depardieu and his son Guillaume. The film explores, in a fictionalised way, the relationship between the two sixteenth-seventeenth century French masters of the viola da gamba, Jean de Sainte-Colombe and Marin Marais.

The concept of this concert was for actor James Fraser to recount the story of the film, interspersed with musical items. The major question posed by the film and Fraser's dramatic re-telling concerned the relationship between performing artists and their art and audience. Is the prime responsibility of artists towards their art or to their audience? Do artists need to sacrifice part of their art in order to reach their audience? These questions are, of course, unanswerable, but the journey of exploration was highly involving.

The text that Fraser prepared was dramatically lively and often established a charged atmosphere. With his careful sense of timing Fraser developed a momentum that became dramatically absorbing and the theatrical effects were heightened by atmospheric stage lighting. Unfortunately, the dramatic flow of the narrative was somewhat undermined by intrusive audience applause after each musical item.

The music that interspersed the narrative was by the two protagonist composers and a few of their contemporaries. These items were carefully selected to heighten the sense of the drama. The printed program quoted Robert Fripp: 'music is the cup that holds the wine of silence' and this was amply exemplified by excellent performances from all involved.

Musically, the concert again demonstrated the superb playing of the members of the Marais Project. The acoustic of the attractive Independent Theatre is clear and warm and it allows the performers to establish a congenial intimacy with their audience.

The concert opened with two earlier French *chansons* excellently sung by soprano Belinda Montgomery, who is a stalwart of Sydney's early music singing world. These successfully captured the style and spirit of the French chanson. Montgomery's clear tone and natural projection, her true intonation and expressive sense of line were excellently suited to all the music she sang. Her choice of ornamentation was idiomatic and her execution

exemplary.

Throughout the concert the short musical items were presented by varying permutations of performers that provided continually refreshing changes to the sound palate. Many of the items were played by Jennifer Eriksson and Catherine Upex as viola da gamba duets. In these they displayed their close rapport, developed over years of close collaboration. Their phrasing was expressive and at times moving. Their tuning, intonation and ensemble were all impeccable. Their performances underlined the fact that music written 300 years ago can speak directly to an audience today and evoke the same emotions as it did then.

For most of the concert Tommy Anderson provided discreet but sympathetic accompaniments to the other performers. In his own solo theorbo transcription of Marais' *Le Rêveuse*, however, he had an opportunity to display his individual musicianship, creating a mood of introspection and deep longing.

The prevailing mood of the music throughout the programme was reflective and often poignant, demonstrating the same sense of melancholy that permeates the music of the contemporary Englishman John Dowland. In Fraser's words 'art speaks when words do not'. The concert concluded, however, with a spirited rendition of Marais' *Chaconne en rondeau* that ended this often dramatically intense performance on an upbeat note.

— LARRY TURNER
for SoundsLikeSydney©
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PLAYING THE VIOL

As a teacher of stringed instruments, when approached for lessons I have certain stock questions. Invariably when the request is to teach a child and I am speaking to a parent, having found out the age, gender, and the school that the child is attending, one of my first questions is whether they are learning the piano. When the reply is in the affirmative I am pleased for the following reasons. The piano is an ideal instrument to learn the rudiments of music and it provides a good basis for aural training, both of which are good stepping-stones to learning another instrument. The visual component of learning a keyboard instrument should not be underestimated. Other instruments that fall into the above categories are the fretted instruments, namely the guitar and the viol or viola da gamba family.

It should be understood that this article does not favour any particular instrument over another but can be seen as observations garnered over the years of my teaching the viol family. When asked to teach the viol to an adult or a child I may well ask the question about the piano but it is more likely that this will be a general question as to what other instruments they might have played. The experience of playing any previous instrument will feed into the playing of the new instrument in one way or another. The reasons for opting to play a lesser-known instrument such as the viol over – say – that of the violin family, the recorder or the guitar are various. The singular timbre and clarity of the viols, the repertoire of renaissance and baroque music (though there is now a growing amount of contemporary music) and not least the ease of the early steps which are undoubtedly helped by frets and underhand bowing. Maybe the viol was first heard at a concert or, as is the case with some of my cello students, they have seen and heard me playing.

Having taught all the instruments of the viol family with the exception of the violone both privately and in groups and single lessons at schools, universities and workshops, I can safely say that the early learning process is easier and quicker than with the instruments of the violin family. A defining psychological factor, especially for the adult beginner, is that unlike his modern counterpart in the violin family, students often begin at tertiary level or beyond. I have however introduced viols at primary and secondary levels in Australia and there is a growing interest at these levels in the US and the UK in particular. However this is still somewhat exceptional in comparison to the volume of young players of the modern violin family. Since my beginnings in the 1970s there are far more opportunities to study in Europe at post-graduate level. There are also early music competitions. Most importantly, for geographically isolated countries like Australia, there are rapidly growing opportunities for young professionals returning to their homeland from overseas to start making a living as viol players.

Frets and the natural underhand bowing are relatively easy for beginner viol players to relate to. The delayed gratification of achievement for both adults and children is far less compared with non-fretted stringed instruments. I make the comparisons to new students about bowing, comparing the similarities with chopsticks and soup spoons. While it helps to have played a modern stringed instrument to start with, it really is a moot point. One can also argue that prior tuition on the viol would help the initial stages of playing one of the modern stringed instruments though this is something I haven't yet come across in my own teaching experience. One of the main challenges for the beginner viol player is supporting the instrument. Unlike the cello, the viol does not have an endpin. Viola da 'gamba' literally means 'leg' viol. Supporting an instrument held either in the lap in the case of the trebles, a little lower with tenor viols and between the calves for the bass needs very careful monitoring, especially with adult beginners, having short practices at the outset. Using new muscles in a new posture cannot be taken lightly. My Chinese doctor was very helpful on this matter. He compared the viol to the Chinese instrument, the erhu, especially in relation to bowing and holding the instrument. He told me how, as in *tai chi*, the changing balance, and posture of the body in relation to the legs and feet is the first skill that is taught to the aspiring erhu student.

There is much original Renaissance repertoire to play from the outset. Like the recorder or the piano, a student can come out of the first lesson having played a piece. I bring beginner gamba players into the school ensemble around the third lesson. The social element for adults and children alike cannot be overestimated. While the polyphonic part writing of much renaissance consort music is highly sophisticated and satisfying for players and listeners alike, the separate parts are often very simple. Simple homophonic dance music of the period abounds and the historical background to the repertoire is fascinating. All this lends itself to intellectual as well as musical stimulation and again, earlier inclusion in groups of all ages.

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries it was usual to start the viol at a mature age, and sometimes but not always in one's undergraduate years. The viol was and still is, to a lesser degree, a non-mainstream instrument. Only relatively recently has the viol and early music in general reached comparative acceptance in tertiary institutions while in primary and secondary education it is still relatively rare. There have been school programmes in Europe and the UK, certainly since the 70s, while I started programmes in Australian schools in the mid 80s. There are also several programmes in the US.

For my school programmes I commissioned specially designed, robust viols which, like guitars, have machine

heads for tuning, thereby cutting down on the tedious physical problems of orthodox pegs, especially hard to use when tuning gut strings which are far less stable than the synthetic strings habitually used on the modern violin family. The viol is a relation of the guitar and follows the same intervals of tuning unisons to frets with fourths and thirds in the middle compass making the process relatively easy. However, in this day and age of digital tuners, the ability to tune efficiently requires little or no skill, something that I regret.

In 1990, in conjunction with my recorder colleague Lynton Rivers, we took a group of students from North Adelaide Primary School to the ISME conference in Canberra where we gave a workshop/demonstration that was attended largely by string players and teachers. The children, while they were apt and keen students, were not exceptionally high flyers at the viol. The proficiency and independence of their ability to tune with machine heads was remarked upon as was the standard and confidence of playing that they had achieved at an early stage. Topics for discussion included playing with frets and employing underhand bowing (though this is a separate topic). The more recent advent of interplanetary pegs (brand name *Pegheads*) are a great invention for all string players though I have yet to experience these.

Whereas it was common practice in the Renaissance to play the viol with no prior musical experience, the likelihood of this occurring in the present day is far less likely. I have had a lot of students who have come to the viol via the modern violin family. Surprisingly (and I must admit puzzling) is that I haven't had the situation in reverse. I will be interested when this happens to be able to form the basis of further comparisons.

Even though there is a 'pecking order' with the varying standards of viol players, both amateur and professional, the divide between the amateur and the professional is less formal than in the field of modern players. The usual understanding of the word 'amateur' is non-professional and in my opinion can be thought of as pejorative. Translated from the French it means 'lover', having nothing to do with monetary gain, standard or ability, a love of something for its own sake. In Australia there are both early music societies and the Australian Viola da Gamba Society; the UK has its Viola da Gamba Society while the Viola da Gamba Society of America has a huge following. There is also much interest in Japan with the Japanese Viola da Gamba Society. There are a goodly amount of enthusiastic amateur players in all these countries who meet to play consorts. As the global viol community is, comparatively speaking, a minority group, teachers and players are invariably most welcoming, inclusive and encouraging.

I am a professional cellist, and started the viol in the UK aged 26 prior to immigrating to South Australia. Having

grown up in an authoritarian system akin to the master and apprentice, I remember, on arriving in Belgium for my studies with the master player and teacher Wieland Kuijken, his first words were, 'Welcome to the family of viols!' This is not to put down any modern counterparts in a negative vein but I can't imagine the equivalent comment coming from Heifetz or Casals.

The popularity of early music as can be seen in terms of public concerts, recordings and broadcasts is palpable, leaving little doubt of growing interest from the public at large. The future of the viol in particular depends on encouraging the growth of interest leading to new players joining our ranks.

The Australian National Easter Viol School is an annual event that is hosted in a different state each year. This year professional musicians specialising in instruments other than the viol were invited to attend the course in Melbourne. As beginners they were to be given free tuition on the viol from Good Friday to Easter Monday. Initially it was thought that I would take the full class. However, numbers exceeded all expectations and Laura Vaughan joined me, taking half the participants. An appreciable number of these 'professional beginners' have continued to play, swelling the numbers of viol players in both quality and quantity. This is both exciting and encouraging, boding well for the future of this beautiful instrument.

— MIRIAM MORRIS

**MINUTES OF THE AGM OF THE AUSTRALIAN
VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY INC.**

Monday 28 March 2016

The meeting opened at 1.50pm

1. Present

Brooke Green, John Weretka, Laura Moore, Vic Watts, Tony Watts, Janet Norman, Rachel Walker, Chrissie Berryman, Lyn Hawkins, Peter Hawkins, Richard Milner, Joan Milner, Barb Williams, Bethan McDonald, Jason Yong, Tom Helps, Dylan Quinlan-Baskett, Kaz Ross, Miriam Morris

2. Apologies and Proxies

Tony Watts holds the proxy for Michael O'Loughlin
Richard Milner holds the proxy for Michael Proleop
Patrice Connelly holds the proxy for Ted Granlund
John Weretka holds the proxy for Wendy Cobcroft
Brooke Green holds the proxy for Jane Grimm, Sue Christie, Cathy Upex
Christine Berryman holds the proxy for Rosemary Evenhuis
Janet Norman holds the proxy for Laura Vaughan
Victoria Watts holds the proxy for Zeah Riordan
Laura Moore holds proxy for Lucy Price, Elly Walker, Elizabeth Anderson, Liz Zetzman, Bonita Williams, Jacob Lawrence, Elizabeth Welsh

Apologies have been received from David Archer, Gemma Mahadeo, Rosaleen Love, Patrice Connolly

3. Confirmation of Minutes of the 2015 AGM

Amendments - the minutes should show that Tony Watts was present.

Minutes of the 2015 AGM were accepted with amendment

Moved by Richard Milner

Seconded by Rachel Walker

Carried

4. President's Report: Brooke Green

The President's report was received

Moved by Chrissie Berryman

Seconded by Laura Moore

Carried

5. Treasurer's Report: Tony Watts

Treasurer's report was received and is appended to these minutes

Moved by Peter Hawkins

Seconded by Janet Norman

Carried

Brooke Green officially thanked Tony for his work as treasurer.

6. Election of Office Bearers and Committee

Nominations were received and the following people were nominated:

Brooke Green - President

John Weretka - Secretary

Janet Norman - Treasurer

General committee members - Laura Vaughan, Laura Moore, Rosemary Evenhuis, Rachel Walker, Victoria Watts

The Public Officer continues to be Di Ford

7. Closure of Development Fund

John Weretka reported that the Development Fund has been finalised and the bank account closed

8. Website

Rachel encourages content for the web site to be forwarded to her.

Brooke and Laura encourage liking the Facebook page and using it.

9. Any other business

a. Easter Viol School 2017

The viol school for 2017 will be held in Sydney.

b. Variations to Memberships: Discontinuation of Three-Year Memberships; Discontinuation of Non-Electronic Memberships

Tony Watts proposed removal of 3 year memberships because they are too complicated. It was decided to keep 3 year memberships and find a better way to manage them.

John Weretka proposed removal of non-electronic memberships.

Motion to cease hard copy memberships. Those with

existing hard copy memberships will be notified with their last newsletter.

Moved Vic Watts

Seconded Laura Moore

Carried

c. Scholarship Program

It was requested that feedback be included in the next newsletter on the Scholarship Program. Miriam has offered to write a report and also continue to teach the Melbourne people and has suggestions for next year.

It was suggested that Scholarship students are asked to write a few sentences about their experiences to publish in the newsletter.

If we are going to grow on this initial program we need to follow up with instruments and playing opportunities.

d. Workshop Evaluation process

Michael O'Loughlin proposed an evaluation process for the school and the individual tutors.

Discussion considered that the viol community is a small one and we can't have individual tutors being criticised; that evaluation of the school is unproblematic but that it is probably not productive to ask for evaluation of tutors.

Chrissie Berryman mentioned that research shows evaluation is generally not productive and that we need to have nurture and growth at the forefront of our mind when thinking about evaluation.

It was suggested if an individual tutor wants evaluation they could ask at the end of their session as an ad hoc means of evaluation that is potentially more respectful of individuals.

Motion from Mike O'Loughlin was put by John Weretka and no one seconded.

Not carried

It was agreed that Rachel will create a general evaluation of the school using Survey Monkey.

Meeting closed at 2.46pm

WORKSHOP ON THE VIOLA BASTARDA

A symposium entitled *Stimme—Instrument—Vokalität* and a study day dedicated to the viola bastarda will be held between 23 and 26 November 2016 at the Schola Cantorum, Basel, Switzerland.

For further information, see <http://blogs.fhnw.ch/scb_news/2016/09/12/scb-symposium-2016/> and <<https://blogs.fhnw.ch/violabastarda/studentag-23-november-2016-2/>>.

Those interested can also contact Kathrin Menzel at <kathrin.menzel@fhnw.ch>.

General Account

Balance at 1/1/14	\$9,029.46
Income	
Bank interest	\$36.63
Membership fees	\$1,660.00
Viol school fees	\$9,390.00
Viol school concert	\$30.00
Donation	<u>\$1,000.00</u>

	\$12,116.63	\$21,146.09
Expenses		
Bank fees	\$0.75	
Web hosting	\$144.00	
Domain name	\$20.00	
Office of Fair Trading	\$49.00	
Insurance	\$371.10	
Viol school expenses	<u>\$9,897.06</u>	

	\$10,481.91
Balance at 31/12/14	\$10,664.18
	\$21,146.09

Note: Some of the membership fees are for three years and should be counted as income for future years.

Viol school

Income	
Viol school fees	\$9,390.00
Concert ticket sales	\$30.00
Donation	<u>\$1,000.00</u>

	\$10,420.00
Expenses	
Tutor fees	\$5,985.00
Tutor travel expenses	\$2,689.56
Venue hire	\$200.00
Overseas payment fee	\$42.50
Food	<u>\$980.00</u>

\$9,897.06

Development fund

Balance at 1/1/14	\$1,755.59
Bank interest	\$37.07
Balance at 31/12/14	\$1,792.66

Australian Viola da Gamba Society

2015 Accounts

Summary 2015

Viol school and concert receipts and expenses 2015

	Receipts	Payments	Receipts	Payments
Balance B/F from 2014	\$10,664.18			
Bank fee		\$1.25	Donation (received in 2014)	\$1,000.00
Bank interest	\$17.70		Transfer from development fund	\$1,807.75
Liability insurance		\$394.70	Viol school fees	\$9,105.00
Membership fees	\$1,610.00		Accommodation	\$850.00
Overseas transfer fee		\$32.00	Admin fee	\$500.00
Transfer from development fund	\$1,807.75		Concert fees	\$1,200.00
Viol school fees	\$9,105.00		Concert flyer	\$106.83
Viol school concert tickets	\$505.00		Concert ticket sales	\$505.00
Viol school and concert expenses		\$12,542.26	Food	\$1,336.24
Office of fair trading		\$50.00		
Web hosting		\$144.00	Miscellaneous	\$145.00
C/F to 2016		\$10,545.42	Rent	\$300.00
			Travel	\$3,404.19
Totals	\$23,709.63	\$23,709.63	Tutor fees	\$4,600.00
			Viol school dance workshop	\$100.00
			Totals	\$12,417.75
				\$12,542.26

Development Fund

Balance at 1/1/15	\$1,792.66
Interest	\$15.09
Balance transferred at closure	\$1,807.75

Dispersal of Development Fund balance Funds were used to support the public concert held in conjunction with the viol school

Performer fee:	
Joelle Morton	\$300.00
Laura Vaughan	\$300.00
Laura Moore	\$300.00
Ruth Wilkinson	\$300.00
Travel expenses	
Joelle Morton	\$360.00
Laura Vaughan	\$100.00
Rent to ANU	\$100.00
Concert flyer	\$106.00
	<u>\$1,866.00</u>
Less contribution from AVdGS	<u>-\$58.25</u>
	<u>\$1,807.75</u>



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