

Australian Viola da Gamba Society Newsletter

Summer 2013/14

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WELCOME!

A warm welcome to all members of the Australian Viola da Gamba Society to the Summer 2013/14 edition of the newsletter. Thanks to contributors to this edition. We'd like to encourage all members to contribute to further editions of the Newsletter but, in the meantime, we hope you will enjoy this edition!

—John Weretka and Rhona Lever

ANCIENT VIOLS AT DUINO

In September, Lyn and I set out with Barb Williams and Liz Zetzmänn to participate in a unique viol workshop directed by José Vázquez in Duino near Trieste in northern Italy. Lyn and I had experienced José's unique style of running workshops through our adventure in Labro a couple of years ago, however Barb and Liz were prepared only from hearing our accounts.

The Duino course is one of the special courses José conducts in Europe that feature playing on his wonderful collection (The Orpheon Collection) of historic stringed instruments, predominantly viols, a large number of which are housed and on permanent display in the castle at Duino. These are dusted down a couple of times a year to be played by the course participants. Most of the instruments, which number over 100, have been restored to playing condition. They date from around 1660 until about 1800. Some of these instruments are shown here in the pictures.

Lyn and Barb were lucky to play on a wonderful matching pair of treble viols from around 1730. They were in leaf shape form, not unlike a viola d'amore with rather narrow bouts and in Barb's case, five strings. Liz was fortunate to be assigned a small bass

by Nikolaus Leidolff (1695) with a glorious tone and an easy action.

Unfortunately the collection contained no playable tenor viols. José had recently bought a Gaspar da Salo tenor but it was in need of restoration before being able to be played. So I had to play a modern tenor, as the consorts were desperately short of tenor instruments.



Bass viol at the Duino course led by José Vasquez

Although playing the historic instruments was a unique experience, and the location high on a cliff in

a sixteenth-century castle overlooking the Adriatic Sea was inspiring, there were a couple of drawbacks.



The sixteenth-century castle that hosted the course

The second drawback was the division of the approximately twenty participants of the school into ‘professionals’ — typically young string players or students of José, most of whom were relative newcomers to the viol, and the rest of us — a mixed bunch with a variety of experience and ability that was sometimes a little frustrating.

However, as at Labro, José was as keen as ever to work hard to get the best out of the talent at hand. In this he was ably assisted by tutors Susanne Braumann and Lúcia Krommer. What the course lacked with the above drawbacks and slightly chaotic organisation, José made up for in work on technique and musical interpretation, and we all came away invigorated by the experience. It was an amazing opportunity to play on the historic instruments, which we could never do here.

After the eight-day long course members of the Australian contingent went their different ways — Barb to England, Liz to Prague via Venice, and Lyn and I to various locations around the Veneto — Lake Garda, Bologna, Padua and of course Venice.

— Peter Hawkins

The first disappointment was the repertoire. There was preference for lightweight dances over fantasias. Jenkins was entirely absent as José rates him as a second rate composer. Furthermore Lawes’ fantasies were only allowed to be played by the ‘professional’ group.



Participants at the Duino course

AMHERST EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL 2013

In July I attended the second week of the annual Amherst Early Music Festival at Connecticut College, New London, USA. This year the viol programme included a focus on medieval music, including the vielle, with two brilliant vielle players, Shirra Kammen and Mary Springfels as tutors.

I took a class taken by Mary Springfels on beginner vielle with a group of other viol players, so we were not absolute beginners. The vielles in this group were played more as alto instruments, rather than in the higher violin register. Our instruments were tuned with a mix of fourths and fifths, with the fifths providing the element of surprise, at least for me. It is a different experience, playing medieval music with vielle. It may have something to do with the way improvisation is encouraged as part of the experience.

I greatly enjoyed a class on the musical world of medieval England where, under the guidance of Mary Springfels and Shirra Kammen, we explored monophonic songs from the 13-15th centuries. The idea was to take a song and create an instrumental accompaniment for it. Two groups rehearsed separately, singers with vielles, and recorders with viols and harp. At the end, we came together to perform in a medieval band in the student concert.

Improvisation was a feature in many of the classes. It worked very well. Since we were playing medieval music, improvisation was around a simple tune in a particular mode. Shirra Kammen played the tune, the next person round the circle did an improvisation and so it proceeded. For someone like myself without a background in music theory, this simplified the improvisation process enormously. All I had to do was keep in time and avoid playing notes that were not in the modal sequence, and it didn't sound wrong. It was a brilliant experience, and I'm sure we could do something like that at one of our viol schools. For example, in a class on popular English tunes, such as *Bonnie Sweet Robin* and *Greensleeves*, we found we mostly knew the tunes, which made it easier to launch play around with improvisation.

Amherst is also a local music festival, and most nights there was a concert by professionals. It was interesting to hear the vielle played to sound like a viol, and the treble viol played, with great virtuosity,

to sound like a violin.

I would not attend Amherst solely for viol consort playing. The pool of viol players is smaller than at our Easter Viol School, and I think we offer more diversity in viol consort playing. I always enjoy Amherst as it gives the amateur viol player a taste of the wider world of the viol beyond the viol consort repertoire, which, brilliant as it is, is part of a broader scene.

— Rosaleen Love



A treble viol at the Duino course

COURSES AND EVENTS FOR TRAVELLERS OVERSEAS

27-30 January

Benslow Music, for individual viol players of standard intermediate or above

Tutors: Alison Crum and Roy Marks

Information: www.benslow.org

31 January

Fretwork, Songs, galliards and other dances by John Dowland

Where: The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, 7.30pm

Information: www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk

22 February

Phantasm, *Arts of Fugue*

Where: Wigmore Hall, London, 7.30pm

Information: www.phantasm.org.uk

7-9 March

Rondo Viol Academy, for intermediate players

Where: The Hayes, Derbyshire

Tutors: Jacqui Robertson-Wade and Alison Kinder

Information: www.rondoviolaacademy.co.uk

21 March

Duo Labyrinth (Claire Bracher, violas da gamba and Jadran Duncumb, theorbo)

Where: St George's, Hanover Square, London, 1pm

22 March

VdGS Spring meeting and AGM: *The Creative Viol: Telemann and the modern world*
Oxford

Information: www.vdgs.org.uk

30 March

Parthenia Concert: Purcell — The Complete Fantasias for Viol Consort

Where: The Church of Saint Luke in the Fields, 487 Hudson Street, Manhattan

Who: Special guests will be Joanna Blendulf, David Morris and Brent Wissick, viols

Tickets: \$40/25/10, under 18 free

Information: parthenia.org

10-16 April

Ascot Easter Early Music Course

Where: St George's School, Ascot

Tutors: Philip Thorby, David Hatcher, Jane Francis, Alison Kinder

Information: www.easterearlymusiccourse.org.uk

16-18 May

Benslow Music, *Voices and Viols*

Tutors: Alison Crum, Peter Syrus

Information: www.benslow.org

16-18 May

Rondo Viol Academy, for upper intermediate players

Where: Hothorpe Hall, Leicestershire

Tutors: Jacqui Robertson-Wade and Alison Kinder

Information: www.rondoviolacademy.co.uk

17 May

Parthenia Concert: Musical Games — Three centuries of music for strings

Where: The Church of Saint Luke in the Fields, 487 Hudson Street, Manhattan

Who: Special guests will be Shira Kammen and Robert Mealy, violins and vielles

Tickets: \$40/25/10, under 18 free.

Information: parthenia.org

5-7 June

Berkeley Exhibition: Early Music America presents the Berkeley Festival Exhibition

Where: Large and Small Assembly Halls at the First Congregational Church of Berkeley

What: The Exhibition is where the general public can meet publishers, instrument builders, service organizations and other early music practitioners. Free and open to the public

Information: www.amherstearlymusic.org

6-20 July

Amherst Early Music Festival

What: The programme includes two weeks of classes for amateurs and pre-professionals, a music and instrument exhibition, a professional concert series, and concurrent special courses for advanced students. In 2014 the Festival features the Music of France and the Low Countries, Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*, Baroque Academy, Recorder Special Programmes, Ensemble Singing Intensive, and a reprise of New London Assembly, a week of English country dancing with a historical focus

Information: www.amherstearlymusic.org

27 July-3 August

VdGSA Conclave

Where: Miami University at Oxford, in Oxford, Ohio

Information: <http://vdgsa.org/pgs/conclave-2014/2014conclave.shtml>

3-10 August

Baroque Week at Cambridge Early Music Summer Schools: The Purcell Legacy

Where: Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge

Tutors: The Parley of Instruments — Peter Holman, Judy Tarling, Mark Caudle, Gail Hennessy, Philip Thorby

Information: <http://www.cambridgeearlymusic.org/Courses-Baroque.php>

10-18 August

Renaissance Week at Cambridge Early Music Summer Schools: Musica Transalpina

Where: Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge

Tutors: Philip Thorby, David Hatcher, Emma Murphy, Frances Eustace, Lynda Sayce

Information: <http://www.cambridgeearlymusic.org/Courses-Renaissance.php>

VIOLS IN AND AROUND CANBERRA

The viol scene in and around Canberra is quite active despite the small number of players. Joan and I get together regularly with Owen Bingham to play trios and with Rachel Walker to play quartets in our Bush Baroque viol consort (see us on YouTube). With Owen we are presently exploring some fascinating and rhythmically challenging fifteenth-century anonymous chansons (Dovehouse Italian Renaissance Consort Series No. 20) and also the wonderful viol trios of Coprario and Bassano. Sometimes we are also joined by other players from Sydney and Melbourne. Three local people have spoken to us recently about taking up the viol and wondering about how best to buy an instrument.

'Berrima Viols' (Richard and Joan Milner with Di Ford, Owen Bingham, Glenice and David Norton, joined by Rachel Walker and Allison Balberg on occasions) continue to meet about every three months in the Anglican church hall at Berrima (a beautiful historic village midway between Canberra and Sydney). We meet on a Sunday and have morning sessions followed by a shared lunch. In the afternoon we revisit the pieces played in the morning before ending with a 'concert' for ourselves and a local friend or even two! We last met on October 13 when we played six-part fantasies by Coprario and Jenkins, a pavan by Gibbons and madrigals by Wilbye and Tomkins.

In September we held another of our annual viol consort weekends, which we named Gambaroo 2, at our house in Bywong. This year we had nine players with Brooke Green as our tutor, one of whom, Allison Balberg, wrote a wonderful poem about the weekend which appeared in our last newsletter. Besides Allison and ourselves the other players were Annabelle McIver, Malcolm Lawn, Rachel Walker, Di Ford, David and Glenice Norton, who were all in a four-person group or a five-person group with each group working together for up to three sessions. A mix of music was played in the final concert to a small invited audience, at the end of which Brooke delighted us by playing a virtuosic piece on the treble viol. Books of music were provided, so time taken choosing music and part allocation was kept to a minimum. A wide range of music was included, most of which was covered in the sessions, and consisted of madrigals by Byrd, Tomkins, and Wilbye, sacred motets by Palestrina, Byrd, Hassler and Guerrero, and fantasies by Deering, Lupo, Coprario and Ferrabosco. Brooke was an inspiring and valuable tutor.



Berrima viols in October 2013

Owen Bingham, Richard Milner, Joan Milner, Glenice Norton, Di Ford, David Norton



Gambaroo 2

Brooke Green, Annabelle McIver, Joan Milner, Malcolm Lawn, Rachel Walker and Di Ford

In October, the Sydney Consort came to Canberra and gave a most enjoyable concert at the Wesley Music Centre with Anthea Cottee playing viol, together with Stan Kornel on violin, Monika Kornel on harpsichord and Belinda Montgomery and Craig Everingham singers. Anthea treated us to a sparkling performance of an Abel sonata (K 150) with Monika. Other works on the programme included sonatas by Buxtehude and Handel, harpsichord solos by Purcell and arias by Buxtehude, Handel and Bach.

In November we travelled to Sydney for a weekend of viol concerts. The concert on Saturday November 9 was in the excellent acoustic of the newly renovated Glebe Town Hall, where Josie and the Emeralds presented a programme dedicated to Jeanne d'Arc. The singers, Josie Ryan and Belinda Montgomery sang with a viol consort consisting of Brooke Green, Laura Moore, Fiona Ziegler, Catherine Upex and Margo Adelson, who were joined for some pieces by Jacques Emery on double bass and percussion. The music was very varied, featuring some rarely played composers from the 13-15th centuries such as Bernard de Ventadorn, Jean Japart, Robert Morton and Alexander Agricola as well as Guillaume Dufay. In the second half we were treated to three of Brooke's own compositions, which proved to be very attractive for viols in a tuneful, accessible and affecting modern idiom. The pieces were *This*

body is not me, a very moving lament, *The Shades*, the winner of the Traynor prize in the USA, and *Travelling to the Question*. All were extremely well played and most arresting, being interspersed with more familiar music in the form of a fantasy à 5 by John Jenkins and a sett in C à 5 by William Lawes. The final piece was a most memorable performance of the Michael Nyman film music *If*; all in all a very satisfying concert.

The concert on Sunday was presented by The Marais Project to celebrate the 450th birthday of John Dowland. The singer was the very busy Belinda Montgomery with the viol consort this time comprising Danny Yeadon (making his debut on treble viol), Jenny Eriksson, Catherine Upex, Shaun Ng, and Imogen Granwall with Tommie Anderson on lute. Many of Dowland's most famous songs were performed such as *Flow my tears*, *Can she excuse my wrongs*, *Time stands still*, and *Come again*. Instrumental music included some of the *Lachrimae* as well as dances. We were pleased to have a piece included by Marais, which proved to be a very moving *Tombeau for Marais le Cadet* arranged for 2 bass viols (Jenny and Imogen) with lute. Belinda sang from just behind the viols thus ensuring a well-blended consort song sound rather than that of a soloist with viols. Danny excelled on the treble viol, putting in discrete ornamentation to embellish the

treble line. The old banqueting hall at the University of Sydney provided a most appropriate and acoustically alive venue, with the performers seated in the middle of the long wall and the very large audience arranged in an arc looking at the players, with the vast mural on the back wall as a dramatic backdrop (see picture). The highly enthusiastic audience was rewarded with a familiar but sparkling encore, Morley's Now is the month of maying, which was the culmination of a most polished and enjoyable concert.

Looking to next year, in early March Joan and I are planning a viol consort workshop at a wonderful country property named Spring Hill Retreat near Moss Vale in New South Wales, which will be a five-day event (Sunday to Friday) with nine or ten viols, and Sarah Mead (USA) as a part-time tutor. With Berrima Viols and perhaps another Gambaroo event in October it sounds like another busy year!

— Richard and Joan Milner

NEWS FROM SARABAND MUSIC

I've had several months break from publishing after a big push in May-June, but now I'm back into it with a couple of new volumes of Bach chorales arranged for TrTrTB viols, and several other projects in planning.

The Bach chorales could be very useful. A lot of them are technically simple, making them useful for students, but in many cases the harmony is incredibly complex, as one finds (and loves) in Bach. I've included chorales of varying lengths, so that if a consort were playing in church for verse anthems, for example, a chorale or two could be used to fill a small gap in the programme. The first book is almost ready at the time of writing, and a second compilation isn't far behind. As usual, I've included some old favourites like *Jesu meine Freude*, *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* and *Wachet auf* in the first book along with a lot of lesser-known but beautiful chorales. Book 2 will have *In dulci jubilo*, *Aus tiefer Not* and *O Ewigkeit* plus plenty more. Score and parts as usual, and if everything fits, I'll include an alternative second part for tenor viol.

Further projects will include a number of duets.

— Patrice Connelly
patrice@saraband.com.au/07 5496 3439



Marais Project (L to R): Shaun Ng, Catherine Upex, Danny Yeadon, Tommie Anderson (lute), Jenny Eriksson and Imogen Grunwal

CONCERT DIARY

Melbourne

10 January 2014, 2000

Monteverdi, *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (1610)
St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat (opening festival of
the 2014 Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields Festival)
Information: <http://www.ballarat.com/organs/>

28 January 2014

Improvisation masterclass with Davide Monti
Early Music Studio, 27 Royal Parade, Parkville
Information: Jacky Ogeil, (03) 5427 156

22 February 2014, 1830

Latitude 37 *An Unholy Rackett!*
Cloudehill Nursey and Gardens, 89 Olinda Monbulk
Road, Olinda
Tickets: \$33 (full)/\$25 (children)
Information: 9751 1009

30 March 2014, 1830

The Choir of Queen's College with viol consort
presents Buxtehude's *Vulnerasti cor meum* and
consort works by Rosenmüller
Chapel of Queen's College, University of Melbourne
1-17 College Crescent, Parkville
Free

31 August 2014, 1830

The Choir of Queen's College with viol consort
presents John Ward's *Prayer is an endless chain* and
consort works by Coprario and Byrd
Chapel of Queen's College, University of Melbourne
1-17 College Crescent, Parkville
Free

Sydney

17 January 2014, 2000

Hilliard Ensemble with Consort Eclectus (Laura
Vaughan, Laura Moore, Ruth Wilkinson and Victoria
Watts, with Danny Yeadon and Brooke Green)
City Recital Hall, Angel Place
This concert is part of the Sydney Festival
Information: [http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/2014/
Music/Hilliard-Ensemble-and-Consort-Eclectus/](http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/2014/Music/Hilliard-Ensemble-and-Consort-Eclectus/)

29 March 2014, 1700

New Fashions: 17th century works for lyra viol and
viol consort
Music by John Jenkins, Sarah Mead and Brooke
Green, including Australian premiere of Brooke
Green's *Shades of Presence Past* for viol quartet

Tickets: \$30 and \$20 (concessions)

Information: <http://josieandtheemeralds.com/>

NEWS FROM JOSIE AND THE EMERALDS

We're delighted to announce that our fundraising
campaign through Pozible was successfully realised
on 6 December 2013.

Thank you very much to all our supporters. Over the
next few months we will be completing our first CD,
Travelling to the Question, available on Tall Poppies,
in May 2014.

— Brooke Green

VIOLS ON THE WEB

Viol iconography

Below is one example from an extensive collection of
images of viols and related instruments that can be
found at [http://www.greatbassviol.com/iconography.
html](http://www.greatbassviol.com/iconography.html)

There is a lot of other interesting information on this
website by player and teacher, Joelle Morton.

Renaissance Music Sources Online

Rosaleen Love found this website that contains an
extensive list of links to early music online, including
sources of manuscripts: www.lorenludwig.com



RAMEAU DIE GOLDENE GAMBE

If history were fair, Rameau would take his place among the true innovators of chamber music in the standard histories of music. His *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* for two melodic instruments and obligato harpsichord part, written in 1741 at the apex of a brilliant career, reveal the truly revolutionary cast of Rameau's mind in chamber music settings, a worthy inheritor of the tradition of Marais in works such as the *Sonate à la Maresienne* or *La gamme* and Couperin in *Le Parnasse*, while also speaking volumes of the composer who had the brilliant dance music of *Les indes galantes* and *Les fêtes d'Hébé* behind him. We also hear something of Rameau the brilliant harpsichordist in the glittering and idiomatic keyboard textures, and the composer of the virtuosic *Pièces de clavecin* that got his career moving in the first place. These are no mere keyboard pieces with quasi-optional violin part as some ensemble sonatas of the early Classical period will be, but proper ensemble works in which everyone is given a real workout.

These works have very strong advocates in Ensemble Fleury in this new disc for Deutsche Harmonia Mundi in what appears to be their first recording. Neither the brilliant passages, such as in the

Tambourin of the third suite or *La pantomime* of the fourth suite, nor the affecting ones, such as *La Boucon* in the second suite or *La Cupis* in the fifth suite holds any terrors for them. Flute and violin are both used for the principal melodic line.

From a viol perspective, the attraction of this recording is the use of an eight-string bass modelled on one by Benoist Fleury made in 1759 or 1769. The attraction of using this instrument has been to simplify certain unplayable passages in some of the suites, which seems like a good enough reason to allow such an important offshoot of the viol tradition to be heard. But with the kind of accomplished player that Heidi Gröger evidently is, I would have loved an opportunity to hear a little more of her, particularly as the sound of the viol is somewhat recessed in the overall sonic mix (especially compared to the melodic instruments). An arrangement or two, even of some of the *Pièces* (as *Les Voix Humaines* gave us on their *Folies* disc some years ago) would have given us a wonderful chance to hear what is evidently a fascinating addition to our understanding of the viol's history.

A highly recommended disc.

— John Weretka

Patrice has been busy lately ...

A whole bunch of new viol editions are available now (or almost ready):

SM86 - Schutz: *Ich weiss, das mein Erlöser lebt*, (1648) arr. for 7 viols

SM88 - Bach: 17 Chorales arr. for TrTrTB viols

SM89 - Bach: 19 Chorales, arr. for TrTrTB/TrTTB viols

SM90 - R. Mico/Anon: Five Fantasias for 2 viols: TrB, TrTr, BB. Alternative arrangements of the 5 pieces included

SM91 - G. Guami: Canzona 6, arr for TrTrTB viols. Great little piece!

SM92 - Easy Baroque duets for treble viols or violins, music by Hook, Mouret, R. Marais, Anon, Purcell, Rameau, Telemann and Turk

SM93 - Renaissance duets for treble viols. Canons, Carminas and songs by Anon, Asola, de Turnhout, Lemlin and Brumel

SM94 - English Renaissance duets for treble viols. Gibbons, Morley, White and Anon

And there's more to come! Where possible, extra alternative parts are provided. Score and parts for all above. Call today.

The New Saraband Book!!!

A Tempest in a Glass of Water. Gordon J. Kinney's translations of French Renaissance & Baroque viol treatises. Kinney died in 1981, leaving an enormous body of work, particularly translations of De Machy, Danoville, DuBuisson, Jambe de Fer, Trichet, Loulie, M & R Marais and more. One of Kinney's articles included. \$33



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