

SPRING HOUSE CONCERT

On Sunday, May 22, Viols of Houston members and guests gathered at the home of Barrett Sills for an informal concert of viol music. Eric Fisher and Pedro Funes were first up with a Pavan by John Jenkins and an Ayre by John Ward. Their bass viols were so different in timbre that it made following the individual lines easy.

Eric played a sonata by Telemann, with accompaniment by Pedro. The third movement was especially tender, perfect for allowing Eric to show off the beautiful tone colors of his borrowed instrument.

Deborah Dunham and Brady Lanier played four pieces by Diego Ortiz. Brady plucked the ground for two of the pieces and played the chanson that formed the basis for the other two. Of special interest was the setting in which Brady played the tune on the treble while Deborah provided an embellished bass line.

Brady remained "on stage" and was joined by Jordan Witherspoon for several short variations by Marais. Jordan then played a Marais Chaconne (with lots of precision finger-placement above the frets) to Brady's accompaniment. A Kuhnel Prelude & Allemande gave Jordan an opportunity to play the only unaccompanied presentation on the program.

Los Grillos completed the afternoon's performances with four selections from a suite by Simpson. Los Grillos consist of Erika Lawson, William Pannill and Eric Fisher. The Ayre, Courante, Ayre and Sarabande were well-played with much communication among the members of the group. The ending was especially striking, as the three parts converged to a unison note.

Following the performances, the group shared a pot luck reception.

LOS GRILLOS July 8

Pedro Funes and Eric Fisher represented Los Grillos with a program of bass viol duets at the home of Bill Pannill and Molly Hammond on the evening of July 8. They performed music by John Jenkins, John Ward, Georg Telemann, John Hingeston, Marin Marais and Johannes Schenck. In attendance were Viols of Houston members and friends of the performers.

The first set featured a Pavan by Jenkins and an Almain and Ayre by Ward. In all three pieces, themes and lines of accompaniment were tossed back and forth between the players. The duo was attentive to relative dynamics, allowing the audience to hear the repetitions clearly. A sonata in a minor by Telemann followed. This more complex music had four movements: a Largo, Allegro, Soave and second Allegro. It called for truly virtuosic performances by both players. Hingeston's Suite for Two Basses was

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interesting in that each large section was repeated with the parts traded between performers.

Following a brief intermission, the pair played the Canonic Sonata No. 1 by Telemann. Each of the three movements is a true canon at one measure's distance. This piece was familiar to several in the audience, as it was written originally for treble instruments and is still performed as a violin duet. Marais' Les Folies d'Espagne provided the source for several short but intricate variations on the famous La Folia theme. A brief gasp arose from the audience when a page of Eric's music slid to the floor. Luckily, he knew that variation by heart and was able to continue without interruption. Johannes Schenck provided the closing five-movement Sonata that permitted the duo to display their artistry and musicianship to great effect.

OUTREACH

Eric Fisher

Hello fellow gambists! First, I'd like to thank you for voting me into the position of Vice President of Outreach. I will do all I can to reach out to the community and spread the word of the viola da gamba. With the help of Bill and Pedro, I have come up with a system of having a scripted book of music and dialogue for anyone who is interested in performing outreach concerts to take with them and use. The idea is that two people can take any combination of instruments to perform on and talk about and, if the occasion calls for, have a petting zoo. In order to facilitate this plan, I need volunteers to perform in these outreach concerts. If anyone is interested in participating in an outreach concert, send an email to efisherbass@hotmail.com. As concert opportunities become available, I can contact those interested in order to put together an outreach team. Also, if anyone has ideas of venues for outreach performances, please email those to me as well. Currently I have some schools I am in contact with and there are numerous nursing homes/assisted living centers that are always happy to have performers come in. I'd like to have venues that offer combination of general early music/viola da gamba education for the community as well as outreach that draws in patrons and possible new members to the society. This past month, Pedro and I performed two concerts at Orchard Park at Willowbrook and Kingwood Senior Village and Pedro and Erika performed a very successful outreach and petting zoo at the American Festival of the Arts. I am hoping to keep this outreach momentum going and that we can perform one to two outreach concerts each quarter. In addition, Pedro has set up a Facebook page for Viols of Houston that can be used to invite and inform friends of upcoming gamba events, further extending our reach into the Houston community. If you have not done so, please accept the invitation to become a fan of "Viols of Houston" so that we can become an official Facebook page. Thank you again, and I look forward to our next Gamba Ramba.

Annual Meeting and Gambaramba!

September 17, 10 AM

At the Dunhams' 2608 Glen Haven

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello friends! I hope you've all had a great summer, and are ready to do some great music-making this fall!

I had a great time at the VdGSA Conclave in Chicago, where I directed the Consort Cooperative program. We had a delightful group of sixteen professional and pre-professional players this year, including fellow Houstonites Deborah Dunham and Amalia Bandy. (Mary Springfels was also on faculty – delightful to see her there!) Each member coached two pieces of their choosing during the week (the music having been selected and distributed well in advance). When not directing, members played in their peers' coached ensembles. As a result each member was able to rehearse intensely a wide variety of music (at least ten pieces each!) during the week.

The program culminated with a triumphant concert on Friday afternoon, featuring music by Purcell, Hume, and David Funck; and ending with the majestic Bach Passacaglia and Fugue as transcribed by Richard Boothby (played by two separate ensembles taking each half of the piece). It was a rousing success! A personal highlight for me was performing a medley of Madonna tunes (arranged by me) with the entire group at the Student Concert! What a note to go out on!

I also attended the VdGSA Chapter Representatives meeting (in Ruth's absentia). While we are not one of the biggest groups, we are one of the few to fully take advantage of the Circuit Rider program. There are also Workshop Grants available, as well as "teacher's apprentice" grants to be used in conjunction with the Workshop program. This is something I'd like to see us take advantage of in the future – perhaps in May when John Mark Rozendaal comes to town! Let's start brainstorming workshop ideas....

On a more immediate note, our Spring Meeting and Gamba Ramba are scheduled for Saturday, September 17, at the Dunham's. 10 AM for the meeting, 10:30 for the 'Ramba. I'll send out an agenda for the meeting in the next week. Bring your calendars!!! We will be picking dates for future Mary lessons, concerts, recitals, meetings, and 'Rambas.

For the 'Ramba, I envision it having three parts:

- 1) Presentations/performances by members. Let me know if you'd like to present/perform something.
- 2) Group Play! I'll bring some 5 & 6 part music...
- 3) Mini-lessons for guests/newbies. I'm awaiting word from Eric regarding outreach possibilities. If any of you know anyone curious about the viol, please invite them to the 'Ramba (starting at 11 AM) and let me know so I can plan accordingly.

Please RSVP your ability to attend the Gamba Ramba if you haven't already done so. I look forward to seeing you all there!

- Brady Lanier

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