

Program brings viols into local high schools

Two Naperville high schools will benefit from the 'Viols in Our Schools' program this fall.

Earlier this month, Valparaiso University faculty member Dr. Phillip Serna, director of Viols in Our Schools, spent rehearsal sessions working with string students on Baroque style for their performance of the "Telemann Concerto in A-Major." The rehearsal sessions addressed issues including performance practice, performing Baroque music with modern bows, continuo performance techniques for cellists and double bassists, as well as detailed and comprehensive approach to articulation and phrasing.

Additionally, Serna joined the Symphonic Orchestra for a performance of Giovanni Bottesini's "Concerto No. 2 in B minor" for double bass and orchestra after discussing the historical evolution of the instrument with the audience.

Serna will be at Metea Valley High School on Nov. 9 demonstrating solo literature for the viol. He will be joined by Metea student Katie Ashcraft demonstrating chamber music for two bass viols.

Serna will bring various sizes of viol - treble, tenor, bass viol and violone - and demonstrate the rare literature for this family of stringed instruments.

The viol or viola da gamba ("leg" viol) originated in Spain in the 1400s. While shaped in similar fashion to the cello, it has more in common with the Renaissance lute, an early cousin of the modern guitar. The viol was often performed in consort, with a grouping of up to six viols performing chamber music.

Additionally there is a large body of solo literature, religious music and chamber music with other instruments that survive from the instrument's history.

Based in the Chicago area, Serna works to bring the early western string instrument family known as the viola da gamba into many area schools, demonstrating solo literature from the Renaissance, Baroque and early Classical periods



Dr. Phillip W. Serna will conduct lecture-performances for classes at Metea Valley High School on Nov. 9. SUBMITTED PHOTO

for treble viol, tenor viol, bass viol and violone.

Viols in Our Schools seeks to entertain while educating audiences

about the rich literature for this family of bowed string instruments. Visit www.violsinourschools.org.

- Submitted by Phillip W. Serna