



FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

in Cooperation with Pacific's Conservatory of Music presents

Ayreheart with Sarah Pillow

SARAH PILLOW, vocals
RONN MCFARLANE, lute
WILLARD MORRIS, colascione
MATTIAS RUCHT, percussion

2:30 PM, Sunday, March 25, 2018
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific

Ayres of Albion

Songs, Dances and Ballads of England, Scotland and Wales

Pastime with Good Company	King Henry VIII (1491–1547)
In a Garden so Green	Anonymous (17 th Century Scotland)
Lady Hunsdon's Puffe Come Again	John Dowland (1563–1626) Dowland
Passemeze	Adrian LeRoy (1520–1598)
Twa Corbies	Anonymous (c.1610s, Scottish ballad)
Mr. Dowland's Midnight Fortune	Dowland Dowland
John Barleycorn	Anonymous (17 th Century England)

— INTERMISSION —

A Fancy	Dowland
Tarleton's Resurrection	Dowland
Chi Passa	John Johnson (1545–1594)
Flow My Tears	Dowland
Can She Excuse	Dowland
Lady Carey's Dompe	Anonymous (c.1520s)
The Queen's Treble	Johnson
Ddoi di dai	Traditional (c.13 th Century Wales)
Nottamun Town	Traditional (late Medieval England)

www.Ayreheart.com

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ARTIST PROFILE



Ayreheart grew out of Ronn McFarlane's desire to write new music for the lute - the most popular instrument of the Renaissance - and make it accessible to a wider audience. His first compositions were conceived as solos. But he was soon writing music that could not be fully expressed on solo lute and needed musician friends to help realize the music. Willard Morris and Mattias Rucht teamed up with him, and soprano Sarah Pillow, though not a member, sings with them. They perform original music as well as Renaissance music from the time of Shakespeare.

Ayreheart also performs Renaissance concerts with voice, two lutes, colascione (a kind of bass lute) and hand percussion. These historically informed concerts, such as the one we hear today, give a glimpse into the lute's past, and the expressiveness that prompted Renaissance writers to call the lute "The Prince of Instruments."

An Ayreheart performance can consist of an eclectic mix of Renaissance-inspired Folk and Acoustic Rock originals, as well as some old traditional tunes, or entire programs of Renaissance music from the British Isles. Ayreheart also offers concerts consisting of half original music and half Renaissance music. When Centuries Collide is a groundbreaking concert program combining the elegance of Renaissance music with the propulsion of twenty-first century rock.

Pastime with Good Company

This is an English folk song attributed to "The Kynge H. viij." Henry was held in high esteem as a composer and musician, and this became a popular song in England. The early years of Henry VIII's reign exhibited a distinct spirit of exuberance and overindulgences in the English court. The song, penned during this period, reflects general praise to all these entertainments and diversions, depicting a general state of mind of leisure and unconcern that prevailed in court at the time. The text simultaneously provides a moral justification for all this merriment: company is preferable to idleness, for the latter breeds vice. It was probably written for Catherine of Aragon.

In a Garden so Green

The majority of compositions written through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance are by people long forgotten, and attribution often remains a problem. The composers of many songs, dances, and marches that were basic to daily life are nameless. In the realm of early secular music, a village musician might fabricate a dance tune that became popular. Learned by other players by ear, the tune would pass from village to hamlet, and from peer group to generation. The dance's origin would become obscure, even within the composer's life. Some pieces were calculatingly published anonymously for political or personal reasons, and many dodgy publishers simply 'forgot' to name their composers, thus evading the annoyance of paying them for their work. This song may date back to 1682 in a Scottish collection of *Songs & Fancies*. It is an older example of a courtly song turned folk: it came by way of the oral tradition, but was once written for someone of noble birth.

Lady Hunsdon's Puffe

John Dowland was the greatest of the lutenist songwriters, and we hear eight of his songs today. Much has been said about Dowland's gloomy temperament, but in Dowland's case it does not seem premeditated. He seems to have been a man of conflicting and potent emotions so vastly affected by his early failure to achieve an English court appointment¹ that he was not able to enjoy his great successes. But we should remember that rather than wallowing in self-pity, the expression of melancholy through music was seen in the Renaissance as having a cathartic and healing effect.

Nonetheless, his music reveals a wide range of emotions showing a highly active wit, even having a shot at polite social commentary on both his noble and bourgeois patrons. A number

of almins, pavans, and giges endure with the names of the ostensible dedicatees for the attached music; it may be that aspects of the actual persons are reflected in Dowland's music. Lady Hunsdon apparently gave Dowland the inspiration for this otherwise enigmatic piece. The title in itself is suggestive: does the word "puffe" suggest a dancer's exertional breath, the exhalation of a graceful society woman, or the imprudent dialogue of a bloviating windbag?²

Come Again

"Come Again, sweet love doth now invite" is a Dowland song with anonymous lyrics. The song is bitter-sweet, typical of Dowland's melancholy style and was included in his *First Booke of Songes or Ayres*, which appeared in 1597.

Passemeze

Adrian Le Roy was an influential French lutenist, mandore player, guitarist, composer, music educator, and music publisher. His function as publisher was that of artistic director, making sure only the good stuff got published. That included, of course, his own works: six volumes of lute music, five books for four-course guitar, and much more. "Passemeze" can be found in *A Briefe and easye instru[c]tion to learne the tableture to conducte and dispose thy hande unto the Lute* (London 1568). The piece is written in 8 bars, so it is frequently repeated, and there is both a simple as well as a decorated version. You will hear tight runs of notes that are characteristic of Le Roy's diminutive style.

Twa Corbies

"Twa Corbies" (Two Ravens) is a Scottish adaptation of an English ballad sung to a different melody and with a darker, more cynical twist. The ballad takes the form of two scavenger birds conversing about where and what they should eat. One tells of a newly slain knight, relating that his hawk and hound have forsaken their master and are off chasing other game, while his mistress has already taken another lover. They talk in gruesome detail about the meal they will make of him, plucking out his eyes and using his hair for their nests. Themes believed to be portrayed include the fragility of life, the idea that life goes on after death, and a somewhat more pessimistic viewpoint on life.

Mr. Dowland's Midnight

Because of his reputation for melancholy, it is perhaps fitting that when Dowland penned his own name on a lute solo, it would be called his "Midnight." Structurally, this is an almain, one of several dance-forms that enjoyed a huge fad in Elizabethan England. Also known as an

allemande in French, it probably originated in Germany, though by the time Dowland added his always ingenious embellishments, the music is transformed into something wholly artistic and elevated above the essentials of the practical dance. Dowland's strangely sparse piece falls clearly into two repeated strains of a simple four bars each, and Dowland endows his work with unconcealed melancholy. Cast in a minor key, he bases harmonic progressions of both strains on a descending melodic fourth, understood by musicians of the time as a perfect motif of gloom. Even the minutiae of ornamentation subtly underscore the emotion: listen for aching tritone intervals.

Fortune

As do many of Dowland's compositions, "Fortune" exists in several versions, including a lute solo and an arrangement for broken consort (group including strings and winds). The music promotes his doleful self-image, probably a combination of fashionable posing and authentic bouts of depression. The minor-mode melody bears resemblance to the French Renaissance pavane "Belle qui tiens ma vie." It started out as a lover's complaint but soon became the tune to which condemned people sang their last words before going to their death at the gallows.

John Barleycorn

"John Barleycorn" is a British folksong. The character of John Barleycorn in the song is a personification of the significant cereal crop barley and of the beer and whisky made from it. In the song, John Barleycorn is portrayed as suffering attacks, death and indignities that correspond to the various stages of barley refinement, such as reaping, malting, and fermenting. Countless versions of this song exist. A Scottish poem with a similar theme is included in the *Bannatyne Manuscript* of 1568 and English broadside versions from the 17th century are common. Robert Burns published his own version in 1782, and modern versions abound.³ Burns' version makes the tale somewhat mysterious and, although not the original, it became the model for most subsequent versions.

A Fancy

Dowland's "A Fancy" lives up to its description extremely well, showing both contrapuntal ploy, and a wide selection of instrumental techniques, providing the player with possibility for virtuosity of both fingers and imaginings in its performance. Dowland's

¹ He did not replace John Johnson in Queen Elizabeth's court, nor replace a relative nonentity when the next vacancy occurred in 1610.

² Remind you of anyone you know?

³ Traffic, Steeleye Span, Jethro Tull, Joe Walsh, Steve Winwood, Fairport Convention, et al.

lute music continued to be copied after his death in 1626, and continues to delight us still with its thoughtful variety. This is one of the fantasias that Poulton lists as 'Anonymous, but probably by Dowland'. It is sometimes referred to as "Dowland's Tremolo Fantasia" because of the decoration of recurrent notes near the end. This piece occurs in several sources, some with the title "The Earl of Essex Galliard."

Tarleton's Resurrection

Dowland most likely composed *Tarleton's Resurrection* as a praise of the English comic actor Richard Tarleton, who died in 1588. The piece is very similar to Dowland's other jigs and the composition implies the composer knew, or at least appreciated, Tarleton. It is in 6/8 meter, aptly associated with a delightful Irish jig. A very succinct piece, it is closely woven and deftly fashioned. The bass line unceasingly expresses the meter as the melody moves in clusters of three notes. Chromatic nuances shade the piece from the opening, both in an emotional mode and to produce cadences. Only about one and a half lines long in the manuscript (now at Yale), the piece highlights a melody that rises nearly continuously, perhaps evoking the resurrection of the subject. Only the bass and uppermost voice move with any constancy, whereas the two inner voices harmonize.

Chi Passa

"Chi passa per 'sta strada" (He who passes down this street) was originally a vocal piece by Filippo Azzaiolo, a 16th century composer and singer in various Bolognese churches. His surviving compositions were published in three collections entitled *Villotte del fiore* (1557–1569). These songs frequently contain nonsense syllables and passages in triple time. The popularity of the villotta alla padovana, a form for four voices to which he made a notable contribution, was derived from Venetian dance-song and was of limited duration. The dedicatees each have links to Bologna, so it seems likely that Azzaiolo himself had connections to that city. "Chi passa" was especially well known and was used as the basis of a keyboard piece by William Byrd. John Johnson took this piece as a basis for a set of divisions to it for lutes making it a set of English variations using this Italian vocal piece as the basis for those variations.

Flow My Tears

"Flow, My Tears" and its melody became very well-known and influential, and are a prime example of the contemporary fashion for melancholia. First composed as an instrumental under the name "Lachrimae pavane," it is Dowland's most famous ayre, and became his signature song. Like other of Dowland's lute songs, the piece's musical form and style are based on a dance, in this case the pavan. It is

thought that Dowland himself wrote the lyrics. The melancholy subject matter was fashionable in the Elizabethan period, and musically the piece affects that now familiar air of mourning and grief, established by the chromatic descending bassline from A to E appearing in the opening bars. It is likely that you have heard this piece before (even if you have never heard of it) because it is one of the most famous pieces in the English language. Anthony Boden calls the song "probably the most widely known English song of the early 17th century."

Can She Excuse

This is another Dowland galliard with an interesting back story (when played as an instrumental it is known as "The Right Honourable Earl of Essex His Galliard"). The text is thought to be by Robert Devereux, the 2nd Earl of Essex. Devereux became Queen Elizabeth's famous court favorite, but when he often displeased the Queen he was sent away from court. At these times he would retreat to Wanstead in the country outside London where he would walk in the woods and write sonnets to the Queen begging her forgiveness, all of which is encapsulated in the galliard. The ballad tune "Will Yow Walke the Woods soe Wylde," heard in the lute part of the third strain, is a very apt description of Essex's country activities. As to his clemency, he was beheaded for treason in 1601.

Lady Carey's Dompe

"Lady Carey's Dompe" is one of the earliest surviving Renaissance musical pieces, most probably written for lute and harpsichord, notable as being the first composition that can be clearly identified as being composed for a keyboard because of the left-hand configuration. A traditional English dance tune, it was a written-down improvisation by an unknown musician during the time of Henry VIII. It is sometimes attributed to English innovative composer of the early Tudor period, Hugh Aston, an important Tudor composer known for his writing for the keyboard. It consists of an improvisatory treble line over a drone alternating between two bass notes, G and D. It may have been written for the death of William Carey, a courtier and favorite of Henry VIII, who died on 22 June 1528. Some sources attribute dedication to Lady Carey, his wife Mary Boleyn, one of the mistresses of Henry VIII and the sister of Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn, but this is unlikely as William was never knighted.

The Queen's Treble

John Johnson was employed as a lutenist at the court of Queen Elizabeth I in 1579 and is last mentioned in court records in 1594. His widow, the following year, was granted a lease on various lands, a recognition of her late husband's distinction as one of the first great English

lutenists. He wrote dance movements in the tradition of the time, works that have an element of contrapuntal interest, and he made a significant contribution to the lute duet. Johnson's lively and infectiously jolly (if somewhat repetitive) dump, known as "The Queen's Treble", was written as a duet. English duets fall into two categories: 'equal' duets where both lutes play harmonized parts, often with some imitative dialogue between the two lutes, and 'treble and ground' duets, where one player plays a single ornate melody line, while the other plays the ground, a repeated pattern of chords, providing the bass and harmony.

Ddoi di dai

"Ddoi di Dai" is a lament for Daffydd ap Gruffydd, the last independent Prince of Wales, who was executed by Edward "Longshanks" in 1283. This King Edward I was the same English King who also later executed William Wallace in Scotland. Dai is Welsh for the name David. The text of the song includes references to wishing that David would come home, for now "who will plant the wild flowers" in the meadow.

Nottamun Town

"Nottamun Town" is an English folk song that dates from the late medieval period and was brought to North America during the early colonial era. In England it was considered a "lost song", not sung since the early 18th century: though the words were preserved on paper, the melody was forgotten. Musicologists in North America discovered people in parts of the southern Appalachian Mountains still singing the song in the early 20th century. It's a great tune with a set of confusing, contradicting lyrics that seem to obfuscate a deeper meaning. The song is fairly popular in the English Midlands, particularly in Nottinghamshire, which lends credence to the theory that Nottamun is a corruption of Nottingham. Theories abound as to the meaning of the song, but two are generally accepted as probable: it derives from the Feast of Fools or Mummers' Plays and their absurd topsy-turvy worlds, or that it refers to the English Civil War, in which Charles I of England raised his first army around Nottingham. A popular theme at the time with diarists and pamphleteers was 'The World Turned Upside Down' and there are many famous woodcuts dating from this period with illustrations of cats chasing dogs, men wearing boots on their hands and the like. The song has a taboo on it: whoever figures out its meaning will lose all of his or her luck.

62ND SEASON

2017-2018

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For an in-depth treatise on "Nottamun Town", check out: www.sophiapereennis.com/discussion-forums/traditionalism-and-folklore/fair-nottamun-town-mystical-and-alchemical-symbolism-in-an-appalachian-folk-song/

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