

Music for Voices and Viols

La Spirita

with guest artists

Elizabeth Horn and Jack Zamboni

Canzone Quarta
Canzone prima "La Spirita"
Melpomene

Giovanni Gabrielli
(c.1556-1612)
Michael East
(1580-1612)
Henry Purcell
(1659-1695)

Fantazia no. 11

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Though Amaryllis dance in green

William Byrd
(1543-1623)

To ask for all thy love
Stay time a while thy flying

John Dowland
John Dowland
(1562-1626)

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Fantasia no. 7

John Coprario
(c.1575-1626)

A sad paven for these distracted tymes
February 14, 1649

Thomas Tomkins
(1572-1656)

Prelude and Voluntary

William Byrd

Intermission

I care not for these ladies

Thomas Campian
(1566-1620)

My love hath vowed
Go crystal tears

Thomas Campian
John Dowland
(arr. Will Ayton)

Go crystal tears

Will Ayton
(1948-)

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The Bee
Fall of the Leaf

Anon. 17th c.
Marshall Barron
(fl.2003)

Yom Ze L'Yisrael
The Cradle (Pavan)
The Honie-suckle (Almaine)
The Fairie-round (Galliard)

Will Ayton
Anthony Holborne
(d. 1602)

We have chosen for this program some of our favorite music from the viola da gamba consort repertoire. The meat and potatoes of the viol consort is the English fantasia and we have included two fantasias in 4 parts by Henry Purcell and John Coprario, and one in 3 parts by Michael East.

The fantasia (in all of its various spellings) was the most important instrumental form in late 16th and early 17th century England. Thomas Morley in 1597 described it thus:

when a musician taketh a point at his pleasure, and wresteth and turneth it as he list, making either much or little of it as shall seeme best in his own conceit. In this may more art be showne then in any other musicke, because the composer is tide to nothing but that he may adde, diminish, and alter at his pleasure Other things you may use at your pleasure, as bindings with discords, quicke motions, slow motions, proportions, and what you list.

You may be surprised to see the Baroque composer Henry Purcell grouped with composers of viol consort music. "**Fantazia no. 11**" is one of 12 in three and four parts. They are among his earliest surviving works and in a style which harkens back to the works of Matthew Locke. They are often performed on modern strings, but were meant for viol consort.

Michael East wrote a fantasia for each of the nine muses – "**Melpomene**" is the muse of Tragedy playing a bass viol. Yes, Coprario is English. His name was originally Cooper or Cowper, but because Italian vocal (the madrigal) and instrumental music was all the rage at the time, a musician with an Italian name was at an advantage.

Elizabeth Horn and Jack Zamboni have joined us to perform some *Consort songs* and *Ayres*. The *Consort song* was intended for solo voice and a consort of viols while the *Ayre* is for solo voice and lute. Both were usually published for maximum flexibility so that they could be performed by solo voice with instrumental accompaniment (either viols or lute), all instrumentally or all vocally. The songs we have included by Dowland and Campian are *Ayres*, while "**Though Amaryllis dance in green**" by Byrd is a consort song. In addition, we have added a contemporary setting of Dowland's *Ayre* "**Go crystal tears**" by Will Ayton.

"**The Bee**" is a short dance from a 17th century *Masque* or entertainment, while "**A Sad Paven for These Distracted Tymes**" by Tomkins and "**Prelude and Voluntary**" by Byrd, are both transcriptions from keyboard works. It was a common practice to create instrumental pieces from keyboard works and vice versa. The pavan was written to mourn the execution of Charles I in 1649. Tomkins, a court musician, had also composed music for Charles I's coronation.

Representing Italy, where the viola da gamba developed, are 2 canzonas by Gabrielli. These light-hearted pieces are a departure from his large-scale ceremonial music written for performance at St. Mark's Cathedral.

We return to the 21st century with two contemporary settings. "**The Fall of the Leaf**" is based on music composed by Martin Peerson (c. 1572 – 1651). His divisions, some of which Pat will play first, may be found in the "Fitzwilliam Virginal Book". The melody has a plaintive, tragic quality. Listen for two counter melodies in the bass line which are woven into the fabric of the piece: "Autumn Leaves", a jazz ballad by Johnny Mercer, and "Forest Green", an English folk tune used as an alternate melody for "O Little Town of Bethlehem". Will Ayton has set a traditional Jewish melody. "**Yom Ze L'Yisrael**" is from the Russian Lubavitcher Hasidim tradition - the lyrics celebrate the joy of the Sabbath.

We end our program with three 5-part dances by Anthony Holborne. The "**Fairie-round**" is perhaps our all time favorite dance. Its 6/8 meter is constantly shifting from twos to threes - each part shifting at a different time – there's the fun!

Mary Benton