

PARTHENIA

Beverly Au, treble and bass viols
Lawrence Lipnik, tenor viol
Rosamund Morley, treble, tenor, and bass viols
Lisa Terry, bass viol

Voices of the Viol

Captain Hume, Master of the Viol

An Almaine: M. Georges Delight Tobias Hume (c.1569-1645)
A Spanish Humour: The Lord Hayes favoret
An English Frenchman
A Polish Ayre and Vilanell
Death/Life
The Pashion of Musicke: Sir Christopher Hattons choice

A Hapsburg Songbook

La dame le demanda Antonio de Cabezón (1510-1566)
Two fantasias a3 Francesco da Milano (1497-1543)
¿Qu'es mi vida preguntays? Johannes Cornago (1400-c.1474)/
Johannes Ockeghem (c.1410-1497)
Der Hund Heinrich Isaac (1450-1517)
Mille Regretz Josquin des Prés (c.1450-1521)
Response: Les miens aussi brief Tielman Susato (c.1510-c.1570)
A la Bataglia Isaac

Intermission

The Art of Fugue

Contrapunctus I à 4 J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Canon alla ottava à 2
Contrapunctus II à 4

Continental Dances

Pavana Prima Carlo Farina (c.1604-1639)
Three Spagnolettas Giamberti (c.1600-c.1664)
Hetorre della Marra (fl.1620)
Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

English Fantasias

Fantasy a4 John Jenkins (1592-1678)
Fantasy a3 William Byrd (c.1540-1623)
Fantasy a4 Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Note on the program

From the earliest documented mention of a Spanish consort of viols in a 1493 letter to the Mantuan duchess, Isabella d'Este, to the 1787 death in London of Karl Friedrich Abel, the celebrated viol virtuoso and friend of J.S.Bach's son Johann Christian, the sound of the viola da gamba was treasured throughout Europe for its ability to imitate the human voice and to move the emotions of those who heard it. Across those three centuries the viol was played by professional and amateur musicians for dancing and singing, for worship, for entertainment and recreation, and to boast of the power and prestige of the patrons whose courts and chapels were graced by our beautiful viola da gamba.

Tonight's program presents a tiny cross section of the variety of music those viols might have played. The earliest comes from the music of the Hapsburg Emperors, whose cultural influence extended from Eastern Europe to Spain. We like to conjecture that perhaps some of the music by these early composers was played by the viol consort that Isabella d'Este was urged to hire; we know that composers employed by the German Hapsburgs traveled with their patrons to work in Spain and Burgundy at other Hapsburg courts and that the great feasts held for visiting nobility were fertile grounds for the exchange of musical ideas amongst these composers. The youngest composer on our program is J. S. Bach. His

PARTHENIA, hailed by the *New Yorker* as "one of the brightest lights in New York's early-music scene," is a dynamic ensemble exploring the extraordinary repertory for viols from Tudor England to the court of Versailles and beyond. Known for its remarkable sense of ensemble, Parthenia is presented in concerts across America, and produces its own lively and distinguished concert series at Corpus Christi Church in New York City, collaborating regularly with the world's foremost early music specialists and has been featured on radio and television and in prestigious festivals and series as wide-ranging as *Music Before 1800*, *Maverick Concerts* and the *Regensburg Tage Alter Musik*.

masterwork of counterpoint, *The Art of Fugue*, written in the last years of his life, was most likely intended for performance on an organ, but the transparent sound of a consort of viols is a perfect medium to express the intricacies of Bach's craft, and these fugues are gratifying to play. Between these milestones, we offer some music of the eccentric Elizabethan Tobias Hume, a mercenary soldier who took his viol with him on his military campaigns and who wrote music so idiomatic that it can be played only by the viol, or perhaps by the lute. These pieces are whimsical pictures of his peripatetic life or songs dedicated to patrons he hoped would smile on him, and they show the unique ability of the viola da gamba to pluck chords with the bow as accompaniment to its own melodies. The English fantasies by Byrd, Jenkins and Purcell represent some of the huge outpouring of similar compositions begun in the reign of Elizabeth I and culminating in the dense and emotional fantasies of Purcell. And finally, the continental dances show the intersection of stylized dance forms – Carlo Farina's *Pavan* – with music used by the dancing masters who traveled Europe to teach the latest dancing styles that was collected into several huge volumes of dance music by the Swiss composer Michael Praetorius. This is all music we love to play and we hope that the array you hear tonight will delight and move you too.

- Rosamund Morley

Noteworthy among Parthenia's inventive programs have been presentations of the complete viol fantasies of Henry Purcell at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the complete instrumental works of Robert Parsons at Columbia's Miller Theatre, as well as the popular touring program "When Music & Sweet Poetry Agree," a celebration of Elizabethan poetry and music with actor Paul Hecht. Parthenia performs often at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, both in Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium and in the Museum's Medieval Sculpture Hall, and appeared in conjunction with the exhibition "Searching for Shakespeare" at the Yale Center for British Art.

Parthenia's enduring interest in the bonds between poetry and music will be heard in a forthcoming release of 16th-century settings of the poems of Pierre de Ronsard, *Les Amours de Mai*, with soprano Julianne Baird and Renaissance violinist Robert Mealy. Parthenia has also recorded *Within the Labyrinth*, *Parthenia Sampler*, *A Reliquary for William Blake*, and *Trumpet after Dark*, with jazz trumpeter Randy Sandke.

Parthenia has commissioned, premiered and recorded many new works by composers such as Phil Kline, Brian Fennelly, Will Ayton, Randy Sandke, Frances White, Nicholas Patterson, funded in part through grants from the Fromm Foundation, American Composers Forum, the Camargo Foundation, Roger Williams University, the Viola da Gamba Society of America, and private donors. An ASCAP/CMA Award honored Maverick Concerts' 2002 Season, which included two world premieres of works by Brian Fennelly, commissioned especially for Parthenia by Maverick Concerts. Through a 2006 grant from the Jerome Foundation, Parthenia premiered "Nothing Proved," a song cycle for viol consort, voice and interactive audio processing, set by composer Kristin Norderval to the extraordinary poetry of Queen Elizabeth I. More information about Parthenia's activities can be found at www.parthenia.org.