

PARTHENIA

Rosamund Morley, treble viol
Lawrence Lipnik, tenor viol
Beverly Au, bass viol
Lisa Terry, bass viol
with guest
Caroline Nicolas, treble viol

CONTINENTAL CONNECTIONS

Paduan & Galliard	William Brade (1560-1630)
Benedictus	Heinrich Isaac (1450-1517)
Aflitti spirti	Philippe Verdelot (c.1485-c.1530)
Amour partez	Philip van Wilder (c.1500-c.1554)
Adrianus Fantasie	Adrian Willaert? (c.1490-1562)
Je file	Van Wilder
Aria del Gran Duca	Peter Philips (c.1560-1628)
Fantasia 1 a 5	Richard Dering (c.1580-1630)
Spanish Paven	John Bull (c.1562-1628)
The King of Denmark's Galliard	John Dowland (c.1563-1626)
Canzon XIV ~ XV	Brade
Fantasia 1 a 3	Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)
Pavan & Galliard "Sachevil's Dolorosa"	Thomas Simpson (1582-1628)
Ein Schottisch Tantz	Brade
Fantasia [49]	Giovanni Coprario (c. 1570-1626)
"Clorinda"	Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605)
"Latral" Parte prima	Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)
Parte seconda	Richard Mico (1590-1621)
Dulces exuvia	Dyricke Gerarde (fl.1550-1590)

January 26, 2025, 4 pm
The Church of Saint Luke in the Fields
NYC

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Even island nations are rarely musically insular. Although it can be tempting to view the viol consort as an archotypically English phenomenon, its history and literature suggest that its popularity was the product of robust cultural exchange. Most English consort music appears in manuscript miscellanies, where fantasias by English composers appeared alongside madrigals, mass movements, and other music of continental origin. Renaissance composers and viol players often led cosmopolitan careers, with continental musicians prominently featured at the English court and English musicians venturing abroad in the wake of the sweeping changes brought about by the English Reformation. Today's program explores the dynamic musical connection between England and Europe during the Renaissance, showcasing how English musicians absorbed continental musical styles and traveled across Europe in pursuit of fame, fortune, and religious freedom. Henry VIII (1491–1547), himself an enthusiastic musician and composer, was an important patron of continental viol players. In the 1520s, he hired a Flemish viol trio to join the "King's Musick," and in the 1540s brought on a sextet of Italian Sephardic viol players, known variously as the "Newe Vialles" or the "Venetian Brethren." He employed other foreign-born musicians, too, including Dutch lutenist Philip Van Wilder (c. 1500–1554). Van Wilder seems to have been equally talented in music, business, and politics: he became a Gentleman of the Privy chamber and a naturalized citizen, allowing him to own land, and profited from a thriving mercantile business importing Toulouse mead and Gascon wine. Most of his output consisted of songs like "*Amour partés*" and "*Je file*," which were widely copied in English and European sources. Van Wilder wrote in a number of continental styles, often favoring the five-voice Flemish model but at other times preferring a lighter French idiom. In addition to employing European musicians, Henry's court also imported a large number of continental compositions. The *Henry VIII Book*, a manuscript of mostly secular works carefully curated to illustrate the diversity of musical idioms fashionable at court, features music by many continental composers, as well as by the

King himself. The collection opens with a *Benedictus* by the Netherlandish composer Heinrich Isaac (1450–1517) from his *Missa Quant j'ai au Coeur*; the prominent placement highlights English interest in emulating continental polyphony. Continental composers cultivated connections with Henry's court themselves, too, perhaps in pursuit of jobs in the rapidly growing "King's Musick" that Henry established. While working in Florence as *maestro di cappella* at Santa Maria del Fiore, the French-born Philippe Verdelot (c. 1480–1540), a pioneering composer of the Italian madrigal, compiled a set of partbooks intended as a "musical embassy" for Henry. His gift featured his own compositions, among them "*Aflitti spirti*," and those of other Italian composers, which were duly copied into English manuscript sources. Italian printing culture, too, touched English shores. As *Maestro di Cappella* of San Marco in Venice, Adrianus Willaert (1490–1562) benefitted from the city's status as a center of music printing in the early sixteenth century. Although as a church musician he was likely best known for his motets and masses, editions of his fantasias, canzone, and villanelles were printed (and reprinted) to great acclaim and widespread circulation. Although it was Henry who had instigated the English Reformation, the reign of Elizabeth I (1533–1603) brought new and significant challenges for English Catholics. Until the late 1560s, measures to control the Catholic population in England were largely limited to enforcement of recusancy fines established by the 1559 *Act of Uniformity*. But Elizabeth then enacted a series of ever more punitive laws that enabled her to control, punish, and even execute her Catholic subjects. Simultaneously, the profession of music was undergoing rapid change. Protestant lay patrons usurped the Catholic church as the primary source of musical patronage, a shift that directly contributed to the rise of secular viol consort music for use at aristocratic estates. Meanwhile, the 1572 *Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds* rendered freelance musicians without noble or institutional sponsorship vulnerable to imprisonment. A musician's inability to secure a position within the Chapel Royal, cathedrals, or major collegiate churches thus often resulted in self-imposed exile to

the Continent or, in the case of recusants, retreat into a sympathetic Catholic household. These exiles then played a key role in transmitting English musical traditions to continental Europe, often in dynamic interaction with local styles. This fostered an appreciation for English music, which in turn ensured the ongoing publication of works in the English style abroad.

The career of Peter Philips (c. 1560–1628) exemplifies the tumult of recusancy. A Catholic priest and virtuoso keyboardist, Philips fled England in 1582. His travels included a stint in Rome, where he studied with Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, and a harrowing journey to Amsterdam to hear the Flemish organist Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, during which he was imprisoned and tried for complicity in a plot on Elizabeth's life. (He was later acquitted.) Philips's compositions, including settings of popular European melodies like *Aria del Gran Duca*, which originated in a 1592 *intermedio* by Emilio de Cavalieri, reflect the synthesis of English and continental styles that characterized his career.

Other English musicians converted to Catholicism while abroad, complicating their relationships with their homeland. Richard Dering (c. 1580–1630), also an organist, converted to Catholicism during a visit to Italy in 1612 and subsequently settled in Brussels for much of his career. He was able to return to England in the final years of his life to serve in the private Catholic chapel of Charles I's wife Henrietta Maria, but the influence of the Italian madrigal is clear in the sectional structure and frequent homophony of his viol fantasias. John Bull's successful career took him to the Spanish Netherlands, where he became organist of Antwerp Cathedral; he was at one point accused of being a Catholic, though this was never proven. Known for his virtuosic works for virginal, Bull often incorporates elements of continental traditions, blending English counterpoint with the ornamentation and flair of the Dutch keyboard school.

John Dowland converted to Catholicism as a young man traveling in Paris, a decision that complicated his professional aspirations upon returning to England. He set out to make his fortune abroad, securing a post at the Danish court, but continued to publish prolifically in London and supplement his income with well-

remunerated espionage assignments from Sir Robert Cecil. Both these ventures seem to have been strategic attempts to secure a court appointment at home in England, since they ceased after Dowland was finally appointed to James I's court. Dowland often repurposed compositions to suit new contexts or patrons. He initially composed his *Battle Galliard* as a lute solo, but reimaged in 1610 as an ensemble piece dedicated to King Christian IV of Denmark, his former patron and the brother of Anne of Denmark, who by then had become Queen of England after her marriage to James I. In its revised form, the piece's intricate divisions, emblematic of Dowland's late style, amplify the martial character of the original.

A virtuoso violinist and prolific composer of instrumental music, William Brade spent much of his career in Germany, where he became known for his fiery temperament and his innovative dance compositions. In 1612, having been engaged to work for Count Ernst III of Holstein-Schaumburg for a (very good) salary of 400 Thaler, livery, and a cartload of rye wine, Brade refused to work unless offered 1000 Thaler. The Count, offended, rejected Brade's terms, and warned his future employers in Hamburg against engaging such a "wanton, mischievous fellow"; nevertheless, Brade got the job. Works like the *Scottish Dance* and the *Canzone*—Italianate instrumental works often characterized by a five-part texture with two equal top parts—showcase Brade's ability to blend the sectional and homophonic textures of continental dance forms with the intricate counterpoint characteristic of English music. Brade was equally comfortable in the traditional English genres, as exemplified by the pavan-galliard pair that opens tonight's program.

Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625) had an illustrious career, earning the title "hand of England" for his virtuosity on the virginal. Around 1620 he published a set of three-part fantasias for viols, already in an old-fashioned contrapuntal style. Surprisingly, these fantasias enjoyed a brief resurgence in the 1660s, when Amsterdam publisher Paulus Matthysz (1616–84) known for pirating English works, included Gibbons' pieces in one of his three collections of consort music.

Little is known of Thomas Simpson's (1582–1628) career in England; the first records of his musical employment date from 1608,

when he was employed at the court of the Elector Palatine at Heidelberg. While working in Germany, he published his *Opusculum newer Pavanen*, that included *Sachevil's Dolorosi*. While Simpson often included his own variants on other composers' works in this collection, this pavan was an original composition, likely an elegy for Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset (d. 1608).

The program concludes with a group of works by continental composers that appear in English sources. The Italian madrigal in England is typically most closely associated with Nicholas Yonge's 1588 *Musica Transalpina*, which sparked a widespread fascination with Italian madrigals and inspired numerous English imitators. (Such was the appetite for Italian compositions that the already-established composer John Cooper (1570–1626) began to style himself "Giovanni Coprario," under which name he composed traditional English fantasias with Italian flair.) Although the Italian madrigal in its original context is intimately concerned with the relationship between music and poetry, Italian madrigals that appear in English manuscript collections are typically either "englished" (i.e., translated, often badly) or reproduced without their text. Orazio Vecchi's "*Clorinda*," from his first book of madrigals (1589), and "*La*

giovinetta," by Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643), receive the latter treatment in the English manuscripts where they appear. Sometimes, an English composer would provide musical commentary on a well-known Italian work, as Richard Mico (1590–1661) did with his "*Latral*," which responds to Monteverdi's "*La tra'l sangue' le morti*." Mico's "*Latral*" was copied widely in English manuscript sources, appearing both with and without Monteverdi's original work preceding it.

The program concludes with a setting by Dericke Gerarde (fl.1550–1590) of "*Dulces exuviae*," which draws its text from the final words of Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid*. The Latin phrase, meaning "sweet relics," captures a moment of profound emotional intensity as Dido bids farewell to Aeneas and to life itself. Although Gerarde remains a mysterious figure, it seems certain that he spent at least some of his career in England, where a number of partbooks collect his music. "*Dulces exuviae*" reflects the shared fascination between England and the Continent with classical antiquity, underscoring the depth of cultural exchange that shaped the music of this era and providing a fitting conclusion to this exploration of interconnected musical traditions.

~ Cat Slowik

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

The viola da gamba quartet PARTHENIA brings early music into the present with a ravishing sound and a remarkable sense of ensemble, animating both ancient and fresh-commissioned repertoire to critical acclaim. These "local early-music stars," hailed by *The New Yorker* and music critics throughout the world, are "one of the brightest lights in New York's early-music scene." Parthenia is Beverly Au, Lawrence Lipnik, Rosamund Morley and Lisa Terry. The ensemble appears regularly in concerts across America and produces its own series in New York City, collaborating with the world's foremost early music specialists. The quartet has been featured in prestigious festivals and series as wide-ranging as Music Before 1800, Berkeley Early Music Festival, Early Music Now Concert Series, Arizona Early Music Society, Chamber Music Tulsa, National Gallery of Art, Harriman-Jewell Series, Maverick Concerts, Regensburg Tage Alter Musik, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Pierpont Morgan Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and at the Venice Biennale. Parthenia's performances range from Venetian Renaissance masterpieces performed on rare reproductions of the earliest viols, to the complete viol fantasies of Henry Purcell, to a musical journey through the Habsburg empire. Parthenia also commissions and premieres new works annually, especially engaging women composers such as Calliope Tsoupaki, Frances White, Kristin Norderval, Tawnie Olson, and librettist Wendy Steiner. Parthenia's discography includes *As it Fell on a Holie Eve* – Music for an Elizabethan Christmas, *Les Amours de Mai*, *The Flaming Fire* – Mary Queen of Scots and Her World, *A Reliquary for William Blake*, *Within the Labyrinth and Nothing Proved* – New Works for Viols, Voice, and Electronics. Parthenia is represented by Summerell Arts and records for MSR Classics.

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Noted for her “eloquent artistry and rich, vibrant sound” (Gainesville Times), CAROLINE NICOLAS has been praised as “one of the finest gambists working today” (Gotham Early Music Scene). Ensembles she has worked with include the English Concert, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, Mercury Chamber Orchestra, Ars Lyrica Houston, Juilliard Baroque, Harmonia Stellarum, Philharmonia Baroque, Pacific MusicWorks, Kammerorchester Basel, New World Symphony, and Sinfonieorchester Liechtenstein. Notable venues include the KKL Luzern, Berliner Philharmonie, Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, and Benaroya Hall. Distinctions include having been selected as a fellow of The English Concert in America, an award given to young musicians “who appear likely to make significant contributions to the field of early music.” Her recent concert with Emerald City Music was listed in the Seattle Times as a top pick for classical music concerts that season.

#### ABOUT THE VIOL

The viol, or viola da gamba, is a family of stringed instruments celebrated in European music from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Today on both sides of the Atlantic, soloists as well as viol groups—known as “consorts”—have rediscovered the lost repertoire and ethereal beauty of this early instrument. The viol was first known as the “bowed guitar” (vihuela da arco), a joint descendent of the medieval fiddle and the 15th-century Spanish guitar. Unlike its cousin, the arm-supported violin (viola da braccio), the viol is held upright on the leg (gamba) or between the legs; its bow is gripped underhand; and its body is made of bent or molded wood. These characteristics lend a distinctive lightness and resonance to viol sound that have inspired a wave of new works by 21st-century composers and a growing enthusiasm on the part of international audiences.

#### Parthenia acknowledges the following people and organizations for help in making this concert possible:

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Join us for Parthenia’s next performance at Saint Luke’s

**Sunday, April 27, 2025, 4pm**  
**LES AMOURS DE MAI**

Our spring concert features French Renaissance songs and dances marked by grace, balance and a wonderful sense of lightness, especially the song settings of poetry of Pierre de Ronsard by such composers as le Jeune, Costeley, Goudimel, du Caurroy and others.

Parthenia, performing on a consort of viols in the style of those used in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with guests Sherezade Panthaki, soprano and Christopher Morrongiolo, Renaissance lute

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