

NAXOS

DOWLAND

Fancies, Dreams and Spirits

Lute Music • 1

Nigel North, Lute



John Dowland (1563-1626)

Lute Music • 1

A true genius in any artistic field is a rare thing. In the world of the lute John Dowland most certainly qualifies for this accolade. Despite being a Catholic at the wrong time in English history and a man with a rather difficult complaining character, Dowland's genius still brought him praise and honour from his contemporaries. In a sonnet from 1598, the poet Richard Barnfield paid the most telling tribute to Dowland by writing "*Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch/Upon the lute doth ravish human sense*". From this, and from Dowland's music itself, we can sense that Dowland's inimitable qualities as a performer (of his own compositions) were the beauty of his tone coupled with an extraordinary ability to move the emotions of his listeners.

In our 21st century, Dowland is often remembered for his "*Lachrimae*" *Pavan*, and as a composer of melancholic music. This gives us, however, a very limited and unduly biased view of our "English Orpheus" because Dowland's music explores the complete range of human emotions with a unique blend of spirit, heart and intellect. The other qualities which are very much apparent are a wonderful melodic gift and a thorough, ingenious contrapuntal skill. While it is often virtuosic, Dowland's lute music is always natural and idiomatic. All of these qualities can be found throughout Dowland's canon of works which principally consists of about one hundred solo lute pieces, almost the same quantity of lute songs, with some consort pieces for viols and lute.

Shakespeare and John Dowland were exact contemporaries, born one year apart. Shakespeare, born in 1564, is known to have revised his works over many years but this does not diminish our admiration of his genius. Similarly, Dowland revised much of his music from year to year. Some lute pieces survive in as many as ten versions so it is impossible to define any as "the authentic one". The lute was a continuously developing instrument and Dowland would have begun his "luting"

on an instrument with only six courses (pairs of strings), but would have played a nine- or ten-course lute in his maturity. Thus we can trace Dowland's development side by side with that of the lute. Of course, the writing for the instrument tells us much, as does the history of each manuscript in which the music is found. More interesting evidence can be gleaned from the dedications which Dowland gave to many of his lute pieces. Patrons and courtiers, for example, often changed their names through marriage, they received new titles by Royal command, or they may also have gained a degree at one of the two English Universities. From all these directions, we can build a fairly clear chronological journey.

While borrowing ideas from the past, Dowland and Shakespeare were both extremely innovative in their creations. In Dowland's musical environment, it was perhaps more that the air was full of certain ideas, fashions and conventions and it was simply unavoidable to share or borrow from this collective. For Dowland, this might have been in the form of a phrase, (such as the famous descending *Lachrimae* theme) or a way of working with a musical figure and its inherent rhetorical meaning.

Fancies, Dreams and Spirits

The lute repertoire of Elizabethan England abounds with *Pavans*, *Galliards*, *Almains*, and variations on popular ballad tunes, but in comparison with the rest of Europe we find very few *Fantasies*. In this respect Dowland is unusual. He left us seven wonderful *Fantasies* written in various forms. Although this may seem small in number, Dowland wrote many more fantasies than his English contemporaries.

To an Elizabethan, a "*Fantasia*" or "*Fancye*" was a purely instrumental work in which the composer could

literally follow his own Fancy and make an expressive and varied piece of music without any restrictions of form. In writing about the English consort Fantasy, Thomas Morley described it in 1599 as *The most principal and chiefest kind of music which is made without a ditty...., that is when a musician taketh a point at his pleasure and wresteth and turneth it as he list... In this may more art be shown than in any other music because the composer is tied to nothing.*

The English lute *Fantasia* as a genre, and particularly those of Dowland, had a texture more flexible than the contrapuntal consort fantasy, sometimes strictly contrapuntal and at other times more idiomatically instrumental and playful. Dowland's awareness of musical style from the whole of Europe is very much mirrored in his lute *Fantasies*. Sometimes we can sense a very English contrapuntal tradition, including quotations and adaptations of figurations from colleagues such as Thomas Tallis. In contrast, Dowland was also interested in the world of Italian music, especially the madrigals of Marenzio. In his *Fantasies*, we find that Dowland mixes the English style with a more Italianate one. This often manifests itself as music which is more improvisatory in style, as one would expect from a prelude, toccata or ricercar.

Fantasia No. 1 (P1) is Dowland's earliest and probably his most well known. Optimistic, bright and virtuosic, it begins serenely with a traditional canzona-like opening with subsequent short contrapuntal sections which accumulate in speed and spirit leading to an exuberant conclusion. *Fantasies* Nos. 5, 6 and 7 are all more toccata-like and Italianate. *Fantasia No. 6 (P6)*, begins almost like a minor version of the *Fantasia No. 1*, but soon goes a very different route. *Fantasies Nos. 5 (P5)* and *7 (P7)* are thematically related and sound as though they could be "snap shots" of Dowland's own improvising. The pair of chromatic fantasies (*No. 2, P2*, and *No. 3, P3*) come as a great contrast. In these two fantasies, *Forlone Hope Fancy* and *Farewell*, the contrapuntal invention is extremely rich, and the chromaticism is daring and very innovative for the time. The shocking nature of this chromatic

music is partly reminiscent of certain English melancholic madrigals and also of the madrigals by the Italian Gesualdo. *Forlone Hope Fancy*, built on a descending chromatic bass, begins in deep melancholy but changes to a rapidly fleeing, runaway flourishing end. In contrast, *Farewell* has a rising chromatic theme which keeps the fantasia in a melancholic mood throughout. *Fantasia No. 4, P4*, is another "Farewell" yet unique for Dowland in being an *In Nomine*, a *Fantasia* based on a cantus firmus chant *Gloria tibi Trinitas*. The *In Nomine* fantasy was a favourite form of the English consorts of Dowland's contemporaries, but was not so common in lute literature. On this recording, the chant can be heard played on the lute before Dowland's fantasy begins. *Fantasy, P73*, is Dowland's "eighth" *Fantasia*, often known today as the *Tremolo Fantasia*, the modern title describing the repeated figuration at the piece's conclusion. The unique copy of this *fantasia* is found in the Cambridge University Library, Ms. Dd.9.33, preceded by a version of Dowland's *Fantasia No. 6*, unattributed in this manuscript but confirmed as Dowland's in several other sources. After some judicious editing this "tremolo" fantasia does yield a convincing fantasia worthy of a young Dowland.

Of the *Dreams* and *Spirits* in this recording, most pieces date from about 1590–1600. Four pieces are connected with the theatre. *Lord Strange's March* is an Almain-like piece, dedicated to Lord Strange who was the patron of the acting troupe Lord Strange's Men, in which Shakespeare performed from about 1587. Richard, or Will Tarleton was the first of the Elizabethan comic actors who performed with Shakespeare. We know he died in 1588 but it is not clear if *Tarletons Risurrection* was written in his memory or if it might have been conceived as a *Jig* in which he may have danced. I decided to play it as both an elegy and a jig. *The Shoemakers Wife (A Toy)* and *Orlando Sleepeth* are both likely to have been simple tunes composed by Dowland for the theatre. The "Dream" pieces are the only two remotely close in spirit to the melancholy of *Lachrimae*. A *Dream* is in fact a

Pavan, and *Mr. Dowland's Midnight* a simple, dreamy tune found in a late manuscript source, the Margaret Board Lute book.

The *Spirits* are all connected to Dowland's friends, patrons and court associates, honoured in the remaining playful pieces, Mrs White, Lady Clifton, Mrs Nichols, Mrs Vaux, Mrs Winter and Lady Hunsdon. George Carey, 2nd Baron Hunsdon, was appointed as Lord Chamberlain to Queen Elizabeth in 1597. As he was also patron of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, in which

Shakespeare acted, we have another link with Shakespeare and the theatre. Carey and his wife, Lady Elizabeth, were Dowland's friends and patrons. Dowland reworked a *Balletto* by the Italian lutenist Santino Garsi and dedicated it to Lady Hunsdon, and from this was born what must now be his most well known non-melancholic piece, *My Lady Hunsdon's Puffe*.

Nigel North

All performing versions have been edited from original sources by Nigel North.

Any numbering given to identify a piece is taken from *The Collected Lute Music of John Dowland*, Faber, 1974, edited by Diana Poulton and Basil Lam.

Nigel North

Nigel North was born in London in 1954, and has been playing the lute professionally now for over thirty years. Initially inspired into music at the age of seven by the early 1960s instrumental pop group The Shadows, he studied classical music through the violin and guitar, eventually discovering his real path in life, the lute, when he was fifteen. Basically self taught on the lute, he has developed a unique musical life which embraces activities as a teacher, accompanist, soloist, director and writer. His achievements include the publication of a basso continuo tutor (Faber 1987), representing his work and dedication for this subject, and a four-volume CD recording *Bach on the Lute* (1994-1997). Together with Andrew Manze (violin) and John Toll (harpsichord and organ), he formed the ensemble *Romanesca*, and for ten years, from 1988 to 1998, they explored, performed and recorded seventeenth-century chamber music, winning several international awards for their recordings. Nigel North also enjoys accompanying singers and is an enthusiastic teacher. For over twenty years he was Professor of Lute at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, and from 1993 to 1999 he was Professor at the Hochschule der Künste, Berlin. Since January 1999 he has been Professor of Lute at the Early Music Institute of Indiana University, Bloomington in the United States, and from January 2005 has also taught the Lute at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague.



DDD

8.557586

Playing Time
64:39

www.naxos.com

© & © 2006
Naxos Rights International Ltd.
Booklet notes in English
Made in Canada

The pre-eminent lutenist of his day, John Dowland was an almost exact contemporary of William Shakespeare. This first volume of his complete lute music, which comprises about one hundred solo pieces, includes the 7 *Fantasies* (or *Fancies*), free-form, improvisatory works in which the composer gives free rein to his fertile imagination and wonderful melodic gift.

John
DOWLAND
(1563-1626)

Lute Music • 1

1 Lord Strange's March	1:40	14 Mrs. Vaux's Jig	1:16
2 Mrs. White's Thing	2:14	15 Tarleton's Risurrectione	2:55
3 Mrs. White's Nothing	1:19		
4 'Tremolo' Fancy (P73)	3:27	16 A Fancy (Fantasie No. 6)	3:00
5 Mrs. Nichols' Almain	1:34	17 Forlorn Hope Fancy	3:52
6 A Fantasie (Fantasie No. 1)	4:27	(Fantasie No. 2)	
7 Preludium	1:06	18 The Shoemaker's Wife (A Toy)	1:14
8 A Fancy (Fantasie No. 5)	2:37	19 Lady Hunsdon's Puffe	1:50
9 A Dream	5:05	20 Orlando Sleepeth	2:55
10 A Fancy (Fantasie No. 7)	5:02		
11 Mrs. Winter's Jump	1:40	21 Mr. Dowland's Midnight	1:56
12 Lady Clifton's Spirit	1:48	22 Farewell 'In Nomine'	4:34
13 Mrs. Vaux's Galliard	2:27	(Fantasie No. 4)	
		23 Farewell (Fantasie No. 3)	6:41

Nigel North, Lute

Recorded at St John Chrysostom Church, Newmarket, Ontario, Canada, 23rd-26h July 2004

Producers: Norbert Kraft & Bonnie Silver • Engineering & Editing: Norbert Kraft

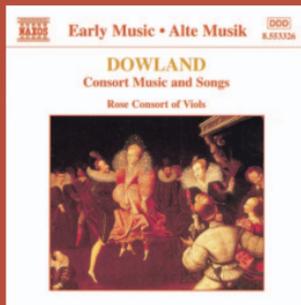
Instruments: 8 course lute by Paul Thomson, Bristol, 1999 (A 440) & 9 course lute by Paul Thomson,

Bristol, 1995 (A 392), both after early 17th Century models. • Booklet Notes: Nigel North

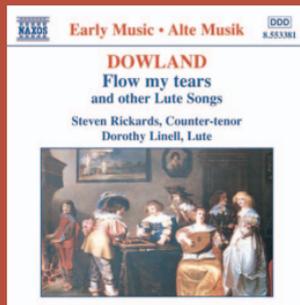
Cover Image: *Lute player*, anonymous (c. 1520-40)

[The Art Archive / Galleria Sabauda Turin / Dagli Orti (A)]

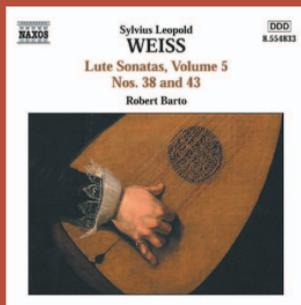
Also Available



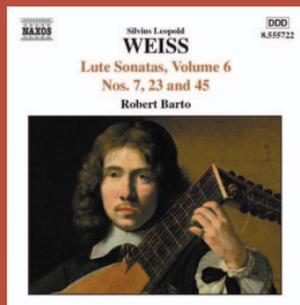
8.553326



8.553381



8.554833



8.555722