

## - Notes -

### VIOLS

**Richard Mico** (1590-1661) and **John Jenkins** (1592-1678) are celebrated fantasy composers. This form is rather like an instrumental madrigal in which several points of imitation are developed one after the other. Jenkins is our favourite composer, an inexhaustibly inventive melodist and a consummate contrapuntist. Like many of the English fantasy composers and like Haydn, Jenkins resided on the estates of the provincial gentry; he preferred to be treated as a gentleman house-guest of Lord Dudley North (an amateur treble viol player) rather than an employee.

**Clive Lane** is a Sydney based composer, with published works for viols and recorders. He is also an accomplished singer and viol player, and is member of our consort. *Air* is a composition for quartet of viols (treble/tenor/tenor/bass) in a 16<sup>th</sup> century style, in which Clive captures the mood of a viol piece by his favourite composer for viols: John Jenkins. The folk tune 'Barbara Allen', is a traditional Scottish ballad (Child Ballad 84) which later became a popular folk song. In Variations on *Barbara Allen's Cruelty*, Clive has set the melody for viol quartet with six variations.

Many of the fantasy composers were descended from Italian musicians imported as far back as Henry VII's time. By the time of Charles I their families were quite naturalized, and most of them served the usual musician's apprenticeship as choirboys. **John Coprario** (1570-1626) is an exception, he claimed to be Italian and there is no record of him as a choirboy. His music reveals some ingenious internal cadence schemes, unlike those commonly borrowed from the sacred style.

Musicians in Paris and Versailles at the time of the Sun King had to be careful not to seem to compete with the king's favourite, Lully. Then, when Lully used violins, Charpentier and **Henry DuMont** (1610-1684) would use viols. Whereas Lully's music was light and rhythmic for dancing, we have in this allemande by Henri DuMont (1652) a tune of exceptional gravity and nobility. We hear the low A string of the bass viol, and for added gravity, the theorbo.

**Michael Praetorius** (1571-1621) worked for Duke Heinrich Julius at Wolfenbützel. He wrote valuable treatises on performance practice and several volumes of church music. The Duke's second wife liked to party; a dance instructor was recruited from France who brought with him a collection of 340 of the latest French dance tunes. Praetorius was put to work orchestrating them. Benefiting from his previous experience, the dance settings of Terpsichore Musarum (1612) were quite polished.

*Notes by John Cunningham.*

### RECORDER CONSORT

**Trotto** (*Anon Italian 14th century*) is a lively monophonic dance in the form of a rondeau. It originated around 1390. The time signature for the trotto is given as 6/8, and is infused with the triple meter swing, kind of like listening to horse riding and fox hunting. In Italian, trotto means to trot.

**Virgo Rosa** (*Gilles Binchois 1400-1460*)

Gilles Binchois was a Franco-Flemish composer, one of the earliest members of the Burgundian School, and one of the three most famous composers of the early 15th century. Binchois is often considered to be the finest melodist of the 15th century, writing carefully shaped lines which are easy to sing, and utterly memorable. Most of his music, even his sacred music, is simple and clear in outline.

The words of this sacred motet -

*Virgin, rose of loveliness with even greater blossom, hold the honour of your chastity and rejoice in the privilege of a holier childbearing. Hail, virgin of virgins; hail, true virgin, ultimate in purity; virgin full of grace, you have borne the heavenly Lord. Amen.*

**Jongleurs** (*John Rimmer b 1939*)

John Rimmer is a New Zealand composer and this medieval dance has been given a modern twist which becomes obvious towards the end of the piece. Jongleurs were professional storytellers or public entertainers in medieval France. The role of the jongleur included that of musician, juggler, and acrobat, as well as reciter of literary works. *Notes by Susan Christie.*

Not much is known of **Anthony Holborne** but he was musically active around the Elizabethan court from about 1580 until his death in 1602. He is best known for his compositions for lute, bandora and cittern. In 1599 he published a collection of music for "consorts" of various instruments: *Pavans, Galliards, Almains, and other short Aeirs both grave, and light, in five parts, for Viols, Violins or other Musically Wind Instruments*. It is said that he published these works to minimise copying piracy, apparently as rife then as now!

**William Brade** was born in England in 1560 and little is known of his early life. Around 1590 he moved to the Continent and worked as a musician and composer of dance music in a variety of German principalities and courts. He was an esteemed master of the viol, in all its sizes, and gained a reputation as a fine performer on that new instrument, the violin. Brade died in 1630.

The *pavan* was a stately courtly dance in duple time and was often followed by the faster, more spritely *galliard* in triple meter. The *almand*, or almain, alman or allemande, was a moderately paced dance in duple time. In England these dances evolved over time into purely instrumental pieces, divorced from their original dance forms.

*Notes by Tony Tenney.*

## THE CHOIR: I Cantarini

The first item sung today, *Sdegno la fiamma estinse* is the last madrigal in order of composition by more than 50 years. **Alessandro Scarlatti** was quite adept at composition in the baroque style, yet here he has chosen to hark back to an antique style.

**Peter Philips** was an English keyboard virtuoso who fled to the continent 'pour la foy catholique' and spent all his working life there. He produced 6 voice madrigals for the court of Albert VII of Austria, governor of the Low Countries in Brussels.

At Mantua, the senior musician was **Giaches de Wert**; although born in Antwerp (real name Jacques) he arrived in Italy as a young choirboy and unlike other Flemings was trained in composition in Italy. Although Wert wrote many madrigals, in a strong wiry style with expressive leaps, today we hear a gentle one, full of birdsong and leaves murmuring in the breeze.

In 1590 a junior musician at the Mantuan court, one **Claudio Monteverdi**, hired for his viol playing skill, wrote *Ecco mormorar l'onde*. Things did not always go well for Monteverdi. t Mantua, **Benedetto Pallavicino** was his senior but merely an 'adequate' composer in Monteverdi's opinion, yet Monteverdi was lucky to get in on the ground floor and be allowed to compose and workshop his pieces with the famous Concerto delle Donne.

The earliest composer on our program today is **Adriaan Willaert**, born near Bruges in 1490, one of the last of the Flemish composers imported into Italy. *Occhi piangete* is in seven voice parts, employing the whole of our company. There is only one high part appropriate to a woman's (or boy's) voice; all the other parts were written for men. The work is written in dialogue form, contrasting different combinations of four voices against each other.

*Notes by John Cunningham.*

**Henry Purcell** (1659-1695) was an English Baroque composer, remembered for his songs, incidental music and small (or "semi-") operas. Of the last, Dido and Aeneas is probably the best known, together with the Fairy Queen and King Arthur. The rondeau from his *Abdelazer* is the main theme of Benjamin Britten's "The young person's guide to the orchestra"; and his music was played both for the funeral of Queen Mary II and, three hundred years later, for the funeral of Princess Diana.

Dioclesian is however the source of this evening's "Two in one upon a ground". In this piece the two treble (i.e. alto) recorders play the same slow, minor melody, but a bar apart; and underneath is a simple bass phrase — the ground— that repeats throughout. Grounds (similarly chaconnes or passacaglias) feature in many of Purcell's works, as do gently sliding, almost supernatural chromatics. It's an indication of Purcell's extraordinary talent that it is often the ground, simple though it might be, that remains in the mind long after the melody fades.

*Notes by Carroll Morgan.*