

PARTHENIA

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

ALL IN A GARDEN GREEN *Music from England's Golden Age*

A Voluntary for My Ladye Neville	William Byrd (c.1540-1623)
<i>Suite of early Elizabethan Dances</i>	
Pavin of Albarti	Innocenzio Alberti (c. 1535-1615)
Gallyard	Anonymous
Allemana d'amor	Anon
Hugh Ashton's Maske	Hugh Ashton, attrib. (c.1485-c.1558))
Fantasy à4 for great dooble bass	Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)
A Merry Conceit: <i>The Queenes Delight</i>	Tobias Hume (ca.1569-1645)
Harke, harke	Hume
A Gigge: Doctor Bull's my selfe	John Bull (c.1562-1628)
<i>Three Fantasias</i>	
Fantasia à4	Byrd
Fantasia à3	Byrd
Fantasia à4	Alfonso Ferrabosco II (c.1575-1628)
Ut, re, mi, fa, sol	Robert Parsons (c.1534-1572)
From the <i>Ayres of Foure Parties</i>	John Dowland (1563-1626)
Come again	
Come, heavy sleep	
Can she excuse my wrongs	
Pavan a4	John Jenkins (1592-1678)
Fantasy on <i>All in a Garden Green</i>	Jenkins
Fantasy a4 in g, Z.735	Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
From <i>Pavans, Galliards, Almains (1599)</i>	Anthony Holborne (c.1550-1602)
As it fell on a Holie Eve	
Paradizo	
The Night Watch	
Divisions on <i>Greensleeves</i>	Anonymous 17 th Century

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

From the earliest documented mention of a Spanish consort of viols in a letter received in 1493 by the Mantuan Marchesa, Isabella d'Este, to the 1787 death of Karl Friedrich Abel, the celebrated viol virtuoso and close friend of Johann Christian Bach, the sound of the viol was treasured throughout Europe for its ability to emulate the human voice and to move the emotions of those who heard it. Across those three centuries the viol was played for worship, entertainment and to elevate the status of the aristocratic patrons whose courts and chapels were graced by this beautiful instrument.

In England, Henry VIII, who played the lute, sang and composed, hired a sextet of Venetian viol players to modernize and add luster to the tiny musical establishment he inherited in 1509. By his death in 1547 the number of musicians he employed had burgeoned to 58; his collection of instruments exceeded 300. This was the musical soundscape of the childhood of his daughter, Elizabeth I, and although she was reduced to penury after the death of her mother, she was given a superlative education. As Queen she was able to communicate fluently in French and Italian, to extemporize orations in Latin, and make her way in Greek. Like her father, she consoled herself with music, learning to play the lute and virginals, and to appreciate the compositions of the best musicians of her day. The relative stability of her long and prosperous reign and her love of music fostered a climate for a remarkable flowering of musical life. Instrument builders perfected the construction of the viol and gave it the form by which it is recognized today.

Elizabeth's most beloved musician was William Byrd, who even though a devout Roman Catholic, was protected by the patronage of the Queen and some of her most influential courtiers from much of the persecution other Catholics suffered during this time. After a musical upbringing as a chorister in the Chapel Royal where, as was the custom in Cathedrals all over England, he would have learned singing, organ, composition and how to play the viola da gamba, he was appointed to be a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1572. The Queen, a tolerant Protestant, recognized his genius and in 1575 granted him a patent with to publish music. This business venture assured the survival much of his music in eight books of sacred Latin music and three books of secular English songs and some of his instrumental music, all published between 1575 and 1611. It is interesting to read in the preface to his 1588 book "Psalmes, Sonets & Songs of sadnes and pietie" that he described these pieces as "being originally made for Instruments to expresse the harmonic, and one voice to pronounce the dittie, are now framed in all parts for voyces to sing the same." From this we can see that whether the part was texted or not, Byrd's compositional concept remained the same whether he was writing for instruments or voices. Byrd, older by a generation than most of the other composers on our program, was revered as the "Father of Musick" and laid the foundation for the polyphonic instrumental art of England.

Many of the younger composers on our program also sang in the Chapel Royal, such as Parsons and Gibbons, but others like Ferrabosco and Holborne were instrumentalists employed at Court. Some musicians left England to work on the Continent; John Dowland, lute virtuoso, famous at home and abroad, spent much of his career at the court of Christian IV of Denmark but always remained bitter that he never was granted a position by Elizabeth. His collection of 4- part songs with a lute accompaniment, published in 1597, was the first such collection of lute songs ever printed and gave rise to a long list of imitators over the next 25 years. Dowland said his songs were "so made, that all the parts together, or either of them severally, may be sung to the lute, orpharion, or viol de gambo".

The instrumental music you will hear tonight covers all the common forms of the time; the fantasy modeled on the anthem and the madrigal; the voluntary, another name for a fantasy such as might have been used in a church service; and the pavan, galliard and almain intended for dancing like those of Holborne. But the music of Tobias Hume needs special mention. Among bowed string instruments, the viola da gamba is unique in its ability to play chords with the bow in much the same way that a lute might strum them. This style of playing was called “lyra way,” and the viola da gamba that played it was called a “lyra viol.” The player, reading from a special notation known as tablature such as that used by a lutenist, sounded both melody and harmony simultaneously in a robust departure from the elegant counterpoint of the other pieces. Hume published two books of music for lyra-viol; in his 1605 preface, he wrote that the viol was as musically rich and versatile an instrument as the more universally played lute. Some of the versatility he claimed came from his use of the techniques of pizzicato (plucking the strings) and col legno (playing with the wood or stick of the bow); Hume’s two books are the first known instructions for both of these playing styles, asking the musician to “play one straine with your fingers, the other with your bow, and so continue to the end,” and to “Drum this with the back of your Bow”. His striking solo piece, Harke, Harke, illustrates this.

Music for the viol circulated in manuscripts to players all around the country, where composers, such as the beloved John Jenkins, a lyra-viol virtuoso, employed by the L'Estrange family far from court, remained enamored of the glorious madrigal repertoire from Italy, and kept writing in that polyphonic style - essentially madrigals without words. The "youngest" composer in our program is the well-known Henry Purcell. He wrote a set of 15 fantasies for the viols in the summer of 1680 perhaps as a way of studying the old compositional techniques that had gone out of fashion in London by then. Though it is uncertain whether he ever heard them outside of his own imagination, each one is a contrapuntal jewel and as a group they are the astonishing culmination of more than a century-long tradition of English viol music.

ABOUT PARTHENIA

The viol quartet PARTHENIA brings early music into the present with its repertoire that animates ancient and contemporary works with a ravishing sound and a remarkable sense of ensemble. 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 presented in concerts across America, and produces its own series in New York City, collaborating regularly 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, the Harriman-Jewell Series, Maverick Concerts, the Regensburg Tage Alter Musik, the Shalin Lui Performing Arts Center, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Yale Center for British Art, Columbia University’s Miller Theatre, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Parthenia’s performances range from its popular touring program, *When Music & Sweet Poetry Agree*, a celebration of Elizabethan poetry and music with actor Paul Hecht, to the complete viol fantasies of Henry Purcell, as well as the complete instrumental works of Robert Parsons, and commissions and premieres of new works annually.

Parthenia has recorded *Les Amours de Mai*, with soprano Julianne Baird and violinist Robert Mealy, *A Reliquary for William Blake*, *Within the Labyrinth*, and was featured on jazz trumpeter Randy Sandke’s

CD, *Trumpet After Dark*. The ensemble's most recent release is *As it Fell on a Holie Eve - Music for an Elizabethan Christmas*, with soprano Julianne Baird; a video of the live performance from December 2012 on the Trinity Wall Street Twelfth Night Festival, presented by the Gotham Early Music Scene, can be viewed at the Trinity Wall Street Video page.

Parthenia is represented by Gems Live! Artist Management and records for MSR Classics.