

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



# MIDTOWN CONCERTS

Thursday, June 30, 2022 1:15 pm

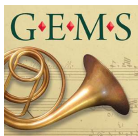
Live Streamed from The Church of the Transfiguration in NYC  
to [midtownconcerts.org](http://midtownconcerts.org) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

## *Midnight Viols*

Patricia Ann Neely, Charlie Reed, Arnie Tanimoto, Lisa Terry ~ viols  
Gene Murrow ~ English concertina (a.k.a. “air viol”) and recorders  
Ruth Cunningham ~ soprano, flute, and recorders

## *Among Friends: English Consorts and Country Dances*

- English Country Dances** from *The Dancing Master*, John Playford, John Walsh, publishers  
*Parson Upon Dorothy* (1652), arr. Bernard Thomas John Playford  
*Come Let's Be Merry* (1719), arr. Marshall Barron John Walsh  
*Epsom Wells, or Wa is me* (1696), arr. Barron Playford  
*Jenny Pluck Pears* (1651), arr. Thomas Playford
- “Awake, sweet love”** John Dowland (1563–1626)
- Three Galliards** Anthony Holborne (1545–1602)  
*My Linda ~ The Widowes Myte ~ The Faerie Round*
- Fantasia à 5 “Ardo”** Thomas Lupo (1571–1627)  
*Prima parte ~ Seconda parte*
- “Ye Sacred Muses”** William Byrd (c.1540–1623)
- Dance Suite** Willam Brade, a.k.a. Wilhelm Brade (1560–1630)  
*Der ander Mascharada ~ Ein schottische Tanz ~ Der Rothschencken Tanz*
- “Can She Excuse My Wrongs”** Dowland
- Two Pavans** Holborne  
*The Cradle ~ Infernum*
- English Country Dances** from *The Dancing Master*, and Preston's “24 Dances for the Year 1791”  
*Fair and Softly* (1726), arr. Barron Henry Playford  
*Long Odds* (1791), arr. Barron Thomas Preston  
*Room for Ramblers* (1719), arr. Barron Walsh  
*Hole in the Wall* (1698), arr. Barron Playford



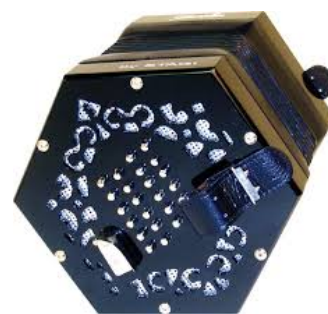
## About Midtown Concerts and GEMS Staff

Midtown Concerts are produced by Gotham Early Music Scene, Inc., and are made possible with support from The Church of the Transfiguration, The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; the Howard Gilman Foundation; and by generous donations from audience members.

John Thiessen, Director of Concert Production      Toby Tadman-Little, Program Editor  
Steven Marquardt, Director of Concert Services      Paul Arents, House Manager  
Live stream staff: Dennis Cembalo, Howard Heller, Ivan Rana      Christina Britton Conroy, Announcer  
Gene Murrow, Executive Director  
Gotham Early Music Scene, 340 Riverside Drive, Suite 1A, New York, NY 10025 (212) 866-0468

## About the Instruments

The **English concertina** was invented and patented in 1829 by Charles Wheatstone, an English engineer most celebrated for the “Wheatstone bridge,” a device for measuring electrical resistance. The concertina is a free-reed and air bellows instrument with the range of the violin. It became popular with Victorian upper-class women who could consequently play the violin repertoire without having to raise their arms in an un-lady-like manner. It has since slid down the socio-economic scale, from aristocrats to middle-class amateurs, to sailors at sea, to folk singers, and finally executive directors of arts service organizations.



The **viola da gamba** (or **viol**, as it was known in England) is a six-stringed, bowed instrument with frets on the fingerboard, and held between the legs. It is a member of the guitar family, and not of the cello family as one might think. The height of the instrument’s popularity was in Elizabethan and Jacobean times, when no proper household was without a “chest” of viols comprising the three primary sizes – treble, tenor, and bass – which you

are hearing today. It is enjoying a renaissance of popularity in present times.

## About the Artists

**Midtown Viols** includes some of the top viola da gamba artists working today and their friends: **Patricia Ann Neely** is director of Abendmusik, a teacher of music at numerous early music workshops, and a member of the board of Early Music America. **Charlie Reed** graduated from Juilliard’s Historical Performance Program and is founder of Nuova Pratica, a New York-based collective dedicated to composing and improvising in historical style. **Arnie Tanimoto** was the Gold Medalist of the 7th International Bach-Abel Competition and the recipient of a 2017 Frank Huntington Beebe Fund Fellowship. **Lisa Terry** is co-director of Parthenia and past President of the Viola da Gamba Society of America. Soprano **Ruth Cunningham** was a member of the much-celebrated ensemble Anonymous 4 and remains an active performer of early music and improvisational music in both liturgical and concert settings, as well as devoting herself to music as a healing art. **Gene Murrow**, Executive Director of GEMS and internationally known teacher of English country dancing, has amused viol players for many years playing the treble parts on his English concertina, which noted viol player Martha Bishop dubbed the “air viol”.

## About the Program

The **English country dance** evolved during Elizabeth I's reign as an amalgamation of the lively vernacular/folk dances of the countryside that the monarch so admired and the more formal dances created and led by the dancing masters (mostly Italian) of her court. The first collection of these dances was published by John Playford in 1651, in a milestone work titled "The English Dancing Master". This and numerous subsequent editions (titled simply "The Dancing Master") published by Playford, his son Henry, and then John Walsh, led to widespread adoption of the style by the lesser nobility and eventually the middle classes in public "assemblies" in major cities and at spas including Bath and Tunbridge Wells. You've likely seen examples in the numerous movies based on the works of Jane Austen, depicting ladies and gentlemen dancing in long facing lines. The tunes were popular ballads, or adaptations from the theater, or written especially for the dances. The *genre* remained popular through the 18<sup>th</sup> century until it was replaced by couple dances including the waltz and polka. Thanks to the reconstruction efforts of English musicologist Cecil Sharp in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and his disciples and successors, English country dancing has enjoyed renewed popularity in Britain, Europe, the United States, and Japan! Hundreds of new dances are being written by choreographers and composers today.

The melancholics of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic era had nothing on **John Dowland**. A lutenist, composer, and singer, he is best known for his songs, many of which are on depressing themes, and his series of consorts based on his song "Flow My Tears". He failed to win an open position as lutenist in Elizabeth's court and so served in France and Denmark, returning to England on occasion and grouching about his rejection, claiming his religion was the obstacle. He finally did win a position as lutenist in the court of James I. Woefully under-appreciated as the brilliant composer he was, Dowland ruminates in his typical fashion on the despair of love in the two songs we perform today.

The consorts of **Anthony Holborne**, a much-admired Elizabethan era composer and musician, remain favorites today. The works we are performing are drawn from the 1599 publication *Pavans, Galliards, Almains and other short Aeirs, both grave and light, in five parts, for Viols, Violins, or other Musically Winde Instruments*. The committee chaired by Carl Sagan responsible for the "golden record" intended to communicate the story of human civilization to any extraterrestrials who might encounter it aboard the Voyager interstellar spacecraft launched in 1977 chose a recording of "The Fairie Round" by the Early Music Consort of London to be included in the "golden record". Having left the solar system in 1990, Voyager's next encounter with a near star will be in 40,000 years, making all the contents "early music".

The extended **Lupo** family comprised Italian musicians and composers in Elizabeth's court spanning three generations. **Joseph** was married to Laura Bassano, of the distinguished Italian Jewish Bassano family, and he served for over 40 years as a viol player and composer. Their son **Thomas**, an innovator who was appointed to the court's violin consort while still a teen-ager, served in royal courts until his death. Many "anonymous" compositions for Elizabeth and her successors may well have been written by the Lupos while in service.

**William Byrd** and his teacher Thomas Tallis, both Roman Catholics, were musical giants best remembered for their liturgical choral compositions that aptly served a succession of monarchs promoting radically shifting religious practice and belief: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth I. For their service, loyalty, and achievement they were granted a monopoly by Elizabeth for the publishing of polyphonic music. The regard Byrd had for his teacher is evidenced by his extraordinary musical elegy "Ye Sacred Muses", declaring "Tallis is dead, and Music dies".

As many musicians have done in the past and present, **William Brade** traveled from his home country (England) to Europe seeking better opportunities as a composer and virtuosic violinist. Changing his name to Wilhelm, he found them in the aristocratic courts of Germany and Denmark. He held new positions every couple of years despite his reputation for being unreliable. Nonetheless, he wrote lively and elegant dance music for string ensembles, of which we're providing a very small sample.

## *Midnight Viols*

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### Texts

#### **“Ye Sacred Muses”** William Byrd

Ye sacred Muses, race of Jove,  
whom Music's lore delighteth,  
Come down from crystal heav'ns above  
to earth where sorrow dwelleth,  
In mourning weeds, with tears in eyes:  
Tallis is dead, and Music dies.

#### **“Awake, sweet love!”** John Dowland

Awake, sweet love! Thou art return'd,  
My heart, which long in absence mourn'd,  
Lives now in perfect joy.  
Let love, which never absent dies,  
Now live forever in her eyes,  
Whence came my first annoy.  
Only herself hath seemed fair,  
She only I could love,  
She only drove me to despair,  
When she unkind did prove.  
Despair did make me wish to die,  
That I my griefs might end,  
She only which did make me fly,  
My state may now amend.

If she esteem thee, now aught worth,  
She will not grieve thy love henceforth,  
Which so despair hath prov'd.  
Despair hath proved now in me,  
That love will not inconstant be,  
Though long in vain I lov'd.  
If she at last reward thy love,  
And all thy harm repair,  
Thy happiness will sweeter prove,  
Rais'd up from deep despair.  
And if that now thou welcome be  
When though with her dost meet,  
She, all the while, but play'd with thee,  
To make thy joys more sweet.

#### **Can She Excuse My Wrongs** John Dowland

Can she excuse my wrongs with Virtue's cloak?  
Shall I call her good when she proves unkind?  
Are those clear fires which vanish into smoke?  
Must I praise the leaves where no fruit I find?  
No, no; where shadows do for bodies stand,  
That may'st be abus'd if thy sight be dim.  
Cold love is like to words written on sand,  
Or to bubbles which on the water swim.  
Wilt thou be thus abused still,  
Seeing that she will right thee never?  
If thou canst not o'ercome her will,  
Thy love will be thus fruitless ever.