

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday, June 24, 2021 1:15 pm

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

## *The Violators*

Sarah Cunningham, Motomi Igarashi, Patricia Ann Neely, Charles Reed, Lisa Terry ~ viols  
Gene Murrow ~ English concertina (a.k.a. “air viol”), recorders  
Ruth Cunningham ~ soprano, recorders

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

#### English Country Dances

*Indian Queen (1701)*  
*Beggar Boy (1651)*  
*Beaux of Oak Hill*

(musical arrangements by Marshall Barron)  
from *The Dancing Master*, John Playford  
Playford  
Traditional

#### Fantasia à 6 in G minor

Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625)

#### “Fine Knacks for Ladies”

John Dowland (1563–1626)

#### The Lupo dynasty in Elizabeth’s court

Pavan à 5  
Fantasia à 5

Joseph Lupo (1537–1616)  
Thomas Lupo (1571–1627)

#### “Come Again”

Dowland

#### Pavan and Galliard “Dolorosa”

Peter Phillips (1560–1628)

#### In Nomine No.3

Gibbons

#### Fantasia à 6 in F Major

William Lawes (1602–1645)

#### English Ballads/Country Dances

*Greensleeves / Greensleeves and Yellow Lace (1721)*  
*Broom of the Cowdenknoves / Broom, the Bonny, Bonny Broom (1651)*  
*The Joviall Broom Man / Jamaica (1670)*

Playford  
Playford  
Playford

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## 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

**The “Violators”** includes some of the top viola da gamba artists working today and their friends: **Sarah Cunningham**, on the faculty of Juilliard, a co-founder with Monica Huggett of Sonnerie and member of numerous ensembles around the world; **Motomi Igarashi**, a ubiquitous presence on the early music scene, featured with the American Classical Orchestra, the Handel and Haydn Society, among many others; **Patricia Ann Neely**, director of Abendmusik and teacher of music at many early music workshops; **Charlie Reed**, just graduated from Juilliard's Historical Performance Program and founder of Nuova Pratica, a New York based collective dedicated to composing and improvising in historical style; **Lisa Terry**, co-director of Parthenia and past President of the Viola da Gamba Society of America. **Gene Murrow**, Executive Director of GEMS and internationally known teacher of English country dancing, has “sat in” with distinguished viol players for many years playing the treble parts on his English concertina. Viol player Martha Bishop dubbed his instrument the “air viol” when he was invited to join the others one late evening at Pinewoods Camp Early Music Week to “violate” some music. 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.

## 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”) led to widespread adoption of the style by the lesser nobility and eventually the middle classes in public “assemblies” at major cities and at spas such as Bath and Tunbridge Wells. You've likely seen examples in the numerous movies based on the works of Jane Austen, depicting men and women 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.

**Orlando Gibbons** wrote masterpieces of sacred and secular works for large and small vocal ensembles, as well as works for instrumental ensembles and keyboard (Glenn Gould claimed Gibbons was his favorite composer, above even his beloved J.S. Bach). Gibbons's mastery of imitative counterpoint and evocative writing is illustrated brilliantly in his fantasias. Number 2 on today's program is an episodic work which, in only 56 bars, moves from contemplation to agitation and finally to quiet peace.

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 appears typically sorry for himself in the two love songs we offer today.

The extended **Lupo** family were 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** was an innovator who was appointed to the court's violin consort while still a teen-ager, and 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.

After fleeing England because of his Catholicism, **Peter Phillips** bounced around from Italy to the Low Countries as a music teacher, organist, and composer. He probably wrote the *Dolorosa* pavan and galliard while imprisoned at The Hague on charges of conspiring against Queen Elizabeth. He was exonerated, became a priest, secured a court position, and continued to compose prolifically. Among his colleagues in Europe was the English composer John Bull, who also had fled England, on a charge of adultery.

Beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, composers enjoyed a sophisticated sort of parlor trick. A portion of the plainchant *Gloria Tibi Trinitas* with the words "**In nomine**", was originally set very simply as part of a 1530 mass by John Taverner. It was then used as a *cantus firmus* around which the composer would write complex polyphony. The game is to see how intricate, harmonious, and beautiful the counterpoint can be while keeping the chant melody, which is intoned in long notes by one of the consort players, intact. **Gibbons** was one of the clear winners of the game. And while it's disparaged in music history circles to say things such as "If only Bach had a modern piano he would have preferred his pieces to be played on that," it is our opinion that the best instrument for the "In nomine" chant part in any viol consort is the air viol!

**William Lawes'** music is often gnarly, complex, and full of startling, strange harmonies and rhythms. His *Fantasia à 6 in F*, like the Gibbons fantasia earlier in the program, spans a wide range of emotion and compositional techniques, complete with Lawes' signature surprises. It can easily be heard as a metaphor for a day in one's life, from sunrise to sunset. Some 21<sup>st</sup>-century musicologists think Lawes was a genius ahead of his time; others think he was an incompetent amateur who didn't know what he was doing. You decide.

~ Gene Murrow

[See next page for texts...]

## Texts

### “Fine knacks for ladies”, John Dowland

Fine knacks for ladies, cheap, choice, brave and new;  
Good penny-worths, but money cannot move.  
I keep a fair but for the fair to view;  
A beggar may be liberal of love.  
Though all my wares be trash, the heart is true, the heart is true, the heart is true.

Great gifts are guiles and look for gifts again;  
My trifles come as treasures from my mind.  
It is a precious jewel to be plain;  
Sometimes in shell th'orient pearls we find;  
Of others take a sheaf, of me a grain, of me a grain, of me a grain.

### “Come Again”, John Dowland

Come again, sweet love doth now invite  
Thy graces that refrain  
To do me due delight,  
    To see, to hear, to touch, to kiss, to die,  
    With thee again in sweetest sympathy.

Come again, that I may cease to mourn  
Through thy unkind disdain;  
For now left and forlorn,  
    I sit, I sigh, I weep, I faint, I die,  
    In deadly pain and endless misery.

But alas, my faith is ever true,  
Yet will she never rue  
Nor yield me any grace:  
    Her eyes of fire, her heart of flint is made  
    Whom neither tears nor truth may once invade.