



BLAME
not
MY LUTE

ELIZABETHAN LUTE
MUSIC *and* POETRY

Ronn McFarlane, lute
Robert Aubry Davis, spoken word

L In the late 1970s the stars aligned for the second wave of early music groups. Unreconstructed flower children who had studied music needed real jobs, and in the time before there was a Renaissance Festival renaissance, groups blossomed from the soil of the Collegium Musicum movement and inspired by the generation of performers who had come before. Folks living everywhere felt the void if there was no resident ensemble in their town, and thus the Renaissance Ensemble of Baltimore was born.

My own career in early music had begun in Jacksonville, Florida at the public radio station WJCT; when I first had a call from Baltimore I was back in my home town of Washington, and allowed to have the hour-and-a-half from 11:30 to 1 a.m. Sunday evenings on WETA radio here. There was less of this music to go around, and people in the field rapidly found each other. That was three decades ago.

In the early days, I attended board meetings (!), watched the group get regular concert bookings and later the very identifiable contract with Dorian Records, lived with the name change (“The Baltimore Consort”) and occasional personnel shake-up. We had done narrator/performance things together (Christmas, of course; a memorable touring production of music seen in Renaissance paintings with slide show and readings), but my own work in English literature pointed to the desire to do something more.

Which leads us to Ronn McFarlane: one doesn’t need the evidence of 20-odd recordings to know his quality as a master of the lute; any one selection from any one album will do.

Spending time with him belies the otherwise fierce history of the McFarlane clan itself; his Zen-like and imperturbable nature is ruffled rarely. A light night disquisition on Jimi Hendrix’s late work with the Band

of Gypsies (with musical examples) was as passionate as I have ever see Ronn get. It is a body of guitar magic that is mostly overlooked by all but a few who play the instrument. I noted to Ronn that while I had played the guitar since age 14, I was as close to Hendrix as a Wright Brothers biplane is to a spaceship. Ronn reminded me that it is not the notes we should listen to, but the passion behind them.

Out of these sessions and many talks “Blame Not My Lute” grew. We have performed it live scores of times in many states. The simple idea—match poetry and theater about the lute to the music from the Elizabethan and Jacobean era from which the words grew—led to an organic collaboration you may hear on this disc. The reverence these great poets and dramatists had for this elegant and courtly instrument plays out in every syllable we use.



We begin every performance with a sort of glossary, since so many of the words that apply to music are but part of the vast wordplay of the late Renaissance writers, and are repeated many times:

Fret ~ the genteel French derivation gives us the musical meaning: the raised or grooved ridges that mark the fingerboard of a string instrument like the lute; our Old English root of “devouring or eating away” leads us to the stressful wearing away of our emotions. The many word plays on “fretting and fuming,” a construction we still use, are used both comically and in tragedy relating to the lute.

Division ~ a variation on a ground (see below), or a vocal or instrumental variation on a melody. Many plays on the concept of being divided in affection are weaved in the musical references.

Descant ~ the higher (treble or soprano) voice, or the soprano instrument in a group (like the descant recorder).

Ground ~ a recurring bass line that voices or instruments add to or vary.

Crochet ~ the somewhat fanciful French name for the little flag added to the stem of a note; thus a quarter note. The crotch of the body (a late 16th century English construction, probably a variation of “crutch”) is the intended pun.

Relish ~ a late English Renaissance ornament by which the note sounds a trill followed by a turn (a quick note above or below)

Prick ~ this can be a song that has been written down, or “pricked out.” Mercutio has fun with this:

“More than prince of cats, I can tell you. O, he is the courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing prick-song.” -*Romeo & Juliet, Act. II, Scene iv*

“Prick” can also be a corrupt form of the plectrum or modern “pick” that is used to pluck stringed instruments from the medieval lute through the harpsichord to the modern guitar. Of course, everyone from Mercutio on is simply using the word in any musical sense as an excuse to get to its bawdy meaning.

Recorder ~ the blown wind flute instrument with finger holes still often used to teach young people music today. In bawdry, the phallic nature of the instrument (or a bow) would contrast with the feminine nature of the curvaceous lute or viol.

Plain ~ a lament or formal song of woe.

Heartstrings ~ the late medieval notion that the heart was braced and fed by tingling tendons that carried emotion; since the lute has strings, this lends endless range for mixing the two.

“Break” ~ this curious and multi-functional word is used for music in these readings in the sense that we have retained now when we speak of “breaking” a horse—that is, when one has become completely comfortable with the instrument (as the horse does with a person), then he or she is “broken” to it.

As we begin the program, let me share a last reflection. At every venue, even if it was a supposedly pure “early music” concert, some person would walk up afterwards and quietly wait to be the last to speak. Clearly, he or she, young or old, had perhaps heard of the lute but had never heard it actually played. They looked on it with the eyes of someone who had just discovered a wonder, like seeing a unicorn or a benign spirit. Ronn would hand them the lute to hold, with his short discourse on how surprisingly light and delicate the instrument is... and they would hold it, like it was a newborn baby, them knowing this delicate thing came from wonder and has wonders yet to perform.

May some of that spirit be with you as you hear this collaboration.

Robert Aubry Davis



1. Anon.: Bonny Sweet Boy

We begin with Ronn's performance of a popular Elizabethan song set for lute solo. While this version comes from one of the Matthew Holmes lute books collected at Cambridge, Thomas Robinson published a version in his 1603 *The School of Musicke* (where he credits himself with the composition) as "Bony sweet boy." Robinson was a lute instructor at the court of Denmark before Dowland arrived there in 1598, and arranged some Dowland pieces for that 1603 book, including one we hear on this program ("Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home"). The tune itself acquired the lyric you can still hear sung today ("I once loved a boy and a bonny sweet boy").

2. Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542): Blame Not My Lute

The time of Henry VIII will always be fodder for film and theater, and the passion and color of the lives of characters like Wyatt show why. His father's service with Henry led young Thomas to be given posts in various lands; it was on the 1527 journey to petition Pope Clement VII to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon that he began the translations of Petrarch, which led to the sonnet form being brought to England. Even as he was dedicating to Catherine a Plutarch essay he had translated, he had fallen under the spell of Anne Boleyn. Wyatt had already separated from his wife Elizabeth Brooke who he had married in 1521 (she much later in the story was rumored to become the sixth wife of Henry after Catherine Howard was executed), and the hard evidence of the great poem "Whoso List to Hunt" which warns all comers to stay away from the King's new favorite, is matched by later accounts that he had confessed to Henry that she was indeed his lover and not the right stuff to be a queen. Perhaps because Wyatt had the protection of Thomas Cromwell he was not executed in 1536 when the seven "suitors" of Anne were tried and killed—but he was almost certainly witness to Anne's beheading at the Tower of London on May 19 of that year. And, when Cromwell himself was killed in 1540, so went Wyatt's last shield against Henry's wrath. The accusation of treason in 1541 was only removed when Catherine Howard

interceded, and her death left little for Wyatt at court. Perhaps it was a courtly self-inflicted death that gave the poet his last fever "contracted by hard riding" on a last diplomatic assignment for Henry. He was in his late 30s. It is fitting that this tall, rugged, passionate and magnetic figure begins and ends these readings. The music used is one of the only two or three anonymous settings we can attach to Wyatt's work.

Blame Not My Lute

Blame not my lute, for he must sound
Of this or that as liketh me;
For lack of wit the lute is bound
To give such tunes as pleaseth me.
Though my songs be somewhat strange,
And speak such words as touch thy change,
Blame not my lute.

My lute, alas, doth not offend,
Though perforce he must agree
To sound such tunes as I intend
To sing to them that heareth me;
Then though my songs be somewhat plain
And toucheth some that use to feign,
Blame not my lute.

My lute and strings may not deny,
But as I strike they must obey;
Break not them then so wrongfully,
But wreak* thyself some wiser way;
For though the songs which I indite*
Do quit thy change with rightful spite,
Blame not my lute.

Spite asketh spite and changing change,
And falsed faith must needs be known,
The fault so great, the case so strange,
Of right it must abroad be blown.
Then since by thine own desert*
My songs do tell how true thou art,
Blame not my lute.

*carry out; inflict
*write

*desert; what
one deserves

Blame but the self that has misdone
And well deserved to have blame;
Change thou thy way, so evil begun,
And then my lute shall sound that same;
But if till then my fingers play
By thy desert their wonted way,
Blame not my lute.

Farewell, unknown, for though thou break
My strings in spite with great disdain,
Yet I have found out for thy sake
Strings for to string my lute again;
And if perchance this foolish rhyme
Do make thee blush at any time
Blame not my lute.

3. John Dowland: My Lady Hunsdon's Puffe

This relatively light piece showing the not-so-melancholic side of Dowland is an "almain" or allemande, a duple-time dance courtly French and English composers thought was au courant in Germany. While no German examples of the dance from Dowland's time have been passed down to us, we can reconstruct the dance itself from collections like Arbeau's famous *Orchésographie*.

4. John Dowland: Melancholy Galliard

The same dance source gives us the prescription for this, one of Queen Elizabeth's favorite dances (the head of the privy Chamber said she would "dance six or seven galliards of a morning"). It is an athletic dance of hopping and skipping, and only a person of Dowland's alleged temperament would take this bright work and make it of a darker hue. We wed it to one of the three Orphic references in the plays of Shakespeare, two of which are on the program. The mystical singer of Thrace who in Ovid pursues Eurydice to the very gates of hell had a powerful effect on the Renaissance imagination, and the transformative nature of his singing was appealing to that most music-loving of playwrights.



Shakespeare: Henry VIII, Act III, Scene 1. The Queen's apartments.

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain tops that freeze
Bow themselves when he did sing.
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung, as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.

Every thing that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by.
In sweet music is such art,
Killing care and grief of heart
Fall asleep, or hearing die.

5. Anon.: Kemp's Jig

Will Kemp was not only the early clown in Shakespeare's plays but was a stockholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men. When bet that he could not dance all the way from London to Norwich in ten days (a hundred pounds—a small fortune for an actor and clown), he not only did so, but made the 80-odd miles in nine days. His hilarious account of the journey, "The Nine Days Wonder," was published in 1600; this purveyor of "mad jiggas and merry jestes" proves why he was so beloved by his fellow players and evidently by the young Shakespeare himself. This work commemorates his famous journey, where he asks us to "Imagine ... I am now setting from Lord Mayors, the hour about seaven, the morning gloomy, the company many, my hart merry".

6. Anon.: Packington's Pound

Another wager—this time, Sir John Packington (a favorite of the Queen) bet £3,000 that he could swim from the bridge at Westminster to Greenwich Bridge—but (according to William Chapell) “the good Queen, who had a particular tenderness for handsome fellows, would not permit Sir John to run the hazard of the trial.” The “pound” was a pond built by Sir John that encroached on a public road; when forced to remove it, he cut out a section so it would flood the property of the complaining locals.

7. Thomas Heywood (?1574-1641): *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

Like Wyatt a Cambridge student, Heywood became a lead dramatist for Queen Anne's and Lady Elizabeth's Men at the Red Bull and Cockpit theaters. While he claimed 200 plays, we do have a number in autograph, as well as his 1612 *An Apology for Actors*, a great summation of all the arguments for the stage itself. *A Woman Killed with Kindness*—played in 1603 at the end of Elizabeth's life—looks at a happy, upwardly mobile couple, John and Mary Frankford. He is kind and loving, and she is beautiful and accomplished, as evidenced by her skills as a lute player. There is a subplot involving her brother Sir Francis and his altercation with one Sir Charles (over a wager again!); Francis falls in love with Charles's sisters Susan, and they all reconcile over this dowryless match made for love alone. But in the main plot, an impoverished gentleman John had befriended and invited to the estate falls under the spell of Mary, and persuades her into an affair. When it is discovered, John chooses a most remarkable path. He collects everything that was Mary's, sends her to a country home a few miles away, and promises to keep her in perpetuity, with one condition: She may never see him again. As we take up this scene in Act V, Scene iii, John is making sure every last thing of Mary's is gone; he finds her most precious possession, and dispatches the servant Nicholas to take it to her:

FRANKFORD. Her lute! O God, upon this instrument
Her fingers have ran quick division,
Sweeter than that which now divides our hearts.
These frets have made me pleasant, that have now
Frets of my hearts strings made...
Oft hath she made this melancholy wood,
Now mute and dumb for her disastrous chance,
Speak sweetly many a note, sound many a strain
To her own ravishing voice; which being well strung,
What pleasant strange airs have they jointly rung!—
Post with it after her.—Now nothing's left;
Of her and hers I am at once bereft.

NICH. I'll ride and overtake her; do my message,
And come back again.

[Exit]

Enter NICK.

NICH. There.

MRS. F. I know the lute. Oft have I sung to thee;
We are both out of tune, both out of time...
I thank him; he is kind, and ever was.
All you that have true feeling of my grief,
That know my loss, and have relenting hearts,
Gird me about, and help me with your tears
To wash my spotted sins! My lute shall groan;
It cannot weep, but shall lament my moan.

[She plays.]

MRS. F. [TO NICHOLAS] If you return unto you master,
say...
That you have seen me weep, wish myself dead....
Go break this lute upon my coach's wheel,
As the last music that I e'er shall make;
Not as my husband's gift, but my farewell
To all earth's joy; and so your master tell.

NICH. If I can for crying,

8. John Dowland: *Lachrimae*

Much has been written about this incomparable piece, published in those dark days just after Elizabeth's death in 1603, and dedicated to James's wife Anne of Denmark. Whether we can construct backwards with this difficult and gifted man to say his self-professed melancholy was a more clinical depression is not within the purview of what we attempt here. Later commentators have likened the set of pieces centering around this tearful motif to the late Beethoven quartets; suffice it to say that when we listen to those works, or these, we are gifted with music's window into our inmost primal self, born into this world weeping and alone.



9. Shakespeare:

The Taming of the Shrew, Act II, scene i

You may remember that a rich gentleman of Padua, Baptista by name, is father to two daughters: Bianca, and the fiery Katharina. In our scene of this tale, Bianca's suitor Hortensio has disguised himself as a music teacher to “break” this daughter Kate to the lute. Petrucchio, who is most intrigued by the spirited lady, stands nearby:

BAP. What, will my daughter prove a good musician?

HOR. I think she'll sooner prove a soldier.
Iron may hold her, but never lutes.

BAP. Why, then thou canst not break her to the lute?

HOR. Why, no, for she hath broke the lute to me.
I did but tell her she mistook her frets
And bowed her hand to teach her fingering,
When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,
“Frets, you call these?” quoth she. “I'll fume with them!”
And with that word she struck me on the head,
And through the instrument my pate made way;
And there I stood amazed for a whole,
As on a pillory*, looking through the lute * the more
While she did call me rascal fiddler severe version
wherein the prisoner was forced to stand of the stocks
And twangling Jack, with twenty such vile terms,
As she studied to misuse me so.

PET. Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench.
I love her ten times more than e'er I did.
Oh, how I long to have some chat with her!

10. John Dowland: *Mrs. Winter's Jump*

One can over think the connections here—yes Mrs. Winter was probably Jane Ingleby, in-law of famed recusant Lord Vaux and mother of two of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators, and this may be tied up with the various Catholic conversions and associations Dowland made in his quest for station. Or it could simply be a delightful dance tune dedicated to a bright and charming lady: the choice is yours.

11. Anon.: Go From My Window

This popular ballad was set by many Elizabethan composers (Morley and Dowland among them), is quoted by playwrights Fletcher & Beaumont and our friend Thomas Heywood, and has been recorded in our time by Steeleye Span. The song's theme—that the lover cannot harbor safely this night—was more merry in the earlier versions, but typically with the Elizabethans, tinged with melancholy:

Go from my window, love, go
Go from my window, my dear;
The wind and the rain
Will drive you back again,
You cannot be lodged here.

Samuel Daniel (1562-1619): Like As the Lute

He studied at Oxford, met the pastoral poet Guarini in Italy, published the sonnet cycle *Delia* before he was thirty, and his brother John was a lutenist and composer. The Romantics loved him (Wordsworth thought his language “pure and manly”), but in his own age Ben Jonson wrote that he was “a good Honest man...but no poet.” In post-Romantic collections, he was one of those “Silver Poets” of the second rank. Perhaps—but as evidenced in this musical sonnet of love, Daniel plays with images of the instrument within the vast elasticity of the sonnet form to create a song any lover of the lute, or of love, would instantly recognize.

Sonnet XLVII

Like as the Lute that joys or else dislikes,
As is his art that plays upon the same:
So sounds my Muse according as she strikes
On my heart strings, high tuned unto her fame.
Her touch doth cause the warble of the sound,
Which here I yield in lamentable wise,
A wailing descant on the sweetest ground,
Whose due reports give honor to her eyes.
Else harsh my style, untunable my Muse,
Hoarse sounds the voice that praiseth not her name:
If any pleasing relish here I use,

Then judge the world her beauty gives the same.

O happy ground that makes the music such,
And blessed hand that gives so sweet a touch.

12. Thomas Campion (1567-1620): When to Her Lute Corinna Sings

After studying at Cambridge, Campion enrolled at Grey's Inn to study law, but found himself fascinated by the theater, playing in masques and dramas. He began composing and publishing, first songs, then a series of Latin epigrams. In 1601 he wrote a treatise on song (with 21 original examples) for Philip Rosseter's *Book of Ayres*. In fact, with his 1602 *Observations on the Art of English Poesie* and the 1615 *A New Way of Making Four Parts in Counterpoint By a Most Familiar and Infallible Rule*, later generations thought him a critic. In 1602 he acquired a medical degree and set up a practice in London (he was 40). Perhaps through the relationship with Rosseter, who was a lutenist to King James, he created masques for court. He produced four more books of ayres, and as he wrote so charmingly in the preface to one, “I have chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together.” When he died in 1620 of the plague, he had left his meager fortune—£32—to his dear friend Rosseter. This work is from the *Second Book of Ayres*:

VI.

When to her lute Corinna sings,
Her voice revives the leaden strings
And doth in highest notes appear,
As any challenged echo clear;
But when she doth of mourning speak,
E'en with her sighs the strings do break.
And as her lute doth live or die,
Led by her passions, so must I!
For when of pleasure she doth sing,
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring;
But if she doth of sorrow speak
Ev'n from my heart the strings do break.

13. John Dowland: Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home

Dowland here re-sets the popular tune Rowland (as William Byrd called his version in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*). It changes the cast of this jig for a comic character into a celebration of the victorious return in 1589 of Lord Willoughby de Eresby, back in England after a successful command of the army in the Lowlands campaigns. When Elizabeth sent him to the aid of Henry of Navarre in September of that year, she wrote to Henry of Willoughby that “... His quality and the place he holds about me are such that it is not customary to permit him to be absent from me; ... you will never have cause to doubt his boldness in your service, for he has given too frequent proofs that he regards no peril, be it what it may...”

14. Robert Herrick (1591-1674): Upon Julia's Voice

Son of a suicidal goldsmith (Robert was barely 16 months when his father leapt from their fourth story London home), Herrick was apprenticed to his uncle (also a goldsmith) before attending Cambridge. He came under the sway of Ben Jonson's magnetic circle—the “sons of Ben”—before becoming a priest and army chaplain, composing verse all the while. As a reward for serving with the Duke of Buckingham's campaign to help French Protestants, he was given a church in the South Devon village of Dean Prior. Like any cliché of the big-city boy finding himself among the country folk, his immediate disdain and isolation rapidly melted in the face of the people and their fierce humanity—he particularly loved how they kept their pagan traditions in the face of Puritan pressure. Of particular charm were the country lasses, and his pet pig could famously drink ale from a tankard he kept nearby. When the Puritans took over Parliament, they ejected this loyalist poet, and he had to live back in London off his relatives and their goldsmith trade. With the restoration in 1660, he was allowed to return, where he lived out his final years, buried in an unmarked grave. In Wordsworth's day the locals could still recite his works from memory. Many male poets (if fewer mere male mortals) claim to love everything about women; few do. But for Herrick, everything about

a woman, her scent, her dress, her motion, even her voice was divine. What he learned in the fine art smithy of gold work he applied to his lapidary poems—polishing, honing, burnishing so that every word gleams.

Upon Julia's Voice

So smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice,
As, could they hear, the damned would make no noise,
But listen to thee, walking in thy chamber,
Melting melodious words to lutes of amber.



15. William Byrd (1539/40-1623): Pavana Bray

Another keyboard piece in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, apparently arranged for lute by Francis Cutting (c.1550-1596), this is given the MB listing 59 in the catalogue of Byrd's works, and with the paired galliard is simply listed as “Bray's.” It would be fun to imagine that the Bray so named was of the Shropshire family that sent son Thomas to Maryland to propagate Anglicanism (and perhaps convert the citizens of that Catholic colony back to the true Protestant church), but since Byrd himself was a devout Catholic, that's unlikely. Yet Cutting, of whom we know little except for his lute works, was probably part of the circle of Lord Howard, renting a place near the Howard estate of Arundel—names from that most famous of English Catholic families that still are kept alive in Ronn McFarlane's home state.

16. John Dowland: Piper's Galliard

Captain Digorie Piper possessed not only one of those perfect Elizabethan names, but also professions: he was a licensed pirate, charged by the Queen to plunder Spanish shipping. That he cast his net rather wider, attacking other nations (including Danish ships) is entirely in character. That Dowland took to writing this piece even while he served King Christian IV of Denmark, gives us a perfect window into the temperament of the time in general, and Dowland in particular. As Dowland's dear friend Henry Peachem said in *The Compleat Gentleman*, "he had slipped many opportunities in advancing his fortune." His contrarian nature may have been more potent than his melancholy.

Richard Barnfield (1574-1627):
If Music and Sweet Poetry Agree

Raised in Shropshire and attending Oxford, Barnfield was caught up in the spirit of the time—Sir Philip Sidney died when he was still at school—so he came to London to find his heroes. He met Drayton and maybe Spenser, and began publishing in 1594, with his second collection, the twenty sonnets of Cynthia being addressed to Ganymede. This made Barnfield the only other poet of the age to address a sonnet cycle to a man outside of Shakespeare. Indeed his *A Remembrance of Some English Poets* is the earliest work to praise Shakespeare by name (sorry, Earl of Oxford partisans), placing the playwright in the same company as Spenser and Samuel Daniel. And additionally, in the same appendix to *Poems: In Divers Humours* where we take our sonnet (almost certainly addressed to a courtly male lutenist), the ode "As it fell upon a day/in the merry month of May" appears—a work for centuries attributed to Shakespeare himself. The use of the word conceit, related to "concept," is in the poetic sense of the vast extended metaphors that guided poets from Petrarch to Donne. Phoebus in this context means Apollo, god of both music and poetry.

If music and sweet poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lovs't the one and I the other.
Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense.
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
As passing all conceit needs no defense.
Thou lovest to hear the sweet melodious sound
That Phoebus' lute, the queen of music, makes:
And I in deep delight am chiefly drowned
When as himself to singing he betakes.
One god is god of both, as poets feign;
One knight loves both, and both in three remain.



17. Anon.: Peg-a-ramsey/Robin Reddock

Two pieces added by "An unknown adult hand" to William Ballett's lute book, presented to him by his teacher William Vines. Sir John Hawkins reflecting on the first tune notes that it was the same as we see in *Twelfth Night* linked to Malvolio (Act II, sc. 3. SIR TOBY: Malvolio's a Peg-a-Ramsey...). Dr. John Bull sets it as "Little Pegge of Ramsey" and Tom D'Urfey notes the tune was sung to one of the ballads he collected originally as "O! London is a Fine Town." The robin (also called the "redduck") is associated in medieval and Elizabethan lore with lust (thus its red breast), the natural pagan world in the Robin Hood tales, and the Crucifixion (by comforting Christ on the Cross, the formerly dun-colored bird was gifted with a mark of Christ's blood on its breast). One takes comfort in the medieval imagination understanding that these things lived in harmony, not in conflict, in their minds.

Thomas D'Urfey (1653-1723)(ed.):
The Wanton Trick

Perhaps the title of this collection says all we need to say: *Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy*. The Restoration was like the uncorking of a champagne bottle, and every tendency held in check by the Puritans exploded out into the artistic and popular world. Young Tom, a Devonshire man of Huguenot heritage, found he had a knack not only for the stage but also for humorous song stylings. At home in the courts of the kings, he was equally beloved by the common man; among his most popular songs was "The Fart". Inheriting the Playford family dance books, he expanded the charter with whatever bawdy ballad he could find. He adapted *Cymbeline* (as *The Injured Princess*); his three-part setting of *Don Quixote* featured music of Henry Purcell (one of the 40-odd composers who set his work); and he was still writing into the time of Queen Anne. This wild and profane take on a music tutor and his female pupil may never have you look on a lute, a viol, a bow, or a recorder quite the same way ever again.

If anyone long for a musical song
Although that his hearing be thick
The sound that it bears will ravish his ears
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

A pleasant young maid on an instrument played
That knew neither note nor prick
She had a good will to live by her skill
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

A youth in that art, well seen in his part
(They called him Derbyshire Dick)
Came to her a suitor and would be her tutor
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

To run with his bow he was not slow
His fingers were nimble and quick
When he played on his bass, he ravished the lass;
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

He wooed her and taught he until he had brought her
To hold out a crotchet and crack
And by his direction she came to perfection:
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

With playing and wooing, he still would be doing
And called her his pretty sweet chick;
His reasonable motion brought her to devotion:
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

He pleased her so well that backwards she fell
And swooned as though she were sick
So sweet was his note that up went her coat:
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

The string of his viol she put to the trial
Till she had the full length of the stick
Her white-bellied lute she set to his flute:
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

Thus she with her lute and he with his flute
Held every crotchet and prick
She learned at leisure, yet played for the pleasure:
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

His viol string burst; her tutor she cursed
However, she played with the stick,
From October to June she was quite out of tune:
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

And then she repented that e'er she'd consented
To have either note or prick,
For learning so well made her belly to swell:
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

All maids that make trial of a lute or a viol
Take heed how you handle the stick!
If you like not this order, come try my recorder:
Whoop!, 'Tis but a wanton trick

18. Shakespeare:
The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act III, sc. ii

Ah, yes: "Who is Silvia? What is she...?" we ask in this delightful early play. It makes elegant sense that the changeable Gentleman named Proteus would invoke in almost a throw-away quatrain not only Orpheus, but in that last line one of the most magnificent evocations of the surruration of the sea in the language. Ovid would have been pleased.

PRO. For Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews,
Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,
Make tigers tame, and huge Leviathans
Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.

19. John Dowland: A Farcy

Of the hundred-or-so solo lute works by Dowland, a number are labeled "farcy." This is the Renaissance fantasia form, allowing the composer to have free range of expression; sometimes they are linked to a special tune ("Forlorn Hope"), sometimes to a technique ("Tremolo"). This is one of the four Farcys in the Cambridge Dowland manuscript, and is given the Poulton listing 73.

20. John Dowland: Fortune My Foe

Another resetting of a popular ballad, and another masterpiece of the composer's melancholy strain, it appears in solo and consort form. Early lyrics survive what must have been a popular tune for broadside ballads, and as Falstaff flatters Mrs. Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he responds to her proclamation that she is but a plain woman (Act III, sc. iii):

FAL. By the Lord, thou art a traitor to say so: thou wouldst make an absolute courtier; and the firm fixture of thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gait in a semi-circled farthingale. I see what thou wert, if Fortune my foe were not, Nature thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

Sir John Davies (1569-1626):
*Objections Against the Immortality of the Soul,
from "Nosce Teipsum"*

Born in Wiltshire to a good family, Davies studied literature at Winchester and at Oxford, where his writings came to the attention of the Queen. He had some trouble becoming a lawyer: he was disbarred for striking his friend Richard Martin with a cudgel in the Inns at Court, after dedicating his 1596 poem with its account of the history and value of dancing ("Orchestra") to Martin. His two 1599 works found great favor with the Queen (he dedicated *The Hymnes of Astraea* to her), and the one called *Nosce Teipsum* ("Know Thyself") also brought Davies to the attention of Lord Mountjoy, who became Lord Deputy of Ireland. That, and the patronage of James I, leads us to the rest of Davies' life and his work in Ireland. But we will stay with that vast philosophical poem, and how in the section "Objections against the Immortality of the Soul" Davies uses the skills of a lutenist to answer two questions: Doesn't the soul get old?—look how old people behave; and How can the soul shine forth when the body itself decays?

Objection I

For what, say they, doth not the Soul wax old?
How comes it then that aged men do dote,
And that their brains grow sottish*, dull and cold,
Which were in youth the only spirits of note?

**stupefied
as if by
drink*

What? Are not souls within themselves corrupted?
How can there idiots then by nature be?
How is it some wits are interrupted,
That now bedazzled are, now clearly see?

Answer

So, though the clouds eclipse the sun's fair light,
Yet from his face they do not take one beam;
So have our eyes their perfect power of sight
Even when they look into a troubled stream.

Then these defects in Senses' organs be
Not in the soul or in her working might:
She cannot lose her perfect power to see,
Though mists and clouds do choke her window light.

These imperfections then we must impute
Not to the agent but the instrument:
We must not blame Apollo, but his lute,
If false accords from her false strings be sent.

As a good harper stricken far in years,
Into whose cunning hand the gout is fall,
All his old crochets in his brain he bears,
But on the harp plays ill, or not at all.

But if Apollo take his gout away,
That he his nimble fingers may apply,
Apollo's self will envy at his play,
And all the world applaud his minstrelsy.

Objection II

Yet say these men: If all her organs die,
Then hath the Soul no power her powers to use;
So, in a sort, her powers extinct do lie
When unto act she cannot them reduce.

And if her powers be dead, then what is she?
For sith* from everything some powers do spring,
And from those powers some acts proceeding be,
Then kill the power and act, and kill the thing.

**since*

Answer

Doubtless the body's death, when once it dies,
The instruments of sense and life doth kill,
So that she cannot use those faculties,
Although their root rest in her substance still.

....

(Yet) if one man well on a lute doth play,
And have good horsemanship, and learning's skill,
Though both his lute and horse we take away,
Doth he not keep his former learning still?

He keeps it doubtless, and can use it too,
And doth both the other skills in power retain,
And can of both the proper actions do
If with his lute or horse he meet again.

So, though the instruments (by which we live
And view the world) the body's death do kill,
Yet with the body they shall all revive,
And all their wonted offices fulfill.



21. John Dowland: Queen Elizabeth's Galliard

Published seven years after the Queen's death in 1603, this was a re-working of an earlier galliard Dowland had dedicated to Kathryn Darcie around 1590. Despite the darker hue Dowland encouraged in his self-image, this lively dance form was much his favorite; we have twice as many settings of the galliard as any other type of dance he composed.

22. John Dowland: Tarleton's Resurrection

These works fit together magically. Dowland had already written a work for Lord Strange, in whose company of actors Shakespeare had performed from the end of the 1580s. Will Tarleton had been a comic actor with the troupe, and had died in 1588. Was this meant to be a dance for him, or an elegy on his passing? No matter; through this music let us remember them all.

Sir Thomas Wyatt: *My Lute Awake*

My lute awake! perform the last
Labour that thou and I shall waste,
And end that I have now begun;
For when this song is sung and past,
My lute be still, for I have done.

As to be heard where ear is none,
As lead to grave in marble stone,*
My song may pierce her heart as soon;
Should we then sigh or sing or moan?
No, no, my lute, for I have done.

The rocks do not so cruelly
Repulse the waves continually,
As she my suit and affection;
So that I am past remedy,
Whereby my lute and I have done.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got
Of simple hearts thorough Love's shot,*
By whom, unkind, thou hast them won,
Think not he hath his bow forgot,
Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain
That makest but game on earnest pain.
Think not alone under the sun
Unquit* to cause thy lovers plain,
Although my lute and I have done.

Perchance thee lie withered and old
The winter nights that are so cold,
Plaining* in vain unto the moon;
Thy wishes then dare not be told;
Care then who list, for I have done.

And then may chance thee to repent
The time that thou hast lost and spent
To cause thy lovers sigh and swoon;
Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,
And wish and want as I have done.

Now cease, my lute; this is the last
Labour that thou and I shall waste,
And ended is that we begun.
Now is this song both sung and past:
My lute be still, for I have done.



**lead is too soft
to be used for
engraving*

**Cupid's arrow*

**unrequited*

**lamenting;
complaining*

DSL-92105 — BLAME NOT MY LUTE

Ronn McFarlane, Lute

Robert Aubry Davis, Spoken Word

Lute recorded at Ayshire Farm, Upperville, Virginia, August 31-September 2, 2009
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