



CHANNEL CLASSICS

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THE KNIGHT OF THE LUTE
MATTHEW WADSWORTH

MUSIC FROM
THE VARIETIE OF LUTE LESSONS
1610



THE KNIGHT OF THE LUTE

The seeds of this recording were planted many years ago. As a teenage classical guitarist, I used to spend a lot of time playing other peoples' transcriptions of renaissance and baroque music. Little did I know, that many of the pieces I played were actually taken from the 'Variete of Lute Lessons'.

When I discovered the lute (accidentally) in my first year as an undergraduate at the Royal Academy of Music, I found myself returning to some of the same pieces, except this time, in their proper context. Not only did I have to develop a Braille system for notating lute tablature (with the help of Tim Crawford), but I then had to spend hours manually writing the pieces out on a clunky old braille typewriter. I taught a number of my student friends to read tablature, and we would spend valuable and precious time each week writing out one or two new pieces.

I used to spend hours in the basement of the library, listening to recordings of one of my great idols, Julian Bream – deciding which piece to write out and learn next. Since then, it has always been a burning ambition of mine to one day record the Variete of Lute Lessons, and some 15 years after my initial forays into this stunning repertoire, it felt right to finally commit the pieces to disc.

Although my understanding of the music has matured over the years, I must confess to finding some of these pieces no less demanding to play. Ironically, the very first note in the book is actually printed on the wrong string, and there are a great many mistakes throughout the pages, which I have taken the liberty to correct. It is quite surprising that Robert Dowland was not able



to publish accurate versions of his father's own work, and he even forgets to credit his dad's authorship of two *Almaines*, one of them being Sir John Smith's *Almaine*, which opens this recording.

In 1610, Robert Dowland (son of the great lutenist John Dowland) published two important collections of music in London: 'A Musical Banquet' (songs to the lute) and 'A Varietie of Lute Lessons' (a collection of lute solos). The full title of *Varietie* reads:

VARIETIE OF LUTE-lessons:
Fantasies, Pavins, Galliards, Almaines, Corantoes, and Volts:
Selected out of the best approved AUTHOURS, as well beyond
the Seas as of our owne country.
By Robert Douland.

There is no doubt in my mind that 'Varietie' is mainly the work of John Dowland, but was published under Robert's name as a helping hand up the ladder from Father to son.

John Dowland was still somewhat out of favour at the English court, and possibly felt that the work of a younger hand might be received with greater ease.

In his introduction "To The Reader", Robert Dowland writes:

" I am bold to present you with the first fruits of my skill, which albeit it may seem hereditarie unto mee, my Father being a Lutenist, and well known amongst you here in England... perfection in any Skill cannot be attained unto

without the waste of many years... but being young in years, I have adventured like a desperate souldier to thrust my selfe into the Vant-gard, and to passe the Pikes of the sharpest Censures, but I trust without danger, because we find it true in Nature that those who have loved the Father, will seldom hate the Sonne.”

Robert unfortunately had to wait until two years after his Father’s death before finally being given a court appointment in 1628.

John Dowland (1563-1626) was the most brilliant lutenist of his day. Upon the death in 1594 of John Johnson, court lutenist, Dowland – seemingly an obvious successor – was overlooked doubtless due to the Catholicism he had new acquired in France, not to mention his somewhat difficult personality. Frustrated by this lack of recognition of his growing reputation, he headed for Europe in search of court employment elsewhere.

Dowland’s years in exile must have caused him great pain and frustration, but they were also to prove incredibly productive, with the publication of the 1st Book of Ayres in 1597, the 2nd Book in 1600, the 3rd Book in 1603, and Lachrimae in 1604. It was during this time that Dowland would have surely collected many of the pieces from emminent foreign lutenists, the best of whom are represented in this book notably, Laurencini “il Divino”, Prince Moritz of Hessen, The Knight of the Lute and Gregorio Huwet of Antwerp.

The Varietie of Lute-Lessons contains some forty two pieces, in six musical forms which were in vogue around the time of publication: Fantasies, Pavans, Galliards, Almains, Corantos and Voltas (seven of each). Lutenist-composers represented came from England, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy. We are provided with a rich tapestry of musical personalities which embrace the older style of lute writing, Italian virtuosity, and the more modern French style. The

forms were aptly described by Thomas Morley in his book, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, printed in London in 1597, the same year as Dowland's 1st Book of Ayres.

Of the Fantasie, Morley says:

“The most principal and chieftest kind of music which is made without a ditty is the Fantasy, that is when a musician taketh a point at his pleasure and wresteth and turneth it as he list, making either much or little of it according as shall seem best in his own conceit. In this may more art be shown than in any other music because the composer is tied to nothing, but that he may add, diminish and alter at his pleasure. Morley then goes on to describe the dances which follow, Pavans, Galliards, Almains and Volts.”

Of all the composers in Varietie, John Dowland is the best represented, composing six of the seven Galliards. A particular favourite of mine is the King of Denmark's Galliard, which was always known as the Battle galliard in earlier versions. One can't help thinking that Dowland was perhaps poking fun at his x-employer, who was famous for his excess drinking and lack of skill in battle and war.

The great Laurencini of Rome (il Divino) provides us with two wonderful fantasies, modelled on a contrapuntal older style, but with toccata-like sequences, which were to become so idiomatic in later lute writing. Laurencini was granted the “Order of the Golden Spur” by the Pope, and he may also have been known as “Equis Romanus” and the “Knight of the Lute”.

The Italian Alfonso Ferrabosco of Bologna, spent some years at the Eliza-

bethean court, between 1562 and 1578. in 1622 Henry Peacham wrote of him: “For judgement and depth of skill he was inferior unto none: what he did was most elaborate and profound.”

Indeed, his Fantasia and Pavan remind us of an earlier English style, filled with nobility and poise. The Fantasia is written in the key of B flat minor, which is most unusual, and provides a sombere and intense sonority.

One of my personal favourites from the fantasies is that of the Flemish lutenist Gregorio Hewit, with its wonderful chromaticism and expansive use of the instrument.

John Dowland travelled with Hewit to the German court of Prince Moritz, Landgrave of Hessen. The Prince himself was a fine lutenist and his Pavan, the first in the collection, is dedicated to Dowland.

The Pavans by Thomas Morley (the only non-lutenist composer in the book) and Anthonie Holborne are the only Pavans written without divisions. Given the generous sophistication of many of the other pieces, I came to the conclusion that a greater impact would be achieved through subtle embellishment of the repeats, rather than florid divisions.

My choice of pieces for this recording was largely instinctive. It wasn't possible to record all 42 pieces, so I chose the ones which spoke to me the most at the time, with a view to representing all styles and genres of the book.

© Matthew Wadsworth,
London November 2008

Matthew Wadsworth, lutenist, is in great demand as a soloist, continuo player and chamber musician. He has appeared at major festivals in the UK, Europe and North America and can frequently be heard on radio, both in live performance and on disc.

Matthew has recorded for Avie, Deux-Elles, Linn and EMI Records. His CDs, “When Laura Smiles”, (featuring music by Phillip Rosseter), “Away Delights” (Robert Johnson) and “14 Silver Strings” (Kapsberger and Piccinini) have received international critical acclaim.

Matthew’s first collaboration with Channel Classics ‘Masters Of The lute’, was Editor’s Choice in Gramophone Magazine, December 2006.

Matthew studied lute with Nigel North at London’s Royal Academy of Music, winning the London Student of the Year award in 1997 for his work on the development of Braille lute tablature. He then spent a year at the Royal Conservatory of Music in The Hague.

Wadsworth was recently made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and was nominated by The Independent as a “Rising Star for 2005”.

Recent engagements have included the Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, the Georgian Concert Society (Edinburgh), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and the Lufthansa, Beverley, Spitalfields, Budapest, Vancouver, Ottawa, Mitte-Europa and Innsbruck festivals. Matthew has also worked with The Academy of Ancient Music, English Touring Opera, Birmingham Opera Company, Independent Opera, The Netherlands Bach Society, I Fagiolini, The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble, The Musicians of the Globe, Arion, Constantinople, The Theatre of Early Music and Les Violons du Roy, among others.

For more information visit www.matthewwadsworth.com



1	<i>Sir John Smith, his Almaine</i> JOHN DOWLAND	2.45
2	<i>Fantasia composed by the most famous</i> GREGORIO HUWET <i>of Antwerp</i>	4.42
3	<i>Pavin composed by the most famous & perfect Artist</i> ANTHONIE HOLBORNE	5.51
4	<i>The most sacred Queene Elizabeth, her Galliard</i> JOHN DOWLAND	1.26
5	Volt 1 ANONYMOUS	2.49
6	<i>Fantasia composed by the most famous</i> THE KNIGHT OF THE LUTE (LAURENCINI)	2.38
7	<i>Pavin composed by the right perfect Musition</i> DANIEL BATCHELAR	5.35
8	Coranto 1 : <i>Mounsier Ballard his Coranto</i> ROBERT BALLARD	1.41
9	<i>Fantasia composed by the most artificial & famous</i> ALFONSO FERRABOSCO <i>of Bologna</i>	3.25
10	Pavin ALFONSO FERRABOSCO <i>of Bologna</i>	3.52
11	Coranto 6 ANONYMOUS	0.54
12	Coranto 2 : <i>John Perrichon his Coranto</i> JOHN PERRICHON	1.25
13	<i>Fantasia composed by the most famous & divine</i> LAURENCINI OF ROME	3.13

14	<i>Pavin made by the most magnificent and famous</i> MORITZ, PRINCE OF HESSEN <i>“fecit in honorem Ioani Doulandi Anglorum Orphei”</i>	5.00
15	<i>The most high & mightie Christianus</i> <i>the 4th King of Denmarke, his Galliard</i> JOHN DOWLAND	3.10
16	<i>Coranto 4 : Mounsier Saman his Coranto</i> MOUNSIER SAMAN	1.29
17	<i>The Right Honourable the Lady Clifton’s Spirit</i> JOHN / ROBERT DOWLAND	1.57
18	<i>Pavin composed by the excellent Musition</i> THOMAS MORLEY	5.05
19	<i>The Right Honourable Ferdinando Earle</i> <i>of Darby, his Galliard</i> JOHN DOWLAND	2.49
	total time:	62.00



Previous release

CCS SA 24206

MASTERS OF THE LUTE

This is Matthew Wadsworth's finest release to date ... a gem of an album, which exudes intelligence, sensitivity and sheer class ... A richly painted recital that really shouldn't be missed.

Gramophone Editor's Choice

Excellent recording by a first class player, and one that I expect to play over and over again.

Lute Society

Production

Channel Classics Records BV

Producer

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Recording engineer, editing

C. Jared Sacks

Lines notes

Matthew Wadsworth

Cover design

Manifesta, Ad van der Kouwe

Recording location

The National Center For Early Music,
York, England

Recording dates

December 2006/May 2007

Instrument

10 course lute by Klaus Jacobsen, 1988

Temperament: 6th comma

Strings: gut, made by Aquilla

in Italy and

Daniel Larson, U.S.A.

Technical information

Microphones

Bruel & Kjaer 4006, Schoeps

Digital converters

DSD Super Audio/Meitnerdesign AD/DA

DSD editing system

Pyramix Editing/Merging Technologies

Speakers

Audiolab, Holland

Amplifiers

Van Medevoort, Holland

Cables

Van den Hul*

Mixing board

Rens Heijnis, custom design

Mastering Room

Speakers

B+W 803d series

Amplifier

Classe 5200

Cable

Van den Hul*

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