

OPERA  
OMNIA



## ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

*William Shakespeare, John Dowland  
17<sup>th</sup>-cent. English Theatre-Music*

### Ensemble Floridante

Ivo Posti – Countertenor  
Villu Vihermäe – Bass Viol  
Saale Fischer – Harpsichord  
Andrew Lawrence-King – Baroque Triple Harp, Director



# ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

## All the world's a stage

Full fathom five                      *The Tempest* (1611)                      Robert Johnson  
Where the Bee sucks                  *The Tempest*  
Fairy Round                              *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1605)                  Anthony Holborne

## If Music be the food of Love

Come again, sweet Love doth now invite                      John Dowland (1597)  
An English Frenchman      *Musicall Humours* (1605)                      Tobias Hume  
Now oh now (The Frog Galliard)                      Dowland (1597)

## Fancy: it alone is high fantastical

A Fancy                                  *Twelfth Night* (1602)                      Dowland  
Sweet stay awhile                      *A Pilgrimes Solace* (1612)  
The most sacred Queen Elizabeth, her Galliard (1610)

**Music & Sweet Poetry**      *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599)                      Richard Barnfield

## Let the sky rain potatoes!

Greensleeves to a Ground      *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597)                      John Playford  
Rowland                                  *King Lear* (1606)                      William Byrd  
The Willow Song                      *Othello* (1604)                      Anon  
My Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home                      Dowland

## The Lover & a Soldier

It was a lover and his lass      *As you like it* (1603)                      Thomas Morley  
Take those lips away                  *Measure for Measure* (1604)                      John Wilson  
Callino Casturame                      *Henry V* (1599)                      Byrd  
The Pangs of Love                      *Twelfth Night*                      Anon  
Fain would I change that note                      Hume (1605)

## Alas, poor Yorick!

Music for a While                      Dryden & Lee *Oedipus* (1692)                      Henry Purcell  
Grim King of the Ghosts                  *A Midsummer Night's Dream*                      Anon  
O Death, rock me asleep                      Anne Boleyn (1536)

## Heigh, ho

Heigh, ho, holiday                      Holborne  
When that I was and a little tiny boy      *Twelfth Night*                      Joseph Vernon (1780)  
O Mistress mine                      *Twelfth Night*                      Morley

# ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

*All the world's a Stage, and all the men and women in it merely players. They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts...*

Shakespeare *As you like it* Act II Scene vii

Around the year 1600 in Italy Cavalieri's *Anima e Corpo*, Peri's and Caccini's rival settings of *Euridice*, Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and *Arianna* established a new genre of story-telling in music, that we now call 'opera': whereas in England, the spoken theatre of Shakespeare and his followers reigned supreme. But performances at Shakespeare's Globe theatre were full of music, from the moment the audience arrived, during the Plays, and even after the drama was over.

Whilst waiting for the Play to start, the audience was entertained with sophisticated art-music. As the drama commences, music sets the mood: "If Music be the food of love, play on!" commands Duke Orsino in the first scene of *Twelfth Night*. Shakespeare wrote love-songs to be sung 'realistically' as part of the action; comic nonsense for clowns; and melancholy laments for courtiers. Many characters quote phrases from popular ballads; others dance galliards.

Music often characterises magic spirits: Oberon and Titania, the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Ariel, who serves the magician, Prospero, in *The Tempest*; the appearance of the Ghost in Dryden and Lee's *Oedipus*. Ariel's song 'Full fathom five' suggests the sound – 'rich and strange' – of under-sea bells marking the hours. The three-note pattern of sad bells creates an ostinato bass – a funeral Ground – for 'O Death, rock me asleep', supposedly written by Anne Boleyn imprisoned in the Tower of London on the eve of her execution.

Formal songs and instrumental music were only a small part of the musical texture of Shakespeare's plays. Verses, lines, or even just a couple of words from well-known ballads brought popular tunes to the audience's ears, and suggested rich associations with familiar texts. As scholar Russ Duffin has shown in *Shakespeare's Songbook* (2004), key words can evoke a traditional tune, which might then provide a melody for Shakespeare's own song-text. Thus, in *Twelfth Night* Duke Orsino mentions "love, in the sweet pangs of it"; this suggests 'The Pangs of Love', a ballad-tune that fits the unusual metre of Shakespeare's song 'Come away, Death', which follows soon afterwards.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'lovers and madmen' are characterised as imagining vividly, 'shaping fantasies'. Two lines later Shakespeare links 'the lunatic, the lover and the poet', a reference to the poetic text of 'The Lunatic Lover' sung to the tune of 'Grim King of the Ghosts'. This scene also mentions the harp as a symbol of antiquity: in *The Tempest* the 'miraculous harp' is similarly mentioned, but with additional associations of the power of music, read by some scholars in the context of the magician Prospero as an Orpheus-like, musical demi-god.

Popular ballad-tunes were heard not only in the theatre, but also in chamber-music. Dowland dedicated his setting of the 'Rowland' tune to Lord Willoughby, and William Byrd re-set Dowland's lute variations as a keyboard piece. Soldier and champion of the viola da gamba, Tobias Hume might have been the model for the character Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*. Hume's 'Musicall Humours' [meaning contrasting moods, not comedy] and Holborne's consort dance-music feature evocative titles that set the mood for each piece, as if it were a theatrical scene.

Such ballad-tunes as 'Greensleeves' are still well known today. Some have vanished into obscurity. Others have left faint traces for modern investigators to follow. In the history-play *Henry V*, the character Pistol speaks mock-Latin in reply to a French soldier whom he cannot understand: 'Qualtitie calmie custure me. Art thou a Gentleman?'. Hidden amongst all this nonsense is the title of a ballad-tune set with variations by William Byrd, 'Callino Casturame', an attempt to spell in English the Gaelic song-title 'Cailín ó Chois tSiúre mé' (I'm a girl from by the river Suire). Even 'Greensleeves' is not as English as one might think, being based on the Italian *passamezzo* Ground. Shakespeare knew it as the 'Passy-Measures Pavin'.

On the stage of Shakespeare's world, each person plays many parts: the baby, the schoolboy, the lover, the soldier, the justice, and the old fool, before entering a second childhood. So *Twelfth Night* – one of his most musical plays – ends with the ballad 'When that I was and a little tiny boy'. The 'traditional' tune was attributed by its 1906 editor to actor/singer Joseph Vernon, who published a collection of song texts in 1780. Perhaps Vernon picked up the tune – which certainly has a Gaelic feel – whilst he was in exile in Ireland, and perhaps it might even date back to Shakespeare's time, and to the Globe tradition of ending the Play (even a Tragedy) by bringing all the 'dead' characters back onstage for a lively Jig!

Andrew Lawrence-King