

Fancy That!
Brandywine Baroque
October 17, 2021

Fantasy à 3 for the Great Dooble Base
Fantasia No. 7

Giovanni Coprario
(c1570/80 - c1626)

Fantasia No. 3

Orlando Gibbons
(1583-1625)

Fantasias for Three Viols and Organ
Fantasia #10 in G major
Fantasia # 12 in D major
Fantasia #22 in A major

John Jenkins
(1592-1678)

Suite #5 from *The Flatt Consort*
for my Cousin Kemble

Matthew Locke
(1621-1677)

Fantazie
Galliard
Fantazie
Saraband

October from the *Monthes*

Christopher Simpson
(1606/9-1669)

Fantasia Suite #7 in D minor
Fantazia
Almain
Corant

John Jenkins
(1592-1678)

John Mark Rozendaal, treble viol
Sarah Cunningham, bass viol
Donna Fournier, bass viol
Karen Flint, organ

Notes

Through most of the seventeenth century, a distinguished set of the English gentry cultivated the viola da gamba, or “viol”, both as solo instrument for individual edification, and in small chamber ensembles, or “consorts”. The number of people who participated in this diversion includes King Charles I, Samuel Pepys, as well as two wealthy crypto-Catholic families living in Norfolk, the Derhams and the Lestranges. These noble amateurs employed the finest virtuoso players and composers of the time to teach them, play with them, and compose music for them. This refined patronage produced an esoteric body of repertoire whose refinement and power to move matches the famous poetry of the age, the works of Donne, Marvell, and Milton.

This program features a group of works scored for one treble instrument, two bass instruments, and sometimes organ. This intriguing combination seems to be unique to this specific repertoire and is not found in any continental music.

Giovanni Coprario (c?1570-80 to c1626) was an English composer who affected an Italian last name. He may have been born John Cooper or Cowper, but by 1601 had adopted the pseudonym Coprario, when William Petre made a gift of 10 shillings to “*Coprario for Lessons hee brought mee while in London*”. It is suggested that he had perhaps spent some time in Italy and adopted the name there, retaining it after he returned to England. The first Fantasia No. 7 on this program was until recently thought to have been composed by Orlando Gibbons. It is now attributed to Coprario.

Sir Robert Cecil, the Earl of Salisbury in 1605 and Lord Treasurer in 1608, seems to have been his chief patron during these years, paying him for lodging, stringing the instruments in his care, including a Lyra viol, and hiring musicians. Other patrons were Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford (1539–1621), and Francis Clifford, Earl of Cumberland (1559–1641). It was set down that Coprario taught music to the children of James I and that Prince Charles was “*a scholar of Coperario on the viol da gamba*”. It is clear that he came to occupy a special place in the Prince of Wales’s household.

His fantasias or “instrumental madrigals” (as the majority may be better termed) are among his most celebrated works. No literary associations underlie his fantasias of two, three or four parts; indeed the sets for three and four viols are classic examples of this “*chiefest kind of musicke which is made without a dittie*”. Coprario stands out as an original, influential and literate figure in the circle that included the younger Ferrabosco, Orlando Gibbons and Thomas Lupo.

Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625), English composer and keyboard player, was a leading composer of vocal, keyboard and ensemble music in early 17th-century England. He was a chorister at King’s College Cambridge from 1596 until 1599, where his brother was master of the choristers. From 1603 until his death he was a musician in the Chapel Royal, becoming a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1605, and later one of two organists there. By 1625, he was senior organist of the Chapel Royal. From 1613 Gibbons was the most talented keyboard player and keyboard composer available to the court. His two eminent predecessors, Byrd and Bull, had marked him out as such by his inclusion in *Parthenia*, the keyboard collection published to celebrate the marriage of the king’s daughter, Princess Elizabeth, to Frederick, Elector Palatine, in 1613.

The assumption that Gibbons wrote ensemble music exclusively for viols is now untenable. The fantasias for “great dooble basse” and certain of the three-part printed fantasias are particularly suited to violins. However, there remains a substantial body of music for two to six instruments which is apt for viol consort, including the unusual two-part fantasias, the varied group of In Nomines, the rich-textured six-part fantasias, and the finely wrought variations on *Go from my window* with its duel of divisions between the bass viols. Gibbons often writes

more for the moment than the cumulative whole, with emphasis on clear articulation of imitative motives, shaping of phrases, control of texture, and rhythmic and periodic use of harmony. The fantasias for “great dooble basse” are deliberately sectional, include changes of meter, have style and tempo indications, and quote from popular melodies and idioms; they were perhaps written specifically for the burgeoning string band entertaining Charles I during his years as Prince of Wales.

John Jenkins (1592-1678), an English composer was superb in writing consort music, especially for viols. He became famous as a lutenist and a lyra viol player. Among Jenkins’s patrons were the Derham family of West Derham, Norfolk, and the L’Estrange family at Hunstanton. The two families were friends and Jenkins probably moved freely between them as the occasion required, although Gibbons was apparently never attached to any household, but spent much time “*at Gentlemen’s houses in the country*”. From about 1654 he was visiting the North family at Kirtling, Cambridgeshire, residing there between 1660 and 1668 as teacher to Roger and Montagu. Roger North’s writings provide an endearing character study of the composer and many reminiscences concerning his stay at Kirtling. In 1660, at the Restoration, Jenkins was appointed as a theorbo player in the Private Musick, but although he spent some time at court between 1660 and 1663, it is unlikely that he attended often.

During the first half of his life the viol fantasias provided the focal point of his creative work. He inherited a form already in its prime, through the examples by Coprario, Ferrabosco (ii), Lupo, Ward and others which served as his models. However, his genius as a composer in this field was highly individual, showing itself in unsurpassed lyrical inventiveness and outstanding gifts for tonal organization. During his long life, the many-voiced consorts of viols gradually made way for the instrumentation of the Italian trio sonata. Responding to this change, Jenkins produced two collections of three-part fantasias. Those for treble, two basses and organ mark the trend towards shorter, more clearly defined and contrasted sections. The organ features prominently in the works with two basses, where it is given solo introductions and interludes, an idea transferred from the contemporary fantasia-suites. “Divisions” dominate much of Jenkins’s writing in this genre, rising to the heights of virtuosity in the nine fantasia-suites for treble and two basses and the seven fantasia-air division sets. With emphasis placed on instrumental display, the opening movements contrast sharply with the less extrovert viol fantasias. The divisions, invariably placed after the opening fugato section, are frequently followed by a short homophonic passage in triple time before the customary rich harmonic conclusion. The second movements are usually brisk and sprightly by nature, betraying their origin as dance forms. In his later fantasia-suites Jenkins generally preferred the corant to the ‘ayre’ or galliard as the third movement.

Matthew Locke (c?1621-23 to1677), composer and organist, was the most important, influential and prolific English composer of his time. He was a chorister in the Cathedral Church of Exeter. He probably joined the cathedral choir around 1630, where his teachers would have been Edward Gibbons (eldest brother of Orlando) and the organist John Luge. He carved ‘Mathew Lock / 1638’ on the organ screen, possibly when his voice broke, and perhaps a second carving, “ML / 1641” records the year he left the choir.

Charles I made Exeter the base for his activities in the west in 1644 and conscripted all adult Devon men into the royalist army, and it is possible that Locke was one of those who accompanied Prince Charles to France in 1646. Hulse suggested that Locke was with Charles at The Hague in 1648, and accompanied the Duke of Newcastle to Antwerp early in 1649. Perhaps he became a Catholic at this point. Locke ‘married Mr Garnon’s daughter in Herefordshire’. Mary, his wife was the daughter of Roger Garnons from Trelough, south of Hereford. On 29 March 1654 a deposition was made against ‘Mr. Matthew Lock as being a papist’ and being involved in a fracas in Hereford. As a Catholic, Locke was not a member of the Chapel Royal, though he wrote for it in the 1660s. Locke was one of eight members of the 24 Violins paid travelling expenses between 30 June 1665 and 18 February 1666, when the court was sheltering from the plague at Hampton Court and in Oxford. In view of Locke’s Oxford activities and his prominent position in English musical life, it is surprising he never received a doctorate from the university. Perhaps it was because he was a Catholic, though it is also likely that his assertive

and quarrelsome personality, revealed in his writings, offended potential academic patrons.

Unlike the *Duos for Two Bass Viols*, four three movement suites, each consisting of two fantasias and a courante or saraband, *The Flat Consort* is relatively incoherent as a set since it has no meaningful key sequence, no standard scoring and no consistent pattern of movements. Indeed, it should perhaps be thought of as two sets, united only by three-part writing, a penchant for flat keys and, presumably, an origin in the musical activities of the Kemble household. The first two suites are scored for treble, tenor and bass, and have the sequence fantasia–courante–fantasia–saraband–fantasia–jig, while the other three require a treble and two basses and consist of four-movement sequences of fantasia–courante–fantasia–saraband. The first two may perhaps be a little earlier than the others, since they are relatively straightforward, while the other three have more complex and developed fantasias, with some elaborate division writing. However, they all probably date from Locke's Hereford period in the 1650s.

Christopher Simpson (c1602-6 to 1669) was an English theorist, composer and viol player. He and his parents were Roman Catholics, known as recusants. At some time between 1645 and 1649 he went to live at Scampton, Lincolnshire, at the house of Sir Robert Bolles, who became his friend and patron, "*affording me a cheerful Maintenance, when the Iniquity of the Times had reduced me (with many others in that common calamity) to a condition of needing it*". It was Sir Robert's son John (b 1641) who was "*the chief occasion*" for the writing of *The Division-Violist* (London, 1659). Simpson was the most important English writer on music of his time. *The Division-Violist*, to which Jenkins, Coleman and Locke contributed laudatory verses, was sufficiently successful for a second, revised edition made in 1665. Sir Roger L'Estrange, who licensed the second edition, called it "*one of the best Tutors in the world*" for the instrument and "*a work of exceeding use in all sorts of Musick whatsoever*". Simpson's instrumental compositions range from the "Short and Easie Ayres Designed for Learners" (in *The Principles of Practical Musick*) to works which display the prowess of the fully fledged division violist.

His most challenging and elaborate pieces are a set of 12 fantasias, *The Monthes*, to which Jenkins referred in 1659 in these lines: "*And those thy well composed Months o' th' Yeere, Which Months thy pregnant Muse hath richly drest, And to each Month hath made a Musick-Feast*", and a companion set of four suites of fantasia, air and galliard, *The Seasons*, probably inspired by Jenkins's brilliant fantasia-suites for the same consort. These fantasias are of a type described by the composer in *The Division-Violist* as "*beginning with some Fuge; then falling into Points of Division; answering One Another ... and sometimes, All joyning Together in Division; But commonly, Ending in Grave, and Harmonious Musick*".

Notes by Karen Flint and John Mark Rozendaal