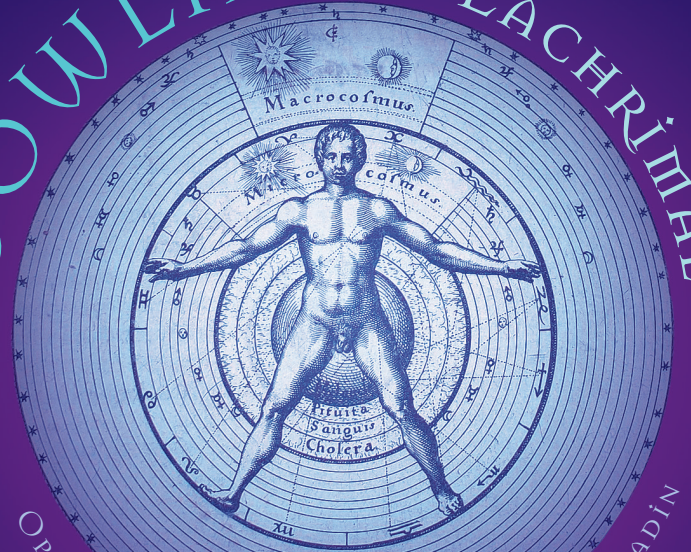


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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS



HOWLAND LACHRIMAE



OPERA PRIMA CONSORTI · CRISTIANO CONTADIN

John Dowland 1563-1626

Lachrimae (1604)

1. Antiquae	4'12	12. The Earle of Essex Galiard	1'18
2. Novae Antiquae Novae	3'45	13. Sir John Souch his Galiard	1'21
3. Gementes	3'48	14. Mr Henry Noel his Galiard	1'49
4. Tristes	4'20	15. Mr Giles Hobies Galiard	1'20
5. Coactae	3'40	16. Mr Nicholas Gryffith his	
6. Amantis	3'54	Galiard	1'47
7. Verae	4'07	17. Mr Thomas Collier his Galiard	1'20
8. Semper Dowland semper dolens	6'04	18. Captaine Digoire Piper his Galiard	2'38
9. Sir Henry Umpton's Funerall	4'29	19. Mr Buctons Galiard	1'21
10. Mr John Langton's Pavan	3'56	20. Mrs. Nichols Almand	1'12
11. The King of Denmark's Gagliard	1'47	21. M. George Whitehead his Almand	1'12

Opera Prima consort

Miguel Rincon *lute*

Fiorenza de Donatis & Andrea Rognoni *Alto viola & violins*

Giulia Genini *recorder*

Marco Casonato, Rodney Prada, Noelia Reverte, Rosita Ippolito *viols*

Cristiano Contadin *treble viol & conductor*

The signal event of John Dowland's life occurred in 1594. He had by then attained a measure of both prominence and security within English musical life as a lutenist and composer. Sufficiently so, it appears, for him to have been much aggrieved at failing to win a post at the court of Queen Elizabeth upon the death of its incumbent lutenist, John Johnson.

When a moneybags German prince came calling for his services, Dowland gladly took the offer and travelled through Europe. His Catholicism would have permitted him to take up what his correspondence even hints at as a Papal invitation; which at the same time would have entailed permanent exile from England, in the throes of the Reformation. An obsequious letter to Sir Robert Cecil, who had the Queen's ear, appears to have saved his skin – 'god he knoweth I never loved treason nor trechery nor never knew of any... most humbly I do Crave p[ar]don, p[ro]testinge if ther wer any abylytie in me, I wold be most redy to make amende[s]' – but preferment came there none from the court in England. Finally, in November 1598, he entered the service of a foreign head of state, King Christian IV of Denmark.

Dowland's highly valued but somewhat shadowy presence at the Danish court inspired Rose Tremain's fine novel, *Music and Silence*, but his own music had travelled across Europe some time before he did so himself, and one work in particular, a *Lachrymae Pavan*. Dowland had probably written it for himself to play on the lute, and later arranged it for a consort of viols, with or without lute accompaniment. At any rate arrangements sprang up in Scotland, The Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden and Italy, and for a panoply of instrumental resources. Among the distinguished composers who made arrangements for some of these instruments are Byrd, Morley, Farnaby, Scheidt and Schildt.

What above all seems to have drawn these composers to Dowland's piece was the affective use of its opening motif, which descends a fourth through a chromatic scale to describe the very act of weeping. Dowland himself seems to have nurtured a melancholy disposition, though to what extent this was an artfully constructed

persona to further his career and status as a proto-Romantic, suffering artist remains open to question: he was surely not insensible to such status when he signed himself 'Jo: Dolandi de Lachrimae' and described himself as 'infoelice Inglese'. In a 1592 letter he remarked: 'I have plaide so long with my fingers, that I have beaten out of play al my good fortune' – a standard complaint of professional musicians, perhaps, but one supported by contemporary accounts of his character.

In due course Dowland himself produced a vocal arrangement of his *Lachrymae* Pavan, 'Flow my tears', which duly appeared in his *Second Booke of Songs or Ayres of 2, 4 and 5 parts* (London, 1600) to a set of now-anonymous lyrics. In this form both he and his piece achieved further renown; and established in King Christian's favour, he was rewarded well by both emoluments and congenial terms of service, which allowed him to make return trips to London from time to time.

Four years later Dowland returned to the Pavan one more time to produce both the summa of his own output and perhaps of English consort music, in a series of seven linked *Lachrymae* Pavans of which his original piece forms the first. This he dedicated to Christian's sister Anne, the newly crowned and artistically disposed wife of King James I, thus buttering his bread on both sides with characteristic resourcefulness. And in due course Dowland's political manoeuvres were rewarded, though only in 1612, nine years after the death of Queen Elizabeth and six after his departure from the Danish court. It is hard to resist the conclusion that he was his own worst enemy at times; as his friend Henry Peacham put it in *The Compleat Gentleman* (London, 1622), he 'slipt many opportunities in advancing his fortunes'.

At any rate, Dowland's temperament was in tune with his times. There is a vein of melancholy running through Elizabethan culture and thought which viewed the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake as injurious to the soul, much as contemporary Lutheran theology in north Germany cautioned against worldly pleasures as drawing Man away from union with God which was, or should be, his ultimate goal. In both cases, the purpose of human life was to repent for sin, both original and repeated, as

first committed by Adam and Eve when first they were beguiled by the serpent to eat from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden.

Dowland's contemporary William Prynne makes clear how the further pursuit of either knowledge or distraction would lead only to further despair: 'Alas there are but few that finde the narrow way [the road to Heaven]...and those few what are they? Not dancers, but mourners: not laughers, but weepers; whose tune is Lachrymae, whose musicke sighs for sinne.'

The front page of Dowland's 1604 collection is titled: *Lachrimae, or Seaven Teares* figvred in *Seaven Passionate Pavans*. He continues in his introduction: 'My labours... [have] receiv[ed] their last foile and polishment; for which consideration I haue undergone this long and troublesome worke, wherein I haue mixed new songs with olde, graue with light, that euery eare may receiue his seuerall content....I do likewise hope that the peruser will gratefully entertaine my endeouours.'

In 1597 Morley had codified the musical practice that Dowland would follow in his sequence. Perhaps even inspired by Dowland's example, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* states that: 'When you would expresse a lamentable passion, then you must use motions proceeding by halfe notes. Flat thirds, and flat sixths, which of their nature are sweet...[and] accidentall motions [semitones] may fitly express the passions of grieffe, weeping, sighes, sorrowes, sobs, and suchlike.' In his *Lachrymae* Pavan, Dowland introduces all three of these melancholic intervals within the first three bars: the semitone, G sharp to A, appears in bar 2; the minor sixth between E and C in bar 1; and, the interval of a minor third in bar 3. Furthermore, these motifs are worked through almost every bar of the piece, and of the six that complete the *Seaven Teares*. In its monothematicism, its concentration and its contrapuntal ingenuity, Dowland's collection bears comparison with *The Art of Fugue* produced a century and a half later by the elderly Bach as the capstone to his own life's work.

In the individual titles of the *Seaven Teares* may be discerned a narrative of grief

for sin, recognition, repentance and finally transcendence: *Lachrimae Antiquae* (old/original tears); *Lachrimae Antiquae Novae* (new old/original tears); *Lachrimae Gementes* (groaning tears); *Lachrimae Tristes* (grave or bitter tears); *Lachrimae Coactae* (mixed tears); *Lachrimae Amantis* (tears of love, or tears of a lover); *Lachrimae Verae* (true tears). For the gambist Cristiano Contadin, this narrative outlines ‘an alchemical transformation which he has attempted to convey through both the instrumentation and performance style of this, his second recording of the *Seaven Teares*. The polyphony of the *Seaven Teares* is progressively less elaborate through its course, and Contadin reflects this through the practice of diminution which divides long notes into shorter values in a practice of embellishment that was common and indeed taken for granted in Dowland’s time.

However, whereas the published text of the *Seaven Teares* is scored for a consort of viols plus lute, Contadin has used a broken consort – ‘broken’ because it involves instrument from different families such as winds and strings – of viols, viola da braccio and recorder, plus lute. He notes that the recorder has long had an affective association with music of lamentation in works such as the early *Actus Tragicus* of Bach. His interpretation aims to recover the avowedly ‘passionate’ nature of the *Lachrymae* sequence as titled by Dowland, not only in the grief and lamentation of the early pieces but also in the joy and redemption tentatively discovered in *Lachrimae Coactae*, before weeping turns into tears of love and joy in the concluding pieces of the cycle.

The *Seaven Teares* are complemented here, as they have been on record for half a century and more since the pioneering efforts of August Wenzinger and his colleagues in the Schola cantorum Basiliensis, by a carefully ordered selection of pavans and dances mostly dedicated by Dowland to patrons and notables. These are deft character sketches in the manner of harpsichord pieces by Couperin and Rameau. The Earl of Essex, for example, was known as an arrogant and impulsive man as well as dashing and elegant (immortalised in Britten’s Coronation opera *Gloriana*, for example). The

Galliard dedicated to him is accordingly structured as a sequence of undulating lines interrupted by syncopated jumps. An imaginative listener will see Dowland and his colleagues playing the nimble passagework with fluidity and élan and then making play with syncopated accents, as if Essex were daring us with his antics.

History has not left us with rich sources of information to fill out some of the other characters enshrined on this album such as Thomas Collier, Mr Bucton or Mistress Nichols. Sir John Souch was a friend of the composer’s who also merited mention in the preface to his *Third Book of Songs* (1603). Henry Noel was a courtier to Elizabeth, and Sir Henry Umpton (known now as Unton) was an English diplomat working in France and a benefactor of Dowland’s. Captain Digorie Piper pursued a still more eventful career as a Cornish-born sailor turned pirate who, when caught, was spared the axe and bound over to make recompense to his victims; he died in penury.

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Cristiano Contadin is an Italian viola da gamba player and the founder of the Opera Prima Ensemble, a chamber music group of internationally-acclaimed soloists devoted to the baroque repertoire.

As a gamba soloist and continuo player, he collaborates with ensembles in Italy and abroad, including I Barocchisti, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, La Venexiana, Orchestra Sinfonica "G. Verdi" (Milan), Cantar Lontano, Accademia Bizantina, Arte dell'Arco and Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala (Milan).

Mr. Contadin has recorded for Sony, EMI Classical, Universal (Deutsche Grammophon), Arte, Brilliant, Hyperion, Stradivarius, Winter & Winter, and Naxos, among others. In 2015, he released a recording of The complete Telemann Trio Sonatas and Concertos with his Opera Prima Ensemble to widespread acclaim. For this disc, proclaimed by Classic Voice as "CD of the Month", Musica Magazine confirmed him as "a first-rate artist for the sweetness of the sound, the stylistic relevance and the absolute mastery of the instrument". His 2016 recording of Corrette's *Les délices de la solitude* (Opera Prima) was praised by Fanfare Magazine as "spirited, elegant, and warm". With the early music group Il Suonar Parlante, his recording "Full of Color" won such prestigious awards as the Diapason d'Or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, and Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik.

With the Quartetto Italiano di ViOLE da Gamba, "Il Suonar Parlante", and as a soloist, he aims to cultivate a repertoire that embraces ancient as well as modern viol consort music. He has performed works by contemporary composers and jazz artists such as Kenny Wheeler, Uri Caine, Don Byron, Ernst Reijseger, Vanni Moretto, Markus Stockhausen, Francesco Hoch, Henry Bartholomée, and Lucio Garau, and performed in the Italian premiere of George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* with the Orchestra Haydn of Bolzano.

In addition to his activities as a performer, Mr Contadin wrote the Italian translation of *The Early History of the Viol* by Ian Woodfield, published by EDT – Turin. He is also the coordinator of the viola da gamba catalogue *La Voce*

Dell'Ambasciatore for the Italian publishing house Musedita.

Mr. Contadin teaches Viola da Gamba and chamber music at the Conservatory "B. Marcello" in Venice, and has also held teaching positions at the Academy of Music in Esbjerg, Denmark, the Conservatory "S.Giacomantonio" in Cosenza, and the "V. Bellini" Conservatory in Palermo, Sicily. He is the summer director of "L'Instituto Laboratorio di Musica Antica" (ILMA) in San Vito al Tagliamento.

In March 2019 Mr Cristiano Contadin was nominated "Consigliere" of the Board of the new "Teatro San Cassiano" project, led by Mr P. Atkin.

Mr. Contadin plays an anonymous Venetian bass viol from the 18th century.

Opera Prima was created by Cristiano Contadin to bring well-informed performances and recordings from the renaissance and baroque periods to life.

"I approach music as if it's just been composed, and I want people to hear our performances as if for the first time. If we can touch the hearts of our audiences, then the language of early music will be as easy to comprehend as popular styles. This the goal of Opera Prima, to make historical performance accessible to everyone."

Musical instruments - Opera Prima consort

Cristiano Contadin
Marco Casonato

Treble viol - Anonimo early XVIII century
Tenor viol of Paolo Biordi, Firenze 2004.
Based on an original an original English viol of the first half of XVII century

Rodney Prada

Bass viol of Carlos Pineda, Cremona/Córdoba 2018.
Model Stradivari

Noelia Reverte
Rosita Ippolito

Bass viol of Carlo Chiesa, Milano 2017, model Colichon
Violone of Adriano and Riccardo Coleati Rama, Brunico 2017 based on a Brescian original violone of the XVII century

Rognoni Andrea

Violino: Anonimo italiano 1700
Viola da braccio - Anonimo XVIII century

Fiorenza de Donatis

Violino of Carlo Antonio Testori, Milano 1749
Viola da braccio of Anonimo XVIII century

Miguel Rincón Rodriguez

Liuto 10 cc of Barber- Harris, 1992

Giulia Genini

Tenor recorder model C. Rafi of Francesco Li Virghi, 2007
Treble recorder, model C. Rafi di Francesco Li Virghi, 2007

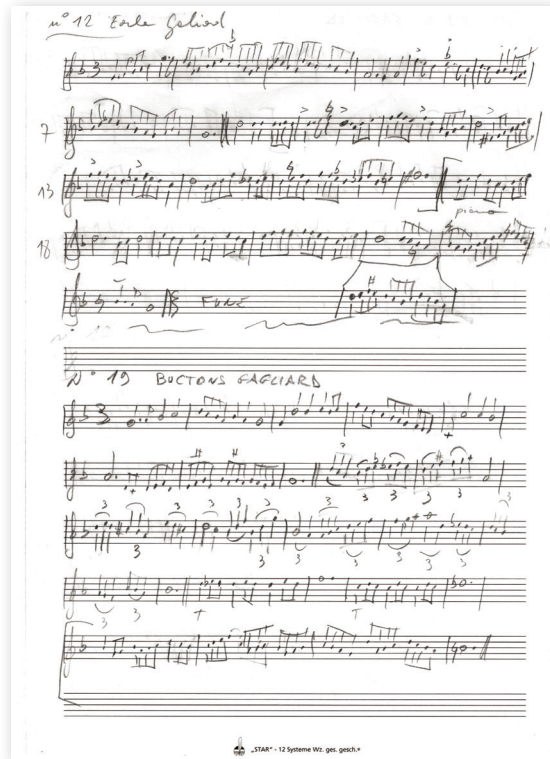
Recording: Recording: 17-19 April 2018, Auditorium Stelio Molo of Radio Svizzera Italiana of Lugano, Switzerland

Sound engineer: Michael Rast

Cover: Volume prime Macrocosmi History of negotiations among the two divided..., by Roberto Flud

Image on the back of the booklet: lavishly illustrated cosmology, based on the chemical theory of Paracelsus, by Roberto Flud

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Diminutions by Cristiano Contadin