

Program:

Ornamentation on the Viola da Gamba

May 11th at 11am in Pickman Hall

Guinevere Conner, student of Jane Hershey

Featuring: Kevin Lubin, harpsichord and alto viol, Thomas Conrad, tenor viol, Julian Bernal, bass viol, Itzel Orellana Sierra, bass viol, Daniel Fridley, bass voice

Ballet en Rondeau from Deuxième Livre

Marin Marais (1656-1728)

Sonata XII from Tyd En Konst-Oeffeningen

Johannes Schenck (1660-1712)

1. Adagio - Allegro - Adagio
2. Allemande
3. Courante
4. Sarabande 1
5. Sarabande 2
6. Gigue

Lachrimae

John Dowland (1562-1626)

1. Antique
2. Trieste
3. Amantis
4. Mr. Giles Hobies Galiard
5. Mrs. Nicholas Almand

Dopo che tu

Enrico Radesca (Born in second half of 16th century - 1625)

With divisions by Guinevere Conner and Daniel Fridley

Fantasia Sobre 'Nani, Nani'

David Loeb (1939 - Present)

Ornamentation on the Viola da Gamba

The viola da gamba is a multifaceted instrument. The viola da gamba not only acts as a bassline instrument, often heard as part of a continuo group in an ensemble setting, but can also serve as a melodic instrument using both division-style ornamentation and other melodic elaborations. The gamba has the ability to act as a chordal instrument, able to be used to outline polyphonic music on its own, and ornamenting while alternating between multiple lines of the same polyphonic piece or elaborating on the harmonies contained within more vertically-oriented music. In this program, I will show these differing styles of ornamentation in several periods and areas of the world.

Marin Marais was one of the most prominent composers and viola da gamba virtuosos of the French Baroque era. He studied composition with Jean-Baptiste Lully and with the master of the bass viol, Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe. Marais wrote operas, trio sonatas, and many other compositions including his famously recognized *Pieces de Violes*, of which he produced five books over a span of forty years. His vocal style of ornamentation prevailed in the methods of the day. Marais used many codified ornaments such as the *tremblement* – a “tremble” or baroque trill, *batement* – a mordent, *port de voix* – a lower grace note, and *flattement* – a wide or two finger vibrato. Marais meticulously notates the ornaments, the vibratos, and the signs specific to viol technique. In the continuo part, he uses figured bass notation, which was conventional at the time. In each volume, Marais includes detailed introductions which provide insight for the execution of his works as well as the execution of the style of the French Baroque. The *Ballet en Rondeau* from the *Deuxième Livre* of *Pieces de Violes* shows an array of the ornaments that Marais is known for.

Johannes Schenck was a Dutch viola da gambist and composer. Although born in Amsterdam, Schenck traveled all over Europe, exploring and immersing himself in multiple cultures. *Tyd en Konst-Offningen*, Op. 2, was the first of his instrumental compositions for viola

da gamba. It was in this collection that Schenck started to expand from his Italian style with regular note values and few ornaments, and brought in elements of the more challenging technical style of the French Baroque, heavily ornamented with many dotted notes, either notated or implied. Schenck sets this sonata in a French dance suite style and explores ornamentation, polyphony and chordal writing as well as dialog between the 'solo' voice and the basso continuo. By blending these numerous styles, Schenck set the standard for the viola da gamba's status as the foremost melodic instrument of the Baroque era with its rich, warm, and expressive timbre.

John Dowland was an English composer, virtuosic lutenist and skilled singer. Dowland's *Lachrimae* or 'Seven Tears' was originally composed as an instrumental piece but later became one of Dowland's most famous ayres, *Flow my Tears*. It is believed that the text was written specifically for the music and may have even been written by Dowland himself. This instrumental cycle for viola da gamba consort will feature five viola da gambas – in this performance treble, alto, tenor, bass, and bass. One hears the falling tear motif in *Antique*, the first movement in which the melody is not modified but is purely the ayre *Flow my Tears*. The following movements expand upon the initial melody, ornamenting in each voice, adding divisions and expanding the harmonies with cross-relations.

Enrico Radesca di Foggia was an Italian composer and organist. He composed both secular and sacred music, writing largely in vocal genres. *Dopo Che Tu* is a canzonetta written most likely for two tenor voices, but has been transposed down a fourth to fit comfortably for bass voice and bass gamba. When writing division style ornamentation to show numerous applications of ornaments for both voice and viola da gamba, I studied ornamentation treatises from the period such as Ganassi, Bovicelli, Brunelli, Dalla Casa, and Ortiz. Throughout the piece, ornamentation of the melody line as well as the bass line will be heard. The result features use of chords, imitation between the parts, switching of the parts, trading of ornamentation between the parts, as well as simultaneous ornamentation.

Nani, Nani is a bittersweet lullaby where a mother sings to her growing son and longs for his father's return. The text is in Ladino, or Judaeo Spanish, and the music is in the style of the Sephardic musicians who were expelled from Spain and fled to Italy before being recruited for the English court. This piece was passed down orally and was often heard for voice and a plucked instrument. Due to the oral tradition, there are many variations on the melody itself as well as the ornaments added to the melody. David Loeb, an American composer who has written extensively for early Western music as well as music from China or Japan, wrote a fantasia version of *Nani, Nani* for viola da gamba. He uses a variety of extended techniques including left hand pizzicato and harmonics. The piece itself should sound improvisatory and sound as if it is ornamenting upon the original melody.

The viola da gamba is unique in its many-faceted nature. I hope this recital has opened the door for you to experience its multiple uses - as a chordal instrument, a polyphonic instrument, ornamenting melody instrument, and many more. "Viva fui in silvis sum dura occisa securi dum vixi tacui mortua dulce cano." - "I was alive in the woods; I was cut down by a cruel axe. While I lived I was silent; in death I sweetly sing." as inscribed on the fingerboard of a viola da gamba by Kaspar Tieffenbrucker (Gasparo Duiffopruggar).