Three, Four & Twenty Lutes
Paul O’Dette, director

Canzone a Otto Voci per suonar a 4 Liuti (1599)
Canzone a Tre Liuti (1623)
Canzon XIII à 8
arranged by Patrick O’Brien

Suite for Four Lutes (1616)
Ballet
Ballet
Est-ce Mars
Courante de Mars
Un jour de la semaine
Allon aux noces
Galliard

Passamezzo di Zorzi — Padoana — Saltarello (1564)

Als ick u vinde (1584)
arranged by Emanuel Adriaenssen (ca. 1554–1604)
Madonna mia pietà
arranged by Adriaenssen
O Villanella
arranged by Adriaenssen

Intermission

Three Masque Dances “for the twenty Lutes”
arranged by Tim Crawford and Patrick O’Brien

The Songe called Trumpets
reconstructed by Lyle Nordstrom

Giovanni Antonio Terzi
(fl. 1580–1600)
Alessandro Piccinini
(1566–ca. 1638)
Giovanni Gabrieli
(ca. 1554–1612)
Nicolas Vallet
(ca. 1583–ca. 1642)

Giovanni Pacoloni

Hubert Waelrant
(ca. 1517–1595)
Orlando di Lasso
(1532–1594)
Waelrant

Robert Johnson
(ca. 1583–1633)

Robert Parsons
(ca. 1535–1571/2)

BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL extends heartfelt thanks

This afternoon’s performance of Three, Four & Twenty Lutes is sponsored by
the New York Continuo Collective,
in loving memory of Pat O’Brien, whose genius inspires us all
Suite from Terpsichore (1612)  
arranged by Patrick O’Brien and Grant Herreid  
Ballet CCLVIII  
Courante LV  
Courant CL M.M. Wüstrow  
Bransle de la Torche XV  
Reprinse secundam inferiorem CCCX  
Courante CLXXXIII

Dalle più alte sfere  

O che nuovo miracolo  
Ellen Hargis, Nell Snaidas & Danielle Reutter-Harrah, voice & guitar

**BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL** extends heartfelt thanks to:  
**Daniel and Ruth Shoskes**  
for their leadership support of Paul O’Dette, **director,**  
in this afternoon’s performance of Three, Four & Twenty Lutes

**Lutenists**

Paul O’Dette, **director, treble, alto & tenor lutes**
Grant Herreid, **tenor & bass lutes, cittern**
Charles Weaver, **mandora, treble, alto & tenor lutes**
Stephen Stubbs, **bass lute & theorbo**

Ryaan Ahmed, **theorbo**
Kenneth Bé, **alto lute**
Deborah Fox, **theorbo**
Douglas Freundlich, **bass lute**
Gail Gillispie, **alto lute**
Lucas Harris, **theorbo**
Dieter Hennings, **Baroque guitar**
Catherine Liddell, **alto & tenor lutes**

Christopher Morrongiello, **alto & tenor lutes**
Lyle Nordstrom, **bandora & tenor lute**
Kevin Payne, **tenor lute**
Phillip Rukavina, **tenor lute**
Andy Rutherford, **bass lute**
Paul Shipper, **cittern**
Daniel Shoskes, **tenor lute**
Daniel Swenberg, **bass lute & theorbo**

**Singers**

Ellen Hargis & Nell Snaidas, **soprano**
Danielle Reutter-Harrah, **mezzo-soprano**

**BEMF Young Artists Training Program**

Sarah Mitchell & Hannah Rose Stubbs, **soprano**
Brittany Fowler, **mezzo-soprano**
Michael Manning, **alto**
Bradley J. King, **tenor**
Zachary Lenox, **bass**
Notes on the Program

Three, Four & Twenty Lutes

The lute is usually thought of as solo instrument par excellence. Its delicacy of tone and dynamic flexibility, combined with its capability of rendering all the parts of a polyphonic composition made it ideal for the solitary amateur as well as the perfect medium for virtuoso display. But lutes, especially in the hands of professionals, were frequently brought together into ensembles, most commonly duet teams in which a skilled performer improvised virtuoso runs and counterpoints to a simpler accompaniment played by his assistant on the second lute. Sometimes, however, the groups were larger: trios and quartets frequently played for dancing, and for special occasions such as ballets de cour, masques, or the elaborate Florentine Intermedii, while very large groups of plucked instruments—even as many as 40—were combined to ravishing effect. This afternoon’s program gives some idea of the range of possibilities suggested by the scattered sources of lute ensemble music of the Renaissance and early Baroque periods.

One of the greatest of the Italian lute virtuosos of the late sixteenth century was Giovanni Antonio Terzi, also highly esteemed as a singer, whose two books of lute music (1593 and 1599) present some of the finest and most idiomatic compositions and arrangements for the solo instrument. While these are rather neglected today owing to their great technical difficulty, Terzi is well known to lutenists for his duets and for the canzone for four lutes. In this cleverly contrived piece, two pairs of lutes are pitted against one another in the manner of contemporaneous double-choir canzonas by Guami and Gabrieli. These, and other canzonas set for multiple lutes, inspired Pat O’Brien to arrange the present Gabrieli canzona for lute ensemble.

Alessandro Piccinini was a distinguished and innovative musician whose fine works for the lute and for the chitarrone provided a parallel to the keyboard music of his contemporary Frescobaldi. His canzona for three lutes (1623), one of the masterpieces of the lute ensemble repertoire, begins in a rather conservative, solidly contrapuntal style, but ends thrillingly with the two upper instruments exchanging virtuoso passages over the sober accompaniment of the bass lute, rather as Pacoloni had done over fifty years before.

A controversial area of scholarly debate is the performance of sixteenth-century dance music. On what instruments was it played? Do the plain ensemble versions of the popular dances that have come down to us represent what was actually heard in the ballrooms of the time? The dance music for a group of three lutes in Giovanni Pacoloni’s Longe Elegantissima...Carmina (printed in 1564, probably after an earlier edition), presenting versions of many popular dances carefully scored for the ensemble, gives us a uniquely clear idea of one type of dance accompaniment. A steady harmonic support is given by the bass lute, whose only elaborations consist of an appealing use of “walking bass” figures, while the two other lutes are provided with elaborate divisions whose improvisatory character is underlined by Pacoloni’s apparent lack of concern over harmonic clashes between the parts. An extra cittern part by Frederico Viaera, tailored to fit these trios, was published in the same year. This splendidly lively music is mostly arranged into “suites” in which the same thematic material is heard gradually accelerating in three dances: passamezo, padoana, and saltarello.

Until recently it was thought that the single part marked Replete for three lutes in an English lute manuscript now at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth was an isolated fragment, impossible to reconstruct. But Paul O’Dette noticed that it is an arrangement of the lower four voices of a popular six-part consort piece by Robert Parsons called variously The Songe called Trumpetts, Mr Parson bis Songe, Cante Cantate, and Lusti Gallant. The missing upper lute parts have been reconstructed by Lyle Nordstrom, thus providing a worthy addition to the very sparse English lute ensemble repertoire.

In the English masque, the equivalent of the Italian ballo or the French ballet de cour, London’s artistic elite was mobilized to provide court entertainment on the most lavish scale. Great talents like Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones produced scripts and designs of lasting fame, generally praising the monarchy and encouraging extreme patriotism. One of the musicians who regularly provided music for masques was the lutenist Robert Johnson, whose father John was one of the leading royal lutenists of Queen Elizabeth’s reign. For one of the most lavish masques, Ben Jonson’s Oberon (1611), Robert Johnson was hired to produce dance music to be arranged for the court violin band. He is also known to have engaged “XX lutes...for the Princes Dance” in the same masque; the large number of lutes taking part is further confirmed by an anonymous eyewitness account: “Before passing into the hall, ten musicians appeared each with a lute and two boys who sang very well some sonnets in praise of the prince [Henry] and his father [James I].” The dances by Johnson performed in this conjectural reconstruction by Tim Crawford, later revised by Pat O’Brien, probably come from a slightly later masque in honor of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine in 1613; they survive in excellent five-part settings for strings by the violinist William Brade, as well as in versions for solo lute.
The “twenty lutes” in these entertainments also included other plucked-string instruments such as citrurn, bandora, theorbo, and guitar, as was also apparently the custom for the Entrées de luth in the French ballets de cour. In the Entrées de cour, the players, twelve or more in number and attired in fantastic costumes, advanced slowly onto the stage and there played a sort of concert. The theorbo was introduced into England by Inigo Jones in 1607, but at first it was confiscated by an overzealous customs officer at Dover who feared it might be “an engine of war sent by some Popish country to destroy our King.” It is remarkable how little things have changed for lute players over the past 400 years!

The dances collected by Praetorius for his popular Terpsichore are among the finest examples of music from ballets de cour to have survived. These charming works, often used today to demonstrate the wide variety of Renaissance instruments depicted by Praetorius in his De Organographica, were originally intended for a consort of violins, the primary ensemble to provide music for ballet. Praetorius goes on to explain that many of the dances were written by lutenists, mostly as solo pieces, but on occasion performed by the large plucked ensembles described above. The present arrangements, made by Patrick O’Brien and Grant Herreid, are an attempt at recreating the kind of sound heard on those occasions. For the Johnson dances, divisions for the treble lute have been added to the repeated strains, while those in the Praetorius works were supplied “by a French dancing master.”

One of the most important French lutenists of the early seventeenth century was Nicolas Vallet, who seems to have spent almost his entire working career in the Netherlands as a Huguenot exile. He established strong links with England: a relative, Adam Vallet, worked as a musician to the English court, and Nicolas dedicated his Regia Pietas (1620), settings of all 150 psalms for solo lute, to James I. In 1626 he formed a permanent quartet in Amsterdam with three English lutenists, and a surviving contract between them tells us that the group played for dancing, and at banquets and weddings. We can safely assume that they would have played music similar to this “suite” of seven pieces for four lutes that Vallet published in 1616. Here there is another link with the ballet de cour, for there is a fair probability that the first four items were originally performed in Parisian ballets, though we cannot be sure of their original scoring.

Another lutenist of an earlier generation working in the Low Countries was Emanuel Adriaenssen, whose Pratum Musicum was first published in 1584. As well as containing fantasias and dances for solo lute and the usual solo arrangements of vocal items, it includes an interesting series of madrigal and chanson arrangements in which only two out of the original four-or-more voice parts are provided, together with a lute part. Lassus’s Madonna mia pietà, however, is provided with three lute parts, while the two songs by Hubert Waelrant are accompanied by a consort of four lutes doubling the individual voice parts and supplying some distinctively ornamented cadences. The chanson Als ick u vinde is a rare example of a chanson in Dutch, but Waelrant also published a version of the song with Italian words with a rather different sentiment. Both texts are performed here separated by a version with lutes only.

The elaborate musical interludes, or intermedii, performed at Florentine weddings in the sixteenth century, also utilized large numbers of plucked instruments. The most extravagant of these, performed at the 1589 wedding of Ferdinand de’ Medici, was a musical event of such significance that it brought together more than fifty of the finest musicians in Italy working for nearly a year to produce something truly memorable. The opening song, Dalle più alte sfere, was sung by the most celebrated soprano of the time, Vittoria Archilei, to the accompaniment of a consort of lutes and theorbs. The final ballo, O che nuovo miracolo, alternates villanelle for three sopranos accompanying themselves on guitars of two different sizes, with choruses that included the entire company. The music of this ballo was an instant hit, and it became known as the Ballo del Gran Duca or the Aria di Fiorenza, one of the most popular pieces upon which instrumentalists in the seventeenth century composed or improvised sets of variations.

This program was originally designed for and performed at the 1989 Boston Early Music Festival by Paul O’Dette and Pat O’Brien. Pat, who was the lute teacher and mentor to nearly all of the world’s leading lutenists, passed away suddenly last July, leaving an enormous hole in all of our lives. Today’s performers were all students of Pat’s. For the decades of patient and devoted guidance he provided to so many, we felt there could be no better tribute than to reprise this program of the music he loved the most. ♦
Texts & Translations

Als ick u vinde

Als ick u vinde met u spil’ en spinrock
Met u schoon handen ende roode wanghen,
Dan vind ik dat ick ben van u ghevanghen.

Vorria morire per uscir di guai
Ma mi par mala cos’ amaro me ne:
Per che s’io mor’ oimé, non veggia te ne.

Madonna mia, pietà

Madonna mia, pietà
Chiam’ et aita
Ch’io moro e stento a torto pur volete:
Io grido, e nol sentete
    Acqua, madonna, al foco
Ch’io si sento morire a poco a poco.
Di chiedervi merce son quasi roco,
Sol della pena mia prendete gioco;
    Acqua, madonna, al foco.

O Villanella

O Villanella quand’ al’acqua vai
Dimmi se fresca torn’
E poi che fai?
Non posso, no!
Dimmelo mo.
O Villanella bella
E quando ti basciarò
O dolce villanella?

O villanella, se dici che tu m’ami,
Quando vai all’acqua,
Perché non mi chiiami?
Non posso, no!
Dimmelo mo.
O Villanella bella
E quando ti basciarò
O dolce villanella?

O villanella, se mi porti amore,
Quando vai all’acqua
Fammi ’no favore!
Non posso, no!
Fammelo mo,
O villanella bella,
E quando ti basciarò,
O dolce villanella?

O villanella, non mi far morire,
Quando vai all’acqua,

When I see you with your spindle and distaff,
With your fair hands and rosy cheeks,
Then I find that I am truly captured by you.

I wish to die to be rid of my woes:
But this seems to me a wicked and bitter thing
Since if I die, alas, I shall not see you any more.

My lady, have mercy on me
I beg you, and help me
For I am dying, wrongly killed, and yet you wish it;
I cry out and you don’t hear me:
    Water, lady, to quench my fire!
For, little by little, I feel myself dying,
I have begged for your pity so often that I am nearly hoarse,
But you only mock my sufferings.
Still everywhere I go I cry out:
    Water, lady, to quench my fire.

O peasant girl, when you go to the spring,
Tell me if you return refreshed,
And then what do you do?
I cannot, no!
Please tell me!
O beautiful peasant girl,
What if I kiss you,
O sweet maiden?

O peasant girl, if you say you love me,
When you go to the spring,
Why do you not call me?
I cannot, no!
Please tell me!
O beautiful peasant girl,
What if I kiss you,
O sweet maiden?

O peasant girl, if you offer me love,
When you go to the spring,
Please do me a favor!
I cannot, no!
Please do it for me!
O beautiful peasant girl,
What if I kiss you,
O sweet maiden?

O peasant girl, do not make me die,
When you go to the spring,
Famici venire,
Non posso, no!
Vengoci no,
O villanella bella
E quando ti bacierò
O dolce villanella?

Bring me with you.
I cannot, no!
Please let me come!
O beautiful peasant girl,
What if I kiss you,
O sweet maiden?

Dalle più alte sfere
Dalle più alte sfere
Di celesti Sirene amica scorta
Son l’Armonia, ch’ha voi vengo, o mortali;
Poscia che fino al ciel battendo l’ali
L’alta fama n’apporta,
Che mai si nobil coppia’l sol non vidde
Qual voi nuova Minerva, e fort’ Alcide.

From the highest spheres,
As friendly escort to the celestial sirens,
I, Harmony, come down to you, O mortals;
For, flying all the way to Heaven
Exalted Fame has brought [the news]
That never has the sun seen such a noble couple
As you, a new Minerva and a strong Hercules.

O che nuovo miracolo
Tutti
O che nuovo miracolo
Ecco ch’in terra scendono
Celeste alto spettacolo
Gli Dei ch’il mondo accendono
Ecco Himeneo e Venere,
Co’l pie la terra hor premere.

All
O what new miracle!
Here descending to the earth
In noble, celestial display,
The gods who bring light to the world.
Here Hymen and Venus
Now set foot upon the earth.

Tre Donne
Del grande Heroe, che con benigna legge
Hetruria frena e regge
Udito ha Giove in Cielo
Il purissimo zelo
E dal suo seggio santo
Manda il ballo, et il canto.

Three Ladies
Jove in Heaven has heard
Of the purity and devotion
Of the great hero
Whose benign rule governs Etruria,
And from his sacred throne
Sends dance and song.

Tutti
Che porti, o drappel nobile
Ch’orni la terra in mobile.

All
What do you bring, o noble crowd,
To adorn the immovable earth?

Tre Donne
Portiamo il bello e’il buon ch’in Ciel si serra
Per far al Paradiso ugual la Terra.

Three Ladies
We bring beauty and goodness that are stored in Heaven
So that the Earth may be like Paradise.

Tutti
Tornera d’auro il secolo?

All
Will the golden Age return?

Tre Donne
Tornera il secol d’oro
E di real costume,
Ogni più chiaro lume.

Three Ladies
The Golden Age will return,
And royal customs,
Each more clearly illuminated.

Tutti
Quando verrà che fugghino
I mali e si distrugghino?

All
When will all things evil
Be banished and destroyed?
Tre Donne
Di questo nuovo sole
Nel subito apparire
I gigli e le viole,
Si verdranno fiorire.

Tutti
O felice stagion beata Flora!

Tre Donne
Arno ben sarai tu beato a pieno
Per le nozze felici di Loreno.

Tutti
O novella d’Amor fiamma lucente:

Tre Donne
Questa e la fiamma ardente
Ch’infiammerà d’Amore
Ancor l’anime spente.

Tutti
Ecco ch’amor e Flora
Il Cielo arde e innamora.

Tre Donne
A la sposa reale
Corona trionfale
Tessin Ninfe e Pastori
Det più leggiadri fiori.

Tutti
Ferdinando hor va felice altero;

Tre Donne
La vergine gentil di santo foco
Ard’e si accinge a l’amoroso gioco.

Tutti
Voi Dei scoprite a noi la regia prole.

Tre Donne
Nasceran semidei
Che renderan felice
Del mondo ogni pendice.

Tutti
Serbin le glorie i cign’in queste rive
Di Medici e Lorenzo eterne e vive.

Tre Donne
Le meraviglie nuove
Noi narreremo a Giove.
Hor te coppia reale,
Il Ciel rend’immortale.

Three Ladies
As soon as this new sun
Appears;
Lilies and violets
Will then bloom.

All
O happy season, O blessed Flora!

Three Ladies
Arno, you will be fully blessed
By the happy marriage with Lorraine.

All
O shining new flame of love!

Three Ladies
This is the burning flame
That will inflame with love
Even lifeless souls.

All
Behold how Amor and Flora
Inflame the heavens with love.

Three Ladies
For the royal bride
Let nymphs and shepherds
Weave a triumphal crown
Of the loveliest flowers.

All
Ferdinand is now happy and proud.

Three Ladies
The noble virgin burns with holy ardor
And prepares herself for amorous sport.

All
O Gods, reveal to us the royal progeny.

Three Ladies
Demigods shall be born
That will render the world
Happy in every place.

All
May the swans on these banks preserve the glory
Of Medici and Lorraine for ever.

Three Ladies
The new wonders
We shall relate to Jove.
Now, to you, royal couple,
The heavens give immortality.
Tutti
Le quercie bor mel distillino
E latte i fiumi corrino
D’amor l’alme stavillino
E gl’empi vitti aborrino
E Clio tessa l’istorie,
Di così eterne glorie
Guidin vezzosi balli
Frà queste amene valli
Portin Ninfe e Pastori,
Del’arno al Ciel gl’honori
Giove benigno aspiri
A i nostril alti desiri
Cantiam lieti lodando
Cristiana, e Ferdinando. ♦

All
Let oak trees drip with honey
And rivers run with milk.
Let souls sparkle with love
And abhor wicked vices
And Cleo weave the story
Of these eternal glories.
Let graceful dances lead us
Among these pleasant valleys,
Let nymphs and shepherds bring
Arno’s honors to the sky
Let Jove benignly grant
Our noble wishes.
We sing happily honoring
Christine and Ferdinand. ♦

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