



As our sweet
Cords
with
Discords
mixed be



ENGLISH
RENAISSANCE
CONSORT MUSIC

CONSORTIUM5
RECORDER QUINTET

As our sweet Cords with Discords mixed be

English Renaissance Consort Music

Consortium5

Emily Bloom
Kathryn Corrigan
Oonagh Lee
Gail Macleod
Roselyn Maynard

recorders

About Consortium5:

*'[Consortium5] played
with superb and consistent musicality'*
Ipswich Star

*'Consortium5 has earned all the praise critics
can muster by reinventing consort music'*
Sequenza21

| | | | |
|--|------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Jerome Bassano (1559-1635) 1. Galliard | [1:08] | Edward Blakes (1582-1633) 13. A phancy | [1:35] |
| Alfonso Ferrabosco I (1543-1588) 2. In nomine II | [1:42] | Alfonso Ferrabosco I 14. In nomine I | [2:01] |
| William Byrd (c. 1540-1623) 3. In nomine IV | [2:22] | William Brade 15. Coranto | [0:46] |
| William Brade (1560-1630) 4. Coranto | [1:18] | Christopher Tye 16. In nomine IX 'Re la re' | [1:14] |
| Christopher Tye (c. 1505-1572) 5. In nomine 'Howld fast' 6. In nomine 'Crye' | [1:17] [1:36] | Antony Holborne (c. 1545-1602) 17. [Almaine] 'The night watch' | [1:35] |
| Osbert Parsley (1511-1585) 7. In nomine | [2:24] | William Byrd 18. The leaves be green | [3:48] |
| Alfonso Ferrabosco II (1575-1628) 8. Dovehouse Pavan | [3:23] | Christopher Tye 19. In nomine XI 'Farewell good one for ever' | [1:56] |
| Christopher Tye 9. In nomine 'Seldom sene' | [1:35] | Alfonso Ferrabosco II 20. Pavan V | [3:20] |
| Robert Parsons (c. 1535-1572) 10. In nomine III | [1:42] | John Dowland (1563-1626) 21. Mrs. Nichols' Almain 22. The Earl of Essex's Galliard 23. Captain Digorie Piper's Galliard | [0:56] [1:13] [1:17] |
| Christopher Tye 11. In nomine X 'Saye so' | [1:06] | Jerome Bassano 24. Fantasia I | [3:16] |
| John Ward (1571-1638) 12. Fantasia III | [4:17] | | |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Edward Gibbons (1568-c. 1650) | |
| 25. In nomine | [2:10] |
| Osbert Parsley | |
| 26. Parsley's Clocke | [1:22] |
| Jerome Bassano | |
| 27. Fantasia III | [3:05] |
| John Eglestone (dates unknown) | |
| 28. In nomine II | [1:48] |
| John Dowland | |
| 29. Mr George Whitehead's Almain | [1:32] |
| Antony Holborne | |
| 30. Coranto 'Heigh ho holiday' | [0:46] |
| 31. The Fairie-round | [1:10] |
| Giovanni Coperario (c. 1570-1626) | |
| 32. Fantasia | [3:42] |
| Antony Holborne | |
| 33. Pavan 'The funerals' | [3:40] |
| William Brade | |
| 34. Coranta | [0:49] |
| Total playing time | [67:15] |

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As our sweet Cords with Discords mixed be: English Renaissance Consort Music

The idea of developing instruments in different sizes so that they could be used together to play polyphonic music, mimicking the natural differences between different voices, seems to have developed around 1400 somewhere in Germany, when the bombard, a tenor version of the shawm (the ancestor of the oboe) was developed. Until then the various types of instruments had only been made in a single size (or at least in uncoordinated different sizes), as they still are in the traditional music of the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The consort principle, as we might call it, was applied in the course of the fifteenth century to other wind instruments, such as the flute and the recorder (the instrument featured on this album), followed around 1500 by bowed instruments – viols, violins and rebecs. The fashion for the consort principle in the sixteenth century meant that Medieval instruments with a built-in drone, such as the bagpipe and the hurdy-gurdy, dropped out of art music, remaining in use in popular music; their drones made them unsuitable for polyphonic music.

The various types of instrumental consorts

were developed to play polyphonic music, either by themselves or with voices, though they were not mixed freely together until the late-sixteenth century. Mixed consorts became fashionable around 1600, but before then the various types of instruments were mostly played by themselves, used by professional groups more like items on a menu rather than ingredients in a dish. Shawms, cornetts, trombones and other loud instruments were used outdoors or in large halls. Flutes, recorders and other soft wind consorts were naturally used in more intimate, indoor situations. Viols were particularly associated with contrapuntal music and with accompanying voices. Violins were thought to be the best instruments for accompanying courtly dance music, and so on. Most employers, such as town councils (who employed groups of municipal musicians, called 'waits' in England) or the smaller courts in Italy and German-speaking areas of Europe, could only afford a single versatile group, though the largest courts had a number of separate groups. At the English court during Queen Elizabeth's reign, for instance, there were consorts specialising in loud winds (principally shawms and trombones), flutes, recorders, violins, viols and lutes – by then even the lute had been developed in three sizes.

Since instrumental consorts were modelled on polyphonic vocal ensembles it followed that most early instrumental music was derived from vocal music. The first collections, from around 1500, consist mostly of motets, chansons and other types of vocal music just copied or printed without words. In time new genres developed based loosely on vocal idioms, such as the fantasia, mostly derived from the motet and other types of church music, and the canzona, derived from the French chanson. The one type not based directly on vocal idioms was dance music. Mediaeval dance music was rarely written down and therefore must have been largely improvised, and when polyphonic dance music developed during the fifteenth century it initially consisted of improvisations around a given plainsong-like *cantus firmus*, often derived from popular songs. Around 1500 changing fashion led to new types of dance music. It was now composed rather than improvised, in three or four parts, with the tune in the top part rather than the tenor. Also, the new dances, such as the pavan and galliard, consisted of two, three or more short repeated sections rather than a continuous *cantus firmus*.

Early consort music was usually written in a neutral manner so that it could be played by most types of instrument. It only began to be written specifically for one type rather

than another in the late sixteenth century, when composers began to exploit their particular characteristics, particularly in virtuoso passage-work which up to that time had been added by the performers as improvised ornamentation. The norm was for consorts to consist of three sizes of instrument, used respectively to play soprano, alto/tenor, and bass parts in four-part music, with a part added between the tenor and bass in five-part music and an extra soprano in six-part music. Recorders, like other Renaissance winds, were pitched a fifth apart, usually in *g'*, *c'* and *f*, though it was possible to use smaller or larger instruments to produce high- or low-pitched consorts.

In England consort music was largely dependent on Continental imports and models until the middle of the sixteenth century, when a distinctive repertory of contrapuntal music developed. Much of it was written by composers associated with the court, such as Christopher Tye (who seems to have been Edward VI's music tutor), Alfonso Ferrabosco I (a lutenist from Bologna who worked at Elizabeth's court in the 1560s and 70s), and Robert Parsons and William Byrd (both members of the Chapel Royal). Much of it was probably written for and played by court musicians, and the three pieces (nos. 1, 24 and 27)

by Jerome or Jeronimo Bassano may have been written specifically for recorders, since he was a member of the court recorder consort from 1578 until his death in 1635. The Bassano family, from Bassano della Grappa near Venice, settled in London in the reign of Henry VIII and its members served successive monarchs, mostly as recorder players and instrument makers, until the Civil War and beyond. In general, this Elizabethan repertory is mostly thought of today as music for viols, though much of it is equally suitable for wind instruments, and may even have been sung on occasion – one of the most important manuscripts is labelled ‘for voyces or Instrumentes’.

Many Elizabethan fantasias took the form of the *In Nomine*, so called because it was modelled on a section from the *Benedictus* of John Taverner’s mass *Gloria tibi Trinitas* at the words ‘In nomine Domini’; the plainsong is used as a *cantus firmus* in slow notes, usually in the alto part, and is surrounded by counterpoint. Tye was the most important early composer of *In Nomines*, writing more examples than anyone else, and giving them titles that seem to reflect their character. Thus in ‘Howld fast’ (no. 5) the plainsong is accompanied by scurrying rising and falling patterns, in ‘Crye’ (no. 6) it is surrounded by explosive repeated-note

fanfares, and in ‘Re la re’ (no. 16) the counterpoint features those three notes – *d-a-d* or *g-d-g*. Composers also subjected other melodies or patterns of notes to the *cantus firmus* technique. In ‘Parsley’s Clocke’ (no. 26), also known as ‘The song upon the dial’, the Norwich composer Osbert Parsley represented the chiming of the clock by six rising and falling notes in the tenor part. In Byrd’s superb ‘The leaves be green’ (no. 18) the given material (also known as ‘Browning’) is a popular tune rather than a *cantus firmus*, which migrates continually from part to part.

A second distinctive type of English consort music developed in the late-sixteenth century, using dance forms rather than formal counterpoint and focussed on large-scale five-part pavans and galliards; on the Continent simple functional four-part dance music was still the norm. As Antony Holborne’s pavan ‘The funerals’ (no. 33), taken from his *Pavans, Galliard, Almains* (1599), shows, this is no longer functional dance music but deeply expressive chamber music. The same is true of the two pavans (nos. 8 and 20) by Alfonso Ferrabosco II, Alfonso Ferrabosco I’s illegitimate son, born in Greenwich. While Ferrabosco spent his career in royal service as a viol player, Holborne, a lutenist, was more courtier than professional musician. Holborne’s

1599 collection also illustrates the fashion for lighter, more modern dances, including almains such as ‘The night watch’ (no. 17) and corantos, such as ‘Heigh ho holiday’ (no. 30). Similarly, John Dowland’s *Lachrimae* (1604) is famous for its sequence of seven *Lachrimae pavans*, which are essentially string music, though the lighter galliards and almains in the collection (including nos. 21-23) also work well on recorders. The three corantos by William Brade (nos. 4, 15 and 34) exemplify the fashion for English consort music abroad: he left England as a young man and spent his working life in northern Germany and Denmark, publishing a number of collections of dance music in Hamburg.

A third type of English consort music, a more modern version of the fantasia, became fashionable around 1600. It was derived from the madrigal rather than church music and imitated its lively style and sectional structure, moving rapidly from idea to idea as if setting a series of contrasted words. In most fantasias of this sort, such as those by Jerome Bassano (nos. 24 and 27), the madrigal composer John Ward (no. 12), and the court viol player John Coperario (Giovanni Coperario, no. 32), the ideas are largely contrapuntal, though the remarkable fantasia by the little-known Edward

Blankes (no. 13), a London wait, makes its effect more by quirky changes of rhythmic direction and by rich, dissonant harmony. Music of this sort illustrates the richness of the English consort tradition: it draws on European traditions of vocal and instrumental music and yet can only have been written by an Englishman.

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*H*ere lies the Man whose Name in Spight of Death
Renowned lives by Blast of Golden Fame;
Whose Harmony survives his vital Breath,
Whose skill no Pride did spot, whose Life no Blame;
Whose low Estate was blest with quiet Mind
As our sweet *Cords with Discords* mixed be:
Whose life in Seventy and Four Years entwind
As falleth mellowed Apples from the Tree.
Whose Deeds were Rules, whose Words were Verity;
Who here a Singing-Man did spend his Days.
Full Fifty Years in our Church Melody
His Memory shines bright whom thus we praise.

Quoted from a wall-plaque in Norwich Cathedral to composer
and one time chorister, Osbert Parsley,
who died in 1585.



Consortium5

Consortium5 are a unique and ground-breaking recorder ensemble, performing a wide variety of music on a breathtaking array of instruments. Winners of numerous awards and residencies, Consortium5 have performed critically acclaimed concerts in many inspiring venues and festivals, including the Newbury Spring Festival, the Spitalfields Festival, The Purcell Room, Kings Place, the Leeds International Concert Series, Windsor Castle, the York Spring Festival, The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, Bury St Edmunds Festival and The Newcastle Festival of Early Music.

Notable milestones for Consortium5 include a Fellowship at Trinity College of Music, Park Lane Young Artists 2009 and a debut album on the Nonclassical label in 2011.

As Our Sweet Cords with Discords Mixed be features music of the English renaissance and presents repertoire that has been central to our development as an ensemble. The pieces have become part of our story, performed many times in different situations, for different people and for different events.

Consortium5 perform on a set of ten Bassano consort recorders made by Adriana Breukink.

www.consortium5.com



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RESONUS LIMITED – LONDON – UK

info@resonusclassics.com

www.resonusclassics.com

