

Program for Cleveland
February 23, 2019

The Secret of the Muses
Paul O'Dette, Lute

Guillemette (1615)
Courante de mars
La Chacona

Nicolas Vallet
(c.1583-after 1642)

En me reverant
Courante
Courante "Son Adieu"
Chacogne

Anonymous
Vieux Gautier
Gautier
Anonymous

Toccata Ia (1611)
Gagliarda 4a
Toccata VIa
Gagliarda IOa

Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger
(c. 1585 - 1650)

Prelude (1615)
Onse Vader im Hemelryck
Passemeze en b mol
Bouree d'avignon
Gaillarde du comte Essex (after Dowland)

Nicolas Vallet
(c.1583-after 1642)

INTERMISSION

Les Pantalons
La Mendiant Fantasye
Pavane en forme de Complainte
Carillon de village

Vallet

Pavin
Almaine

Robert Johnson
(c. 1583-c.1633)

Prelude
Fantasie
3 Courantes
Une jeune fillette

Daniel Bachelar
(1572-1619)

10-course Lute after Hans Frei by Ray Nurse, Vancouver, 1984

Paul O'Dette – Biography

"...should I come to meet Saint Peter at the pearly gates, I hope he will say, 'Welcome, good and faithful servant! By the way, be sure to hear Paul O'Dette—he's leading the angel band.'" Early Music America, Spring 2011

Paul O'Dette has been described him as "the clearest case of genius ever to touch his instrument." (Toronto Globe and Mail) One of the most influential figures in his field, O'Dette has helped define the technical and stylistic standards to which twenty-first-century performers of early music aspire. In doing so, he helped infuse the performance practice movement with a perfect combination of historical awareness, idiomatic accuracy, and ambitious self-expression. His performances at the major international festivals in Boston, Vienna, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Munich, Prague, Milan, Florence, Geneva, Madrid, Barcelona, Tokyo, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Melbourne, Adelaide, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Berkeley, Bath, Montpellier, Utrecht, Bruges, Antwerp, Bremen, Dresden, Innsbruck, Tenerife, Copenhagen, Oslo, Cordoba, etc. have often been singled out as the highlight of those events.

Paul O'Dette has made more than 140 recordings, winning two Grammys, receiving seven Grammy nominations and numerous other international record awards. "The Complete Lute Music of John Dowland" (a 5-CD set for harmonia mundi usa), was awarded the prestigious *Diapason D'or de l'année* and selected as the "Best Solo Lute Recording of Dowland" by BBC Radio 3. while "The Royal Lewters" has received the *Diapason D'or*, a *Choc du Monde de la Musique*, a 5-star rating in *BBC Music Magazine*, 5-star rating in *Goldberg* and a perfect score of 10 from ClassicsToday.com. "The Bachelar's Delight: Lute Music of Daniel Bacheler" was nominated for a Grammy as "Best Solo Instrumental Recording of 2006."

Mr. O'Dette is also active conducting Baroque operas. His recording of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* with the Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble won a Grammy for "Best Opera Recording of 2014," as well as an *Echo Klassik Award* in the same category. In 1997 he led performances of Luigi Rossi's

L'Orfeo at Tanglewood, the Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF) and the Drottningholm Court Theatre in Sweden with Stephen Stubbs. Since 1999 they have co-directed performances of Cavalli's *Ercole Amante* at the Boston Early Music Festival, Tanglewood, and the Utrecht Early Music Festival, Provenzale's *La Stellidaura Vendicata* at the Vadstena Academy in Sweden, Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for Festival Vancouver, Lully's *Thésée*, Conradi's *Ariadne* (Hamburg, 1691) Mattheson's *Boris Goudenow*, Lully's *Psyché*, Monteverdi's *Poppea*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Steffani's *Niobe* and Handel's *Almira* for the Boston Early Music Festival. Five of their opera recordings have been nominated for Grammy awards: *Ariadne* as "Best Opera Recording of 2005," *Thésée* in 2007, *Psyché* in 2008, *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* in 2014 and *Niobe* in 2015. *Niobe*, and both Lully recordings were nominated for Gramophone awards. Their recording of Steffani's *Niobe*, was awarded a *Diapason D'or de l'année*, an *Echo Klassik Award* and the prestigious *Jahrespreis der Deutscheschallplattenkritik*. Paul O'Dette has guest directed numerous Baroque orchestras and opera productions on both sides of the Atlantic.

In addition to his activities as a performer, Paul O'Dette is an avid researcher, having worked extensively on the performance and sources of seventeenth-century Italian and English solo song, continuo practices and lute music. He has published numerous articles on issues of historical performance practice and co-authored the Dowland entry in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

Paul O'Dette is Professor of Lute and Director of Early Music at the Eastman School of Music and Artistic Director of the Boston Early Music Festival.

Program Notes

"Lutebooke...containing diverse selected Lessons of excellent Authores in severall Countreys, Wherein also are some few of my owne Composition, Herbert"

Today's program was inspired by two different sources, an important manuscript of early 17th-century lute music known as *Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Lute Book*, and Nicolas Vallet's 1615 *Le Secret des Muses*. Lord Herbert's Lutebook contains 242 pieces by the leading English, French and Italian lute composers of the time, including John Dowland, Daniel Bachelar, Robert Johnson, Jacques Gautier, Jacob Polonois, Diomedes Cato and Lorenzino di Roma. The manuscript is extraordinary not only for the exceptional quality of its contents and the large number of pieces not found in any other source, but also for its variety of styles including music from all over Europe. The manuscript provides us with a glimpse of a rich, but little-known repertoire for 10-course lute in Renaissance tuning, which was soon to vanish in favor of the newly-developed French Baroque lute. The compiler of this manuscript was Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1582-1648), King James I's

ambassador to France from 1619 to 1624, where he met, and presumably studied with the leading French lutenists of the time.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century there were three distinct national styles of lute music being cultivated, each reflecting the taste and aesthetics of their country of origin. The Italians emphasized virtuosity, novelty, extraordinary dissonances, and sudden contrasts in affect from one moment to the next. The French, on the other hand, eschewed overt virtuosity, favoring elegance, delicacy and unity, while the English preferred clear, memorable melodies enriched with beautifully proportioned ornamentation. At the same time, these countries strongly influenced one another resulting in the use of French ornamentation in English pieces, imitation of Italian guitar strumming in the French Sarabandes, and French-style arpeggio patterns in Italian works. The blending of these styles, along with the gradual transition from Renaissance to Baroque harmonies and forms makes this repertoire particularly fascinating.

A large number of the French pieces in Lord Herbert's manuscript are attributed to "Gaultier." Of the many lute-playing members of the Gaultier family, Jacques Gaultier (c. 1595-after 1652), known as "the English Gaultier," is the most likely author of these works. He had fled France in 1617 after murdering a young nobleman and eventually wound up at the English court as lutenist and teacher to Queen Henrietta Maria. Lord Herbert was directly involved in negotiations with Louis XIII, who persistently lobbied the English for Gaultier's extradition. His *Courante: "Son adieu"* may have been a farewell to his homeland—it is not the same as the piece of the identical title by the more famous Vieux Gaultier. Jacques was a member of Charles I's Royal Music from 1625 to 1641, during which he became one of the most influential lutenists in England. According to one source, he was noted "for the goodness of his hands--the most swift, the neatest, and most even that ever were."

Lord Herbert was apparently unable to meet one of the most influential French lutenists of the time, Nicholas Vallet, since Vallet, a staunch Calvinist, had recently fled to the Netherlands to avoid religious persecution. If he had managed to meet Vallet, Herbert would surely have been impressed by the Frenchman's masterful blending of French, English and Dutch musical styles. In his two volumes of *Le Secret des Muses*, published in 1615 and 1616, Vallet included instructions for playing in the new French style, including right and left-hand fingerings for nearly every note! Vallet's varied musical activities included directing a dance school, where he taught the Dutch public the latest French noble dances, and running a professional lute quartet with three expatriate Englishmen. They drew up one of the earliest union-style contracts regulating performance conditions and payment, and promoted a style in which tuneful English music, with its virtuoso diminutions were combined with the newly fashionable French techniques of style brisé (an ornamentation technique based on arpeggiation), dissonant trills and appoggiaturas, and the use of *notes inégales*, a practice of swinging equally-notated rhythms.

At the beginning of his time in Amsterdam, Vallet lived in a house near the Oude Kerk, where the great Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck was organist. Though Calvinists forbade the use of the organ during services, the "Orpheus of Amsterdam," as Sweelinck was known, performed before services there for an hour in the morning

and the evening, improvising on the organ and the harpsichord. Sweelinck seems to have had a strong influence on Vallet's music; this is especially apparent in the preludes, fantasias, variation sets, psalm settings and the magnificent *Onse Vader im Hemelryck*—a setting of Martin Luther's hymn for the Lord's Prayer. Specifically, the use of full four-part textures in contrapuntal works, frequent running passages in the bass to accompany treble melodies, the placing of a cantus firmus in different voices for each variation (including extensive use of the bass and contrabass registers), the setting of Dutch folk songs and the treatment of hymn tunes in the organists' style, all point to the profound effect Sweelinck's playing must have had on the young Frenchman.

Herbert of Cherbury's knowledge of Italian music was limited to the repertoire that made its way to Paris, and consisted primarily of the works of Diomedes Cato and Lorenzino di Roma. But the finest Italian lute music of the time was written by Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger. Born around 1580 to a noble German family living in Italy, Kapsberger spent most of his professional life in Rome in the employ of Pope Urban VIII and Cardinal Antonio Barberini. Though known today primarily for his virtuoso lute and theorbo works, Kapsberger wrote a large amount of vocal music, both sacred and secular, including motets, masses, Vespers, oratorios, monodies, villanelle and operas, as well as ensemble *sinfonie* and dances for various combinations of instruments. By the 1620's Kapsberger had established himself as one of Rome's preeminent musicians. The theorist Kircher proclaimed Kapsberger to be Monteverdi's successor in the composition of highly expressive vocal music. The solo lute works published in his 1611 collection, includes some of the most daring and inventive works in the entire lute repertoire. His extravagant toccatas, with their wild improvisatory flourishes, bold dissonances, and quirky rhythms provide a glimpse into the extraordinary style of instrumental improvisation in early 17th-century Rome.

The early sections of Lord Herbert's manuscript contain works by Elizabethan composers such as Dowland and Holborne, but the most interesting English music in the manuscript is by their younger contemporaries, Robert Johnson, Daniel Bachelar and Cuthbert Hely. The stylistic changes that took place in English lute music after 1600 are particularly well represented in this anthology. Robert Johnson (c. 1583-c. 1633) was the son of Queen Elizabeth's court "lewter", John Johnson. While John's music is full of virtuoso runs and cross-rhythms, Robert's is more about sonority, texture and expressive harmonies. The clean, clear lines of the Elizabethans are abandoned in favor of rhapsodic writing enhanced by the use *style brisé*, dissonances, and the rich resonance of the low bass strings recently added to the instrument. Johnson's exquisite *Pavin* in c minor is one of the finest examples of this new proto-Baroque style.

Daniel Bachelar (1572-1619) was one of the most important English lutenist-composers of the time, though almost nothing was known of his life and career until recently. Thanks to the tireless work of a descendant, Anne Bachelar, we now know the years of his birth and death and a number of details about his career. Bachelar wrote sophisticated consort music for the household of Sir Francis Walsingham while still in his teens, and quickly developed a highly distinctive style, breaking new ground in lute technique. His set of variations on the French popular song "Une jeune fillette" is one of the most brilliant works in the early 17th-century lute repertoire.

Passages from it were so distinctive as to have been borrowed verbatim by many other lutenists of the time.

Sadly, Bachelar's brilliance was not able to save the lute from disuse in England. Less than 60 years after his death, the lute was considered a "neglected and abused instrument." Thomas Mace's words of encouragement to the lute in 1676 could not be any more appropriate today: "*Cheer up, Brave Soul! And know that some Yet Living, who for Thee will take such Care, (there are) That Thou shalt be Restor'd Thy former Glory, And be Eterniz'd to Eternal Story.*"

Paul O'Dette