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INTRODUCTION

THE RECORDER is perhaps the most important member of the fipple or end-blown flute family, to which the flageolet and the common penny-whistle also belong. It is frequently called the English flute to distinguish it from the German or cross-blown flute. Apparently the recorder was of English origin, though the facts of its early history are still obscure. It did have an enormous vogue in the musical life of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and continued its popularity in the first decades of the eighteenth century. Of the several pitches in which the instrument was made, four seem to have been most widely used: the soprano or descant in C, the alto or treble in F, the tenor in C, and the bass in F. The effective range of each of the instruments is about two octaves.

Although it was a regular instrument in the sixteenth-century broken consort (an 'orchestra' of several kinds of instruments) and numbered among its players royal personages including Henry VIII, there was little music written exclusively for it until about 1660. In the original recorder period, amateur players largely used solo vocal and choral music such as ballad tunes, ayres, and madrigals, as well as music equally suitable for wind and string instruments.

In the eighteenth century the recorder found a legitimate place in the orchestra. Bach and Händel used it freely, and in their scores for the flute the recorder is intended unless the part was marked 'Traversa' or 'Flauto traverso' indicating the cross-blown flute. In fact, both the second and fourth Brandenburg Concertos use the recorder. There is, furthermore, a considerable literature for the recorder itself, including four sonatas by Händel and six by Daniel Purcell. In addition to these original scores, other music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been arranged for the recorder within recent years.

In English literature of the Renaissance the recorder is frequently mentioned. Shakespeare shows his knowledge of the instrument when he puts the following speech into the mouth of Hamlet (III, ii):

> 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music.

And Samuel Pepys, the diarist, found the recorder so pleasing an instrument that he engaged Thomas Greeting, a well-known Restoration musician, to teach his wife to play duets with him. In his Diary for April 8, 1668, he notes:

> . . . and thence I to Drumbleby's and there did talk a great deal about pipes; and did buy a recorder, which I do intend to learn to play on, the sound of it being, of all sounds in the world, most pleasing to me.

In the 1920's through the activities of England's great musical antiquarian, the late Arnold Dolmetsch, the recorder was revived. It is now fast becoming one of the world's most popular instruments for amateurs, since it is comparatively inexpensive and is easy to learn.

The individual performer can derive great pleasure from playing any song or dance tune on the recorder, but the greatest satisfaction comes in group playing, especially in the trio or quartet. Furthermore, through the recorder the player can obtain a knowledge of some of the best formal and popular music of the past.

The aim of the present collection is twofold: first, to present in playable arrangements many of the popular English songs and dance tunes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and, secondly, through the historical notes to introduce the player at least briefly to the fascinating stories behind the music.

An effort has been made to write arrangements which any group of reasonably competent players can perform without difficulty. Every setting has been played by recorder groups who have tested in actual performance both practicability and musical effect.

Dance tunes and ballad tunes predominate in the collection, since these melodies are best suited to recorders. But we have not neglected the rich collections of seventeenth-century ayres or the important Shakespearean music that has come down to us. Ballad tunes such as those in sections II and V were among the most popular kinds of music in Elizabethan and seventeenth-century England. They were the tunes which accompanied the thousands of broadside ballads hawked about the streets of London by

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ballad-singers like Autolycus in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*. Samuel Pepys, whose interest in the recorder has already been mentioned, was a famous collector of these interesting ballads, which Prof. Hyder E. Rollins has made available in modern editions in *The Pepys Ballads*, *A Pepysian Garland* and *The Pack of Autolycus*.

Since many of the ballad tunes served also as airs for country dancing, and in fact have for the most part survived only in their dance forms, it is to the first collection of English country dance tunes ever made that we owe many of the melodies in these volumes. In 1650 John Playford, the most important English music publisher in the seventeenth century, issued *The English Dancing Master*, which went through at least seventeen editions in the next seventy-five years. Many of the fine tunes he collected are still popular for country dancing. Another source has been William Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (1855–59), the first important scholarly collection of English popular music. Wherever possible we have checked Chappell's original sources. His setting for a few songs is unlike any other printed version we have been able to discover, and where we have felt that his version was characteristic of its period and more interesting musically than other versions, we have used his text as a basis for the recorder arrangements.

With an average group of performers the development of good ensemble playing requires patience and careful attention to what the other fellow is doing. It goes without saying that recorders which are as nearly as possible in tune with each other should be used. Good intonation is perhaps the most important characteristic of a fine recorder ensemble, and is worth working painstakingly to achieve. A player should try to develop the habit of listening not only to his own part, but to the effect of the whole group. In this way he can correct faults in intonation and can know the joy of group music.

We are indebted to the Treasure Room of the Harvard College Library for free access to rare books and photostats, and are under a special debt to the Adams House Recorder Group of Harvard University for their coöperation in testing these arrangements in actual performance.

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Tobacco's but an Indian Weed . . . 22
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Soprano, Alto, Bass

Gather ye Rosebuds (3) . . . 23

Soprano, Tenor, Bass

Gather ye Rosebuds (3) . . . 23
To all you ladies now on land (2) . . . 20

Soprano, Alto I and II, Bass

Drink to me only with thine eyes (2) . . . 28

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Early one morning . . . 29
Gather ye Rosebuds (4) . . . 24
God rest you merry, gentlemen . . . 30
Grim King of the Ghosts *or* Can Love be Controlled by Advice? . . . 21
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Shall I come, sweet love, to thee? (2) . . . 8
Since first I saw your face . . . 10

Soprano, Alto, Tenor I and II, Bass

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HISTORICAL NOTES

I. The Seventeenth-Century Ayre

Almost exactly at the turn of the seventeenth century there arose a distinguished group of musicians known to-day as the English school of lutenist song-writers. Within a period of less than twenty years they produced some of the finest songs in the language; yet until their recent republication by Dr. Edmund H. Fellowes, all but a few samples of this notable collection lay buried in their original rare volumes, unknown except to a handful of specialists.

The 'ayre,' as the lutenists called it, bears almost the same relation to the modern vocal solo that the madrigal bears to the anthem. Ordinarily, it was a song for single voice with lute accompaniment, although it was a regular practice to include subordinate inner parts which might be played on the contemporary 'bandora' or 'orpharion' or on viols — or sung by voices. The more complex madrigal was strikingly different. In it, a number of unaccompanied voices sang independent parts which moved according to strict rules of counterpoint, and all the parts were of equal musical importance. The foundation of the ayre, however, was its all-important melody, to which all other parts were subordinate.

The English school of lutenists were not only a highly skilled group of composers, but were able performers, singing their songs to their own lute accompaniment; and many of them held responsible positions at Court. Most notable among this large group of composers are John Dowland, John Daniel, Robert Jones, Alfonso Ferrabosco, Philip Rosseter, Thomas Campion, William Corkine, Thomas Ford, John Cooper, and Thomas Morley. For their words they drew upon some of the most eminent writers of Elizabethan lyrics; Thomas Campion seems to have been the only composer who wrote both words and music. In his invaluable book, *The English Ayre* (1926), the late 'Peter Warlock' (Philip Heseltine) gives eloquent proof of the uniform success of the lutenists in that most difficult task of the song-writer — wedding the sound to the sense.

John Dowland (1563–1626), whose "Come again" is included in this collection of recorder music, was the greatest lute player of his time. He was one of six lutenists of Charles I, and for a number of years had earlier been Court Lutenist to the King of Denmark at what Warlock calls "an almost unheard-of rate of pay." Like Händel, he lost his position when he remained away from his patron too long during a leave of absence, and in Dowland's case there is more than a hint of financial irregularity that brought down the censure of King Christian IV. But for all his difficulties he is generally conceded to be the foremost composer of the lutenist school. His work was published not only in England, but in half a dozen continental capitals, and he enjoyed a widespread fame during his lifetime. Among other work, he published three books of ayres, the first of which went through five editions within sixteen years. One of the most tantalizing of legends is that he may have been a friend of Shakespeare, and on his return from Elsinore may have given the dramatist some hints for the background of *Hamlet.*

Robert Jones (*circa* 1575– ?) was a theatrical manager as well as a composer of ayres and madrigals. Between 1600 and 1610 he published five volumes of songs, the third of which he called his 'Ultimum Vale'. But after this 'last farewell' he provoked amusement and consternation by returning with his *Fourth Book of Ayres* and his *Muses Garden for Delights* within two years. Afterward he turned to the theatre, and with Philip Rosseter and others formed the "Children of the Revels to the Queen," which took part in notable productions of Jonson and Chapman in conjunction with the Lady Elizabeth's company.

Thomas Campion (1567–1620), a poet as well as a musician, studied law for a time, then acquired a medical degree (probably at some continental university). He had begun writing poetry while a law student, and in 1601 contributed twenty-one songs, both words and music, to Philip Rosseter's *Book of Ayres.* And he probably wrote the words for the twenty-one Rosseter songs in the volume. Later, Campion published four books of his own ayres, the first two about 1613, the third and fourth some four years later. With 118 ayres to his credit, he was the most prolific song-writer of the period. All his poetry seems to have been composed with music in mind, and his "I care not for these ladies," "When to her lute Corinna sings," "There is a garden in her face," and "What if a day," are among the most graceful of English

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I. Seventeenth Century Ayres

Come again

John Dowland (1563-1626)
First Book of Ayres (1597)

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

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Since first I saw your face

Thomas Ford (1580-1648)
*Musicke of Sundrie Kindes** (1607)

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

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II. Seventeenth Century Songs, Dances, and Ballad Tunes

Stingo

or, Oil of Barley

The Dancing Master (1650)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

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James the Second's March

or, The Garter

The Dancing Master (1690)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

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Grim King of the Ghosts

or, Can Love be Controlled by Advice?

The Beggar's Opera (1728)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

*)

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