

# Simple Gifts

a community concert series

*presents*

## Chicago Early Music Consort

in

## The Lowest Trees Have Tops

music of John Dowland

Sunday, October 14, 2007 4:00 pm  
Glenview Community Church

### ABOUT THE CHICAGO EARLY MUSIC CONSORT

Acclaimed for its “imaginative” programming and “delicate, flawlessly played music,” the **Chicago Early Music Consort** recreates the rich and diverse sounds of the late Renaissance and early Baroque chamber repertoire in a historically informed manner. Founded by Gary Berkenstock, the consort performs throughout the Chicagoland and Wisconsin areas. The core ensemble consists of a “broken” consort of voice (Stephanie Sheffield), recorders (Gary Berkenstock), lute/theorbo (Joel Spears), and viola da gamba (Phillip Serna), but the ensemble is supplemented as needed by the dictates of the music. Programs are built around historical themes in order to provide modern audiences with a meaningful social context that will enrich their musical experience.

For more information, contact Gary Berkenstock at cemconsort@comcast.net

### ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS

**Recorder** - No woodwind instrument other than the recorder could lay claim to a regular partnership with the most aristocratic and refined instruments of the day. From the 15th to the mid-18th century, the recorder was regarded as the flute, and throughout this period, any references to flute without adjectival qualification always mean recorder. The recorder was extremely popular in England. An inventory following Henry VIII's death in 1547 revealed he owned 78 recorders! By the end of the Renaissance period, the recorder family consisted of eight sizes, from the tiny “garklein” down to the great bass in F. Recorder instruction manuals demonstrating a high degree of technical accomplishment date to the mid-sixteenth century. During the Baroque period, the soprano, and then the alto recorder, was favored as a solo instrument.

**Lute** - From the 15th to the late 17th century, the lute unquestionably occupied a special place of honor, second only to the human voice. A plucked string instrument, it was the courtly instrument par excellence and its repertoire was enormous. The importance of the lute is reflected by the other arts. Philosophers discussed it, poets praised it, and painters depicted it in a variety of roles. The most salient characteristics of the lute are the flat table with a carved circular sound-hole or “rose”, the pear-shaped back and the bent-back pegbox.

**Viola da gamba** - The viola da gamba is a bowed string instrument that probably developed in Spain during the fifteenth century. Its Italian name is descriptive of the between-the-legs playing position. The instrument made its earliest appearance in England about 1540, where it was called the “viol.” The viola da gamba shared the aristocratic attributes of the lute and was cultivated among courtly society. Three sizes became standardized during the Renaissance: treble, tenor and bass. Violas da gamba were played together in consorts and the bass instrument was often used in lute songs to reinforce the lowest part.

## The Lowest Trees Have Tops

music of John Dowland

John Dowland (1563-1626) was a superb Elizabethan lutenist, singer and composer. Very little is known of his early life, but it is generally thought that he was born in London. In 1580 Dowland went to Paris and served as a musician for the ambassador of the French court. He became a Roman Catholic at that time, a move that Dowland later claimed to have prevented him from being offered a coveted post at Elizabeth I's Protestant court. Instead, Dowland worked for many years at the court of Christian IV of Denmark. He returned to London in 1606 and in 1612 secured a position as one of James I's lutenists. He died in London in 1626.

Most of Dowland's music is for his own instrument, the lute. He wrote several books of solo lute works, lute songs, part-songs with lute accompaniment, and several pieces for viol consort with lute. Dowland's popularity and recognition throughout Europe was enormous. His *First Booke of Songs...* published in 1597 was a huge success. It was the first published collection of English lute songs and was reprinted at least four times. He went on to publish three more books in 1600, 1603, and 1612. They reveal Dowland's evolution as a composer and demonstrate that Dowland was well aware of the new declamatory style of his Italian contemporaries.

Dowland's music became part of the repertoire of the early music revival in the 1960's and there have been a plethora of Dowland concerts and recordings over the past 40 years. Dowland's music has even made its way into the “pop” culture arena. Just a year ago, Sting released a crossover album featuring Dowland's songs titled *Songs from the Labyrinth*. We think Dowland would have approved!

Thank you for joining us today! We hope to see you here again on December 9 for *Rejoice and Be Merry* - an early music Christmas celebration.

### Chicago Early Music Consort

**Stephanie Sheffield** soprano

**Gary Berkenstock** recorders

**Joel Spears** lute

**Phillip W. Serna** viola da gamba

Glenview Community Church  
1000 Elm Street, Glenview, Illinois 60025  
www.gccucc.org

## The Lowest Trees Have Tops

music of John Dowland

“. . . whose heavenly touch upon the lute doth ravish human sense”

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Come again!   | <i>First Booke of Songs or Ayres...</i> (1597)   |
| His golden locks  | <i>First Booke of Songs or Ayres...</i> (1597)   |
| Now, O now I needs must part  | <i>First Booke of Songs or Ayres...</i> (1597)   |
| Now, O now I needs must part<br>The King of Denmark, His Galliard             | variations by Jacob Van Eyck (1590-1657)<br>from Robert Dowland,<br><i>Varietie of Lute Lessons</i> (1610)   |
| Sorrow, stay!<br>Fine knacks for ladies                                       | <i>Second Booke of Songs or Ayres...</i> (1600)<br><i>Second Booke of Songs or Ayres...</i> (1600)   |
| Mounsiers Allman  | variations by Richard Sumarte (15??-after 1630)  |
| The lowest trees have tops<br>Flow not so fast, ye fountains<br>It was a time | <i>Third and Last Booke of Songs...</i> (1603)<br><i>Third and Last Booke of Songs...</i> (1603)<br><i>Third and Last Booke of Songs...</i> (1603) |
| Farewell  | from Cambridge University Library, Ms.Dd.9.33  |
| In darkness let me dwell  | from Robert Dowland, <i>A Musical Banquet</i> (1610)   |
| My Lord Chamberlain, His Galliard<br>My Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home        | from Cambridge University Library, Ms.Dd.9.33<br>from <i>The Dowland Lute Book</i>   |
| In this trembling shadow cast<br>Lasso vita mia                               | <i>A Pilgrimes Solace</i> (1612)<br><i>A Pilgrimes Solace</i> (1612)   |

## Chicago Early Music Consort



Stephanie Sheffield recently completed her musical studies in Vocal Performance at North Park University in Chicago. While at North Park she performed several operatic roles including Blanche (*Dialogues des Carmelites*), Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), and several operatic scenes. Ms. Sheffield was also the soprano soloist in Brahms' *Requiem* and Mozart's *Sparrow Mass* (K.220). Since her graduation, she has performed in various operas for children with Stage One Productions, namely the title role in Barab's *Little Red Riding Hood*, Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Gretel in *Hänsel & Gretel*. She enjoys singing in several Chicago area ensembles, including the professional choirs at St John Cantius Church, Cantate, and Anshe Emet synagogue. Ms. Sheffield has performed the soprano solo in Schubert's *Mass in G* with Cantate and has been a featured soloist in services at St. John Cantius Church. She has also won several awards, including Second Place in the 2005 Society of American Musicians competition and Honorable Mention in the 2002 Chicago area NATS competition.

Gary Berkenstock has a Bachelor of Music degree in clarinet from George Peabody College and was a member of the Nashville Symphony and Chicago Civic Orchestras. He also has a Master of Music degree in music history and literature from Northwestern University, where he specialized in early music and directed the Northwestern Collegium Musicum. During that time, he also performed with the University of Chicago Collegium Musicum and did extensive graduate research in early music performance under the renowned scholar, Howard Mayer Brown. Mr. Berkenstock twice received scholarships for the study and performance of early music at Yale University, and has a performance diploma in early music from Penn State University. He has attended master classes in recorder with Marion Verbruggen and David Hart. Mr. Berkenstock is founder and artistic director of the Chicago Early Music Consort.

“For, as an old, rude, rotten, tune-less Kit,

if famous Dowland deign to finger it

Makes sweeter musick than the choicest Lute

in the gross handling of a clownish Brute”

Joel Spears is an active lutenist and guitarist based in the Chicago area. He is a founding member of two ensembles: Sweet Fretting, a quartet dedicated to playing 17th and 18th century trio sonatas, and Weissduo, featuring baroque duos for flute and lute. Mr. Spears has performed extensively with Chicago-area musical organizations, including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theater, Music of the Baroque, Ars Antigua, Scholars of Cambrai, Heroic Bard, and Harwood Early Music Ensemble. In addition to playing for numerous radio broadcasts on 98.7 - WFMT, he has appeared at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Chicago Cultural Center's Preston Bradley Hall, the Bach Week in Evanston Festival, and the Handel Week Festival. As a lecturer and performer, he has appeared at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Madison Early Music Festival, and as Guest Artist and Lecturer at Grand Valley State University. Mr. Spears is Artistic Director of the Early Music series at Byron Colby Barn in Grayslake, Illinois.

Phillip W. Serna holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Masters Degree & Doctorate from Northwestern University School of Music where he studied double bass with Michael Hovnanian and DaXun Zhang as well as viola da gamba with Mary Springfels. Phillip is an active double bass performer with numerous Chicago area & Midwest orchestras as well as viola da gamba and violone with many early music ensembles including the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, Ars Antigua, the Boston Early Music Festival, Chicago Early Music Consort, Period Opera Cosi fan Tutte with Chicago Opera Theater, Classical Arts Orchestra, Comic Intermezzo, Early Music Chicago, the Gravitas Continuo Consort, the Janus Ensemble, the Newberry Consort, the Evelyn Dunbar Memorial Early Music Festival at Northwestern University, the Oriana Singers, the Second City Musick, the Spirit of Gambo - a Chicago Consort of Viols, the Viola da Gamba Society of America Conclave Consort Cooperative, as well as the Concert for Compassion Viol Consort and the Forces of Virtue Ensemble and Choir, dedicated to raising money for disaster relief and other charities. Phillip is the current President of the Chicago chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America as well as a member of the board of the Early Music Chicago arts advocacy and performance organization. In addition to his busy performance schedule, he is a dedicated instructor of double bass, viola da gamba, guitar and bass guitar at numerous Chicago area institutions. Phillip lives in Plainfield, IL with his best friend and wife, Magdalena.