Reginald Mobley & Stephen Stubbs Time Stands Still

Reginald Mobley, countertenor Stephen Stubbs, lute & baroque guitar

Come again, sweet love doth now invite (Book 1, 1597)

John Dowland (1563–1626)

Come heavy sleep (Book 1, 1597)

Packington's Pound (lute solo)

Francis Cutting (1550–1595)

Sorrow stay (Book 2, 1600)

Dowland

Fine knacks for ladies (Book 2, 1600)

Fortune my foe (lute solo)

Dowland

Time stands still (Book 3, 1603)

Dowland

Greensleeves (lute solo)

Anonymous

Tell me true love (Pilgrim's Solace, 1612)

Dowland

Welcome black night (Pilgrim's Solace, 1612)

John Dowland (A Musicall Banquet, 1610)

Lady, if you so spite me (A Musicall Banquet, 1610)

Suite for the Guitar

Nicola Matteis (*c*.1670–1713)

Prelude - Ayre - Giga - Ayre - Giga

To be or not to be

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)/Cesare Morelli (fl. late 1660s–1686)

Text: William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Where the bee sucks there suck I (from The Tempest)

John Wilson (1595–1674)

Full fathom five (from The Tempest)

Robert Johnson (1583–1633)

Take, o take those lips away

John Wilson

The willow song

Anonymous

Suite from King Arthur for solo guitar (arr. by Stephen Stubbs)

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

Your hay it is mow'd

Fairest Isle

Come if you dare

Here the Deities approve (from "Welcome to all the pleasures")

Purcell

O solitude (a Single Song from "Orpheus Britannicus")

O how blest is the isle (from "Why are all the muses mute")

Britain, thou art great (from "Why are all the muses mute")

Program Notes

Our program revolves around three iconic figures of English cultural history: **John Dowland**, **William Shakespeare** and **Henry Purcell**. Shakespeare's universal fame is such that it might seem odd to put the two musicians, Dowland and Purcell, on the same short list, but from the musical point of view they undoubtedly deserve this elevated status.

When **John Dowland** published his *First Booke of Songs* in 1597, he began the short but glorious Golden Age of the English Lute Song, which ended around 1620, and Dowland's own productions came to a close with the magnificent *Pilgrimes Solace* in 1612. In this brief span of publishing activity, (contemporary with Shakespeare's theatrical productions) Dowland produced a body of song that "dominated the beginning of the seventeenth century as surely as Purcell's does the end." In an age when the lute was the primary solo instrument, Dowland was widely recognized as the greatest lutenist of his time, and also the foremost composer of both lute solo and lute song repertoire. Lute songs ranged widely from the light and amorous (Come again, sweet love doth now invite), through the religious (Tell me true love) to Dowland's personal specialty: the melancholic (Come heavy sleep, Sorrow stay). His Pavane entitled *Semper Dowland Semper Dolens* (ever Dowland ever doleful) might have served as a personal motto, or an assumed artistic persona. In any case, a pervasive contemporary fascination with melancholy is evidenced by Richard Burton's encyclopedic *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), and it is beyond doubt that Dowland created some of the most poignant and affecting portrayals of melancholy in the history of Western music.

"Down, down, down, Down and arise, Down and arise... I never shall." (The final lines of Dowland's Sorrow stay.)

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was an almost exact contemporary of John Dowland (1563–1635), and also the period of their productive careers is a close match (Shakespeare first publishing *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and the latest plays, like *The Tempest*, coming around 1611). Music, particularly songs, was an important feature of the original theatrical productions under Shakespeare's care with the company first known as *The Lord Chamberlain's Men*, then, after 1603 *The King's Men*. One of the primary composers for this company was the lutenist Robert Johnson (1582–1633). Johnson didn't publish a book of songs but luckily some of the songs he provided for Shakespeare's plays were published later by John Playford, and some are found in contemporary manuscripts. We include here his two songs from The Tempest: *Where the bee sucks* and *Full fathom five* sung by the character Ariel. In the case of *The Willow Song* used in Othello, we seem to be dealing with a song that had been in popular currency for some time. We are using the version from a manuscript collection of lute songs at the British Museum dated to 1616.

The fact that Shakespeare's plays continued their currency in the English theater well beyond his own lifetime brings us to the little-known setting of the entire soliloquy from Hamlet – *To be or not to be* – from the manuscript collection of Samuel Pepys. Pepys (pronounced Peeps, 1633–1703) was an administrator of the English Navy and is still known now for his very extensive diaries in the years 1660–1669. This represents our most detailed knowledge of the early Restoration period; King Charles II having arrived back in England in 1660 to assume the crown. Francesco Corbetta, the virtuoso guitarist who had been the tutor to Louis XIV, also came to England at that time becoming the tutor to the new English King as well. Pepys, who became Charles's Secretary to the Admiralty, was an enthusiastic follower of musical fashion and was invited to hear Corbetta play in the chambers of the Duke of York on August 5, 1667:

¹ English Song Dowland to Purcell, Ian Spink, London 1974

I there espied Signor Francisco tuning his Gittar, and Monsieur de Puy with him, who did make him play to me; which he did most admirably, so well as I was mightily troubled that all that pains should have been taken upon so bad an instrument.

He was comparing the guitar to that most noble and most English instrument, the lute. Yet, the guitar-disdaining Pepys, ever fashionable and musically avid, would shortly thereafter engage the services of another Italian, Cesare Morelli, for the study of both guitar and voice. Together they produced a unique manuscript of guitar-accompanied song designed for Pepys's baritone voice (and therefore also available to the countertenor voice). The setting of *To be or not to be* is a fascinating record, direct from the 17th century, of a rhetorical delivery of the most famous speech in the English language.

Henry Purcell (1659–1695) in his short, Mozart-like life, was able to establish himself firmly as the dominant composer of the late 17th century in England, and is often considered the greatest English composer of all time. He contributed major works to almost every contemporary category: opera, instrumental suite, anthem, ode, and solo song; and yet it is arguably in this last category that he left his most indelible impression on English music. Some of his greatest creations for voice with continuo (available to harpsichord, lute, theorbo, or the extremely fashionable baroque guitar) are built upon the ostinato bass borrowed from Italian models. Sometimes the unit of the repeating bass pattern modulates to related keys, but in some of the most remarkable pieces such as *O solitude* and *Here the deities*, the bass simply repeats the pattern throughout, relying on the incredible richness of Purcell's melodic invention for variety. Some of Purcell's best creations for solo voice are part of the large-scale Odes and Welcome Songs. In our program the solo *Here the deities* is taken from the Saint Cecilia Ode called *Welcome to* all the pleasures and the solo O how blest is the Isle is from the sublime Welcome Song called Why are all the muses mute? Welcome Songs were composed and performed on the occasion of the return of the King to court after hunting season. The conceit here is that, in the King's absence, all the muses have been mute, but now rejoice at his return. The ending presents an image of the world ending without the life-giving presence of the King. The verse is little more than sycophantic drivel, but in Purcell's musical setting, no King ever received a more beautiful compliment.

His fame shall endure till all things decay; His fame and the world together shall die, Shall vanish together away (the last lines of Purcell's Welcome Song Why are all the muses mute?)

Stephen Stubbs, 2020

Text

"Come again, sweet love doth now invite" John Dowland (1563–1626)

Come again:
Sweet love doth now invite,
Thy graces that refrain,
To do me due delight,
To see, to hear, to touch, to kiss, to die,
With thee again in sweetest sympathy.

Come again
That I may cease to mourn,
Through thy unkind distain:
For now left and forlorn,
I sit, I sigh, I weep, I faint, I die,
In deadly pain and endless misery.

All the night
My sleeps are full of dreams,
My eyes are full of streams.
My heart takes no delight,
To see the fruits and joys that some do find,
And mark the storms are me assign'd.

Gentle Love
Draw forth thy wounding dart,
Thou canst not pierce her heart,
For I that do approve,
By sighs and tears more hot than are thy shafts,
Did tempt while she for triumph laughs.

"Come, heavy Sleep" Dowland

Come, heavy Sleep - the image of true Death;
And close up these my weary weeping eyes:
Whose spring of tears doth stop my vital breath,
And tears my heart with Sorrow's sigh-swoll'n cries:
Come and possess my tired thought-worn soul,
That living dies, till thou on me be stole.

Come shadow of my end, and shape of rest,
Allied to Death, child to his black-fac'd Night:
Come thou and charm these rebels in my breast,
Whose walking fancies do my mind affright.
O come sweet Sleep; come or I die for ever:
Come ere my last sleep comes, or come never.

"Sorrow, stay" Dowland

Sorrow, stay, lend true repentant tears,
To a woeful wretched wight,
Hence, Despair with thy tormenting fears:
O do not my poor heart affright.
Pity, help now or never,
Mark me not to endless pain,
Alas I am condemned ever,
No hope, no help there doth remain,
But down, down, down I fall,
And arise I never shall.

"Fine knacks for ladies" Dowland

Fine knacks for ladies, cheap choice brave and new,
Good pennyworths but money cannot move,
I keep a fair but for the fair to view,
A beggar may be liberal of love,
Though all my wares be trash the heart is true.

Great gifts are guiles and look for gifts again,
My trifles come, as treasures from my mind,
It is a precious jewel to be plain,
Sometimes in shell the Orient's pearls we find,
Of others take a sheaf, of me a grain.

Within this pack pins points laces and gloves,
And divers toys fitting a country fair,
But [in] my heart where duty serves and loves,
Turtles and twins, Court's brood, a heav'nly pair,
Happy the heart that thinks of no removes.

"Time Stands Still" Dowland

Time stands still with gazing on her face,
Stand still and gaze, for minutes, hours and years, to her give place:
All other things shall change, but she remains the same,
Till heavens changed have their course and Time hath lost his name.
Cupid doth hover up and down blinded with her fair eyes,
And Fortune captive at her feet contemn'd and conquer'd lies.

"Tell me true love" Dowland

Tell me true Love where shall I seek thy being,
In thoughts or words, in vows or promise-making,
In reasons looks, or passions never seeing,
In men on earth, or women's minds partaking.
Thou canst not die, and therefore living tell me
Where is thy seat, why, doth this age expel thee?

"Welcome black night" Dowland

Welcome black Night – Hymen's fair day,
Help Hymen Love's due debt to pay,
Love's due debt is chaste delight.
Which if the turtles want to-night,
Hymen forfeits his deity,
And Night in love her dignity,
Help, help black Night, Hymen's fair Day,
Help Hymen, Love's due debt to pay.

Hymen, O Hymen, mine Of treasures more divine, What deity is like to thee, That freest from mortality?

"Lady, if you so spite me" Dowland

Lady, if you so spite me,
Wherefore do you so oft kiss and delight me,
Sure that my heart oppress'd and overcloyed
May break, thus overjoyed?
If you seek to spill me,
Come kiss me sweet, and kill me.
So shall your heart be eased,
And I shall rest content and die well pleased.

Shakespeare songs

"To be or not to be" Samuel Pepys (1633–1703)/Cesare Morelli (fl. late 1660s–1686)

To be; or not to be; that's the question. Whether't be nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; Or to take arms against a sea of trouble, And by opposing end them? To die; to sleep; No more. And by a sleep, to say we end The heart-ache, and the thousand nat'ral shocks That flesh is heir to, is a consummation Devoutly to be wish'd. To die; to sleep; To sleep; perchance to dream; aye, there's the rub. For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come; When we have shuff'ld off this mortal coil, Must give us Pause. There's the respect That makes Calamity of so long life. For who would bear, the whips and scorns of Time The Oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumelys, The pangs of despis'd Love, the Law's delays, The Insolence of Office, and the spurns That patient Merit of the unworthy takes, When he himself might his Quietus make, With a bare Bodkin? Who would these fardles bear, To groan and sweat under a weary life, But that the dread of something after death That undiscover'd Country, from whose Borne No Traveler returns, puzzles the will, And makes us rather bear, those ills we have, Than fly to others, that we know not of? Thus, Conscience makes Cowards of us all; And thus, the native Hue of Resolution Is sickly'd o'er with the pale Caste of Thought; And Enterprises of greatest Pith and Moment, With this regard, their Currents turn awry, And lose the name of Action.

"Where the bee sucks there suck I" (from The Tempest) John Wilson (1595–1674)

Where the bee sucks, there suck I, In a Cowslip's bell I lie, There I couch when Owls do cry, On the Bat's back I do fly, After Summer merrily. Merrily, merrily shall I live now Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

"Full fathom five thy father lies" (from The Tempest) Robert Johnson (1583–1633)

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell,
Hark now I hear them, ding, dong, bell.

"Take, o take those lips away" (from Measure for Measure) John Wilson

Take, O take those lips away,
that so sweetly were for sworn,
And those eyes that break of day,
lights that do mislead the morn,
But my kisses bring again
Seals of love though sealed in vain.

Hide, O hide those Hills of Snow, that thy frozen blossom bears; On whose tops the Pinks that grow, Are yet of those April wears: But first set my poor heart free, Bound in those icy chains by thee.

"The willow song" Anonymous

The poor soul sat sighing by a Sicamore tree, (Sing willow, willow, willow) With his hand on his bosom, and his head upon his knee,

> Oh! Willow, willow, willow, willow Shall be my garland, Sing all a green willow, Ah me, the green willow shall be my garland.

He sigh'd in his singing, and made a great moan, (Sing willow, willow, willow)

I am dead to all pleasure, my true love he is gone,

The mute bird sat by him, was made tame by his moans, (Sing willow, willow, willow)

The true tears fell from him, would have melted the stones,

Take this for my farewell and latest adieu, (Sing willow, willow, willow) Write this on my tomb, that in love I was true,

Here the Deities approve (from "Welcome to all the pleasures") Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

Here the Deities approve, The God of Music, and of Love; All the Talents they have lent you, All the Blessings they have sent you; pleas'd to see what they bestow, live and thrive so well below.

"O solitude" (a Single Song from "Orpheus Britannicus") Purcell

O solitude, my sweetest choice! Places devoted to the night, Remote from tumult and from noise, How ye my restless thoughts delight! O solitude, my sweetest choice! O heav'ns! what content is mine To see those trees, which have appear'd From the nativity of time, And which all ages have rever'd, To look today as fresh and green As when their beauties first were seen. O, how agreeable a sight These hanging mountains do appear, Which th'unhappy would invite To finish all their sorrows here. When their hard fate makes them endure Such woes as only death can cure. O, how I solitude adore! That element of noblest wit, Where I have learned Apollo's love, Without the pains to study it. For thy sake I in love am grown With what thy fancy does pursue; But when I think upon my own, I hate it for that reason too. Because it needs must hinder me From seeing and from serving thee.

O solitude, O how I solitude adore!

"O how blest is the isle" (from "Why are all the muses mute?") Purcell

O, how blest is the isle to which Caesar is given, The glory of earth and the darling of Heaven! His name shall the Muses in triumph rehearse, As long as there's number or music in verse; His fame shall endure till all things decay, His fame and the world together shall die, Shall vanish together away.

"Britain thou now art great" Purcell

Britain, thou now art great indeed! art great indeed! Arise, and proud of Caesar's godlike sway, Above the neighbour nations lift thy head. Command the world, while Caesar you obey.

Biographies



Particularly noted for his "shimmering voice, a voice which also allows lucid and pure levels" (BachTrack), countertenor **Reginald Mobley** is highly sought after for baroque, classical and modern repertoire.

Reginald leads a very prolific career in the United States, where he resides. In March 2020, he became the first ever programming consultant for the Handel and Haydn Society following several years of leading H+H in his community engaging *Every Voice* concerts. He is a regular guest with Cantata Collective, Musica Angelica, Agave Baroque, Charlotte Bach Akademie, Seraphic Fire, Quodlibet, Pacific Music Works, Bach Collegium San Diego, San Francisco Early Music Society, and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Recent engagements have included concerts and recordings with organisations such as Opera Lafayette, Miller Theatre (Columbia University), Blue Heron in Boston,

Chatham Baroque in Pittsburgh, and Washington Bach Consort. Most of the recordings are available online.

In Europe, his career is expanding; in the UK, he has toured with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists for the last five years, and continues to do so, and has performed with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music and was due to make his debut with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in June 2022. He was also invited to perform with the OH! (Orkiestra Historyczna) in Poland and the Vienna Academy in Austria (Musikverein), gave a recital (with a Spiritual programme) at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, toured with the Freiburger Barockorchester under Kristian Bezuidenhout, Balthasar Neumann Chor & Ensemble and the Bach Society in Stuttgart.

In the autumn 2021, he will perform the role of Ottone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* with the Budapest Festival Orchestra for a series of concerts in Europe, and has been invited to sing Messiah with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in December 2021. Reginald is expecting to be touring Australia in April 2022 together with Bach Akademie Australia.

His recordings have been received with critical acclaim, including several Grammy nominations, most recently for his work on *A Lad's Love* with Brian Giebler on BRIDGE 9542 label, which has been nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album. He has also been featured on several albums with the Monteverdi Choir and Sir John Eliot Gardiner, including a recording of Bach's St Matthew Passion and Magnificat. His own projects include *Peace In Our Time* on Vgo Recordings label with frequent collaborators, Agave Baroque. He also looks forward to the release of *American Originals* with Agave Baroque, which celebrates the music of composers of colour.



Stephen Stubbs, who won the GRAMMY® Award as conductor for Best Opera Recording in 2015, spent a 30-year career in Europe. He returned to his native Seattle in 2006 as one of the world's most respected lutenists, conductors, and baroque opera specialists and in 2014 was awarded the Mayor's Arts Award for 'Raising the Bar' in Seattle. Before his return, he was based in Bremen, Germany, where he was Professor at the *Hochschule für Künste*.

In 2007 Stephen established his new production company, Pacific MusicWorks, based in Seattle, reflecting his lifelong interest in both early music and contemporary performance. The company's inaugural presentation was a production of South African artist William Kentridge's acclaimed multimedia staging of Claudio Monteverdi's opera *The Return of Ulysses* in a co-production with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. PMW's performances of the Monteverdi *Vespers* were described in the press as "utterly thrilling" and "of a quality you are unlikely to encounter anywhere else in the world". In its celebratory tenth season (2017/18) Pacific MusicWorks will release its first commercial recording: *Handel's Tenor* featuring GRAMMY® Awardwinning Tenor, Aaron Sheehan.

Stephen is also the Boston Early Music Festival's permanent artistic co-director along with his long-time colleague Paul O'Dette. Stephen and Paul are also the musical directors of all BEMF operas, recordings of which were nominated for five GRAMMY awards, and won the GRAMMY for Best Opera Recording 2015. Also in 2015 BEMF recordings won two Echo Klassik awards in Germany, and the Diapason d'Or de l'Année in France. In 2017 they were presented with the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik.

In addition to his ongoing commitments to PMW and BEMF, other recent appearances have included Handels' *Giulio Cesare* and Gluck's *Orfe*o in Bilbao, Mozart's *Magic Flute* and *Cosi fan Tutte* for the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Handel's *Agrippina* and *Semele* for Opera Omaha, Cavalli's *Calisto* and Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* for Juilliard, Mozart's *Il re pastore* for the Merola program and six productions for Opera UCLA including Cavalli's *Giasone*, Monteverdi's *Poppea* and Handel's *Amadigi*. In recent years he has conducted Handel's *Messiah* with the Seattle, Edmonton, a Birmingham and Houston Symphony orchestras. His extensive discography as conductor and solo lutenist include well over 100 CDs, many of which have received international acclaim and awards.

From 2013-2018 Stephen Stubbs held the position of Senior Artist in Residence at the University of Washington School of Music. During this tenure he produced and conducted Handel's *Semele*, Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, Gluck's *Orphée*, Cavalli's *Calisto*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*.

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