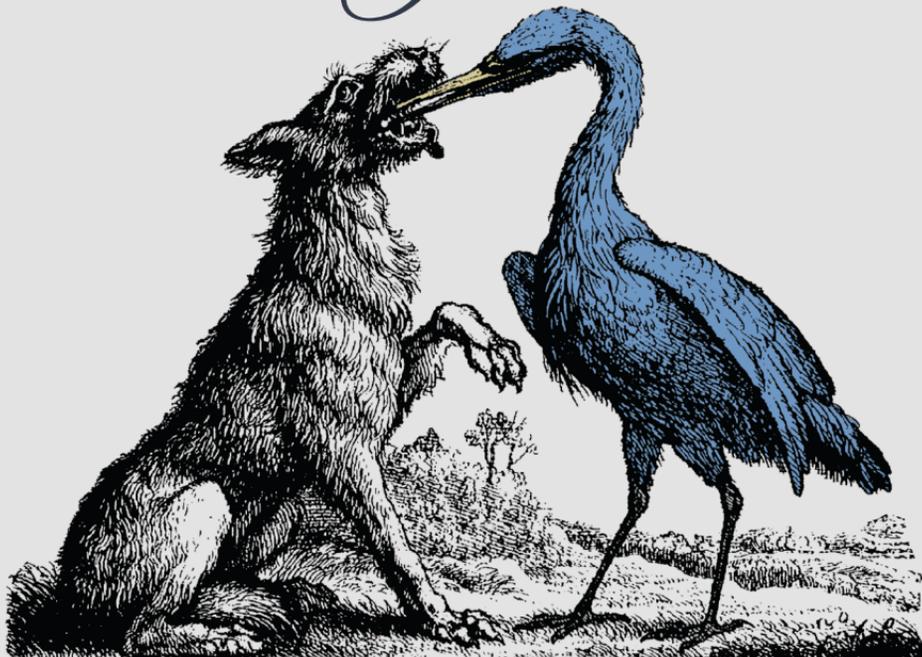


Le Strange Viols



WILLIAM CRANFORD
CONSORT MUSIC FOR 4, 5 AND 6 VIOLS

FEW SPECIFIC FACTS ABOUT THE LIFE OF William Cranford are currently known. The inclusion of his psalm tune “Ely” in Ravencroft’s psalter of 1621 and a possible reference to him in a list of royalist supporters (“delinquents”) from 1643 suggest that Cranford’s compositional career spanned the twenty-odd years coinciding with consort music’s final efflorescence under the Stuart kings James I and his son, Charles I. Though a handful of Cranford’s psalm tunes and catches made their way into print, the bulk of his surviving music was collected in several manuscripts associated with an enthusiastic and prolific community of musicians centered around St. Paul’s in London. It was among these composers and consort players, who included John Ward, Simon Ives, Thomas Ford, Thomas Brewer, Thomas Myriell, and others, that Cranford’s consort music was likely initially played and enjoyed.

Like English coterie poetry of the period, Stuart consort music served as a nexus of creative sociality and circulated almost exclusively in manuscript. For example, the Lestrange partbooks (GB BL Add. MSS 39550-4), one source of Cranford’s five- and six-part pieces, contain extensive contemporaneous annotations.

These annotations reveal the careful side-by-side comparison of numerous manuscript copies that evidently circulated among Nicholas Lestrange and his circle of consort enthusiast friends. As one might expect of a composer deeply embedded in a community of connoisseurs, Cranford’s music is rich in quotation and allusion to the works of other composers of the idiom. Listeners familiar with the music of John Ward, Martin Peerson, William Lawes, and William Byrd, to name a few, will recognize various citations and playful adaptations. One prominent example is Cranford’s quotation of Lawes’ six-part sett in F major—the “sunrise” fantasia—in the opening point of his first six-part fantasia.

Perhaps because Cranford’s musical style is so idiomatic to a particularly insular vein of Stuart consort music, it has not yet found the popularity among modern listeners enjoyed by the brash and flamboyant William Lawes or the incredibly prolific and cultivated John Jenkins. Gordon Dodd’s characterization of Cranford’s music as “pointilliste” and “mechanical” has managed to cast a shadow, perhaps, across Cranford’s evident enjoyment of unique textures and droll sequences of close imitation. Cranford’s fantasias reveal an astonishing breadth of internal

contrasts and subtle use of an often strikingly modern-sounding harmonic palette, such as his conspicuous use of modal mixture in the opening of the fourth fantasia a4. His consort music is also quite technically demanding, requiring frequent forays above the frets in the treble parts and the nimble execution of tricky divisions in the close quarters of dense ensemble textures.

Unlike Dodd, the seventeenth-century consort enthusiast Dudley North wrote of being quite “taken with what hath proceeded from Mr. Cranford.” We hope you hear in these pieces some of Cranford’s evident love for this esoteric but highly expressive idiom, a bit of the “gravity, majesty, honey-dew spirit, and variety” that North remembered of Cranford’s music.

- Loren Ludwig



Produced by Loren Ludwig and LeStrange Viols.

Recorded, engineered, mixed and mastered by Ryan Streber at Oktaven Audio in Yonkers, NY. Tina Chancey, session producer. Additional editing by Hansdale Hsu.

Special thanks to Catharina Caldwell, Axel Pollak and John Mark Rozendaal for the use of their beautiful instruments and to Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Inwood.

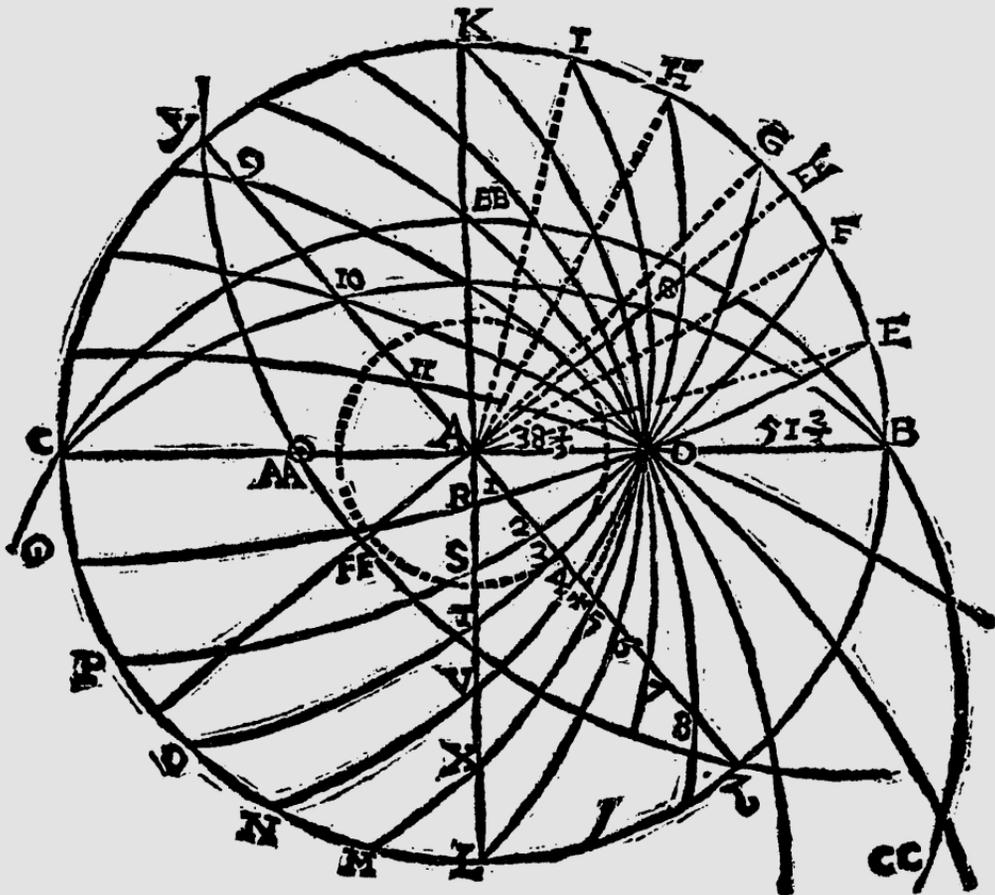
Performers clockwise from upper left: Douglas Kelley, Zoe Weiss, James Waldo, John Mark Rozendaal, Kivie Cahn-Lipman, Loren Ludwig

Images by Francis Barlow from *Æsop's fables with his life* (1666) Tray image: *John Blagrove The Mathematical Jewel* (1585)

Design: Marc Wolf



Before assembling to record the modern premier of William Cranford's consort music, the musicians of LeStrange had already established themselves as a crack team of American consort players. Their many previous appearances together in diverse musical combinations and their experience in acclaimed American ensembles allow LeStrange to craft subtle and virtuosic performances of intricate gems of the consort repertory. Named after an important manuscript collection of consort music collected by the seventeenth-century English nobleman Nicholas Lestrange, LeStrange viols brings the highest level of music making to the wonderful repertory of English consort music and beyond.



WILLIAM CRANFORD (fl. 1630) CONSORT MUSIC FOR 4, 5 AND 6 VIOLS

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------|------|-----|----------------------|------|
| 1. | Fantasia a6 no. 6 | 4:58 | 9. | Fantasia a4 no. 3 | 3:36 |
| 2. | Fantasia a6 no. 2 | 4:17 | 10. | Fantasia a4 no. 1 | 2:28 |
| 3. | Fantasia a6 no. 4 | 4:13 | 11. | Fantasia a4 no. 2 | 2:53 |
| 4. | Quadran Pavan a6 | 5:53 | 12. | Fantasia a4 no. 4 | 3:04 |
| 5. | Fantasia a6 no. 3 | 4:40 | 13. | Fantasia a5 no. 2 | 3:37 |
| 6. | Fantasia a6 no. 1 | 3:45 | 14. | Go From My Window a5 | 4:28 |
| 7. | Fantasia a6 no. 5 | 4:53 | 15. | Fantasia a5 no. 1 | 4:24 |
| 8. | Passamezzo Pavan a6 | 7:08 | 16. | In Nomine a5 | 2:55 |

Loren Ludwig and John Mark Rozendaal, *treble viol*

Kivie Cahn-Lipman and James Waldo, *tenor viol*

Zoe Weiss, *tenor and bass viols*

Douglas Kelley, *bass viol*

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