

signum
CLASSICS

Matthew Locke
The Flat Consort

MATHEW LOCKE

1638

FRETWORK

THE FLAT CONSORT
MATTHEW LOCKE (1621-1677)

The Flat Consort, Suite No. 1 in C Minor

1	I. Fantazia	[3.13]
2	II. Courante	[1.25]
3	III. Fantazia	[2.21]
4	IV. Saraband	[0.37]
5	V. Fantazia	[1.37]
6	VI. Jigg	[1.01]

Duo for 2 Bass Viols in C

7	I. Fantazia	[1.36]
8	II. Fantazia	[1.39]
9	III. Courant	[1.35]
10	IV. Fantazia	[1.26]
11	V. Fantazia	[1.33]
12	VI. Saraband	[0.54]

The Flat Consort, Suite No. 2 in B-Flat Major

13	I. Fantazia	[2.56]
14	II. Courant	[1.42]
15	III. Fantazia	[3.04]
16	IV. Saraband	[0.52]
17	V. Fantazia	[2.31]
18	VI. Jigg	[1.16]

The Flat Consort, Suite No. 3 in D Minor

19	I. Fantazia	[3.36]
20	II. Courante	[1.34]
21	III. Fantazia	[3.01]
22	IV. Saraband	[1.49]

Duo for 2 Bass Viols in D

23	I. Fantazia	[1.26]
24	II. Fantazia	[1.13]
25	III. Courant	[1.11]
26	IV. Fantazia	[1.15]
27	V. Fantazia	[1.14]
28	VI. Saraband	[0.54]

The Flat Consort, Suite No. 4 in B-Flat Major

29	I. Fantazia	[3.06]
30	II. Galliard	[1.21]
31	III. Fantazia	[3.37]
32	IV. Saraband	[1.35]

The Flat Consort, Suite No. 5 in A Minor

33	I. Fantazia	[3.18]
34	II. Galliard	[1.18]
35	III. Fantazia	[2.50]
36	IV. Saraband	[1.42]

Total timings	[67.39]
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FRETWORK

Emily Ashton, Richard Boothby, Joanna Levine, Asako Morikawa

DAVID MILLER ARCHLUTE & THEORBO
SILAS WOLLSTON HARPSICHORD

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The Flat Consort

Suite No. 1 in C Minor **EA, JL, RB, SW, DM**
 Suite No. 2 in B-Flat Major **AM, JL, RB, SW, DM**
 Suite No. 3 in D Minor **EA, RB, AM, SW, DM**
 Suite No. 4 in B-Flat Major **EA, JL, RB, SW, DM**
 Suite No. 5 in A Minor **AM, RB, JL, SW, DM**

Duo for 2 Bass Viols in C **JL, RB**
 Duo for 2 Bass Viols in D **RB, AM**

Performers

Viols

Emily Ashton **EA**
 Richard Boothby **RB**
 Joanna Levine **JL**
 Asako Morikawa **AM**

Harpichord

Silas Wollston **SW**

Archlute & Theorbo

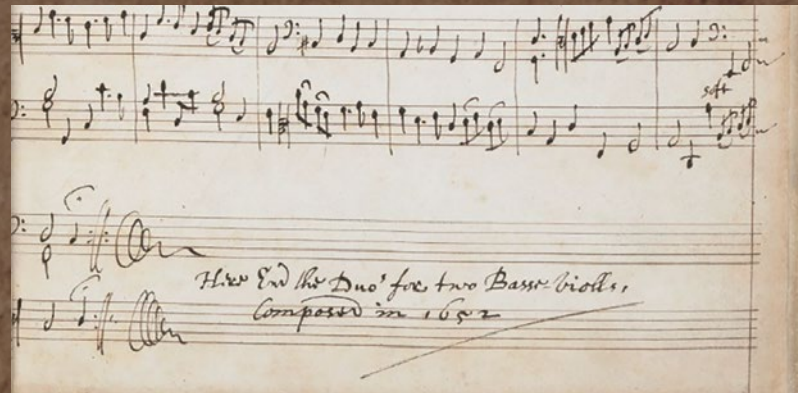
David Miller **DM**

Matthew Locke was born 400 years ago in 1622, and while he is often ranked as one of England's finest composers, he is still unaccountably neglected: his music may not be as immediately appealing as his immediate successor, Henry Purcell, nor as wide-ranging as William Byrd, yet his forceful musical personality and luxuriant technique place him in the first echelon of English composers. He was a difficult, cantankerous man, who took offence easily, bore grudges and spoke his mind without much regard for the consequences; yet his music is filled with a generous warmth that is hard to reconcile with this personality.

We may assume he was born in or near Exeter and became a choirboy there around 1630. He carved MATHEW LOCK/1638 on the wall behind the organ, and again ML/1641, probably when he left the choir.

He may have gone with Charles I to the Hague in 1648, where he may have converted to Catholicism. By 1651 he was back in Exeter and had written his 'Little Consorts', '*made at the request of Mr Wm. Wake for his Schollars*'. He wrote this into a scorebook he had started, in which he collected all his chamber music throughout his life. It is the principal source of most of this music, now held by the British Library.

The first entry is of the Bass Duos:



Later in the 1650s, during the Commonwealth, Locke spent his time in Hereford. There he married Mary, daughter of Roger Garnons of Trelough (near Hereford), a Catholic recusant. Here he took part in music meetings organised by Silas Taylor, who also provided him with a house. Even though Taylor was a parliamentary sequestration commissioner, and presumably Protestant, the meetings themselves were suspected of being pretexts for assemblies of ‘Papists and Delinquents’.

And it's not hard to see why the Catholic Locke would find life in Hereford congenial. It was known as an outpost of the old religion and there was even a Jesuit College located in the county, close to the Welsh border. *The Flat Consort* was titled ‘for my cousin Kemble’, and it seems that his wife was related in some way to the prominent Hereford Catholic family of that name. John Kemble became a martyr in 1679, but was an active priest, ordained in Douai in 1625 and sent as a missionary to Hereford and Monmouth.

The Flat Consorts themselves follow similar lines to most of Locke's chamber music, with Fantazias followed by dances, woven together into a suite in the same key. However, this consort set has a varied instrumentation: the first two are for treble, tenor and bass viols, with any continuo instruments using the bass viol's part. The other three have treble, and two bass viols which alternate playing the bass and the middle line. In these, the continuo has to have a part constructed that links the actual sounding bass part together from the two bass viols; and, even though Locke's score doesn't provide such a part, another source, from Oxford, does just that.



We can well imagine that these consorts were played in the music meetings in Hereford, and that they were composed with the participants in mind. Locke himself was a keyboard player, but probably also played the viol, so could have played either in these meetings.

It is interesting to see the relative ease with which Catholics such as Locke were able to thrive in the Commonwealth; the regime's focus was more on the Royalist sympathisers who posed a greater threat. Also, we can perhaps contrast the seriousness of these intense works of consort music that Locke composed during this period with a lighter style of music that he developed after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 – Charles II famously couldn't abide ‘Fancys’, and greatly preferred to tap his foot to the dance music to which he had grown accustomed in French exile.

Locke was to parade his Catholicism in public when, on 22nd March 1654, he walked to the gallows with a condemned murderer whose final action was to proclaim the Catholic faith. He was even denounced by a fellow musician, Matthew Price, who had attended Silas Taylor's music meetings. But he seems to have got off without much trouble and had made his way to London a couple of years later, when he composed the music for William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* of September 1656 and also sang the part of the Admiral. The same year *The Little Consort* was published by Playford.

He was to remain in London for the rest of his life, apart from a sojourn in Oxford to avoid the plague. By the time of the restoration, he was England's pre-eminent composer, and eventually held three court positions. In addition, he was a prominent composer for the commercial theatre and wrote incidental music for 12 productions by William Davenant and his Duke of York's company, anticipating Purcell's semi-operas with Thomas Shadwell's *Psyche* in 1675. He was writing music right up to his death in 1677, a year before his much older colleague, John Jenkins.

Locke's chamber music can be seen in the context of the gradual change in English consort music over the 17th century, and the passing on of the flame of virtuoso viol playing from England to France. Whereas Lawes and Jenkins wrote consort music of five and six parts, Locke's largest ensemble is of four; this, his *Flat Consort* and the *Little Consort* are of three; and the *Consort of Several Friends* is for just two. And at this time, English viol players were the pre-eminent virtuosos of Europe. Locke's visit to the ‘Low Countreys’ may have introduced him to the French style, and we can hear this influence most clearly in the many Courantes that he wrote – all the chamber music suites contain one – and he was, famously, to remark that he

‘never yet saw any Foreign Instrumental Composition (a few French Corants excepted) worthy an English mans transcribing’.

This is found in the introduction to the print of the *Little Consort*, and later he pleads with the performers to ‘do your selves and me the right to play plain, not tearing them in pieces with division, (an old custome of our Country Fidlers, and now under the title of *A la mode* endeavoured to be introduced)’.

Yet, there is a big difference between division and ornamentation, or gracing, and for this we have turned to Locke’s friend and contemporary, the viol virtuoso Christopher Simpson, for examples of suitable ornamentation from this period. Locke wrote a dedicatory poem for the first edition of *The Division Violist*, published in 1659, in which he declares the viol to be ‘*The Instrument our Nation Glories in*’.

Simpson himself asked Charles Coleman to compile the table of graces, thus:

Smooth graces
Beat. exp: Backfall exp: Double-Backfall exp: elevation.

exp Spinger. exp: Cadent. exp: Backfall shaken exp:

Shaken graces
Close Shake. exp: Shaked Beat. exp: elevation exp:

Cadent exp: Double-Relish exp: or thus: exp:
10 For Mts, I am obliged to the ever famous Charles Coleman Doctor in Musick

As you can see, these are divided into the ‘Smooth Graces’ and the ‘Shaked Graces’. You will hear plenty of Beats, Backfalls and Double Relishes in our recording. What is striking about Simpson’s table is how similar the ornaments are to French viol graces that we find in the solo music of Marin Marais, Demachy and Ste. Colombe, just a few decades later.

Locke’s consort music is the last great body of chamber music for viols and sits atop the great tradition that was begun nearly 150 years before. Yet the taste for the dense complexities of five- and six-part counterpoint had passed, and it is notable that Locke only wrote one set of consorts in four parts, described by Roger North as ‘a magnifick consort of 4 parts, after the old style, which was the last of the kind that hath bin made’, and produced most of his music in three parts or fewer. *The Flat Consort* contains his most virtuosic music, especially the three for treble and two bass viols, and yet he manages to combine this show-off element with refined and delicate counterpoint, every bit as involving and satisfying as Jenkins or Lawes. But those earlier masters preferred to produce fantazias that often inhabited a single affect or mood throughout, whereas Locke’s fantasias are notable for the many and quick changes in tempo and affect: Purcell’s three and four-part fantasias are clearly modelled on Locke’s in this respect. The result is a quixotic, capricious restlessness that is constantly challenging the listener to follow his argument; it is a thrilling musical ride, and I for one am amazed that these wonderful works have rarely been performed or recorded. I hope this recording can begin the rehabilitation of Mr. Matthew Locke’s magnifick consorts.

Richard Boothby
August 2021



© Nick White

FRETWORK

Asako Morikawa, Emily Ashton, Joanna Levine, Sam Stadlen & Richard Boothby

In 2021, Fretwork celebrates its 35th anniversary. In the past three and a half decades they have explored the core repertoire of great English consort music, from Taverner to Purcell, and made classic recordings against which others are judged.

In addition to this, Fretwork have become known as pioneers of contemporary music for viols, having commissioned over 40 new works. The list of composers is like the role call of the most prominent writers of our time: George Benjamin, Michael Nyman, Sir John Tavener, Gavin Bryars, Elvis Costello, Alexander Goehr, John Woolrich, Orlando Gough, Fabrice Fitch, Peter Sculthorpe, Sally Beamish, Tan Dun, Barry Guy, Andrew Keeling, Thea Musgrave, Simon Bainbridge, Poul Ruders, John Joubert, Duncan Druce and Nico Muhly. The group now frequently presents programmes consisting entirely of contemporary music.

They made their Carnegie Hall debut in February of 2010, and now tour the United States most years. In that year, they also curated a week-long concert series of concerts at Kings Place. The culmination of this week was the world premier of *The World Encompassed* by Orlando Gough, a 70-minute piece describing in musical terms Drake's circumnavigation of the globe in 1577-80.

In 2011, The National Centre for Early Music, in collaboration with the BBC, hosted a competition for young composers to create a four-minute piece for Fretwork. They workshopped

the shortlisted pieces at the NCEM in York in October, and then the winning entries were premiered in Kings Place in December 2011.

The following year, they premiered Nico Muhly's *My Days* for The Hilliard Ensemble and Fretwork in Wigmore Hall; while 2013 was their busiest year for a decade: they played no fewer than ten concerts in London's major chamber music halls: Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, Cadogan Hall and the Royal College of Music.

They celebrated their 30th anniversary with a star-studded concert at Kings Place in June of 2016; and recorded four new albums, including *The World Encompassed*, and later that year they made their longest tour of America, taking in the USA, Canada & Colombia.

In 2018 they performed and recorded a programme celebrating the music of Michael Nyman – who was 75 in 2019 – with the exceptional counter-tenor, Iestyn Davies; and in 2019 they toured North America with this programme. That year they also began a series of concerts at Wigmore Hall, called 'Musick's Monument', presenting the greatest English consort music from the Golden Age – six concerts ranging from Cornyshe to Purcell.

Their recordings with Signum Classics have resulted in several notable releases: *The World Encompassed*, *John Jenkins Four Part Fantasies*, *If* (with Iestyn Davies), *In Chains of Gold: Orlando Gibbons' consort anthems*, & *The Silken Tent*, with Clare Wilkinson, including the music of Debussy, Grieg, Byrd, Purcell, Nyman, Goehr, Wolf, Britten, Shostakovich and Stephen Wilkinson; and then *In Nomine II*, concluding a survey of English In Nomines started with their debut album in 1987, including Nico Muhly's *Slow* and music by Ferrabosco, Bull, Tye, Baldwin, Parsons and Purcell.

The 2020 pandemic curtailed most groups plans and activities, and Fretwork saw its fair share of cancellations; but it was fortunate to receive £30,000 from Arts Council England's Emergency fund, and then to be able to present a live-streamed concert with Iestyn Davies from the National Centre for Early Music in York, a programme of Dowland's *Lachrimae* from Wigmore Hall and premier a new work by Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones in the Early Music Festival in Blackheath. They also pressed ahead with more recording, once lockdown restrictions were eased.

In 2021, they have been at Wigmore Hall twice, including a performance on Good Friday, the first from Wigmore for many decades, of Johann Sebastiani's *St Matthew Passion*. They have also been awarded a substantial grant from Arts Council England to continue and maintain the continuity of their work.

In 2022 they celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of one of England's greatest composers for viols, Matthew Locke; and plans visits to Germany, Spain and France. There will also be a collaboration with The Kings Singers and new works from Sir James MacMillan and Roderick Williams.

SILAS WOLLSTON

Recognised as a leading early music specialist, Silas Wollston combines performance and academic research in a varied career. He studied the organ with John Scott before taking up an organ scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge. He then went on to study harpsichord and fortepiano at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Conservatoire Royale in Brussels. A longstanding member of the *English Baroque Soloists*, he played a major role in John Eliot Gardiner's Bach Cantata cycle in 2000, performing the organ obligato of BWV 146 on the Trost organ in Altenburg. He also has much experience as a choral director, working as Director of Music at Queens' College, Cambridge between 2011 and 2015. He has published research on the string music of Locke and Purcell, and on Handel's compositional process. He is a member of the London Handel Players, the Bach Players, the English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble, and In Echo.



DAVID MILLER

David Miller is a long-established soloist and well known as an accompanist and continuo player on lute, theorbo and early guitars, flourishing in both the early music world and the mainstream musical scene. He maintains a busy recital schedule, enjoying collaborations with other solo artists, both singers and instrumentalists. He also performs and records with all the principal English period instrument orchestras and many of the finest ensembles, as well as a number of top opera companies.

Amongst David's numerous recordings are several CDs of English songs and lute music. His highly acclaimed and award-winning solo disc with Elin Manahan Thomas – *Ravish'd with Sacred Extasies* – features devotional songs by Dowland, Campian, Humfrey and Purcell, as well as rarely heard lute and theorbo music by John Lawrence and John Wilson. David's latest solo album, *The Famous Weiss*, features music by the great German Baroque lute virtuoso Silvius Leopold Weiss, and has received many enthusiastic reviews. With violinist Rachel Podger and continuo players Marcin Swiatkiewicz and Jonathan Manson he recorded all of Biber's Rosary Sonatas, released in a double album which won the Gramophone Baroque Instrumental Award in 2016. His most recent release, *John Dowland: First Booke of Songes or Ayres* with soprano Grace Davidson, has received several 5-star reviews.

David has performed at Dartington International Summer School since the mid-1990s, and he continues to inspire the younger generation of lutenists in his teaching role as professor of lute at the Guildhall School.



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Recorded in St George's Church, Chesterton, Cambridgeshire, UK
from 28th April to 1st May 2021.

Producer and Editor – Nicholas Parker
Recording Engineer – Mike Hatch

Cover Image – Carving from Exeter Cathedral, believed to have been
created by Matthew Locke during his time as a choirboy there.

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