

Leycester Lyra Viol Lessons

a recital and discussion by Lisa Terry

Thumps - "To be played either without the use of a viole stick, or with ye fingers as you play upon a Lute."

Normal Tuning – ffeff

Viol by Peter Tourin, 1986, after Karp (1695)

What if a Day	Anonymous
Almayne	Anon.
Guillims Dumpe	Anon.

Fifths - ffhfh

Viol by Institute for Artistic Research, 1982

Preludium	Peter Leycester (1614 – 1678)
Coranto	Anon.

Harp Sette Flat – edfhf

Viol by Peter Tourin, 1986, after Karp (1695)

Daphne	Anon.
Almaine - Coranto	John Jenkins (1592 – 1678)

Lestrangle – dedeh

Viol by Dominick Zuchowicz, 1990, after Jaye (1624)

Preludium	Jenkins
Coranto	Jenkins
Gigue	Jenkins

High Harpway Sharp/Flat fdefh/fedfh

Viol by Peter Tourin, 1986, after Karp (1695)

Coranto	Jenkins
Ayre	Jenkins
Saraband	Jenkins

Eights – fhfhf

Viol by Institute for Artistic Research, 1982

Mr. Peter Daniels Delight	Richard Pickering
Almayne	Thomas Gregorge
Mrs. Daniels Choyes	Pickering

NOTES

In the 17th century, a very popular way to play the bass viola da gamba was known as “lyra viol.” This term simply means that the viol can be played like a lute, where the player accompanies melodies with chords, using the bow instead of the fingers.

Champions of the viol such as Englishman Tobias Hume had ongoing exchanges in publications with the likes of John Dowland as to which instrument, the lute or the viol, was more noble. Both instruments have an extensive repertoire written in tablature, a system that shows what fret to depress through a system of letters sitting on lines that represent which string to play on; the rhythms are written up above the staff.

Playing viol from tablature allows for the composer to employ any number of interesting, inventive tunings. The player has no concern over what pitch she is playing, since she simply puts her finger where the tablature indicates.

For this program, I have selected a set of pieces from a huge manuscript collected in the mid 17th century by historian and antiquarian Sir Peter Leycester, himself a composer and lyra viol player. Out of the 150 pieces in the collection, I picked seventeen, representing six different tunings (out of the dozen offered), including one tuning that is unique to this manuscript. I will use three different viols for the performances, and you will hear familiar movements of the Baroque dance suite (Prelude, Allemande, Courante and Sarabande) along with character pieces named after folks such as “Guillim” and “Mr. and Mrs. Daniels”.

Lisa Terry, Woodside, Queens