Come all ye songsters

Carolyn Sampson
Elizabeth Kenny
Jonathan Manson
Laurence Cummings

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Carolyn Sampson *soprano*
Elizabeth Kenny *lute*
Jonathan Manson *bass viol*
Laurence Cummings *harpsichord*

**Come all ye songsters**

Recorded live at Wigmore Hall, London, on 17 March 2015

**HENRY PURCELL** (1659–1695)
01 Come all ye songsters (from *The Fairy Queen* Z629, 1692) CS, EK, JM, LC 01.56
02 Sing while we trip it (from *The Fairy Queen*) CS, EK, JM, LC 00.41
03 A dance of fairies (from *The Fairy Queen*) EK, JM, LC 00.44
04 Ye gentle spirits of the air (from *The Fairy Queen*) CS, EK, JM, LC 05.47

**HENRY PURCELL**
Harpsichord Suite No. 5 in C major (with Jig) Z666 (1696) LC 05.59
05 Prelude 00.43
06 Almand 02.06
07 Corant 01.01
08 Saraband 01.08
09 Jig 00.48

**HENRY PURCELL**
10 The cares of lovers (from *Timon of Athens* Z632, 1695) CS, EK 01.59
11 Fly swift, ye hours Z369 (1691) CS, JM, LC 05.31
12 Not all my torments Z400 (1693) CS, EK, LC 02.47

**GIOVANNI BATTISTA DRAGHI** (c1640–1708)
13 An Italian Ground EK, JM 03.12
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*Music from ‘Princess Anne’s lute book’*

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*CHRISTOPHER SIMPSON* (c1602/6–1669)

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<td>(from <em>Abdelazar, or The Moor’s Revenge</em> Z570, 1695)</td>
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<td>CS, EK, JM, LC</td>
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<td>spoken introduction (Carolyn Sampson)</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>30</td>
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Total time: 77.40
COME ALL YE SONGSTERS

Purcell’s reputation as the greatest ever setter of English words (though not difficult to defend) was constructed sometime after his death to meet a pressing cultural-political need. Charles Burney – whose hugely influential *A General History of Music* appeared in 1789 – feared that Purcell’s worth and works [were] daily diminishing …

And so much is our great musician’s celebrity already consigned to tradition, that it will soon be as difficult to find his songs, or at least to hear them, as those of his predecessors Orpheus and Amphion.

Find them in print or hear them performed, Burney meant. The only native-born English composer with a credible claim to international competitiveness was fading into oblivion. To pull him back from the brink Burney needed to find a ‘Purcellian’ quality not possessed by any of his foreign originating rivals. Englishness itself turned out to be the magic ingredient. Though Purcell melodies seemed to many by then to be uncouth and antiquated … by a little allowance and examination, any one possessed of a great love for Music, and a knowledge of our language, will feel, at certain places of almost every song, his superior felicity and passion in expressing the poet’s sentiments which he had to translate into melody.

Paradoxically, it was precisely the ‘uncouth and antiquated’ character of Purcell’s songwriting style that allowed him to express poetical sentiment with such sensitivity. He could and did compose beautifully shaped and harmonised tunes almost as well suited to instrumental performance as to vocal (‘Fairest isle’ is a famous example), but he could also flip at will from hummable melody into unpredictable arioso – and back to melody again – giving specially mixed musical colour to particular words and phrases. ‘Song’ as Purcell understood it was a fully integrated medium in which notated melody, notated declamation and free improvisation around notation in both categories could happily co-exist. An ‘aria’ category sharply distinguished from ‘recitative’ had yet to be introduced. Because Purcell and other late seventeenth century English composers were unused to these imported labels they were unconstrained by them. ‘Song’ was a performers’ medium furthermore: singers and continuo players shared with the composer responsibility for discovering and revealing meaning in the texts supplied, and for projecting meaning onto texts if little or none had been built in by the poet. The poor literary quality of some – certainly not all – of Purcell’s texts troubled later critics far more than it troubled him. He looked for ways to turn words to powerful account in performance (not for words ‘worthy’ of his talent) and had no difficulty finding them.

This programme examines the Purcell song repertoire through highly privileged insider lenses. Over half of the songs chosen come from the so-called ‘Gresham manuscript’, a songbook mostly in Purcell’s own handwriting compiled between 1692 and 1695. The early history of the
manuscript is obscure. Gresham College, London acquired it toward the end of the nineteenth century – hence the name. For conservation reasons it transferred to the Guildhall Library in 1958, along with the rest of the Gresham collection. The Purcell Society and Gresham College published a handsome facsimile in 1995, to mark the Purcell tercentenary.

Recent research by Robert Thompson of the Purcell Society has established that the Gresham manuscript was almost certainly copied for the composer’s star pupil Lady Annabella Howard, fourth wife of the veteran politician and retired playwright Sir Robert Howard. The Howards married in February 1693: she was 17, he was nearly 70. The age gap occasioned plenty of gossip but the couple stayed successfully together until Sir Robert died in 1698. Annabella did not marry again until 1718.

Before settling down with Sir Robert, Annabella had served as a maid of honour to Princess Anne (later Queen Anne), Queen Mary’s younger sister. Anne maintained a separate court, living awkwardly apart from the ruling couple William and Mary and supporting an alternative programme of royal culture. She played the harpsichord and guitar to a respectable standard, took lessons on both instruments, and may also have learned to sing with help from the famous soprano Arabella Hunt. Annabella Dyve – Howard-to-be – sang and played keyboards too. One of her duties as maid of honour would have been to entertain the princess and perhaps to perform alongside her in palace ensembles. Purcell’s involvement as composer and animateur seems highly likely. He and Annabella developed a friendship which continued after Annabella had left Anne’s court. Sir Robert encouraged his wife’s music-making and clearly enjoyed the composer’s company himself. They had theatrical interests in common and must at least have discussed The Indian Queen while Purcell was writing music for it.
in 1695. (Howard with his brother-in-law John Dryden had scripted the original play thirty years previously: Purcell’s new music made it into an opera.)

The Gresham manuscript contains several songs not preserved in any other source, and distinctively different versions of many others also available in early published collections. It is an idiosyncratic anthology reflecting Annabella Howard’s musical personality, allowing her to display her skills in performance and providing practice material of the highest imaginable quality. A number of songs originally written for other voice types appear in Gresham transposed for soprano. A number have incomplete bass parts or no bass parts at all – not a problem if Purcell planned to accompany them himself. Songs seem to have been copied into Gresham in order of composition, very soon after composition: Purcell kept Annabella up to date and she kept track of his stage career, learning new pieces straight after their first public theatre outings.

Princess Anne did exactly the same. ‘Princes Ans Lutebook’ – a misleadingly titled manuscript which is now in the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague – has recently been identified as a guitar tablature anthology (not a lutebook at all) compiled for Princess Anne in the early 1690s, mixing Purcell theatre tunes with selections from John Playford’s English Dancing Master. All but one of the guitar solos in this programme comes from the Princess Anne guitar book. Francisco Corbetta was Princess Anne’s first guitar teacher (she had a virtuoso introduction to the instrument): they appeared together in the 1674–5 court masque Calisto, Corbetta in the band and Anne on stage. Giovanni Battista Draghi taught her harpsichord for a time – older Queen Anne rewarded him with a pension. Two movements from Purcell’s C major harpsichord suite were published in A Choice Collection of Lessons (1696) after the composer’s death: his widow Frances dedicated that collection to Princess Anne to acknowledge ‘Your Highness’s generous encouragement of my deceased husband’s performances in music’. Music from ‘Princess Anne’s lute book’ and from the first (pre-1693) half of the Gresham manuscript might well have been performed at the same soirées, by and for the same people. They open windows on a world of patronage in which Purcell and his most discerning sponsors interacted with extraordinary freedom, crossing class, gender and age barriers to meet through music almost as equals.

The Gresham manuscript opens with a run of pieces from The Fairy Queen. So does this album. On 14 July 1692 Princess Anne and a party of fellow opera-goers travelled by barge to see a performance of The Fairy Queen in Dorset Garden theatre. Annabelle Dyve would have been one of them: presumably she liked what she heard.

‘The cares of lovers’ (not in Gresham) is a recitative-like number sung by Cupid in The Masque of Cupid and Bacchus supplied by Purcell for a 1695 revival of Timon of Athens – Shakespeare’s play substantially re-worked by Thomas Shadwell. Whether love or wine rule the world is the question up for debate. Cupid argues
eloquently for love, but a compromise is reached at the end of the masque: ‘There are pleasures divine / In love and in wine’.

‘Fly swift, ye hours’ is not in Gresham and not a theatre song; but it demonstrates the cares of lovers at their most extreme. The singer longs to see his Belvidera again just as soon as possible – why he wants time to fly by. She has not the slightest interest in him.

‘From rosy bow’rs’, from the third part of Thomas D’Urfey’s Don Quixote, was ‘The last SONG the Author [composer] Sett, it being in his Sickness’. ‘From rosy bow’rs’ is not in Gresham, understandably: Purcell was too ill for further copying. It is a feigned but brilliantly effective mad song. Scheming Altsidora tries to lure old, foolish but implacably loyal Don Quixote away from his true love Dulcinea by pretending to love him more intensely: ‘I intend to tease him now with a whimsical variety, as if I were possessed with several degrees of passion – sometimes I’ll be fond, and sometimes, freakish; sometimes merry, and sometimes melancholy ...’. Altsidora sings while her confederates watch from behind the scenes. Thankfully her plan fails.

‘Let the dreadful Engines of Eternal Will’ from part one of Don Quixote is in Gresham. Like ‘From rosy bow’rs’ it is a mad song, performed on stage by bass-voiced Cardenio – mad because he believes his lover Luscinda has deserted him. Later in the play they are reconciled.

‘I see she flies me’ (in Gresham) was written for a 1693 revival of John Dryden’s last rhyming tragedy Aureng-Zebe, first performed in 1675. (Dryden continued to write tragedies but gave up on rhyme.) It is not clear where in the play the song belonged: there are no obvious cues. Unrequited love is the obvious theme, ‘her scorn [and] my despair’.

Two versions of ‘What a sad fate is mine’ survive, the latter (in Gresham) radically revising its predecessor. Yet again the sad fate dwelt upon is unrequited love. Two possible solutions are proposed: ‘Tis all I implore / To make me love less, or her to love more’.

‘Pious Celinda goes to prayers’ is a non-theatrical song (not in Gresham) setting elegantly witty words by Dryden’s protégé William Congreve. When asked ‘the favour’ Celinda declines on religious grounds. Her suitor hopes to lead her astray one day.

‘Tis Nature’s Voice’ is a famous recitativo-like number from Purcell’s 1692 ode for St Cecilia’s Day Hail, bright Cecilia, one of several ode extracts included in Gresham. Its fame derives chiefly from the heavy ornamentation (‘incredible graces’) supplied by Purcell himself, written out to encourage singers to take greater risks than perhaps they would have been inclined to take without permission.

‘Lucinda is bewitching fair’ (in Gresham) was written for a 1695 revival of Aphra Behn’s blood-soaked tragedy Abdelazar, or the Moor’s Revenge. It is not clear where or how the song fitted in: the words Purcell set are not present in any published edition of the play text. Lucinda has (it would appear) a string of hopeless lovers, all of whom she disdains.
The recital ends with three songs, two of them encores, all recognisable as greatest hits even when they were new. ‘Hark! the echoing air’ from *The Fairy Queen* (also in Gresham) pictures happy Cupids clapping their wings to celebrate love reciprocated and soon to be consummated – as soon as the ‘dull God of Marriage’ arrives to complete formalities. In agonising contrast ‘I attempt from love’s sickness to fly’ deals with love both inappropriate and unrequited, that of the ageing Indian [Mexican] Queen Zempoalla for the much younger warrior-hero Montezuma, rightful heir to the throne she has usurped. Acceptance of her situation would be better for Zempoalla’s peace of mind, but she lacks the inner strength to fight against her feelings. (‘I attempt’ was sung by a voice double in early stage performances of *The Indian Queen*, almost certainly, ventriloquising Zempoalla’s private thoughts.)

‘Fairest isle’, finally, from the fifth act masque in *King Arthur*. Love goddess Venus reports a change of address, leaving her birthplace in Cyprus (‘her Cyprian grove’) to live in Britain. Her son Cupid relocates too. Under their joint protection Britain becomes a lovers’ paradise. The words, by John Dryden, are not as innocent as they appear. Though not produced on stage until 1691, *King Arthur* had been designed to honour the achievements of King Charles II at what seemed to be the high point of his reign (1683–4). ‘Fairest isle’, catching the moment, was a hymn both to British nationhood and to Carolean sexual adventurism. Charles has been born under the ‘Star of Venus’ and believed passionately in both.

*Notes by Andrew Pinnock © 2016*

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**HENRY PURCELL** (1659–1695)

01 *Come all ye songsters*
from *The Fairy Queen* Z629 (1692)
Come all ye songsters of the sky,
Wake, and assemble in this wood;
But no ill-boding bird be nigh,
None but the harmless and the good.
(Elkanah Settle, 1648–1724,
after William Shakespeare, 1564–1616)

02 *Sing while we trip it*
from *The Fairy Queen*
Sing while we trip it upon the green;
But no ill vapours rise or fall,
Nothing offend our fairy Queen.
(Elkanah Settle, after William Shakespeare)
04 Ye gentle spirits of the air
from *The Fairy Queen*
Ye gentle spirits of the air, appear!
Prepare, and join your tender voices here.
Catch and repeat the trembling sounds anew,
Soft, as her sighs and sweet as pearly dew.
Run new divisions, and such measure keep
As when you lull the god of Love asleep.
(Elkanah Settle, after William Shakespeare)

10 The cares of lovers
from *Timon of Athens* Z632 (1695)
The cares of lovers, their alarms,
Their sighs, their tears, have pow’rful charms;
And if so sweet their torment is,
Ye Gods, how ravishing the bliss!
So soft, so gentle is their pain,
’Tis even a pleasure to complain.
(Thomas Shadwell, 1642–1692, after William Shakespeare)

11 Fly swift, ye hours Z369 (1691)
Fly swift, ye hours, fly swift, thou lazy sun;
Make haste and drive the tedious minutes on.
Bring back my Belvidera to my sight,
My Belvidera, than thyself more bright.
Swifter than Time my eager wishes move,
And scorn the beaten paths of vulgar love.
Soft peace is banish’d from my tortur’d breast,
Love robs my days of ease, my nights of rest.
Yet tho’ her cruel scorn provokes despair,
My passion still is strong as she is fair.
Still must I love, still bless the pleasing pain,
Still court my ruin and embrace my chain.
(Anonymous)

12 Not all my torments Z400 (1693)
Not all my torments can your pity move,
Your scorn increases with my love.
Yet to the grave I will my sorrows bear;
I love, tho’ I despair.
(Anonymous)

14 From rosy bow’rs
from *Don Quixote* Z578 (1694–5)
From rosy bow’rs where sleeps the god of Love,
Hither ye little waiting Cupids fly,
Teach me in soft melodious songs to move
With tender passion my heart’s darling joy,
Ah! let the soul of music tune my voice
To win dear Strephon who my soul enjoys.
Or if more influencing is to be brisk and airy,
With a step and a bound
And a frisk from the ground
I will trip like any fairy.
As once on Ida dancing
Were three celestial bodies
With an air and a face
And a shape and a grace,
Let me charm like Beauty’s goddess.
Ah, ’tis in vain, all in vain,
Death and despair must end the fatal pain;
Cold despair, disguised like snow and rain,
Falls on my breast:
Bleak winds in tempests blow,
My veins all shiver and my fingers glow:
My pulse beats a dead march for lost repose
And to a solid lump of ice my poor fond heart is froze.
Or say ye Pow’rs, my peace to crown
Shall I thaw myself or drown?
Amongst the foaming billows
Increasing all with tears I shed,
On beds of ooze and crystal pillows
Lay down my lovesick head?
No, no, I’ll straight run mad
That soon my heart will warm;
Where once the sense is fle’d,
Love has no pow’r to charm,
Wild thro’ the woods I’ll fly;
Robes, locks shall thus be tore:
A thousand deaths I’ll die
Ere thus in vain adore.
(Thomas D’Urfey, 1653–1723)
15 Let the dreadful Engines of Eternal Will,
from Don Quixote
The Thunder roar, and crooked Lightning kill;
My rage is hot as theirs, as fatal too,
And dares as horrid Execution do.
Or let the Frozen North its Rancour show,
Within my Breast far greater Tempests grow;
Despair’s more cold than all the Winds can blow.

Can nothing, nothing warm me?
Yes, Luscinda’s Eyes:
There Etna, there, Vesuvio lies,
To furnish Hell with Flames,
That mounting reach the Skies.

Ye Pow’rs, I did but use her Name,
And see how all the Meteors flame;
Blue Lightning flashes round the Court of Sol,
And now the Globe more fiercely burns
Than once at Phaeton’s Fall.

Ah! where are now those flow’ry Groves,
Where Zephyr’s fragrant Winds did play?
Where, guarded by a Troop of Loves,
The fair Luscinda sleeping lay:
There sung the Nightingale and Lark,
Around us all was sweet and gay;
We ne’er grew sad, till it grew dark,
Nor nothing fear’d but short’ning Day.

I glow, I glow, but ’tis with Hate;
Why must I burn for this Ingrate?
Cool, cool it then and rail,
Since nothing will prevail.

When a Woman Love pretends,
’Tis but till she gains her Ends,
And for better, and for worse,
’Tis for Marrow of the Purse,
Where she Jilts you o’er and o’er,
Proves a Slattern or a Whore.

This Hour will tease and vex,
And will cuckold you the next.
They were all contrived in spite:
To Torment us, not delight;
But to scold, and scratch and bite,
And not one of them proves right;
But all are Witches by this Light!
And so I fairly bid ’em,
And the World, Good Night.

(Thomas D’Urfey)

20 I see she flies me
Z573 (published 1692)
I see she fly’s me ev’rywhere;
Her eyes, her scorn discovers.
But what’s her scorn, or my despair,
Since ’tis my fate to love her.
Were she but kind, kind whom I adore,
I might live longer, but not love her more.

(John Dryden, 1631–1700)

21 What a sad fate is mine
Z428a (?1693–4)
What a sad fate is mine,
My love is my crime.
Or why should she be
More easy and free
To all than to me?
But if by disdain
She can lessen my pain,
’Tis all I implore,
To make me love less,
Or her to love more.

(Anonymous)

22 Pious Celinda goes to prayers
Z410 (1695)
Pious Celinda goes to prayers
If I but ask the favour,
And yet the tender fool’s in tears
When she believes I’ll leave her.
Would I were free from this restraint,
Or else had hopes to win her;
Would she could make of me a saint,
Or I of her a sinner!

(William Congreve, 1670–1729)
24 ‘Tis Nature’s Voice
from Hail, bright Cecilia Z328 (1692)
‘Tis Nature’s Voice; thro’ all the moving Wood
Of Creatures understood:
The Universal Tongue to none
Of all her num’rous Race unknown.
From her it learnt the mighty Art
To court the Ear or strike the Heart:
At once the Passions to express and move;
We hear, and straight we grieve or hate, rejoice or love;
In unseen Chains it does the Fancy bind;
At once it charms the Sense and captivates the Mind.
(Nicholas Brady, 1659–1726)

25 Lucinda is bewitching fair
from Abdelazar, or The Moor’s Revenge Z570 (1695)
Lucinda is bewitching fair.
All o’er engaging is her Air.
In ev’ry Song Lucinda’s Fam’d.
She is the Queen of Love proclaimed.
To all she does a Flame impart
Expiring Victims feel her Dart.
Strephon for her has Love expressed,
Philander sighs too with the rest;
Wracked with Despair each one complains,
Unmov’d, untouch’t She all disdains.
(Aphra Behn, c1640–1689)

26 Hark! The echoing air
from The Fairy Queen
Hark! hark, the ech’ing air a triumph sings,
And all around, pleased Cupids clap their wings.
(Elkanah Settle, after William Shakespeare)

28 I attempt from love’s sickness to fly
from The Indian Queen Z630 (1695)
I attempt from love’s sickness to fly in vain,
Since I am myself my own fever and pain.
No more now, fond heart with pride no more swell,
Thou canst not raise forces enough to rebel.
For love has more pow’r and less mercy than fate,
To make us seek ruin and love those that hate.
I attempt from love’s sickness etc.
(John Dryden)

30 Fairest isle
from King Arthur Z628/38 (?1691)
Fairest isle, all isles excelling,
Seat of pleasure and of love
Venus here will choose her dwelling,
And forsake her Cyprian grove.
Cupid from his fav’rite nation
Care and envy will remove;
Jealousy, that poisons passion,
And despair, that dies for love.
Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,
Sighs that blow the fire of love
Soft repulses, kind disdaining,
Shall be all the pains you prove.
Ev’ry swain shall pay his duty,
Grateful ev’ry nymph shall prove;
And as these excel in beauty,
Those shall be renown’d for love.
(John Dryden)
CAROLYN SAMPSON

Carolyn Sampson has enjoyed notable successes worldwide in repertoire ranging from early Baroque to the present day. On the opera stage she has appeared with English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Scottish Opera, Opéra de Paris, Opéra de Lille, Opéra de Montpellier, and Opéra National du Rhin. Carolyn Sampson performs regularly at the BBC Proms and with orchestras including Bach Collegium Japan, Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the Royal Concertgebouw, Freiburg Baroque, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, and Vienna Symphony orchestras, and with numerous orchestras throughout the USA.

A consummate recitalist, Carolyn Sampson appears regularly at Wigmore Hall, Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam, and at the Saintes
and Aldeburgh festivals. In October 2013 she made her Carnegie Hall recital debut. Carolyn Sampson has an extensive discography appearing on the Harmonia Mundi, BIS, Hyperion, Virgin Classics, DG Archiv, Linn Records, BIS, and Vivat labels.

ELIZABETH KENNY

Elizabeth Kenny is one of Europe’s leading lute players. Her chamber music interests have led to recordings of Lawes, Purcell and Dowland. With her group Theatre of the Ayre she created a concert version of John Blow’s Venus and Adonis which was released on the Wigmore Hall Live label. The Masque of Moments and Lutes & Ukes toured in 2015 thanks to a major award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She devised and directed Le malade imaginaire, and A Restoration Tempest, for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse.

Elizabeth Kenny is Professor of Lute at the Royal Academy of Music, and Professor of Musical Performance at Southampton University. She was one of four artistic advisors for the York Early Music Festival in 2011–14, and returns to York in 2016 with Theatre of the Ayre, to judge and perform winning entries for the National Centre for Early Music’s International Young Composers’ Competition.
Laurence Cummings is one of Britain’s most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as conductor and harpsichord player. He has been Artistic Director of the London Handel Festival since 1999 and of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen since 2012, as well as Music Director for Orquestra Barocca Casa da Musica Porto since its formation. He has conducted productions for English National Opera, Glyndebourne, Opernhaus Zurich, Gothenburg Opera, Opera de Lyon, Opera North and Garsington. He has worked with Handel and Haydn Boston, St Paul Chamber Orchestra Minnesota, The English Concert, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Northern Sinfonia, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, Royal Scottish National and Hallé orchestras.

His discography includes the first recording of Handel’s newly discovered Gloria with Emma Kirkby, and Handel arias with Angelika Kirchschlager and the Basel Chamber Orchestra for Sony BMG.
JONATHAN MANSON

Jonathan Manson enjoys a varied career as a performer on both cello and viola da gamba. He is a founding member of the viol consort Phantasm, which has toured worldwide and won numerous prizes for its recordings, including two Gramophone Awards. For ten years he was the principal cellist of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, with whom he performed and recorded more than 150 Bach cantatas and, together with Yo-Yo Ma, Vivaldi’s Concerto for two cellos.

Nowadays he specialises mainly in chamber music, performing repertoire from the Renaissance to the Romantic. Jonathan is the cellist of the London Haydn Quartet. A long-standing partnership with the harpsichordist Trevor Pinnock has led to critically acclaimed recordings of the Bach gamba sonatas and, together with Rachel Podger, Rameau’s Pièces de clavecin en concert. Jonathan is a Professor at the Royal Academy of Music.