Pegasus Early Music and NYS Baroque present

**Dowland’s Grand Tour**
Lute Music from England, France, Germany and Italy

**Paul O’Dette** - lute

Branle
Courante
Volte
Branle - Branle gay
Branle
Canaries

(from Jean-Baptiste Besard, *Thesaurus Harmonicus*, Cologne 1603)

Omnino Galliard
A Pavan to Delight
A Galliard to Delight
Carman's Whistle

Pavin
Fantasia

Fantasia nona (1599)
Ballo detto il Conte Orlando
Saltarello del predetto ballo
Fantasia ottava

La mia Barbara
A Galliard (30)
A Fancy (6)

**Paul O'Dette** has been described as “the clearest case of genius ever to touch his instrument.” (Toronto Globe and Mail) One of the most influential figures in his field, O'Dette has helped define the technical and stylistic standards to which twenty-first-century performers of early music aspire. In doing so, he helped infuse the performance practice movement with a perfect combination of historical awareness, idiomatic accuracy, and ambitious self-expression. His performances at the major international festivals in Boston, Vienna, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Munich, Prague, Milan, Florence, Geneva, Madrid, Barcelona, Tokyo, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Melbourne, Adelaide, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Berkeley, Bath, Montpellier, Utrecht, Bruges, Antwerp, Bremen, Dresden, Innsbruck, Tenerife, Copenhagen, Oslo, Cordoba, etc. have often been singled out as the highlight of those
Throughout his career, Dowland showed a keen interest in the music of a wide range of European composers. Beginning with his apprenticeship to Sir Henry Cobham in Paris from 1580 to 1584, where he heard and studied the lute and vocal music of leading French composers, such as Adrian Le Roy, Jacques Polonais, Julien Perichon, Robert Ballard and Charles Tessier, Dowland borrowed ideas from each of them to add richness and variety to his own music. Upon his return to England, he was clearly inspired by the inventive diminutions and variation techniques of Queen Elizabeth’s favorite “lewter” John Johnson. By the time Johnson died in 1594, Dowland had established himself as the leading lutenist of the time and felt he was the obvious choice to replace Johnson at court. Confident about a future position at court, Dowland embarked on a grand tour of Europe in 1595 to meet and work with as many prominent musicians as possible, including the great Luca Marenzio, whose madrigals he often emulated. During his travels, Dowland met Gregory Huwet, a Flemish lutenist at the court of the Duke of Brunswick, who was considered the finest player in Germany at the time, and together they travelled to Kassel to court of Moritz, Landgrave of Hesse. The two lutenists performed several times for the music-loving Moritz, who attempted to persuade Dowland to remain at his court, but Dowland had greater ambitions and continued on towards Italy. In Italy, Dowland visited Venice, Padua, Ferrara and Genoa, where he must have met Simone Molinaro, whose extraordinary book of lute music was soon to go to press. Dowland’s music contains numerous echoes of Molinaro’s music, while a Genovese copy of Besard’s Thesaurus Harmonicus contains a manuscript appendix of Dowland’s setting of Mounsieur’s Almaine, perhaps copied out during his visit. Upon arriving in Florence, Dowland almost certainly met and heard Giulio Caccini, whose music inspired numerous lute songs of Dowland, who in turn, published several of the Florentine’s works in London in 1610. Unfortunately, Dowland was spotted conversing with a group of Catholic exiles on the streets of Florence, and word of his encounter quickly reached the Elizabethan court. Dowland, sensing his chance to obtain a position at court in jeopardy for associating with enemies of the Queen, quickly left Italy without visiting Marenzio in Rome. Back in Germany, he wrote a lengthy autobiographical letter claiming he had had no connection with the English Catholics in Florence, and that “I beseech God night and day to bless and defend the Queen’s Majesty”. Unfortunately however, the damage was done and he had to abandon hope of an Elizabethan appointment.

Fortunately for us however, Dowland’s “Grand Tour” supplied him with a cornucopia of musical ideas which he incorporated into his own music for the rest of his career. Works such as La mia Barbara, or Fancy #6 would not have been possible, had it not been for the inspirations he encountered on his travels. This evening’s program provides a selection of the lute music he might have heard on his tour which enriched his already fertile imagination.

--Paul O’Dette