

WIGMORE HALL 125

Sunday 29 March 2026
2.30pm

Dowland 400th Anniversary Weekend

Iestyn Davies countertenor • Thomas Dunford lute
Daisy Bevan soprano • Thomas Hobbs tenor • Neal Davies bass-baritone
Laurence Dreyfus treble viol • Markku Luolajan-Mikkola bass viol

John Dowland (1563-1626)

From *A Pilgrimes Solace* (pub. 1612)

*Disdain me still, that I may ever love • Sweet, stay awhile,
why will you rise? • To ask for all thy love • Love, those
beams, that breed • Shall I strive with words to move*

A Dream (1610)

From *A Pilgrimes Solace*

Go Nightly Cares | From Silent Night | Lasso Vita Mia

From *A Pilgrimes Solace*

*Were every thought an eye • Stay, Time, awhile thy flying •
Tell me, true Love*

Interval

Thou mighty God | When David's life | When the poor cripple
from *A Pilgrimes Solace*

Melancholy Galliard

From *A Pilgrimes Solace*

*Where sin sore wounding • My heart and tongue were
twins • In this trembling shadow cast • If that a sinner's
sighs be angel's food*

A Fancy

Up merry mates | Welcome black night | Cease these false
sports from *A Pilgrimes Solace*



UNDER 35S

Supported by the AKO Foundation
Media partner Classic FM



Join & Support
Donations



125 years
Mark the moment
Support the music



To find out more visit
wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management. In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions. Disabled Access and Facilities – full details from 020 7935 2141. Wigmore Hall is equipped with a loop to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • [Wigmore-hall.org.uk](https://wigmore-hall.org.uk) • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan

In the manner of such things, the 1603 songbook Dowland entitled *The Third and Last Booke of Songes* was not his last. Seven years later his son Robert – a music publisher as well as a lutenist and sometime composer himself – issued a collection of lute pieces by various composers, his father among them, stating in the preface that Dowland Sr was ‘now graye, and like the Swan, but singing towards his end’. That his father was indeed still musically active was confirmed by the inclusion that same year of three songs (the incomparable ‘In darkness let me dwell’ among them) in Robert’s anthology *A Musically Banquet*, and then in 1612 when John himself published a fourth songbook under the title *A Pilgrimes Solace*.

Since his previous publications – the *Third and Last Booke* and the consort collection *Lachrimae* – Dowland had concluded his service in 1606 as a lutenist at the court of Christian IV of Denmark. He had not been forgotten in England: reprints of *The Firste Booke of Songes* had continued; his name cropped up in literary sources as a byword for excellence as a song-writer and lutenist; and his lute music entered numerous published and manuscript collections. Even so, in 1610 yet another attempt to secure a much longed-for position at the English court failed, and by the time he came to write the preface to *A Pilgrimes Solace* he was in grumpy mood.

Starting with a reference to his ‘Kingly entertainment in a forraine climate, which could not attaine to any (though never so meane) place at home’, he proceeded to fulminate against ‘simple Cantors, or vocall singers’ who ‘seeme excellent in their blind Division-making [or ornamentation]’ yet know nothing of theory, and ‘young-men, professors of the Lute, who vaunt themselves, to the disparagement of such as have beene before their time, (wherein I my selfe am a party) that there never was the like of them’.

Times were indeed changing. The song with contrapuntal lute accompaniment, derived from the consort song with a leading vocal line, was giving way to a new manner from Italy, freer and more directly speech-related, with chordal accompaniment. This style, often richly ornamented, found a place in the lavish masque entertainments that reached their decadent height at the court of James I, and a new set of composers such as Alfonso Ferrabosco the younger and Nicholas Lanier had arisen to supply it. As he was all too aware, Dowland was falling behind fashion.

Not that *A Pilgrimes Solace* is without signs of Italian influence. Dowland had visited Italy in the 1590s in the hope of studying with the great madrigalist Luca Marenzio, and ‘Lasso mia vita’ is in obvious imitation of the madrigal style, even if the Italian poem seems designed less to make emotional sense than to allow the composer to play the game of allocating certain pitches (‘la’, ‘mi’ and ‘sol’ in the customary solmisation) to the relevant vowel sounds. The expressive dissonances of ‘In this trembling shadow’ and ‘If that a

sinner’s sighs’, and chromatic lines of ‘From silent night’ also smack of madrigalian procedures. And Dowland does approach the newer declamatory style in songs such as ‘To ask for all thy love’ and the songs ‘Welcome black night’ and ‘Cease these false sports’, probably created for the wedding of Dowland’s patron at this time, Lord Howard de Walden.

Others, however, are English lute-songs of a classic mastery and beauty one would expect from the mature Dowland, among them the wonderfully static ‘Disdain me still’, supple ‘Sweet, stay awhile’, dignified ‘Stay, Time’ and humble ‘Where sin sore wounding’. This last is one of several songs in this set to treat religious subjects, a new direction in Dowland’s published songs, and one which brings an affecting poignancy of its own. The trilogy starting with ‘Thou mighty God’, a wrenching meditation on suffering and patience, is especially moving.

Songs such as these do not seem the work of a young man, but others in the set were probably gathered from earlier in the composer’s career: ‘Shall I strive with words to move’ and ‘Were every thought an eye’ are both based on dance tunes in the manner recalling *The Firste Booke of Songes*, while the charming ‘My heart and tongue were twins’ very likely has origins in a song performed before Queen Elizabeth as part of an entertainment at Sudeley as early as 1592. ‘Up merry mates’ has very much the look of a masque song.

A Pilgrimes Solace, like all of Dowland’s songbooks, was printed in such a way that the songs could be performed in a variety of scorings, in this case solo lute-songs or part-songs for combinations of voices and instruments. This afternoon’s performances will reflect these options.

Dowland’s fame during his lifetime rested as much on his lute-playing as his compositions. Though he published very few lute solos himself, their presence in numerous printed and manuscript collections of the time places them among the most significant of all bodies of work for lute. The items in this afternoon’s programme include two moody dance-based pieces and the contrapuntal and virtuosic *A Fancy* (or ‘fantasia’).

In October 1612, Dowland finally achieved his long-held desire of a position at court when an extra place was created for him among the King’s lutenists. He promptly fell silent as a composer, and we know little of his activities in his last decade. Having been listed among the musicians at James I’s funeral in 1625, he died early the following year and was buried on 20 February. ‘Every land strives to exalt the renown of its own artists’, one continental observer had written in 1615. ‘England puts Dowland first, honours and loves him’.

© Lindsay Kemp 2026

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.

John Dowland (1563-1626)

From *A Pilgrimes Solace* (pub. 1612)

Disdain me still, that I may ever love

William, Earl of Pembroke

Disdain me still, that I may ever love,
For who his Love enjoys, can love no more.
The war once past with ease men cowards prove:
And ships returned, do rot upon the shore.
And though thou frown, Ile say thou art most faire:
And still Ile love, though still I must despair.

Sweet, stay awhile, why will you rise?

John Donne

Sweet stay awhile, why will you rise?
The light you see comes from your eyes:
The day breaks not; it is my heart
To think that you and I must part.
O stay, or else my joys must die,
And perish in their infancy.

To ask for all thy love

John Donne

To ask for all thy love,
And thy whole heart 'twere madness:
I do not sue, nor can admit (fairest) from you to have all,
Yet who giveth all hath nothing to impart, but sadness.

Love, those beams, that breed

Anon.

Love those beams that breed,
All day long
Breed and feed this burning:
Love I quench with floods,
Floods of tears,
Nightly tears and mourning.
But alas, tears cool this fire in vain,
The more I quench, the more there doth remain.

Shall I strive with words to move

Anon.

Shall I strive with words to move,
When deeds receive not due regard?
Shall I speak, and neither please,
Nor be freely heard?

Grief alas though all in vain,
Her restless anguish must reveal:
She alone my wound shall know,
Though she will not heal.

All woes have end, though awhile delayed,
Our patience proving.
O that Time's strange effects
Could but make her loving.
Storms calm at last, and why may not she
Leave off her frowning?
O sweet love, help her hands
My affection crowning.

I wooed her, I loved her, and none but her admire.
O come dear joy, and answer my desire.

A Dream (1610)

From *A Pilgrimes Solace*

**Go Nightly Cares | From Silent Night |
Lasso Vita Mia**

Anon.

1.
Go nightly cares, the enemy to rest,
Forbear a while to vex my grieved spirit,
So long your weight hath lain upon my breast,
That lo I live of life bereaved quite,
O give me time to draw my weary breath,
Or let me dye, as I desire the death.
Welcome sweet death, oh life, no life, a hell,
Then thus, and thus I bid the world farewell.
2.
From silent night, true register of moans,
From saddest Soul consumed with deepest sins,
From heart quite rent with sighs and heavy groans,
My wailing Muse her woeful work begins,
And to the world brings tunes of sad despair,
Sounding nought else but sorrow, grief and care.

3.

Lasso vita mia, mi fa morire, Crudel'amor mio cor consume, Da mille ferite, che mi fa morir. Ahi me, Deh, che non mi fa morire, Crudel'amor, mi fa soffrir mille martire.	My miserable life. It makes me die, cruel love, which consumes my heart, with a thousand wounds that make me die. Alas, that does not kill me, cruel love makes me suffer a thousand torments.
--	---

*Please do not turn the page until the song and its
accompaniment have ended.*

From A Pilgrimes Solace

Were every thought an eye

Anon.

Were every thought an eye,
And all those eyes could see,
Her subtle wiles their sights would beguile,
And mock their jealousy.

Her fires do inward burn,
They make no outward show.
And her delights amid the dark shades,
Which none discover, grow.

Desire lives in her heart,
Diana in her eyes.
'Twere vain to wish women true, 'tis well,
If they prove wise.

The flowers growth is unseen,
Yet every day it grows.
So where her fancy is set it thrives,
But how none knows.

Such a Love deserves more grace,
Then a truer heart that hath no conceit,
To make use both of time and place,
When a wit hath need of all his sleight.

Stay, Time, awhile thy flying

Stay, Time, awhile thy flying,
Stay and pity me dying.
For Fates and friends have left me,
And of comfort bereft me.
Come, come close mine eyes, better to die blessed,
Then to live thus distressed.

To whom shall I complain me,
When thus friends doe disdain me?
'Tis time that must befriend me,
Drown'd in sorrow to end me.
Come, come close mine eyes, better to dye blessed,
Then to live thus distressed.

Tears but augment this farewell,
I feed by night, (oh cruel)
Light griefs can speak their pleasure,
Mine are dumb passing measure.
Quick, quick, close mine eyes, better to dye blessed,
Then here to live distressed.

Tell me, true Love

Anon.

Tell me, true Love where shall I seek thy being,
In thoughts or words, in vows or promise making,
In reasons, looks, or passions never seeing,
In men on earth, or women's minds partaking.
Thou canst not dye, and therefore living tell me
Where is thy seat, why doth this age expel thee?

Interval

From A Pilgrimes Solace

Thou mighty God | When David's life |
When the poor cripple

Anon.

1.
Thou mighty God, that rightest every wrong,
Listen to patience in a dying song.
When Job had lost his Children, Lands, and goods,
Patience assuaged his excessive pain,
And when his sorrows came as fast as floods,
hope kept his heart, till comfort came again.

2.
When David's life by Saul was often sought,
And worlds of woes did compass him about,
On dire revenge he never had a thought,
But in his griefs, Hope still did help him out.

3.
When the poor Cripple by the Poole did lye,
Full many years in misery and pain,
No sooner he on Christ had set his eye,
But he was well, and comfort came again.
No David, Job, nor Cripple in more grief,
Christ give me patience, and my Hopes relief.

Melancholy Galliard

From A Pilgrimes Solace

Where sin sore wounding

Anon.

Where Sin sore wounding, daily doth oppress me,
There Grace abounding freely doth redress me:
So that resounding still I shall confess thee,
Father of mercy.

My heart and tongue were twins

Anon.

My heart and tongue were twins at once conceived,
Th'eldest was my heart, born dumb by Destiny,
The last my tongue, of all sweet thoughts bereaved:
Yet strung and tun'd to play heart's harmony.

Then this be sure, since it is true perfection,
That neither men nor gods can force affection.

In this trembling shadow cast

Anon.

In this trembling shadow, cast
From those boughs which thy winds shake,
Far from humane troubles plac'd,
Songs to the Lord would I make,
Darkness from my mind then take,
For thy rites none may begin,
Till they feel thy light within.

If that a sinner's sighs be angel's food

Anon.

If that a sinner's sighs be Angel's food,
Or that repentant tears be Angel's wine,
Accept, O Lord, in this most pensive mood,
These hearty sighs and doleful complaints of mine,
That went with Peter forth most sinfully:
But not as Peter did, weep, weep bitterly.

A Fancy

From A Pilgrimes Solace

Up merry mates | Welcome black night | Cease these false sports

Anon.

1.

First Voice

Up merry mates, to Neptune's praise
Your voices high advance:
The watery Nymphs shall dance
And Eolus shall whistle to your lays
Steerman, how stands the wind?

Second Voice

Full North, North-east

First Voice

What course?

Second Voice

Full South, South-west

First Voice

No worse

And blow so fair

Then sink despair

Come solace to the mind

Ere night we shall the haven find.

Chorus

O happy days

Who may contain

But swell with proud disdain

When seas are smooth, sails full and all things please?

Conclusion

The golden mean that constant spirit bears

In such extremes that nor presumes nor fears.

2.

Welcome black Night Hymen's fair day,

Help Hymen Love's due debt to pay.

Love's due debt is chaste delight,

Which if the turtles want tonight,

Hymen forfeits his deity,

And Night in love her dignity,

Help, help black Night, Hymen's fair Day,

Help Hymen, Love's due debt to pay.

Hymen, O Hymen, mine

Of treasures more divine,

What deity is like to thee,

That freest from mortality?

3.

Cease these false sports, hast away,

Love's made a truant by your stay,

Good night, yet virgin Bride;

but look ere day be spied,

You change that fruitless name,

least you your sex defame,

Fear not Hymens peaceful war,

You'll conquer though you subdued are,

Good night, and ere the day be old,

Rise to the sun a Marigold.

Chorus

Hymen, O Hymen, bless this night,

that Loves dark works may come to light.