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CLASSICS

2 CD

# JOHN JENKINS

COMPLETE  
FOUR-PART  
CONSORT  
MUSIC

FRETWORK



# JOHN JENKINS (1592-1678)

## COMPLETE FOUR-PART CONSORT MUSIC

### CD1

1	<b>Fantasia No. 1</b>	[3.24]
2	<b>Fantasia No. 2</b>	[3.57]
3	<b>Fantasia No. 3</b>	[4.03]
4	<b>Fantasia No. 4</b>	[3.39]
5	<b>Pavan in D Minor</b>	[6.09]
6	<b>Fantasia No. 5</b>	[3.31]
7	<b>Fantasia No. 6</b>	[2.52]
8	<b>Fantasia No. 7</b>	[5.00]
9	<b>Fantasia No. 8</b>	[4.06]
10	<b>Fantasia No. 9</b>	[5.52]

Total timings: [42.35]

### CD2

1	<b>Fantasia No. 10</b>	[3.58]
2	<b>Fantasia No. 11</b>	[3.30]
3	<b>Fantasia No. 12</b>	[4.18]
4	<b>Fantasia No. 13</b>	[3.16]
5	<b>Fantasia No. 14</b>	[3.44]
6	<b>Pavan in E Minor</b>	[6.39]
7	<b>Fantasia No. 15</b>	[4.35]
8	<b>Fantasia No. 16</b>	[4.56]
9	<b>Fantasia No. 17</b>	[5.29]

Total timings: [40.27]

FRETWORK

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## JOHN JENKINS

### FOUR PART CONSORT MUSIC

Amateur viol players throughout the world love playing the consort music of John Jenkins, probably more than any other English composer of the great golden era of music for multiple viols, that ranges from William Cornyshe in 1520 through to Henry Purcell in 1680. And the reason why is not hard to fathom: a rare melodic gift is married to an exceptionally deep understanding of harmony and modulation; effortless counterpoint gives each part an equal voice in the musical conversation; and a virtuoso viol player's knowledge of what is possible, works well and is effective on each of the consort's viol sizes.

He was an unusual composer in many ways. Though he did attain a court position in later life for the most part he spent his time in the country, employed by various noble families at their large houses – teaching them, entertaining them and writing copious quantities of music for these amateur viol players. There was the Derham family of West Derham, Norfolk, and the L'Estrange family at Hunstanton. These two Royalist families were friends and Jenkins probably moved freely between them

as the occasion required; he was apparently never officially attached to any household, for his pupil Roger North wrote: "I never heard that he artiled with any gentleman where he resided, but accepted what they gave him."

We can guess that they must have been quite advanced players in that much of the music was highly virtuosic in the division style, where slow-moving lines are decorated by 'dividing' the longer notes into ever shorter ones. However, the consort style was mostly concerned with more melodic, mellifluous lines and Jenkins wrote a large body of such music for four, five and six viols.

The music for four viols comprises seventeen fantasies and two pavans, and calls for one treble viol, two tenors and one bass viol. Jenkins was a very long-lived man, and it's difficult to date his music, though the consensus amongst scholars suggests that this consort music was composed in the earlier part of his life. He was born in the reign of Elizabeth I in 1592 in Maidstone, Kent; and he died in the reign of Charles II in Kimberley, Norfolk in 1678, making him an unusual 86 years when he died.

He was ten years senior to William Lawes, with whose music his is often compared; but a greater

contrast in life, character and style could not be imagined. Lawes's life was short, ended violently and was closely connected to the Court and London; whereas Jenkins's long life ended peacefully, and he stayed away from the Court and the capital. And perhaps we can sense this in their very different styles of music: while Lawes 'broke somewhat the rules of music' in his flair and passion, Jenkins mellifluous style was concerned with a smooth perfection, for the most part eschewing drama. The two composers probably knew each other, as both were employed as composers for James Shirley's prestigious masque mounted by the Inns of Court to demonstrate loyalty to the crown, *The Triumph of Peace* (performed 1634).

His father was a carpenter, and could well have made the seven viols and violins that were listed at this death. He lived through the great period of viol making in England, and we find examples of viols made by John Rose, Henry Jaye, Henry Smith and Richard Meares – among many others – still surviving. Instruments by these makers, made for the nobility who played them in their country houses, were prized by players throughout Europe for a century and more to come.

Thomas Mace in 1676 speaks of a 'chest' of viols, comprising six viols, two of each size; but the term also refers to an actual item of furniture which contained these viols, their bows, spare strings, rosin, music – in short, all the paraphernalia associated with playing music.

Jenkins lived with the North family in Kirtling, Cambridgeshire from 1660 until 1668. This was a prominent political family that had risen during James I's reign, but which had always had a strong musical tradition. There were six sons, all of them musical, in particular Francis, who was to become Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and Roger, who left us extensive writings on music, and an intimate and sympathetic portrait of Jenkins as friend and mentor:

*... In this time Mr John Jenkins began to be famous, and his compositions much sought after. He was once carried to play on the viol before Kings Charles I, which he did in his voluntary way, with wonderful agility, and odd humours, as (for instance) touching the great strings with his thumb, while the rest were employed in another way. And when he had done the King said he did wonders on an inconsiderable instrument. But this gentleman made himself more famous for his compositions*

*of all sorts. There were more consorts of his composing went about among the performers in his time than all the rest of his contemporaries, till he got almost the monopoly of consort music. He lived to a great age, and had composed so much that he knew not half of what he had done. A Spanish Don sent over to the late Sir P. Lely the leaves of one part of a 3 part consort of his, with a desire to procure the rest, costa che costa<sup>1</sup> ; for his music had got abroad and was more esteemed there than at home. I showed him the papers, but he could tell nothing of them, when or where they were made, or might be found, only he knew they were his own.*

*... Mr Jenkins was a very gentle and well bred gentleman and was always not only welcome, but greatly valued by the families wherever he had taught and convers't. He was constantly complaisant in everything desired of him, and wherever he went Mirth and Solace (as the song hath it) attended him. After his whole profession was driven from the Court, he past his time mostly in the country at Gentlemen's houses, and then he composed numerous consorts and in his effete age was no less acceptable, where he chose to reside, than when he was in his vigour, and at last laid his old bones at Kimberly in Norfolk, leaving an old friend a competent legacy to be remembered by.*

The patriarch of the North family, Roger's grandfather, Lord North also had something to say about the composer, whom he had invited into his house, in a letter to Henry Loosemore:

*Art and Air come seldom from under a Gown; yet are you not ignorant, how I have appeared taken with what hath proceeded from Mr. Cranford, whom I knew, a sober, plain-looking man: his pieces mixed with Majesty, Gravity, Honey-dew Spirit and Variety. I find less strange from Mr. Jenkins, whose infinite flowing vein, in all kinds I have much admired, as been delighted in: but his Fashion promises no less; Spirit, Garb and Air, shine in his first appearance.*

Jenkins is buried in the nave of St. Peter's Church, Kimberley, Norfolk, with this inscription:

*Under this stone Rare Jenkins lie  
The Master of the Musick Art  
Whome from ye Earth the God on High  
Call'd upto Him to bear his part  
Ag'd eighty six October twenty sev'n  
In Anno sev'nty eight he went to Heav'n*

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<sup>1</sup> At any cost

## FRETWORK

**Asako Morikawa** *treble viol*

**Reiko Ichise** *tenor viol*

**Sam Stadlen** *tenor viol*

(Fantasies Nos. 1-9 & Pavan in D Minor)

**Emily Ashton** *tenor viol*

(Fantasies Nos. 10-17 & Pavan in E Minor)

**Richard Boothby** *bass viol*

In 2016, Fretwork celebrated their 30th anniversary. In these last three 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.



© Nick White

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 a 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. In 2008, they recorded two tracks on Ryuichi Sakamoto's album *Out of Noise*.

They now tour the United States most years, and made their Carnegie Hall debut in February of 2010. In that year, they also curated a week-long series of concerts at the dynamic London concert hall, 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 *My Days* for The Hilliard Ensemble and Fretwork by one of today's most exciting young composers – Nico Muhly – 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.

In 2014 they continued to concentrate on the music of John Dowland with a major tour of the UK with one of today's greatest tenors, Ian Bostridge. They also spent a week in the Britten Studio in Aldeburgh re-working Orlando Gough's *The World Encompassed*, to incorporate a spoken narrative drawn from contemporary accounts

Another new work by Nico Muhly was premiered in 2015 at Kings Place, and they collaborated with celebrated actor Simon Callow in the revised version of *The World Encompassed* at the Dartington International Summer School – this version was subsequently recorded and released to critical acclaim on Signum in 2016.

They celebrated their 30th anniversary with a star-studded concert at Kings Place in June 2016, and recorded four new albums including *The World Encompassed*. They made their longest tour of America, taking in the USA, Canada & Colombia. They are looking forward to further tours of North America and preparing to celebrate Michael Nyman's 75th birthday in 2019.

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**This recording was made possible by the generous assistance of Linda Hill, who has supported many viol-related activities throughout the United Kingdom. We are fortunate indeed to have such patrons.**

Recorded from in St. Mary Magdalen Church, Sherborne, Gloucestershire, UK from 18th to 20th January 2016

Produced, Engineered & Edited by Nicholas Parker

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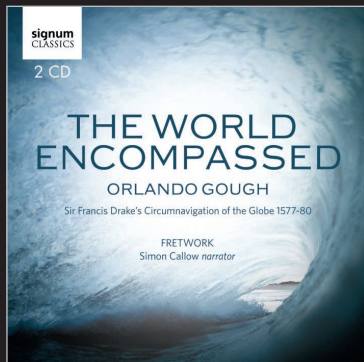
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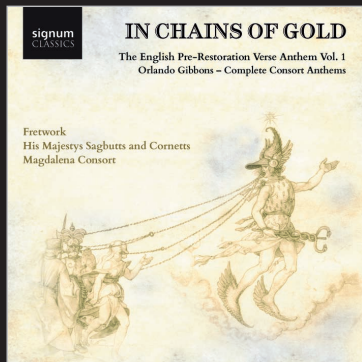


## Orlando Gough: The World Encompassed

Fretwork  
Simon Callow

SIGCD453

*"It's the musical equivalent of being asked to make a raft out of plastic bottles and paperclips, a challenge Gough meets with all his customary wit and invention. It's also tremendous fun. This mixture of old and new, familiar and alien, really shouldn't work; but, stitched together by Simon Callow's characterful narration, it forms an exotic tapestry – a vivid portrait of the age of exploration." Gramophone*



## In Chains of Gold, Vol. 1

Orlando Gibbons, The Complete Consort Anthems

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SIGCD511

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