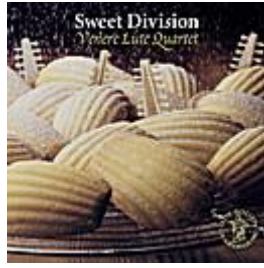


## Mp3 Venere Lute Quartet - Sweet Divisions



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Lutes were the most popular instrument from 1550-1625 and this group specializes in historically-informed arrangements of music for soprano, alto, tenor and bass lutes. 29 MP3 Songs in this album (49:46) ! Related styles: CLASSICAL: Traditional, CLASSICAL: New Age People who are interested in Hopkinson Smith should consider this download. Details: Sweet Division includes some of the only extant material for the combination of soprano, alto, tenor and bass lutes in d, a, g, and D (Nicolaes Vallet settings from *Secretum Musarum II*, 1618-19) as well as historically informed arrangements of Renaissance music made by the Venere Lute Quartet. Multiple lutes were played together in masques and as the continuo instruments, improvising accompaniments for singers and instruments in all sorts of Baroque music, but relatively little music remains for the lute quartet. During the 16th and 17th centuries scores were rare and most lutenists played from partbooks of tablature or a vocal or instrumental part. So much music has been lost that the Venere Quartet has started from the same kinds of sources that were used to make lute quartets in the Renaissance; the vocal and instrumental music of the day. Imagine that a new manuscript source has been unearthed in the back of a historic library. Chosen for the first CD, the Venere Lute Quartet are performers with considerable credentials including being teachers at LSA Summer Schools. They live in four different parts of the U.S., but come together to cultivate and expand the repertoire for multiple lutes. Gail Gillispie lives in the Chicago area and is a graduate of Oberlin College and the London Early Music Centre and has performed with Andrew Lawrence-King and Jacob Herringman. Douglas Freundlich teaches lute at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, MA and also cross-trains as a bebop bassist, catalogs music manuscripts at Harvard's Isham Library, and teaches a popular course on music cognition at Tufts. Christopher Morrongiello lives in the New York City area and is a graduate of Mannes College of Music, the Royal College of Music and the

University of Oxford. In 1993 he was a prize winner in the BBC Radio 2 Young Musician of the Year Competition. Phillip Rukavina has studied lute with Hopkinson Smith in Basel, Switzerland and teaches in St. Paul, MN. The group take their name from Vendelio Venere, a master lute builder who is comparable to Stradivarius, as the finest builder of lutes of his time. Many contemporary luthiers are interested in recreating Venere's masterpieces. Gail Gillespie comments on the group's instruments: "My treble and alto lutes were made by Grant Tomlinson; I met him at the 1985 LSA Seminar and have been ordering instruments from him ever since. Jacob Heringman borrows the alto lute every chance he gets and so far has been very good about returning it. Chris's tenor lute is also by Grant. The bass lute (Big Bertha) is by Larry K. Brown, who also made Pat O'Brien's famous "Bubba" bass, which I think was the first of its kind [in the 20th century]. It arrived two days before my wedding in 1988, and every time another family member arrived, I had to put down my sewing and show off the new toy. The string length is 88cm, enough to throw a scare into most theorbo players. The treble, alto, and tenor are all copies of Vendelio Venere instruments (hence the name of the group); the bass is after Stegher, who also worked in Padua at about the same time. The group performs entirely with gut strings, which is rare among ensembles." (Lute Society of America, Quarterly Volume 38 No. 3) "Although the Quartet's repertoire would be at home on any classical music show, it is refreshingly without pretense and, so far as scholars can tell, closer to the original performances than much of what comes from the academic and concert hall traditions. But make no mistake: each player is an accomplished musician and arranger. In fact, they are among the very few artists who combine soprano, alto, tenor and bass lutes in the same piece. To that end, they are far more interesting in the blending of their instruments rather than showy virtuoso solo performances. The result is a small gem of an album that's perfect for both serious listening and gentle background ambiance." Rob Weir, SING OUT! November, 2003 "The heavenly plectra are plucked by Gail Gillespie, Douglas Freundlich, Christopher Morrongiello and Phillip Rukavina. These brief selections for lute quartet are arranged by three of the group's members. This project serves as an appetizer, not dessert. This collection is a tempting, savory taste of things to come, fingers crossed. Highly recommended, if not essential." Linda Daily Paulson, Dirty Linen Feb/March, 2004

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