

Mp3 Richard Griffith - Bonny Sweete Boy



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A delightful mix of Scottish dance tunes, airs and folk music arranged for Renaissance lute. 28 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Traditional, WORLD: Celtic Details: About Bonny Sweete Boy When most of us think of the music of Scotland, the lute is not the first instrument that comes to mind. Clearly, the bagpipe, harp and fiddle have made a more indelible impression as representative of Scottish music. Nevertheless, the gentle, refined tones of the lute held a revered place in the parlors of the Scottish nobility and gentry from the 13th through the 18th century and were directly linked to the art music of the royal courts. Sadly, only a handful of manuscripts of Scottish lute music are known to have survived the turbulence of Scotlands political, social and religious upheaval, and none of these were compiled prior to the 17th century. There is, however, ample evidence to establish that many Scottish court lutenists received their instruction in the lute from French or Flemish teachers, so it is easy to speculate that much of the lute music played in Scotland during the High Renaissance would have been heavily influenced by the styles of Continental Europe. Many of the dance tunes that appear in the existing manuscripts take the form of Continental dances such as the gavotte, the coranto and the volta, and the French influence is evident in the written ornamentation in these sources. Most of the pieces on this recording are drawn from the two earliest known Scottish lute manuscripts: the Rowallan Lute Book (ca. 1612-1628) and the Straloch Manuscript (ca. 1627), both of which contain solo lute settings of traditional pipe, fiddle and harp tunes that would have been popular in Medieval and Renaissance Scotland, as well as versions of pieces more representative of the music of Continental Europe. For this recording, I have endeavored to include a mix of Scottish and Continental tunes, though even the French-influenced pieces manage to retain a flavor that is unmistakably Scottish. As for the manuscripts themselves, both Rowallan and Straloch are rife with idiosyncrasies, including ambiguities of pitch and rhythm, incomplete arrangements, and, in the case of

Rowallan, the obliteration of the titles of numerous tunes, reportedly as the result of a religious conversion late in the life of the manuscripts compiler, the poet, cartographer and lutenist Sir William Mure of Rowallan. In the case of the Straloch manuscript, the original has been lost to history and exists today only in the form of a partial copy made by George Graham in the 19th century which contains many errors and omissions; in some cases only a few bars of the melody were copied. Nevertheless, both manuscripts contain a bounty of music that is a delight to play, with the many quirks in the transcriptions providing ample opportunity for the lutenist to interpret and place his own stamp on the music. The lute music of 17th Century Scotland presents the listener with an easily accessible introduction to Renaissance lute music, since its focus is primarily melodic rather than contrapuntal (unlike much of the lute music of 16th century Europe) and eschews the ostentatious ornamentation characteristic of 16th and 17th century English lute music. The deceptive simplicity of the 28 pieces presented on this CD belies a sweet and soulful depth that is at once relaxing and invigorating, which makes this disc great both for the attentive listener and as background music.

About me I have worn a lot of hats in my life, some of which were pretty interesting, but most of which didn't fit me particularly well. I've been an officer in the US Air Force, worked as a health insurance fraud investigator, and spent a really wacky year as a costumed character (the sequin-clad pirate Captain Blackjack) at a local casino, but my first, best love has always been the performance of music. For most of my life I focused almost exclusively on the electric guitar (with a few layovers here and there as a brass guy, a bass guy, an acoustic folk guy), hopping from band to band trying to find that elusive perfect combo in which to let my true voice be heard, but the end result almost never lived up to my expectations. In February of 2001, a confluence of events conspired to bring the Renaissance lute into my life. I was very lucky to study with two of the big names in Early Music in the Twin Cities area Paul Berget and Phil Rukavina and discovered not only an affinity for the instrument, but a real love for the music of the Renaissance. Since 2001, I've had some great opportunities to perform: at Renaissance fairs, Scottish festivals, private parties and corporate events, and I'm currently co-producing a monthly Early Music concert series (Thursday at the Lute Caf) at a local recreation center. I'm blown away by the power this quiet little instrument has to draw people together and put them in touch with something ancient and honest and mysterious and I've made some of the best friends of my life since I've started playing it. I'm sincerely grateful to everyone that has helped and encouraged me (and you know who you are!!) as I've wandered down the Early Music path and I thank

you in advance for your future support as I continue to grow as a lutenist. I am, incidentally, still looking for that perfect combobut Im pretty sure Ill never be a sequin-clad pirate again. Cheers!

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