

John Dowland

January 2, 1563 – February 20, 1626



John Dowland was born in 1563 in London, England. Although nothing is known of his childhood, in 1580 he went to Paris as a "servant" to Sir Henry Cobham, the ambassador to the French court. A few years later, he moved back to England where he attended Oxford University. In 1588, he received a degree in music.

After university, Dowland began traveling to the continent of Europe again and eventually became a lutenist for King Christian IV of Denmark. However, he was dismissed from the king's court in 1606, possibly because his trips to London took him away from court too often or possibly because the Danish court could no longer afford his salary.

He returned to England and served as a lutenist for Queen Elizabeth I. It is believed that Dowland was also involved in a number of espionage assignments in France and Denmark under the orders of Sir Robert Cecil and the Queen.

In 1612 he was appointed one of the "musicians for the lutes" to King James I. However, suspicions of Catholic

sympathies led to him losing his position at James' court, and again he left England for a time.

Finally, Dowland returned in the 1620s and continued to compose music. He wrote four part harmonies, fantasias, and pavans for solo lute, as well as songs for solo voice and lute accompaniment. His compositions were influential in the development of the English madrigal style.

Dowland is best known for his melancholy songs, often with themes of unrequited love, such as "Come, Heavy Sleep" and "Flow My Tears." His song "Lachrimae" became extremely popular and was frequently used as a basis for improvisation by other musicians of the time.

In addition to his solo works, Dowland also wrote chamber music and instrumental pieces for lute. He published books of his music, including *A Pilgrimes Solace* and *The First Book of Songs or Ayres*.

He continued to compose until his death in London in 1626, and is remembered as an accomplished composer, virtuoso lutenist, skilled singer, and one of the most famous musicians of his time.

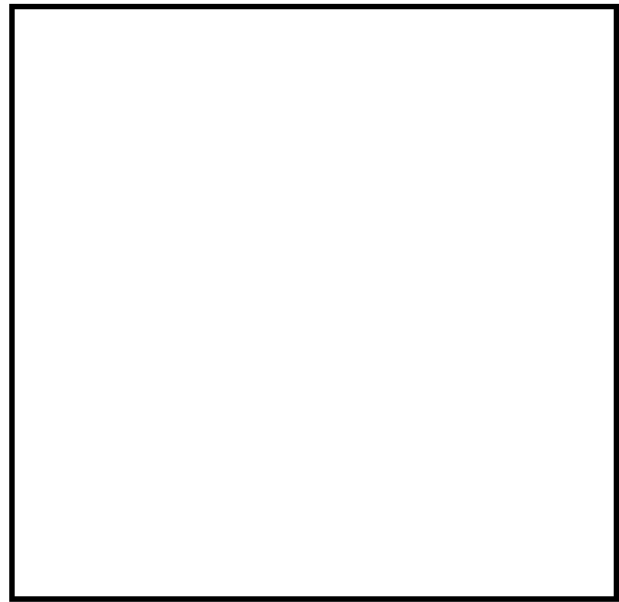
Composer Study

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Composer Fun Facts:



Instruments Used: _____

Famous Compositions: _____

Further Study:
