

Title: Lautenschmaus (Lute Feast)  
Subtitle: Ascendance of the German Baroque Lute

Performer: Daniel Shoskes

Sound Engineer and Editor: Peter Nothnagle

Session Producer: Lucas Harris

Instruments:

Tracks 1-12: 11 course Baroque lute by Grant Tomlinson. Strung entirely in gut

Tracks 13-end: 13 course Baroque lute by Andrew Rutherford. Strung in nylon, nylgut and copper wound basses

Recorded in St. Bridget's Church, Johnson County Iowa, March 12-14 2011

Introduction

In the mid 17th century France was the center of excellence for lutenists who, after much experimentation, settled on the "d minor" tuning system on an instrument with 11 sets of single and double strings ("courses") tuned f' d' a' f d a g f e d c. Once the Sun King turned his attention to the previously low brow guitar and elevated it to royal status, the lute fell out of favor. Performers spread throughout western Europe into the mostly German speaking countries and began to fuse the contemplative cerebral "broken" style of the French lutenists with more Italian influences that emphasized melody (Cantabile) and counterpoint while retaining the popular French dance music forms. In the later German baroque, two additional bass courses were added (b and a) and the music increased in harmonic complexity.

The program in this CD is an exploration of this rich and underappreciated repertoire, performed on both 11 course and the later 13 course baroque lute. The 11 course music retains much French influence with separated chords and simple harmonies but introduces more melodic components. The 13 course music introduces the singing cantabile style leading to the complex harmonies and grandeur of Weiss and Bach. Finally, a modern composition by Turovsky shows that the "German" baroque lute has not sung its last new songs.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to my wife and children, without whose support none of this would have been possible. Thanks also to my talented baroque lute teachers: Pat O'Brien, Robert Barto, David Dolata, Richard Stone, Lucas Harris and Ronn McFarlane as well as those whom I have had the privilege to receive masterclasses or individual lessons: Paul O'Dette, Nigel North, Stephen Stubbs, Sylvain Bergeron and Daniel Swenberg.

Thanks to Valerie Shoskes for creating the CD images, which depict a tablature letter "d" transforming into a lute.

### About the Performer

Daniel Shoskes is a lutenist in Cleveland Ohio His instruments include Baroque lute, Renaissance Lute, Archlute and Baroque Guitar. He has performed continuo with the Case Western Reserve Baroque Orchestra in its production of Dido and Aeneas and with Apollo's Fire, The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra. He has also performed with the Cleveland based groups Buckeye Baroque and Cantores Cleveland. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Apollo's Fire, Early Music America and the Lute Society of America. More information is available at <http://www.dshoskes.com> and videos at <http://www.youtube.com/kidneykutter>

### About the Music

Baroque lute music was usually presented as dance movements all in the same key grouped together in a suite. The practical advantage of keeping pieces of the same key together was avoiding having to retune the bass strings between movements. A given dance would have a certain time signature, structure, tempo and possibly chord sequence. For example, all the allemandes in this CD are in 2/4 time, start with a light upbeat note and follow the structure A A' B B'. The repeated sections were expected to be played differently than the first time through with ornaments and flourishes improvised by the performer. It is interesting to note in this recording how each composer brought variety and emotion into each movement, despite the constraints imposed by the dance structure.

A popular musical form, which is still used by modern composers, is variations over a repeated ground bass line. In the baroque, these were called the chaconne (ciaccona, chacona) and passacaglia (passacaille). These terms were sometimes used interchangeably and some authors have conflicting definitions, but in the German baroque they were usually in triple time with a repeated bass line ending in a cadence and then repeated for several variations. The 5 examples in this recording show how such a simple form can be used to spectacular effect, conveying emotions from joyous to triumphant to tragic.

Esiais Reusner was born in 1636 in Silesia (now part of Poland), and under the tutelage of his lutenist father became a child prodigy. He published two collections of lute music, *Delitiae testudinis* and *Neue Lauten-früchte* which contain suites of dance movements grouped according to key. His music has many features of French baroque composition, especially the heavy use of "broken" chords but begins to emphasize melodic elements. His Chaconne in D major shows wonderful inventiveness with variations that include guitar-like strumming and shockingly dissonant harmonies. His sonata in g minor comes from extra material written into the blank pages of his *Neue Lauten-früchte* by hand and equally combines the Style

brisé tradition of French lutenists with singing elements of the Italian cantabile style.

Anton Logy (also spelled Losy) was, unlike most musicians of the day, a nobleman. He composed for both baroque lute and baroque guitar and was held in high esteem by many contemporaries. He is perhaps best known for a piece written in his honor by Sylvius Weiss following Logy's death (*Tombeau sur la mort de Monseigneur Comte de Logi*).

Jacques St. Luc studied in France but spent most of his musical career in Brussels. His musical style was more exclusively Cantabile with elements of Style brisé only in his preludes. His music characteristically has a clear melody combined with a moving bass line that sometimes takes on or echoes the melody itself.

The Munich Manuscript (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Ms 5362) is a rich source of baroque lute music by a variety of composers. Not much is known about Johann Kühnel other than he was the son and grandson of better known composers. Several works for solo lute and lute in ensemble survive. This pair of Bourrées is charming and unusual in that they are in different keys (C major and C minor) but written in a way that avoids retuning the bass strings.

Sylvius Leopold Weiss was arguably the finest performer and composer of the lute in the late Baroque. More individual pieces survive in manuscript form of Weiss than for any other lute composer, and we know many more compositions are likely lost. He was the highest paid musician in the Dresden court and was considered a more talented improviser of counterpoint than even J. S. Bach himself (Bach even used a Weiss solo lute sonata as the keyboard accompaniment for one of his violin sonatas). His music is organized into suites (which are called sonatas and partitas) and uses a fusion of French and Italian styles, but unlike the earlier composers on this CD, Weiss' music is much more harmonically ambitious. The Menuet and Gigue in the Munich Ms are likely early works. The sonata in d minor from the London manuscript (Smith-Crawford #13) begins with an unmeasured prelude (most Weiss sonatas don't have preludes which were likely improvised during performance). A difficulty in performance comes at the final cadence. There is an asterisk before the final chord (about 1:46 on the disc) and additional material is hand written on the bottom line of tablature that was meant to be inserted. Unfortunately, the page ends before the music ends and in order to play this extra material, it is necessary to create a musical bridge that leads back to the final cadence. I have tried to do this using idiomatic Weiss progressions (my music begins at 1:54 and continues until the final cadence). The allemande is beautiful and explores new harmonic territory; it's very interesting to compare with the earlier allemandes from Reusner and St. Luc. The Bourrée might have been one of the most popular by Weiss, judging by its appearance in 13 known manuscripts. In this performance, I use a Double for the repeats. The sonata ends with a menuet rather than the more common gigue or presto.

Wolff Jakob Lauffensteiner was an Austrian lutenist whose over 100 surviving solo and chamber works for the lute are tuneful examples of the cantabile style. In some manuscripts his sonatas are misattributed to SL Weiss, which a backhanded compliment to their quality. The sonata in Bb major here is sunny and tuneful throughout.

JS Bach, the titan of German baroque music, published 4 lute suites, three with original music and one a reworking of a solo violin sonata. Bach, who didn't play the lute, had a gut strung harpsichord on which he composed, which may be part of the reason that the music is very difficult to play (especially in the original keys) and doesn't "fit" the instrument as well as music composed by a lute virtuoso like Weiss. Bach would often re-arrange and transcribe music for different instruments and as mentioned above, even used a Weiss lute sonata in one of his own works. I have returned the favor by transcribing a beautiful passacaglia, marked adagissimo, from his keyboard Capriccio BWV 992 "On the departure of a dear brother". When I heard Leon Fleisher's spectacular recording of the piece, I felt it would work as a lute solo. The chromaticism hanging over the descending bass line evokes intense longing and sadness.

Roman Turovsky is a composer, lutenist and painter living in New York City. He has composed a large number of original works and transcriptions for solo lute, including those under his "nom de plume" Sautscheck. His compositions use the baroque idiom and often incorporate Ukrainian folk melodies. To close the recording, I have chosen his cheery and optimistic Chaconne in C Major. Information is available at <http://polyhymnion.org/swv/opus.html> .

## Track List

\*= first time recorded and published on CD

Esiais Reusner (1636-1679)

1. Passacaglia in D major
2. Sonata in g Minor: Allemande
3. Courante
4. Sarabande
5. Aria I
6. Aria II
7. Gigue

Anton Logy (1650-1721)

8. Chaconne in F Major

Jacques St. Luc (1616-1710)

- \*9. Sonata in D Major (excerpts): Allemande
- \*10. Courante
- \*11. Sarabande
- \*12. Chaconne

Johann Michael Kühnel (1670-1728)

- \*13. Two Bourrées in C major and C minor

Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750)

- 14. Menuet in F major
- \*15. Gigue in F major

Wolff Jacob Lauffensteiner (1676–1754)

- \*16. Sonata in Bb Major: Allemande
- \*17. Courante
- \*18. Bourrée
- \*19. Sarabande
- \*20. Menuet
- \*21. Gigue

J. S. Bach (1685-1750) (arranged D. Shoskes)

- \*22. Adagissimo in g minor (Passacaglia) from BWV 992 "On the departure of a dear brother"

Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750)

- 23. Sonata in d minor: Prelude (ending bridge by D. Shoskes)
- 24. Allemande
- 25. Courante
- 26. Bourrée
- 27. Menuet

Roman Turovsky (1961-)

- \*28. Chaconne in C Major