

## The Sound of Tears - Works for lute - John Dowland

Massimo Marchese, lute

**From Varietie of Lute Lessons**

01 Sir John Smith, His Almain [P. 47] 02:30

**From The Margaret Board Lute Book:**

02 Preludium [P. 98] 01:34

**From Folger Dowland Manuscript**

03 Lachrimae [P. 15] 06:00

**From Cambridge University Library, Ms. Dd.9.33:**

04 The Shoemaker's Wife [P. 58] 01:34

**From The Euing Lute Book:**

05 Semper Dowland semper dolens [P. 9] 07:55

**From The Dowland Lute Book:**

06 What if a day\* [P. 79] 02:07

**From Cambridge University Library, Nn. 6.36:**

07 Resolution [P. 13] 05:27

**From Cambridge University Library, Ms. Dd.2.11:**

08 Complaint [P. 63] 01:29

**From The Euing Lute Book:**

09 Solus cum sola\* [P. 10] 05:14

Lute, 8 course, by Paul Thomson, Bristol, 1992

\*Lute, 6 course, by Ivo Magherini, Bremem, 2003

Total time: 66:30

Recorded on January 2026 at Palazzo Toriellii, Sala Gonzaga, Mombello Monferrato (AI)

Recording Producer **Massimo Marchese** | Sound Supervisor **Stefano Albarello**

Recording Engineer **Massimo Marchese** | Cd Mastering and Editing **Massimo Marchese**

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Instrumentarium: Lute, 8 course, by Paul Thomson, Bristol, 1992 Lute, 6 course, by Ivo Magherini, Bremem, 2003

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# The Sound of Tears

## Works for lute

### John Dowland

Massimo Marchese



**John Dowland** occupies a unique place in the history of music: a rare figure, capable of defining an era both as a composer and as a virtuoso. Despite his Catholic faith — no small obstacle in England at the time — and a temperament notoriously prone to melancholy, he achieved international fame. In 1598, the poet **Richard Barnfield** immortalised his talent in the famous sonnet: "*Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch/Upon the lute doth ravish human sense*". These words encapsulate the essence of his art: a heavenly timbral beauty combined with profound emotional intensity. Although today he is associated almost exclusively with the melancholic aesthetic of the pavane '*Lachrimae*', Dowland's output is surprisingly multifaceted. His writing balances a natural melodic talent with refined contrapuntal rigour; even in the most virtuosic passages, the music remains perfectly idiomatic for the lute. His catalogue boasts around a hundred solo pieces, as many songs, and seminal works for viol consort. An almost exact contemporary of **William Shakespeare**, Dowland shared with the Bard the habit of constantly reworking his own creations. Many of his pieces exist in multiple versions, making it difficult to define a 'definitive' edition. This artistic evolution went hand in hand with the technical evolution of the instrument, which progressed from 6-course lutes to 10-course lutes. In 1604, Dowland published *Lachrimae* or *Seaven Teares*, a collection dedicated to Anne of Denmark, Queen Consort of James I. In the preface, the composer states that he has fused 'the new and the old, the grave and the light'. The work opens with seven pavaues based on the famous descending four-note motif, which became a veritable musical 'meme' of the Elizabethan era. From this instrumental core also emerged the famous song 'Flow My Tears' (1600). The interchangeability between vocal and instrumental music is a hallmark of Dowland. For example, the opening of 'I Saw My Lady Weep' follows almost exactly the beginning of the pavane '*Sir Henry Umpton's Funeral*'. Equally iconic is the piece '*Semper Dowland Semper Dolens*', an autobiographical seal that plays on Elizabeth I's motto ('*Semper Eadem*'). In this pavane with its restless harmony, the final section introduces a cantus firmus that evokes funeral tolls, transforming grief into a sonic architecture of extraordinary vitality that still resonates today.



**Massimo Marchese** is worldwide known as one of the refined performer his generation's. His long career took him to play and cooperate with many of famous early music ensembles and to make concerts as a soloist in several countries in the world. More than 20 record publications, among whom 8 a soloist (RCA, STRADIVARIUS, TACTUS, BRILLIANT CLASSICS, CENTAUR RECORDS ecc.) let Massimo Marchese be proud of one of the smartest curriculum as regards his instrument. He was very young when he first approached to the instrument: he met M<sup>o</sup> Jakob Lindberg and he achieved in London "the Royal College of Music" Diploma. Right after, the specializations with Paul O'Dette and Nigel North, Hopkinson Smith lead him to the very beginning his career. Since 1980 as a soloist and continuo's player, playing for voices like Nigel Rogers and Furio Zanasi and renewing his cooperation with Jakob Lindberg (member of "Dodekachordon" ensemble); and other smart experiences with Enrico Gatti, Ottavio Dantone and Flavio Emilio Scogna just to name a few. During various tours he played in most of the music capitals, in Italy and abroad; particularly noteworthy are his concerts for "Oude Muziek - Festival del Liuto" di Utrecht, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - Sorbonne di Parigi, Festival di Musica Sacra di Tenerife e le Settimane musicali di Sofia. He has been Artist in Residence of the Osaka Italian Cultural Institute during summer 2016 (June and July), he participated in several RAI RADIO BROADCASTS ((radio 2, radio 3 - Piazza Verdi e Radio 3 Suite - La Stanza della Musica) and Bulgarian National Radio. He was the first lutenist in the world who recorded monographic Cd of Francesco Spinacino (Tactus, 2006), Franciscus Bossinensis (Tactus, 2004), Joackim Van den Hove (Brilliant Classics, 2015) and who recorded the complete works in score (1682/1686/1716 ) of Robert de Visée ( Brilliant Classics, 2011/2015 ). He worked in musicological research and he participated in several conferences, bringing back to light composers as Gabriele Fallamero (1584). In 2003 he has been lute professor at the "A. Vivaldi" Conservatory in Alessandria (Early Music Department), and President of the S.I.E.M. (Italian Society for the Musical Education) in Alessandria since 1993 to 2000. In 1997 he participate to the "landeskongress Schulmusik" in Stuttgart. He signed several festivals as artistic director and musical consultant, like the C.I.M.A.AI (Italian Centre of Early Music in Alessandria) in 2004, with whom he organized and directed the European Festival of Early Music - Eastern Piedmont until 2014.