

ing, and allowing a variety of right-hand techniques and expression.

***Five Scenes from the Life of Edward de Vere* (2009)**

The trio of arpeggione, mandolin, and double reed creates an antique, pleasantly rustic timbral palette. *Five Scenes* hijacks this sound world to accompany a provocative, Elizabethan narrative. The piece is inspired by mysteries surrounding the Shakespeare authorship question. Each musical impression presents a stage in the life of a primary suspect: Sir Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. A scoundrel-poet, polymath dramatist, and trusted insider of Queen Elizabeth's court, de Vere's real life echoes in detail throughout Shakespeare's works. With cultural norms and political realities forcing the aristocrat to pursue his theatrical creations in veiled secrecy, complex webs of fate tragically obscured de Vere's accomplishments. He may very well have written works attributed to William Shakespeare.

I. "Ankerwicke Manor"

(English horn)

As a child, de Vere moved to the Thames and Datchet Mead environs of Ankerwicke Manor, home of Sir Thomas Smith, secretary of State to King Edward VI. There he studied mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, horticulture, pharmacology, law, geography, cosmology, and language. The boy grew, as did his literary imagination.

II. "De Consolatione:

So he that takes the pain to pen the book, Reaps not the gift of golden goodly muse" (oboe d'amore)

A line from de Vere's poem *To the Reader* describing unrecognized creative acts behind familiar works of the field laborer and building mason. In 1573, De Vere commissioned Thomas Bedingfield to translate and publish Italian philosopher Gerlamo Cardano's *De Consolatione*. The result was *Cardanus's Comfort* and it included de Vere's poetry.

III. "Paradise of Dainty Devices"

(oboe)

This best selling anthology from 1576 published by the director of the Children of the Chapel Royal contains lyrics by de Vere. The 'complaint' form dominates the writer's input, a form later perfected in *A Lover's Complaint*.

IV. "Now is the Month of Maying"

(oboe d'amore)

In 1574, de Vere signed over his estate Battails Hall to composer William Byrd. The English composer flourished during de Vere's lifetime along with latter members of the English Madrigal School, including Thomas Morley. An excerpt from Morley's 1595 *Now is the Month of Maying* is featured here in various forms.

V. "Mortal Moon"

(English horn)

From sonnet 107 comes this dedication to Elizabeth upon her death in March 1603. The end of an age had come, an end to the House of Tudor. The next year, in June 1604, de Vere died of the plague. This final scene eerily seals a mystery over which writers and scholars have argued for centuries.