

L'Infidèle

William Bower | lute



move

The sensuous lute

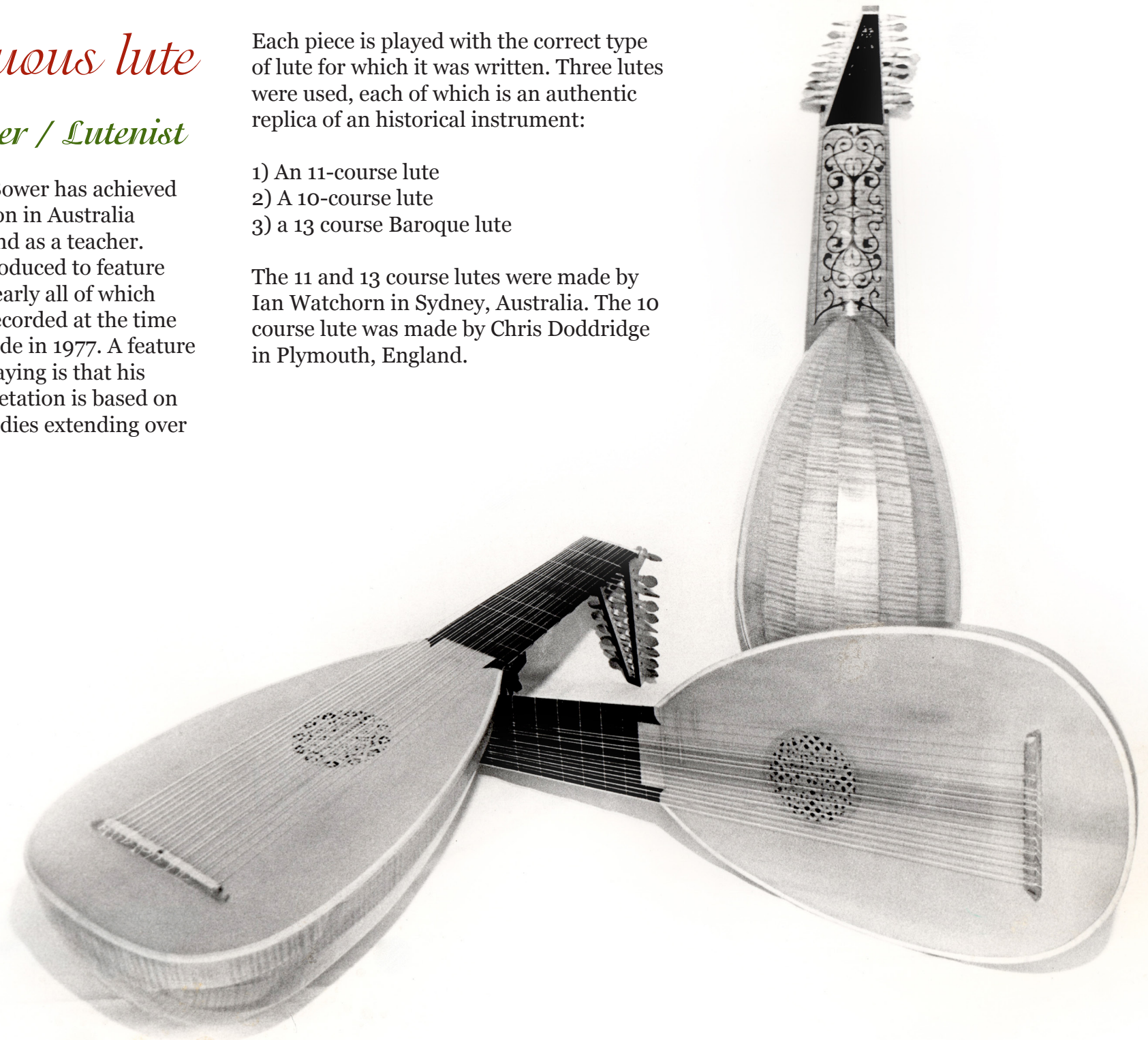
William Bower / Lutenist

Lute-player William Bower has achieved a substantial reputation in Australia both as a performer and as a teacher. This recording was produced to feature original lute works, nearly all of which were not previously recorded at the time this recording was made in 1977. A feature of William Bower's playing is that his technique and interpretation is based on accurate historical studies extending over ten years.

Each piece is played with the correct type of lute for which it was written. Three lutes were used, each of which is an authentic replica of an historical instrument:

- 1) An 11-course lute
- 2) A 10-course lute
- 3) a 13 course Baroque lute

The 11 and 13 course lutes were made by Ian Watchorn in Sydney, Australia. The 10 course lute was made by Chris Doddridge in Plymouth, England.





L'Infidèle

William Bower | *lute*

WOLFT JACOB LAUFFENSTEINER

- 1 Prelude 1'36"
- 2 Allemande 3'46"

SILVIO LEOPOLD WEISS

"L'INFIDELE"

- 3 Entree 3'31"
- 4 Courante 2'34"
- 5 Sarabande 3'02"
- 6 Minuet 2'16"
- 7 Musette 3'12"
- 8 Paysane 2'24"

RENE MESANGEAU

- 9 Prelude 1'24"
- 10 Sarabande 1 0'56"
- 11 Sarabande 2 1'06"
- 12 Courante 1 1'19"
- 13 Courante 2 0'56"
- 14 Ailemane 2'48"
- 15 Bransle de Mets 0'58"
- 16 Tu es enrusme Compere 1'36"
- 17 Sarabande 3 0'51"

JACQUES DE GALLOT

- 18 Sarabande la divine 2'02"
- 19 Gavotte la dauphine 1'27"
- 20 Courante Tombeau de Made 2'29"
- 21 Courante l'Eternelle 1'42"

Total 42'09"

Front cover photograph by Gabi Taken in Rippon Lea Estate, Melbourne, with the help of a local peacock.

Austrian born W. J. LAUFFENSTEINER was a lutenist in the household of Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria. His duties included such unrelated tasks as the purchase of his employer's wardrobe, and for instructing the Prince in music, it is recorded that his salary was increased by 100 florins. Unfortunately, as witnessed in a later petition by Lauffensteiner the sum was mistakenly deducted from rather than added to, his rather humble wage.

He appears not to have shared the freedom of travel enjoyed by other court lutenists of his time, having been obliged to accompany his employer even into battle; but with the Prince he had the opportunity to visit France and Italy. Lauffensteiner composer for solo lute, lute duet and for small ensemble.

SILVIO LEOPOLD WEISS was born in Breslau in 1686 and died in Dresden in 1750. A contemporary of J.S. Bach, he was an outstanding composer and performer, spending the last 33 years of his life as lutenist to the Elector of Dresden. He travelled widely associating and performing with such musicians as Handel, Bach and Quantz. His music is extensive though largely unexplored. The suite on this recording has been played on a thirteen course lute.

RENÉ MESANGEAU was born in Paris towards the end of the sixteenth century and became recognised as one of the most celebrated lute players of his time.

He spent many years as a musician at the court of Louis XIII and died in 1638. Although a prolific composer, little survives of his work. The suite included here was played on the 10 course lute.

Since there are no surviving documents, the details of Mesangeau's origin remain to a large extent a mystery. We know that he was born in Paris during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. It seems likely that he lived in Germany (Cologne) for a time before 1617, and it was in Germany that he first came to public attention as one of four composers of the period whose works were collected and published in an important lute book.

Two years later, in 1619, we hear of him in France, in the service of the court of the young Louis XIII. We know more about Mesangeau's professional life mainly due to the survival of church records of births, deaths and marriages which were kept at that time. In 1619 he married Marguerite Jaquet, daughter of a rich harpsichord and spinet maker (Jean Jecquet). This family was of good social standing and the marriage was approved because Mesangeau was already, apparently, a renowned musician. According to records, the couple produce five children during the years which followed.

Mesangeau's reputation as a lutenist was growing steadily, and he is cited in a work published in Strasbourg in 1621, alongside Ennemond Gautier (called "Gautier the Elder"), Robert Ballard

and Mercure, as being "among the most celebrated lute players in France". Also at the end of this year (1621). he became officially qualified as "ordinary musician of the King." This title which he kept until his death, represented at that time an honour which one rarely attained without certain conditions of wealth, family and social standing. So, coming from the Parisian middle class, he often shared privileges of much higher echelons of the social hierarchy. But it is difficult to determine precisely what role Mesangeau played in the court. An admirable lute player and cited by Mersenne as an excellent composer, he doesn't appear to have participated at any of the royal ballets, balls or ceremonial occasions. however, Mesangeau's notoriety allowed him from 1632, to add a further title to his name - that of "upper middle class citizen of Paris", apparently having progressed as well in his career as a composer and thus having considerably augmented his financial and social position.

We do not know whether Pierre Ballard included works by Mesangeau in his anthology of 1623, for this volume has since been lost. But the two other "Tablatures of Various Authors" which Ballard published in 1631 and 1638 place Mesangeau well up in the top ranks amongst composers of lute music of the period who employed the new lute tunings - the full significance of Mesangeau's role here can be appreciated when one remembers that it was directly as a result

of the publication of this work by Ballard that the new tuning system became widely accepted. There is evidence, too, that Mesangeau instructed several pupils who themselves became masters of the lute in their own right.

Mesangeau died early in 1638, leaving a widow and two surviving children and only a very modest estate, including one spinet (valued at only eight pounds), and three lutes (valued at fifty, forty and twenty pounds respectively) - significantly, his output consists of about fifty works.

Mesangeu's memory is perpetuated by means of the homage paid to him by his friend Ennemond Gautier in a "Tombeau" ("Memorial") published about 1672 in a work compiled by his cousin, Denis Gautier. This piece was considered a masterpiece which "one would never tire of hearing". Another anonymous memorial piece, dedicated to "Mr. Messangoir", scored for viola-baryton, appears in a manuscript in the Cassel library. His music is played here on a ten course lute.

JACQUES DE GALLOT came from a French family of lutenists who achieved great fame for their playing during the seventeenth century. The four pieces included here were written sometime between 1670 and 1680 to the vice admiral d'Estreé. The are played on the 11 course lute.



WILLIAM BOWER

With a background of ten years study and performances in Europe, including four years at the Royal College of Music in London, William Bower returned to Australia in 1975, and has been performing regularly as a concert, TV, radio and recording soloist, accompanist and continuo player. He has appeared with orchestras and ensembles like the City of Bath Festival Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Philharmonia, Orchestra Victoria and Ensemble Dufay, four English Lute Society summer schools, and tutoring posts in both Australia and New Zealand, where he was Executant Tutor of Lute and Guitar at Victoria University, Wellington for 23 years.