

# THE TORONTO CONSORT

***Renaissance master's music takes on an Irish flavour in  
Dowland in Dublin  
with La Nef and tenor Michael Slattery  
March 27 & 28, 2015***

*"Gorgeous" is too mild a word for these performances, particularly Slattery's sweet, soulful, seductive vocals, and Dowland's songs ... work splendidly in La Nef's arrangements.* — Times Colonist (Victoria)

Toronto, February 11, 2015 ... Was the great composer John Dowland, often considered the quintessential English lute master, actually Irish? This question is the starting point for ***Dowland in Dublin***, an intimate and evocative program that is “half way between art song and folk song.” *Dowland in Dublin* features Montréal's **La Nef** and American tenor **Michael Slattery**, who is making his Toronto debut. Set with Irish flute, recorder, fiddle, lute, cittern, shruti-box, and cello, Dowland's 400 year-old songs take on a Celtic flavour in these arrangements by Slattery and members of La Nef, and invite listeners to hear this music in a new way.

***Dowland in Dublin*** takes place on **March 27 and 28** at 8:00 PM at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall. For tickets and information, call the box office at (416) 964-6337 or visit [torontoconsort.org](http://torontoconsort.org). **Sylvain Bergeron**, Artistic Director of La Nef, will give a pre-concert talk on both evenings, free with concert admission.

Along with Slattery, who accompanies himself on the shruti box, *Dowland in Dublin* features some of Canada's finest musicians on period instruments: **Sylvain Bergeron**, lute; **Seán Dagher**, cittern; **Grégoire Jeay**, Irish flute and recorder; **Alex Kehler**, violin; and **Amanda Keesmaat**, cello.

The idea for *Dowland in Dublin* was sparked at a Christmas party hosted by La Nef. Sylvain Bergeron describes how “**Seán Dagher** charmed all who were listening when he took out his cittern and began to sing Dowland's ‘Come again’ as a folksong. Subsequently, we worked closely with Michael Slattery and read through all 90 or so of Dowland's songs. We began to strip some of them of their complex, contrapuntal accompaniments, seeking to give them a simple, Celtic flavor.”

“My approach to the project was influenced by the time I spent in Ireland studying traditional Irish music,” said Michael Slattery in an interview. Searching for a practical way to accompany himself while singing, some years ago Slattery happened on the shruti box, a traditional Indian instrument that produces a drone-like sound. He discovered that the notes on the box correspond directly to the long pipes of the bagpipe. “With my voice as the chanter singing the melody against the drones, the resulting sound was surprisingly and authentically Irish.”

In 2012 the group recorded *Dowland in Dublin* for ATMA Classique, and the album has garnered unanimous praise since its release: “The real star ... is Michael Slattery; his voice is like warm honey on a summer day. Timbrally, he and La Nef were made for one another. Slattery sings with the intimacy and charm of a favored Elizabethan courtier ... his honesty and wistfulness in the plaintive songs are especially endearing. He is absolutely believable, and he imbues these pieces with a striking sense of relevance and immediacy,” wrote *Early Music America*.

Tenor Michael Slattery made an unforgettable debut last year, stepping in at the last minute to sing Benjamin Britten’s *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings* for the New York Philharmonic’s celebrations of the composer’s 100th birthday. He was invited back to the Philharmonic this season as the tenor soloist in Handel’s *Messiah*. Slattery’s career highlights include the title role in Bernstein’s *Candide* at Royal Festival Hall in London; J.S. Bach’s B-minor Mass with Iván Fischer and the National Symphony Orchestra; Peter Sellars’ *Tristan Project* with Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Philip Glass’s *Akhnaten* with John Adams — both with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; the title role in Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris; and the Monteverdi *Vespers of 1610* at the Berlin Staatsoper.

La Nef is a company dedicated to the creation and production of concerts of early, world, traditional, and contemporary music based on historical and literary themes. Founded in 1991 by **Sylvain Bergeron, Claire Gignac, and Viviane LeBlanc**, La Nef’s repertoire spans the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and also embraces various oral traditions of Mediterranean heritage. La Nef’s unique sound stems from the interaction of a core group of some twenty performers of different musical backgrounds who come together for different programmes. In 2001, La Nef and the Toronto Consort collaborated on *The Black Madonna*, a words-and-music programme they co-presented in Montreal and Toronto.

UP NEXT:

***The Play of Daniel***

May 22, 23 & 24, 2015

with tenor Kevin Skelton, VIVA! Youth Singers of Toronto

direction: Alex Fallis | musical direction: David Fallis | costume design: Nina Okens

set & lighting design: Glenn Davidson

**The Toronto Consort presents**

**Guest ensemble La Nef with tenor Michael Slattery in**

***Dowland in Dublin***

**March 27 & 28 at 8:00 PM**

**Venue:** Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, Jeanne Lamon Hall

427 Bloor Street West (just west of Spadina)

**Ticket Prices:**

*Regular:* \$23 to \$54 | 65+ : \$21 to \$55

**Club Consort tickets for ages 30 and under: \$10 (with valid photo ID)**

**Box Office:** (416) 964-6337

**Website:** [www.torontoconsort.org](http://www.torontoconsort.org) Find us on [Facebook](#)

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*The Toronto Consort is Canada's leading ensemble specializing in the music of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Early Baroque — roughly 1200 to 1675. Founded in 1972, The Toronto Consort was one of the city's first professional period music ensembles. Over the past four decades, the Toronto Consort has continued to expand listeners' appreciation through inventive programming that breathes life into period music. The ensemble has become internationally recognized for its excellence in live and recorded period music, and has collaborated on a number of film and television projects including Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* and two Showtime series, *The Tudors* and *The Borgias*.*



The Toronto Consort gratefully acknowledges the support of:



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