

ARTHUR'S COURT

Songs of Romance and Chivalry

Gaita

Chris Elmes:	Fiddle, oud, bagpipes
Cait Webb:	Lap harp, shawms, recorder
Stacy Schumacher:	Oud, percussion
Helena MacGilp:	Voice, percussion
Tembu Rongong:	Voice, narration

The Romances of King Arthur have their roots in Celtic myth, but came to France via the Bretons who migrated to Brittany from the west of Britain in the 6th and 7th centuries. By the High Middle Ages of the 12th and 13th century these tales are set in a mythical Britain, bearing little relation to real history, with Arthur as its ideal King. Arthur himself plays small part in many of the romances other than to provide the setting of a noble court from which the action is launched. The stories mix ancient myth and enchantment with the newly fashionable ideas of romantic love and chivalry. The heroic Knight-errant continually encounters fantastical beings, fay maidens, unhappy wives in search of a noble lover, bizarre tests of courage, and of course, other knights they must defeat in combat. Many of the same themes are explored in the songs of the Troubadours (from the Languedoc, writing in Occitan) and the Trouvères (from northern France, writing in Old French).

The narration for this concert draws on the earliest extant sources of Arthurian literature. The introduction and conclusion are based on Wace's *Brut* of 1155 which is the first Anglo-Norman account of the history of Arthur, embroidering the story given in the 'History of the Kings of Britain' by Geoffrey of Monmouth. The *Lay of Lanval* and *Lay of Tristan and Iseult* come from the *Lais* of Marie de France, written in the late 12th century. *The Lay of Fergus*, written around 1200 by Guillaume de Clerc, is the first satirical treatment of the Arthurian romance, with a strikingly detailed setting in the Scottish landscape. The *Lay of Erec and Enide* (1170) and the *Lay of Lancelot* (1180) are from Chrétien de Troyes, the earliest known versions of these stories. The grail legend is summarised from the early 13th century prose *Queste del Saint Graal*, part of the 'Vulgate cycle' which was the main source for most later treatments of Arthurian legend, including that of Malory.

The music is all from late 12th to late 13th century France, with the exception of *Lamento di Tristano* (from 14th C Italy). There are three main sources. The first is the ‘Notre Dame’ style including examples from the two most important manuscripts, St Andrews (W₁) and Florence (F). The pieces from these are mainly polyphonic Conductus, a type of processional. The second source is the Montpellier manuscript, which is the largest single collection of 13th century motets, containing over 300 examples. Motets are distinguished by the multiple parts which each have a different text (usually vernacular) composed over a slow moving cantus firmus in the lowest part (often a church chant). The last source is the chansonniers containing the works of the Troubadours and Trouvères, along with some added instrumental pieces. The chansons (*canso* in Occitan) are monophonic pieces written in the vernacular and covering an astonishing range of subjects from politics to ribaldry, but the most common theme is love, and from all points of view, male and female, high and low. The forms we use here are the reverdie, chanson, lay, pastourelle, alba and dansa.

Another feature of the programme is that there are a number of pieces related melodically, though with strikingly different forms or themes. The conductus *Pugator crimum* has the melody of the chanson *L’amours dont sui espris* in the lower part. The same melody is used in the conductus *Procurans odium*. *Pugator* is a religious diatribe; *L’amours* is a chanson full of longing; *Procurans* is a discussion of the effect of detractors on true love. The church conductus *Crucifigat omnes* and the *Lai des pucelles* also share many melodic sections. In all these cases it is not clear whether the original melody was secular or sacred. Two motets, *Li jalous* and *Je sui jonete* share the same cantus firmus melody but in differing rhythm. Similarly, the *Domino* chant is used extensively for all forms and themes including *Pucelete / Je languis* (with themes of young love in one part and unrequited love in another). It is clear from much medieval music that melodies easily moved from the church to the tavern and vice versa.

Programme

- **Pugator crimum** French/Scottish Conductus (W₁)

- **Quant revient / L’autre jor / Flos filius** French Motet (Mo)

The Lay of Lanval

- **Li jalous / Tuit cil / Veritatem** French Motet (Mo)

- **Volez vous que je vous chant** French Trouvère Reverdie (Arsenal)

The Lay of Fergus

- **Je sui jonete / Hé Diex! / Veritatem** French Motet (Mo)

The Lay of Erec and Enide

- **Veri floris sub figura** French /Scottish Conductus (W₁)
- **Cricifigat omnes** French /Scottish Conductus (W₁)
- **Le Lai des Pucelles** French Trouvère Lai (No)
- **Bele Doette** French Trouvère Chanson (St-G)
- **Tant es gaia** Occitan Troubadour Dansa (du Roi)
- **Domna pos vos ai chausida** Occitan Troubadour Dansa (du Roi)

The Lay of Tristan & Iseult

- **Le lai du kievrefoel** French Trouvère Lay (No)
- **Lamento di Tristano** 14th C Italian Istampitta (Lo)

Interval

The Lay of Lancelot

- **Li savours / Li grant / Non veul mari** French Motet (Arsenal)
- **Verbum bonem et suave** Scottish Sequence (W₁)
- **Estampie Real (no. 3)** French Estampie (du Roi)
- **S'anc fui belha** **Cadenet** - Occitan Alba (Ms R)
- **Au renouvel du tens que la floret** French Trouvère Pastourelle (du Roi)
- **Pucelete / Je languis / Domino** French Motet (Mo)
- **Domino** French Clasula (F)
- **Ja nuns hons pris** **attr. Richard I** – French Chanson (Cangé)
- **Pange melos** French /Scottish Conductus (W₁)

The Grail

- **Chanterai por mon corage** French Trouvère Chanson (du Roi)
- **L'amours don't sui espris** French Trouvère Chanson (Arsenal)
- **Procurans odium** French Conductus (F)

The Death of Arthur

- **Danse** French Danse (du Roi)

Texts and Translations

Triplum

Quant revient et fiolle et flor
Contre la doucor d'esté,
Diex, adoc me souvient d'amors
Qui m'atoziors
Cortoise et douce este,
Mont aun son secors,
Qua ma volenté,
Ma liège de mes delors:
molt en vient biens et honors
D'estre à son gré.

When leaves and flowers return
with the sweetness of spring,
God, then I think of love
which has always been
kind and sweet with me.
With this succour,
when I wish,
I relieve my pain:
Much good and honour
comes from following love.

Duplum

Lautre jor m'en alai
par un destor
En un jardin m'en entrai
por cuillir flor.
Dame plaisant y trovai
Cointe d'ator; cuer et gai,
Si chantoit en grant esmai:
Amors ai, qu'en ferai?
C'est la fins
Que que nus die,
J'amerai.

The other day I went
along a path;
I entered a garden
to pick flowers.
I found a lovely lady,
elegantly dressed, with a gay heart,
there she sang with great passion:
'I am in love, what shall I do?
This is the end,
no matter what people say,
I shall love.'



Volez vous que je vous chant

Un son d'amors avenant?
Vilain ne.l fist mie
Ainz le fist d'un chevalier
Souz l'onbre d'un olivier
Entre les braz s'amie.

Do you wish me to sing you
a sweet song of love?
No rustic composed it,
but rather a knight
in the shade of an olive tree
in the arms of his sweetheart.

Chemisete avoit de lin
Et blanc peliçon hermin
Et bliäut de soie,
Chauces ot de jaglolai
Et sollers de flors de mai,
Estroitement chaüade.

She wore a linen shift,
a white ermine wrap,
and a tunic of silk;
she had stockings of iris
and shoes of mayflowers,
fitting just right.

Çainturete avoit de feuille
Qui verdist quant li tens mueille;
D'or ert boutonade
L'aumosniere estoit d'amor;
Li pendant furent de flor,
Par amors fu donade.

She wore a sash of leaves
whose green deepened in the rain;
it had buttons of gold.
Her purse was of love,
with pendants of flowers:
it was a love-gift.

Si chevauchoit une mule;
D'argent ert la ferreüre,
La sele ert dorade;
Seur la crope par derrier
Avoit planté trois rosiers
Por fere li honbrage.

Si s'en vet aval la pree;
Chevaliers l'ont encontree,
Biau l'ont saluade;
"Bele, dont estes vous nee?"
"De France sui, la löee,
Du plus haut parage.

Li rosignous est mon pere
Qui chante seur la ramee
El plus haut boschage;
La seraine, ele est ma mere
Qui chant en la mer salee
El plus hout rivage.

"Bele, bon fussiez vous nee,
Bien estes enparentee
Et de haut parage;
Pleüst a Dieu nostre pere
Que vous me fussiez donee
A Fame espousade."

She was riding a mule;
its shoes were of silver
and its saddle of gold;
on the crupper behind her
three rosebushes grew
to provide her with shade.

So she went down through the field;
some knights came upon her
and greeted her nicely:
"Lovely lady, where were you born?"
"From France I am, the renowned,
of the highest birth.

"The nightingale is my father,
who sings on the branches
high in the forest;
the siren is my mother,
who sings high on the shore
of the salt sea."

"Lovely lady, may such birth bode well!
You are of fine family
and high birth;
would to God our father
that you were given me
as my wedded wife!"

Translation by Margaret Switen.

-----oOo-----

Je sui jonete et jolie
S'ai un cuer enamoré
Qui tant mi semont et prie
D'amer par jolieté
Que tuit i sunt mi pensé.
Mes mon mari ne set mie
A qui j'ai mon cuer doné:
Par les sains que l'en de prie,
Il morroit de jalousie,
S'il savoit la verité.
Mes, foi que je doi a Dé,
J'amerai!
Ja pour mari ne lairé:
Quant il fait tout a son gré
Et de mon cors sa volenté,
Del plus mon plesir reiré.

I am young and pretty
and have an enamored heart
that so bids and entreats me
to love ardently
that all my thoughts are of love.
But my husband does not know
to whom I have given my heart.
By the saints who hear our prayers,
he would die of jealousy
if he knew the truth.
But by the faith I owe God,
I will love!
Never will I stop loving because of my husband.
When he does all he wishes
and has his will with my body,
all the more will I do as I please.

Bele Doette as fenestre se siet,
 Lit en un livre mais au cuer ne l'en tient;
 De son ami Doon li resovient
 Q'en autres terres est alez tornoier.
E or en ai dol!

Lovely Doette is sitting by the window
 reading a book, but her thoughts are elsewhere;
 she is thinking of beloved Do,
 who has gone to tourney in foreign lands.
Oh, what grief I feel!

Uns escuiers as degrez de la sale
 est dessendu, s'est destrossé sa male.
 Bele Doette les degrez en avale,
 Ne cuide pas oïr novele male.
E or en ai dol!

At the stairs to the great hall, a squire
 has dismounted and untrussed his bags.
 Lovely Doette runs down the stairs;
 she does not expect to hear bad news.
Oh, what grief I feel!

Bele Doette tantost li demanda:
 "Ou est mes sires, que ne vi tel pieç'a?"
 Cil ot tel duel que de pitié plora;
 Bele Doette maintenant se pasma.
E or en ai dol!

Lovely Doette asked him right away:
 "Where is my lord, whom I have not seen for so long?"
 The man was so grieved that he was moved to weep;
 lovely Doette suddenly fainted away.
Oh, what grief I feel!

Bele Doette s'est en estant drecie;
 Voit l'escurier, vers lui s'est adrecie;
 En son cuer est dolante et correcie
 Por son seignor dont ele ne voit mie.
E or en ai dol!

Lovely Doette has stood back up;
 she sees the squire and walks up to him;
 in her heart she is upset and disappointed
 not to see any sign of her lord.
Oh, what grief I feel!

Bele Doette li prist a demander:
 "Ou est mes sires cui je doi tant amer?"
 "En non Deu, dame, ne.l vos quier mais celer:
 Morz est mes sires, ocis fu au joster."
E or en ai dol!

Lovely Doette began to question the man:
 "Where is my lord, whom I rightfully love?"
 "By God, my lady, I'll not keep it from you anymore:
 my lord is dead; he was killed int he joust."
Oh, what grief I feel!

Bele Doette a pris son duel a faire:
 "Tant mar i fustes, cuens Do, frans debonaire,
 Por vostre amor vestirai je la haire,
 Ne sor mon cors n'avra pelice vaire."
E or en ai dol!
Por vos devenrai nonne en l'eglyse Saint Pol.

Lovely Doette began her mourning:
 "Alas you ever went there, noble gracious Count Do!
 For love of you I will now wear a hairshirt,
 and no fur-lined cloak will cover my body."
Oh, what grief I feel!
For you I will become a nun at St. Paul's.

Por vos ferai une abbaïe tele,
 Qant iert li jors que la feste iert nomeie,
 Se nus i vient qui ait s'amor fauseie,
 Ja del mostier ne savera l'entreie."
E or en ai dol!
Por vos devenrai nonne en l'eglyse Saint Pol.

"For you I will found an abbey such
 that, when its day of dedication comes,
 if anyone appears who has betrayed his love,
 he will not find his way to the church."
Oh, what grief I feel!
For you I will become a nun at St. Paul's.

Bele Doette prist s'abaïe a faire,
 Qui mout est grande et adés sera maire;
 Toz cels et celes vodra dedanz atraire
 Qui por amor sevent peine et mal traire.
E or en ai dol!
*Por vostre amor devenrai nonne en l'eglyse
 Saint Pol.*

Lovely Doette proceeded to build her abbey,
 which is very large and will grow larger;
 she wants to draw all men and women there
 who know the pain and woe of love.
Oh, what grief I feel!
For love of you I will become a nun at St. Paul's.

-----oOo-----

*Domna, pos vos ai chausida,
fatz me bel semblant,
qu'ieu sui a tota ma vida
a vostre comand.*

A vostre comand serai
a tots los jorns de ma via,
e ja de vos no'm partrai
per deguna outra que sia,
qu'Erecs non amet Enida
tant ni'Iseuts Tristan
com ieu vos, domna grasida,
qu'ieu am ses engan.

*Lady, since I have chosen you,
be kind to me,
for I am, with all my life,
at your command*

I will be at your command
all the days of my life,
and I will never leave you
for any other that may be.
For Erec did not love Enide,
nor Iseult Tristan,
as I do you, gracious lady,
whom I love without deceit.

-----oOo-----

Please note that we play instruments with many gut strings which are very sensitive to changes of temperature and humidity. For this reason we ask for your patience if we have to pause occasionally to re-tune.



Gaita is an Edinburgh-based music ensemble dedicated to playing music from the courts of medieval Europe, in particular those of Scotland, France, Spain and Italy.

Gaita is Old Occitan for 'watchman' - such as a guard of town walls who was usually equipped with a horn or a shawm for raising the alarm. The Gaita is a stock character in the genre of Troubadour song called the 'Alba' (dawn song). He guards a tower where two lovers spend the night and alerts them of any intruders (usually the jealous husband). The same word in English became the 'Waite' - a member of a town band. The association with loud instruments also led to the current use of Gaita as the name of a North African shawm and for some Spanish and Balkan bagpipes.

www.gaita.co.uk

S'anc fuy belha ni prezada,
 ar suy. d'aut en bus tornada:
 qu'az an vilan suy donada,
 tot per sa gran manentia;
 e murria
 s'ieu fin amic non avia
 cuy disses mo marrimen
 e gaita plazen
 que me fes son d'alba.

Eu sui tant cortesa gaita
 q'ieu non vuoill sia desfaita
 leials amors adreig feita:
 per qe.m don garda del dia,
 si venria;
 e drutz que jai ab s'amia
 prenda comjat franchamen,
 baisan e tenen,
 q'ieu crit qan vei l'alba.

S'ieu en nulh chastel gaitava
 ni fals'amors I reignava,
 fals sia ieu si non celava
 lo jorn aitan cum poiria
 car volria
 partir falsa drudaria;
 et entre la leial gen
 gait ieu leialmen
 e crit qan vei l'alba.

Be.m platz longa nuoitx escura,
 el temps d'ivern que plus dura;
 e non lais ges per freidura
 q'ieu leials gaita non sia
 tota via,
 per tal que segur estia
 fis drutz qan pren gauzimen
 de dompna valen:
 e crit qan vei l'alba.

Ja per gabs ni per menaza
 que mos mals maritz me faza
 no mudarai qu'eu non jaza
 ab non amic tro c'al dia:
 car seria
 desconoissenz vilania
 qui partria malamen
 son amic valen
 de si tro qu'al l'alba.

If before I was beautiful and of good reputation
 now I am turned from high to low:
 for I am given in marriage to a churlish man,
 all because of his great wealth;
 and I should die
 if I did not have a noble lover
 to whom I could tell my distress,
 and pleasing watchman
 to sound the dawn for me.

I am such a courtly watchman
 that I do not wish that loyal love,
 properly contracted, should be undone:
 therefore I stand guard for the day,
 if it should come;
 and may the lover who is lying with his love
 take his leave nobly,
 kissing and embracing,
 for I call when I see the dawn.

If I kept watch in any castle
 and false love reigned there,
 may I be false too if I did not conceal
 the day as far as possible,
 for I should wish
 to sever false loving;
 while amongst loyal people
 I watch loyally,
 and call when I see the dawn.

A long dark night pleases me greatly,
 and especially in the season when it lasts longest,
 and I do not desist at all because of the cold
 from being a loyal watchman
 always,
 so that a noble lover may be secure
 when he receives the pleasures
 of a worthy lady:
 and I call when I see the dawn.

Never for any taunts or threats
 that my wicked husband may make to me
 will I leave off lying
 with my lover until daylight;
 for it would be
 ungrateful and base
 if anyone wickedly sent away
 their worthy lover
 before the dawn.

Au renouvel du tens que la florete

Nest pae ces prez et indete et blanchete,
Trouvai soz une coudrete coillant violete
Dame qui resenbloit fee et sa compaignete,
A qui el se dementiot
De deus amis qu'ele avoit
Au quel ele ert amie:
Ou au povre qu'est cortois,
Preuz et larges plus que rois
Et biaux sanz vilanie,
Ou au riche qu'a assez avoir et manandie,
Mes en li n'a ne biaute ne sens ne cortoisie.

"Ma douce suer, mon conseil en creez:
Amez le riche, grant preu i avrez;
Car se vous volez deniers, vous en avrez assez;
Ja, de chose que il ait, mes soufrete n'avrez.
Il fet bon le rich'amer,
Q'il a assez a doner;
J seroie s'amie.
Se je lessoie mantel
D'escarlade por burel,
Je feroie folie;
Car li riches veut amer et mener bone vie,
Et li povres veut jöer sanz riens donner s'amie."

"Or ai oï ton conseil, bele suer,
Du rich'amer; ne.l feroi'a nul fuer!
Certes, ja n'iert mon ami par deseure mon cuer.
Dame qui a cuer joli ne.l feroit a nul fuer.
Dames qui vuelent amer
De bon'amor sanz fausser,
Comment que nus me die,
Ne doivent riens demander,
Pour nus qu'en sache parler,
Fors bons amor jolie.
Toutes fames je les hè, et Jhesus les maudie,
Qu'aient homme pour doner; c'est grant ribauderie.

"E! fine_Amor, tant m'avez oublïee
Que nuit ne jor ne puis avoir duree,
Tant m'a sa tres grant biauté taint'et descoloree;
Tant pens a li nuit et jor que tout'en sui müee.
Rosignol, va, si li di
Les maus que je sent pour li,
Et si ne m'en plaing mie;
Di li q'il avra m'amor,
Car plus bele ne meillor
De moi n'avra il mie;
Di li q'il avra assez puis que je sui s'amie,
Q'il ne lest pas pour deniers a mener boune vie."

At the return of the season when new flowers
india-blue and white blossom in the field,
I found, as they were gathering violets in a grove
a lady who looked like a fay and her companion,
with whom she was pondering
which one of two suitors
of hers to love:
the poor man who was refined,
upright, and generous even more than a king,
and flawlwessly handsome,
or else the rich man with money and land
but with no beauty or brains or refinement.

"Sister, my dear, trust my advice:
love the rich one; the benefit will be great,
for if money's what you want, you'll have a lot;
you'll never lack for anything he has.
It's good to love the rich man,
since he has much to give;
I would be his mistress.
If I gave up a cloak
of silk for homespun,
I'd be making a foolish mistake;
the rich man wants to enjoy life and love,
and the poor one wants to play but not pay."

"I've now heard your advice, dear sister,
to love the rich man. I'd never do it!
He'll never be my lover; my heart would refuse.
A lady with a lively heart would never do it.
Ladies who want to love
truly and sincerely,
whatever anyone may tell me,
mustn't ask for anything,
whatever anyone may say,
save true and lively love.
I hate all women - and Jesus curse them! -
who trade for love for money; that's plain
wantonness.

"Ah, true Love, you have so forgotten me
that I can't last through day or night,
so drained and wan has his beauty left me;
day and night I think of him so much that I'all
changed | Nightingale, go tell him
the pains that I feel because of him,
(and yet I have no complaint);
tell him that he shall have my love,
that he will never have a woman
better or more beautiful than I;
tell him that he will be rich with my love,
that money must not keep him from enjoyment."

Translation by Margaret Switten

Ja nuns hons pris ne dira sa raison
Adroitement, se dolantement non;
Mais par effort puet il faire chançon.
Mout ai amis, mais povre sont li don;
Honte i avront se por ma reançon
Sui ça deus yvers pris.

Or sai je bien de voir, certainement
Que je ne pris ne ami ne parent,
Quant on me faut por or ne por argent.
Mout m'est de moi, mes plus m'est de ma gent,
Qu'après ma mort avront reprochement
Se longuement sui pris.

N'est pas mervoille se j'ai le cuer dolant,
Quant mes sires met ma terre en torment.
S'il li membrast de nostre soirement
Que nos feïsmes andui communement,
Je sai de voir que ja trop longuement
Ne seroie ça pris.

Ce sevent bien Angevin et Torain
Cil bachelier qui or sont riche et sain
Qu'encombrent sui loing d'aus en autre main.
Forment m'aïdissent, mais or n'en oient grain.
De beles armes sont ore vuit li plain,
Por ce que je sui pris.

Chanterai por mon corage
Que je vueill reconforter,
Car avec mon grant damage
Ne vueill morir n' afoier,
Quant de la terre sauvage
Ne voi nului retorner
Ou cil est qui m' assoage
Le cuer quant j' en oi parler.
*Deus, quant criëront "Outree",
Sire, aidiez au pelerin
Por qui sui espöentee,
Car felon sunt Sarrazin.*

Souffrerai en tel estage
Tan que l voie rapasser.
Il est en pelerinage,
Dont Deus le lait retorner!
Et maugré tot mon lignage
Ne quier oçoison trover
D' autre face mariage;
Folz est qui j' en oi parler.
Deus, quant criëront...

-----oOo-----

No prisoner will speak his thoughts
clearly, if not to describe his suffering;
but for his efforts he can make a good song.
I have many friends, but their gifts are poor.
They will be shamed, if, for want of my ransom,
I am captive for two winters.

Now I see this perfectly;
that I should not value friend nor family,
when I am in need of gold or silver.
I worry for myself, but more for my people,
for after my death they will have the blame
If I am a prisoner long.

No wonder that my heart grieves
When my feudal lord torments my lands.
If he remembered our vow,
our fealty oath we swore together,
I see that I should not too long,
continue here a prisoner.

Know this well, men of Anjou and Touraine,
who are rich and safe,
that I am confined far away, in other's hands.
You could aid me, but not a grain of gold comes.
The fair lists will not see valour
While I am a prisoner here.

-----oOo-----

I will sing for the sake of my heart,
which I want to console;
with all my suffering
I don't want to go mad or die,
as I see no one come back
from that brutish land
where he is whose name calms
my heart when I hear it spoken.
*God, when they shout "Forward!",
help, Lord, the pilgrim
for whom I tremble,
for the Saracens are ruthless.*

I will suffer just as I am
until I see him come home.
He is on a pilgrimage,
and God grant he return!
Despite my whole family,
I have no wish to find
another man to marry;
anyone I hear suggest it is a fool.
God, when they shout ...

De ce sui au cuer dolente
Que cil n' est en cest païs
Qui si sovent me tormente;
Je n' en ai ne gieu ne ris.
Il est biaux et je sui gente.
Sire Deus, por que.l feïs?
Quant l' une a l' autre atalente,
Por coi nos as departis?
Deus, quant criëront...

De ce sui en bone atente
Que je son homage pris;
Et quant la douce ore vente
Qui vient de cel douz païs
Ou cil est qui m' atalente,
Volentiers i tor mon vis;
Adont m' est vis que je.l sente
Par desoz mon mantel gris.
Deus, quant criëront...

De ce fui mout deceüe
Que ne fui au convoier.
Sa chemise qu' ot vestue
M' envoia por embracier.
La nuit, quant s' amor m' argüe,
La met delez moi couchier,
Toute nuit a ma char nue,
Por mes malz assoagier.
Deus, quant criëront...

What pains my heart
is that he is not here at home
for whom I ache so much;
I have no delight or laughter.
He is handsome and I, lovely.
Lord God, why have you done this?
With so much desire for each other,
why have you parted us?
God, when they shout ...

What gives me hope
is that I received his homage;
and when the sweet breeze blows
from that sweet land
where he is whom I desire,
I gladly turn to face it;
then I seem to feel his touch
under my grey cloak.
God, when they shout ...

What leaves me disappointed
is that I was not there to escort him out.
The pilgrim's tunic that he wore
he then sent back for me to caress.
At night, harried with love for him,
I lay it out beside me
for the night, next to my naked flesh,
to soothe away my pain.
God, when they shout ...

Translation by Margaret Switten

-----oOo-----

L'amours, dont sui espris,
Me semont de chanter,
Si chant con hons surpris
Qui ne puet amender.
Petit i ai conquis
Mais bien me puis vanter:
Se li plaist, j'ai apris
Loiaument a amer.
A cel sunt mi penser
Et seront a touz dis;
Ja nes en quier oster.

Love, with whom I am besotted,
makes me sing,
so I sing like a man surprised,
who cannot stop.
I have gained a little
so I can boast,
if I please, I have learned
to love loyally.
With her are my thoughts
and always will be;
I will never move them.

Deus, pour coi m'ocirroit,
quant ainc ne li menti?
Se ja joianz en soit
li cuers, dont je la pri!
Je l'aim tant et couvoit
et cuit pour voir de li,
que chascuns qui la voit
la doie amer ausi.
Qu'est ce, Deus, que je di?
Ce estre ne porroit:
Nus ne l'amerroit si!

Plus bele ne vit nus,
Ne de cors ne de vis;
Nature ne mist plus
De biauté en nul pris.
Pour li maintendrai l'us
d'Eneas et Paris,
Tristan et Pyramus,
Qui amerent jadis,
Et serai ses amis.
Or pri Deu de lasus
Qu'a lor fin soie pris.

God, why would she slay me
when I had not been disloyal?
If only my heart were already rejoicing
In whom I take joy!
I love her so and gaze longingly
and think of catching sight of her,
for all who see her
must also love her.
What am I saying, God?
If I could not do so,
nobody would love her so!

More beautiful none has seen
not in body nor in face;
Nature has never given more
Beauty to no one.
For her I shall continue as
did Eneas and Paris,
Tristan and Pyramus,
Who all loved long ago,
And now I am their companion.
Now I pray to God above
That I will ever be so.

-----oOo-----

Script by Cait Webb

Programme by Chris Elmes

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Margaret Switten translations from *Songs of the Troubadours and Trouvères*, ed., Rosenberg, Switten & le Vot, Garland Publishing, NY and London, 1998

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