



(LEMS 8001)

Troubadour & Trouvere Songs Music of the Middle Ages Vol. 1 The 12th & 13th Centuries - Six Chansons Courtoise

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Seymour Barab, Viol

"A, fayre lady, who love I the? For thou art fayrst of all othir, and as yet sheudyst thou never love to nother bounte. Parde, and yet, alas! must I love the. And I may not blame the, fayre lady, for myne eyen caused me. And yet to love the I am but a foole..."

This quotation from Sir Thomas Mallory's "Mort d'Arthur" illustrated the medieval theory of poetry, or at least of lyric poetry, and lyric poetry in the middle ages was generally synonymous with song. It was believed that only under such conditions of love could true song originate; and likewise, the poet was thought of as a man who suffered from love in spite of himself.

The theory is the basis of troubadour poetry and music, perhaps the greatest repertory of secular song ever produced in Europe. It is an intensely humane literature concerned almost exclusively with love, and with the refinement, through love, of human sensibilities. It is important to understand these songs in this way. For, since the

troubadours conceived of love as the greatest force in the perfection of human sensibility, of the poet as a man suffering through love, and of lyric poetry as a love complaint, so then these songs are part of a serious pursuit, and, at their best, a profound expression of deeply humane beliefs underlies them. They are not, as is sometimes stated, the conventional frivolous pastime of a leisure class.

The earliest troubadour of whom we have any record, Guilehm, VII Count of Poitiers and IX Duke of Aquitaine, was born in 1071; the last, Guiraut Riquier died in 1294. So we may say that the troubadour period lasted some two hundred years, from the end of the 11th century to the end of the 13th centuries. The movement began in southern France, in the language of Provençal. During the first century of this activity, it was centered around the great courts of that area. Later troubadours lived at the courts of northern France and England, Italy, Pain, and Sicily. But always troubadour activity centered around a court - the troubadours were either nobles themselves or men attached to a noble's court and under his protection - for only the court at that time could provide the conditions necessary for these men to conduct such an experiment in humane art and thought. With the gradual collapse of these courts the troubadours first scattered throughout Europe, and finally the movement came to an end altogether. The principal cause of this collapse was the series of crusades, beginning in 1209, against the Albigenian heretics, a religious party to which most of the southern French nobility belonged. With the final defeat of the Albigenians, that particular social structure in southern France on which the troubadours depended and which they sought to perfect came to an end.

The trouveres are, generally speaking, the northern French counterpart to the southern troubadours. Their poetry is written in the langue d'oïl, and begins to appear about half a century after the troubadours. The crusades to the Holy Land in the early 12th century brought the northern French into contact with the culture of southern France; and it is probable that through this contact (as well as general commerce) the trouvere movement began. And quite possibly the personal influence of Eleanor of Aquitaine, granddaughter of Guilehm IX (the first of the troubadours) aided in the movement of these ideas northward. Eleanor married Louis VEE, King of France, in 1137 and invited troubadours to her court in Paris; and again in 1152, when she divorced Louis and married Henry, Duke of Anjou, troubadours were welcomed at her court. Further, Henry became King of England in 1154, and once more troubadours were invited to follow this remarkable lady. Her son, Richard the Lion-Hearted, practiced the troubadour art himself, and her daughter, Marie Countess of Champagne, became a notable patroness of trouveres. The trouveres did not become as

intimately connected with northern French life in the way that the troubadours had become in southern France, and when, toward the end of the 13 century, interest in these forms began to decline and the forms to change, the movement died out, and quite suddenly, around the year 1280, though it did persist somewhat longer under different circumstances at the Norman French court in Sicily.

The music of both the troubadours and trouveres derives from liturgical chant and the popular song of the time, but differs from chant in its adherence to poetic metrics and from popular song in the quality and subtlety of its organization. Each song has one melody which is repeated for each stanza of the text, the form of the melody being determined by the form of the stanza, as regards length of line and placement of cadence. The use of repetition and refrain in the melodic structure varies from song to song, and in some cases does not appear at all, the stanza being "composed through".

The earliest song of this record, "Can vei la lauzeta mover", (Track 4) by Bernard de Ventadour, is a case of a "composed through" stanza. Bernard was born in 1145, the son of servants at the castle of Elbe II, Viscount of Ventadour. His Provencal biography tells us that he was raised to be a poet and musician by the Viscount, but was exiled from Ventadour when Elbe discovered that his wife and Bernard were lovers. Bernard went to the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine in Anjou, and then went to the court of Raymond, Count of Toulouse, where he remained until the count's death. He spent the last years of his life in the monastery of Dalon where he died in 1195. He was the most famous troubadour of his time, though only 45 of his poems and 19 of the melodies for these have survived. "Can vie la lauzeta mover", perhaps the most celebrated of his songs, receives this tribute by way of paraphrase from Dante:

Like the small lark who wantons free in air,
First singing and then silent, as possessed
By the sweetness that contented her,
So seemed to me the image, deep impressed
With the Eternal Pleasure, by whose will
Each thing in its own nature is expressed. (Paradiso: Canto XX, lines 73-78 - Binyon)

The exact dates of Arnaut Daniel ("Chanson do.ill mot son plan e prim", (Track 3) are not known, but he was writing in the late 12th century. Born at Ribeyrac in Perigord, he "forsook his learning and became a jongleur"-so says his Provencal biographer. (A jongleur was a professional itinerant singer.) He is known to have visited the courts of Paris and Aragon, and was for an extended period a member of the

court of Richard I of England. In the Purgatorio Dante "finds" Arnaut in the Seventh Circle, among the lustful. Nevertheless he says of him: 'O brother, said he, 'He who is singled by My finger (he pointed to a spirit in front) Wrought better in the mother-tongue than I.

Whether in verses of love or in prose romaunt
He surpassed all; and let the fools contend
Who make him of Limoges of more account. (Purgatorio: XXVI, 188-123)

The gentleman of Limoges Dante is anxious to discredit here is Guiraut de Borneil ("Reis glorios, verais lums e clartatz", (Track 1), called by his contemporaries, "master of the troubadours". He was born in Limousin at the castle of the viscount of Limoges around 1150, and is known to have visited the Spanish court of Alfonso VIII, and to have participated in the third Crusade as a member of the court of Richard I. He is said to have remained for a year in Antioch at the court of Boemund III. His Provençal biography tells us he passed the winters in schools and the summers in travelin from court with two jongleurs to sing his songs.

He died about 1220. There are 80 of his poems extant, but only 4 have melodies. The "Reis Glorios" recorded here is an aubade, or morning song, sung at dawn to two lovers who have spent the night together to warn them of the daybreak. It is perhaps the most famous of all medieval aubades.

Guiraut Riquier ("Ples de tristor, marritz e doloiros", (Track 2), the last of the troubadours, was born about 1230 in Narbonne, and died in 1297. He spent much of his life Spain, partly at the court of Alfonso the learned who compiled the magnificent collection of 13th century Spanish Cantiglas to the Virgin Mary. Guiraut laments in his songs the of an era, saying that the times had turned barbarous and that he had been born too late. The recorded here is a planh, a funeral elegy, written on the death of the Viscount Amalric of Narbonne. Of Guiraut's work we have 89 poems - 48 with their melodies.

The two trouveres on this record, Gace Brule ("Cil qui d'amor me conseil", Track 6), and Gautier d' Epinal ("Commencements de dolce saison bele", Track 5) were both active in the late 12th century, though their exact dates are not known. Gace was from Champagne, and is spoken of by his contemporaries as a knight as well as a trouvère; Gautier lived at the court of Philip of Alsace, Count of Flanders. Little information other than these few details of their lives had come to us.

Troubadour and trouvère songs are preserved in several manuscripts dating from around the 14th century which are found, for the most part, in the libraries of Paris and Milan. The melodies are put down in a notation that shows exactly the pitch of each note, but gives little idea of the rhythm intended. Various theories have been advanced in modern times concerning the interpretation of this rhythm. The songs presented here have been transcribed into modern notation according to the medieval rhythmic modes, the selection of the mode being determined by the meter of the text. The transcriptions of the songs by Bernard de Ventadour and Gace Brule are from the New Oxford History of Music, Volume II, in the article on medieval song by J.A. Westrup; that of Guiraut Riquier is by Higinio Angles, in the Rivista Manuscrit du Roi; those of Guiraut de Borneil and Arnaut Daniel are by myself. The original manuscripts have no indication as to how these songs were accompanied. The accompaniments for viol used here are also my own. Notes by Saville Clark

TRACKS:

1. Reis Glorios - 5:21
2. Ples de tristor, marritz e doloiros - 12:29
3. Chanson do-ill mot son plan e prim - 6:16
4. Quand Vei La Laudeta Mover - 8:46
5. Commensmens de Dolce Saison Bele - 7:55
6. Cil Qui d'Amours - 8:07

SIX CHANSONS COURTOISES

These six chansons, although written in two different languages, are all examples of the same poetic movement. This movement, traditionally designated as courtois lyricism, was born in France sometime during the first half of the twelfth century and lasted until close to the end of the thirteenth century. It represents perhaps the most literary expression of the chivalrous ideal which inspired feudal aristocracy then at the peak of its power in Western Europe.

Recent works on the origins of French lyric poetry, and especially the remarkable studies by Reto Bezzola, lead us to see a characteristic manifestation of "medieval humanism" in the appearance and evolution of the art courtois. In other words, it is impossible today to fully comprehend and evaluate the history of French lyric poetry from 1100 to 1300 without seeing it in the context of the cultural framework of the High Middle Ages.

However, about 1100, one of the great nobles of southwestern France, Guillaume, count of Poitiers and duke of Aquitaine (1071-1127), wrote extraordinarily beautiful chansons in his native dialect, limousin.

Under his influence there originated a school of lyric poetry whose members were known as troubadours. The name troubadour was later applied to any song-writer using a southern dialect. The troubadours were mostly from the southwestern and central provinces of France. They employed and perfected the exquisite lyric forms of the so-called "popular" poetry. Their main originality lay in the fact that, in opposition to the other French writers of the period who remained strictly anonymous, they signed their works and took pride in them. This practice seems to be derived from the Roman tradition of individualism which was still prevalent in the *pays de droit écrit* in the French Kingdom.

After 1140, the troubadours started to develop in their poems complex themes of love which can also be found in the romances (stories in verse) written about the same time in *langue d'oïl* dialects. Finally both troubadours and romancers established a theory of love which is one of the basic features of medieval thought and art. The central concept of this theory is that love binds the partners through reciprocal oaths. Consequently the lover must accomplish special "prowesses" in order to fulfill the promises he implicitly made in electing his lady. But in accepting her lover's homage, the lady commits herself to mercy and fidelity. Some historians of the doctrine of *courtoisie* have stated that love can be considered as an invention of the Middle Ages.

The sources of this philosophy are extremely diversified. Here are some of them: (1) the religious content of oath in the ritual of knighthood; (2) the change of status for women caused by the Crusades; (3) the devotion to the Virgin Mary propagated by St. Bernard; (4) the discovery and imitation of Hellenistic tales of fateful love by northern writers; (5) the Celtic mythology fabricated by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (1137), and (6) historic episodes, such as the adventure of Heloise and Abelard (1113). Jaufre Rudel was probably the first troubadour *courtois*.

Between 1160 and 1200 this school of troubadours *courtois* included a rather surprising number of important poets: Bernard de Ventadour, one of the true masters of medieval lyricism; Giraut de Bornelh, and uninspired but superb technician of prosody; Bertrand de Born, a polemic more preoccupied with political matters than the amorous ones; Peire Vidal, a skillful parodist of the *rhétorique courtoise*; Guy d'Ussel; Folquet de Marseille; and the most modern of them all, the virtuoso Arnaut Daniel. After 1180, troubadour poetry shows for obvious reasons, the linguists have arbitrarily classified the many dialects spoken in France at that time under two types of Romance languages: the *langue d'oïl* (from the Latin affirmative, *hoc ille*),

including the dialects spoken north of the Loire, and the langue d'oc (hoc), including those spoken south of this river. In order to appreciate the artificiality of this geographic distribution, we must realize that we do not correspond to any particular system of spelling, and that the borders of all these linguistic regions were very indefinite. One of the langue d'oïl dialects, the francien, in use in Ile-de-France and at the king's court, tended to predominate as the literary language (cf. the series of epics called *chansons de geste*). After 1200 troubadours are only colorless disciples and archaic plagiarists of the great langue d'oc poets of the previous century. It should be underlined that they had slowly lost their aristocratic audiences, thus their means of substance. The social structure of the country was in complete transformation because of the rise of the middle class. Moreover, the political enlargement and centralization of the "Crown Demesne" brought about by Philip Augustus (Philip II) ruined the southern nobility among whom the troubadours had found so many of their patrons.

Until at least 1160 the langue d'oïl poets remained obstinately anonymous, or, in the case of the romanciers, carefully concealed their personal feelings. The first trouveres, who were somewhat the northern equivalents of the troubadours, seem to have appeared at the court of Champagne. They soon formed one of the richest poetic schools ever known in France. The trouveres can be classified in two very different categories. The first category includes the trouveres courtois (Blondel de Nesle, Gace Brule, Guy de Coucy, Huon d'Oisy, Conon de Bethune, etc.), who wrote in the tradition of the romanciers and troubadours. The last trouvère of this type is perhaps the great Thibaut IV, king of Navarre, who died in 1253. The second category includes only bourgeois poets (Colin Muset, Adam de la Halle, Rutebeuf, etc.), who considered the doctrine courtoise either as a static code of poetic laws or as an object for social satire. After the *Roman de la Rose*, written by Guillaume de Lorris between 1225 and 1240, the cult of woman as formulated by troubadours and trouveres inspired less and less lyric poems and more and more cold and tiresome treatises in verse. This didactic poetry which lasted until the sixteenth century unhappily transformed the fresh and genuine imagery of early French lyric poetry into clichés.

Note:

1. That there is a strange parallelism between the evolution of the Romanesque and Gothic styles in art and the history of the courtois lyricism;
2. That the troubadours wrote in langue d'oc and not in provençal. The provençal spoken at that time was only one of the southern

dialects. The langue d'oc of the troubadours was a literary and courtly language created from the dialects of southwestern France.

3. That the trouveres wrote in old French and not in langue d'oïl: the differences between the purely French dialects were limited to local ways of pronunciation and some provincial idioms when the trouveres started to write;
4. That French lyric poetry did not originate from langue d'oc poetry; but, on the contrary, that the so-called provençal lyricism can be understood only as a particular development within the history of French poetry from 1050 to 1300. The chanson was a minor poetic form according to the literary standards of the twelfth century - a fact which explains the rapid ageing of the langue d'oc;
5. That the forms used by all the courtois poets were basically French and in many cases came from the northern provinces;
6. That there is no apparent connection between the death of the langue d'oc as a literary language and the crusades against the heretical sect predominating in the Toulouse and Albi areas, the Cathari.

The texts are those established by the following scholars: Alfred Jeanroy and Jean Audiau ("Reis glorios, verais lums e clartatz"), Joseph Anglade (Ples de tristor, marritz e doloïros"), Rene Lavaud ("Chanson do.illmot son plan e prim"), Alfred Jeanroy and Jean Audiau ("Can vei la lauzeta mover"), Albert Pauphilet and Regine Pernoud ("Commencemens de dolce saison bele"), and Gedeon Hiet (Cil qui d'amor me conseille").

George Guy

1 GIRAUT DE BORNEIL

"Reis glorios, verais lums e clartatz
Deus poderos, Senher, si a vos platz,
Al meu companh siatz fizels aiuda,
Qu'en non lo vi, pois la noitz fon venguda;
Et ades sera l'alba."

"Bel companho, si dormetz o veillatz?
Non dormetz plus, suau vos ressidatz,
Q'en Orien vei l'estela creguda
Qu'amena. I iorn, qu'eu l'ai ben coneguda;
Et ades sera l'alba."

"Bel companho, en chantan vos apel:

Non dormetz plus, qu'en aug chantar l'auzel,
Que vai queren lo iorn per lo boscatge;
Et ai paor que. I gilos vos assatge;
Et ades sera l'alba."

"Bel companho , issetz al fenestrel
Et regardatz las ensenhas del cel;
Conoisseretz [si.us](#) soi fizels messatge;
Si non on faitz, vostres n'er lo dampnatge;
Et ades sera l'alba."

"Bel companho, pos me parti de vos,
Eu no.m dormi ni m.moc de genelhos,
Anz preguei Dieu, lo filh Santa Maria,
Que.us mi rendes per leial companhia;
Et ades sera l'alba."

"Bel companho, la foras als peiros
Mi preiavatzqu'en no fos dormihos,
Enans veilles tota noit tro al dia;
Ara [no.us](#) platz mos chans ni ma paria;
Et ades sera l'alba."

GIRAUT DE BORNEIL

"Glorious monarch truth and light and light most true,
Powerful God, my Lord, I beg of you
To be a faithful aid to my companion
Whom I have not seen since night has fallen;
And soon it will be dawn.

Fair companion, do you wake or sleep?
Sleep no more, but sweetly rise you up,
For in the East I see the star grow bright
That brings the day, I recognize its light,
And soon it will be dawn.

Fair companion, singing I call to you:
Sleep no more, I hear the lark sing, who
Searching for light beneath the branches flies;
And I fear lest the jealous one take you by surprise;
And soon it will be dawn.

Fair companion, sit beside the window
And see the banners that the heavens show;
You will know if I as messenger am faithful;
If you do not, on you shall vengeance fall;

And soon it will be dawn.

Fair companion, since we left each other,
I have not slept, but have stayed kneeling here,
Praying to God, who is Saint Mary's son,
That he my loyal companion might return;
And soon it will be dawn.

Fair companion, there upon the steps
You begged me that I should not fall asleep,
But stay awake all night until the morning-
Now are my friendship and my song displeasing
And soon it will be dawn.

2 GUIRAUT RIQUIER

Planch, que fe Gr. Riquier der senhor de
Narbona, l'an MCCLXX (en dezembre)
Ples de tristor, marritz e doloiros
Comens est planch per lo dan remembrar

E per lo dol, que tart deu oblidar,
Que Narbones soste tant anoyssos
Per la greu mort del senhor de Narbona,
Del vestomt'En Amalric mo senhor,
Don due pus lonc temps e maior.

Qui senhor pert, aver deu gran dolor,
Quant l'a humil e franc, ses forsa far
El pot ab be a son voler menar,
Et es senhers naturals ab honor,
Doncx perdut l'a Narbones e Narbona,
Don deu esser totz le pobles ploros,
Quar elh era ;a pus nobla persona
Per dreg dever, que d'est lenage fos.

Si de poder estes tan autoros
Quon de dever fazen son benestar,
Fera de si per tot lo mon lalar
Per ardimen, per sen e per faitz bos,
Qu'ab Narbones tot so et ab Narbona
S'es d'enemicx honratz, don a lauzor
Elh e ses gens, qui liautatz razona;
Quar senhor an ab bona fe amor.

Anc nulh vil fag vergonhos ab follor
Ni ab enian nol vi hom comensar,

Ans s'es volgutz ab liautat menar,
Part son poder fazen faitz de valor,
E plazial tant le faitz de Narbona,
Qu'autres estars non l'era saboros,
Ni anc nulh temps ab voluntat fellona
A son poble non fon contrarios.

Dieus de salvar las armas poderos,
Per merce us prec, que denhetz perdonat,
Senher, suis platz, a l'arma e luec dar
En paradis entrels sans pres de vos

De mossenhor N Amalric de Narbona,
E son poble gardatz de deshonor
E son efans; aissi quon dreitz of dona,
Tengan em patz lur terra ses clamor.
Sis pessa ben le pobles de Narbona,
Quals dan li es la mortz de mossonhor,
Del conortar leu non a razon bona,
An l'a mout gran, qu'en sospir e qu'en plor.
Aissi cum suelh del senhor de Narbona
Chantar ab gaug, ne chanti ab dolor;
Quar l'ai perdut, de que ai ma persona
Ab marrimen plena de gran tristor.

GUIRAUT RIQUIER

A plaint, which Gr. Riquier made, for the Lord of Narbonne, in the
year MCCLXX (in December)
Sorrowful and grieving, full of pain,
I start this plaint, the damage to remember

And all the woe, which should not be forgotten,
Which in great anguish Narbonne doth sustain
By the unhappy death of the Lord of Narbonne,
The Viscount Sir Amalric who was my lord,
Whose death should sorrow bring to all good men
And to his people longer time and more.

Great pain is his who loses his good lord,
If he did not use force, was frank and humble,
And led men into good by his own will,
And if he was an excellent, honored lord.
Such loss sustain Narbona and Narbonne,
At which should the entire weep,
For he was surely the most noble person
For doing right, of all who speak this language.

Had he been given power that was as great
As was his willingness to work for good,
People through the world would celebrate
His boldness, his intelligence, and his good deeds;
Though he had but Narbona and Narbonne
He had his enemies' respect, whence glory
Is to him and to all his countrymen;
For lords who are so loved of love are worthy.

One never saw him do a shameful thing;
Foolish and vile, nor act dishonestly;
He wanted to do all things loyally,
as well as in all valorous deeds excelling,
And so loved everything about Narbonne
That other places were not sweet to him;
He never did on any occasion,
With crooked will, a crime against his people.

God, you who have the power to save souls,
I beg you, for mercy, that you deign to save,
Lord, if it pleases you, the soul (which give A place in Paradise
among the saints

Near you) of my Lord Amalric of Narbonne,
And that you guard his people from dishonor,
And guard his children, so that right be done,
That they their lands may hold in peace untroubled
Well may they consider, the people of Narbonne,
The injury of their lord's death, how deep;
No cause to bring them consolation,
But greatest cause that they should sigh and weep.
As formerly of my Lord of Narbonne
I sang with joy, so now with pain I sing,
For all my soul is filled, now he is gone,
With grief and with the greatest sorrowing.

3 ARNAUT DANIEL

Chanson do.ill mot son plan e prim
Farai puois que botono . ill vim
E l'aussor cim
Son de color
De mainta flor
E verdeia la fuoilla,
E.il chant [e.il](#) brail

Son a l'ombraill
Dels auzels per la bruoilla.

Pel "bruoill" aug lo chan e.l reffrim
E per tal que no.m fassa crim
Obre e lim
Motz de valor
Ab art d'Amor
Don non ai cor que.m tuoilla;
Anis si be.m faill
La sec a traill
On plus va mi s'orguoilla.

Val orguoill petit d'amador
que leu trabucha son seignor
Del luoc aussor
Jus al terraill
Per tal trebaill
Que de joi lo despuoilla;
Dreitz es lagrim
Et arda e rim
Que contra amor janguoilla.

Per janguoilla.ges [n.om](#) vir aillor,
Bona dompna, ves cui ador;
Mas per paor
Del devinaill,
Don jois trassaill,
Fatz semblan que [no.us](#) vuoilla;
C'anc no.ns gauzim
De lor noirim:
Mal m'es que lor acuoilla.

Si be m'acuoill tot a esdaill
Mos pesamens lai vos assaill;
Qu'ieu chant e vaill
Pel joi que.ns fim
Lai o.ns partim;
Dont sovens l'uoills mi muoilla
D'ira e de plor
E de dousor,
Car per joi ai que.m duoilla.

Ges no.m duoill d'amor don badaill
Ni no sec mesura ni taill;
Sol m'o egaill

Que ans no vim
Del temps Caim
Amador meins acuoilla
Cor trichador
Ni bauzador,
Per que mos jois capduoilla.

Bella, qui que.i.s destuoilla,
Arnautz drech cor
Lai [o.us](#) honor
Car votre pretz capduoilla.

ARNAUT DANIEL

A song with simple words and fine
I'll make because the willows bloom
And greatest heights
Have color now
From many a flower
And green are leafy branches,
And songs and cries
Are heard from birds
In shadows through the woodlands.

In woods I hear their song, refrain,
And so they cannot of me complain
I shape and refine
Good words of mine
By the art of Love,
Love which I'd not abandon;
In fact though He hides me
I trail Him more closely
The more He treats me proudly.

What is the pride of a lover worth?
It hurls the owner of it down
From the rooftops
To the dust
With pain that must
Deprive him of all pleasure;
He deserves to be forlorn,
Degraded, and torn,
Who offers Love reproaches.

It's not in reproach I go elsewhere,
Good lady, to whom I bow in prayer;
But in fear

Of gossips who make
Happy hearts quake,
I act as though I don't desire you.
We never gave
Those people what they crave;
I despise their every turn.

What though I turn in the wrong direction?
My thoughts fly instantly to you;
For I sing and am worthy
By that joy only
We had where we parted;
So that often my eyes are flooded
With tears and pain
And with sweetness too,
For it is joy I complain of.

Inattentiveness I complain not of,
Nor lack of form and measure in love;
But I had a fair return
For being a lover
Who, less than any other
Since the time of Cain, has welcomed
Lies in his heart
And cheating art,
Than Would my joy mount most high.

Beauty, no matter who fly,
Arnaut runs, true,
To honor you,
For your worth is most high.

3 ARNAUT DANIEL

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Who offers Love reproaches.

It's not in reproach I go elsewhere,
Good lady, to whom I bow in prayer;
But in fear
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I act as though I don't desire you.
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By that joy only
We had where we parted;
So often that my eyes are flooded
With tears and pain
And with sweetness too,
For it is joy I complain of.

Inattentiveness I complain not of,
Nor lack of form and measure in love;
But I had a fair return
For being a lover
Who, less than any other
Since the time of Cain, has welcomed
Lies in his heart
And cheating art,

Than Would my joy mount most high.

Beauty, no matter who fly,
Arnaut runs, true,
To honor you,
For your worth is most high.

4 BERNARD DE VENTADOUR

Can vei la lauzeta mover
De joi sas alas contra.I rai,
Que s'oblid'e.s laissa chazer
Per la doussor c'al cor li vai,
Ai! tan gran enveya m'en ve
De cui qu'en veyà jauzion,
Meravilhas ai, car desse
Lo cor do dezirer no.m fon.

Ai, las! tan cuidava saber
D'amor, e tan petit en sai!
Car eu d'amar no.m posc tener
Celeis don ja pro non aural.
Tout m'a mo.cor, e tout m'a me,
E se mezeis'e tot lo mon;
E can se.m tolc, no.m laisset re
Mas dezirer e cor volon.

Anc non agui de me poder
Ni no fui meus de l'or en sai
Que.m laisset en sos olhs vezer
En un miralh que mout me plai.
Miralhs, pus me mirei en te,
M'an mort li sospir de preon,
C'aissi.m perdeicom perdet se
Lo bels Narcisus en la fon.

De las domnas me dezesper;
Ja mais en lor no.m fiarai;
C'aissi com las solh chaptener,
Enaissi las deschaptendrai.

Pois vei c'una pro m'en te
Vas leis que.m destrui e.m confon,
Totas las dopt'e las mescre,
Car be sai c'atretais se son.

D'aisso's fa be bemna parer
Mo donna, per qu'e.Ih o retrai,
Car no vol so c'om deu voler,
Et so c'om li deveda, fai.
Chazutz sui en mal merce,
Et al be fait co.I fols en pon;
E no sai per que m'esdeve,
Mas car trop puyei contra mon.

Merces es perduda, per ver,
(Et eu non o saubi anc mai),
Car cilh qui plus en degr'aver
No.n a ges; et on la querrai?
A! can mal sembla, qui la ve,
Qued aquest chaitiu deziron
Que ja ses leis non aura be,
Laisse morir, que no l'aon!

Pus ab midons no'm pot valer
Precs ni merces ni.I dreizh qu'en ai,
Ni a leis no ven a plazer
Qu'en l'am, ja mais no.Ih o dirai.
Assi.m part de leis e.m recre;
Mort m'a, e per mort li respon,
E vau m'en, pus ihI no.m rete,
Chaitius, en issilh, no sai on.

Tristans, ges no.n aures de me,
Qu'eu m'en vau, chaitius, no sai on.
De cantar me gic e.m recre,
E de joi d'amor m'escon.

4 BERNARD DE VENTADOUR
When I see the lark moving
It's joyous wings in a ray of sunlight,
Then forgetting itself and falling
Because of the joy pervading its heart,
Ah! then I feel great envy
For any who can be so happy!
I find it strange that instantly
My heart does not melt from longing.

Alas! I thought I was so knowing
In love, yet I so little know!
For I cannot refrain from loving
Her from whom I'll no profit show;

Of heart and soul she has deprived me
And of herself and all the world;
And when she took herself she left me
Only desire and a yearning heart.

Over myself I've had no power,
Nor have I been mine, since the hour
She let me look into her eyes
In a mirror that brought me blisses.
Mirror, since I have looked in you
I have killed myself with signs,
For I have lost myself as did
In the fountain fair Narcissus.

I despair of women;
Never will I trust them more-
As I valued them before
So now I'll scorn them.

Since I see that not one helps me
With her who destroys, confounds me,
All I fear and all distrust,
For they are all the same.

In this she shows herself a woman,
My lady, which is shy I blame her,
That she wants not what she should
And she does what ought to shame her.
I have fallen into bad grace
Like the fool on the bridge behaving,
Not knowing wherefore, save that I
have mounted to too high a place.

Assuredly, there is no pity
(Which till now I did not know)
For she who most should show it to me
Has none - to seek it where then go?
Ah, how unguessed from her appearance
that she this poor desiring creature
Who never can be glad without her
Let's die, and give him no assistance!

Since with my lady has no weight
Prayer nor pity, nor my right,
Nor is she pleased that I adore
Her, I shall speak of it no more;

Thus I renounce it and depart;
She has brought me to death, I answer from there,
And go off, since she holds me not,
Wretched, in exile, I know not where!

Tristan, you'll hear no more from me,
For I go off wretched, I know not where;
My songs I leave and hence forswear,
and from joy and love do hide me.

5 GAUTIER D'EPINAL

Commencements de dolce saison bele
Que je voi revenir,
Remembrance d'amor que me rapele,
Dont ja ne quiers partir,
Et la malvis, qui comence a tentir,
Et li douz sons del ruissel sur gravele,
Que je voi reslarcir,
Me font resouvenir
De la ou tuit mi bon desir
Sont et seront jusqu'au morir.

Tos temz m'est plus s'amors fresche et novele,
Quant recors a loisir
Ses yeux, son vis qui de goie sautele,
Son aller, son venir,
Son bel parler et son gent contenir,
Son douz regart qui vient d'une estincele
Mon cuer el cors ferir,
Sanz garde de perir.
Et quant je plus plaing et sospir,
Plus suis joianz, quant plus m'air.

Leals amors et fine et droituriere
M'a si a son voloir,
Que ne m'en puis partir ne traire attiere,
Ne je n'en ai pouvoir.
N'est pas amors, dont on se puet movoir,
Ne cil amis, qui en nule maniere
La bee a decevoir,
Or sai je bien de voir
Qu'ensemble convient remanoir
Moi et amor par estovoir.

Se li annuis de al gent malparliere
Ne me feist doloir,

Bien peusse avoir ma joie entiere
D'esgarder, de veoir.
Mais ce que n'es por eus ramntevoir
Conoissiez, bele, au vis et a chiere,
Que je n'os mon voloir
Dire por percevoir,
Mais bone dame doit savoir,
Conoissance et merci avoir.

Vos merci je, ma dolce dame chiere,
Qu'ains vos daigna seoir
Et qui'il vos plaist a oir ma priere,
Ainsi com je l'espoir;
Mais se merci m'i peust escheoir,
Granz fust ma joie et ma peine legiere
Sanz point de mescheoir.
Mais molt fait bien paroir
Amors, qu'ele me trait a hoir
De moi faire tot son valoir.

Chanonete, por voir
A celui, qui tant set valoir
Te feras en Flandres savoir.

Phelipe, a mon pouvoir
Pri amor que vos laist veoir
Ce que fins amanz doit avoir.

GAUTIER D' EPINAL

Begins the season beautiful and sweet
Which I see returning,
Remembrance of the love that calls me back
From which I seek no parting,
And the titmouse who begins his singing
And the sweet sounds of brooks on pebbles
Which I see once more clearing
Have set me thinking
On there where all my sweet longing
Is and shall be until dying.

Always I have more love both fresh and new
When at my ease remembering
Her eyes, her face dancing with joy,
Her going, her coming,
Her gentle modesty and lovely speaking
And her sweet look that issues from a star,

My heart and body wounding
Without a care for dying.
And the more I do of moaning and sighing,
The happier I am, the more aspiring.

Loyal Love and delicate and worthy
Has me so much at His mercy
That I can neither leave Him nor go back,
I cannot possibly.
It is not love when one loves changeably,
Nor are those friends who in any way
Behave deceitfully
Thus I see obviously
That we remain together fittingly,
Love and I, by necessity.

If worries caused by people who spoke falsely
did not make me unhappy,
I could have had joy lovely and entire
Only to look, to see.
But I need not recall it to their memory-
know, lady beautiful in face and body,
I wish not my desire
To speak that it may be
Perceived, but a good lady should be
Observant, and have mercy.

I thank you, dear, sweet lady
When you deign to smile on me
And when it pleases you to hear my prayer
As I would have it be.
But if you could grant me your pity,
Great would be my joy and light my pain,
Unfailingly,
But it seems frequently,
Love, that she deals with me only
To have me do all she commands me.

Little song, go see
Him of whose worth and quality
A trumpet in Flanders you'll be.

Philip, listen to me,
Pray Love that He let you see
What perfect lovers' rewards should be.

6 GACE BRULE

Cil qui d'amor me conseille,
Que de le doie partir,
Ne set pas ki me resveille,
ne quel sont mi grief souspir.
Petit a sens et voisdie,
Cil qui m'en vuet chastier,
N'onques n'ama nice folie,
Qui s'entremet dou mestier
Dont il ne se set aidier.

He blanche, clere et vermeille,
De vos sont tuit mi desir;
Car faites en tel merveille
Droiture et raison faillir.
Quant je vos vueill a amie
Droiz ne poroit otrier;
Se vostre grant cortoisie,
De gentil dousor garnie,
Ne me deigne conseilier;
Mar vos oi tant prisier.

Qui trop haut bee et teseille,
Maint desconfort puet oir,
Mes tres granz amors pareille
Ce que li plaist a sesir;
Sa tres haute seignorie
Fair monter et abessier.
Douce dame, vostre aie!
Ceste qui m'a en baillie,
Puet bien conduire et haucier
Mon outrageus desirier.

Povres cuers se desconseille
Et let de paor mortir;
Li vigoureux s'apareille
En biau confort de guerir.
Dame, mais rien que je die
Ne me vaut, car je sorquier;
S'un petit de vilainie,
Esprise de felonie,
Vos fet pitie desvoier,
Mar vos vi et ma mort quier.

Dedens mon cuer monte treille,

Toute preste de florir;
Granz amor fine et feeille
Cui la daigneroit joir.

Mes amors qui n'est joie
Ne puet cuer esleecier;
Bien voi se mort ne chastie
Ma volente, m'anemie,
Ne puis mon biau tort laissier
Ne mon outrage changier.

Bels Lorenz, felon, d'envie,
Me firent joie esloignier.
Meinte douce compeignie
Ont a lor tort departe
A mentir et a trichier,
Et rien ne s'en puet vangier.

Odins, cil cui amors lie,
Est cheuz en tel baillie,
que nus ne puet desliier,
Se pitiez ne vuet aidier.

6 GACE BRULE

Whoever tries to counsel me
That from love I ought to fly
Knows not what arouses me,
Nor how painfully I sign.
Little sense and vision has he
Who would subject me to correction
When his own life of love's been empty.
It is simply sheerest folly
To try to practise a profession
About which one knows nothing.

O white, fair, and rose,
My desires all come from you;
For such wonder you impose
That virtue fails me, and I reason too.
That I want you ardently
Does not give me rights, it's true;
Yet could not your great courtesy,
With gentle sweetnes mingling free,
Condescend to counsel me?
For all men speak in praise of you.

He who wishes for the skies
Much great hardship may endure;
But great love can equalize
Those it wishes to secure;
Its so noble mastery
Can abase or can raise higher.
Your understanding heart, sweet lady!
In whose power I am completely,
Can raise and can control entire
My unbearable desire.

Weaker hearts themselves dismay,
Allow themselves to die of fear;
Stronger hearts arm for the fray
With good hopes of coming clear.
Lady, nothing that I say
Does any good; I am not free.
If I've done some villainy
Which baseness did inspire in me,
Oh do not turn your pity away-
I die at sight of you, my lady.

In my heart a vine is growing
That will soon its blossom bear;
A perfect love that's flourishing
For any who would take pleasure there

But a love that is not joy
Cannot make the heart go free;
If death do not my will destroy
And make me my own enemy,
I cannot leave my pain's sweet sting,
Nor ever change my suffering.

Fair Lawrence, crimes, done covetously,
have kept joys away from me.
Encounters with sweet company
Have concluded painfully
Through cheating and dishonesty,
And there's no excuse for me.

Odin, he whom love doth bind
Is imprisoned in such kind
That he never can be free
Lest he pity's help doth find.

English verse translations by KENNETH KOCH

Russell Oberlin, Thomas Hunter professor of music emeritus and director of the Collegium Musicum at Hunter College, is an internationally acclaimed singer widely recognized as America's foremost countertenor. A graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, Oberlin was founding member of the legendary New York Pro Musica. He had recorded extensively, given recitals, and appeared as soloist with leading orchestras throughout this country and abroad. Operatic roles include appearances at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where he sang the part of Oberon in the London premiere of Benjamin Britten's "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream." A senior Fulbright research scholar, Oberlin had taught and lectured extensively in the U.S. and England.

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