

La Domna Ditz: Liner notes

Women are portrayed very rigidly in the traditional (male-authored) courtly love literature: a lady is virtuous, demanding, and unattainable — and usually complained about whether she withholds her affection or grants it. These women are more like the figures in stained-glass windows than real people. However, women also contributed to this literature, and their self-portrayals are more varied. It is these women that I want to show. The powerful Comtessa de Dia states plainly her desire to sleep with someone other than her husband (“Estat ai en greu cossirier”) and advises women not to worry about court gossips (“Ab ioi et ab ioven m’apais”). Clara d’Anduza rages about her lack of power: her husband prevents her from seeing her beloved. And Na Castelloza is neurotic, stealing a man’s glove to pretend that he has given her his token (“Ia de chantar non degra aver talan”). Women are lusty (“Quant ce vient en mai ke rose est panie”) and vain (“Ab greu cossire et ab greu marrimen”). They grieve (“Bele Doette,” “Ab lo cor trist environat d’esmay”) and, possibly, court other women (“Na Maria, pretz e fina valors”).

Most of these songs are by trobairitz — women troubadours, living in the south of France and writing in Occitan. I have, however, included two trouvère pieces, written in French, from northern France. The two trouvère pieces may have been written by men, but they express alternative views of women, so I included them. (And Bele Doette is too beautiful to leave out.)

The trobairitz repertoire poses a significant difficulty for the performer. While a number of trobairitz lyrics have been preserved, only one melody is left to us: La Comtessa de Dia’s “A chantar m’er de so qu’ieu non volria.” However, it was not uncommon for medieval composers to write new lyrics to old melodies (“contrafacts”). Like many performers, I have chosen to use contrafacts where I can and to write my own settings where contrafacts are unavailable.

In addition to the lack of extant melodies, there are the challenges inherent in much early medieval music: rhythms are unspecified; no accompaniment is written out. We have tried as best we can to adopt a historically-informed approach to this music. It is believed that the rhythm is fluid for most songs, driven by the flow of the words. If there was instrumental accompaniment (and many scholars believe there was), it was improvised. While Peter (vielle) wrote notes and reminders for himself, he has never played the accompaniment in quite the same way twice: this recording represents a frozen moment. What we present is not a reproduction of medieval practice, but we have made choices that make sense to us as musicians, guided by modern scholars. And through all of this, I hope the stories shine through.

– Robin Snyder

Lyrics and translations

Ab greu cossire et ab greu marrimen (Anonymous/Snyder)

Ab greu cossire et ab greu marrimen
planh e sospire et ab perilhos turmen,
can me remire ab pauc lo cor no.m fen,
ni mos huelhs vire que gart mos vestimens

In heavy grief, in heavy dismay,
and in dreadful pain, I weep and sigh.
When I gaze at myself, my heart all but cracks,
and I nearly go blind when I look at my clothes

que son ricx e onratz
e ab aur fi frezatz
e d'argen mealhatz,
ni regart ma corona;
l'apostoli de Roma
volgra fezes cremar
qui nos fay desfrezar.

Sesta costuma ni sest establiment
non tenra gaire, c'an fag novelament,
car lo rey Iacme no foron a prezen
ni l'apostoli, c'absolva.l sagrament,
car nostres vestirs ricx
an nafrazt e aunitz;
qi o tractet sia marritz,
per que cascuna entenda
que non port vel ni benda
mais garlandas de flors
en estieu per amors.

Coras que vengua lo rey nostre senhor
que es semensa de pretz e de valor,
per merce.l prenda c'auia nostra clamor
de la offensa que fan sieu rendador,
que.ls vestirs an nafrazt
e desencadenatz
e desenbotonatz
per que nostras personas
ne van pus vergonhozas
prec que sian tornatz
per vos, franc rey onratz.

Senhors dauraires e los dauriveliars,
donas e donzelas que es de lur mestier,
a l'apostoli mandem un messatgier
que escumenie cosselhs e cosselhiers
e los fraires menors
en son en grans blasmors,
e los prezicadors
e selh de penedensa
ne son en malvolensa
e li autre reglar
c'o solon prezicar.

Vai, sirventesca, al bon rey d'Arago
e a la papa que.l sagrament perdo,
car vilanesca an fag, si Dieus be.m do,
e ribaudesca, nostre marit felo;
[missing lines]
la sentura m'esclaija
que yeu solia senchar,
lassa! no l'aus portar.

Lassa, non l'aus vestir!
Lo cor me vol partir,
[Lo cor me vol partir]
e non es maravilha.
Senhors, faitz me esclavina
que aitan l'am portar
can vestir ses frezar.

(rich and noble,
trimmed with fine gold,
worked with silver)
or look at my crown.
May the Pope in Rome
send him to the fire
who untrims our clothes.

I will not observe this custom,
this law they've just made,
for Iacme the King wasn't there,
nor was the Pope; let the order be lifted;
they've harmed and dishonored
our rich clothing.
May the law's author suffer
to see every woman resolve
not to wear veil or wimple
but garlands of flowers
in the summer for love.

Whenever our lord the King may come
(from him comes all merit)
let pity move him to hear our outcry
against the offense brought on by his stewards,
who have torn from our clothing
its chains
and its buttons.
See that our persons
are no longer shamed:
pray, have them restored
to us, high, honored King.

Let us, lord goldsmiths and jewelers,
and ladies and girls who are of their trade,
ask the Pope in a message
to excommunicate council and councilmen,
and the friars minor,
who are greatly to blame for this,
the preachers
and penitentials
who show their ill-will in it,
and other regulars
accustomed to preach it.

Go, sirventesca^a, to the good King of Aragon
and to the Pope; let them undo the law,
for — as God grant me grace — our ignoble husbands
have done a vile deed.
[missing lines]
The girdle I used to fasten
dismays me. Alas!
I dare not wear it.

Alas, I dare not put it on.
My heart feels like breaking,
[my heart feels like breaking.]
and it's no wonder.
Lords, make me a coarse cloak;
I prefer to wear that
when my clothes have no trimmings.

^aA *sirventes* is a song of complaint.

Ia de chantar non degra aver talan (Castelloza/Snyder)

Ia de chantar non degra aver talan
car on mais chan
e pieitz me vai d'amor,
que plaing e plor
fant en mi lor estatge,
car en mala merce
ai mes mon cor e me,
e s'en breu no.m rete,
trop ai faich lonc badatge.

I should never have the wish to sing
because the more I sing
the worse it goes for me in love;
laments and tears
find their home in me,
for I have placed my heart, my self
where there's no mercy;
if he does not accept my service soon,
I will have stayed too long.

Despois vos vi fui al vostre coman
et anc per tan,
amics, no.us n'aic meillor,
que preiador
no.m mandetz ni messatge
que ia.m viretz lo fre,
amics, non fassatz re.
Car iois no mi soste
a pauc de dol non ratge.

Since I saw you, I've been at your command,
and for my pains,
friend, I've had nothing better from you:
neither plea-bearer
nor messenger do you send;
as for turning in my direction,
friend, you do no such thing!
Because no joy sustains me,
I'm all but mad with grief.

Si pro.i agues, be.us membri'en chantan
q'aic vostre gan
q'enbliei ab gran temor,
puois aic paor
qe i aguessetz dampnatge
d'aicella qe.us rete,
amics, per q'ieu desse
lo tornei, car ben cre
q'eu non ai poderatge.

If it helped me, I'd remind you, singing,
that I had your glove,
the one I stole in fear and trembling;
then I feared
you would be harmed
by the lady who has your service;
so, friend, at once
I gave it back, because I know
I have no rightful claim.

Dels cavalliers conosc que i fant lor dan,
car ia preian
dompnas plus q'ellas lor,
c'autra ricor
no.i ant no seignoratge,
que pois dompna s'ave
d'amar, preiar deu be
cavallier, s'en lui ve
proeza e vassalatge.

I know knights who harm themselves
when they plead
with ladies more than ladies plead with them,
for no further rank
or power is gained by it;
so when it happens that a lady
loves, she ought to court
the knight if she sees
prowess and knightly worth in him.

Dompna Na Mieils, ancse
am so don mal mi ve,
car cel qui pretz mante
a vas mi cor volatge.

Lady-the-Best, I always
love what brings me harm,
for he who upholds merit
has an inconstant heart towards me.

Estat ai en greu cossirier (La Comtessa de Dia/Snyder)

Estat ai en greu cossirier
per un cavallier q'ai agut,
e vuoil sia totz temps saubut
cum eu l'ai amat a sobrier.
Ara vei q'ieu sui trahida
car eu non li donei m'amor
don ai estat en gran error
en lieig e qand sui vestida.

I have been sorely troubled
about a knight I had;
I want it known for all time
how exceedingly I loved him.
Now I see myself betrayed
because I didn't grant my love
to him; I've suffered much distress from it
in bed and fully clothed.

Ben volria mon cavallier
tener un ser en mos bratz nut,
q'el s'en tengra per erebut
sol q'a lui fezes cosseillier;
car plus m'en sui abellida
no fetz Floris de Blanchaflor;
eu l'autrei mon cor e m'amor,
mon sen, mos huoills e ma vida.

I'd like to hold my knight
in my arms one evening, naked,
for he'd be overjoyed
were I only serving as his pillow,
and I am more pleased with him
than Floris with his Blanchaflor.
To him I grant my heart, my love,
my mind, my eyes, my life.

Bels amics, avinens e bos,
cora.us tenrai en mon poder,
e que iagues ab vos un ser,
e qe.us des un bais amoros?
Sapchatz gran talan n'auria
qe.us tengues en luoc del marit
ab so que m'aguessetz plevit
de far tot so qu'eu volria.

Fair, agreeable, good friend,
when will I have you in my power,
lie beside you for an evening,
and kiss you amorously?
Be sure I'd feel a strong desire
to have you in my husband's place
provided you had promised me
to do everything I wished.

A chantar m'er de so qu'ieu non volria (La Comtessa de Dia)

A chantar m'er de so qu'ieu non volria
Tant me rancur de lui cui sui amia,
Car ieu l'am mais que nuilla ren que sia;
Vas lui no.m val merces ni cortesia
Ni ma beltatz ni mos pretz ni mos sens,
C'atressi.m sui enganad'e trahia
Com degr'esser, s'ieu fos desavinens.

I am obliged to sing of that which I would not,
So bitter am I over the one whose love I am,
For I love him more than anything;
With him mercy and courtliness are of no avail
Not my beauty, nor my merit nor my good sense,
For I am deceived and betrayed
Exactly as I should be, if I were ungracious.

Meravill me com vostre cors s'orguoilla
Amics, vas me, per qu'ai razon qu'ieu.m
duoilla
Non es ges dreitz c'autr'amors vos mi tuoilla
Per nuilla ren qe.us diga ni acuoilla;
E membre vos cals fo.l comenssamens
De nostr'amor! ja Dompnedieus non vuoilla
Qu'en ma colpa sia.l departimens.

I am amazed at how you become haughty,
Friend, towards me, and thus I have reason to grieve;
It is hardly right that another love take you from me
On account of anything said or granted to you.
And remember how it was at the beginning
Of our love! May the Lord God never wish
That my guilt be the cause of separation.

Valer mi deu mos pretz e mos paratges
E ma beltatz e plus mos fis coratges,
Per qu'ieu vos man lai on es vostr'estatges
Esta chansson que me sia messatges:
Ieu vuoill saber, lo mieus bels amics gens,
Per que vos m'etz tant fers ni tant salvatges,
Non sai, si s'es orguoills o maltalens.

My worth and my nobility,
My beauty and my faithful heart should help me;
That is why I send there to your dwelling
This song, that it may be my messenger.
I want to know, my fine and noble friend,
Why you are so cruel and harsh with me;
I don't know if it is haughtiness or ill will.

Mas aitan plus voill qe.us diga.l messatges
Qu'en trop d'orguoill ant gran dan maintas
gens.

But I especially want the messenger to tell you
That many people are harmed by excess pride.

Bele Doette as fenestres se siet (Anonymous)

Bele Doette as fenestres se siet,
Lit en un livre mais au cuer ne l'en tient;
De son ami Doon li resovient
Qu'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 her 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!

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!

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

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!

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.

"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.

Bele Doette prist s'abaiie 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.*

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

Lovely Doette asked him right away:
"Where is my lord, whom I've not seen for so long?"
The man was so grieved that he wept out of pity;
lovely Doette suddenly fainted.
Oh, what grief I feel!

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!

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 in the joust."
Oh, what grief I feel!

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

"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 into the church."
Oh, what grief I feel!
For you I'll become a nun at St. Paul's.

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'll become a nun at St. Paul's.

Na Maria, pretz e fina valors (Bietris de Roman/Guiraut Riquier¹)

Na Maria, pretz e fina valors
e.l gioi e.l sen e la fina beutatz
e l'acuglir e.l pretz e las onors
e.l gent parlar e l'avinen solatz
e la douz cara e la gaia acundansa
e.l ducz esgart e l'amoros semblan,

Lady Maria, the virtue and pure worth
and joy and wisdom and pure beauty
and graciousness and virtue and honor
and noble speech and lovely company
and sweet face and cheerful manner
and sweet gaze and amorous expression,

¹contrafact melody: Ples de tristor, marritz e doloiros

qe son en vos, don non avetz egansa
me fan traire vas vos ses cor truan.

Per qe vos prec, si.us platz, qe fin' amors
e gausiment et doutz umilitatz
me puosca far ab vos tan de socors,
qe mi donetz, bella dompna, si.us platz,
so don plus ai d'aver gioi esperansa,
car en vos ai mon cor e mon talan
e per vos ai tut so c'ai d'alegransa
e per vos vauc mantas ves sospiran.

E car beutas e valors vos enansa
sobra tutas, c'una no.us es denan,
vos prec, se.us plas, per so qe.us es onransa,
qe non ametz entendidor truan.

Bella dompna, cui pretz e gioi enansa,
e gient parlar, a vos mas coblas man,
car en vos es gauss' e alegransa
et tut lo ben c'om en dona deman.

these things, in which no one equals you,
draw me to you with no deceitful heart.

For this I beg you, please, to let pure love,
delight, and sweet humility
give me the help I need with you
so you will grant me, lovely lady, please,
the gift which I most hope to enjoy;
for in you lie my heart and my desire:
I have all my happiness because of you,
I'm sighing many sighs because of you.

As beauty and worth exalt you
above all other women (none surpass you)
I pray you, please (for this will bring you honor)
not to love any false admirer.

Lovely lady, exalted in virtue, joy
and noble speech, I send my song to you,
because in you live gaiety and happiness
and every quality one looks for in a lady.

Ab lo cor trist environat d'esmay (Anonymous/Snyder)

Ab lo cor trist environat d'esmay,
plorant mos uells e rompen los cabels,
sospirant fort, lassa, conget pendray
de fin amor et de totz sos consells,
car ja no.m platz amar hom qu'el mon sia
deres anant, ne portar bon voler,
pus mort cruel m'a tolt cel q'eu volia
trop mais que me, sens negun mal sauber.

E per aiso fauc lo captenimen
desesperat e farai chascun jorn
ab trist semblan, e darai entenen
a totz aicels que.m vey anar entorn
qu'en me no.ls qual aver nul'esperansa;
ans podon be sercar en autre part
dona q'els am o qu'els don s'amistansa
car eu d'amor e de joi me depart.

E si del mon pogues pendre comiat
ab grat de Deu, axi cum fau d'amor,
totz mos parens encara m'an retrat,
plandrie.m pauc aitant visc ab dolor,
e per aiço prec la mort sans demora
vengua de faitz per mon las cor alcir,
pus a mort cell de mon cor tant plora
e fa mant dol nuyt e jorn e suspir.

De tots quant vey ben parats e vestits
dençant, xentant, alegres e pagats
ai gran enueg e no.m plats mos delits;
e non deu esser res maravelats,

With confusion wrapped around my sad heart,
shedding tears, tearing my hair,
sighing heavily, I, wretched woman, will say farewell
to perfect love and all its practices;
I have no wish to love or like any man
in the world [from now on,]
for cruel death has stolen the one I loved
more than myself, with perfect pleasure.

For this reason I'm acting like a person
in despair, and I will spend each day
with a dismal face, and inform
all those I see circling around me
that hope means nothing to me;
and they can go seek elsewhere
a lady who loves them or gives them friendship
as I am taking leave of love and joy.

And if I could say farewell to the world,
with God's blessing, as I've said it to love
(all my relations still hold me back),
I'd complain but little, I live in so much pain;
and for this reason I pray that death may come
without delay to kill my weary heart
since it killed the one my heart weeps for,
and I sigh and sorrow day and night.

All those I see brightly adorned and clothed,
dancing, singing, happy, and at ease
torment me, and I desire no pleasure
of my own; this should be no wonder,

car pus me son renovellant la playa
anant me.l cor en lo gent aresar
e.l gay vestir d'acell, aquj Deus haya,
lo qual no crey en lo mon n'agues par.

Mon dolç amy ch, si be hom no.m sosterra,
morta suy hey gran res, si Deu m'ajut,
car sino mal no sent, tan fort s'aferra
dolor en me despuys que.us ay perdut.

for at those times they renew the wound
by bringing to my heart the sweet manner
and bright clothing of the one (God keep him)
who had no equal in the world, I think.

My sweet friend, if no one sustains me,
I am long dead, God help me,
for I feel nothing but misery, so strong is the grip
of sorrow in me since I lost you.

Ab ioi et ab ioven m'apais (La Comtessa de Dia)

Ab ioi et ab ioven m'apais
e iois e iovens m'apaia,
que mos amics es lo plus gais
per qu'eu sui coindeta e gaia,
e pois eu li sui veraia
be.is taing q'el me sia verais,
c'anc de lui amar no m'estrais
ni ai cor que m'en estraia.

Mout mi plai car sai que val mais
cel q'ieu plus desir que m'aia,
e cel que primiers lo m'atrais
Dieu prec que gran ioi l'atraia,
e qui que mal l'en retraia,
non creza, fors qu'ie.l retrais,
c'om cuoill maintas vetz los balais
ab q'el mezeis se balaia.

Dompna que en bon pretz s'enten
deu ben pausar s'entendenssa
en un pro cavallier valen
pos ill conois sa valenssa
que l'aus amar a presenssa,
e dompna, pois ama a presen,
ia pois li pro ni.ll'avinen
no.n diran mas avinenssa.

Q'ieu n'ai chausit un pro e gen
per cui pretz meillura e genssa,
larc et adreig e conoissen,
on es sens e conoissenssa;
prec li non aia crezenssa,
ni hom no.il puosca far crezen
q'ieu fassa vas lui faillimen,
sol non trob en lui faillensa.

Amics, la vostra valenssa
sabon li pro e li valen,
per q'ieu vos qier de mantenen
si.us plai vostra mantenenssa.

I feed on joy and youthfulness
and joy and youthfulness content me;
since my friend is the most cheerful
I am cheered and charmed by him,
and because I'm true to him,
it's well that he be true
to me; I never stray from loving him
nor do I have the heart to stray.

I'm pleased to know there's so much worth
in him, the one that I most wish would have me;
to the one who first brought him to me,
I pray that God may bring great joy.
May he disbelieve whoever speaks
false words to him, and believe what I say,
for many people bind brooms
and with those brooms are swept away.

The lady who has faith in virtue
surely ought to put her faith
in a knight of heart and worth;
since she knows how worthy he is,
let her dare reveal she loves him;
and about the lady, since she loves openly,
will virtuous, pleasant people thus
say nothing but pleasing things.

For I've chosen one who's brave and noble
in whom worth becomes ennobled:
openhanded, agile, knowing,
full of knowledge and good sense.
I pray that he not believe,
and that none can make him believe
I'm failing him, always provided
that I find no fault in him.

Friend, your worth
is known by the brave and the worthy,
and so I ask you presently:
please lend me your protecting presence.

En greu esmay et en greu pessamen (Clara d'Anduza/Gaucelm Faidit²)

En greu esmay et en greu pessamen
an mes mon cor et en granda error
li lauzengier e.lh fals devinador,
abayssador de ioy e de ioven,
qar vos q'eu am mais que res qu'el mon sia
an fait de me departir e lonhar
si q'ieu no.us puesc vezer ni remirar,
don muer de dol, d'ira e de feunia.

Selh que.m blasma vostr'amor ni.m defen
no podon far en re mon cor mellor
ni.l dous dezir qu'ieu ai de vos maior
ni l'enveya ni.l dezir ni.l talen,
e non es hom, tan mos enemixx sia,
si.l n'aug dir ben, que no.l tenha en car,
e si.n ditz mal, mais no.m pot dir ni far
neguna re que a plazer me sia.

Ia no.us donetz, belhs amicx, espaven
que ia ves vos aia cor trichador,
ni qu'ie.us camge per nul autr'amador
si.m pregavon d'autras donas un cen,
qu'amors que.m te per vos en sa bailia
vol que mon cor vos estuy e vos gar
e farai o, e s'ieu pogues emblar
mon cors, tals l'a que iamais non l'auria.

Amicx, tan ai d'ira e de feunia
quar no vos vey, que quant yeu cug chantar,
planh e sospir per qu'ieu no puesc so far
a mas coblas que.l cor[s] complir volria.

Quant ce vient en mai ke rose est panie

Quant ce vient en mai ke rose est panie,
Je l'alai coillir per grant drüerie;
En pouc d'oure oï une voix serie
Lonc un vert bousset pres d'une abiete:
*Je sant les douls mals leis ma senturete.
Malois soit de Deu ke me fist nonnete!*

“Ki nonne me fist, Jesus lou maldie!
Je di trop envis vespres ne complies;
J'amaixe troupe muels bone compaignie
Ke fust deduissans et amerouse.”
*Je sant les douls mals leis ma senturete.
Malois soit de Deu ke me fist nonnete!*

In grave distress, grave trouble,
and great confusion my heart is thrown
by slanderers and treacherous spies,
bringers down of joy and youth,
for you whom I love best in all the world
they've stolen and sent away from me
so I can't see or gaze at you;
therefore, I am dying of grief, torment, and anger.

He who blames me or forbids my loving you
cannot in any way amend my heart
nor increase the sweet desire I have for you
nor the wish, nor the desiring, nor the yearning;
and there's no man, however much my enemy,
that I won't love if he speaks well of my friend;
if he speaks ill, he cannot say or do
anything at all that pleases me.

Have no fear, fair friend
that my heart will ever be false to you,
or that I'll exchange you for another
even if a hundred other ladies beg me.
Love that has me in its power because of you
commands my heart to enclose and keep you,
which I will do; yet someone has my body
who never would, if I could steal it back.

Friend, I'm in such rage and torment
because you're out of sight, that when I try to sing,
I complain and sigh, for I cannot, with my verses,
accomplish what I wish.

When May arrives and roses bloom,
I go a-picking with love on my mind;
in little time I hear a lovely voice
in a green grove near a convent.
*I feel the pleasant pains below my waist.
God curse whoever made a nun of me!*

“Whoever made a nun of me be cursed by Jesus!
Compline and vespers I sing against my will;
I'd much rather have good company,
fun-loving and ready to love.”
*I feel the pleasant pains below my waist.
God curse whoever made a nun of me!*

²contrafact melody: Mon cor e mi e mas bonas chanssos

Elle s'escriait: "Com seux esbaihie!
E Deus! ki m'ait mis en ceste abaïe?
Maiz jeu en istrai, per sainte Marie!
N'i vestirai mais souplis ne gonnete."
*Je sant les douls mals leis ma senturete.
Malois soit de Deu ke me fist nonnete!*

"Celui manderai a cui seux amie
K'il me vaigne querre en ceste abaïe;
S'irons a Parix moneir bone vie,
Car il est jolis et je seux jonete."
*Je sant les douls mals leis ma senturete.
Malois soit de Deu ke me fist nonnete!*

Quant ses amis ot la parolle oïe,
De joie tressaut, li cuers li fremie;
A la porte en vient de celle abaïe,
Si en getait fors sa douce amiète.
*Je sant les douls mals leis ma senturete.
Malois soit de Deu ke me fist nonnete!*

She cries out: "I am mortified here!
God, who placed me in this convent?
But I'll get out, by holy Mary!
Nor will I wear habit or surplice anymore."
*I feel the pleasant pains below my waist.
God curse whoever made a nun of me!*

"I'll send word to the man I love
that he should come get me in this convent;
we'll go to Paris to lead a good life,
for he is handsome and I am young."
*I feel the pleasant pains below my waist.
God curse whoever made a nun of me!*

When her friend hears the words,
he jumps with joy and his heart flutters;
he comes to the gate of the convent
and frees his young sweetheart.
*I feel the pleasant pains below my waist.
God curse whoever made a nun of me!*

Peter Cama-Lekx, vielle: A native of Ontario, Canada, Peter performs internationally on period violin and viola as well as medieval strings. He is a founding member of the early music ensemble *Cascata* and has performed with *Quicksilver*, *Cambridge Concentus* and *Music for a while*. He has appeared as lead violinist with *Baroque and Beyond* in North Carolina and on the *Allegro* series in Spokane, WA. Peter recently toured Japan with *Cambridge Concentus*, performing Bach's St. Matthew Passion under the baton of Joshua Rifkin. Known also for his exciting interpretations of contemporary music on modern viola, he has premiered many new compositions for various small ensembles, and performed in chamber ensembles and orchestras throughout New England and the Midwest. Peter recently completed his Performance Diploma at Boston University where he studied viola with Michelle LaCourse and Baroque violin/viola with Jane Starkman. He also holds both a Masters degree (Penn State University) and a Bachelors degree (Wilfrid Laurier University) in Viola Performance.

More information can be found at: www.cama-lekx.com/peter.html and www.cascata.org

Robin Snyder, voice: Robin Snyder performs Renaissance and medieval vocal music and is a founding member of the Renaissance lute song ensemble *Theatrum Musicum* and early English medieval ensemble *Briddes Roune*. She studied voice with contralto Vicky Hart and studied the troubadour repertoire with members of the Boston Camerata in Coaraze, France.

With gratitude: We thank our sound engineer, Tom Knab, who knows how to put musicians at ease. Special thanks to Barry Rountree, for his encouragement and financial support of this recording — un amics larc et adreig e conoissen.

Texts and translations for "A chantar m'er de so qu'ieu non volria," "Bele Doette," and "Quant ce vient en mai" came from *Songs of the Troubadours and Trouvères: An Anthology of Poems and Melodies*, eds Samuel N. Rosenberg, Margaret Switten, and Gérard Le Vot, Garland Publishing, 1998. All other texts and translations came from *Songs of the Women Troubadours*, edited and translated by Mathilda Bruckner, Laurie Shepard, and Sarah White, Garland Publishing, 2000.