

Introduction

"Se la face ay pale, la cause est amer"
-- "If my face is pale, the cause is love /
bitterness". The double meaning of "amer"
offers a medieval acknowledgement that
Love is multi-faceted. Never simply just
an enjoyable state, it can also induce
anxiety, loneliness and grief. This chanson
of Guillaume Dufay serves as both the
title song and the theme of this recording,
which presents 15th-century Burgundian
chansons interleaved amongst modern
settings of medieval Japanese verses.

The programme of this recording is comprised of five thematic sets. Each set addresses a different state of love, beginning with a waka from Janpieter Biesemans' suite Vijf Nippon Waka (2002), and followed by with a latemedieval chanson chosen to reflect the emotion evoked by the waka. Several of these chansons are also presented as intabulations, or instrumental arrangements.

The classic waka and courtly love

In the literature of medieval Japan, the anthology known as "Hyakunin-isshu", or the "100 poems by 100 different poets" holds an important place. The poems were collected by the nobleman Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241) and consist of 100 love poems written in the *waka* form. Not all of the poets' names have been preserved, but this poetry was written primarily by monks, rulers and nobility, both male and female. Of the five waka chosen by Biesemans, two are by women -- Utaisho Michitsuna-no Haha, a lover of a prince-regent, and Taikenmon-in-no Horikawa, a courtisan from the emperor's court.

The waka form is extremely short and has a set number of syllables, comparable to the more modern haiku. It consists of 31 syllables in five lines following the pattern 5-7-5-7-7. In ancient aristocratic Japan, good taste in waka was a sign of high status and proper upbringing. Competitions for waka poets were held regularly, often in the spring under the blossoming cherry trees.

The waka frequently served as a means of secret communication between separated lovers, who often found themselves isolated in far-flung courts -- as were their counterparts in the Burgundian courtly tradition of the 15th century. Furthermore, custom dictated that bride and



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Geert Van Gele, recorder, organetto
Bill Taylor, harp, psaltery
Willem Mook, lutes

groom should never gaze directly upon each other before their marriage, but many would recite suggestive waka to each other through the protective barrier of a screen, or with a fan held before the face.

Until quite recently, the classic 100 waka were routinely memorized by every cultivated Japanese, and were even used in an educative card game. Although the poems in the collection date from the 7th to the 12th century, the card game has its origins in the early Edo period (c.1620) and is still popular today in Japan, especially during the New Year festivities.

Biesemans' Vijf Nippon Waka

Five of the waka are central in this programme, which examines different states of Love: the joy of newly discovered love; parting at dawn; absence of the beloved; doubting faithfulness; and rueful grief. They were selected and set to music in 2002 by the Flemish composer Janpieter Biesemans for Quadrivium's instrumentarium of voice, lute, harp, psaltery and recorder. Although Biesemans scored the suite for western instruments, his compositions capture the delicate yet intense character of Japanese traditional music.

Biesemans says about his Vijf Nippon Waka: "Through my artistic endeavours I come in contact with other cultures. My curiosity about these cultures stimulates me to absorb something of their artistic spirituality. I feel compelled to translate this into my own artistic expression. In this way I have already composed in nine different cultural-languages, whereby the Japanese waka with its special poetic form presented a unique challenge. I experience each language as its own instrument, with its own specific rhythm and sound-colour".

Formes fixes in the 15th-century repertoire of the Burgundian court

French 15th-century court chansons were composed upon poems set in the, then very popular, formes fixes. These poetic forms used fixed rhyme schemes and set patterns of repetition. Within this genre, the rondeau gained the foremost place, outpacing the ballade and the virelai in popularity. A rondeau employs the scheme ABaAabAB, where capital letters signify the refrain lines, and lower-case letters indicate musical repetitions with different words.

Prominent poets were Charles d'Orleans, Christine de Pisan and Alain Chartier. Courtly love was their main theme and their lyrics were often melancholy in character. The musical settings of these poems did not (yet) use much word painting -- but relied for their expression on the associative power of the words in combination with the particular quality of their melody and counterpoint. Chansons of this period are typically in three voices, with a sung superius and two accompanying voices: a tenor and contratenor, the latter of which is structured so as to complement and fill in around the tenor part.

The late-medieval chansons in this programme are all taken from the repertoire of the Burgundian court under Philip the Good (ruled 1419-1467).

This powerful duke added the regions of Holland, Brabant and Hainault to his realm. When he transferred his court from Dijon to Brussels, Lille, Ghent and Bruges, the cultural centre of gravity moved with him.

The acquisition of the prosperous Low Countries gave him the means to indulge in a level of arts patronage to a degree that was unknown at that time. His court was a cosmopolitan, French-speaking centre, including many poets, musicians, composers and painters of international repute. Many of the singers/composers of his court chapel were born and educated within the Burgundian borders; instrumentalists were recruited from all over Europe.

Se la face ay pale, le cause est amer, the title song of our programme, is an early work of Guillaume Dufay (1398-1474) from the 1430s, written in the form of a ballade équivoquée. In this verse-form, the lines end not with rhymes, but with identical final syllables, often with disparate meanings. Although Dufay is respectfully referred to as capelanus (chaplain) of Philip the Good, it is unlikely that he had a regular position at Philip's court. Nevertheless, many of the manuscripts associated with the Burgundian court are filled with his compositions. Par le regard, for

example, one of Dufay's most widely known chansons, is found in more than fifteen preserved manuscripts.

Pierre Fontaine (c.1392-c.1447) was listed in 1403 as a choirboy in the court chapel of Philip the Bold (ruled 1363-1404). After a period in northern Italy and Rome he returned in 1430 to the Burgundian court. His compact, dance-like chanson, *J'ayme bien celui*, was provided with an alternative countertenor, possibly by Dufay.

Gilles Binchois (c.1400-1460) is often mentioned in the same breath as Guillaume Dufay. Although less universal than that of Dufay, his music gained renown for its elegant style and its tender melancholic quality. The characteristic melody of *Triste plaisir* is completely in harmony with Chartier's poem. Binchois remained at Philip the Good's court from 1430 until his death.

Tout a par moy is possibly a late work of Binchois but is most often ascribed to Walter Frye (fl.1450-1475). Whether this English composer actually worked on the Continent or not is still unknown. Whoever the composer may have been, Tout a par moy was one of Europe's most beloved and widespread chansons during the second half of the 15th century.

The same is true of *Le souvenir* by Robert Morton (c.1430-after 1476). This Englishman was a member of the ducal chapel under Philip the Good and later under Charles the Bold from 1457 until his death. The flowing melodic style of

Le souvenir and Tout a par moy, and the capricious unpredictability and liveliness of the countertenor, are characteristic of the generation of composers after Dufay and Binchois.

Instrumental arrangements

While the chief sources of these chansons are the chansonniers, the often beautifully illuminated song manuscripts, many have also come down to us in instrumental sources. One of the most important of these sources is the so-called Buxheimer Orgelbuch, a hefty manuscript from the second half of the 15th century, containing instrumental versions of the chansons notated in tablature. These intabulations often present the tenor and contratenor voices in their original form, while the top voice is ornamented in instrumental fashion with rhythmic and melodic figures in faster note values. This was known as the technique of diminution, and was widely used by instrumentalists, not only organists, but also players of wind-, bowed- and pluckedinstruments.

The remaining compositions on this CD are songs performed on instruments. Some of them comment on the current love story as told by the female lover's songs; others represent the male lover's sentiment as from a distance. The lyrics of these compositions have been condensed into a synopsis.

Historical instruments

The characteristic feature of 15th-century recorders is their straight, cylindrical bore which gives the instruments their very pure, transparent sound colour. The organetto, also known as the portative (lit. portable) organ, was originally small enough to sit on the player's lap, or on a table. Most had lead pipes and a button-type keyboard, and the bellows were pumped with the musician's non-playing hand. Both Dufay and the Italian composer Francesco Landini are portrayed with this costly and sensitive instrument.

Of the soft-sounding instruments, the harp and the lute took pride of place. The harp was considered an instrument of the highly-lettered class. The typical gothic harp was fitted with bray pins, tiny wooden pegs which held the strings into the soundbox and lightly touched them, causing them to buzz. In English, this "bray" harp was so-named because people thought it sounded like a donkey! Nevertheless. this is the harp which is so often played by musician angels in late-medieval Netherlandish altarpieces. As the 15th century progressed, the lute gained in importance. When the plectrum technique was gradually replaced by a finger-tip technique, making polyphonic music playable on the lute, its popularity rocketed. Both the lute and the gothic harp were strung with gut.

A **psaltery** (or psalterium) differs from a harp in that the strings are parallel to the soundboard, going across one or two bridges. Psalteries were often strung with fine wire strings, and came in many forms: trapezoidal, with a curved frame, square, etc.



The instruments of Quadrivium

- Recorders: G- and F- alto in Pythagorean tuning from a set of six with cylindrical boring, based on late-medieval examples. Builder: Bob Marvin, Maine, USA, 2000. [tracks 3, 5, 7, 10, 14, 17, 20]
- Organetto: soprano instrument based on the painting "The Mystical Marriage of St Catherine" by Hans Memling (1479). Builder:



- John Brombaugh, Oregon, USA, c.1980. [tracks 1, 8, 12, 15, 19, 21]
- Harp: 24 gut strings and brays, based on the painting "The Garden of Earthly Delights" by Hieronymus Bosch (c.1505-10). Builder: Rainer Thurau, Wiesbaden, Germany, 1987. [tracks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]
- Late-medieval psaltery: 19 brass strings. Builder: Lynne Lewandowski, Vermont, USA, 1989. [tracks 7, 8, 9, 14]
- Late-medieval 5-course lute: gut strung alto instrument, based on the fresco "The Triumph of Venus / April" by Francesco della Cossa (c.1470). Builder: Carel Huiskamp, Velp, NL, 2002. [tracks 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]
- Early-renaissance 6-course lute: gut strung tenor instrument, based on an example by Georg Gerle (Innsbruck c.1530). Builder: Carel Huiskamp, Velp, NL, 2001. [tracks 2J3]
- Early-renaissance 7-course lute: gut strung bass instrument, based on the anonymus Flemish painting "The Prodigal Son" from the circle of Jan Cornelisz, c.1535. Builder: Martin de Witte, Den Haag, NL, 2006. [tracks 9, 12]

prologue

Se la face ay pale

La cause est amer, C'est la principale Et tant m'est amer. Amer, qu'en la mer Me voudroye voir; Or, scet bien de voir La belle a qui suis Que nul bien avoir Sans elle ne puis.

S'ay pesante male De deuil a porter, Ceste amour est male Pour moy de porter. Car soy deporter Ne veult de vouloir, Fors qu'a son vouloir Obéisse, et puis Qu'elle a tel pooir, Sans elle ne puis.

C'est la plus reale Qu'on puist regarder, De s'amour leiale Ne me puis guarder; Fol sui d'agarder Ne faire devoir D'amours recevoir Fors d'elle, je cuis, Se ne veil douloir, Sans elle ne puis. If my face is pale, the cause is love, Indeed it is the main one; and so bitter to me is love that I wish to throw myself in the sea; O how good it is to look upon the fair lady whom I serve I can have nothing good without her

If I carry a heavy burden of grief to it is this love which is painful for me to bear. For she would be displeased should I want anything beyond doing her will, Since she has such power that I cannot live without her.

She is the most regal one that one could behold. I am helpless against her loyal love; I should be crazy to seek and receive love elsewhere than from her. If i do not want to suffer I cannot live without her.

Prenez sur moy vostre exemple amoureux (instrumental)

Take from me your example in love. The beginning is full of delight, the middle is painful and sad, and in the end one has a pleasant mistress. But it is in the jumping that the danger lies.

the joy of newly discovered love

Ai mite no

Nochi no kokoro ni Kurabureba Mukashi wa mono o Omowazari keri I have met my love.

When I compare this present with feelings of the past, my passion is now as if I have never loved before.

Gon-chunagon Atsutada (906-943)

Par le regard de vos beaux yeux

Et de vo maintien bel et gent, A vous, belle, vien humblement Moy presenter vostre amoureux.

De vostre amour sui désireux Et tout mon vouloir si consent.

Par le regard ...
Donc vous plaise, cuer gracieux,
Moy retenir or a present.
Por vostre amy entierement.
Et je le seray en tous lieux.
Par le regard ...

By the look of your beautiful eyes and your handsome and gentle posture humbly I come to you, o lovely one, to present myself as your lover.

I long for your love,

my entire will is at your bidding.

By the look of your beautiful eyes... Thus, gracious heart, if you please, retain me as your devoted lover,

totally devoted to you,

which I shall remain everywhere.

By the look of your beautiful eyes...

J'ay pris amours a ma devise (instrumental)

I have taken love as my device, to attain joyousness. Happy shall I be, this summer, if I can succeed in my enterprise. Am I not right to strive for such a cause?

parting at dawn

Ariake no

Tsurenaku mieshi Wakare yori Akatsuki bakari Uki mono wa nashi Like the morning moon, cold, unpitying was my love. and since we parted, I dislike nothing so much as the breaking of day.

Mibu-no Tadamine (12th C)

J'ayme bien celui qui s'en va

En priant dieu que le conduie, S'il me tient pour sa seul amye Mon coeur a lui obéira.

Jusques a ce qu'il revendra Jamais ne feray chière lye. J'ayme bien celui ... Mon cuer aultre ne choisira, Fors que lui seul, jure de ma vie Quelque chose que nulz en dye, Tous jours de lui me souvendra. J'ayme bien celui ... I love the one who is leaving and pray to God to protect him. If he will keep me as his only love my heart will obey him.

Until he returns
I will have no pleasure.
I love the one ...
My heart will choose none other than only him, I swear upon my life. It goes without saying that
I shall remember him every day
I love the one

absence of the beloved

Nageki tsutsu

Lying all alone Hitori nuru yo no through the hours of the night, Akuru ma wa till the daylight comes: Ikani hisashki can vou realize at all Mono to ka wa shiru the emptiness of that night?

Utaisho Michitsuna-no Haha (c.937-c.995)

Le souvenir de vous me tue,

Mon seul bien, quant je ne vous voy, Car je vous jure sur ma foy, Que sans vous ma joye est perdue.

Ouant vous estes hors de ma veue. le me plaing et dis a par moy: Le souvenir

Seule demeure, despourvue, De nulle confort ne recoi. Ce deuil porte sans faire effroy lusques a vostre revenue.

Le souvenir

The memory of you is slaying me when I cannot see you, my only good. for I swear to you upon my faith, without you my happiness is lost.

When you are out of my sight I lament and say to myself:

The memory of you ... I remain alone and disconsolate receiving no comfort at all and silently suffering such distress until the day or your return.

The memory of you ...

Je ne fai tousjours que penser a vostre doulcheur (instrumental)

Day and night I think of your unsurpassed sweetness, my only joy, and I cannot forget your beauty. I long for the spring to return and myself to return to you, my mistress.

doubting faithfulness

Nagakaran

Is it forever Kokoro mo shirazu that he hopes our love will last?

Kurokami no

Midarete kesa wa and now my daylight thoughts Mono o koso omoë are as tangled as my black hair.

He did not answer.

Taikenmon-in-no Horikawa (12th C)

Triste plaisir et douleureuse joie,

Aspre doulceur, reconfort ennuyeux. Ris en plourant, souvenir oblieux M'acompangnent, combien que seule soye.

Enbuchiés son, affin que ne les voye Dedens mon cuer, en ombre de mes yeulx. Triste plaisir ...

C'est mon trésor, c'est toute ma monnove Pouvre Dangier est sur mov envieux. Bien seroit il s'il me veroit avoi mieulx. Ouant il me het pour ce qu'amours m'envoye. Triste plaisir ...

Sad pleasure and sorrowful joy, bitter sweetness. distressing comfort tearful laughter and forgetful remembrance are my companions even when I am alone.

They are trapped, such that I see them only in my heart, hidden from my eyes. Sad bleasure...

It is my treasure and all of my riches: poor Danger is envious of me. He would welcome seeing me better off, for he hates me for that which love brings me. Sad bleasure ...

Je requier a tous amoureux (instrumental)

I ask all lovers to judge by their courtliness: those who dare not declare their love are most happy in love. On this New Year's Day, I find none such around me. I hope to be cured of this malady in the year ahead.

rueful grief

Omoi wabi

Satemo inocho wa Aru mono o

Uki ni taenu wa Namida nari keri Though stricken by fate and sorrow my life is left to me,

but I cannot keep my tears; they break forth from my grief.

Doin Hoshi (dates unknown)

Tout a par moy affin qu'on ne me voye,

Si tres dolent que plus je ne porroye, Je me tien seul comme une ame esbaye. Faisant regret de ma dolente vye Et de fortune, qu'ainsi fort me guerroye.

Pensez quel doel mon desplaisir m'envoye, Car j'ay des maulx a si tres grant monjoie, Que je crains fort que brief je ne m'occye. Tout a par moy ...

Mais non pourtant se mourir je devoye
A la poursuite de vous servir, ma joye,
Et fussiez plus fort mon ennemye,
Je n'ay pooir que jamais vous oublie,
Car c'est mon sort qu'il fault que vostre soye.

Tout a par moy ...

All to myself so that none can see me, grieving so much that I could grieve no more, I remain alone like a soul in torment lamenting my unhappy life, and fate, which so grievously wars against me.

Think of what grief my misfortunes bring me, for I have such great sufferings that I fear that I shall take my own life.

All to myself...

All to mysel;...
But even though I should die
attempting to serve you, my joy,
and were you still more my enemy,
I could never forget you,
for it is my fate to be forever yours.
All to myself...

epilogue

Vray dieu d'amours qui vrays amans resjoye (instrumental)

True god of love, you who delight true lovers, I beseech you to pardon me if I have abandoned him. Never could I treat him well after his false behaviour towards me that used to love him so deeply.

Se la face ay pale, la cause est amer (instrumental)

If my face is pale, the cause is bitter love

Quadrivium

Ellen Delahanty studied voice with Jessica Cash in London. She received her Master in Music degree in recorder and Historical Performance at the Mannes College of Music in New York, and furthered her recorder studies with distinction at the conservatories of Utrecht, Leuven, and Antwerp. She specializes in early vocal repertoires as a soloist and as a member of the ensembles Quadrivium and Sospiri Ardenti. She regularly appears as a teacher and performer at early music festivals in Europe and the USA.

Willem Mook studied the lute at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, with Toyohiko Satoh. and the Sweelinck Conservatory of Amsterdam, with Anthony Bailes, and musicology at the State University of Utrecht. In addition to his activities as a lute teacher and performer, both as a soloist and in ensemble, he is an avid researcher, and has specialized in the performance of musical sources of the period 1400-1650. He currently performs in duos with Paulien van der Werff, soprano, with Harry van Berne, tenor, and with Peter Adema, poetry reader, and is a member of the ensemble Voix et Cordes. Mr. Mook has an extensive luteteaching practise in his hometown Haarlem and in Deventer.

Bill Taylor is a specialist in the performance of medieval and renaissance European harp music, as well as the ancient harp music of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. He is one of very few players investigating these repertoires on medieval gut-strung harps, wire-strung clarsachs and renaissance harps with buzzing bray pins. He has performed with several ensembles in the US, including the Folger Consort, the Newberry Consort and Hesperus. Now based in Scotland, Mr. Taylor regularly performs and records with Canty and Coronach. He teaches privately, offers classes through Fèis Rois, and frequently teaches and performs at festivals in the UK, Europe and the US.

After finishing his studies at several conservatories in Flanders with honours, **Geert Van Gele** went on to co-found the Flanders' Recorder Quartet. For ten years he performed and recorded with the Quartet in Europe and both North and South America. Along the way he won several important international competitions. He is regularly invited to give masterclasses. As a soloist he is admired as much for his interpretations of Bach and his performances of early Italian baroque music as for his mastery of contemporary recorder literature -- repertoires which he has all recorded on CD.



Photo © Roland Van Rompaey

Janpieter Biesemans (born 1939)

After finishing his studies at the Lemmens Institute and the Antwerp Conservatory, Biesemans founded the ensemble Consortium Antiquum in 1964 and dedicated 23 years to the interpretation of early music. He began composing in 1980, and now has over 100 opus numbers to his credit. Now retired from teaching, he taught chamber music at the Antwerp Conservatory, and is Director Emeritus of the Akademie voor Muzische Kunsten in Meise. Under his impulse, the "Werkgroep Kunstonderwijs" was founded to defend the rights of the students of Flemish part-time arts education.

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La Cause est Amer

Medieval Love Poems from Japan and the Low Countries

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