

Sweet Friendship

Courtly Songs & Dances from 15th-century France & Italy

Alkemie

Tracy Cowart, dancer, voice & harp
Ben Matus, dancer, voice, winds, lute & percussion
Elena Mullins, dancer, voice & percussion
Sian Ricketts, voice & winds
Niccolo Seligmann, composer, vielles, viola a chiavi, lute, lirone & percussion
Alyssa Weathersby, dancer & voice

Audio/Visual Production by Charles Mueller and Elisa Sutherland, with assistance from Spiff Wiegand

*Presented by Arizona Early Music Society
Sunday, March 21 at 3:00 p.m. MST*

Le grant pena	Anon., Amiens MS 162 D
Amoroso	Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro (c. 1420-c. 1484)
Le joly tetin	Anon., Copenhagen no. 17
Je ne puis vivre	Antoine Busnois (c. 1430-1492)
O Dieu d'amour	Delahaye (fl. 1465)
Franchoise nouvelle	Anon., Brussels MS
Zannetta del Giorno	Niccolo Seligmann (b. 1993)
Alessandrescha	Niccolo Seligmann (<i>Improvisation by Niccolo Seligmann</i>)
La Giloxia	Domenico da Piacenza (c. 1400-c. 1470)
A la longue	Fede (fl. 1450)
J'ay prins amour	Anon., Wolfenbüttel no. 29
Leonzello Petit Riense	Domenico da Piacenza Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro
A vous sans aultre	Antoine Busnois
La casouille nouvelle	Anon., Toulouze MS (<i>Improvisation by Niccolo Seligmann</i>)
Zannetta della Notte	Niccolo Seligmann
Verçeppe	Domenico da Piacenza
Voltate in ça Rosina/Poi che'l ciel e la fortuna	Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro Anon., Frottole libro VII (Ottaviano Petrucci)

Notes on the Program

Tonight's program includes adaptations of three lively *balli* and a stately *bassadanza* choreographed by the fifteenth-century dancing master Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro. In the case of the *balli*, the choreographies and music (both attributed to Guglielmo) are preserved in his treatise *De pratica seu arte tripudii*. For the *bassadanza* Alessandrescha, we have followed the traditional practice of composing a tenor line over which Niccolo improvises a cantus line. We drew other pieces of dance music from the treatises of Guglielmo's predecessor Domenico da Piacenza, and are pleased to present two additional new compositions by Niccolo Seligmann. The vocal music was drawn from a group of beautifully illuminated fifteenth-century songbooks known as the Loire Valley chansonniers. We've selected two pieces by the great Burgundian composer Antoine Busnois as well as a variety of equally compelling songs by lesser known and anonymous composers.

Alkemie exists to explore and share the life-affirming and alternative perspectives to be experienced in the sounds of centuries past. Comprised of singer-performers playing over a dozen instruments (including vielles, harps, psaltery, recorders, douçaines, and percussion), the ensemble has a particular interest in the porous boundaries between the court and folk music of the medieval period. Grounded in historical performance practice and fed by a love of experimentation, Alkemie's performance on the Indianapolis Early Music Festival in June 2018 was lauded as "enchanting" and "indicating [the] future health" of the field of early music."

Founded in 2013, Alkemie is based in Brooklyn and also performs nationally; since 2018 they have maintained a partnership with the Medieval Studies program at Fordham University. In addition to growing a series in NYC, Alkemie has appeared at the Amherst Early Music Festival (New London, CT), Amherst Glebe Arts Response (AGAR – Amherst, VA), Beacon Hill Concert Series (Stroudsburg, PA), the Cambridge Society for Early Music (Cambridge, MA), the Capitol Early Music Series (Washington, DC), Five Boroughs Music Series (New York) Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS – New York City), Music Before 1800 series (NYC), and the War Memorial Arts Initiative (Baltimore). This season (despite circumstances and with much help), Alkemie debuted a recorded program of medieval Ashkenazi & German music ("Mirroring the Other"), as well as launched Alkemie & Friends – an initiative featuring experimental collaborations between medieval musicians and experts in diverse musical genres and traditions. Both of A&F's opening concerts ("Blood, Booze, and Betrayal" and "Florilegium") debuted new works from collaborators. Later this spring, Alkemie will premiere a new program featuring the music and writings of Hildegard von Bingen.

Alkemie's members are also committed to the lively teaching of medieval and Renaissance performance practice and history. Alkemie was in residence at Fairmont State University in 2016-2017, and has presented workshops and educational outreach programs at the Capitol Early Music Series (VA), Ramaz High School (NY), and at Fordham University (NY). Alkemie members teach collegiate and amateur students at Case Western Reserve University (OH), Fordham University (NY), the Strathmore Arts Center (MD), Amherst Early Music Festival (CT), the Baroque Performance Institute at Oberlin (OH) and through the Early Music Access Project (VA).

For more information and to hear about upcoming performances, please visit alkemie.org.

Thank you to Arizona Early Music Society and Capitol Early Music for sponsoring this concert. Thank you also to St. Paul's Episcopal (Doylestown, PA), Mary & Ron Matus, Case Western Reserve University, Spiff Wiegand, and Paul Holmes Morton for their generous donations of venue, costumes, and instruments without which this concert would not have been possible.

Performers in today's concert were tested for COVID-19 immediately preceding the project week, with negative test results. Performers operated as a household throughout the duration of the project. When interacting with non-household members, performers wore masks and/ maintained social distancing.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Le grant paine que io sento,
me tormenta nocte et dia.
O de morir jozo contento
por la vostra signoria.

Le joly tetin de ma dame
a touché nu a nu le myen;
de quoy trop heureulx je me tien,
quant il m'en souvient, sur mon ame.

J'ose dire et diray tout hault,
a qui qi'il en doive doloir,
qu'en toutes façons elle vault
autant que femme peut valoir.

Sans blamer nesune aultre femme,
elle a tant en elle de bien
qu'on ne sçaroit dire combien;
or me demandez dont si j'ame.

Le joly tetin...

Je ne puis vivre ainsi toujours
Au main que j'aye en mes dolours
Quelque confort
Une seule heure, ou mains, ou fort
Et tous les jours
Leaument serviray amours
Jusqu'à la mort.

Noble femme de nom et d'armes,
Estripvez à ce dicté
Des jeulx pleurant a chaudes larmes
Affin qu'aiez de moi mercy.

Quant a moi, je me meurs bon cours
Veillant les nuitz faisant cent tours
En criant fort
"Vengeance à Dieu, car à grant tort
Je noye en plours"
Lors qu'au besoing me fault secours
Et Pitié dort.

Je ne puis vivre ainsi tousiours...

O, dieu d'amours et qu'as tu fait
d'avoir consenty le forfait
de celui dont je fuz maistresse?
Mon cuer en a si grant destresse
qu'a bien peu il n'en est desfait.

This great pain that I'm feeling,
It torments me night and day.
O, to perish – I'd be willing,
To defend your sovereignty.

The perky breasts of my lover
Just touched my own chest skin to skin;
Good lord, what a fine state I'm in,
As happy as a pig in clover!

I dare to shout out to the world
Without a trace of viciousness
That no one's girl comes near my girl
In total babe-a-liciousness.

Too bad they didn't make the cut;
There's nothing they can do about it:
Bae's got more charms than can be counted.
Am I a fool in love or what?

The perky breasts of my lover...

I can no longer live this way
With deprivation and dismay,
But if I do
Get comfort for an hour or two,
Then every day
I'll wait on Love and I'll obey
My whole life through.

Woman of fame and noble grace,
Because of you I write this ditty,
So when the tears run down your face,
You'll finally show a little pity.

But as for me, I'm going down.
Awake all night, I paced around
And madly roared,
"I can't stand more—avenge me, Lord!
In tears I drown."
And then I found help had skipped town
And mercy snored.

I can no longer live this way...

O god of Love, what have you done
Allowing evil by the one
Whose mistress I was proud to be?
My heart feels such anxiety
That by him I might be undone.

A la longue j'ay bien cognu
que je n'estoye entretenu
que par couverte.
Pourtant ne seres recouverte
de moy, las, plus n'y suis tenu.

Vous estes gente, belle et bonne
que je n'en voudroie mil mal dire
mais de tous pions vous habandonne
devant que mon mal plus empire.

Par grant temps m'avez detenu
cuidant que fusse recongnu
de ma desserte;
mais bien ay veu que se non perte
et dueil ne me fust advenu.

A la longue...

J'ay prins amours a ma devise
pour conquerir joyeuseté;
heureux seray en cest' esté,
se puis venir a mon emprinse.

S'il est aulcun qui m'en deprise,
il me doit estre pardonné.

J'ay prins amours...

Il me semble que c'est la guise,
qui n'a riens, il est debouté,
et n'est de personne honoré;
n'esse pas droit que je y vise?

J'ay prins amours...

A vous sans aultre me viens rendre,
Il m'est force qu'ainsy le face.
À ce me contraint vostre face,
Qui tant est belle, douce et tendre.

Veuillez vo pitié condescendre,
Envers moy qui de prima face

A vous...

Le vous dire n'ose entreprendre,
Jamais en moi n'eust tant d'audace;
N'au moins pretendant estre en grace
En tant qu'honneur se peult estendre.

A vous...

De voltate in qua

E do bella rosina
Che Gianolte vol parlare.

For some time it's been plain to see
That you would only be with me
On the down low.
But now we can let all that go
Because it seems you've set me free.

You are gentle, fine, and good,
And rather than besmirch your name
I'd leave as quickly as I could
And not succumb to spite and shame.

For quite a while I've been detained
Imagining that I'd obtain
My just dessert;
But now it's clear I'll just get hurt
With much to lose and zilch to gain.

For some time...

I wear the uniform of Team Love
So Joy will call me champion.
I'll have fun in the summer sun
If I can snag the one I dream of.

You think I sound like all those jerks;
I have a good enough excuse:

I wear the uniform of Team Love...

It's just how human nature works:
If you don't get some then you lose
And fade away like last week's news,
So why not chase life's little perks?

I wear the uniform of Team Love...

To you alone my life I render.
I have the need and nerve, no less,
Compelled thus by your gracefulness,
Which is so charming, sweet, and tender.

When first we meet, I pray extend your
Kind pity, for I must express:

To you alone...

To bravery I'm no pretender,
And I would never dare confess
These thoughts to you, except, I guess,
Wild hopes these gallant words engender:

To you alone...

Translations by Raphael Seligmann

Ah, come back for a moment,
lovely Rosina,
For Gianollo wants to talk to you.

Translation by W. F. Prizer