

November 14, 2024 7:30 p.m.
Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall

Aesop's Nightingale

Amber Evans, soprano Niccolo Seligmann, vielle

I'm Leuven It: Newly-Discovered Renaissance Love Songs

<i>N'araige jamays mieulx que j'ay</i>	Robert Morton, The Leuven Chansonnier (c. 1470-75)
<i>Oublie oublie oublie oublie</i>	Anonymous unicum (Leuven)
<i>J'ay prins amours a ma devise</i>	Anonymous/Hayne van Ghizeghem (Leuven)
<i>Si vous voulez que je vous ame</i>	Anonymous unicum (Leuven)
<i>Comme femme desconfortee</i>	Gilles Binchois, Chansonnier Cordiforme (c. 1470s)
<i>J'ay des semblans tant que je vueil</i>	Anonymous unicum (Leuven)
<i>Vraiz amans pour dieu suppliez</i>	Anonymous unicum (Leuven)
<i>Quant ce vendra au droit destraindre</i>	Antoine Busnoys (Leuven)
<i>En atendant vostre venue</i>	Anonymous unicum (Leuven)

About Aesop's Nightingale

Aesop's Nightingale celebrates the virtuosity and sweetness of early music, sharing joy with our audiences through fresh programming, dynamic performance, and a chill vibe. Featuring Amber Evans, soprano; and Niccolo Seligmann, historical bowed strings; this duo connects audiences with music and emotions of the past through commitment to text and storytelling.

Background on Early Renaissance Polyphony

Early renaissance polyphonic music typically has three voice parts, each with a name and a role. The cantus line is “the tune,” and it usually approaches final notes from below. The tenor line, equally tuneful as the cantus but usually in a lower range, is the structural voice, and it approaches final notes from above. These two voices form the core pair of early renaissance polyphony, and when you hear two polyphonic voices in this concert, those are the two you're hearing. The third voice is the contratenor—Latin for “against the tenor”—which sometimes comments on the other voices and sometimes forms a bassline. When you hear three polyphonic voices in this concert, you're hearing Amber on cantus, and Niccolo playing tenor and contratenor lines at the same time.

The Leuven Chansonier

In 2014, an art dealer discovered a small book (4 3/4" x 3 1/3") at an estate sale in Brussels. Experts from the Alamire Foundation identified it as one of a family of six chansoniers, or songbooks, from France's Loire Valley, c. 1470-75, and dubbed it the Leuven Chansonier. Despite its miniature size, it contains fifty polyphonic pieces for three and four voices, including twelve *unica*, or pieces only found in this single source. Too small for an ensemble to use for performance, this manuscript was likely a memory aid, or a wealthy patron's copy for following along with a command performance.

In June 2024, I attended the Egida Sartori and Laura Alvin Early Music Seminars at the Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice Italy, to study the Leuven Chansonier with Anna Danilevskaia of the renowned Sollazzo Ensemble. In a Renaissance abbey, we spent the week uncovering the Leuven Chansonier's secret imitations and palindromes, textual subtleties, and diverse options for performance. At the festival, I developed my two-voices-on-one-vielle technique using *En attendant vostre venue, Vraiz amans pour Dieu suppliez*, and *Jay des semblans tant que je vueil* as case studies. This performance represents a culmination of my work in Venice.

The one piece not from Leuven, *Comme femme descomfortee*, comes from the Chansonier Cordiforme, a lavishly illustrated heart-shaped songbook from the same time and culture as the Leuven Chansonier.

- Niccolo Seligmann

Handwritten musical tablature for guitar, consisting of six systems of notation on a grid. The notation includes numbers (0-5) and symbols (circles) placed on the grid lines, representing fret positions and techniques. Some systems include additional markings like 'M2' and 'M3'.

System 1: A single line of notation with numbers and circles.

System 2: A single line of notation with numbers and circles.

System 3: A single line of notation with numbers and circles, including the text "Oublie Oublie (tenor + contra) ↑ M2".

System 4: A single line of notation with numbers and circles, including a circled 'M' above it.

System 5: A single line of notation with numbers and circles.

System 6: A single line of notation with numbers and circles.

Vielle tablature for *Oublie oubie oubie oubie*, tenor + contratenor voices

Song Texts and Translations

N'araige jamais mieulx que j'ay

N'araige jamais mieulx que j'ay?
Suije la ou je demouray,
m'amour et toute ma plaisance?
N'arez vous jamais cognoissance,
que je suis tout vostre et seray?

Shall I never fare better than I do,
am I there where I must remain,
my love and all my pleasure?
Will you never remember
that I am yours and shall stay so?

Ne faictes sur moy plus d'essay
car vous sçavez bien de vray
que je suis navré a oultrance.

Do not put me to more tests,
for you know well the truth,
that I am wounded beyond all hope.

N'aray je *jamais mieulx que j'ay?*
Suis je la ou je demouray,
m'amour et toute ma plaisance?

Shall I never fare better than I do,
am I there where I must remain,
my love and all my pleasure?

Je me rens et si me rendray,
autre deffanse n'y mectray,
car vous avez trop de puissance
et si povez prandre vengeance;
mes dictes moy que je feray.

I surrender and shall surrender myself,
I shall offer no other defence,
because you have too great power
and can take vengeance;
but tell me what I shall do.

N'araige jamais mieulx que j'ay?
Suije la ou je demouray,
m'amour et toute ma plaisance?
N'arez vous jamais cognoissance,
que je suis tout vostre et seray?

Shall I never fare better than I do,
am I there where I must remain,
my love and all my pleasure?
Will you never remember
that I am yours and shall stay so?

Oublie oublie oublie oublie

Oublie oublie oublie oublie oublie,
oublie *oublie oublie* tes douleurs,
leal amant, car venus sont les jours
que de dangier ne donnent une oublie.

Forget, forget, forget, forget, forget,
forget, forget, forget your sufferings,
loyal lover, for the days have arrived
that do not bring a bit of danger.

Si tu as dueil ou *as* merancolie
que tes desirs venoient au rebours,

If you feel grief or is depressed
because your desires were rejected,

oublie *oublie oublie oublie oublie,*
oublie oublie oublie tes douleurs.

forget, forget, forget, forget, forget,
forget, forget, forget your sufferings.

Pour tant donques lesse celle follie,
tu n'as besoing de ces dolens labours,

Therefore now take leave of this folly,
you have no need for these painful labours,

ainsi vivras doucement en amours
et au plaisir de ta dame et amye.

Oublie *oublie oublie oublie oublie*,
oublie oublie oublie tes dolours,
leal amant, car venus sont les jours
que de dangier ne donnes une oublie.

J'ay prins amours a ma devise

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 a ma devise
pour conquerir joyeuseté.

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

Si vous voulez que je vous ame

Si vous voulez que je vous ame
bien et lealment sans changer,
ne vous vueillez plus estranger,
car je vous lairoye sur mon ame.

Fait m'avez aler et venir
trop de foix sans nul bien me faire,

mays pensez y pour l'advenir
g'iray ailleurs ou j'ay affaire,

si non qu'il vous plaise, ma dame,
gracieusement vous ranger,

and then you will live nicely in love
and at the pleasure of your lady and beloved.

Forget, forget, forget, forget, forget,
forget, forget, forget your sufferings,
loyal lover, for the days have arrived
that do not bring a bit of danger.

I have taken love as my devise
in order to win joyfulness;
I shall be happy this summer,
if I can get my token of love.

If anyone for that should despise me,
I must be forgiven.

I have taken love as my devise
in order to win joyfulness

I think that this is how it is,
he who has no [token] is rebuffed,
and no one honours him;
Is it then not right that I look for it?

I have taken love as my devise
in order to win joyfulness;
I shall be happy this summer,
if I can get my token of love.

If you wish that I love you
fairly and truly without deceit,
you should not any more turn away,
for I will leave you, upon my soul.

You have made me go and come
too many times without any joy for me,

so think about that in the future
I will go somewhere else where I am
welcome,

unless it pleases you, my lady,
to surrender graciously;

car vous povez bien sans dangier
me faire plaisir et sans blasme.

Si vous voulez *que je vous ame
bien et lealment sans changer,
ne vous vueillez plus estranger,
car je vous lairoye sur mon ame.*

Comme femme desconfortee

Comme femme desconfortee
sur toutes aultres esgaree,
qui n'ay jour de ma vie espoir
d'en estre en mon temps consolee,
maiz en mon mal plus agravee
desire la mort main et soir.

Je l'ay tant de foyz regrette
puis qu'elle ma joye oustee;
doy je donc ainsi remanoir

*comme femme desconfortee
sur toutes aultres esgaree,
qui n'ay jour de ma vie espoir.*

Bien doy mauldire la journee
que ma mere fist la portee
de moy pour tel deul recepvoir,
car toute douleur assemblee
est en moy, femme malheuree,
dont j'ay bien cause de douloir

*comme femme desconfortee
sur toutes aultres esgaree,
qui n'ay jour de ma vie espoir
d'en estre en mon temps consolee,
maiz en mon mal plus agravee
desire la mort main et soir.*

J'ay des semblans tant que je vueil

J'ay des semblans tant que je vueil,
mais du surplus il n'est nouvelle,
car par ma foy la bonne et belle
n'a pas le cueur tel comme l'ueil.

for you could easily without fear
make me happy, and without reproach.

If you wish that I love you
fairly and truly without deceit,
you should not any more turn away,
for I will leave you, upon my soul.

As a woman discomforted,
more than all others distraught,
I have not on any day of my life hope
of being consoled at any time,
but evermore oppressed by my misfortune
I desire death morning and night.

I have yearned for it many times
since it took my joy away from me;
must I then remain here

as a woman discomforted,
more than all others distraught,
I have not on any day of my life hope.

Well may I curse the day
when my mother bore me
to receive so much grief,
for all pain is gathered
in me, unfortunate woman,
whence I have real cause to grieve

as a woman discomforted,
more than all others distraught,
I have not on any day of my life hope
of being consoled at any time,
but evermore oppressed by my misfortune
I desire death morning and night.

I get glances, as many as I want,
but otherwise there is nothing new,
for by my faith the good and fair
has not the heart that matches her eye.

Se je me plains ou je me dueil
mais que sans plus soye pres d'elle,

j'ay des semblans...

Nul aultre bien je n'en recueil
fors que par foiz elle m'appelle
"Mon amy" et puis se rapelle.
Mais quoy que j'aye ou joie ou dueil,

*j'ay des semblans tant que je vueil,
mais du surplus il n'est nouvelle,
car par ma foy la bonne et belle
n'a pas le cueur tel comme l'ueil.*

Vraiz amans, pour dieu suppliez

Vraiz amans, pour dieu suppliez
pour ung serviteur hors de grace,
qu'on a la mis par grande espace
avec les pechez oubliez.

Helas! il est si travailleiz
que je crains qu'il ne se defface.

*Vraiz amans, pour dieu suppliez
pour ung serviteur hors de grace.*

Et s'il est si treffort liez
que la mort sa vie trespasse,
je pry et requier qu'on pourchasse
que ces motz soient publiez.

*Vraiz amans, pour dieu suppliez
pour ung serviteur hors de grace,
qu'on a la mis par grande espace
avec les pechez oubliez.*

Quant ce vendra au droit destraintre

Quant ce vendra au droit destraintre,
comment pourray mon veuil contraindre
et mon cueur faindre
a mon douloureux departement,
mon loyal cueur et pensement,
a qui nulle ne peut actaindre.

If I lament or suffer,
only so that I may be near her,

I get glances...

No other favours do I receive
except that sometimes she calls me
'My friend' and then turns away.
But whatever I get, joy or grief,

I get glances, as many as I want,
but otherwise there is nothing new,
for by my faith the good and fair
has not the heart that matches her eye.

True lovers, for God's sake pray
for a servant out of favour,
who was put there for a long time
with the sins forgotten.

Alas, he is so tortured
that I fear he will end his life.

True lovers, for God's sake pray
for a servant out of favour.

And if he is so tightly bound
that death ends his life
I pray and require that you strive
to make these words known.

True lovers, for God's sake pray
for a servant out of favour,
who was put there for a long time
with the sins forgotten.

When it comes to real distress,
how can I make my will restrain
and my heart feign
at my painful departure,
my loyal heart and care,
who no one can capture.

Larmes et plours, gemir et plaindre,
feront mon cuer palir et taindre
sans riens enfaindre
et laisser tout esbatement.

Quant ce vendra *au droit destraindre,*
comment pourray mon veuil contraindre
et mon cuer faindre
a mon douloureux partement.

Souspirs angoisseux pour refraindre
ma joye et ma plaisance estaindre,
ou les reffaindre,
soudront en moi tant largement
que je ne pourroye bonnement
a grace et a mercy avaindre.

Quant ce vendra *au droit destraindre,*
comment pourray mon veuil contraindre
et mon cuer faindre
a mon douloureux partement,
mon loyal cuer et pensement,
a qui nulle ne peut actaindre.

En attendant

En attendant vostre venue,
mon bien que je desire tant,
une heure me dure bien cent
quant de vous seul je pers la veue.

Bien souvent seullete esperdue
je passe mon temps en pleurant

en attendant *vostre venue,*
mon bien que je desire tant.

Mais Bon Espoir m'a maintenue
et de son bon gre m'asseurant
que je vous reverray briefment
qui en joye m'a entretenue

en atandant *vostre venue,*
mon bien que je desire tant,
une heure me dure bien cent
quant de vous seul je pers la veue.

Tears and crying, to moan and wail,
make my eyes pale and weak,
without feigning anything,
and renouncing all amusement.

When it comes to real distress,
how can I make my will restrain
and my heart feign
at my painful departure.

Anguished sighs to suppress
my joy and extinguish my pleasure,
or feign them,
will surge in me so abundantly
that I cannot now in any way
gain grace and mercy.

When it comes to real distress,
how can I make my will restrain
and my heart feign
at my painful departure,
my loyal heart and care,
who no one can capture.

Waiting for your arrival,
my dear whom I so desire,
an hour feels like hundred
when I lose sight of you alone.

Very often alone and lost
I pass the time in tears

waiting for your arrival,
my dear whom I so desire.

But Good Hope has supported me
and by her good wish promised me
that I will see you again shortly,
which has kept me happy

waiting for your arrival,
my dear whom I so desire,
an hour feels like hundred
when I lose sight of you alone.