Unsung Heroine

The Imagined Life and Love of Beatriz de Dia

VIRTUAL CONCERT

PREMIERE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 25 | 12pm

IN-PERSON SCREENING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25 | 5pm

Texts & Translations

Poz a sabermi ven e cres

Poz a sabermi ven e cres
Que chanter sai et eu m'en dic
Mal estera se non pares
And faz que fols que non m'en gic,
Car can c'on dist a la langue
Ceu que ben en point non tengue
Non poc aver sordei or tec,
Con dir ce que non convengue

Or ai gauch q'an seurain de freis E remaingun sobr'il abric Que q'il oiseillon en lor leis Chazuns de son chanter non tric Qui s'aligra en sa langue Per novel tens qui sorvengue E des arbres k'eren tuit sec Con fuell per branke s'arengue

Estat ai en greu cossirier

Estat ai en greu cossirier per un cavalier q'ai agut, e voill sia totz temps saubut cum eu l'ai amat a sorbrier; ara vei q'ieu sui trahida car eu non li donei m'amor, don ai estat en gran error en lieig quand sui vestida.

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

Bels amics, avinens e bos, Cora.us tenrai e mon poder? e que jagues ab vos un ser Now that I have learnt well the craft Of how to sing and write poetry, It would be wrong not to make words, I would be a fool not to speak out. For when one speaks with a tongue A talent which one doesn't hold, There is nothing more wrong To make such improper claims.

Now, I rejoice, that I am safe from cold And in nests everywhere Each bird begins his song with urgency.

Happiness is the language now For good weather is coming And the trees, that were dry and without sap, Now array their branches with greenness

I have been in a state of great distress
Because of a knight who wooed me,
and I wish to confess for all time
how very much I loved him;
Now I see I have been betrayed,
for I did not give him my love
and so I suffer from this great mistake,
both, when I try to sleep and when I am awake.

How I wish that my knight might
Hold my naked arms for just a moment
So that I would find myself in ecstasy
To have him, with me as his pillow;
For I am more in love with him
than Floris was with Blanchfleur:
to him I give my heart and love,
my reason, my eyes and my life.

Handsome friend, tender and good, when will you be mine? Oh, to spend with you just one night 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 voiria.

Kalenda maia

Kalenda maia
Ni fueills de faia
Ni chans d'auzell ni flors de glaia
Non es qe.m plaia,
Pros dona gaia,
Tro q'un isnell messagier aia
Del vostre bell cors, qi.m retraia
Plazer novell q'amors m'atraia
E jaia,
E.m traia
Vas vos, donna veraia,
E chaia
De plaia
.l gelos, anz qe.m n'estraia

Ma bell'amia,
Per Dieu non sia
Qe ja.l gelos de mon dan ria,
Qe car vendria
Sa gelozia,
Si aitals dos amantz partia;
Q'ieu ja joios mais non seria,
Ni jois ses vos pro no.m tenria;
Tal via
Faria
Q'oms ja mais no.m veiria;
Cell dia
Morria,
Donna pros, q'ie.us perdria.

Can vei la lauzetta mover

Can vei la lauzetta mover De joi sas alas contral rai, Que s'oblid' e.s laissa chazer Per la doussor c'al cor li vai, Ai! Tan grans enveya m'en ve De cui qu'eu veya jauzion, Meravilhas ai, car desse Lo cor de dezirer no.m fon.

Ai, las! Tan cuidava saber D'amor, e tan petit en sai, And to plant on you a loving kiss! Know that with great passion I long for the hope of you in my husband's place, as soon as you have sworn to me that you will grant my every wish.

Neither the marking of May Day, nor leaves of beech nor songs of bird, nor gladiolus flowers please me in any way, o most noble and joyous lady, until I have a quick messenger from your beautiful body to tell me of new pleasures love and joy that you will bring me; and I will come to you, true lady; and let me crush and strike the jealous [husband], before I leave you.

My beautiful friend by God, may it never be that, out of jealousy, I am harmed, he'd command a dear price for his jealousy if he were to succeed in parting we two lovers; Never again would I be happy nor would I know happiness, without you; I'd take such a step that I'd never be seen by men again; that very day I'll die, My lady if I were to lose you.

When I see the lark
Spread its wings for joy and fly towards the sun,
Forget itself, and fall
In the bliss that rushes to its heart
Alas! How I then envy
All creatures that I see happy.
I am amazed that my heart
Does not melt away there and then with longing.

Alas! how much of love I thought I knew And how little I know,

Car eu d'amar no.m posc tener Celeis don ja pro non aurai. 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.

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

Ce fu en mai

Ce fu en mai
Au douz tens gai
Que la saison est bele,
Main me levai,
Joer m'alai
Lez une fontenele.
En un vergier
Clos d'aiglentier
Oi une viele;
La vi dancier
Un chevalier
Et une damoisele.

A lor plesir fesoient.
Cors orent gent
Et avenant
Et Deu! Tant biau dançoient
En acolant
Et en besant,
Mult biau se deduisoiant.
En un detor,
Au chief du tor,
Dui et dui s'en aloient;
Desor la flor,
Le gieu d'amor
Qui sui et que queroie.

J'alai avant,
Trop redoutant
Que nus d'aus ne me voie,
Maz et pesant
Et desirant
D'avoir autretel joie.
Lors, vi lever,
Un de lor per,
De si loign con g'estoie.

A apeler,

For I cannot stop loving
Her from whom I may have nothing.
All my heart, and all herself,
And all my own self and all I have
She has taken from me, and leaves me nothing
But longing and a seeking heart.

You will not see my sorrow, Since I am going, wretched not knowing where. I renounce and deny my songs And flee from joy and from love.

It was in May,
at that sweet joyous time
When the weather is beautiful;
I got up early
and went to seek joy
Near a fountain.
In an orchard,
Tangled up with wild roses,
I heard a fiddle;
There I saw dancing
– a knight
And a young lady.

They had gentle, pleasing bodies, And, oh dear God, how well they danced! Holding, and kissing, They took sweet pleasure. In a hidden place, Far at the end, They went off hand in hand; On a bed of flowers, They played the games of love, In ways that pleased them.

I went towards them
And told them about my sadness;
That I loved a lady,
To whom I would be loyal
And faithful
All my living life.
For her, I suffer
Such pain and torment,
More than I could say.
Alas! I shall die now.

A demander
Grant marrement:

Courtoisement
Et gentement
Chascun d'aus me ravoie
Et dient tant

Que Deus briefment M'envoit de cele joie

Por qui je sent

Et je lor en rendoie Merciz mult grant Et, en plorant, A Deu lez commandoie.

Un petit davant lo jor

Un petit davant lo jor Me levai l'autrier, Sospris de nouvelle amor

Ke me fait vellier.

Por oblieir mes dolors

Et por aligier,

M'en alai coillir la flor Dejoste un vergier.

Lai dedans, en un destor,

Oï un chevalier,

Desor lui, en haute tour, Dame ke moult l'ot chier.

Elle ot frexe la color

Et chantoit per grant dousor

Uns douls chans pitous melleit en plor.

Pués ait dit, com louials drue: 'Amins, vos m'aveis perdue, Li jalous m'ait mis en mue.'

Quant li chevalier entent

La dame a vis cleir,

De la grant dolor k'il sent

Comance a ploreir.

Pués ait di ten sospirant:

'mar vi enserreir,

Dame, vostre cors lou gent

Ke doie tant ameir!

Or m'en covient durement Les dou biens compaireir

Ke volenteirs et sovent

Me solïes doneir.

Lais! Or me vait malement: Trop ait si apres torment! I know it so well,

If she does not give me consolation.

Courteously, And gently,

They both console And wish me that God may quickly Send me that joy

To replace that sorrow which I feel right now

And I gave them
One thousand thanks,

And, in tears,

Commended them to God.

Just a bit before daybreak I rose the other day, Smitten by a new love that had kept me awake.

To forget my sorrow And to soothe them.

I went off further to gather flowers.

There, in a secluded spot,

I heard a knight,

And above him, in a tall tower, Was a lady who loved him much. She had a fresh complexion

And sang so sweetly

A sweet, poignant song, mingled with tears

Then she said, as a loyal lover: 'Beloved, you have lost me,

For the jealous [husband] has imprisoned me.'

When the knight heard

that lady with the clear, radiant face,

From the great anguish he felt

He began to weep tears.

Then he said, sighing:

'Alas, dear lady, woe the day I saw Your gracious body confined, which I cannot help loving! Now I must pay heavily For the sweet favours

You so very willingly and so often

Granted me.
Alas! I feel sick:

It is such bitter torment.

Et se ceu nos dure longement, Tres dous Deus, ke devanrons nos? Je ne puis endureir sens vos, Et vos, sens moi, comant dureis vos?'

Dist la belle: 'Boens amis, Amor me maintient; Aisseis est plus mor ke vis Ki dolor sustient. Leis moi giest mes anemis, Faire le covient; Et se n'ai joie ne ris Se de vos ne vient. l'ai si mon cuer en vos mis Tour adés m'en sovient. Se li cors vos est echis, Li cuers a vos se tient. Si faitement l'ai empris. Et de ceu soiiés tous fis, Ke sen repentir serai toudis Vostre loial amie. Por ceu se je ne vos voi, Ne vos oblierai mie.'

'Biaus amins, vos en ireis, Car je voi le jor. Des ore maix is poeis Faire lonc sejor. Vostre fin cuer me laireis; N'aies pais paour, C'aveuc vos enportereis La plux fine amor. Des ke vos ne me pois Geteir de ceste tor, Plux souvant la resgairdeis, Por moi, per grant dousor.' Et c'il sen part toz iriés Et dist: 'Lais! Tant mar fu neiz, Quent mes cuers est ci sens moi remeis. Dolans m'en part. A Deu comans je mes amors K'il les me gairt.'

Amours, u trop tart me sui pris

Amours, u trop tart me suis pris, M'a par sa signourie apris; Douce dame de paradys, Ke de vous voeill un cant canter: Pour la joie ki puet derer Vous doit on servir et amer. If we must endure it for much longer, dear sweet God, what will become of us? I cannot survive without you And you: how can you survive without me?'

The lovely one replied: 'Dearest love, Love sustains me; It is easier to face death Than to suffer sorrows. Besides me lies my enemy; I have to comply; And yet, I have no joy nor pleasure, unless it comes from you. My heart is so wedded to you that you are always on my mind. Even if my body is denied you You hold my heart. This is the vow I have made to you: So you can be sure That, without repenting, I will be faithful And forever your loyal lover. And so, even if I cannot see you I will never forget you.'

'Handsome, love, quick: get on your way, For I see the daybreak. From this hour onwards, you could be in danger If you stay here too long. Leave me your true heart; Don't be frightened: Because you take with you The most noble love ('fine amor'). Since you cannot Release me from this tower, Look at it, very often, With great feeling, for my sake.' And he left her, full of anger, Saying 'Alas! So hard it is that I was ever born! When my heart stays here, without me, I leave you, dolefully. To God, I commend my love

Love, to which I have been drawn recently, Has instructed me by its nobility, Sweet lady of paradise, I want to sing a song to you: To achieve everlasting joy It is you, one should serve and love.

May he protect it for me.'

Virge roine, flour de lis, Com li hom a de ses delis Ki de vous amer est espris, Nus hom ne.l saroit reconter: Pour la joie ki puet derer Vous doit on servir et amer

Lanquan li jorn

Lanquan li jorn son lonc en mai M'es belhs dous chans d'auzelhs de lonh, E quan mi sui partitz de lai, Remembra'm d'un' amor de lonh. Vau de talan embroncs e clis Si que chans ni flors d'albespis No-m valon plus que l'iverns gelatz.

Be'm parra joys quan li querrai, Per amor Dieu, l'alberc de lonh, E, s'a lieis platz, albergarai Pres de lieys, si be'm sui de lonh, Qu'aissi es lo parlamens fis Quan drutz lohndas et tan vezis Qu'ab bels ditz jauzirai solatz.

Mas so qu'ieu vuelh m'es atais, Qu'enaissim fadet mos pairis Qu'ieu ames e nos fos amatz.

Reis glorios

Reis glorios, verais lums e clartatz deus poderos, senher, si a vos platz Al meu compan siatz fizels ajuda Qu éu no lo vi pos la nochs fo venguda et ades sera l álba

Bel companho si dormetz o veillatz No dormatz plus, suau vos ressidatz Qu én orien vei l éstella creguda Qu ámena l jorn qu éu l ái ben coneguda Et ades sera l álba

Bel companho, en chantan vos apel; no dormatz plus, qu'eu auch chantar l'auzel ue vai querren lo jorn per los boschatge, Et ai paor que.l gilos vos assatge, Et ades sera l álba!

Bel companho, pos me parti de vos eu nom dormi ni mog de genolhos anz pregi dieu, lo fil santa Maria Virgin queen, flower of the lily, Just like the great delight you feel When ignited by love for you Which no one could begin to tell To achieve everlasting joy It is you, one should serve and love.

In May, when the days are long,
I love the beautiful song of the birds from far away
and when I have gone away from there,
I remember a lover who is far away.
I go with my head bowed, embittered,
so much so that songs and the hawthorn flowers
move me no more than the freezing winter.

It will truly feel joyous, when I can ask her, for the love of God, while I live so far from her; But, if she likes it, I shall live near her, although I come from far away. And what intimate conversations we will have when my lover who has been faraway is so close What beautiful words will bring me joy and solace.

But that which I want so much is denied to me Because my Godfather has decreed it So that I must love – and not be loved.

Glorious King, true and clear light, Almighty God, Lord, if it pleases you To my lover be a faithful helper For I've not seen him since night came down And soon it will be dawn.

Fair friend, whether you sleep or are awake Don't sleep anymore, look out from the tower to the east, where our trusting star rises which brings the day, which I know well. And soon it will be dawn.

Beautiful friend, whose name I sing out; don't sleep any more; I hear birdsong which I look for, all day long through the wood; I fear the jealous one will find you. And soon it will be dawn.

Beautiful friend, since I left you, I have had no sleep; I have only been on my knees praying to God, Son of the Blessed Mary, qu éus mi rendes per lejal compania Et ades sera l álba.

A chantar m'er do so qu'ieu non volria

A chantar mer de so qu'eu no volria, tant me rancur de lui cui sui amia; car eu l'am mais que nuilla ren que sia: vas lui no.m val merces ni cortezia ni ma beltatz ni mos pretz ni mos sens; c'altressi.m sui enganad' e trahia Com degr' esser, s'eu fos dezavinens.

D'aisso.m conort, car anc non fi faillensa, Amics, vas vos per nuilla captenenssa; ans vo am mais non fetz Seguis Valensa, e platz mi mout quez eu d'amar vos vensa, lo meus amics, car etz lo plus valens; mi faitz orgoil en digz et en parvensa, et si etz francs vas totas autras gens.

Valer mi deu mos pretz e mos paratges e ma beutatz e plus mos fins coratges; per qu'eu vos man lai on es vostr estatges esta chanson, que me sia messatges: e voill saber, lo meus bels amics gens, per que vos m'etz tant fers ni tant salvatges; no sai si s'es orgoills o mal talens.

Mais aitan plus voill li digas, messatges, qu'en trop d'orgoill an gran dan maintas gens. who has given me to be your loyal companion. And soon it will be dawn.

Now I shall sing a song I do not want to sing, So bitter I am towards the man I love, I love him more than anyone, Yet I've no kindness from him, or mercy My beauty, my noble rank or my wisdom Have no meaning: for I am cheated and betrayed As much as I would be if I had no appeal.

I take comfort at least that I never did anything wrong My love, towards you in anything;
Rather I loved you more than Seguis did Valensa,
And it pleases me greatly that I have bettered you in the way I have loved,
My friend, because you are the most worthy;
You show me arrogance in both words and deeds,
And yet you are so friendly to everyone else.

My worth and my nobility are the real value; And my beauty and my brave heart; Therefore, I send this song to you So that it would be my messenger. And I want to know, my handsome and noble friend: Why you are so cruel and so savage to me; I do not know if it is arrogance or a cold heart.

Messenger, most of all I want you to tell him that too much pride has brought great damage to many men.



he troubadours were a large group of poet-musician/singer-songwriters who worked in Occitania, southern France from approximately 1100 to 1270. Many of our ideas about romantic love stem from the idea of *Fin Amor* and the code of courtly love enshrined in troubadour poetry. Yet, many of the ideas integral to troubadour poetry seem foreign to our modern ideals about love, such as the idea that you can't truly be in love with your wife/husband, and that one can only be truly in love if one experiences jealousy.

Fin Amor, meaning "True" or "Pure Love", is bound up with the idea of chivalry and courtly love, and has provoked debate amongst historians: much of the poetry is deliberately obscure, with some crafted in code or as if only to be understood by the lover. There are also numerous references in the poems and songs to popular stories that haven't survived. These poems speak surprisingly directly and are unusually personal for the age. They are also heart-felt, and use powerful and breath-taking imagery.

And then there is Beatriz herself and the collection of 20 or so *trobairitz* (feminine of *troubadour*) whose poetry survives. Amongst this group Beatriz stands out because more of her poems (four) survive than by any other woman. Moreover, her poem *A Chantar m'er de so quieu non volria* is the only trobairitz poem that was written in a manuscript which survives today. Plus, the song is extraordinarily impassioned and forward for an age when women were generally not given a voice and often treated as nothing more than the property of their husbands.

Many of the troubadours have *vidas* which are the medieval equivalent to a biography. However, the vidas often blur the boundaries between fact and myth; they were 13th century marketing hype, proclaiming many troubadours to be "the best singer in the world" and "the best lover".

Indeed, nothing concrete is known about Beatriz, Comtessa de Dia. Historians believe she was born in the early 1140s and died around 1212. Beatriz's vida is very short raises more questions than answers: "The Countess de Dia was the wife of Guillem de Peitieus (Poitiers), a beautiful and good lady. She fell in love with Raimbaut d'Aurenga (Orange) and made many good

songs about him."

These names do not aid matters. There is no wife of a Guillem de Peitieus who held title to the county of Die. There are many Raimbaut d'Aurengas in the heraldic annals of the 12th century, including the troubadour who was a direct contemporary of Beatriz. As a result, the story is based around what we know of life in the region in this period: for example, Beatriz marries Guillem at the age 13, which was commonplace. The script is also grounded in troubadour concepts and ideas. Raimbaut D'Aurenga mentioned in Beatriz's vida is assumed as the troubadour, leading to the idea that Beatriz's poem A chantar was a response to their break-up. Guillem de Peitieus's character is based on the jealous red-headed husband with a horrible cough in the trouvère song "Un petit davant lo jor". All other "characters" are invented but have Occitan 12th century names.

Musical choices

Troubadour songs are mostly melancholic and declamatory in nature, so Trouvère (northern French troubadour counterparts) repertoire is included which tends to be more light-hearted and rhythmic. We also perform pieces from the *Estampie roial*, a collection of anonymous French medieval dances. The Trouvère tradition included women poets/songwriters/performers, and we perform one melody and text by Blanche de Castille and a poem by La Duchesse de Lourraine.

The troubadour songs survive today because they were written down by scribes, in many cases some 50-100 years after they were first sung. Some of the popular songs survive in more than one manuscript that make it clear that the songs have been taken on different musical journeys. So, the melodies we have today are almost certainly only one possible musical interpretation.

For all the repertoire we perform in *Unsung Heroine*, a single line melody is all that exists, and we made decisions about how to arrange and perform the music. We know, from texts and pictures, about the instruments that would have been used in this period for dances, but we don't know whether singers would have been accompanied. For two of the texts a vocal line doesn't exist: we have used the troubadour method of *contrafactus*, borrowing melodies from poems with the same meter. This includes one of Beatriz's poems: *Estat ai en greu cossirier*.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

(Norburn, Demetriou, Renton biographies in program book)

Ariane Prüssner was born in Hanover, Germany where she studied opera at Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien before moving to London to do a postgraduate course at the Royal Academy of Music where she obtained a Recital Diploma. She subsequently won grants to study song repertoire and contemporary opera at Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada. Prüssner sang as a soloist all over Britain. She fell in love with medieval music, joining groups including Fifth Element, Third Voice and Mediva. Prüssner then moved to Barcelona where she sang with the Chamber Choir of Palau de la Música Catalana, toured Europe with Marc Minkowski, Musiciens du Louvre, Jean-Christophe Spinosi, Ensemble Matheus, and performed at Palau de la Música. She returned to the UK in 2017 and lived in Hastings where she had a growing singing teaching practice. She performed and recorded with The Telling until her untimely death in 2021.

Giles Lewin is an instrumentalist and singer specialising in the traditional music of Europe and the Middle East. He has always preferred informal to formal music-making, learning most of his Irish music in the pub and with the band Afterhours. Whilst he was a member of the early music ensemble The Dufay Collective, his interest in the Arab influences in medieval music led him to Cairo to study Arabic violin with Ashraf al Sarki. He is a founder member of the folk band Bellowhead and The Carnival Band, and works frequently with Maddy Prior. He also plays with the Oxford-based Egyptian group Maqaam. He has released two solo albums: The Armchair Orienteer (Park Records, 2008) and Time's Chariot (Park Records, 2016).

Born in Cornwall, **Joy Smith** is a storyteller, composer and percussionist. She inherited a harp at age eight which led her to eventually travel the world with seven different harps and become an explorer of music and sound of all kinds. She is renowned for her thorough and exciting approach, creating programmes and performing music in the style and on the instruments they were intended for, from the Middle Ages to the 21st century. Smith's eclectic taste in music has led her to play in an unusual array of venues from the Royal Albert Hall to Glastonbury Festival and with groups such as I Fagiolini, Gabrieli Consort, The Sixteen, the orchestra of the Royal Opera House, David Gray and Sophie Ellis Bextor. She has performed at Bayerische Staatsoper, Teatro Real Madrid and Glyndebourne Opera and is professor of early harps at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.