

French Troubadour Songs (1950)

Written by bluesever

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Hugues Cuénod, tenor
Hermann Leeb, lute

Anonymous: 1. *Il me suffit* 2. *Quand ce beau printemps* 3. Gilles Binchois: *Rondeau: De plus en plus se renouvelle* Certon: 4. *Exultate iusti in Domine (Psalm XXXIII)*
5. *Quare fremuerunt (Psalm II)* 6. *Verba mea (Psalm V)*
Guillaume de Machaut:
7. *Ma chiere dame* 8. *Chanson Balladée* 9. Hugo de Lantins: *A madame playsante et belle*
Clemens non Papa:
10. *Misericorde au martyr* 11. *Puisque voulez*
Thomas Créquillon:
12. *L'ardent amour* 13. *A vous en est* 14. Anonymous: *Le lai des amants*
Thomas Créquillon:
15. *Je suis aimé de la plus belle* 16. *Puisque malheur* 17. *Cessez, mes yeulx* 18. Guillaume Dufay: *Le jour s'endort* 19. Adam de la Halle: *Helas! il n'est mais nuns* 20. Thibaut IV de Navarre: *Pour ce se d'amer dueil*
Hugues Cuénod (tenor) Hermann Leeb (lute)

The repertoire of trouvère songs is one "we are only now beginning to explore" writes Margaret Switten. I'm not sure that John Stevens or Hendrik van der Werf would agree with this, but it is certainly a claim that whets the appetite. And here we have an enlightened and well-chosen selection, sensitively presented and delightfully sung by Paul Hillier with insight and feeling. The main object of the poets' attention is *Jin'amor*, but other themes, including the return of spring (*Volez vous que je vous chant* and *En mai, quant li rossignolet*), make their joyful appearance, and there is one piece in a completely different vein, a serious piece of religious polemics: *Dieus est ensi conme est li pelicans*.

The melodies, simple and stanzaic, are of great beauty. Outstanding in this respect is Gace Brulé's *A la doucor de la bele seson*. Many are modal (Dorian) and a few share a well-known opening phrase with a Gregorian melodic-type that Andrew Lawrence-King has made much use of in his accompaniments. His own contribution is momentous: in the manner in which these

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songs were originally performed still remains a mystery for the singer, it is even more of an enigma for the accompanist. But Andrew Lawrence-King has taken the word trouvère to heart: he is a true 'finder'. His empathy with text, music and singer is total: he 'invents' with a sure touch, and I think it is not going too far to say it is a touch of genius. -- Gramophone [4/1997]

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