

2026
YORK
EARLY
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

Contre le Temps

Le Baiser de la Rose

National Centre for Early Music

Sunday 5 July 8.30pm

Contre le Temps

Cécile Walch, Karin Weston *sopranos*
Amy Farnell, Julia Marty *mezzo sopranos*

Le Baiser de la Rose

Each section of the programme starts with a quotation from the *Roman de la Rose*. Please reserve applause until the end of the programme

The Springtime

*...The earth becomes so proud that she wishes to have a new dress
and has one fashioned with such grace that it glimmers with hundreds of
colours: green grasses, white and blue flowers, and many other varied hues.
It is then that young people, because the season is beautiful and mild,
must strive to be joyful and in love.
He is hard-hearted who does not love in May,
when he hears the birds in the branches singing their sweet plaintive song...*

Venez oïr vrais amoureux

Anonymous
two-voice rondeau

Qui n'aroit autre deport,

Guillaume de Machaut c.1300-1377
Lai, strophe I

Contre le Temps

Anonymous
three-voice ballad, Oxford manuscript

Entry into the Dream

*...I dreamed that it was May, at the time when all things rejoice...
Many are those who imagine that in dreams there are only fables and lies...*

Rose et lis ay veu

Egidius de Francia fl. mid-14th century
three-voice ballade, Chantilly Codex, fol. 22

Je me complains

Guillaume Dufay 1397-1474
three-voice ballade

The Wonders in the Garden

...There were very beautiful violets, periwinkles, flowers of extraordinary whiteness, yellow blossoms, and crimson ones with exquisite scents. This corner of the earth was full of grace...

Et pour ce engendree s'est douche pensee

Machaut
Lai, strophe III

Se je chant mains

Denis Le Grant d. 1352
three-voice canon, I-IV, fol. 52v

Cupid and the Rose

*...Roses, there were thousands of them:
there was no fairer display under the sky.
Among the rosebuds I chose one of extraordinary beauty.
Amour, with his bow drawn, shot at me so truly
that through my eye he drove his arrow straight into my heart...*

En remirant vos douce portraiture

Anonymous
four-voice ballade, F-CA 1328, fol. 15

Fors tant, qu'en aucune manière

Machaut
Lai, strophe VI

Toujours servir

Anonymous
four-voice rondeau, Cyprus Codex, fol. 158v

The Pain of the Lover

*...When I remember that I must part from the Rose,
I would rather be dead than alive...
Once more come the tears and sighs, the endless daydreams,
the sleepless nights, the shivers and the poignant pains...*

Qui n'a le cuer

Anonymous
two-voice rondeau, Torino s.J.II.9, fol. 152v

Amour que j'en pri

Machaut
Lai, strophe IX

Se je fayz dueil

Guillaume Le Rouge fl c. 1450-65
three-voice virelai

The Lover's will

...To you, Amour, before I die, I make my confession without repentance,
as loyal lovers do, and I wish to make my will.

To Bel Accueil I leave my heart.

I have no other bequests to make...

Et pour ce sans nul descort

Machaut

Lai, strophe XII

Ma belle dame souveraine

Dufay

four-voice rondeau

***This concert is being recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast on 2 August.
Please silence mobile phones and any other electronic devices. Thank you!***

Characters in the story:

The Lover, our main character: he falls asleep and enters into a dream... he is struck by the arrow of Amour, and falls deeply in love with the Rose.

The Rose: the beloved flower of this story, a metaphor for the beautiful lady who is the object of all courtly love and hearts.

Amour: Love personified.

Bel Accueil: Fair Welcome, the Lover's guide through the garden of love.

Fortune: allegorical figure of fate, her wheel turns when you least expect it...

What was love in the fourteenth century? In the art of that time, the ideal of courtly love reigns supreme: love, in its proper state, is something hoped for but never attained. It is desire unfulfilled, and those who serve Love faithfully find their reward in the very thought of their beloved. Such a conception may feel quite foreign to our world of instant gratification, where the pleasures of unfulfilled desire are less often cultivated.

This programme evokes that courtly love sphere through song and poetry, guided by two pivotal medieval texts: *Le Roman de la Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris and the lai *Qui n'aroit autre deport* from the *Remède de Fortune* by Guillaume de Machaut. Le

Roman de la Rose provides the narrative framework, while excerpts from both works intertwine with polyphonic songs of the period, forming a portrait of courtly love.

The programme follows the dreamer of *Le Roman de la Rose*. With the arrival of spring, he falls asleep and enters a vivid dream. In this dream, he discovers a garden in full bloom, a world of sweet-smelling flowers, birdsong, music, dance, and perpetual spring – a place of beauty, pleasure and ease set apart from the hardships and ugliness of ordinary life. In this garden, he encounters a rose that captivates his heart. Struck by Cupid’s arrow, he embarks on a quest to attain it. Along the way, allegorical figures – Reason, Jealous and Danger among them – guide and obstruct his path, embodying the tensions and paradoxes of courtly love.

The influence of *Le Roman de la Rose* on medieval culture was profound, shaping poetry, visual art and music for generations. Its legacy resonates in the work of Machaut, whose lai offers a refined exploration of love’s complexities. Written a century after Guillaume de Lorris’s work, it mirrors the earlier themes in a delicate, skillful and poignant style.

The musical programme alternates between monodic stanzas from Machaut’s lai and polyphonic works from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Many of these compositions reflect the *ars subtilior* style, with its intricate rhythmic patterns, sinuous and sensual melodic lines and striking harmonic language, creating a rich and shimmering musical texture. Together, the music and poetry evoke the allegorical and symbolic landscape of medieval love, inviting audiences into a carefully constructed world of beauty and desire, where dream, artifice and longing become inseparable, and allowing the heartbeat of lovers from the past to resonate with audiences today.

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Venés oir vrais amoureux,
Venés oir je vous supplye,
Venés oir la melodie
Dou doulx rossignol gracieux.

Come listen, true lovers,
Come listen, I implore you,
Come listen to the melody
Of the sweet, graceful nightingale.

Qui n'aroit autre deport

En amer
Fors dous Penser
Et Souvenir
Avec l'Espoir de joïr,
S'aroit il tort,
Se le port
D'autre confort
Voloit rouver;
Car pour un cuer saouler
Et soustenir
Plus querir
Ne doit merir
Qui aime fort.

Encor y a maint ressort:
Ramembrer,
Ymaginer
En dous plaisir
Sa dame vëoir, oïr,
Son gentil port,
Le recort
Dou bien qui sort
De son parler
Et de son dous regarder,
Dont l'entrouvrir
Puet garir
Et garentir
Amant de mort.

He who would have no other solace
in loving
but sweet thought
and remembrance,
together with the hope of joy —
would he be wrong
if he wished
to seek
some other comfort?
For to satisfy
and sustain a heart,
one who loves deeply
should seek
nothing more.

Yet there are many other consolations:
remembering,
imagining
with sweet delight
seeing and hearing his lady,
her noble bearing,
the recollection
of the goodness flowing
from her speech
and from her gentle gaze,
whose slightest glance
can heal
and preserve
a lover from death.

Contre le Temps

Tenor:

He! Mari, mari!
Vous soiiés onni,
Quant pour amourrettes
Me batés ensi.

Cantus:

Contre le temps et la sason jolye
Naray mener tres bone et plasant vie.
Tout por l'amour de mon tres doulz
ami,
Que j'ayme tant com le cuer de mi,
Sans mal penser ne vilaine folie.

Et me vorray maintenir fresquement
Et vivre ainsi tres amoureuement,
Et li feray de fait
Por ma plasanche et mon esbatement.
Et de ma part je vuel autrement
Et que mal penser ait.

Et je le puis faire sans vilenie,
Par jugement d'amant et amie.
Que nul mesfait n'y a d'amer ensi
Puis qu'il m'a pointe de vilain parti
S'il y estoit, j'en seroye polie.

Contre le temps et la sason jolye
Naray mener tres bone et plasant vie.
Tout por l'amour de mon tres doulz
ami,
Que j'ayme tant com le cuer de mi,
Sans mal penser ne vilaine folie.

Rose et lis ay veu

[Sanz texte]

Tenor:

Hey! Husband, husband!
You will be cursed,
When for little love affairs
You beat me like this.

Cantus:

Against the time and the joyful season,
I shall lead a very good and pleasant life,
All for the love of my very sweet friend,
Whom I love as much as my own heart,
Without bad thoughts or vile
foolishness.

And I wish to keep myself fresh
And live thus very lovingly,
And I shall do so indeed,
For my pleasure and amusement.
And for my part, I want otherwise
Than for there to be evil thoughts.

And I can do so without vileness,
By the judgment of lovers and friends.
There is no wrongdoing in loving this way,
Since he has shown me no vileness.
If there were, I'd have cleansed myself of it.

Against the time and the joyful season,
I shall lead a very good and pleasant life,
All for the love of my very sweet friend,
Whom I love as much as my own heart,
Without bad thoughts or vile
foolishness.

[Without text]

Je me plains piteusement
a moi tout seul plus qu'a nullui
de la grieste, paine e tourment,
que je souffre plus que ne di.
Dangier me tient en tel soussi
qu'eschever ne puis sa rudesse,
et fortune le veult aussi,
mais par ma foy
ce fait jonesse.

Et pour c'endengrée
S'est douce pensée
En mon cuer et enfermée
Qu'adès me souvient
De la desirée,
Dont ma joie est née
Et l'esperance doublée
Qui de li me vient.
S'en yert honnourée
Servie, loee
Crainte, obeïe, et amee
Faire le couvient
Car si li aggree
J'arai destinee
Bonne ou mort desesperee
Dou tout a li tient.

Se je chant mains
que ne suelh
de la simple
sans orguelh
Ou j'ay mis toute ma cure,
en yver pour la froidure,
C'est pour l'amour des faucons,
que j'ay si biaus
et si bons a voler pour la riviere,

I lament pitifully
To myself more than to anyone else
Of the sorrow, pain and torment
That I suffer more than I say.
(Danger) holds me in such anxiety
That I cannot escape its harshness,
And Fortune wills it so as well,
But truly,
It is youth that causes this.

And for this reason
Sweet Thought was born
within my heart and enclosed there,
so that I always remember
the desired lady,
from whom my joy was born
and the hope doubled
which comes to me from her.
Thus she shall be honoured,
served and praised,
revered, obeyed, and loved,
for so it must be.
For if it pleases her,
I shall have a destiny
either good or desperately fatal,
for all depends on her.

If I sing now
more than I used to
in a simple manner
without pride,
Where I have put all my attention,
in winter due to the cold,
It is for the love of the falcons,
that I have such beautiful
and good ones to fly for the river,

Que riens nulle
n'ay si chiere cume d'aller y souvent,
quant l'air est clair
sans gros vent.

Alons y compains tres dous,
Les oysiaus sont si desous.

Ho! Or tot coy!

Ho! Je les voy!

Ho! Jetés! Jetés!

ou vous les perdés!

Huo, huo, huop!

Huo, huo, huop!

Huo, huo, huop!

Hareu! Il s'en va.

Hau, ha hau, ha hau, houp!

Il va au change, bon gre Diu.

Hau, ha hau, ha hau, houp!

Huo, huo, huo, leves li!

Hau, ha hau, ha hau, ha ha!

Mors est,

or paissions nos fauchons.

Hau, hau, ha ha, hau!

Biaus dous compains retournons,

Puis k'a voler ne trouvons
plus d'oysiaus en cest pais.

De ceus que si avons pris,
fere a ma dame present.

Et se je ne les present

plus ama loyal a mie,

Cest pour ce que ne puis mie.

That nothing, no one,
is as clear as going there often,
when the air is clear
and without strong wind.

Let's go there, very dear companions,
The birds are down here.

Oh! Right now!

Oh! I see them!

Oh! Throw them! Throw them!

Or you'll lose them!

Huo, huo, huop!

Huo, huo, huop!

Huo, huo, huop!

Hareu! It's going away.

Hau, ha hau, ha hau, houp!

It's going to change, God willing.

Hau, ha hau, ha hau, houp!

Huo, huo, huo, lift them!

Hau, ha hau, ha hau, ha ha!

It's dead,

now let's hunt our falcons.

Hau, hau, ha ha, hau!

Beautiful dear companions, let's return,
Since we find no more birds
to hunt in this land.

Of those we have caught,
I will present them to my lady.

And if I do not present them
more faithfully to my beloved,

It is because I cannot.

En remirant

vo douce pourtraiture
Amours m'a fait
si grant joie venir
Que je sçay bien
que humaine creature
N'en porroit plus
avoir ne plus sentir
Que mes cuers sent :
car vo biauté fenir
Fera les mauls,
qui m'ont esté contraire,
Merchi avoir
de vous cuer debonnaire.

While gazing

at your sweet portrait,
Love has brought me
such great joy
That I know well
no human creature
Could experience
or feel more
than my heart feels:
for your beauty will end
the pains
that have been contrary to me,
I thank you
for having such a generous heart.

Fors tant, qu'en aucune maniere

Ma dame chiere,
Qui de mon cuer la tresoriere
Est et portiere,
Sceüst qu'elle est m'amour premiere
Et darreniere.
Et plus l'aim qu'autrui
ne mon bien,
Nom pas d'amour veinne et legiere,
Mais si entiere,
Que mieus ameroie estre en biere
Qu'a parsonniere
Fust, n'en moy pensée doubliere.
Tels tousdis iere,
Comment qu'elle n'en sache rien.
Car ne sui tielz qu'a moy affiere
Que s'amour guiere
Ne que de son vueul tant enquiere
Que li requiere
Car moult pourroit comparer chiere
Telle prière
Mes cuers qui gist en son lyen

Except that, somehow,

my dear lady,
who is the treasurer
and guardian of my heart,
might know that she is
my first and last love.
And I love her more than all others
or even my own well-being,
not with a vain or frivolous love,
but so wholly
that I would rather lie in a coffin
than see her belong to another,
or harbor within me any thought of
forgetting. Thus have I always been,
though she knows nothing of it.
For I am one to whom it would seem
fitting to seek her love openly,
or to press so far upon her wishes
as to entreat her for it;
for such a plea
might cost my heart dearly
my heart, which lies bound in her chains.

Pour ce n'en fai semblant ne chiere
Que je n'acquiere
Refus qui me deboute
ou fiere
De li arriere
Car se sa douceur m'estoit fiere
Amours murtriere
Seroit de moy, ce say je bien.

Therefore I make no show nor
complaint
by which I might earn
a refusal that would drive me back or
thrust me away from her.
For if her sweetness were cruel to me,
murderous Love
would indeed be my death,
of that I am certain.

Toujours servir je veuil la douce
flour
De bon vouloir, honorer et chierir,
Amer, loer, purement sans mentir,
Pour la biauté qu'en elle est et l'odeur.

I always want to serve the sweet flower
With good will, to honour and cherish,
To love, praise, purely without deceit,
For the beauty and fragrance that are in
her.

D'arme, de cuer e cors par gran
ferveur
Sans oblier on ques mais ne faillir...

With soul, heart, and body, with fervour
Without forgetting or ever failing...

Toujours servir je veuil la douce flour
De bon vouloir, honorer et chierir...
Que pris, biauté, bonté, toute
douceur,
Tous les biens honorer sans menrir,
Soingneusement, volentiers, par plaisir,
Et par droit hait en tous lieux de fin
cuer.

I always want to serve the sweet flower
With good will, to honour and cherish...
That value, beauty, goodness, all
sweetness,
To honour all goods without falsehood,
Carefully, willingly, for pleasure,
And by right, cherishes them
everywhere with a sincere heart.

Toujours servir je veuil la douce flour
De bon vouloir, honorer et chierir,
Amer, loer, purement sans mentir,
Pour la biauté qu'en elle est et l'odeur.

I always want to serve the sweet flower
With good will, to honour and cherish,
To love, praise, purely without deceit,
For the beauty and fragrance that are in
her.

Qui n'a le cuer

rainpli de vraie joie
Mallement peut
gracieux chans trover;

Je le sai bien
et si le peus prover,
Mout me desplaist,
mais ainsi faut que soie.

Pluseurs en sont en ceste propre
voie,
Lesquels dire porroient
sans fausser:

Qui n'a le cuer
rainpli de vraie joie
Mallement peut
gracieux chans trove;

Autre ne sai, certes,
que dire doie,
Fors que Dieu
tous tels cuers reconforter.

Veulle, qui peut
toute grace donner,
Car ou peut bien dire
si haut qu'on l'oie:

Qui n'a le cuer
rainpli de vraie joie
Mallement peut
gracieux chans trove;

Je le sai bien
et si le peus prover,
Mout me desplaist,
mais ainsi faut que soie.

He who does not have his heart
filled with true joy
Can scarcely
find graceful songs;

I know this well
and can prove it,
It displeases me greatly,
but it must be so.

Many are on this very path,
Who could speak of it
without deceit:

He who does not have his heart
filled with true joy
Can scarcely
find graceful songs;

I know nothing else, indeed,
but what I should say,
Except that God should wish
to comfort all such hearts,

He who can
give all grace,
For one can say it
loudly enough to be heard:

He who does not have his heart
filled with true joy
Can scarcely
find graceful songs;

I know this well
and can prove it,
It displeases me greatly,
but it must be so.

Amour que j'en pri,

Qui volt et souffri
Qu'a li, sans detri,
Quant premiers la vi, m'offri,
Li porra bien dire
Que pour s'amour fri
Sans plainte et sans cri,
Et qu'a li m'ottri,
Comme au plus très noble tri
Que peüsse eslire,

Et qu'autre ne tri
Ainçoys a l'ottri
Qu'onc ne descouvri
Dont maint souspir ay murtri
Qui puis n'orent mire.
Mais s'en mon depri
Met Amours estri
Je n'en bray ne cri
N'autrement
ne m'en deffri
Ne pense a defrire.

Se je fayz dueil je n'en puis mais
Ne nul ne m'en doibt doner blasme,
Car je ne crois pas qu'il fut ame
Plus desplaisant que moy jamais.

Qui plus est, ne me doibt souffire
De faire deuil tant seullement,
Car par droit, je me deusse occire
Pour metre fin a mon tourment.

Aultrement languir desormais
Me faudra, jusqu'a tendre l'ame,
Plourant les maux qu'ay pour ma
dame,
Puis que seul sans la voir remais.

Love, whom I implore,
who willed and permitted
that I, without faltering,
when I first saw her, offered myself,
may well bear witness
that for her love I burn
without complaint or cry,
and that I have surrendered myself
as to the noblest good
I could choose.

And that I have chosen no other,
but yielded myself wholly,
without ever revealing it
whence many sighs
have tormented me ever since.
But if Love places restraint
upon my sorrow,
I neither weep nor cry aloud,
nor otherwise
defend myself,
nor think of resisting.

If I mourn, I cannot help it
And no one should blame me for it,
For I do not believe there ever was a
soul
More miserable than mine.

Moreover, it should not suffice
For me to simply mourn,
For truly, I ought to end my life
To put an end to my torment.

Otherwise, I will have to languish
Until I breathe my last,
Weeping for sorrows I endure for my
lady,
Since I am left alone, without seeing her.

Se je fayz duel je n'en puis mais
Ne nul ne m'en doibt doner blasme,
Car je ne crois pas qu'il fut ame
Plus desplaisant que moy jamais.

Et pour ce, sans nul descort,

Endurer
Vueil et celer
L'ardant desir
Qui vuet ma joie amenrir
Par subtil sort;
Si le port
Sans desconfort
Et vueil porter;
Car s'il fait mon cuer trambler,
Taindre et palir,
Et fremir,
A bien souffrir
Dou tout m'acort.

Il me fait par son enort
Honnourer,
Servir, doubter,
Et obeir
Ma dame et li tant chierir
Qu'en son effort
Me deport,
Quant il me mort
Et vuet grever,
Mais qu'a li vueille penser
Qu'aim et desir
Sans partir,
Ne repentir;
La me confort.

If I mourn, I cannot help it
And no one should blame me for it,
For I do not believe there ever was a
soul
More miserable than mine.

And for this reason, without any discord,
I wish to endure
and conceal
the burning desire
that seeks to diminish my joy
through subtle device;
thus I bear it
without despair
and willingly continue to bear it;
for, if it makes my heart tremble,
grow pale,
and shiver,
to suffer it well
agrees with me.

Through its influence, it makes me
honour,
serve, fear,
and obey
my lady and cherish her so much
that in such effort
I take delight,
even when it wounds
and seeks to overwhelm me,
so long as I think upon her,
whom I love and desire
without wavering
or regret;
there, I find comfort.

Ma belle dame souveraine

Faites cesser ma grief dolour
Que j'endure pour vostre amour
Nuit et jour, dont j'ay tres grant
painne.

Ou autrement, soiés certaine
Je finneray dedens brief jour
Ma belle dame souveraine
Faites cesser ma grief dolour.

Il n'i a jour en la sepmainne
Que je ne soye en grant tristour;
Se me veulliés par vo doulcour
Secourir, de volonte plaine,

Ma belle dame souveraine
Faites cesser ma grief dolour
Que j'endure pour vostre amour
Nuit et jour, dont j'ay tres grant
painne.

My beautiful sovereign lady
Make my great sorrow cease,
Which I endure for your love
Night and day, for which I suffer greatly.

Or else, be certain
I shall die within a few days.
My beautiful sovereign lady
Make my great sorrow cease.

There is not a day in the week
When I am not in great sadness;
If you would, with all your kindness,
Help me with your full will,

My beautiful sovereign lady
Make my great sorrow cease,
Which I endure for your love
Night and day, for which I suffer greatly.

Contre le Temps



Contre le Temps is a female vocal ensemble specialising in medieval music, founded in Basel in 2022 by Julia Marty, Cécile Walch, Karin Weston, and Amy Farnell during their studies at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. Emerging as a prominent force in today's medieval music landscape, Contre le Temps interprets a variety of musical genres from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries, blending personal musical sensibilities with historically informed knowledge of period sources. The name Contre le Temps is borrowed from two songs, one by the French troubadour Gace Brulé and the other from an anonymous author in the Oxford manuscript, signifying the ensemble's commitment to interpreting this music in an original and timeless manner.

In their original context, the repertoires performed by Contre le Temps would have been sung by singers who knew each other well and had a certain habit of singing together. The ensemble seeks to recreate this musical and personal relationship in its own approach to the music. Rooted in the members' education at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, the group focuses on creating a unified sound

that respects and celebrates the individuality of each voice, while approaching the repertoire with a sense of exploration and experimentation. Working democratically, without a single director, the ensemble develops its interpretations collectively through repeated experimentation with phrasing, tempo, colour, memorization and improvisation. This collaborative process allows the group to build a deep relationship with both the repertoire and its audiences. Contre le Temps also seeks to move beyond the traditional concert format by creatively engaging the stage space and incorporating improvisation into performances, bringing a sense of immediacy and vitality to the music.


Contre le Temps currently performs throughout Europe, with regular appearances in Belgium, England, France, Germany, Holland and Switzerland. In 2023, the ensemble participated in the International Young Artists Presentation organised by the Laus Polyphoniae festival in Antwerp, and won the Audience Award and Second Prize from the jury at the International Van Wassenaer Competition, along with the OOM Prize, which included a concert tour during the Utrecht Early Music Festival season in 2024-2025. In early 2026, the ensemble won fifth place in the Utrecht Early Music Festival's EMTV Award.

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