

The Source

“M’amour jamais on ne verra changer” was published in 1576 by Jehan Chardavoine, in his collection *Le Recueil des plus belles et excellentes chansons en forme de voix de ville, tirées de divers auteurs et Poètes François, tant anciens que modernes. Ausquelles a esté nouvellement adaptée la Musique de leur chant commun, à fin que chacun les puisse chanter en tout endroit qu'il se trouvera, tant de voix que sur les instruments* ("Collection of the most beautiful and excellent songs in the form of voix de ville, taken from various French authors and poets, both ancient and modern. To which texts have been newly adapted the music of their main tune, so that anyone may sing it at whichever place they may be, on voice as well as on instruments").

It is interesting to note that this collection of songs by Chardavoine had actually first been published the previous year. The 1576 version is actually the second edition. While many songs remained essentially the same from one to the next, in the case of this song, an entirely new tune was given in the second edition, which is vastly superior to the earlier one. The lyrics, however, are virtually identical in both, except that the earlier edition abbreviates more of the words.

Chardavoine (1538-1580) was a French musician known both as a composer and editor. His *Recueil* was first published in 1575, making it the oldest collection of French popular songs ever printed. In fact, this collection is one of the few sources of secular monophonic songs from the sixteenth century.

The title of Chardavoine’s collection, as well as its preface, leaves little doubt as to its intended audience. The nearly 200 songs contained within its pages are based on strophic poetic texts, and are meant to be accessible to anyone. The title refers to this style as “voix de ville”-- literally, the voice of the city. “Voix de ville” was understood to mean light popular music, entirely secular in nature. This is the style that became the “airs de cour” in the following century. (Lee, pg. 237) This was not music for the Court or the Church. This was music meant for the common folk. In fact, the term “voix de ville” eventually became the word “vaudeville”. (Cullen et al., pg. Xii)

Transcribing the Music

The music notation used in the *Recueil* is deceptively close to modern notation, but there are some important differences which must be noted.

The first is that unlike today’s music, which is most often written on a treble or base clef, music at this time used a wider variety of clef marks. In the case of this song, a letter “G” at the beginning of the piece indicates that all notes on the middle line of the staff are G’s, with the rest of the notes being determined from there. I chose to transpose this piece down by a perfect fourth, to put it in a more comfortable range for my voice. The song has a very narrow range of only 6 notes.

In the final line of music, just after the first note, there is an unfamiliar symbol that I have not been able to find an explanation for. It consists of 3 dots with a hooked line above them. This same symbol appears frequently in other pieces in this collection, as well as in other examples of period music. Occasionally, it is flipped top to bottom. Sometimes it appears between notes, and sometimes attached to the notes. Conversations with other SCA musicians have led to some interesting speculation on its meaning, but nothing definitive, or even particularly likely, I would argue. Please, if you know what this symbol might mean, contact me! (rohais@serenity-woods.net)

Resources

These are a few of the resources I used when working on this piece. This is a messy, incomplete list, but hopefully will give you a place to start with your own research.

Chardavoine, Jehan, **Le Recueil des plus belles et excellentes chansons en forme de voix de ville, tirées de divers auteurs et Poètes François, tant anciens que modernes, 1st edition.** Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022

https://s9.imsllp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/5/56/IMSLP194046-PMLP333226-Le_recueil_des_plus_belles_et_excellentes_chansons.pdf

Chardavoine, Jehan, **Le Recueil des plus belles et excellentes chansons en forme de voix de ville, tirées de divers auteurs et Poètes François, tant anciens que modernes, 2nd edition.** Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k858262g/f42.item>

Google Translate

Imperfect at best, but convenient, and good enough to get a sense of what is being said. Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022

<https://translate.google.com/>

Collins French Dictionary

Modern, not medieval vocabulary, but still very helpful. I also ended up using the “Grammar” section of this site. Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english>

Verbix Verb Conjugation

Awesome resource. Has lots of modern languages, as well as various ancient languages. Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022

<https://www.verbix.com/languages/middle-french>

Conversation with **Lisa Theriot (SCA: Mistress Adelaide de Beaumont)** via Facebook Messenger.

Conversation with **Ben Tucker (SCA: Master Owen Alun)** via Facebook Messenger and Zoom.

Conversation with **Emilysue Reichardt (SCA: Mistress Amelie d’Anjou)** via Facebook Messenger.

Early Music FAQ. Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022

<http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/>

In particular, the section on the twelve modes:

<http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/misc/modes.html>

Dictionnaire du Moyen Français. A dictionary of Middle French to Modern French. Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022

<http://zeus.atilf.fr/dmf/>

What Is a Mode?

Lisa Theriot’s lesson on medieval modes. Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022.

<https://www.ravenboymusic.com/what-is-a-mode/>

“**Jehan Chardavoine**” entry on **Wikipedia**, last visited on Feb. 2, 2022:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehan_Chardavoine

“**Middle French**” entry on **Wikipedia**, last visited on Feb. 2, 2022:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_French

From Ink to Sound: Decoding Musical Manuscripts: Travel through the history of musical notation and learn how to decode medieval music manuscripts. Taught through the University of Basel, and offered online through FutureLearn.com. Sadly, the course is no longer available. Last visited on Feb. 2, 2022

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/from-ink-to-sound>

Cullen, Frank, with Florence Hackman, and Donald McNeilly, ***Vaudeville Old and New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performances in America, Volume 1***. New York and London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Lee, Sidney, ***The French Renaissance in England: An Account of the Literary Relations of England and France in the Sixteenth Century***. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910.