En un vergier sotz fuella d’albespi

an Occitane alba

or Alto and Bass Throat-singing Duet

Edward Caine
un vergier sotz fuella d’albespi

Ocaitane alba for Alto and Bass Throat-singing Duet

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Commissioned by Robin Bier as part of a “Lost Songs” project.
Dedicated to Bright Cecilia.
First performance: 12/6/09
En un vergier sotz fuella d'albespi

I. En un vergier sotz fuella d'albespi
[ en yn vers'dżjers sots 'fżuəa dalbe'spi ]
holds the lady her lover beside her
tenc la domna son amic costa si
[ tenk la 'domna sun a'mik 'kosta si ]
until the watchman cries that the dawn comes,
tro la gayta crida que l'alba vi,
[ trSu la 'gajta 'krı́da ke 'lalba vi ]
O / alas God! O / alas God! [how] the dawn very soon comes.
Oy Dieus! Oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve.
[ oj djews oj djews de 'lalba tan tɔst ve ]
"[may it] Please to God already the night not ending
II. «Plagues a Dieu ia la nueltz non falhis
[ pla'gjuəs a djew ja la njuęjts nun fa'ʎis ]
nor my lovers alongside from me not parting
ni.l mieus amicx lonc de mi no.s partis
[ nil mjews a'miks lonk de mi nus pars'tis ]
nor the watchman day nor dawn didn't see,
ni la gayta lorn ni alba no vis,
[ ni la 'gajta lɔ́rʃn ni 'alba nu vis ]
O / alas God! O / alas God! [how] the dawn very soon comes.
Oy Dieus! Oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve.
[ oj djews oj djews de 'lalba tan tɔst ve ]
Fair sweet friends, kiss we I and you
III. Bels dous amicx, baizem nos yeu e vos
[ bels dɔw a'miks baj'zem nos jw e vos ]
down in the hay field where sing [the] birds
aval e.ls pratz on chanto.ls auzellos
[ a'val els prɔʃts un 'fʃəntuels aw泽'ʎos ]
all this we do in spite of [the] jealous [man]
tot o fassam en despieg de gilos,
[ tot u fa'ssam en despieg de dʒi'ʎos ]
O / alas God! O / alas God! [how] the dawn very soon comes.
Oy Dieus! Oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve.
[ oj djews oj djews de 'lalba tan tɔst ve ]

1 Wilhelm, Lyrics of the Middle Ages, 47 claims this alba to be the oldest complete dawn song in a European language. I have interpreted the pronunciation accordingly.
Fair sweet friends, [let us] make a game new

IV.  Bels dous amicx, fassam un ioc novel
    bels dɔws ˈamiks ˈfasam ˈyn dʒɔk ˈnuˈvel]
    in the garden where sing the birds
    yns el iardi on chanton li auzel
    [ ins el dʒɔrsˈdi un ˈtʃantu li awˈzel ]
    until the watchman plays his shawm,
    tro la gaita toque son caramelh,
    [ trSu la ˈgajta tuˈkue sun karʃaˈmel ]
    O / alas God!  O / alas God!  [how] the dawn very soon comes.
    Oy Dieus!  Oy Dieus!  de lˈalba tan tost ve.
    [ oj ˈdjews oj ˈdjews de lˈalba tan tɔst ve ]
    For the gentle wind which [is] come from there
    Per la dossˈaura quˈes venguda de lay
    [ per la duˈsawrˈsa kes venˈgyda de laj ]
    of my lover fair and courteous and gay
    del mieu amic belh e cortes e gay
    [ del miew ˈamik bel e kɐrˈtes e ˈgaj ]
    of his breath have I drunk a sweet ray [of sunlight]
    del sjew alen aj beˈgyt ˈyn dɔws ˈrraj
    [ del sjew ˈalen aj beˈgyt ˈyn dɔws ˈrraj ]
    O / alas God!  O / alas God!  [how] the dawn very soon comes."
    Oy Dieus!  Oy Dieus!  de lˈalba tan tost ve. ³
    [ oj ˈdjews oj ˈdjews de lˈalba tan tɔst ve ]
    The lady is charming and pleasing
    La dompna es agradans e plazes
    [ ˈla domˈna es agrˈdaˈns e plaˈzens ]
    for her beauty her watch many people
    per sa beutat la gardon mantas gens
    [ per sa ˈbewˈta la garsˈdo ˈmantas dʒɛns ]
    and to her heart in love truly,
    et a son cor en amar leyalmens,
    [ ez a ˈsun kars en aˈmarʃ lɛjalˈmens ]
    O / alas God!  O / alas God!  [how] the dawn very soon comes.²
    Oy Dieus!  Oy Dieus!  de lˈalba tan tost ve.²
    [ oj ˈdjews oj ˈdjews de lˈalba tan tɔst ve ]²

*Like Reis glorios, meter is decasyllables with a caesura after the fourth syllable.⁵

² Word for word translation by Robin Bier.
³ Original text taken from Bruckner, Shepard and White, Songs of the Women Troubadours, 134.
⁴ IPA transcription by Robin Bier.
⁵ Bruckner, Shepard and White, Songs of the Women Troubadours, 189-190.
Performance Notes

Vocal Multiphonics

This was written early on in my exploration of overtone- and throat- singing. It is best performed using “western” style overtones (use the tongue to bring out overtones from a pure sung note rather than an Isakere voice).

= vowel-influenced overtones:
If you are using “western” style overtones, push the tongue to the back of the throat to bring out the overtones that naturally occur. If using “Mongolian” style, sing with an Isakere voice.

= Subharmonics. This are produced by vibrating the vestibular fold an octave below the sung note.
Subharmonics are indicated by notation of the lower sub-tone as well as a wavy line to indicate the naturally occurring beating in the voice.

Diamond headed notes indicate when actual pitches should be brought out in over-tones. These can be in different octaves - whichever you are able to bring out.

Other Effects

Wavy lines between the parts indicate “beating” resulting from voices being very close in pitch. This is an instruction to explicitly bring out that beating.

Time-space notation

During the refrains of the piece it is notated in time-space notation to indicate complete freedom on the performer’s part to determine the length of the notes indicated. Only proportions are indicated and the general tempo mark should be “freely, slowly and expressively”. Notes that are vertically aligned should be performed together and especially where made explicit by the use of a dashed line.
En un vergier satz fuella d'albespi

moderately fast, dance-like

Solo Alto

Solo Bass

find most resonant overtone (prob. Vth)

find most resonant overtone (prob. Vth)

freely

A tempo

Die- us Oy- ie- us de l'al- ba tan tost ve Pla- gu- es a

Die- us Oy- ie- us de- (oh) ba tan tost ve Pla- u- e a
take as much time as needed