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### “Words and Music in the Early Books of *Chansons nouvelles*”

#### Love Songs—Serious and Not

Love, in all its varied forms, is the prevailing subject of the poems set to music in the early volumes of the *Chansons nouvelles*. Here, as in other collections of French secular polyphony of the middle years of the sixteenth century, we find a diverse literary tradition that gave voice to sentiments sometimes elevated and courtly, other times risqué and popular. Such books present a range of types and styles sharply divided along generic lines that offer sophisticated readers contrasting representations of two very different and highly stereotyped social worlds—one elite, the other popular—that appear throughout the work of writers such as Clément Marot, François Rabelais and others active during the second quarter of the sixteenth century. One part of the chanson repertory depends closely on an aesthetic of serious love, with its rhetoric of fidelity, deferred desire, and almost spiritual suffering. The long metrical patterns and elegantly balanced *quatrain*s and *huitain*s of such lyrics lend themselves well to the refined melodic manner that is the epitome of the mid-century chanson, with its clear alignment of rhyme, prosody, and musical line. Alongside such serious chansons, however, are text types and musical settings that contrast strongly with the restrained lyricism and serious sentiments of the courtly songs, and dwell instead on rustic and ribald themes drawn from popular culture. They also use musical language quite different from that of the serious chansons. Avoiding the closed formal designs and long lyrical lines favored by composers like Du Tertre, Goudimel, and others represented in the *chansons nouvelles*, composers who set these lighter texts instead preferred a style tending towards musical contrast and rhythmic animation to carry dialogue and descriptive narrative. Imitations of everyday speech and satirical representations of the infidelities of clerics and of peasant lovers were not part of the serious aesthetic. How did French composers of the day respond to the variety implicit in this idiom? How did Regnes manage to balance the requirement of novelty (namely, “chansons never before published”) with the enduring impression on the musical public made by the many hundreds of works in these modes already published by Attaignant? Finally, what tentative conclusions can we draw about the readership of Du Chemin’s chansonniers, based on the range of poetic and musical ideals embraced here?

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#### The Chanson at Mid Century: Melody, Texture, and Form

Regnes’ selection for the early volumes of the *chansons nouvelles* follow closely upon the compositional ideals set out in Attaignant’s chansonniers. In these books we find mainly the work of French composers, plus a small number of pieces by masters active in the Hapsburg Netherlands (such as Clemens non Papa and Thomas Crecquillon) or in Lyons (such as P. de

Villiers). As we have noted, a very large proportion of these compositions are by musicians active in Paris (Du Tertre, Gervaise, Jannequin, Goudimel, and others), the royal court (Certon, Le Gendre, and Maillaird), and some provincial cathedrals (such as Bastard, Bonard, De Marle, and Grouzy, among others). The specifically “Parisian” tradition of the Renaissance chanson has often been characterized as a lyrical idiom (with a tuneful superius melody as the leading voice), homorhythmic (with all four voices typically moving in coordinated, chordal textures), and balanced design (with clear formal repetitions and *da capo* reprises). Such stereotypes endure because they seem to confirm general impressions. To be sure, compared with some of the highly contrapuntal chansons crafted by Northern masters like Clemens, Crecquillon, and Gombert, the chansons of Certon, Du Tertre, and Goudimel can indeed seem quite similar in their lyrical restraint and chordal textures. However, in other respects, this conventional dichotomy between the Parisian and Franco-Flemish schools of composition is too simplistic. The model largely ignores, for instance, an equally important repertory of chansons published in Lyons by printers like Moderne, which reveal a preference for longer poems than typically found among the Attaignant prints. Perhaps more importantly, the model glosses over the presence (in each of these repertories) of special generic conventions dictated not by geography or affiliation, but instead largely by literary topic, poetic language, prosody, and verse form.

The bulk of the songs chosen by Regnes for the first eight *livres* are settings of serious love lyrics. Such poems, with their balanced couplets and clear poetic rhythms, elicited equally clear and balanced musical responses from many of the composers favored by Regnes for the new series. Above all else, it seems, these composers sought clear alignment of rhythm, prosody, and musical line, with the result that each line of poetry corresponds to a single melodic phrase. Countless Renaissance chansons begin with the dactylic rhythmic motto (often with repeated notes in the melody) that serves as a hallmark of the genre. Why this stereotypical opening? Probably because composers felt a compulsion to observe the medial coupe (or caesura) that divides the first hemistich of four syllables from the second hemistich (the remaining six syllables) in decasyllabic verse of the day. As we shall discover, this convention was itself exploited in a number of interesting ways in pieces assembled in the *chansons nouvelles*.<sup>1</sup>

The pieces chosen for Attaignant’s prints of the late 1520’s through early 1540’s were typically settings of four-line poems (*quatrains*). Regnes’ selections for the *chanson nouvelles* include a good number of *quatrains*. But from the very outset of the new project we should note the presence here of a preference for relatively longer poetic forms—*huitains*, *dixains*, and even *douzaines*. Yet in setting such extended poems, composers of the mid century nevertheless applied lyrical and formal conventions from the earlier repertory to craft balanced musical designs.

### Du Tertre’s “Ou est ce temps”—A Chanson in Detail

Etienne Du Tertre’s “Ou est ce temps” (from the *Sixiesme livre*) can stand as a good example of this type of composition:

1 · The conventions of rhyme, verse structure, and genre of mid-sixteenth century poetry are summarized in an important literary treatise of the time, Thomas Sebillet’s *Art poétique François. Pour l’instruction des jeunes studiens, et encor peu avancez en la poésie Française* (Paris, 1548). The book has recently been issued in modern edition, along with some other important theoretical writings of the period. See *Traites de poétique et de rhétorique de la Renaissance*, ed. Francois Goyet (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1990).

Ou est ce temps dictes mademoiselle  
 Que ne pouviez estre un jour sans me voir  
 N'estes vous plus? Las à quoy tient il, celle,  
 Qui voz plaisirs preniez tous à m'a voir.  
 Au-je m'espris encontre le debvoir  
 A vous servir, hélas non, que je pense?  
 Mais s'advenu m'estoit par ignorance  
 Dictes le moy, et vous monstrez benigne.  
 Da malfacteur prendray telle vengeance  
 Que le direz de pardon estre digne.

*What seasons is this—tell me, mademoiselle—  
 When you'll not see me daily.  
 Are you no more? Alas, to whom is it due, the one  
 Who takes your pleasure from my sight?  
 Have I erred, contrary to duty,  
 To serve you (alas, no), as I think?  
 But if it happens that I have done so by ignorance  
 Tell me then, and show yourself benign.  
 From a criminal take such vengeance  
 That the pronouncement of pardon will be worthy.*

In this poem, as in many other serious epigrams, the poet speaks to an absent beloved, describing amorous devotion as a kind of dutiful service. Here the physical dimensions of desire are largely ignored in favor of an abstract longing for something quite literally out of view. Note, too, how the poet's isolation is characterized as a kind of punishment that only the beloved has the power to forgive. In all these respects the poem echoes a long tradition of elevated, courtly love that informed chansons lyrics of the sixteenth century, and earlier periods, too.

Du Tertre's response to these lines is at once balanced and subtle. Recognizing the parallel rhyme scheme of the first two couplets ("mademoiselle/voir"; "il, celle/voir"), he used the same pair of musical phrases for each. (Du Chemin's typesetter recognized the repetition, too, and aligned both couplets beneath a single line of printed music in each part. Here the typography carefully aligns the two sets of verses to reflect the two musical endings.) The very same music returns once again for the final pair of lines. This *da capo* reprise is in some respects a musical convention (it appears in many pieces throughout the Attaignant and Du Chemin chansonniers) rather than an attempt to underscore poetic relationships. Yet the return of this music at the end of the piece actually helps to connect those closing poetic lines, with their abstract language of transgression and pardon, with the more personal speech of the remainder of the text. Here, too, Du Chemin's typesetter saves space, using a *signum* above the musical notation (at the word "Da" in each voice part) to indicate a repetition of the final couplet, but when space allowed he seems to have printed the repeated material in its entirety. As it happens, both the *da capo* reprise and the subsequent repetition (with or without *signum*) of the final couplet or line of the text are formal features found in many other pieces assembled in the *chansons nouvelles*, regardless of any connection with the poems they set.

The musical texture of Du Tertre's chanson is overwhelmingly homorhythmic, with all four voices moving largely in coordinated patterns of duration and stress. The superius and tenor form a closely paired contrapuntal duet, progressing mainly in intervals of the third and sixth, except at cadences. Here brief patterns of suspension and syncopation propel the listener through tension and then repose. The bassus part moves alternatively in thirds or fifths with the melody, and as a result modern listeners cannot help but hear the whole as a sequence of triadic harmonies (the altus part provides contrapuntal filler). Taken together, the coordinated rhythms, clear cadential gestures, and sequence of melodic repetitions all create an impression of tonal as well as formal stability. Lines 1 and 3 of the poem coincide with cadences on *D*, while lines 2 and 4 come to rest on *G* (of course the same pair of cadences return for the final pair of verses). Lines 5 and 8 coincide with pauses on this same pair of tonal positions, but 7 and 8 offer variety and subtle touches suited to the meaning of each moment: Du Tertre offers a

tentative plagal gesture to *D* at the question “que je pense?” while the pleading text at “montrez benigne” shows itself in the curious voicing of the cadence to *F* in that verse).

Du Tertre’s approach to the scansion of individual lines of poetry also reveals something of his skills as a reader. He respects, for instance, the customary medial caesura after the fourth syllable of each decasyllabic poetic line (“Ou est ce temps/dictes mademoiselle”). But his melodic gestures do more than mere observe that division. Instead (and as Du Chemin’s typesetter was careful to show with “ij” markings) he repeats either the first or second part of such lines in order to give greater force to the rhetoric of the poem. In lines 1 and 3, for instance, “dictes mademoiselle” and “las à quoy” are repeated in this way. The same internal repetition occurs at the start of the sixth line of verse (“Helas non”) and in the eighth line (at “Dictes le moy”). These are small details, to be sure, but they show how composers like Du Tertre could rely on the high typographical quality of Du Chemin’s work to connect text and tone in convincing ways.

### Repetition and Balance in the Lyrical Chansons

Decasyllabic verse seems to have been the norm for most of the chansons gathered for Du Chemin’s new project. Poetry with lines of eight syllables, in contrast, seems to have elicited somewhat more varied responses from composers. In his setting of “Dieu doibt le bon jour” from the *Sixiesme livre*, for instance, Claude Gervaise frequently repeats parts of poetic verses in ways that extend rather than shorten his melodic ideas (see verses 1 and 3, where the first five syllables are stated three times before the melody at last comes to the final three syllables of the line). The opening of Janequin’s setting of “Sur l’aubepin” from the *Sixiesme livre* (also in octasyllabic verse) joins the first two lines of poetry a single, long lyrical unit. Subsequently, the composer prefers to repeat each line individually before moving on to the next.

4 — As we have observed, Du Tertre’s composition extends the conventions of the mid-century chanson in a number of important ways, crafting an expansive but balanced whole through repetition of phrases, parts of phrases, and entire sections of his piece. But other works from the *Chansons nouvelles* point in precisely the opposite direction, opting for compression rather than expansion. Consider, for instance, Le Gendre’s “Si pour t’avoir” (from the *Second livre*) where in there are but two melodic ideas for a full eight lines of poetry. Other works in a similarly succinct formal idiom from the early volumes of the *chansons nouvelles* include Le Gendre’s “Cherchant amours” (from the *Premier livre*), as well as his “Ma bouche n’ose dire” and “En l’eau jettes toy” (both from the *Tiers livre*); Maximillian Guillaud’s “Sans avoir fait” and “Faire ne puis” (also from the *Tiers livre*); Certon’s “Puisque malheur,” (ascribed to Du Four in the *Second livre*); Du Bar’s “O vous mes yeulx” (from the *Quart livre*), as well as Jean Maillard’s “O combien je suis” and “Si la promesse,” (both from the *Premier livre* of 1550).<sup>2</sup> These compositions ignore individual words and, at times, the syntactic units implicit in the poem almost out of necessity. Pieces like this can be linked with the tradition of the *chanson à dancier* and *voix de villes*: lively, lyrical, but extremely compact compositions that anticipate something of the ideals of the monophonic *air de cour* that emerged as a favored idiom at the French royal court during the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

2 · For modern editions of Maillard’s chansons from the *Premier livre*, see his *Complete Chansons*, ed. Jane Bernstein, *The Sixteenth-Century Chanson*, 18 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 155-56 and 219-21.

3 · Further on the *airs de cour* and their cultural contexts, see Jeanice Brooks, *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

In “Ou est ce temps” we heard echoes of the old courtly love tradition, with its carefully circumscribed codes of service, suffering, and spiritual desire. At times, the love’s sufferings are a kind of living death, as the anonymous author of “Jamais amour n’aura” cries out (here through a musical setting by Le Gendre) “leave then, love, and the heart is not held by it suffers, languishes and dies all at once” (“Partz donc amour, et le coeur qui n’est tien/Souffre languir, et mourir tout ensemble.”) Dour sentiments of this sort dominate a number of other works in this vein, including oxymoronic formulations of nearly Petrarchan intensity: “Je vis sans vie, et sans mourir je meurs” (from “La grand douceur”; Villiers; *Quart livre*) and “L’hyvert je brusle, et l’aeste meurs de froid” (from “D’amour me plainctz”; Goudimel, *Quart livre*).

Some composers attend to the earnest language of serious songs in ways that highlight the meaning of words rather than their rhyme or form. In “Ce friant oeil,” (from the *Second livre*) for example, Le Gay preferred the intensive, motivic repetition of a short phrase of text, “blesser à mort,” to the formal beauty of the usual long melodic idea. Le Gendre’s “Quelle prison” (from the *Premier livre*), to cite another example of musical sophistication, gives special rhetorical emphasis to the phrase “O Dieu amour” that opens the second half of the composition. Goudimel’s “La volonté” (from the *Premier livre*) makes careful use of text repetition, especially in the tenor and bassus parts, in an effort to convey the sense of the poem. The unusual refrain scheme of his “Je sens l’affection” (from the *Premier livre*) likewise hints at the rich variety of lyric forms available to composers of serious chansons. Goudimel, as we will discover, had a special affinity for this sort of varied treatment of poetic texts.

Clément Janequin was particularly adept when it came to transcending the formal conventions heard in many mid-century chansons. In “Si tu as veu” (from the *Sixiesme livre*) pangs of love are represented as a metaphorical flame that burns ardently in the soul and that can only be extinguished by a reciprocal love. Janequin’s setting of this *dixain* acknowledges the conventional couplets with which it opens, but repeats the last three lines of the poem as a unit, undercutting the symmetry of rhyme while emphasizing the final point made by the speaker as he addresses the beloved directly (“C’est pour t’aimer pour Dieu il t’en souviene/ Et si par eaue j’ay secouru ta flamme/Par ton amour si fais cesser la mienne”).

What is more, Janequin carefully uses ornaments, text repetition, and unusual melodic motion to capture both the meaning of individual words and the urgency with which they are spoken. A melisma in the second melodic phrase, for instance, helps illustrate the energy of the amorous “fire” in verse four of the poem. The melodic descent and deep cadence of “au profound de l’ame” likewise serves as a musical representation of that poetic phrase. And in the final three lines of the poem (which Janequin repeats in their entirety, as we noted above) the composer takes care to repeat words within verses (“Pour Dieu, pour Dieu”; “cesser, cesser”) that suggest the profiles of impassioned speech itself.

Janequin’s “Quand contrement” (also from the *Sixiesme livre*) uses a different melodic idea in each of its four lines of poetry, and states the last line of verse a total of four times, each to a different melodic phrase. Carefully avoiding the customary repetitive designs found in the chansons of his Parisian colleagues, perhaps Janequin was here attempting to capture the meaning of the final line of his chosen text, in which the poetic persona promises to forget the beloved: “de toy n’auray plus de memoire.” By similarly “forgetting” to repeat the same

melodic line for repeated text, Janequin mimetically involves the performer in precisely the condition proposed by the poem.

### Pastoral Landscapes in Sound

Poems on pastoral themes seem to have elicited a special set of responses from chanson composers active during the middle years of the sixteenth century. The last work in the *Tiers livre*, “Or sus qu’on resveille,” for instance, is, in some respects, quite unlike many of the other serious lyrics in that volume of the *chansons nouvelles*. The anonymous composer of this piece was no doubt intrigued by the musical possibilities of a poem that beckons readers to listen carefully to the nightingale “who goes singing her gracious song” (“Qui va chantant en son chant gracieux”), which he aptly reflected in the florid parallel consonances of the vocal lines.<sup>4</sup> Clemens non Papa’s setting of “Rosignollet qui chante” (from the *Quart livre*), likewise explores the musical possibilities of a poem that alludes to the power of bird song (here embodied in florid parallel consonances and repeating motives) to assuage a lovelorn speaker. In other poems, too, the pastoral landscape serves as a backdrop and topic for commentary by the poetic speaker. In Gervaise’s “Il n’est que d’estre sur l’herbette” (from the *Sixiesme livre*), a verdant springtime is the setting for love, providing music for dance in the form of a nightingale’s song. Her singing, appropriately enough, is musically imitated in the sudden melodic piping of the concluding phrase of all four polyphonic parts: the superius and tenor offer cascading thirds, the contratenor leaps back and forth around a fourth, and the bassus throbs rhythmically on a single tone. The work affords in miniature some of the more famous musical representations of bird songs also found in Janequin’s well-known “Le Chant des oiseaux.”<sup>5</sup>

6 — In Janequin’s “Sur l’aubepin” (*Sixiesme livre*), in contrast, nature can also be a measure of sorrow. The work begins in much the same manner as Gervaise’s chanson, with a narrative description of a natural landscape filled with “mille mottetz en musique” by two classical emblems of impassioned song, Philomela and her sister Procne. The poetic speaker, in contrast, does not share their joy (“a tout *deuil* je m’applique”) on account of the absence of his beloved. Janequin responds to all of this with finely crafted musical gestures, representing at first the singing of the birds with animated rhythms and patter song, and then the sorrowful poet with inflections of *E-flats* in the lower voices. The pastoral chansons of Du Chemin’s albums are subtle works, rich with melodic grace and attention to the rhythm and meaning of the poetry they set.

### Narrative, Dialogue, and Popular Culture

Another group of pieces from the *Chansons nouvelles* use poetic language that is quite different from the restrained longing encountered elsewhere in these collections. Such pieces take as their subject matter the crude exploits of ill-suited lovers, buffoons, and errant priests.

4 · On the image of the nightingale and other birds in chanson verse of the sixteenth century, see Kate van Orden, “Sexual Discourse in the Parisian Chanson: A Libidinous Aviary,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 48 (Spring 1995), 1-41; and Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, ““Or Sus Vous Dormez Trop”: The Singing of the Lark in French Chansons of the Early Sixteenth Century,” in *Festskrift Henrik Glahn*, ed. M. Müller (Copenhagen: 1979), pp. 35-67.

5 · Janequin’s famous programmatic pieces were printed by Du Chemin in the *Cinquesme livre du recueil* of 1551, a series devoted to issuing music previously issued by Attaignant and others.

Inverting just about all of the conventional conceits of serious love, these poems portray a comic, distopic world that echoes the scenarios of French satire and *fabliaux* of the period. Janequin's setting of "Maistre Ambrelin" (from the *Premier livre* of 1550), for instance, narrates the ribald exploits of a charlatan often portrayed in theatrical farces of the sixteenth century. Among other examples of this sort of poem we find stories of physical rather than spiritual desire, including the anonymous "Maistre Lubin" (from the *Tiers livre*), Cyron's "Un gallant le fit" (from the *Quart livre*), Pagnier's "Un fin mary" (from the *Second livre*) and "Elle disoit" (from the *Tiers livre*), and the anonymous "Margot s'endormit" (from the *Second livre*). Decapella's "Passant melancholie" (from the *Quart livre*), plays upon generic expectations in surprising ways. It opens with all of the hallmarks of a serious *complainte*, but then suddenly shifts to reveal an entirely different sensibility:

Passant melancolie	<i>Passing melancholic</i>
Un soir apres souper	<i>One evening after supper</i>
J'entrepris la folie	<i>I was seized by the impulse</i>
D'aller tost destouper.	<i>To go stuffing.</i>
La fenestre à ma mye	<i>The window by my pet—</i>
Elle estant endormie	<i>She was sleeping</i>
Toute nuë sur son lict.	<i>Completely naked on her bed.</i>
Aupres d'elle me couche	<i>Close by her I slept,</i>
Ne me monstrant farouche	<i>not showing myself shy—</i>
Feis bransler le chalict.	<i>hotly burned the bedstead.</i>

Anti-clerical stories seem to have been a special genre in their own right. Examples among the *chansons nouvelles* include Janequin's setting of Clément Marot's "Un gros prieur" (from the *Second livre*), De Villiers setting of Marot's "Monsieur l'Abbé" (*Quart livre*) and Claude Martin's setting of the story of a lecherous monk, "Un jeune moine" (*Tiers livre*).<sup>6</sup> "Un bon veillard" (Certon, from the *Sixiesme livre*) combines elements of the ribald tale and anti-clerical diatribe in the same poem: when an old man tries without luck to please a young woman, she mocks him with a phrase that "our *curé* has often preached to me": "L'esprit est pront, mais infirme est la chair."

Un bon veillard qui n'avoit que le bec	<i>A good old man who had only a beak</i>
Se trouvant court pres d'une jeune dame	<i>Found himself promptly beside a young woman.</i>
De desir prou: mais de cela à sec	<i>Of desire there was plenty: but of what was required he was all out. "I haven't got it" said he well degraded.</i>
Ne suis je pas ce dict il bien infame	<i>For full payment he sang this scale:</i>
Pour tout payement luy chante ceste game,	<i>He touches, He mounts, in order to squeeze,</i>
Il taste il monte assez pour l'escacher,	<i>More than a hundred times, and could not release.</i>
Plus de cent fois, et ne peult deslacher,	<i>From which self mocking, said the annoyed lady:</i>
Dont se mocquant, dict la dame faschée,	<i>The spirit is ready, but weak is the body.</i>
L'esprit est pront: Mais infirme est la chair	<i>Our curé has often preached me this!</i>
Notre curé souvent m'en a preschée.	

Pierre Certon's setting of this ridiculous tale attends nicely to the events it narrates and the mannerisms of its speakers. Here shifts in mensuration help to set off the description of the old man's efforts from the woman's quotation of the priest's words.<sup>7</sup>

6 · The poem is unrelated to "Un jeune moyne est sorti du couvent" as set by Lassus, van Wilder, and others.

7 · The text was also set by Gervaise in the *Septieme livre*.

For composers of the middle years of the sixteenth century, the narrative themes and exclamatory dialogue found in all of this poetry suggested a style tending towards contrast and animation for convincing effect. Such pieces are not dramatic in the operatic sense, of course, but in their tendency to imitate both the energy of narrated action and the recitational profile of speech itself, these works suggest a rhythmic and rhetorical variety rarely encountered in serious chansons. These compositions, for all of their humour and satire, point towards some important stylistic developments of the middle years of the sixteenth century. In the French chanson and Italian madrigal alike, composers began to attend not only to the form of the poetry they set, but also to its semantic meanings and especially to its sound. Turning away from old priorities of linear counterpoint and flowing melodic lines, such compositions instead reflect a new awareness of the rhythms of speech. It hardly seems coincidental that this new attention to the rhythm and melodic profile of spoken texts emerged in tandem with the new medium of music printing, and its exceptional capacity to link text and tones in exacting ways. In some important ways, then, chansonniers such as Du Chemin's are more than the containers of this new medium, they are also its principal means.<sup>8</sup>

### Literary Sources and Traditions

Just who wrote this poetry and what Du Chemin's readers thought of it must remain a matter for debate and discussion. Only a very small proportion of the poems set in the *Chansons nouvelles* (and in Attaignant's chansonniers before them) can be ascribed to any known author. Among the books compiled for Du Chemin by Regnes (that is, the first eight books of the series), we know authors for only a tiny few, and these via other printed books. The chansonniers themselves are silent on the subject of who wrote the poetry. "Monsieur l'abbé" (set by Villiers in the *Quart livre*), "Madame, je vous remercie," (anonymous; *Cinquiesme livre*), "L'enfant amour n'a plus," (Certon; *Premier livre*), and "Un gros prieur" (Janequin, *Second livre*) are all credited to the great French poet Clément Marot, whose output spans the entire range of themes and literary registers heard throughout the repertory.<sup>9</sup> Two poems set in the *Huictiesme livre*, "Amour et mor on faict une alliance" (set by Bonard) and "Comment, mon cueur" (set by Colin), come from the writings of Gilles d'Aurigny, a French jurist and poet active in Paris during the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>10</sup> But if a great deal of the texts set to music in the early *chansons nouvelles* remain anonymous, some of them nevertheless enjoyed extensive, separate circulation in literary anthologies published during the middle years of the sixteenth century. Perhaps the most famous of these collections was *La fleur de poesie françoise*, first printed by the Parisian bookseller Alain Lotrain in 1542, and reissued in various forms during subsequent decades. Among the early volumes of the *chansons nouvelles*,

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8 · Further on musical approaches to poetic texts in the chanson around 1550, see Jean-Pierre Ouyard, "La Chanson française du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, lecture du texte poétique," *La Chanson à la Renaissance. Actes du XX<sup>e</sup> Colloque d'Etudes humanistes du Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de la Renaissance de l'Université de Tours. Juillet 1977*, ed. Jean-Michel Vaccaro (Tours: Van de Welde, 1981), 106-19; and Howard Mayer Brown, "Paroles et musique: Willaert, la chanson et le madrigal vers 1540," *La Chanson à la renaissance*, 209-42. Brown's essay appeared in English translation as "Words and Music: Willaert, the Chanson, and the Madrigal about 1540," in *Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations, Acts of Two Conferences at Villa I Tatti in 1976-1977*, 2 vols. (Florence: La nuova Italia, 1979-80), II, 217-66.

9 · "O cruauté logé en grant beauté," set by Le Rat in the *Neufiesme livre*, is also credited to Marot. Further on Marot and the 16<sup>th</sup> century chanson, see Annie Coeurdevey, *Bibliographie des oeuvres poétiques de Clément Marot mises en musique dans les recueils profanes du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Collection Ricercare, 1 (Paris: H. Champion, 1997).

10 · "Comment, mon cueur" comes from his *Tuteur d'amour, ensemble un livre où sont: Epistres, Élegies, Complaintes* (Lyons, 1547). D'Aurigny is also credited with the text of "En attendant," set by Menehou in the *Quatorsiesme livre* in our series.

for instance, the text of Le Rat's "J'ay veu que j'estois serviteur" (*Huictiesme livre*) was previously printed in Lotrain's poetic collection. Likewise, a few other texts from the *chansons nouvelles* appear in similar anthologies of verse: "Vous me changez pour un aultre" (Benoist; *Second livre*) appears in *La poesie françoise* (Lyons, 1540), a collection of poetry by and addressed to Charles de Sainte-Marthe; "Recepte pour un flux de bourse," (Guyon, *Cinquiesme livre*) appears in *Recueil de vraye poesie Françoise, prinse de plusieurs poetes, les plus excellentz de ce regne* (Paris: Denys Janot, 1544); and "Un fin mary voyant" (Pagnier; *Second livre*) was later published in *La recreations et passe temps des tristes* (Paris, 1573).<sup>11</sup> Books such as Lotrain's, however, were not so much a source for composers active during mid century as they were a reflection of their success. In this repertory, the musical albums served as models for poetic anthologies, which stand as treasuries of familiar verse and song. Indeed, Lotrain's anthology borrows many poems from the Attaignant chansonniers, often in the order in which they appeared in those music books. The curious history of this chanson verse, which circulated between musical and literary volumes in surprising ways, speaks to a readership equally complex in its social standing.

In sum, the early volumes of Du Chemin's new series reveal a musical world in transition. These books build upon traditions of chanson composition already well established during the second quarter of the sixteenth century. In them we find music by French (and a few Franco-Flemish) composers, musicians whose poetic choices reflect the wide range of genres (serious, pastoral, and satirical) already heard in the chansonniers of Attaignant and other music printers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. These reflect some of the enduring modes of compositional practice, particularly the preference among many French composers for balanced musical phrases and clear cadential designs. But we can also hear in these pieces anticipations of some important trends towards both compression (in the light and lyrical *chansons à dancier*) and expansion (particularly in the rhythmic vitality and declamatory profiles of some of the narrative or pastoral compositions). And all of this material is mediated through an increasingly self-conscious medium of print, in which the contents of books reflect the vibrant commerce of ideas and expressive forms of mid century France. Du Chemin, by bringing music to a newly literate public, created new opportunities for both performance and listening.

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11 · In later books of the *chansons nouvelles* the pattern continues: Caron's "Dedans ton cueur" and "Amour a fait" (both from the *Douzieme livre*) appear in the *Fleur de poesie* of 1542, while that of Cramoisy's "Je veux ayumer quoi" was published in Rigaud's *Ample recueil* of 1579.