

Bedingham / Du Fay

Mon seul plaisir, ma douce joye a 3

Edition and comments by
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<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH203.html>

This edition is extracted from the online project *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the Loire Valley' chansonniers*, which consists of linked html-files and a great number of single PDF editions. It can be accessed at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>.

Each html-file about a song contains lists of sources, and edition and translation of the poetic texts, discussion of the main sources and comments on text and music. Separate files hold lists of contents and descriptions of the sources. Other files contain papers and notes on related topics. The online edition offers many cross references and links to online facsimile editions. These links had to be simplified in the present edition.

Each version of a song is regarded as a valid performance by a scribe/musician, and therefore they are published separately. In most cases there will be no attempts to imagine the intentions of the composer or to reconstruct exactly what the composer had written when the music left his pen. Rather the aim is to interpret the written music in largely the same way as 15th century performers may have read it. Many details, which in one source are different from other sources, must be accepted by the editor as valid elements in a performance of the actual source. Sources marked by an asterisk * are included in the edition.

Sigla

The related 'Loire Valley' chansonniers

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Copenhagen | Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8° http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/702/dan/0+recto/ |
| Dijon | Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517 http://patrimoine.bm-dijon.fr/pleade/img-viewer/MS00517/viewer.html |
| Laborde | Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case (Laborde Chansonnier) https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.200152631.0/?sp=1 |
| Leuven | Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number (Leuven Chansonnier) https://data.idemdatabase.org/IE9381778/representation?fl_pid=FL9382190 |
| Nivelle | Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57 (Chansonnier Nivelle de la Chaussée) http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55007270r/f1.image |
| Wolfenbüttel | Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extravag. http://diglib.hab.de/wdb.php?dir=mss/287-extrav |

Other sources

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Berlin 78.C.28 | Berlin, Staatliche Museen der Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Ms. 78.C.28 |
| Cop 1848 | København, The Royal Library, MS Ny Kgl. Samling 1848 2° |
| Escorial IV.a.24 | Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo del Escorial, Biblioteca y Archivo de Musica, MS IV.a.24 |
| Florence 176 | Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Magl. xix.176 |
| Florence 2356 | Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2356 |
| Paris 15123 | Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. f.fr. 15123 (Chansonnier Pixérécourt) |
| Paris 2973 | Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Rothschild 2973 (Chansonnier Cordiforme) |
| Paris 4379 | Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. nouv. acq. fr. 4379 |
| Pavia 362 | Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ms. Aldini 362 |
| Porto 714 | Porto, Biblioteca Pública Municipal, Ms. 714 |

Text sources

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Berlin 78.B.17 | Berlin, Staatsliche Museen der Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Ms. 78.B.17 (Chansonnier Rohan) |
| London 380 | London, BritishLibrary, MS Lansdowne 380 |

Literature

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Fallows 1999 | David Fallows, <i>A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415-1480</i> . Oxford 1999 |
| Löpelmann 1923 | M. Löpelmann (ed.), <i>Die Liederhandschrift des Cardinals de Rohan</i> (Gesellschaft für romanische Litteratur, Band 44) Göttingen 1923 |
| Wallis 1929 | N. Hardy Wallis (ed.), <i>Anonymous French Verse: An Anthology of Fifteenth Century Poems from Manuscripts in the British Museum</i> . London 1929 |

Mon seul plaisir, ma douce joye 3v · Bedingham / Du Fay

Appearance in the group of related chansonniers:

*Laborde ff. 65v-66 »Mon seul plaisir ma douce joye« 3v

*Wolfenbüttel ff. 41v-42 »Mon seul plaisir ma douce joye« 3v

Other musical sources:

Berlin 78.C.28 ff. 20v-21 »M« 3v

Cop 1848 p. 431 »Mon seul plaisir« 3v

Escorial IV.a.24 ff. 27v-28 »Mon seul plaisir ma douce joye« 3v

Florence 176 ff. 58v-59 »Mon seul plaisir et ma douce joie« 3v Duffay

Florence 2356 ff. 48v-49 »Mon sol plaisir« 3v

Paris 15123 ff. 69v-70 »Mon seul plesir ma douce ioy« 3v

Paris 2973 ff. 44v-45 »Mon seul plaisir ma douce joye« 3v

Paris 4379 ff. 23v-24 »Mon seul plaisir ma douce joie« 3v

Pavia 362 ff. 24v-25 »Mon seul pleysir et ma douce joye« 3v

Porto 714 ff. 59v-60 »Mon seul plaisir ma douce joye« 3v Idem [=Bedyngham de Anglia]

Use as timbre for laude and use of material see Fallows 1999, pp. 285-286.

Text: Rondeau quatrain by Charles d'Orléans "Ma seule plaisant douce joye" – the version used for the musical setting has a slightly different first line; full text in Laborde and Wolfenbüttel; also in Escorial IV.a.24, Paris 2973, Paris 4379 and Pavia 362; the music version is also found in Berlin 78.B.17 ff. 82v-83, ed.: Löpeltmann 1923, p. 121, and London 380 f. 238v, ed.: Wallis 1929, p. 122. After Wolfenbüttel & Laborde (corrections according to Berlin 78.B.17):

Mon seul plaisir, ma douce joye,
la maistresse de mon espoir, 1)
j'ay tel desir de vous revoir 2)
que demander ne le saroye. 3)

Helas, avoir je ne pourroye
aucun bien sans vous recevoir, 4)

mon seul plaisir, *ma douce joye*,
la maistresse de mon espoir.

Car, quant desplaisir me guerroye
souventeffoiz de son povoir,
et si je vueil confort avoir,
esperance vers vous m'envoye,

mon seul plaisir, *ma douce joye*,
la maistresse de mon espoir,
j'ay tel desir de vous revoir
que demander ne le saroye.

My only pleasure, my sweet joy,
the mistress of my hope,
I have such desire to see you again
that I would not know how to ask for it.

Alas, I will not have
any happiness without meeting you,

my only pleasure, my sweet joy,
the mistress of my hope.

For, when Displeasure attacks me,
as often as it can,
and if I wish to get solace,
Hope sends me towards you,

my only pleasure, my sweet joy,
the mistress of my hope,
I have such desire to see you again
that I would not know how to ask for it.

1) Laborde & Wolfenbüttel, line 2, "... de mon desir" (error)

2) Laborde & Wolfenbüttel, line 3, "... de vous voir" (error)

3) Laborde, line 4, "que mander ..." (error); Laborde & Wolfenbüttel, "... ne le pourroye" (error)

4) Laborde, line 6, "aucuns biens ..."

Evaluation of the sources:

“Mon seul plaisir” was very popular in the 1460s and 1470s, especially in Italy, but also in the northern regions, as is evident from the many sources in which the song is found, and it was used as a timbre for laude and quoted in poems and songs. It disappeared from the repertory during the last decades of the century, but was still included in a small music book written in Lyon around 1524, which became part of the large music collection in The Royal Library, Copenhagen, MS Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2^o.¹ Since the song was composed sometime in the middle of the century, many small variations in the music had arisen in the sources, which, however, do not influence the song’s identity to any great extent.² In the chansonnier in Porto, Biblioteca Pública Municipal, Ms. 714, made in Ferrara in the 1460s, the song is ascribed to the English composer John Bedingham, while the Florentine chansonnier of the late 1470s, Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Magl. xix.176, mentions Guillaume Du Fay as its composer.³

The song as it appears in the Laborde and Wolfenbüttel chansonniers was copied from the same original, from which both main scribes have faithfully taken over all its errors in music and words. They both bring a text that, especially in the refrain, has been distorted during transmission; in line two a word from the next line “desir” has crept up as a rime word, even though it does not rime, line three is missing a syllable and in line four the rime word “pourroye” has mistakenly become the same as in line five. A dissonant *e’* appears in the contra in bar three, and after bar 15 contra has a *brevis* rest, which their exemplar had removed in the other voices, but forgot to do in the contra – most other sources have the *brevis* rest in all three voices.

The Laborde/Wolfenbüttel version presents a few unique features: In the tenor, a *longa* in bars 22-23 has been broken up into shorter note values, indicating how to place the text in the tenor; and among the many proposals for the middle cadence, its solution with the contra’s ascent to *a’* in bar 14 is the most euphonious. In Laborde, the scribe in the contra part has added a one flat signature in the first two staves (bb. 1-16). This is probably a mistake, since Wolfenbüttel, like the majority of sources, is without hexachordal signatures in all voices. It is interesting, however, that the Italian chansonnier from around 1460 in the Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo del Escorial, Biblioteca y Archivo de Musica, MS IV.a.24, without hesitation prescribes flat signatures in the tenor as well as in the contra,⁴ and we find the same in the French Chansonnier Cordiforme from the 1470s (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Rothschild 2973), although the b-flats in the tenor have been erased, but are still clearly distinguishable. Finally, a flat signature appears in

1 Cf. P. Woetmann Christoffersen, *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the music collection of a copyist of Lyons. The manuscript Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2^o in the Royal Library, Copenhagen I-III.* Copenhagen 1994, vol I, pp. 94-108, and vol. II, no. 261.

2 See further the editions in Guillaume Dufay (ed. H. Besseler), *Opera omnia VI: Cantiones (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 1)* 1966, no. 90, and the comments in David Fallows, *The Songs of Guillaume Dufay. Critical Commentary to the Revision of Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, ser. 1, Vol. VI* (Musicological studies & documents 47), Neuhausen-Stuttgart 1995, no. 90

3 David Fallows thinks that Bedingham may have set the English version of the rondeau “Mi werry joy and most parfit plesere”, and that the song afterwards became known on the Continent with the adapted French words, cf. ‘Words and music in two English songs of the mid-15th century: Charles d’Orléans and John Lydgate,’ *Early Music* 1977, pp. 38-43.

4 Cf. the edition in Martha K. Hanen, *The Chansonnier El Escorial IV.a.24* (Musicological Studies 36), Henrville 1983 no. 23.

the second staff in the tenor (including bars 11-24) in the manuscript Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ms. Aldini 362, which most probable was executed in Savoy during the 1460s. These hexachordal signatures seem out of place in “Mon seul plaisir” whose C tonality so clearly unfolds within a network of G and C hexachords in all three voices. It would be most relevant to perceive the flat in the Pavia MS as an accidental, which produced a cadence with *b*-flat in the tenor in bars 12-13 – it fits in and creates an attractive variation in sound. Perhaps the desire to indicate this flexibility at an early stage in the song’s career has given rise to the erroneous signatures in some sources.

Comments on text and music:

This version of Charles d’Orléans’ hopeful love song has, at least as far as the refrain is concerned, been slightly modified to fit a phrasing with a caesura after four syllables, which was preferred in many songs. It is set for a melodically attractive and expressive high voice (*c'-e''*) accompanied by tenor and contra, both in the same range (*g-a'*). The sound is bright by virtue of the dominance of the C and G hexachords as mentioned above. The lines begin in syllabic settings of the words and end with extended melismas. The second section creates its contrast to the first by suddenly pulling the voices together within the common part of their range, the *c'*-hexachord, so that a section of equal voices arises in which the voices constantly crosses (bb. 17-20). This effect was anticipated by the open ending of the first section, where the voices end on a *c'*-triad with the contra in the role of the highest voice. The equal voices passage emphasizes this *c'*-triad with fanfare-like motifs that run through the voices until they spread out again and without pause slide into the long drawn-out melismas of the last line.

The sound of the second section cannot avoid recalling the effect of Du Fay’s love song »Se la face ay pale«,⁵ which was composed in the early 1430s and surely known to the composer of “Mon seul plaisir”. The similarities between the two songs are probably also behind their appearance next to each other in both the Laborde and Wolfenbüttel chansonniers, and are perhaps also the reason why the copyist in Florence 176 believed that “Mon seul plaisir” had been composed by Du Fay.

5 At <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH202.html>.

Laborde no. 52

Mon seul plaisir ma douce joye [Bedingham / Du Fay]

Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case, ff. 65V-66

Wolfenbüttel no. 33

Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extravag., ff. 41V-42

[Superius]

Mensura = ♩

1.4. Mon seul plai - sir, ma dou - ce
 3. Car, quant des - plai - - - - - sir me - - - - - guer -

1) 1.4. Mon seul plai - sir, ma dou - ce
 3. Car, quant des - plai - - - - - sir me - - - - - guer -

2) 1.4. Mon seul plai - sir, ma dou - ce
 3. Car, quant des - plai - - - - - sir me - - - - - guer -

6 joy - e, la mais - tres - se de
 roy - e sou - ven - tef - foiz de

3) joy - e, la mais - tres - se de mon
 roy - e sou - ven - tef - foiz de son

8 joy - e, la mais - tres - se
 roy - e sou - ven - tef - foiz

12 mon 4) es - poir,
 son po - voir,

8 es - poir,
 po - voir,

5) de mon es - poir,
 de son po - voir,

16 j'ay tel de - sir de 6) vous re - -
 et si je vueil con - - - fort a - - -

8 j'ay tel de - sir de vous re - -
 et si je vueil con - fort a - - -

j'ay tel de - sir de vous re - -
 et si je vueil con - fort a - - -

22

voir, voir, ⁷⁾que es - pe - ran - ce de - man - der ne vers le vous sa - m'en -

voir, voir, que es - pe - ran - ce de - man - der ne vers le vous sa - m'en -

voir, voir, que es - pe - ran - ce de - man - der ne vers le vous sa - m'en -

26

⁸⁾sa m'en - - - roy - - - e. m'en - - - voy - - - e,

roy - - - e. voy - - - e,

roy - - - e. voy - - - e,

- 1) Laborde, *Contra* has a one flat signature in the first two staves (bb. 1-16 – error).
- 2) Laborde & Wolfenbüttel, *Contra*, bar 3.3, e'-g' (error)
- 3) Laborde, *Superius*, bar 8.1, no coloration.
- 4) Laborde & Wolfenbüttel, *Superius, text 1*, bars 12-13 "desir" (error).
- 5) Laborde & Wolfenbüttel, *Contra*, after bar 15 a *brevis* rest (error).
- 6) Laborde & Wolfenbüttel, *Superius, text 1*, bars 20-22 "vous voir" (error).
- 7) Laborde, *Superius, text 1*, bars 22.3-24 "que mander" (error).
- 8) Laborde & Wolfenbüttel, *Superius, text 1*, bars 26-31 "pourroye" (error).

2a. He - las, a - voir je ne dou - pour - - -
 2b. mon seul plai - sir, ma dou - ce

2a. He - las, a - voir je ne dou - pour - - -
 2b. mon seul plai - sir, ma dou - ce

2a. He - las, a - voir je ne dou - pour - - -
 2b. mon seul plai - sir, ma dou - ce

6
 - roy - joy - e, ¹⁾aul - cun bien sans vous de
 - - - roy joy - e, la mais - tres - se de

roy - joy - e, aul - cun bien sans vous re -
 joy - e, la mais - tres - se de mon

roy - joy - e, aul - cun bien sans
 joy - e, la mais - tres - se

12
 re - ce - voir,
 mon es - poir.

ce - - - voir,
 es - - - poir.

vous re - - - ce - voir,
 de mon es - poir.

1) Laborde, *Superius*, text 2a, bars 9.3-10 "aucuns biens".