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Concert: Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Jorge Grossmann

Jeffery Meyer

Ivy Walz

Wendy Mehne

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Authors

Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble, Jorge Grossmann, Jeffery Meyer, Ivy Walz, Wendy Mehne, Richard Faria, Diane Birr, and Jennifer Hayghe

Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Jorge Grossmann and Jeffery Meyer, co-directors

Featuring:

Ivy Walz, mezzo-soprano

Wendy Mehne, flute

Richard Faria, clarinet

Diane Birr, piano

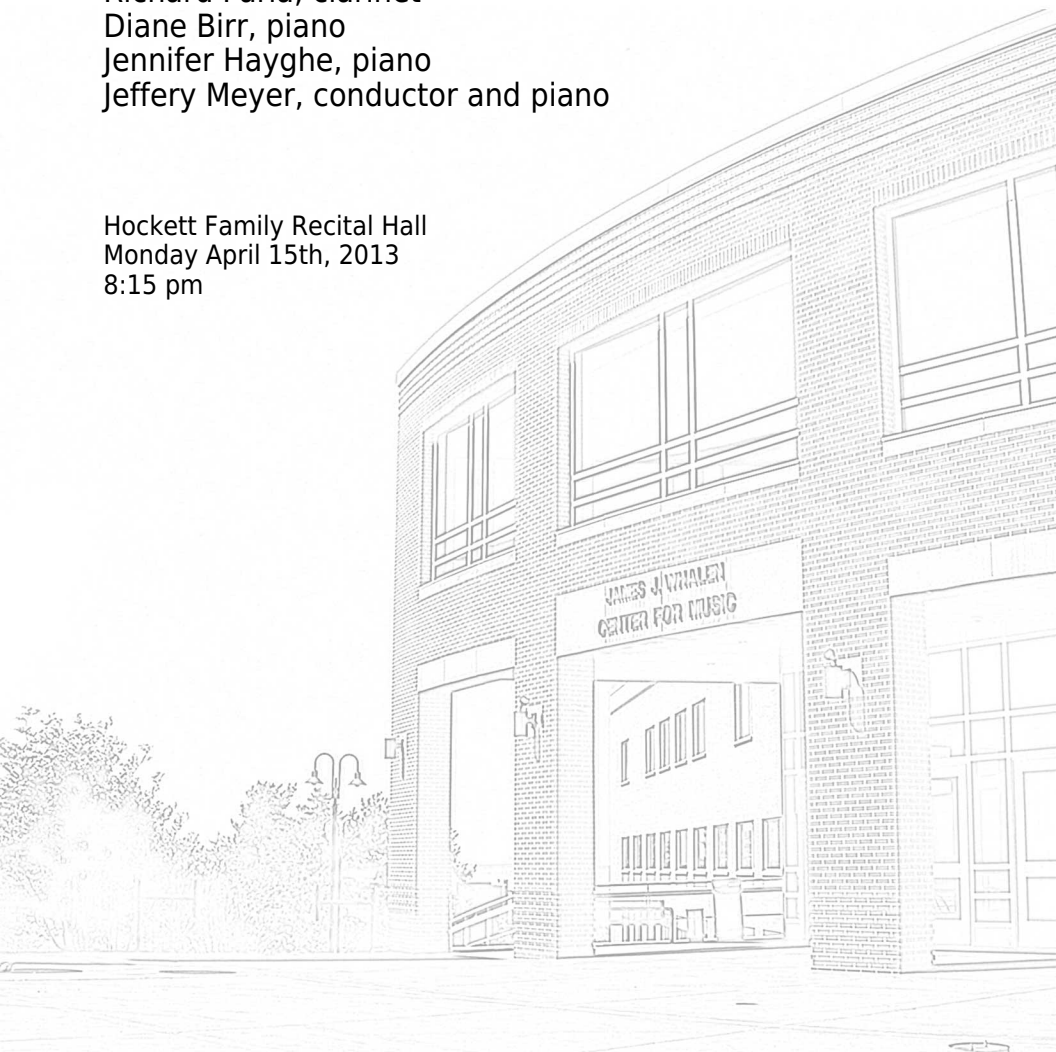
Jennifer Hayghe, piano

Jeffery Meyer, conductor and piano

Hockett Family Recital Hall

Monday April 15th, 2013

8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Spam (1995)

Marc Mellits
(b. 1966)

Maya Holmes, flute
James Conte, clarinet
Laura Sciavolino, violin
Jacqueline Georgis, cello
*Jeffery Meyer, piano**
*Richard Faria, conductor**

From Piano Etudes

No. 40 Strident - Stride piano étude (2002)
No. 15 The Third, Man - Étude on thirds (1997)
No. 68 Absofunkinlutely - Funk étude (2005)
*Diane Birr, piano**

David Rakowski
(b. 1958)

Mento (1995)

I. Où
II. Wo
III. Dove

David Rakowski
(b. 1958)

*Richard Faria, clarinet**
*Jennifer Hayghe, piano**

Pause

Sonata for flute and piano (2006)

- I. Chucho (Vivace)
- II. Chouchou (Adagio)
- III. Catch (Presto con brio)

*Wendy Mehne, flute**
*Diane Birr, piano**

John Orfe
(b. 1976)

Folksongs (1964)

- I. Black is the colour
- II. I wonder as I wander
- III. Loosin yelav
- IV. Rossignolet du bois
- V. A la femminisca
- VI. La donna ideale
- VII. Ballo
- VIII. Motettu de Tristura
- IX. Malorous qu'o un fenno
- X. Lo fiolaire
- XI. Azerbaijan love song

*Ivy Walz, mezzo-soprano**
Maya Holmes, flute/picc
*Richard Faria, clarinet**
Matthew Gillen, guitar
Andrew Sickmeier, percussion 1
Sean Harvey, percussion 2
Maxwell Aleman, viola
Peter Volpert, cello
*Jeffery Meyer, conductor**

Luciano Berio
(1925-2003)

* = denotes Ithaca College faculty

Program Notes - Composers' Biographies

Marc Mellits - Spam (1995)

Everything happens twice in Spam. The music constantly brings itself back, repeating ideas twice but always changing it the second time. Shifting and self-reversing instrumentation continually sets the musical material off of itself, hiding and then bringing to forefront musical ideas. With a backdrop of contrasting and deceptive instrumentation, the music itself is ironically quite direct. I am attempting to speak musically at a personal level. The most important thing I want to achieve in Spam is to communicate directly with the listener, through the musicians. We are all a team: composer, performer, and audience.

Marc Mellits (b. Baltimore, MD 1966) enjoys hundreds of performances throughout the world every year. His unique musical style is an eclectic combination of driving rhythms, soaring lyricism, and colorful orchestrations that all combine to communicate directly with the listener. Mellits studied at the Eastman School of Music, Yale University, Cornell University, and at Tanglewood. His music has been played by major ensembles across the globe and has been commissioned by groups such as the Kronos Quartet, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Sergio and Odair Assad, Bang on A Can All-Stars, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, and the Albany Symphony's Dogs of Desire. Marc remains active within the acclaimed Common Sense Composer's Collective, a group he helped found, which seeks new and alternative ways of collaborating with performance ensembles. Mellits also directs and plays keyboards in his own unique ensemble, the Mellits Consort. He was awarded the prestigious 2004 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Award. Over 31 recorded works of Mellits's music can be found on Black Box, Endeavour Classics, Cantaloupe, CRI/Emergency Music, Santa Fe New Music, Innova, & Dacia Music. Marc Mellits is on the music faculty of the University of Illinois-Chicago where he teaches composition and theory. He lives in Chicago with his wife and two daughters, and spends significant time in Romania.

David Rakowski (2013 Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition): Piano Études; Mento

David Rakowski has written over one hundred piano etudes. He writes about this collection of pieces:

“The collection didn’t start out as a collection, and I wasn’t aware I was writing etudes until Lyn Reyna told me that I was, three years after I’d written the first one. The reason that I had written several short, concentrated (and greatly virtuosic) piano pieces instead of more substantial pieces was that I wasn’t prepared to write a long, monster piano piece like many composers my age were doing in the late 80s (I knew mine would be terrible by comparison, and I didn’t feel I had anything to say). The first etude (E-Machines) was written (in 1988) as a kind of joke piece, to get pianists off my back.

I’ve tried to come up with a pat explanation for why I’ve written so many of them, but I haven’t come up with anything yet that explains it all. I can say

for certain that, at first, writing etudes functioned as a kind of creative recreation – I gave myself a rule that an etude had to be written in six days or less (since *E-Machines* was written in six days), could not be revised, and could not have any a priori notions of how the whole piece should go (i.e., I couldn't think about the piece before I started it). The fun part was the seat-of-the-pants approach to composition, which was in opposition to my usual approach to longer instrumental pieces. I suppose I usually do my best when I don't know what I'm doing, and I like the feeling of exhilaration and frustration at trying to work out things that are new to me, and knowing that any piece can go in just about any direction at any time.

To that end, at least half of the etudes I've written have functioned as a sort of compositional respite. When I'm having trouble working through things in longer pieces, I tend to put them aside and write an etude. Writing unrelated pieces that are brief and single-minded helps keep the gears moving and helps me return to the bigger piece with a fresh perspective (and reminds me that I know something about composing). Other etudes have served as little playgrounds, places where I can play games with ways that notes get put together, and where I can sharpen my chops for use in other pieces. Many of them have been written with specific performers in mind, and with suggestions given by the players themselves. And a few have been written because I had great titles that cried out for pieces.

Nonetheless, I think these pieces tend to be a little conservative formally: almost all of them have expository music, developmental music, and a recapitulation of sorts, sometimes with a coda. There tends to be clear voice leading, tension and release, phrases, and lots of accumulations that are released suddenly. The joy of composing, then, I guess, is discovering lots of different ways to make radically different pieces that are all exciting, expressive and interesting, given that they do not vary wildly in form. And little by little, I think I'm learning how to write for the piano. Anyone who has not heard the etudes of Chopin, Liszt, Scriabin, Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Ligeti or Bolcom might actually think that I **can** write for the piano.

I would probably still have only three etudes, not called etudes, if it were not for fabulous pianists like Amy (*especially* Amy) who have picked these pieces up and played the *caca* out of them. More than recreation, and more than inquisitiveness with notes, I guess I continue to write piano etudes because I know that whatever I write will get its doodoo played out.

#40 Strident: For at least a year, Amy Dissanayake had strongly suggested I write a stride piano etude for her to play. I only had a vague notion of what stride piano was, and I was a little wary about extending the idea of writing an etude from a technical problem to a style imitation. Nonetheless, I savored the challenge of jumping into an unfamiliar style and trying to make it my own. To figure out just what stride piano is, I found stridepiano.com on the web, which is almost drooly in its veneration of James P. Johnson (who also wrote the *Charleston*) and Fats Waller, so I got CDs of both of them playing. What I found out is that stride is like ragtime (oompah in the left hand, sort of, with fast stuff in the right hand), except that it swings, and the bass line is a little more melodic than ragtime. The James P. Johnson tune that gave me the most to chew on was one called *Jingles*, recorded in the 1920s. This piece is structured a little like a traditional ragtime or march, having two repeated sections followed by a trio, which is also repeated, and a substantial coda.

#15 The Third, Man: When it became clear that this collection of etudes was getting pretty serious, I decided to put a little organization into the collection, and resolved to write a bunch of them on intervals, as in the first book of Debussy etudes. I started by writing an etude on thirds, since I liked this title. This is one of the few slow, dreamy ones. It's just one-part, then two-part, then three-part counterpoint, all in thirds (both major and minor), and a little near-quote from "Claire de Lune" at the end to close it off. The recapitulation in this piece coincides with the completion of the bass's descent to its low note, C."

#68 Absofunkinlutely: Rakowski calls this title "the politer version of the last line spoken by Mr. Big in the last episode of Sex in the City." Having just been freed from the burden of a music department chairmanship, he was supposed to embark on a new piano trio. Not yet in the frame of mind to tackle that project, he decided instead to write a new étude. Again Rick Moody's counsel was sought, and Rick suggested that David write a piece based on "Tower of Power licks." Though Tower of Power is a favorite of the composer, he was not inclined to take this advice too literally, because he did not relish the thought of having to seek other advice—of a legal nature—down the road, such licks presumably being under copyright. He instead opted for some generic figures found in many funk tunes, and created a wildly celebratory piece that pays homage to some of his favorite music. The excellent young pianist Adam Marks took up this piece and premiered it in New York, later taking it to the Concours International de Piano d'Orléans in 2006. This étude won a Chevillion-Bonnaud Prize for the best new piano work played in the first round of that competition. The first two short sections (with markings of, respectively, "Dirty" and "A little less dirty") are repeated, and range all over the keyboard. The long middle section is a long build-up marked—partly in reference to a piece by the composer John Adams, but mostly out of relief over new found liberty from department chair duties—"Dirty (The Not Chairman Dances)". This gradually becomes "Filthy," climaxes on a couple of wide repeated chords, and then a coda ensues ("Still dirty but more respectable"), which includes a figure that can be repeated 3 to 7 times, as the spirit so moves. (Program note by Hayes Biggs)

Mento, for clarinet and piano (written for his wife Beth Wiemann, a sort of follow-up work to a piece for the same instruments called *Diverti*), is a lightly-pitched, almost salon-like piece, though in true Rakowski fashion, it whizzes and flies and trips up the listener's ears in an intriguing way. Though small in stature, and meant to be a divertimento (or at least the latter half of one), the piece is no less serious of purpose than any of the others. The three short movements "Où," "Wo," and "Dove") are cast in the traditional fast-slow-fast layout with the first being a scampering scherzo followed by a lilting, legato adagio, both of which rise, pitchwise, to the notes B, then E, then E and then F again-spelling "Beff," his wife's nickname. In the final section, marked "breathlessly and a little wacky," the same pitches are more prominently figured, stated outright in the opening figuration—a tattoo Rakowski spins into a fiendish fugato. (Daniel Felsenfeld, liner notes courtesy of Albany Records.)

David Rakowski was born and raised in St. Albans, Vermont, and received his musical training at New England Conservatory, Princeton, and Tanglewood,

where he studied with Robert Ceely, John Heiss, Milton Babbitt, Paul Lansky, Peter Westergaard, and Luciano Berio. A Rome Prize winner, he has received an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the 2006 Barlow Prize, and the 2004-6 Elise L. Stoeger Prize from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, as well as awards and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Tanglewood Music Center. He has been commissioned by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the U.S. Marine Band, Sequitur, Network for New Music, Koussevitzky Music Foundation, Collage New Music, the Kaufman Center/Merkin Hall, Boston Musica Viva, the Fromm Foundation, Dinosaur Annex and others. His work *Persistent Memory*, commissioned by Orpheus, and his *Ten of a Kind*, commissioned by "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band, were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize. His music is published by C.F. Peters, is recorded on New World/CRI, BMOP/Sound, Innova, Americus, Albany, Capstone, and Bridge, and has been performed worldwide. Rakowski is the Walter W. Naumburg Professor of Composition at Brandeis University.

The Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition is a position awarded annually to a major figure in music composition today. The Visiting Professors come to the Ithaca College campus during the course of the academic year to lecture on their music and issues relevant to contemporary composition. In addition, during their time on campus, they hold private lessons with the School of Music's composition majors. Over the year of their professorship, their music is performed and examined by Ithaca College School of Music faculty and students.

John Orfe: Sonata for Flute and Piano (2006) (2012 Heckscher Composition Prize winner)

The composer writes:

"My Sonata for Flute and Piano was written for Sergio Pallottelli and I for our tour of Peru, Costa Rica and Ecuador in 2006. Given the overwhelming representation of French repertoire for the instrument, I made a point of evoking non-Gallic idioms, except in the trio section of the third movement, a thoroughly Parisian capitulation. Chucho, Chouchou, and Catch total under thirteen minutes altogether and are, respectively, an homage to the wizardry of Chucho Valdes (a latter-day Lain Art Tatum), introduced to me by Mr. Pallottelli; a meditation on the fragility of existence; and a romp, plain and simple."

John Orfe has won a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, a Tanglewood Music Center Fellowship, a Morton Gould Award and twelve Standard Awards from ASCAP, the William Schuman and Boudleaux Bryant prizes from BMI, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and first prizes in competitions held by the Pacific Chorale, Choral Arts Ensemble, and Eastern Trombone Workshop. Dr. Orfe has fulfilled commissions for the Two Rivers Chorale (MN), Duo Montagnard (NY), the Music Institute of Chicago (IL), the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra (IN), Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra (IN), and the Lila Muni Gamelan Ensemble (NY). As pianist, Dr. Orfe is a founding member of new music group Alarm Will Sound; his solo

performances have been described as "hypervirtuosic" and "breathtaking" by the San Francisco Chronicle, full of "virtuosic ardor" by the New York Times, and "a knockout" by the Boston Globe. He lives in Peoria, IL, where he is Assistant Professor of Music at Bradley University, and where he served as the Peoria Symphony Orchestra's first-ever Composer-in-Residence.

Luciano Berio: Folk Songs (1964)

Luciano Berio writes: "I have always sensed a profound uneasiness while listening to popular songs performed with piano accompaniment. This is one of the reasons why, in 1964, I wrote *Folk Songs* - a tribute to the artistry and the vocal intelligence of Cathy Berberian. This work exists in two versions: one for voice and seven players (flute/piccolo, clarinet, two percussions, harp, viola, cello), the other for voice and orchestra (1973).

It is an anthology of eleven folk songs of various origins (United States, Armenia, France, Sicily, Sardinia, etc.), chosen from old records, printed anthologies, or heard sung from folk musicians and friends. I have given the songs a new rhythmic and harmonic interpretation: in a way, I have recomposed them. The instrumental part has an important function: it is meant to underline and comment on the expressive and cultural roots of each song. Such roots signify not only the ethnic origins of the songs but also the history of the authentic uses that have been made of them.

Two of the eleven songs ("La donna ideale" and "Ballo") are only intentionally popular: I composed them myself in 1947 to anonymous Genoese and Sicilian texts."

Born in Oneglia into a family of musicians, Italian composer Luciano Berio (1925-2003) stands as one of the towering figures of 20th-century music. As a pupil of Giorgio Federico Ghedini at the conservatory in Milan, Berio developed a passion for the music of Monteverdi while being exposed to the works of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Milhaud and Bartók. His studies with Dallapiccola at Tanglewood and his friendship with Bruno Maderna and Henri Pousseur had great influence in Berio's work of the 1950s. As he himself put it, "If I look back at those years, I feel gratitude to three people: Ghedini, Maderna and Pousseur. After all, I was still the young man from Oneglia and I needed their help to understand many things about music". Over the following decades, Berio became one of the most influential composers of the 20th century, almost every one of his works turning into a musical milestone. His thirteen *Sequenzas* for solo instruments (including one for voice, written for his wife Cathy Berberian) stretch the technical limits of performance while creating a new genre, so to speak, which hardly compares to anything done before. Works such as *Sinfonia* and *Coro* are novel in their use of musical collage and folk material allied to contemporary techniques respectively. Toward the end of his life, Berio turned to the music that had been his passion in his formative years and produced a series of works based on the works of Schubert, Purcell, Verdi and Mahler. In his piece titled *Rendering*, Berio paraphrases fragments of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony.

Berio, Folk Songs

1. Black is the Colour

black black black is the colour of
my true love's hair
his lips are something rosy fair
the sweetest smile and the
kindest hands
I love the grass whereon he
stands
I love my love and well he knows
I love the grass whereon he goes
if he no more on earth will be
'twill surely be the end of me

3. Loosin yelav

Loosin yelav ensareetz
Saree partzòr gadareetz
Shegleeg megleeg yeresov
Pòrvetz kedneen loosni dzov.
Jan a loosin
Jan ko loosin
Jan ko gòlor sheg yereseen
Xavarn arten tchòkatzav
Oo el kedneen tchògatzav
Loosni loosov halatzvadz
Moot amberi metch mònadz.
Jan a loosin, etc.

4. Rossignolet du bois

Rossignolet du bois,
Rossignolet sauvage,
Apprends-moi ton langage,
Apprends-moi-z à parler,
Apprends-moi la manière

2. I wonder as I wander

I wonder as I wander out under the
sky
how Jesus the Saviour did come
for to die
for poor ordn'ry people like you
and like I
I wonder as I wander out under the
sky

when Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in
a cow stall
with wise men and farmers and
shepherds and all
but high from the Heavens a
star's light did fall
and a promise of ages it then did
recall

if Jesus had wanted for any wee
thing
a star in the sky or a bird on the
wing
or all of God's angels in Heav'n
for to sing
he surely could have it 'cause he
was the king

3. The moon has risen

The moon has risen over the hill,
over the top of the hill,
its red rosy face
casting radiant light on the ground.
O dear moon
with your dear light
and your dear, round, rosy face!
Before, the darkness lay
spread upon the earth;
moonlight has now chased it
into the dark clouds.
O dear moon, etc.

4. Little nightingale

Little nightingale of the woods,
little wild nightingale,
teach me your secret language,
teach me how to speak like you,
show me the way

Comment il faut aimer.
Comment il faut aimer
Je m'en vais vous le dire,
Faut chanter des aubades
Deux heures après minuit,
Faut lui chanter: 'La belle,

C'est pour vous réjouir'.
On m'avait dit, la belle,
Que vous avez des pommes,
Des pommes de renettes
Qui sont dans vot' jardin.
Permettez-moi, la belle,
Que j'y mette la main.
Non, je ne permettrai pas
Que vous touchiez mes pommes,
Prenez d'abord la lune
Et le soleil en main,
Puis vous aurez les pommes
Qui sont dans mon jardin.

5. A la femminisca

E Signuruzzu miù faciti bon tempu

Ha iu l'amanti miù'mmezzu lu mari
L'arvuli d'oru e li ntinni d'argentu

La Marunnuzza mi l'av'aiutari.
Chi pozzanu arrivòri 'nsarvamentu
E comu arriva 'na littra
Ma fari ci ha mittiri du duci paroli

Comu ti l'ha passatu mari, mari.

6. La donna ideale

L'omo chi mojer vor piar,

De quattro cosse de'e spiar.

La primiera è com'el è naa,
L'altra è se l'è ben accostumaa,
L'altra è como el è forma,
La quarta è de quanto el è dotaa.
Se queste cosse ghe comprendi
A lo nome di Dio la prendi.

to love aright.
The way to love aright
I can tell you straight away,
you must sing serenades
two hours after midnight,
you must sing to her: 'My pretty
one.

This is for your delight.'
They told me, my pretty one,
that you have some apples,
some rennet apples,
growing in your garden.
Allow me, my pretty one,
to touch them.
No, I shall not allow you
to touch my apples.
First, hold the moon
and the sun in your hands,
then you may have the apples
that grow in my garden

5. May the Lord send fine weather

May the Lord send fine
weather,
for my sweetheart is at sea;
his mast is of gold, his sails of
silver.

May Our Lady give me her help,
so that they get back safely.
And if a letter arrives,
may there be two sweet words
written,
telling me how it goes with you at
sea.

6. The ideal woman

When a man has a mind to take
a wife,
there are four things he should
check:
the first is her family,
the second is her manners,
the third is her figure,
the fourth is her dowry.
If she passes muster on these,
then, in God's name, let him marry
her!

7. Ballo

La la la la la ...

Amor fa disviare li più saggi
E chi più l'ama meno ha in sé
misura

Più folle è quello che più
s'innamura.

La la la la la...

Amor non cura di fare suoi
dannaggi

Co li suoi raggi mette tal cafora
Che non può raffreddare per
freddura.

8. Motettu de tristura

Tristu passirillanti

Comenti massimillas.

Tristu passirillanti

E puita mi consillas

A prongi po s'amanti.

Tristu passirillanti

Cand' happess interrada

Tristu passirillanti

Faimi custa cantada

Cand' happess interrada

9. Malurous qu'o uno fenno

Malurous qu'o uno fenno,

Maluros qué n'o cat!

Qué n'o cat n'en bou uno

Qué n'o uno n'en bou pas!

Tradèra ladèrida rèro, etc.

Urouzo lo fenno

Qu'o l'omé qué li cau!

Urouz inquéro maito

O quèlo qué n'o cat!

Tradèra ladèrida rèro, etc.

10. Lo fioiaire

Ton qu'èrè pitchounèlo

Gordavè loui moutous,

Lirou lirou lirou ...

Lirou la diri tou tou la lara.

Obio n'o counouilhèto

É n'ai près un postrou.

Lirou lirou, etc.

Per fa lo biroudèto

Mè domond' un poutou.

Lirou lirou, etc.

7. Dance

La la la la la ...

Love makes even the wisest mad,
and he who loves most has least
judgement.

The greater love is the greater fool.

La la la la la ...

Love is careless of the harm he
does.

His darts cause such a fever
that not even coldness can cool it.

8. Song of sadness

Sorrowful nightingale
how like me you are!

Sorrowful nightingale,
console me if you can
as I weep for my lover.

Sorrowful nightingale,
when I am buried,
sorrowful nightingale,
sing this song
when I am buried

9. Wretched is he

Wretched is he who has a wife,
wretched is he who has not!

He who hasn't got one wants one,
he who has not, doesn't!

Tralala tralala, etc.

Happy the woman

who has the man she wants!

Happier still is he

who has no man at all!

Tralala tralala, etc.

10. The spinner

When I was a little girl
I tended the sheep.

Lirou lirou lirou ...

Lirou la diri tou tou la lara.

I had a little staff

and I called a shepherd to me.

Lirou lirou, etc.

For looking after my sheep

he asked me for a kiss.

Lirou lirou, etc.

E ièu soui pas ingrato:
En lièt d'un nin fau dous!
Lirou lirou, etc.

And I, not one to be mean,
Gave him two instead of one.
Lirou lirou, etc.

11. Azerbaijan love song

da maesden bil de maenaes
di dilamnanai ai naninai
go shadaemae hey ma naemaes
yar
go shadaemae hey ma naemaes
sen ordan chaexman boordan
tcholoxae mae dish ma naemaes
yar
tcholoxae mae dish ma naemaes
kaezbe li nintché dirai nintché
lebleri gontchae derai gontchae
kaezbe linini je deri nintché
lebleri gontcha de le gontcha
na plitye korshis sva doi
ax kroo gomshoo nyaka mae shi
ax pastoi xanaem pastoi
jar doo shi ma nie patooshi
go shadaemae hey ma naemaes
yar
go shadaemae hey ma naemaes
sen ordan chaexman boordan
tcholoxae mae dish ma naemaes
yar
tcholoxae mae dish ma naemaes
kaezbe li nintché dirai nintché
lebleri gontchae derai gontchae
nie didj dom ik diridit
boost ni dietz stayoo zaxadit
ootch to boodit ai palam
syora die limtchésti snova papalam

[Transcription defies translation.]