

CANTICUM NOVUM



ARTISTIC PROJECT



Canticum Novum has a passion for the rediscovery, the interpretation and the transmission of the most beautiful repertoires of ancient music, especially those that link the music of western Europe (Spain, France, Italy etc) with that of the Mediterranean basin. The latter being enriched with the influence of both the Christian world and the Orient (which has been moulded by a Jewish and Moorish heredity). Since the society we live in has lost its bearings, we find it essential to maintain our cultural heritage which is so abundant. And we do believe in our role towards our youngsters. We regard it as our mission to accompany them through discovery as well as practice and creation. Thanks to what we have done so far we can foresee the tremendous work of cultural mediation that remains to be done in order to transmit the repertoire that we have faith in. The project we have defined means making the most of our proximity with the public and a constantly renewed dialogue with them, the musicians and our partenaries.

Canticum Novum was created by Emmanuel Bardon in 1996. The ensemble was in residence at the Opéra Théâtre of Saint-Etienne from 2008 to 2012. It was invited to the Festivals of Radio France, Ambronay, Sylvanès, la Chaise-Dieu, Tarentaise, Labeaume en Musiques, Fontmorigny, la Folle journée de Nantes, l'Estival de la Bâtie d'Urfé, Musiques d'Ici et d'Ailleurs, l'Arsenal de Metz, La Mégisserie, etc. It was also invited to such Scènes Nationales as le Théâtre du Chatelet in Paris, Melun Sénart, La Roche-sur-Yon, Montélimar, the Opéra de Lille, and the Cultural Encounter Centre of Noirlac. Besides, the ensemble often plays abroad (Armenia, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland etc.)

Through the pieces interpreted by Canticum Novum (from 5 to 15 singers and instrumentalists), the public rediscovers the musics (Mediterranean, Afghan, Turkish, Persian, Arab, Sephardic, Armenian or Cypriot) which range from the XIIIth century to the XVIIth. As they belong to different cultures and artistic expressions, these musics are extremely vivacious, all the more as they have been enriched by 800 years of shared experience. Their stimulating energy is a token of diversity, respect and tolerance.



OTTOMAN, ARMENIAN, TURKISH AND PERSIAN REPERTOIRES

The most refined music of the Near East and the Middle East was born at the Ottoman Court in the XVIth century and it kept thriving afterwards. The modal structure that characterized it was the maqam. Its influences were multiple: Turkish, Arab, Persian, Byzantine, Armenian, and even Gypsy. It was not only appreciated at the court. The sultans loved it, as well as the soldiers, the religious people and the aristocrats, who all thought that practising music would allow them to ennoble themselves and to assert their power. Because among other things music was thought to have a social function. As for its aesthetic influence, it was due to the cultural richness of one of the biggest Muslim empires.

SEPHARDIC AND SPANISH REPERTOIRES

In Spain, King Alfonso X the Wise (XIIIth century) was a cultured man, both keen on astronomy and music. He liked to surround himself with great minds, whether they were Arab, Jewish or Christian. It was a golden age, which Canticum Novum revives for us in a territory where Arab, Sephardic and Spanish communities live together, trying to create harmony and balance.

RECORDS

Ararat - 2017 Editions Ambronay - Distributed by Harmonia Mundi

Aashenayi - 2014 Editions Ambronay - Distributed by Harmonia Mundi

Paz, Salam et Shalom - 2012 Editions Ambronay - Distributed by Harmonia Mundi

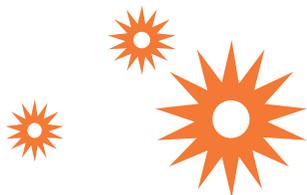
VIDEO RECORDINGS WITH THE KIND SUPPORT OF CNC AND LA RÉGION RHÔNE-ALPES

Ararat - 2016 - Production Films de la Découverte

Aashenayi - 2014 - Production Films de la Découverte

Livre Vermeil - 2012 - Production Films de la Découverte

Paz, Salam et Shalom - 2009 - Production CLC



ARTISTIC TEAM

EMMANUEL BARDON, SINGER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Firts, he learnt cello with Paul Boufil, then he decided to devote himself to singing. While training with Gaël de Kerret he joined the Maîtrise du Centre de Musique Baroque in Versailles under the guidance of Olivier Schneebeli and Maarten Köningsberger. He obtained a higher diploma of singing in 1995. Today he takes part in such musical productions as le Concert Spirituel (Hervé Niquet), La Capella Reial de Catalunya (Jordi Savall), les Musiciens du Louvre (Marc Minkowski), Capriccio Stravagante (Skip Sempé), le Parlement de Musique (Martin Gester), la Simphonie du Marais (Hugo Reyne), etc. In addition to being a singer and the artistic director of Canticum Novum, Emmanuel Bardon created the "Musique à Fontmorigny" (Cher) Festival in 1999. He has been its artistic director since then. He is also the artistic director of the Fontmorigny label.

Gwénaél Bihan, Recorder
Christel Boiron, Singer
Agop Boyadjian, Duduk
Henri-Charles Caget, Percussions
Isabelle Courroy, Kaval flute
Varinak Davidian, Singer, Kamensheh
Valérie Dulac, Vithele
Shadi Fathi, Tar, Sétar
Marine Sablonière, Recorder
Aroussiak Guevorguian, Kanun
Emmanuelle Guigues, Kamensheh, Vithele
Spyros Halaris, Kanun
Barbara Kusa, Singer
Nolwen Le Guern Vithele
Ismail Mesbahi, Percussions
Aliocha Regnard, Nyckelharpa, Fidula
Hélène Richer, Singer
Philippe Roche, Oud
Bérengère Sardin, Harpe
Maria Simoglu, Singer
Gülay Hacer Toruk, Singer



"It is a musical and spatial journey through the vocal monodies and the instrumental polyphonies which are rooted in the tremendous ethnological richness that the Ottoman Empire can boast of in the XVIth century, under the great reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. Canticum Novum successfully absorbs the musical and literary traditions, which spread from Europe to Iran, from the Iberian and Sephardic Al-Andalus to the nomad love songs of the Asian steppes, while setting to music the Afghan, Persian, Turkish or Armenian poems. With a combination of delicacy and audacity, the talented singers and instrumentalists (lute, flute, vithle and percussion players) offer us a fascinatingly sonorous novelty, a fabulously sensuous and allegorical journey which goes beyond the cultural frontiers."

ADAPTED FROM MARIE-ALIX PLEINES - LE COURRIER - AUGUST 8TH 2015



MAIN PROJECTS

AASHENAYI AN ENCOUNTER IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Under the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire was at its height: both its army and its janissaries were feared throughout Europe and Istanbul filled the Western World with wonder. For Suleiman, the “Sublime Porte” was of strategic importance for several reasons: not only did it allow commercial exchanges and wars but it made it possible for the eastern and western cultures to discover each other. First, those two worlds were indifferent, and they gradually became more and more curious of each other. The result was a reciprocal fascination. Aashenayi (“encounter” in Persian) reflects this cultural richness. It invites the listener to a journey to the edge of ancient and traditional music. Echoes of Persia, Turkey and Europe mingle with the music of the singers and instrumentalists of the ensemble Canticum Novum. Each performer is dedicated to continuing a strong musical tradition while making it accessible to all.

ARARAT A MUSICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN FRANCE AND ARMENIA

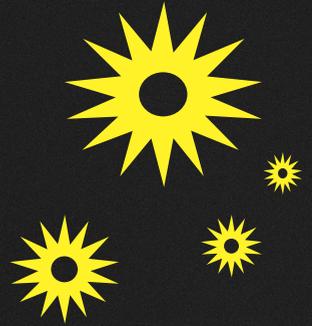
2015 is the centenary of the Armenian Genocide. In order to commemorate such a painful event, Canticum Novum has decided to create an intercultural dialogue between France and Armenia. Let us precise that these countries have been closely related since the XIIIth century when the House of Lusignan ruled the kingdoms of Cyprus, Jerusalem and Armenia. That's how Leon II de Lusignan was crowned King of Armenia in 1252. The influence of the Lusignan family was to last until the end of the kingdom of Armenia (1375). The cultural exchanges that prevailed at the Armenian court in the XIIIth century are being revived by Canticum Novum. In the repertoire that the ensemble has worked out, the most luminous pieces of music echo each other through messages of peace and mutual respect.

PAZ, SALAM & SHALOM EASTERN SPAIN ARAB AND SEPHARDIC MUSIC

“This ancient music reminds us that the body and the soul are bound to each other. (...) While making history vivid, it reminds us that it is our differences that create beauty. (...) This music offers itself to whoever wants to discover it, with its inventiveness and its audacity. (...) Paz, Salam & Shalom is so freshening. It is a lesson of harmony that comes from the past.” adapted from Gilles Granouillet.

Here is a journey out of time, which starts in the XIIIth century. In a territory where the Arab, Sephardic and Spanish communities live together, trying to find harmony in spite their differences. It is music that unites them and opens them to each other's cultures. Its result is still vivid after 800 years of acceptance, with its message of respect and tolerance.





"Here is the great talent of Aashenayi: it succeeds in blending influences and offering unceasing exchanges between different cultures. Far from restoring pieces from Afghanistan, Armenia or Spain, Canticum Novum aims at enriching them in every possible way. And so the musicians of the ensemble, who come from different countries, play instruments which do not necessarily belong to their culture (...). The message conveyed by Aashenayi wants to be appealing in an era when the communities tend to withdraw into themselves, and when the differences between the Christian world and the Orient are being stigmatized. All it takes is an album to encourage encounters and discoveries. "

ADAPTED FROM CHRYSTEL CHABERT - CULTUREBOX - APRIL 28TH 2015





HAYIM TOLEDO 1267

A POETIC SHADOW SHOW ABOUT TOLERANCE

Music and shadow production are joint together for an amazing journey between the 13 th century and today.

Under the reign of King Alfonso X the Wise, Spain knew an era of exceptional intellectual vitality, made possible by the encounter of the greatest Arab, Jewish and Christian minds around a King passionate about music, but also about history, about astronomy and about poetry... This tale makes us relive this golden age through the story of the young Jewish calligraphist Hayim who, of ten years of age, discovers very peculiar links between his beautiful Christian neighbor Elizabeth and his friend Qassem, son of one of the best Arab musicians of the court... It plunges us into the heart of the alleys of Toledo, in a world of tolerance where a music was born at the crossroads, still alive, and that gives a new resonance to the idea of "harmony".

Canticum Novum's ambition is to give through music a message of mutual respect, of diversity and of acceptance of the other by returning to a time where music was a symbol of mixing and of common life. The show, from this viewpoint, is in line with the issues of our times.



Family event and young public



5 musicians

Singer : Emmanuel Bardon / **Nyckelharpa & Fidula:** Aliocha Regnard ou Kamensheh & Vièle: Emmanuelle Guigues ou Valérie Dulac / **Kanun:** Aroussiak Guevorgouian ou **Oud:** Philippe Roche / **Recorder :** Gwénaél Bihan / **Oud:** Philippe Roche / **Percussions:** Henri-Charles Caget / **writing:** Gilles Granouillet et Annick Picchio / **Shadow theater :** Paolo del Gaudio / **Scenography:** Alexandre Heyraud / **Lightning creation :** Rémy Fontferrier / **Video creation:** Georges Florès / **Art creation and direction :** Emmanuel Bardon and Henri-Charles Caget.



CANTICUMNOVUM

PROGRAM

- * Proque trobar – Prologo – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * Sola Fusti – Cantiga 90 – Cantiga de Santa Maria – Alfonso X el Sabio *
- * Saltarello – Cantiga 77/119 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * Las Estrellas de los cielos – Romance Séfara de (Alexandrie) *
- * Rosa das Rosas – Cantiga 10 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * Danza del viento – Tradition musulmane *
- * El Rey de Francia – Romance Séfara de – (Smirne) *
- * Hermoza muchachica – Romance Séfara de (Turquie) *
- * A Virgen gloriosa – Cantiga 42 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * Dized ai trovadores – Cantiga 260 – Alfonso X el Sabio *
- * Pero que saja a gente – Cantiga 181 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * Paxarico – Romance Séfara de (Turquie) *
- * Por que Llorax – Romance Séfara de (Sarajevo) *
- * De Santa Maria sinal – Cantiga 123 – Alfonso X el Sabio *
- * Ir me quiero – Romance Séfara de (Jerusalem) *
- * Muito faz gran ero – Cantiga 209 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * Por alli paso un cavallero – Romance Séfara de (Turquie) *
- * Santa Maria, strella do dia – Cantiga 100 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * Des oge mais – Cantiga 1 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * De la faja saliras – Romance séfara de (Sofia) *
- * Nas Mentas – Cantiga 29 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *
- * Miragres fremosos – Cantiga 37 – Alfonso X el Sabio (Espagne) *



CONTACTS

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Musicale Direction: Emmanuel Bardon
Administration: Judith Chomel
Production: Anne-Lise Arsac

HAYIM TOLEDO 1267

TEXT FOR THE SOUNDTRACK OF CANTICUM NOVUM'S SHOW
GILLES GRANUILLET/ ANNICK PICCHIO

Characters:

Hayim
Kacem
Elizabeth
Ayim's father





My name is Hayin and I am 10 years old and I'm talking to you from far away. And when I say far away... I mean from the beautiful city of Toledo, the capital of Castile, curled up in the twists and turns of the Tagus, in the heart of Spain, under the reign of the good king Alfonso X. Yes, I definitely talk to you from very very far away since today is the 14th of August 1267, it is barely 5 o'clock in the morning. At this time, like you, in your 21st century, I am still asleep, so be gentle: respect my goodnight's sleep, the morning that illuminates will soon make me open my eyes, this dawn announces two days that I am not ready to forget...

6 o'clock! The bells of San Domingo get me out of bed, through the blinds of our room, there is the most beautiful sun of August that faces us. I say "our room": I have two brothers but they sleep, they are little, do not talk about it, I am the eldest.

(Morning prayer in Hebrew)
Modé ani fanékha, Mélékh'Hai vékayam
Chélé'hézartha binichmati bé hémla
Rabba émounatékha

Does that surprise you? My name is Hayim and I am a Jewish child. Like every child of Toledo in this year 1267, I say my morning prayer ... 1267... For the Christians! Our calendar for us, Jews, shows 5022, and 563 for the Muslims! That surprises you: three calendars for the same city? That seems complicated, but we are in Toledo! With a big T just like tolerance. Here, "one religion for each of us, a city for every one of us". It is our own king who says it. Our neighbors are Christians, along with the beautiful Elizabeth...

Elizabeth: Elizabeth, that's me, I am 13 years old...

... Our neighbors live just over there, on the other side of the courtyard. My best friend, Kacem, is Muslim.

Kacem: Slama! I am Kacem, I am 14 years old.

Kacem learns percussions with his father, who is no other than the first musician of the court, a situation that is only explained by his immense talent. Elizabeth, my pretty Christian neighbor, Kacem, my Muslim friend, and me, Hayim, from Jewish parents, we live together. Every one of us under the benevolence of Toledo that loves every prayer, but that, above all, adores music and the Cantigas, which are played and sung by true artists, no matter their religion.

I don't want to show off, but, I, Hayim, with 10 years of age, have a gift.

The father: Hayim, my son, do not forget: a gift is nothing without any work!

That is my father, I love Dad a lot because he lives in the realm of color: he's the one who prepares the pigments of the most beautiful ornamentations for the Cantigas of the king. Here, I, Hayim of 10 years of age, bestowed with the gift of calligraphy, am the chosen Lettrist of the king and my father... some years older ... prepares the colors so that the king illuminates the parchments by himself. In short, my father and I make a team.

The father: Hayim my son, do not forget: a team is nothing without any work!

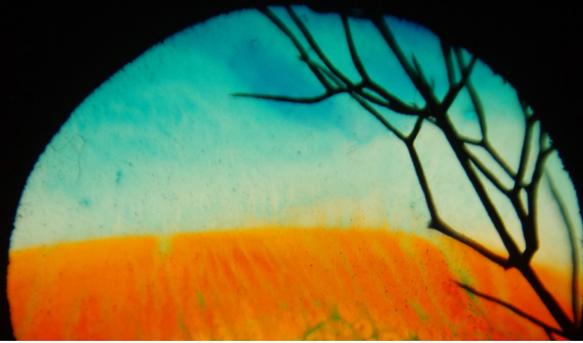
A great team, a good trade, this 14 of august was announced as a beautiful day, if at that instant -some seconds after the prayers- I had not heard the singing of the beautiful Elizabeth, my neighbor, go up the courtyard up to the window of my room; a lovely melody...

"Rose among roses, flower among flowers, woman among women..." She sings well Elizabeth, but as for me, I have like a big cloud over my head: this tune, it's Rosa das Rosas which was dictated to me by the king himself and no later than last week. Question: how is it possible that Elizabeth knows this song by heart, since we are only two who partake in the secret: the king, who dictates, and me, who transcribes? So then, I walk, with unease and bad temper, through the streets of Toledo. The convent San Domingo, the Mayor synagogue and its 32 pillars, in front of me, the Bab al-Mardum or mosque of Cristo de la Luz. I wonder: how could Elizabeth know that song?

Kacem: Hayim, my brother, take the time to sit down, I prepared tea for you.

It's Kacem. He does not quite say that, he says:





Kacem: same text in Arabic

The tongues, in Toledo... Hebrew, Castilian, Arabic, it's a bit complicated... So, everybody makes an effort to learn... And at the end of the day, everybody understands each other!

Kacem: Hayim, my friend, are you coming to drink this tea?

Not this morning Kacem, I don't have the time and I am in trouble.

Kacem: Trouble always fall upon the people who are in a hurry. Hayim, my brother, drink a tea. It is early: in the palace, the king sleeps, even the musicians haven't arrived yet.

Keep it warm, I will pass by later, I am in trouble.

Kacem: (in Arabic) Explain. (in English): Go ahead! Explain!

I am in a hurry Kacem, this evening alongside a tea, I could explain you.

Go and good day! I will keep the tea... for my friend.

Kacem is right, the palace's courtyard is still empty. In the center, the chairs abandoned by the king's orchestra. Today 14th of August: The Assumption, the celebration of the Virgin Mary, it's for tomorrow, our king wants a perfect concert: Jewish, Arab and Christian musicians have rehearsed until after midnight. I don't delay, I climb the stairs on all fours, I push the door of my little cabinet, in front of me, my writing stand, my quill and my parchments, alongside the little table where my father keeps his colors. Garance red, Sinople green, white lead, charcoal black, Carthame yellow, gum Arabic, ash powder, egg whites, minium, cinnabar, arsenic and honey are all alongside each other in his alchemist's workshop. He knows that a few drops of urine will heat up the pigments to render them luminous. He cherishes orpiment that he brought from Mount Sinai; he patiently grinds the crystals; he boils them and melts them in Sulphur with the aim of giving birth little by little to a golden color. He refines the Malachite rock until he could obtain the most gorgeous greens.



He crushes and doses the Nut of Gall so my ink could become as densest as possible. Only he is not afraid of Dragon's Blood red, for only he knows how to extract it from the bark of the palm tree. And above all, my father knows the stones' most precious secret, the lapis lazuli which will give navy blue... my father... still my father... but for the moment he is not here, for the moment I seek the hymns sung by Elizabeth... Rosa das Rosas... that's what I seek!

I search, but I can't find it. I can't find it! Some nights the king dreams his poems, in the morning he dictates them to me, he trusts me; if they are not written down during the day, in the evening, he does not remember them any longer. I search ... How could I've lost the king's poem? They never leave my writing stand and it is me who submits them to Kacem's father, by my own hand, for the rehearsal! I leaf through, I sort and resort the illuminated manuscripts, every partition, my hands shake, the king's anger is a terrible thing, it will surely fall upon my father...

The father: Hayim, my son, we are a team... To work!

I sort and resort and it becomes clear: I've been robbed! I've been robbed!!! Rosa das Rosas, rose among the roses, but also Miragrese, which the king dictated to me no later than yesterday. Two parchments have disappeared! The musicians need them to rehearse starting this morning, I have never lost anything. I've been robbed! I get away from my writing stand, I hurtle down the stairs on all fours, in the courtyard the rehearsal has just begun.

Gauthier : Hayim! Are you leaving? Where are you going at this hour? What got into you? ... Good singer but funny guy... He caught me. Are you going back? Are you leaving work in the middle of the morning?





I mean...Gauthier is a cold man, he has always impressed me.

Gauthier: What do you mean? Tell me Hayim, every musician is waiting... We are missing two Cantigas for tomorrow's concert. We need to rehearse.

I send the Cantigas to Kacem's father, always and myself. It's him, the first musician.

Gauthier: Apparently, there is no one else but us this morning. Could he be unwell?

I don't know, Kacem hasn't told me anything.

Gauthier: It's annoying, in fact, the concert is tomorrow. I am the second musician: I take the coach's place. These two Cantigas, could you go get them?

I mean...

Gauthier: You mean? Are you shaking? We need them Hayim, we must work.

Someone stole them from me.

Gauthier: Come again?

I tell you: someone stole them from me. They were kept under my writing stand, I don't lose anything. I've been robbed, do you understand?

Gauthier: Where are you going? Where are you going?

I am leaving the palace, I will find Kacem! Kacem has always helped me, him being muslin, me being jew, both of us, hand in hand, Kacem? He is my elder brother! But he is no longer there and on the beautiful chiseled tray his tea is already cold... So, I will mindlessly go through the streets of Toledo, I pass again by the synagogue and the convent San Domingo, the neighborhood's children say hello to me, but I do not hear them and my legs bring me to an alley, in front of me the small yard of my beautiful Elizabeth... and there... I only need to open my ears to comprehend that I am not over with neither my surprises or my sorrows...





"Rose among roses, flower among flowers..." under the shade of the arches, I clearly see Elizabeth but... Kacem too, so close the one to the other that one could say that they are touching each other. "Rose among roses, flower among flowers..." I see and I hear, I hear him whispering to the young girl the lyrics of the cantiga as if they were his own. I hear, I see and I understand: he is in front of me, the one who betrayed me: he seduces the beautiful Elizabeth and it is my friend Kacem! It is easy for the first musician's son to enter the palace. He only had to climb up some steps, enter into my study, search under my writing stand and steal my parchments. Since yesterday, he played the poet, Kacem! With the king's words, he did his courting and this morning, Elizabeth hummed the lyrics that Kacem whispered to her. It is obvious, under my own eyes! And still I cannot believe it: Kacem is my friend, a friend does not betray you and I am ashamed of doubting him.

The father: Hayim my son, come into our house, I need to talk to you, pass ahead and hurry up.

Me at the bottom of the stairs, behind me: my father that follows me without uttering a word. Now everything becomes clear: he comes back from the palace, he must have crossed Gauthier. Now he knows about the Cantigas...

The father: Take this chair and sit down! Hayim, I find yourself here, in front of our house without anything to do even though your place is in the palace. We will discuss that another time: I just found about something which is way more serious. Kacem's father has just been arrested. He is prison. Yes, in prison, the king's soldiers just found a parchment in his house. The one that was dictated to you by the king himself. The one for which I prepared the most beautiful colors...

Hayim my son, you have to understand. Tomorrow the 15 of August, it's the celebration of the Virgin Mary. The king foresaw a grand concert and this theft is making a grand noise. Hayim, my son, understand me: Alfonso X is Chistian and the Cantiga transcribed by a Jew -you-, was found in a Muslim's home: in Kacem's home. Hayim my son, understand me well: every one that wants Toledo to be not only a Toledo of cathedrals, but also a Toledo of synagogues and of mosques, every one that would like to divide us by religion cries out: "Take the thief! Our good king was stolen by the Jews, stolen by the Muslims!"



Every one of them will scatter rage throughout our city. Hayim my son, our city is in big danger, so tell me what you know, you have to explain it to me.

Father, do you believe in friendship?

The father: Hayim, you know: friendship is one of the most beautiful things on earth.

Father, do you believe that a great friend can betray you?

The father: A difficult question... I need time to answer...

Father, I am afraid that the guilty one is my great friend. However, I can't believe it so let me have some time and I can answer you. And there: sacrilege! I turn my back at my father and I climb down the stairs to the little yard, without turning back.

Kacem! Enough! You sing of love, but your father is in prison.

Kacem: My father is in prison?

In the fortress. The song that you stole from me; it's in your house that the soldiers found it.

Kacem: I've not stolen anything from you Hayim.

I would love that you were saying the truth. But I look at reality...

Elizabeth: ...Can somebody explain it to me?

Kacem? You were signing so well a bit ago... Talk! Very good, I'll talk: Elizabeth, the lovely lyrics that he murmurs to you are not his own. They belong to the king. Kacem stole my parchments.

Kacem: Elizabeth, listen to me. I've loved you for months without knowing how to approach you. Gauthier understood it. Last week he came see me. He gently slid to me a parchment and said...

Gautier: It's a pretty song, she loves poetry, with this cantiga, she will believe you're a poet, Kacem! Believe me, my little one, that'll please her...





Kacem: I was happy, I said thank you. The song, I learned it all through the night, in the morning I came under your windows, I was finally going to approach you! I sang and you listened to me Elizabeth... Hayim, Gauthier is the thief, not your friend.

I confess that I prefer that! But why such a thing? What's the point of that story?

Kacem: You don't understand? My father is in prison, he takes his place: he becomes the king's first musician. Gauthier is full of ambition, jealousy, Hayim, jealousy and ambition! Elizabeth, I haven't stolen from anybody and still I am ashamed. I did a big mistake so I can approach you.

Me, Hayim, of 10 years of age, at Elizabeth's place, right there, right away, would have given a slap, but a big slap to Kacem! But the slap did not come and these two little tears came dripping at the edge of the young girl's eyes. So, I told myself that my friendship with Kacem had to be without flaw, like the love of Elizabeth for my friend. And the three of us, hand in hand, we left Toledo, crossed the Saint Martin bridge to take refuge in the other side of the Tagus and to reflect, calmly, and find a solution to our problems... to our very big problems.

Elizabeth: Hayim stop with pebbles in the water, that annoys me.

I am thinking!

Elizabeth: Think without throwing pebbles, because that annoys me!

I stop. Does somebody have an idea?

Kacem: We have to set my father free!

That's it: the three of us, with our little muscled arms, we are going to assault the fortress and liberate Dad! Elizabeth, I do not really understand that you fell in love with such a moron.

Kacem: I am looking for a solution!



That's not an excuse for saying whatever!

Elizabeth: Quarreling will lead you nowhere!

Very good. Another idea?

Kacem: Let's go see the king? Our king is wise. He'll understand.

You believe that he's ready to listen to you : Alfonso X will receive Kacem, son of a thief, in person...

Kacem: My father is not a thief!

We know it, the king does not. You could not even approach him.

Kacem: Even you, Hayim? He trusts you...

He trusted me, today he'll believe I am an accomplice.

Kacem: An Arab thief, a Jewish accomplice... that fits well for everyone...

Elizabeth: I am Christian, can I try?

The king welcomes overnight a little twelve-year-old girl that he doesn't know simply because of her pretty eyes, simply because she requests it?

Elizabeth: Not twelve, I am thirteen and stop throwing pebbles in the water because that annoys me!

The king was offended, the king was stolen: this is expensive, your love story!

Elizabeth: Tomorrow nothing will happen. Tomorrow is the Assumption, the celebration of the Virgin Mary, you will not find a Christian ready for war in such a day.

And after tomorrow?





Elizabeth: Why two?

What?

Elizabeth: Why two disappeared parchments?

Kacem: Gautier promised me that he would facilitate me a second song... If the first one didn't please you, if it wasn't enough to get your attention... He stole two parchments but he only used the first one.

Elizabeth: And the second?

Kacem: No idea. The musicians know the partition but that one, Gauthier will not be able to sing. To sing it would be to confess that he took it. To learn it one has to read it, to read it, one has to steal it! Does somebody have any other idea?

There were no more ideas and we rested in silence, the three of us were on the edge of the Tagus imagining what was going to happen after tomorrow... the sun was setting, the time for separation had arrived.

Elizabeth: Let's stay together! Even if we don't have any more ideas, even if we don't know what to do, we have to stay together. Maybe because he knows we are together that Gauthier will commit a mistake!

Elizabeth was right, why should we go home? We were three true friends: and the moments that we were passing together, they were without a doubt the last. So when the night arrived, each one did his or her prayer: one with hands clasped together, the other facing to the east, and me, thinking of my father and my brothers.

Elizabeth: (in Spanish and translation in English) Hail Mary, full of grace. Blessed art thou amongst women...

Kacem: (Arabic and translation in English) In the name of God the most merciful, praise be to God, Lord of worlds....

(Hebrew and translation in English) Let us not be envious of the wicked for like the grasslands, fast are they destitute, and like the grass, fast do they fade...



And the three, as soon as the moon was high in the sky, we fell asleep on the fresh grassland.

In Toledo just like elsewhere, the rising sun always brings a little bit of hope, and this sun of the 15 of August 1267 is already hot, as soon as we open our eyes.

Kacem: Elizabeth, Hayim! The concert will begin in one hour. Get up and keep going, a miracle is still possible.

On the way to the king's palace, the Saint Martin bridge, the San Domingo convent, the Mayor synagogue, the Bab Mardum mosque, through the streets of Toledo we go back to the palace of Alfonso X that dominates the city. On Kacem's passage, murmurs, menacing looks: "It's his father's son: it's the thief's son..." The rumor has already spread through the whole city... In the palace, the musicians start the last rehearsal...

We are in the king's palace, which is bursting with people, the musicians are already in place tuning their instruments...

Kacem: Look, Gauthier is warming up his voice, proud as a peacock, now that he is the first musician, he holds himself upright to the right of my father's place.

In the center, in front of the orchestra, the king's armchair is still empty. Among all men of the law, historians, astronomers, poets, translators, of all religions, of all nationalities, everything that makes Toledo's richness, a unique city admired throughout all of Europe; all these scientists, scholars, men of letters have arranged to be alongside the king to listen to the Cantigas that I have transcribed by my own hands. The drums reverberate, everyone bends over and silence descends: the king enters the scene.

The father (whispering): Hayim! Are you there? Hayim, I am so angry! I have looked for you all night!

Without being able to face my father in such a moment. "This way! Follow me!" I leave the courtyard, Elizabeth and Kacem follow on my heels, we climb up the stairs, we out of which we could see speed between the doorkeepers and it's from a skylight of the second floor, a little window of the squires' delivery, that rang out the first notes of the concert...





Kacem: Blessed music, music that just puts you in your just place! Is it Jesus Christ and its love of men?

Elizabeth: Music that gives peace, is it Mohammed in his mercifulness?

Is it our prayers or simply the force of our friendship that caused the loss of Gauthier? It remains the fact that the miracle happened : Gauthier stumbled; the concert had just finished; a triumph! Everything had been played, everything, except of course the second hymn that had not reappeared and the only one for which the thief could know the lyrics... The satisfied crowd was beginning to leave the palace's courtyard. So from high above our little skylight, Elizabeth, Kacem and me, we began to cry:

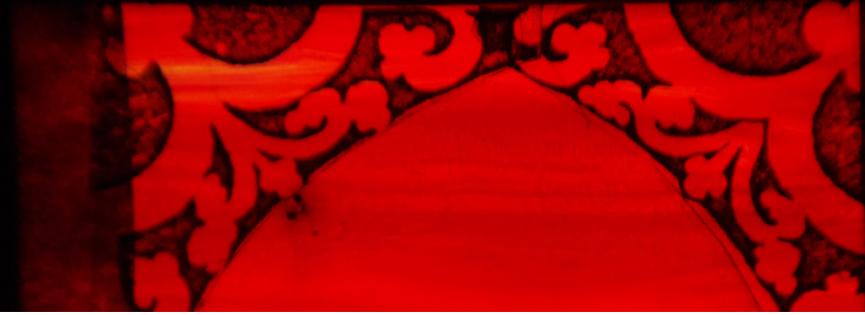
Look at us Gauthier, we are together, we three, Jew, Christian and Muslim, always friends and always together! What say you, Gauthier?

Silence broke, the crowd was troubled: how could these children permit themselves, in the king's courtyard... and what did they reproach Gauthier exactly? They murmured, they asked themselves! Gauthier got scared, he wanted to cover our voice, keep silent the rumor that was growing, without demanding the king's permission, he asked the musicians back.

Gauthier (directly): Sires, please, in your majesty's honor: name of the last hymn according to the team's choice!

There was a major surprise in the orchestra: why play this hymn that nobody knew the lyrics for? Gauthier was an authoritarian boss: everyone took his instrument...

One finds himself alone and lonely in the middle of the crowd when the mask has come off, there remains only an upstart who sent an innocent to prison and risked a war in the whole kingdom. One finds himself alone and lonely in the middle of a stage when one just sang what should above all not be sung... Therefore, I will not say more regarding Gauthier, even if I must remember you that we are in the year 1267, and that the anger of Alfonso X is a terrible thing.



Of course, Kacem's father will find again his rank at the head of the orchestra, even I get back to my writing stand and my father his colors... but the essential is that, without a doubt, in this story, nobody that we pointed the finger on was the thief. Let's also remember that if we all got out of this, it's because we succeeded in staying united, all three. But enough words, for here only notes are concerned, let's leave the music go on and I would like to end with a duo, I would like to leave you with Kacem and Elizabeth, Muslim and Christian of Toledo, in the year of our Lord 1267, who sing their love, beyond religions.

The end

