

Norrskensbardstäblingen

October AS 53



Kareina Talventytär:

Fyra tablingsbidrag

This year my focus in my entries for the Norrskensbardic competition are all about the music. Both learning to understand and apply the period “unmeasured music” (where the timing changes from one verse and/or one performance to the next, based on how important the performer finds each word, and which words they wish to emphasise today) and better learning to play my hammer dulcimer.

Round 1 (period):

Last year for my period piece I sang five verses from the song *Bache, bene venies*, which was written down in the early 13th century in the manuscript the *Carmina Burana*. Since then I have learnt that only about 1/4 of the songs in those manuscripts had the medieval music notation marks with them so that we know how they should sound. Therefore I asked around and learnt that this song, while it has little marks above the words which might be enough to remind someone who already knows the song what the tune is, those marks are not sufficient to actually determine what the tune was if one doesn't already know it.

However, I then found out that the tune which is currently popular to use for the words for *Bache, bene, venies*, is from 12th century France, from the play *Ludus Danielis*. The name of the song in that manuscript is *Jubilemus Regi nostro*. (One can see some of the other songs from that manuscript on line here:

<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6666&CollID=28&NStart=2615>)

Therefore, this year, instead of singing 13th century words to a 12th century tune, I chose to play the 12th century tune on the dulcimer. Here is the tune, in modern-style notation:

Jubilemus Regi nostro

Ludus Danielis



Round 2 (period style):

My piece in a period style was written last spring and early summer as a major collaborative effort. *When Summer Comes* is the sestina written for *Mestari* Kaarina's elevation to the order of the Laurel for her expertise in and love of Medieval Music at Cudgel War this summer. Since I knew that Kaarina would be elevated for talents in medieval music it was important to me that her scroll contain medieval style musical notation. Therefore I took the lead in making certain that there was a song written in her honour to which the notes could attach. I called upon the help of a bardic-arts laurel, Mistress Leofwyn, who was elevated in the West Kingdom for her word-smithing abilities, for the writing of the text (I helped provide images to use and suggested some edits along the way, but the best parts of the text are Leofwyn's genius at work).

However, the words were only a part of the project—the words needed to be set to a tune. The oldest recorded sestina is *Lo Ferm Voler*, which was written in the 12th century by Arnaut Daniel, happens to have medieval musical notation for it (<http://www.filmod.unina.it/cdg/G.htm>), which is why this style was chosen for Kaarina's song. However, even though we have a manuscripts showing the dots for the notes, and we have a poem written with the correct number of syllables per line, there were still some complications in trying to make the words fit the music (or vice versa):

1. Medieval music tends to use melisma, or multiple notes sung for a single syllable in a word.
2. Music in 12th century is often “unmeasured”, which means that while the notes are set, the timing changes to whatever the performer feels like using to emphasise the important words and make the song sound good, and will likely change from one verse to the next in a single performance, and may well be different from one performance to another
3. We were going to perform this song as part of Kaarina's ceremony to be admitted to the order of the Laurel, so we needed the words attached to the music and sheet music created and midi files generated enough before the event so that the singers could learn the song and practice before hand.
4. Only 1.5 months elapsed between Their Majesties announcing that they would do the elevation at Cudgel War, and the event itself, and while I had started corresponding with Leofwyn about the project before then (as I was certain that the question on Kaarina's elevation was not “if”, but only “when”), this still didn't leave much time to get the song ready. The person I know who would have been most qualified to help me make the decisions about the timing and which words should get the extra notes is Kaarina herself, but, as this was meant to be a surprise gift I couldn't ask her help. Therefore it was left to me to arrange the music, with the help of my friend Thorvald, who was visiting from Avacal at the time. We did the arrangement using a very modern tool: the program NoteworthyComposer is one that creates sheet music and lines up the syllables of the lyrics to the notes. If one wishes multiple notes to attach to a specific syllable then one uses the “tie” function to link those notes together.

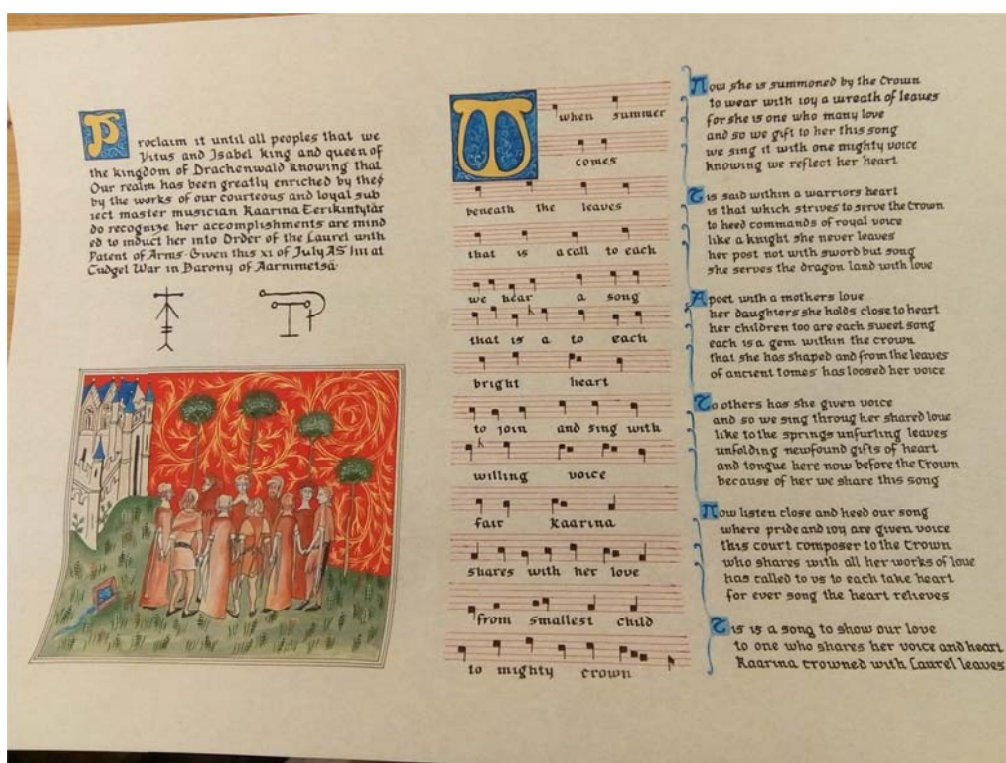
The work flow we developed for this was:

- Put the notes themselves into the program, with a uniform timing (we used quarter notes throughout at this stage)
- Put the text into the program, inserting a hyphen between the syllables for all words with more than one syllable (which is how the program knows to line them up with the notes)
- Go through the song one line at a time, and choose which words are important enough that they should get extra notes, and use the “tie” function to join as many notes in a row as will go with that syllable

- Listen to the resulting music and try to sing the words along with it to see how each word sounds with that many notes; adjust the placement of the tie lines as needed to make it better
- Go through the song again, one line at a time, and start to adjust timing—make some notes shorter, and others longer till each line sounds reasonable (usually longer notes for words with fewer notes, or for more important words, and shorter notes for less important words, or words with lots of notes, but, of course, we wound up with exceptions to these “rules”)
- Listen to the resulting music and try to sing the words along with it to see how each word sounds with that many notes; adjust the length of the notes as needed to make it better
- Go through the song again, one line at a time, checking both the placement of the tie lines and the length of the notes, and make changes as needed, checking to make certain that you haven’t used the same pattern of tie lines in more than one verse, unless, by coincidence, that really and truly is the best place in that line for them.
- Try to teach the song to someone else, notice places they find it difficult to sing, figure out why, and adjust the timing or number of notes per syllable until it is better

We could have done many more passes over the song, making minor changes here and there, but the clock was ticking, and it was needful to get the song to the singers with enough time that they will have had a chance to listen to the music, read the words, and, ideally, practice a bit before the event.

Luckily, Kaarina’s elevation to the order happened on Wednesday of Cudgel, and I arrived on site the Sunday before, so there was time for the singers to practice a bit before the event, and the performance of the song at the conclusion of the ceremony was everything I hoped it would be, and, I believe, helped make her ceremony very special and memorable.



While there were eight of us to perform it for the Laurel ceremony at Cudgel War, for the Norrskensbard competition I sang it myself, all seven verses with their very different timing, and thanked the audience for their patience for my very long introduction and the long song that followed.

When summer comes: Verse 1

Lyrics: Leofwen Cryccthegn Deorcwuda

Music: Arnaut Daniel



When sum - mer comes, be - neath the leaves



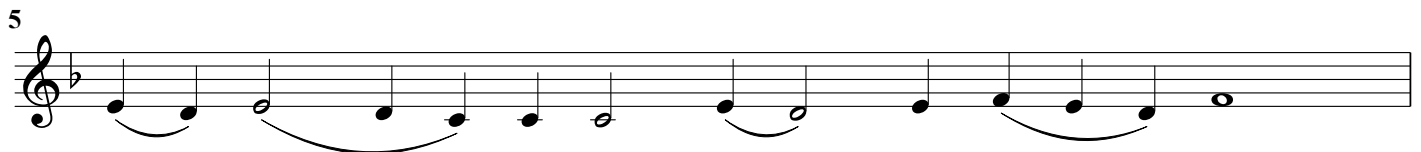
of trees grown green, we hear a song



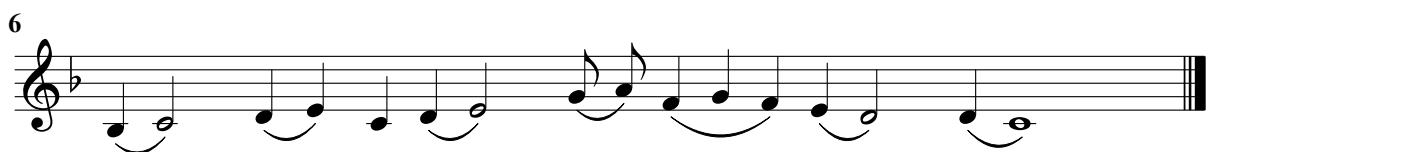
that is a call to each bright heart



to join and sing with wi - lling voice;



fair Kaa - ri - na shares with her love,



from small-est child to migh - ty crown.

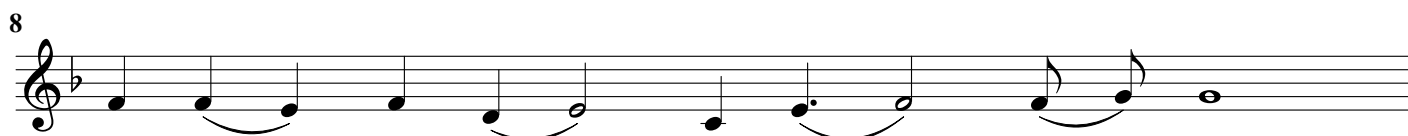
When summer comes: Verse 2

Lyrics: Leofwen Cryccthegn Deorcwuda

Music: Arnaut Daniel



Now she is sum - moned by the Crown



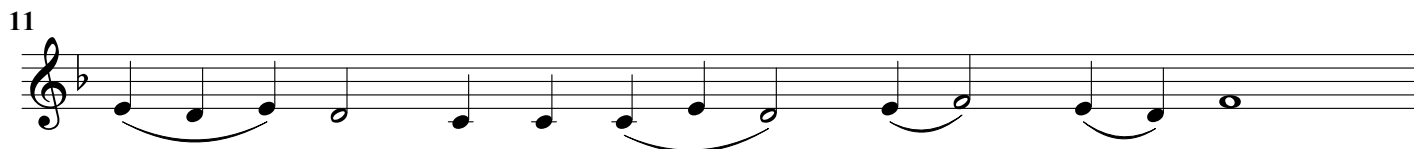
to wear with joy a wreath of leaves,



for she is one who man - y love,



and so we gift to her this song;



we sing it with one migh - ty voice,

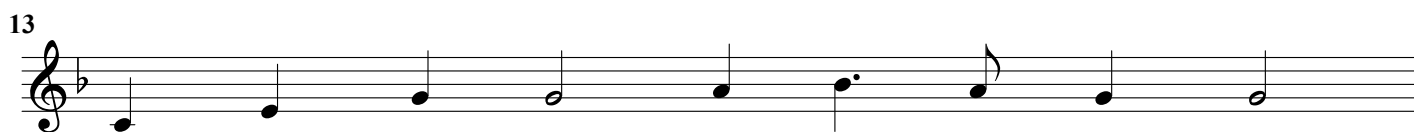


know - ing we re - flect her heart.

When summer comes: Verse 3

Lyrics: Leofwen Cryccthegn Deorcwuda

Music: Arnaut Daniel



'Tis said with - in a war - ri - or's heart



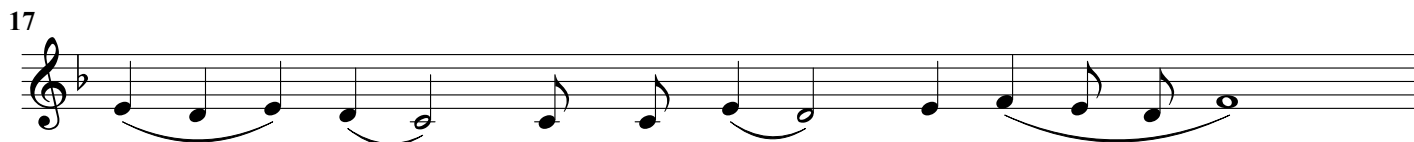
is that which strives to serve the Crown,



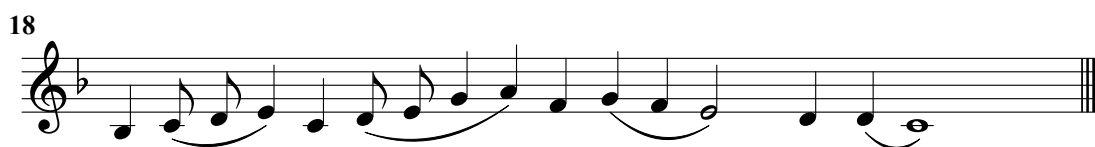
to heed com - mands of roy - al voice;



like a knight she nev - er leaves



her post; not with sword, but song,




she serves the Dra - gon land with love.

When summer comes: Verse 4

Lyrics: Leofwen Cryccthegn Deorcwuda


Music: Arnaut Daniel

19




A poet with a mother's love,

20



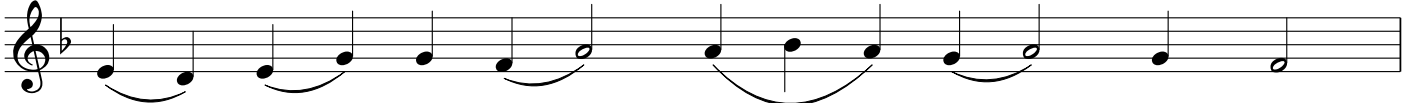
her daughters she holds close to heart;

21




her children too are each sweet song,

22




each is a gem with - in the crown

23



that she has shaped, and from the leaves

24



of ancient times has loosed her voice.

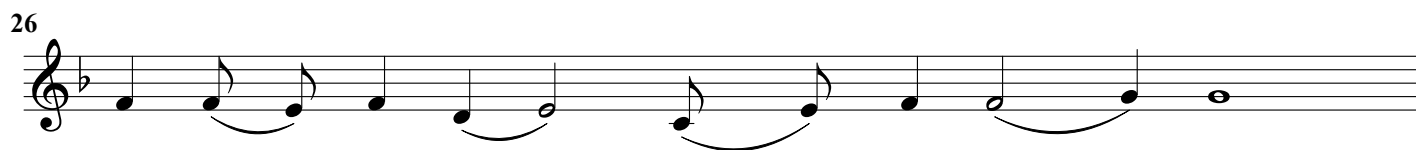
When summer comes: Verse 5

Lyrics: Leofwen Cryccthegn Deorcwuda

Music: Arnaut Daniel



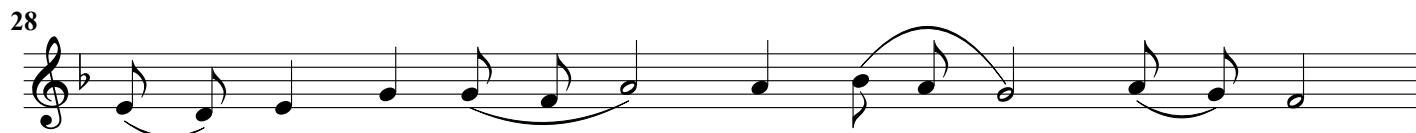
To o - thers has she gi - ven voice,



and so we sing through her shared love,



like to the spring's un - fur - ling leaves,



un - fold - ing new - found gifts of heart



and tongue here now, be - fore the Crown;



be-cause of her we share this song.

When summer comes: Verse 6

Lyrics: Leofwen Cryccthegn Deorcwuda

Music: Arnaut Daniel



Now li - sten close and heed our song,



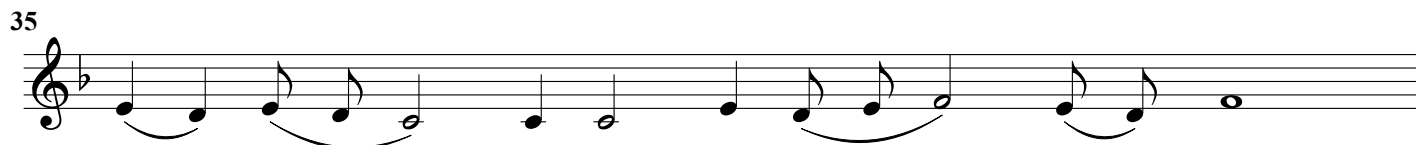
where pride and joy are gi - ven voice;



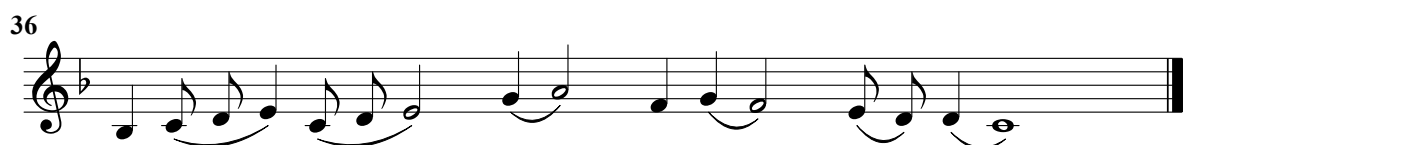
this court com - po - ser to the Crown,



who shares with all her works of love,



has called to us to each take heart,



for e - ver song the heart re - lieves.

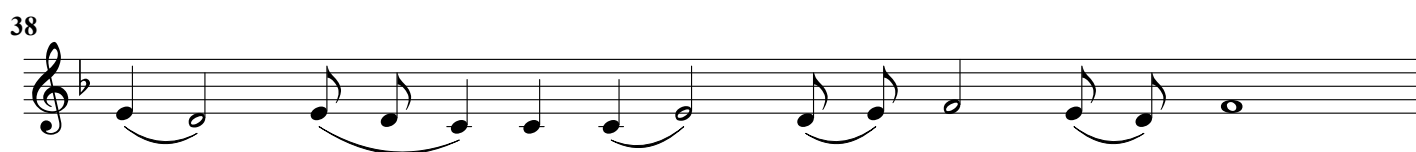
When summer comes: Verse 7

Lyrics: Leofwen Cryccthegn Deorcwuda

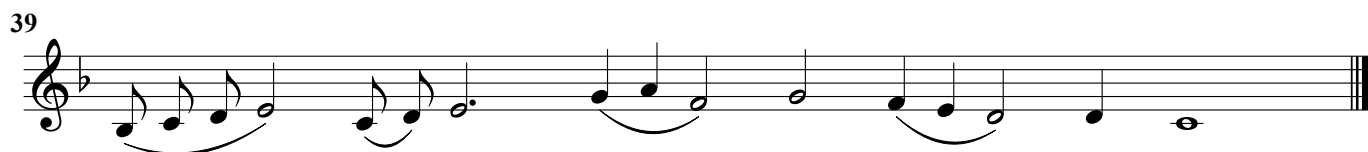
Music: Arnaut Daniel



This is a song to show our love,



to one who shares her voice and heart;



Kaa - ri - na crowned with Lau - rel leaves.

Round 3 (Bard's choice: The SCA)

Normally I write a new piece for this round, but this year the theme was "The SCA", and I had written my Piece in a Period Style on exactly that theme the year before, so I opted to present it this year as my Bard's Choice entry (see last year's pdf for more info). Since this one is also a sestina, I did prepare to sing it to the same 12th century notes as used for Round 2, but with, of course different timing. However, I gave the audience the choice of hearing it sung or recited as a poem, and they chose recited, so I did.

The SCA

I'll tell a tale about the SCA,
a game we play that honours chivalry,
where Pelicans all share their usefulness
and Laurels wonder craft with skilful art,
where hearth and hall and folk are welcoming;
a perfect blend of dream and history.

We value tales they tell of history
within this dream they call the SCA;
the bards here make our halls most welcoming;
they sing their songs in praise of chivalry,
and every breath they share does ring with art;
thus they inspire us all to usefulness.

Our craftsmen choose their tools for usefulness,
making with care items from history;
research does fuel the drive to craft our art
and make the gear to play the SCA;
these things enhance our deeds of chivalry
and thus the stage we set is welcoming.

New people who find us so welcoming
will gladly join in mirth and usefulness,
with us they learn the ways of chivalry;
the reading that they've done of history
will form the bedrock of their SCA,
our new anachronism we fill with art.

At least our cooks serve forth their works of art;
good food in plenty, rich and welcoming;
our bellies full, we love the SCA,
and praise our hosts for all their usefulness;
their tales we tell go down in history,
all intertwined in dreams of chivalry.

For honour, valour, faith and chivalry,
ideals we hold and practice as an art;
as we all strive to echo history,
and form traditions that are welcoming;
the source of ever further usefulness
within the game we call the SCA.

For dreams of chivalry call welcoming
all folk who care for art and usefulness;
from history we forge the SCA.

Round 4 (Three words out of a hat)

For my three words out of a hat this time I drew the words “smör, Brattby, and troll” (Brattby is the name of the village in which the event site was located). I wrote a song using a tune that was written by Ivone Ponslyer when she was Bard of the West for the song she wrote on behalf of King Uther for his Queen Portia. I had always assumed that she had borrowed a period tune, but when I asked her after the event what the name of the period song was that the tune was from she said that she had written it. I have no sheet music for it, so will share just the text here. However, if anyone would like to hear it, I have a recording of her singing her song about Portia, or I could sing you this one.

Har i Brattby

*Har i Brattby
vackra Brattby
alt är underbar*

*Trolla i så
börjar magi
har i SCA*

*Pilbågskytte
dans och sjunger
äter mycket mat*

*Brod och smör och
fläsk och soppa
Drakes goda mat*

*Norrskensbard
tävlingen är
den roligaste jag vet.*

*Stackars ni som
måste rosta;
bättre att bil med.*