A Renaissance Song: “Gar lustig ich spazieren ging” (1603)

Abstract

This song by an anonymous composer and lyricist, whose title translates as “Merrily I went for a Walk,” reflects early seventeenth-century chivalrous romantic sentiment. Such music was popular throughout this period at various German courts.

Source

Quite merrily I walked along,
so lovely was the sunshine.
I know a girl, God-fearing and beautiful,
with whom I'd like to take a walk.
To be merry with her,
to walk around in a little herb garden,
to show her round all day long,
because I have great desire for this very girl.
All that merry playing on the strings
with its sweet sound gives great pleasure
and much refreshment to the soul
whenever one's heart is constricted.
But greater still is the pleasure I derive
from the beloved of my heart,
deep down in my heart with all its pain.
I desire fondly a good many things,
but in no other spirit than the most honorable only.
And so I have completed my walk with greatest joy;
what my God wants to happen to me,
my heart has well perceived.
So keep this heart alive so that
all the singing and all the hopping of the little woodland birds
shall at this time go on in Thy praise alone
and only to please Thine ear.

Source: Anonymous, "Gar lustig ich spazieren ging," 1603. Recording: *Hugues Cuenod Sings German Songs of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Westminster (XWN 18848), 1959. Internet Archive https://archive.org/details/lp_german-songs-of-the-middle-ages-and-the_hugues-cuenod-hermann-leeb/disc1/01.01.+Anon.,+1603:++Gar+Lustig+Ich+Spazieren+Ging.mp3

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