

# A Song for all Seasons

Instrumental music and songs from the Renaissance

Flanders Recorder Quartet, recorders  
Cécile Kempnaers, soprano

Changing times of the year, the four seasons..., from the beginning of civilisation people have thought about these eternal changes and many artists have realised their own visual and aural interpretations of them. We undoubtedly experience the seasons differently from our ancestors, less extreme, with our well-heated houses in the winter, the coolness of air conditioning in the summer, and the protection that cars, busses and trains offer from heavy showers in March or storms in November. People in the Renaissance had a very different experience.

The changing seasons had consequences for everything; for work, for travel, for food that varied every season, for the rituals that belonged to each one of those phases. Visual art from mediaeval and renaissance times allows us to see the differences between the various times of the year, a visual aesthetic that was shared only by a privileged few at that time.

Moreover the fascination for the changing seasons was not reserved only for the visual arts, as they are also prominent themes in literature and music. This programme offers some instrumental examples from Italy and Flanders, but also examples in which great English renaissance poetry forms part of works of music, in the so-called consort songs. We encounter texts by Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, in his time more famous than the bard from Stratford-upon-Avon, in beautiful settings by some of their contemporaries.

Italy, Flanders and England all provide inspiration for *A Song for All Seasons*, a varied programme of music from the Renaissance for recorders and soprano with works by composers such as Richard Nicholson, William Byrd, Robert Parsons, Pierre de la Rue, Giuseppe Giamberti, John Dowland, Thomas Simpson and more.

Listen here to a sound example from *A Song for All Seasons*:

[www.flanders-recorder-quartet.be/song.mp3](http://www.flanders-recorder-quartet.be/song.mp3)

Soprano **Cécile Kempnaers** studied with Mireille Capelle and Rolande van der Paal at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent, Belgium and later with Margreet Honig (Amsterdam), Ingrid Voermans (Den Haag) and Jutta Schegel (Berlin).

As soloist she has worked with many conductors including Philippe Herreweghe, Marcus Creed, Attilio Cremonesi, and Paul Dombrecht ... and with baroque orchestras such as Collegium Vocale Gent, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Freiburger Barockorkester and Ensemble 1800, with whom she has also recorded. Ms. Kempnaers has sung in the solo quartet of the contemporary opera "Medea Material" (Pascal Dusapin) with the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin and Sasha Waltz & Guests Company (with Marcus Creed) at the Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin, the Theater Carré (Amsterdam, Holland Festival), the Opéra de Lille, in De Munt / La Monnaie, Brussels and Théâtre Capitole in Toulouse. She recently sang in Pascal Dusapin's contemporary opera "Passion" at the Théâtre de Champs Elysées.

Cécile Kempnaers sings in various ensembles such as Zefiro Torna, the Huelgas Ensemble, Ricercar (in Belgium); Capella de la Torre, Orlando di Lasso Ensemble, Weserrenaissance (Manfred Cordes, Vocalconsort Berlin (in Germany); Akadêmia (Françoise Lasserre), La Fenice (in France); and The Amsterdam Baroque Choir (Ton Koopman), the Capella Amsterdam, the Balthasar Neumann Ensemble (Thomas Hengelbrock) in the Netherlands.