

En passant par la Lorraine

Program notes by Erica Phare-Bergh

This song dates back to the 1500's and is derived from another folk song called *C'était Anne de Bretagne (It was Anne of Brittany, duchess in clogs)*. Anne of Brittany was a real person and lived from 1488-1514. She was not only Duchess of Brittany, but also Queen of France, Queen Consort of Naples and Duchess Consort of Milan. She was a strong leader and not easily pushed around. She was loved by her people and was often portrayed in paintings and sculptures as the a "heroic orphan" after her death. Legend has it she wore clogs, wooden shoes that were usually worn by commoners. She has also been described as strong-headed and possessing quite a temper. She was "remarkable for her age and once she set her mind on doing something, she made sure she succeeded, by all means necessary and at any price."

Her character is seen in *En passant par la Lorraine*. She is passing through Lorraine (a region in northeastern France that borders on Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium) and meets three captains (army officials). They make fun of her clogs, saying that they are "vilaine" (ugly) worn only by peasants. Does she care? No, she does not. She knows her own worth. She also has her eye on the king's son and tells the listener that the prince has given her a gift: a bouquet of marjoram ("marjolaine"), which is traditionally used for wedding bouquets in France. She says she'll plant it in the plain (field): if it grows, she'll become queen; if not, it (he?) was a waste of her time!

You'll hear a few snippets of other songs hidden in this arrangement. *La Marseillaise* is France's national anthem. Written in Strasbourg (which is in Alsace-Lorraine) in 1792, it became the rallying cry for the French Revolution. You'll also hear Wagner's *Bridal Chorus* from his opera, "Lohengrin".

Because clogs make a *clip-clop* sound as you walk, I added some body percussion to reflect that. You could also use wood blocks instead.

As in most French folk songs, the second part of the verse (couplet) repeats as the first part in the next verse. So, you get a lot of repetition....and a LOT of verses! I've streamlined the verses without leaving out any of the story.