

Souvenirs & Mementos

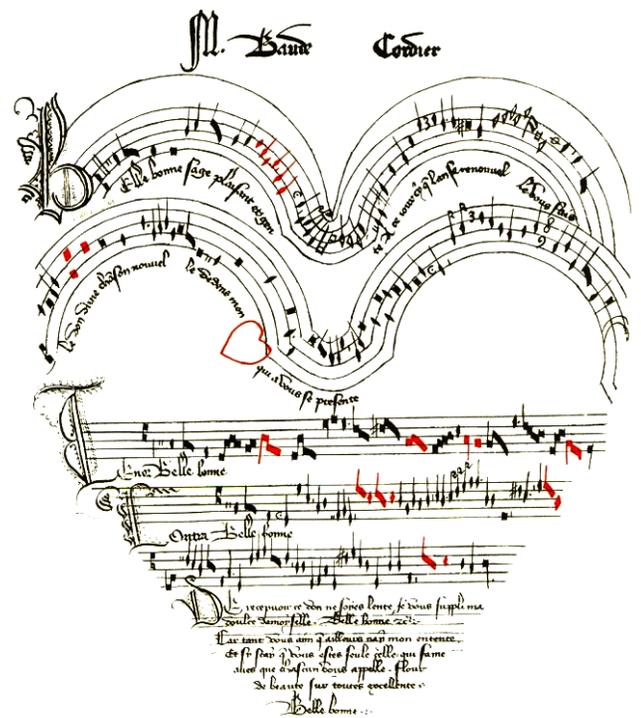
What does one give to a friend on the happiest day of her life—one who has everything? How about a musical epigram—a composition deliciously layered with mystery!

Sandra, your wedding at the Old Mill Chapel was like Edgar Allan Poe's "Landor's Cottage"—but in reverse. The ceremony in the chapel set our lives upon two different paths. After the vows, I gifted you this epigram of our friendship and left for home. I was but the observer.

The Old Mill Restaurant, a mass of quaint Tudor-style buildings nestled at the bottom of the Humber valley, was behind me. A stone bridge spanning the river and the steep incline out of the valley were before me. After a cold start to spring, it was an uncharacteristically warm evening. The greenery, making up for lost time, filled the valley with a rare pastel haze of pollen. As I continued up the hill, the chapel and the restaurant disappeared into the haze. Yet, after all these years, the memories of you, Sandra, have never faded and our friendship endures!



Sandra Burgman (née Nash) on her wedding day—April 14, 1989.



A Mediæval song, "Belle, bonne, sage," by Baude Cordier where words become art, art becomes music, and music becomes speech...

Lovely, good, wise, gentle and noble one,
On this day that the year becomes new
I make you a gift of a new song
Within my heart, which presents itself to you.

Do not be reluctant to accept this gift,
I beg you, my sweet damsel;

(Lovely, good, wise...)

For I love you so well

that I have no other purpose,
And know well that you alone are she
Who is famous for being called by all:
Flower of beauty, excellent above all others.

(Lovely, good, wise...)

This is an example of the *Ars Subtilior*—the subtle art, which superseded the *Ars Nova* or new art in the late 14th century. The Italian madrigal of the 16th and 17th centuries allowed composers to illustrate musically every nuance of the text, sometimes quite graphically. Later, Germanic composers used leitmotifs to create a musical language that spoke volumes to those who understood its symbolic meanings. There was Richard Wagner's unresolved "Tristan Chord" symbolizing unrequited love, Richard Strauss's marital love scene in his "Symphonia Domestica," and Zdeněk Fibich's erotic musical diary—"Moods, Impressions & Reminiscences." To this distinguished list of works I wish to add my "Epigram" with its unique musical glyphs.

