



A MUSICAL DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

Book & Lyrics
PAUL KAVANAGH

Music
ROSS FIDDES

SYNOPSIS

A love story...and its true, based upon actual and very passionate letters of the lovers themselves!

And it is tragic, in the most intimate way imaginable.

A famous teacher-philosopher, and his much younger pupil, fall in love contrary to the mores of the Church and their station, creating a cauldron of passion, eroticism, jealousy, hate, separation and tragedy.



Abelard by Guilliminot 1

At the height of their passion, Abelard is castrated by Heloise's enraged uncle and relatives. Then, in his shame and horror, adding separation and waste to the recipe, Abelard orders Heloise into a convent, and becomes a monk himself.



A MUSICAL DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

Book & Lyrics
PAUL KAVANAGH

Music
ROSS FIDDES

CAST BREAKDOWN

in order of singing

ROLE

*Market Sellers 1 – 6 **
*Jongleurs 1, 2 **
HELOISE
*Berengar of Poitiers **
*Guido of Castello **
*John of Salisbury **
*Geoffrey of Auxerre**
ABELARD
ALBERIC
DROGO
MARIA
*Three Jolly Monks **
HIRSINDE
CANON FULBERT
Washerwoman
Guards
Alberic's Henchmen
*"Innocence" Duet **
Townsfolk, monks, nuns

CHARACTER

Opening street cries - cameos
 Join with Market Sellers and chorus. They flirt with Heloise – cameos.
 Well-educated, 17 year old niece of Canon Fulbert.
 a student of Abelard
 a student of Abelard
 a student of Abelard
 a student of Abelard
 A teacher and philosopher. At 39, reputedly the most famous of his time.
 Archdeacon of Rheims. An archrival of Abelard.
 Abelard's servant
 Drogo's girlfriend
 Comic cameo roles
 A teaching nun. Heloise's principal teacher.
 Heloise's uncle. An important churchman of Paris.
 Comic cameo
 Cameo
 Non-singing or speaking
 Part of final chorus
 Chorus SATB

* These roles can or should be taken from the chorus, or the singers may join the chorus for certain numbers.

ORCHESTRATION

Flute/Piccolo,
 Oboe/Cor Anglais,
 Clarinet/Saxophone,
 Bassoon,

French Horns x 2,
 Trumpets/Flugelhorns x 2,
 Trombones/Tubas x 2,

Piano,
 Percussion x 2,
 Strings (Violins 1, 2, Viola, Cello,
 Double Bass)



A MUSICAL DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

Book & Lyrics
PAUL KAVANAGH

Music
ROSS FIDDES

LIBRETTO

ACT 1

Scene 1

CD1 - Track 1

August 1118 AD. A Paris market-place at dawn.

Marketsellers:



Hot pâtés, hot pâtés and hot cakes!
Tasty country cheese!
We have Brie and Normandy cheese!
I have honey! Fresh clover honey!
Imported grapes!
We have imported grapes!
Ripe loquats, ripe loquats for sale!

Two jongleurs enter. One takes an apple.

Jongleurs, stallholders, chorus:

That's the fruit I want to peel
That's the fruit I want to feel
Hey ya! Hey ya!
That's the pear I want to pluck

Hey ya! Hey ya!
That's the plum I want to peel
That's the peach I want to pick
That's the sloe I want to suck
That's the girl I want to pull
Who only tells me no, no,
Who only tells me no.

Fruit a rieya, fruit a rieya, hey ya, hey yo.
Fruit a rieya, fruit a rieya, hey ya, hey yo.
Me she no, me she no,
Me she no, me she no,
Fruit a rieya, fruit a rieya,
Me she no, me she no, me she no,
Fruit a rieya, fruit a rieya,
Me she no, me she no,
Me she no, hey ya!

She's as light as is the plum
Hey ya! Hey Ya!
She's as acid as is the lime.
Hey ya! Hey Ya!
She's as tart as is the quince
She's as pricking as the juice
She's as bitter as the seed,
She's the crop I want to pluck
Who only tells me no, no,
Who only tells me no.

Fruit a rieya, fruit a rieya, hey ya, hey yo, etc.

Heloise has entered on Fulbert's arm. Then alone she drifts around the market place. She is 17.



Jongleur 1: *To Heloise.*
 If I were a man,
 As I think I am,
 I'd sing you a song
 In the apse and nave,
 That would turn your head
 From your virgin thoughts,
 Jongleur 2: And make you desire
 You know not what.
 Heloise: I have dreams and thoughts
 You know nothing about,
 And in the candlelight
 I have read
 The words of
 Catullus in love
 And Plato
 Rapt in philosophy
 Jongleur 2: A student and a girl!
 You should shave your head,
 Slip into a habit,
 And get Abelard to teach you.
 Who they say is everything
 A woman could desire,
 Jongleur 2: And more — the one
 They're all in love with.

CD1 - Track 2

Heloise notices a pair of lovers.

Heloise: Girl and boy,
 I can tell that they're in love,
 All the books
 Say it's like that—
 But I wonder
 What is she feeling like,
 Knowing all
 That they'll do alone.

Out from the furrows
 In the fields
 Flowers push upward
 Through the snow;
 Deep in the darkness
 Of my heart
 Creatures have stirred
 That won't scare.

She knows more
 Of life and the universe,
 Than I do
 Who've read it in words,
 She could tell
 Of all the ways hands can move,
 And the taste
 On the edge of his lips.

Down by the quay
 The swallows have come again,
 In a girl's heart
 The moon has its way;
 Down by the river
 Water is rising high
 In a girl's heart
 Soft gates are opening.

I'm a girl
 As curious as anything,
 I don't need
 To wait any more;
 I have read
 More than enough to know
 The fruits of love
 Are what I want now.

Come to me come to me
 Come to me I am here,
 Come to me come to me
 Come to me now;
 Come and say come and say
 Come and say who you are.

Abelard, carrying a large book, enters with students, among them, Berengar, John, Guido, and Geoffrey. They celebrate Abelard's teaching. Abelard is 39.

Students: Here are students
 Stuffed from study,
 Here are maidens
 Flushed from home,
 Here are melons
 Fat for cutting,
 Here's a novice
 Come to learn.

Here's our master
 Hot from teaching,
 Give his voice
 A rest a while,
 We are hungry
 For his learning,
 Like a chestnut
 Sweet with burning.

He's the best
 Since Aristotle,
 He's the greatest
 Since the Greeks,
 Abelard
 Has come to Paris,
 Who needs Plato
 When he's here?

In our books
 We learn of logic
 But our master
 Blows your brain;
 The excitement
 When he's talking

Is like sex
In storms of rain.

Disputation
With our master
Is like flying
On one feather,
Just watch out
He'll catch you napping—
Twist your head
To what he says.

Berengar: Words stand for nothing but themselves.

Abelard: If Socrates is a man *Points to John*.

John: Does he have manhood?

Guido: Words stand for eternal ideas.

Abelard: If Socrates and Plato are one idea— *Points to Geoffrey*.

Geoffrey: Are they therefore the same man?

John: Words stand for ideas in our heads.

Abelard: Socrates is a man— *Points to Guido*.

Guido: But only when we think of him.

Heloise: *Lyricaly*. Words stand for ideas we find in experience.

Abelard: Socrates is the first man we meet— *Points to Geoffrey*.

Geoffrey: How do we know he is a man?

Berengar: Or, for that matter, a woman.

Abelard: She's very close, you know, very close.

Students: Here are ideas
Born of reason,
Who has dared
Think them before?
Squeeze your citrons
Check your felons,
Ethics is
About intention.

In our books
We learn of logic,
But our master
Blows your brain,
The excitement
When he's talking
Is like sex
In storms of rain.

Disputation
With our master
Is like flying
On one feather,
Just watch out
He'll catch you napping—
Twist your head
To what he says.

Here are students
Stuffed from study,
Here are maidens
Flushed from home,
Here are melons

Fat for cutting,
Here's a novice
Come to learn.
Yes!
We are hungry
For his learning,
He's the greatest
Since the Greeks,
Abelard
Has come to Paris,
Who needs Plato
When he's here.

Abelard and Heloise see each other.

Abelard: So who are you?

Heloise: This is the one.

Abelard: Your face is white.

Heloise: I might have known.

Abelard: Your fingers are long.

Heloise: You know already.

Abelard: I'll look away.

Heloise: His eyes are spirits.

Abelard: Her pupils are darkness.

Heloise: The angel has words.

Abelard: What can I say?

Heloise: They taste like honey.

Abelard: Her breasts are laced.

Heloise: I hear you singing.

Abelard: This should be easy.

Heloise: You are mine.

CD1 - Track 3

Abelard: I have seen all of life
I could hope for and more
I have fame and wealth to burn
Now I have seen a girl
For whom I would waste it all.

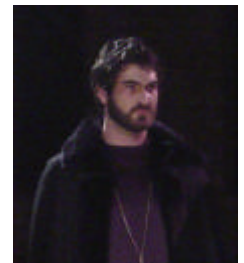
To have her naked, aware,
Her lips full of intelligence.

Drogo!

*Abelard directs his servant to Heloise's uncle, Fulbert.
Fulbert and Drogo converse. Alberic sees it all.*

Alberic: Abelard!
His arrogance
Drives me crazy:
He's giving himself up
To lechery—
What good is it
To have resisted
The glances of women—

But Heloise,
She's the fruit,
The fruit of the serpent,
Innocent though she is—
Now's the time.



I've waited years
To see him go wrong—
And here he is
Eating the fruit
From her hands
While she feeds herself.

See they're my students—
Look how they suck up to him—
I will have my revenge on him
For taunting me.

Eat of the fruit
Abelard,
See yourself naked.
Prepare yourself
For the sword of the angel.

Drogo returns to Abelard.

Drogo: It's set master,
Fulbert says you're more than welcome,
If you wish to live with them
And taste his honey—

Abelard: This is more than I had hoped for—



Drogo: In return each day you'll give her
Lessons as her private tutor
And chastise her when its needed—

Abelard: This is the gospel I'd die for—

Drogo: They have asked you there to dinner,
She's an onion you could cry for,
I'm to come and live there with you—

Abelard: Too easy, Drogo, too easy.

Drogo: Keep it as easy as laughter
Simple as eating or drinking,
Love's not about ever after,
Just try to stop yourself thinking.

Love is for kissing in hay ricks,
Love is as careless as sleeping,
Love is forgetting your brain ticks,
Love is all ready to . . .

Both: Go and fetch the pail to scrub up,
Go and have the razor stropped sharp,
Go and hang out my silk habit,
I'll use my magic to charm her.

Chorus: Look from lashes to amaze her,
Look to fingertips to daze her,
Look for lips and you will craze her,
You can win her with your black art.

She's the passion you could die for,

She's the onion you could cry for,
She's the honey you'll be stung for,
She's the way to lose your heart.

Go with long fluttering lashes
Innocent looks to deceive her
Go with thin sensitive fingers
In which you're willing to weave her.

Go with lips ready for kisses
Magical words to enchant her
You have techniques and soft touches
And you know how you can man her.

By the sharp light of day
Look what you're doing now,
Feel your heart give a lurch
Are you afraid for it?

Is it lust
Is it love
Is it good
Is it wrong
Is it safe
Is it nice
Is it bad
Do I care
This is love
And I feel it
How could it
Be so evil?



Don't tell me this most lovely of dreams
Doesn't have its own rightness,
What is beating inside
Like a chiming bell
Is playing me now.

She's the passion you could die for
She's the onion you could cry for
She's the honey you'll be stung for
She's the story you've been told for.

Feel the bells chiming now
Hear your heart striking now
Taste your lips moving now
See your hands praying now
Smell your skin feeling now
Taste your knees bending now
Smell your blood flowing now
Feel your tongue tasting now
Hear your soul shaking now
Taste your love growing now
Feel yourself falling now
Into her arms.

Heloise meets and embraces Hirsinde, her teacher from the convent at Argenteuil.

Hirsinde: Enough, enough, Heloise.

Heloise: Its been so long, dear Hirsinde.
How I've missed you, and the others,
And my dog. . . How are they?

Hirsinde: Well, well, and your dog has pups—
The nuns aren't pleased.

Heloise: In a nunnery too!

Hirsinde: Tell me what are you doing now?
You're still as fresh as new milk, I can see—
Do the young men fight at your door?

Heloise: Can you see me heavy pregnant and married?

Hirsinde: Well, no I can't, not you,
You're much too bright a flame
Whose burning lights in the wind—
A rising bird in time.

Heloise: I have a secret. *Whispers.*

Hirsinde: Abelard! The rising sun
That blinds the lesser lights?

Heloise: The same, though I believe he is human,
And has a mortal appetite;
At least that's what my uncle thought
When he invited him to dinner tonight.
You're invited too.

Three monks enter.

Monks: Vintage vino, noble vino,
Vino blanc or rosso.
Fragrant vino, fino pinot,
No el cheapo plonko.

Fulbert's asked us all for supper
Let's see what he'll serve us
Figs and ducklings rolled in pepper
Stand back and observe us.

Vintage vino, noble vino,
Vino blanc or rosso.
Fragrant vino, fino pinot,
No el cheapo plonko.

Scene 2

The dining room at Fulbert's house.

Fulbert: Now, be polite, Heloise.
None of your naughty teasing.
Show him how well Mother Hirsinde
has taught you.

CD1 - Track 4

Fulbert: You should hear her quoting poetry.
Abelard: I'd like that very much.
Fulbert: Well, go on my dear,
Here is your audience.

Hirsinde: Would you like to hear something
We nuns taught her?

Abelard: That would be appropriate.

Heloise: I know something about a banquet.

Fulbert: Let's hear it, stop teasing.

Heloise: Dant etiam positis aditum convivium mensis . .

Abelard and Heloise

Fulbert: What is she saying?
Hirsinde: Shall I translate?
Fulbert: My hearing's not what it was.
Hirsinde: It's Ovid. He says, there are
Openings for love at dinner,
And more to taste than wine.

Abelard: *Sardonically, with gestures for horns.*
Saepe illic positi teneris adducta lacertis
Purpureus Bacchi cornua pressit Amor

Heloise: There flushed love has often held the horns
Of lounging Bacchus in soft arms—



Fulbert: My clever girl!
Abelard: Can you continue?
Heloise: *She has spilt some wine.*
But if love once splashes your breast, it hurts.
Atque oculos oculis spectare fatentibus
ignem—

Abelard: Gaze in her eyes with open passion—
Heloise: Fac primus rapias illius tacta labellis . . .
Abelard: Snatch the cup her lips have touched,
Drink from where she has just drunk.

The conversation continues.

Scene 3

The street. Drogo calls to his girl, Maria.

Drogo: Open Maria, come on, let me in,
And pour me a gallon of hot spicy wine,
The taste of that sweetness
Will do me just fine.
I'm drunk on the thought of you,
Can't wait till that
Cinnamon liquor is mine.
Open Maria, please let me in,
And pour me a gallon of hot spicy wine.

Maria: Drogo, go away! I want to sleep
Drogo: Let me come in for just a little while.
Maria: No, we've talked about this Drogo,
And I think you're sweet,
But you're only a servant
And I want a farm,
And some vines, and a pig,
And truffles when I'm married.
Drogo: One kiss for the pig then.
Maria: Just one.
They kiss as Alberic enters.
Someone's coming.
Maria quickly shuts the door.

Alberic apprehends Drogo.

Alberic: Raise the flare!
You in the doorway,
Thinking of robbery are we?

Synopsis & Libretto © 2002 Paul Kavanagh

Drogo: I'm no thief, sir.
(Unless I steal Maria).
Alberic: Who are you?
Drogo: I'm Abelard's servant.
Alberic: Servant!
Drogo: He pays me well,
But not quite enough for . . .



Alberic: . . . not nearly enough for Maria.
She sells wine burned with a poker.
All hot and steamy is she?
No, she's not playing, is she?
So you need money!
And I need eyes and ears.
Your master has enemies.
I can protect him.
From himself, if that is required.
But I must know all that he does
With Heloise.
Drogo: I won't betray my master.
I won't betray my master.
Alberic: Not betray, Drogo, we want to help him.
He has enemies everywhere
Like wolves around a traveller.
Help him now.
Think of Maria, think of her spice,
Of her sweet body, think what it's like.
Alberic: I will save him, not hurt him
I'll protect him from evil.
He needs my help to overcome his enemies.
Think of her spice, you can have her!
Drogo: I will do anything, but not hurt him.
Alberic: We will not hurt him,
We've come to save him.
And we will pay you!
Drogo: Well, then how much?
Alberic: Enough to see you in with Maria.
Drogo: Done!

CD1 – Track 5

Alberic is left alone outside Fulbert's house. Laughter is heard.

Alberic: Bright stars shine down
My mind is on fire,
This dark makes clear
My way ahead;

As beasts do these mate
That's all man's love is,
Sap from the black earth
Runs hot in their veins,

It will destroy all his reason,
Humble his proud mind;
Return him to the earth
Angel fallen down
From the lonely heights
Of the stars.

You hear them laugh
Feasting and drunken;
Their eyes ablaze
Their fingers close;

She is innocent
Eating the apple;
She wants to find herself
All about what's good,
What it is that's bad
Choosing from the
Forbidden.

She thinks she's free
To live as she wants to,
He dreams he's free
Of holy law;

Her pale skin flushes
Her mind is on love,
He sees her thoughts
As she casts down
Her eyes in his
I'll cut him down in his prime.

Scene 4

CD1 - Track 6

Return to the dinner.

Fulbert: If I didn't know better old man,
I'd think she was flirting with you.
Heloise: Girls love stolen passion too
But are better at hiding it.
Fulbert: You're still in Book One.
Heloise: So far I have taught you
Where to spread your nets,
Now you can conquer any girl in sight.
Fulbert: She knows her classics—
Will she do?
Abelard: She will do very well.
So you want to learn philosophy?
Heloise: I'm a woman
Who wants to see reason every day.
Fulbert: See that she does.
Use every moment you have free
From your school to teach my girl;
Make her work day and night
And don't hesitate to punish her
If she won't work.
Abelard: It will be a pleasure.
Fulbert: So you will live with us
And share our board?

Abelard: I will be glad to leave my solitary life.
Heloise: What follows is,
Snaring the girl of your choice.
Abelard: Make promises, what's the harm in it?
Hirsinde
& Monks: These ancient authors knew a thing or two.
Fulbert: There, its settled.
Send Drogo to fetch all your things.
Heloise, your classes start tonight.

Scene 5

The street. Enter Drogo, jubilant.

Drogo: Maria, I've got it,
Well I'm getting it.
Maria: You're not getting anything
Till it's right here.
Opening her palm.
Drogo: We can soon fix that.
Maria: The money I mean.
Drogo: Well that's coming too.
All I do is spy
On my master Abelard,
Then debrief for Alberic,
And he pays me money.
We've got it made.
Maria: You're a clever little water rat.
In and out of the water so fast
You hardly get your fur wet.
Drogo: Let's see about that then.
Maria: Well maybe a little on tick.

Scene 6

CD1 - Track 7

Heloise's bedroom after the banquet.

Hirsinde: So that's the man
Everyone has heard about,
I'm not disappointed
Though I'd never tell him to his face.

But you're still
Have you something on your mind?
Cheer me up with something sharp
You can say about our companions.

All that wine
Must have made me sad I think,
Or is that the screeching owl
Putting spells on watchers in the night?

Pull one of your faces,
Let me see you smile,
That's much better
Even though you mock me
I see through your wiles,

You don't have to

Tell me what you're thinking,
Just remember that
I am still the child
Who dreamed a virgin life away.

Look at you,
Staring at the candle flame,
In your eyes are tears of joy,
Or is there some fear you are hiding?

Where's the girl
Who would run in from the rain
Laughing so she couldn't breathe
With the water dripping from her lashes?

Now I see,
It's this Abelard who's come
With his clever mind and looks
That have made your lips start to tremble.

If I try to tell you
Not to give your heart
You will smile and
Do just what you want to
So why even start?



You are young and
Taking risks is what we
Say youth's all about
But take care and
Leave something for later
When your smiles have gone.

CD1 - Track 8

Heloise: Come and do these laces now,
Please take this off Hirsinde,
Now the noisy guests are gone
We two can breathe easy.
Now tell me all you know of him,
I'd like to hear it:
First is he the kind of man
I should let near me?
Handsome he is, that's for sure,
Even I can see that,
He has angel thoughts to match
Past our little thinking,
Yet his eyes were black tonight,
Even in the firelight—
Why am I so dreamy now?
Hirsinde: Keep your head still!
How can I comb
Out all the hundred woolly
Sheep you hide in your hair?
This could hurt you.

Heloise: Mind so hazy,
Feel so dazy,
Like what I am dreaming of
But I'm not certain,
Really crazy
Things that I am thinking of.

See how the river mist
Glow with the moon,
I in my nakedness
Know how his hands go.

Talking nonsense,
I can't keep on like this—
What must you think I'm at?
Please don't reprove me.

Hardly know
What I am doing
Baby fat boy with feathers,
Cupid go,
Let me be peaceful now.

Hirsinde: Let me see—
Blinking lashes wet with tears,
Don't tell me it's river mist,
And stop talking
All this nonsense.

You're in love,
Face it girl,
Eros is that baby boy
Who will rule your mind from now.

Heloise: See how my hands quiver,
I'm in a state,
All of me asking
Can it be so?

Happy I was as a girl,
But Eros has stung me—
Will I be happy now?

How could I ever know
That I would feel like this?
Why does my body want
Now to betray my life?

Outside the moon shines
So smooth on the river;
Inside my heart beats
Like a stone.
What is he thinking,
This man that I dream of,
Is he feeling the same as me?

All night I'll hear his breathing,
Think that his feet are here,
Till dawn pales in the window
And love can hurt without . . .

More of his hard shameless glance,
More of his quick secret words,

More of his soft prying lips,
More of his long skilful hands.

He wrote the melody I sing,
His fingers find the notes too deep to hear,
He times the playing of my breast to his,
He leads my music to him in the night.

Look at me still staring at the candle
In my eyes are tears of joy or fear.

Scene 7 *Intermezzo and Chant*

CD1 - Track 9

*Fulbert's house, and Abelard's bedroom later the same night.
The intermezzo and action reflect the sexual tension in the
house. The next morning Cistercian Monks are heard
chanting. [The chant was cut in performance]*

Inviolata, integra et casta es, Maria
(Inviolata, immaculate and chaste you are, Mary)

Quae es effecta fulgida caeli porta.
(Who became the glowing gate of heaven.)

O Maria alma Christi carissima,
(O Mother of Christ, so kind and gentle.)

Suscipe pia laudum praeconia.
(Hear our devoted hymns of praise.)

O Maria flos virginum,
(O Mary, flower of maidenhood.)

Te nunc flagitant devota corda et ora,
(We now implore you with fervent heart and tongue)

Nostra ut pura pectora sunt et corpora,
(That we may be pure in soul and body.)

O Maria flos virginum.
(O Mary, flower of maidenhood.)

CD1 - Track 10

*Abelard's room. Abelard's book is prominent on a lectern,
opened. Heloise enters, and is caught by Abelard.*

Heloise: Master! Please forgive me,

Abelard: Caught, my little pupil!

Heloise: I was just looking here for you.

Abelard: Well, and now you've found me,

Heloise: I thought because your door was

Abelard: Alone, and in my bedroom

Heloise: Open I thought I'd come in.

Abelard: What will you do with me?

Heloise: Philosophy?

Abelard: It's up to you.

Heloise: That's good, I have a query.

Abelard: Do please sit down.

Heloise: I'm nervous now.

Abelard: And don't be dreary.

Heloise: Tell me then, is it a sin,

Abelard: Say some more about it.

Heloise: If a person sees a man,

Abelard: Make it more explicit.

Heloise: And she wants to have him.

Abelard: Still she is not sinning.
 Heloise: But she dreams about things.
 Abelard: Surely this is natural.
 Heloise: I think you know
 Abelard: What kind of thing?
 Heloise: My face is red with blushing.
 Abelard: She has not sinned,
 Heloise: She wants to have.
 Abelard: Consent is all that's lacking.

Heloise: What if she should want this plum,
 Abelard: All I have for breakfast,
 Heloise: And she puts it in her mouth,
 Abelard: Then she has consented.
 Heloise: All she wants to do is
 Abelard: Quickly to destroy it!
 Heloise: All that she intends is,
 Heloise: Simply to enjoy it!
 Abelard: It's plain to see,
 Heloise: You must agree,
 Heloise: Her motives are the purest.
 Abelard: I can't agree,
 Heloise: It's clear to me,
 Abelard: You are a clever jurist.

Heloise: Now I really ought to go.
 Abelard: What have we decided?
 Heloise: If she really loves a man,
 Abelard: And she has consented,
 Heloise: What they do together—
 Abelard: Doing it adds nothing—
 Heloise: All the secret pleasure
 Abelard: God has made delicious,
 Heloise: But if this kiss
 Abelard: No sin their bliss
 Heloise: I really cannot see why,
 Abelard: We must debate
 Heloise: Our lovers' state
 Abelard: When next you're free to call by.

She kisses him quickly on the lips and whirlwinds out the door.

Abelard: I'm not sure who is master
 And who is pupil here.
Putting her head back in.
 Heloise: I don't think there's any doubt
 About that now, is there?

Scene 8

CD1 - Track 11

Early September 1118. A lecture hall.

Geoffrey: Am I late?
 Where's the lecture?
 I slept in and I'm hung over.
 John: Don't ask me,
 I was hoping
 You would know what we should have read.

Guido: My head aches
 From the matins
 I just sang to the abbess of love.
 Students: Where's our master,
 We are here,
 All prepared for him.
 Are we late?
 Don't ask me.
 My head aches.
 Don't wake me up.



Geoffrey: We're all here.
 Where's our master?
 Have you checked at his lodging house?

Guido: He's not here—
 Can't imagine
 Abelard ever failing us.

John: Why the fuss?
 Something's happened,
 He is sick or he's still warm in bed.

Students: He's not shown yet,
 He's not late,
 He's deserted us.
 Something's wrong.
 Abelard.
 He's not here,
 Where has he gone?

Guido: I've heard you've been seen
 With a young girl.

John: Abelard,
 How could you, Abelard?

Berengar: I can't believe that one at all.

John: How could you, Abelard?

Guido: If what gossip says is true,
 She'll make a full stop of you,
 You can't fly to heaven
 By the light in her eyes.

Geoffrey: I just don't believe it's true,
 Our master would never woo,
 His thoughts look for heaven,
 Not the light in some girl's eyes.

Guido: I've heard you've been seen
 With a young girl.

John: Abelard,
 How could you, Abelard?

Berengar: I can't believe that one at all.

John: How could you, Abelard?

Guido: If what gossip says is true,
 Why then she'll make a full stop of you.

Students: But I can't believe that
 My master would ever,
 He can't fly to heaven
 On some young girl's feather,
 His thoughts look for reason,
 Not warmth in a courtesan.

Geoffrey: I can't think
Of our master
With a girl like the rest of us.

Guido: It's not true
He's much better,
With his mind on philosophy.

John: But they say
He's been seen out
With a girl under an apple tree.

Berengar: It's a slander,

Students: He'd not do
Such a blatant thing . . .
I can't think
Our Plato
Wants a girl
Just like we do.
It's not true,
But they say,
He's been seen—
Seen with her,
Heloise,
Under apple trees.
He'd not do,
But they say
He's been seen—
Seen with her
You mean Heloise?
He'd not do,
It's not true,
But they say,
He's been seen—
Seen with her, Heloise,
In the leaves,
He'd not do,
Seen with her under apple trees,
Heavy with autumn leaves,
Skinning the heavy fruit—

Lying among the leaves,
Juicy with falling fruit,
Skinned in the heavy leaves,
Lying like autumn fruit,
Heavy with apple juice,
Skinned in the falling leaves,
Heavy with fruit under God's clear eye.

Scene 9

CD1 - Track 12

Abelard's room.

Abelard: I can't believe that I am feeling this,
It will destroy us both.
How can it be that I must reach and touch
you,
And that all that I have ever dreamed
I'd give for just one moment when
I feel your lips come close and touch on mine.

Heloise: I can't believe that I am feeling this,

It goes so deep inside—
I cannot stop myself from coming closer
Just to find if you are feeling
The same passion as I reach my hand
To take hold of the dark forbidden fruit.

Abelard: More of your hard shameless glance,
Heloise: More of your quick secret words,
Abelard: More of your soft prying lips,
Heloise: More of your long skilful hands.
Both: You wrote the melody I sing,
Your fingers find the notes too deep to hear,
You time the playing of my breast to yours,
You lead my music to you in the night.

Heloise: Do you feel my lips like an arrival
From a journey far from human kind,
Do you feel my fingers like a homeward
coming
From cold travels far beyond the world?
And do you feel my teardrops falling
On your face like faith
That loves you just for what you are?

And do you feel my lips now moving on your
lips
Are telling the whole story of your life?
And do you feel my fingers touching skin
beneath
Your clothes are somehow touching on your
mind?



Abelard: Yes your lips so open with arrival
End my journey far from human kind;
And your fingers are that homeward coming
I have dreamed on travels far beyond the
world.

Both: Dearest what shall we do now?
Dearest what shall we do now?
We are doomed to joy and
Doomed to love and
Doomed to pain and
Doomed to die.

But look the summer storm has gone away,
The stars are clear and pricking in a brighter
sky—
Time for that love that we've been waiting for
too long.
Come let's hold hands and take each other into
bed,

Our hearts can now have all that they desire,
 Our bodies rushing us towards our loving fate;
 Hands will find out all they guessed at last,
 Eyes can now see bare all they hungered for,
 Lips can drink the wine to the last drop,
 Come and let us take every pleasure now.
 Heloise: Even though my eyes sting from the candle,
 Please believe that I am not afraid.

CD1 - Track 13

Fulbert bursts in. Abelard is seized by servants and taken away.

Fulbert: Do you call that academic,
 What his hands were doing there?
 Were you studying polemic
 When you let him touch your hair?

What was it he whispered to you?
 Have you gone completely cou-cou?
 See what comes of being clever?
 Now you've lost your soul for ever.

How could you have let him jangle
 Carnal ditties in your head?
 When did academic wrangle
 Give up books and get in bed?

Did his intellect so thrill you?
 I'm so angry I could kill you.
 All of Paris has me named
 As the person you have shamed.

Heloise: He'll marry you or I'll have his . . .
 Never! Marriage would destroy him.

I am guilty I confess it,
 But I'm wholly innocent;
 For my love when you undress it
 Is all holy in intent.

All I ask is that he love me
 Marriage bonds would never move me
 Ask me uncle what I'm dreaming
 Only for his love I am scheming.

He is finished if I wed him
 Teachers never take that vow
 I would rather love and bed him
 When and if he shows me how.

Call me whore you cannot shame me
 If all Paris do so name me,
 Rather than bring strife and distress
 I will be his whore and mistress.

Fulbert: You must marry quick as ever
 I can organise the bans.

Heloise: I won't marry him I'd rather
 Be his loving courtesan.

Fulbert: You're his whore...

Heloise: ...you cannot shame me
 If all of Paris do so name me.
 All I want is to enjoy him...

Fulbert: Bite your tongue! *Slaps her.*
 Heloise: It would destroy him.

Heloise: I won't marry him I rather
 Be his courtesan
 I admit his skin is sweeter
 Than when nuns make marzipan

Yes, I love him
 You can't shame me,
 You will never post the bans,
 I won't marry him I'd rather
 Be his loving courtesan.

Call me whore you cannot shame me
 If all of Paris do so name me,
 By this blood I will enjoy him
 Marriage to me would destroy him.

Fulbert: You must marry quick as ever
 I can organise the bans
 You won't marry him you'd rather
 Be among his courtesans.

Call you whore I can't shame you
 If all of Paris so name you...

Bite your tongue! *Slaps her.*
 I will destroy him.

Scene 10

CD1 - Track 14

April 1119. The street.

Drogo: Spring has come and winter's past
 Take a look around you
 Girls are on the streets at last
 Strutting to astound you.
Maria enters.

Maria: Drogo!
 Drogo: Maria! I've been looking everywhere

Maria: Shush, and listen to me.
 Drogo: I've got something you should hear.

Maria: You're to be a daddy.

Drogo: Heloise is baking bread.

Maria: What d'you think this bun is? *Shows belly.*

Drogo: She's made my master lose his head.

Maria: See what the end of fun is.

Drogo: What was that I heard you say?

Maria: I am pregnant, Drogo.

Drogo: Who was it got you this way?

Maria: Drogo! I think you did it solo!

So what are you going to do about it?

Drogo: I suppose we could get married.

Maria: I suppose we could get married.

That's so romantic

Have you got money?

Drogo: In this letter, Heloise
Gave me for my master
Writes, between her pretty knees
They have made disaster.
Now she wears her girdle low
And her belly's swelling.
What to do she wants to know
Only waits his telling.
Alberic will be thrilled to hear about it
It's worth a gold coin at least
Maria: It's not enough!



Drogo: Alberic has promised more,
Can't wait to get the knife in.
Maria: What you need is money for
A cot to keep your wife in.
Drogo: I'll meet Alberic tonight,
And bring you the pickings.
Maria: Three knocks and I'll let you in.

They leave in different directions.

Scene 11

CD1 - Track 15

July 1119. The narrow lanes of the city. Abelard enters.

Abelard: I am sure that I have been here
In this little square before
And that undercroft I came through
Has that carving of the boar.

These old streets twist back on themselves
Like an inept argument
And I feel that every shadow's
Hiding one of Fulbert's men.

Now she's pregnant and I've stolen
Heloise away to Brittany where she's safe
Fulbert dreams that devils cut my flesh
Only God knows what he'll try to do.
Scream in the darkness.
What is that? A cry a shriek of pain,
Is there someone weeping now?
Nothing but some creature dying
In the hunger of an owl.

Every time I turn a corner
I expect to feel a knife
If I marry her his honour
Will be more than satisfied.

If I don't I'm sure to lose her
Now she's learned the arts of love,
Could I bear to know her doing
All we did with someone else?

If I wed her how can I
Claim to teach philosophy?
Can I marry and still teach here
If I wed her secretly.
Another scream.
What is that now? Hear it down there,
Only a fox slunk in
From the vineyards, think this through now,
Follow down the way we found.

If I don't marry her, he'll kill me;
Marry her, my name is lost.
If I marry, but in secret—
Then surely Fulbert will be mollified.

I'll see Fulbert, and admit
I've hurt him,
And offer him much more than he could dream

To satisfy his wounded honour,
I'll wed the girl I love.
All I ask is that he keep it secret,
Secret, to protect my name—

So my passion, all I live for
Is not shattered by the stroke of shame.
Another scream.

There's that sound again. If they can catch me
Here in this forgotten square,
The owl and fox would
Have more mercy on their prey.

Heloise appears in the shadows.

CD1 - Track 16

Abelard: What's that moving
In the shadows
Who is there?

Heloise: I'd have thought that you'd know me without a
light.

Abelard: Fulbert's angry,
Now you've come back,
We must marry.

Heloise: Who says so?
Do you think he'll forgive just like that?

Abelard: I'll send my friends to him
You'll see how he'll come round.

Heloise: I love you not for anything you can give.

Abelard: If we marry I am certain
Fulbert's rage will soon burn out.

Heloise: If the king of the world said he'd marry me
I would say I'll be Abelard's whore.

Abelard: Won't you listen what I'm saying
Is he'll kill me if you do not marry me.
Marry me.

Heloise: You, I'll marry you with heavy heart,
This, this isn't what was meant to be,
When we loved,
All that we did had a simplicity,
We loved
And even time had to stop—
Now all that's left is suffering.

Scene 13

CD1 - Track 17

August 1119. A chapel. Abelard and Heloise kneel before a candle-lit black Virgin. The chorus is offstage.



Chorus: Deep in the eyes of the Virgin
there is something fearful
she is still the black goddess
of earth and the heart
so when she calls mankind to account
it's softly knowing all
of the things that make up human love
are deeper by far
than our minds can reach
and stronger than our reason.

As you kneel in the darkness
and feel her power,
pray that she will hold back its force
from your heart,
for when it flares
in her holy sight
it burns
to the soul's delight

and leaves us
in our mortal state
in a fire that pains
when we touch

for love is like a candle flame
that catches as I speak your name

Hirsinde: Where is the young maid who
would run laughing in the falling rain?
The Virgin you have prayed to
has seen your joy as well as all your pain.

Chorus: Kneel in her gaze
in our joy and our fear
to give her our word
as long as we both shall live

to comfort and to love,
and to have and to hold,
for better, for worse,
till death us part
and with this ring I thee wed
with my body I worship thee

Deep in her eyes there is something fearful
love her, comfort, honour and keep her
she is the black goddess of the earth
and the heart
as you kneel in the darkness
feel her power
when it flares it burns to the soul's delight
with this ring I thee wed
Those whom God has joined
let no man part.

Hirsinde: Your mouth says words
while your heart's fluttering
with doubt and fear
for what you give up to him
you gave him with a lover's heart
in his bed when his eyes
looked into your soul—
that was true more than this
for now you're afraid
where this ends you can't see
in the virgin's gaze—
see your uncle stands near
in his hands
you see your fear.

Alberic: Taste of the fruit
Sweet to the serpent
Your soul was free
Eating from her
You've given up
To lechery
To lechery.

Fulbert: Deep in her eyes
I see my fear
She feels no love
For me.

Alberic
& Fulbert: Your (My) good name must
not be slighted
nor can honour
keep their secret
I will see to it
my friends hear about it
and all of the world knows.

Chorus: Love is our prayer, our joy and our fear—
In the name of the father and the son and the
holy ghost
Amen. Amen. Amen.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

INTRODUCTION

CD2 - Track 1

Scene 1

CD2 - Track 2

September 1119. The cathedral square.

Fulbert joins the plotters during the introductory music. They mime hugs and/or kisses. Fulbert is in a state. Alberic places his hand on Fulbert's shoulder. Fulbert speaks as if continuing the conversation.

Fulbert: Gone, gone.
Drogo: She's gone.
Fulbert: Pray God it's not so.
Fulbert turns away.
Drogo: *Aside to Alberic.*
The old man has found
He has lost his girl.
She's winged it—
And Abelard has put her in a nunnery.
Alberic: *Aside to Drogo.*
To be shot of her.
Drogo: *Aside to Alberic.*
To make sure she's safe from Fulbert.
He won't stop shouting
Now she's denied
The marriage he's told everyone about.
Fulbert: Dear God! Let her not be gone.



Alberic: You've lost her—
And this time for ever.
Fulbert: *Distracted, aside.*
You were my morning smile
And evening star,
My one guide in the dark.
You were my touch, my tongue,
My open eyes,
My nose deep in the bud of life,

Your warmth, your kiss, your voice,
My cloudy dreams,
Now you've gone there's no light,
No sound or feeling, no joy
You have left me an empty old man.

Alberic: He's ripe for picking.
Abelard's putting her
Into a nunnery.
Fulbert: I'll soon stop that.
Alberic: In the refectory
He knew her carnally.
Fulbert: Now he is tempting death.
Alberic: He touched her under
The nun's robes he dressed her in
During the mass.
Now he is cloyed with her juice
So he spits her out like a bad wine.
Alberic: You see this God?
Fulbert: There's no man living
Who's going to meddle
With something of mine
And then throw it away.

I'll be as hard in my vengeance
And take from his body
The soft part that she loves so much.

I'll feed the owls with the offal I gather
From visiting him.

I'll wake as lovers wake long for their lovers
In unquiet beds.

At night I'll come to him
Like love I'll fondle him
I'll bathe my fingers in blood
And return weeping tears of joy
Clutching his manhood in my fist.

Scene 2

That night. Abelard's bedroom. A soft knock. Abelard stirs, turns over, then sleeps. Moments later, Drogo rises from his pallet and opens the door to a group of men. They gather round Abelard and emasculate him.

Abelard: *Extended scream.*
Heloise: *Anguished, from a distance.*
Oh, my God no!

Scene 3

CD2 - Track 3

Next morning. The river. Three monks drift in a boat, its mast decorated with vines and bunches of grapes. They are drinking from a jug. One holds a scroll and beats time. Another plays a set of drums (tabor or nakers).

Monk 2: Now our abbot's gone away
No more constipating
Monk 1: We can drink and punt all day
Without his berating.
Monks: Vintage vino, noble vino,
Vino blanc or rosso

Fragrant vino, fino pinot
No el cheapo plonko.

Bacchus is our god this day
He soon fills our bellies
Then comes Venus in her way
Leaving us like jellies.

Monks: Vintage vino, noble vino,
Vino blanc or rosso
Fragrant vino, fino pinot
No el cheapo plonko.

Monk 3: But though Venus says we may
Abbots are suspicious
So when they go far away
Life can be delicious.

Monk 1: I hear Abelard got the chop.

Monk 2: Lost the lot.



Monk 3: *Cutting a bunch of grapes from the mast. With relish.*

Whole cluster, stem and all.

Monks: Ooh! Ooh! Oooh! Ooh! Ooh! Ooh! etc.

Monk 1: Now when Venus says he must

Monk 3: Teacher's lacrimosus

Monk 2: When your Peter's turned to dust

Monks: Life can be atrocious.

Washer-

woman: Some of us there is who says

He got what he called for

Mostly it's us girls that pays

Gestures a round belly.

What he's just been deballed for.

Monks: Vintage vino, noble vino,

Vino blanc or rosso

Fragrant vino, fino pinot

No el cheapo plonko.

Washer-

woman: Vintage water, noble water,

Water clear or muddy,

Fragrant water, fino water,

Shut your eyes, it's sudsy.

Washer woman empties a tub of water on them. The boat capsizes and drifts off, leaving them to sink or try to swim.

Scene 4

CD2 - Track 4

Abelard's room. He is in bed. Heloise enters and sits by him. The book is evident on the lectern.

Abelard and Heloise

Heloise: There is one thing, I need to say this,
I still love you, now more than ever.
It's for you that I am weeping,
Now there is no joy without tears.

We found our passion where you bleed,
Your pain now equals our pleasure,
All that we did when you were mine
Will wound us both until we die.

He who did this
He who did this
Did far more than tear the love
From your poor heart
He hurt me too.

He has stolen you from my flesh;
Spoiled far more than human beauty;
What a cruel God, you call him yours.

But touch me, touch me,
While I am here with you I am happy
Please embrace me . . . my love and husband
They have left me your arms to hold me.

Abelard: I have nothing here left to give you
What I was is gone for ever,
When you touch me all I feel now
Is a wound of burning shame.

What is here to fuel your passion?
What remains now to feed your pleasure?
When you reach for what was yours
All that you touch is my despair.



This human blood turns you away from me
You'll do with others
All the lovely things we did here—
I cannot bear to think
How you'll cry in other's arms.

Heloise: Never. I vowed to you I'd be faithful.
Abelard: We must go where you won't be tempted.
Heloise: Never, I love you, I love you.
Abelard: We will go into the cloister.
Into the cloister.
To be sure you will go first
Where virgins will hear your vows.

Heloise: But touch me, touch me;
While I'm here with you I'm happy,
Don't repel me . . . my love and husband
I'll never learn to live without your love.

Synopsis & Libretto © 2002 Paul Kavanagh

Abelard: Don't touch me,
When you are a nun then I will follow,
We must learn to live our lives out alone.
I ask you by this to prove your love,
I set you free this way.

I'm no bride of Christ while you're alive.
I'm too young to end my life in torment.
I'm no bride of Christ . . . I ache for you
Please don't force me from you,
My loved one don't ask me.

Abelard: Please don't make me force you,
I say you have to.

Heloise: I am no bride of Christ,
You force my will this way.

Abelard: I set you free this way.

Scene 5

CD2 - Track 5

The market square. Drogo rushes in, pursued.

Drogo: Quickly, hide me
Woe betide me
Someone's grassed me to the Guard
They'll make crackers
Of my knackers
For the plot on Abelard.

Maria: *Lifts her skirt.*
Down there, scurry
Under, hurry
You've been down that way before.

Drogo: *Drogo sticks his head out from under her skirt.*

Tell them I've gone
Down to Lyon

Maria: *She thrusts him back just in time.*
Trust a girl to know the score.

Guard 1: *Rushes in, followed by Guard 2.*
Tell me ladies,

Maria: *Aside, fanning her face.*
Breath like Hades,

Guard 2: Have you seen a man run by?

Maria: Name of Drogo?

Guard 1: That's the rogue O!

Maria: Never seen him in my life.

Guard 1: Search the alley.
Gooses Maria, who repels him, holding her skirts.

Maria: Don't get pally.

Guard 2: We'll flush out his hidey-hole.

Maria: He's not down there.

Guard 1: What a great pair.

Maria: Cut that out you little mole.

Guard 1: When we nick him,
We'll de-prick him,
Just like they did to Abelard.

Maria: If I catch him,
I will snatch him,
He'll go down for ten years hard.

Guard 1: Down there, scurry
Quickly, hurry

Guard 2: You've been down that way before.

Drogo: *Drogo sticks his head out from under her skirt.*

They have all gone
Down to Lyon.

Maria: Just when they had hoped to score.

Drogo: *Drogo comes out from under.*

What disaster,
My poor master,
Never meant to spoil his fun—
Now he's saying
He'll go praying
After she's become a nun.

Maria: He's what?

Drogo: He has told her to go into a convent—
Then he will become a monk.

Maria: But she's only nineteen!
She's gone mad.

Drogo: You're the expert.

Maria: But now she will
Never see him
Not unless they meet above—
I'm not making
That mistake in
How I get to prove my love.
Draws him to her.

Drogo: *Coming up for air.*
Said they'd never
Hurt my master.
I'll give back the cash they paid.
Holds up purse.

Maria: Don't be sudden
Keep it hidden
Now
Tell me why a girl gets laid.
Drops the purse down her front.

Scene 6

CD2 - Track 7

The Profession. Split scene. December 1119. Abelard and Heloise make their profession separately, Heloise at Argenteuil, Abelard at St Denis. The Prioress leads Heloise to face the altar.

Chorus: Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison,
(Lord, have mercy . . .)
Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.

Abelard: Become the Bride of Christ!

Chorus: Become the Bride of Christ!

Heloise: Become the Bride of Christ!
You my lover dare say that to me.

Alberic: Become the Bride of Christ!
 Become the Bride of Christ!
 Become the Bride of Christ—
 Give up all the pleasures of the flesh.

Chorus: Christe eleison, Christe eleison,
 (Christ, have mercy . . .)
 Christe eleison.
She rips the dress off over her head.
 I strip my body
 To show how our love was made.
 How can I be the bride of Christ?
 While my passion still drives my heart.
Alberic blesses Heloise's habit and veil.
 They prepare a widow's mourning.
 How can this be?
 My love's flesh is still warm?

Alberic: *Blesses her veil and her habit.*
 Dominus vobiscum.
 (The Lord be with you.)

Chorus: Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.
 Alberic: Dominus vobiscum.
 Chorus: Christe eleison, Christe eleison.
 Alberic: Accipe vestem.
The habit is put over her head.

Chorus: Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.
 Alberic: *Cuts Heloise's hair with a pair of shears in front at the top, saying, 'In nomine Patris'— 'et filii' behind— and 'spiritus sancti. Amen' on the other side.*
 In nomine patris, et filii,
 Et spiritus sancti. Amen.

Heloise: Do you see what I am doing?
 I am destroying
 My will, my body.

They are cutting off my beauty—
 I am cutting off the woman,
 Since I lost you what was yours.
 You are my husband
 No one even God
 Can drive you from my bed—
 I'm only asking you to hold me
 In your arms for ever more.
Abelard prostrates himself on the pavement.
The cowl is handed to the abbot by the altar.
Alberic blesses the cowl.



Alberic: Benedictio . . .
 Chorus: I, sister Heloise,
 Given to God,
 Promise to be steadfast
 And convert of my ways
 And promise to follow

The rule of Saint Benedict, . . .
Heloise seizes the veil from Alberic and puts it on her head.

Heloise: You are my husband.
 No one else can be what you are.
 I only ask you to love me
 And stay close to me,
 I am still only yours
 And will be for ever.

Heloise: Please save me—
 Please take me to you
 My mortal lover still
 And keep the word you gave me.
 Please don't take
 All my hope of human love—
 Please don't leave me.
Abelard gets up from the pavement, bent over so that the Abbot can slip the cowl over his head.

Abelard
 & Chorus: *Mixed, with tenderness and anger.*
 Suscipe me, domine,
 (Take me to you, Lord,)
 secundum eloquium tuum,
 (according to your promise,)
 et vivam;
 (and I shall live.)
 et non confundas me
 (and do not deprive me)
 ab exspectatione mea.
 (of my hope.)
Abelard is welcomed into the abbey with kisses.
The Prioress holds both Heloise's hands between her own and kisses her.

Heloise: I can't believe that this is justice
 That we're cut off now we're wed,
 When we lay down for fornication
 Tongues of holy flame rose in our bed—
 Even if our love is mortal
 Raging fires do not compare;
 If God's love is as cold as winter
 I'll keep your fire for my despair.
Heloise turns to light a candle.

Chorus: Suscipe me, domine,
 secundum eloquium tuum,
 et vivam;
 et non confundas me
 ab exspectatione mea.

Abelard: Ego frater Abelard promitto stabilitatem meam
 et conversionem morum meorum et
 obedientiam secundum regulam sancti
 Benedicti . . .

Chorus: Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison,
 Christe eleison.
Heloise and Abelard face one another.

Abelard: You are His bride,
 Heloise: I am your bride,
 Abelard: Show Him your love,
 Heloise: Show me your love,
 Abelard: He'll always be here
 Heloise: I'll always be here,
 Abelard: Don't wait too long.

Heloise: Don't wait too long.
 Abelard: Give him your word,
 Heloise: Send me some word,
 Abelard: Your bed is His,
 Heloise: My bed is yours,
 Abelard: The moment will come,
 Heloise: The moment will pass,
 Abelard: Don't wait too long.
 Heloise: Don't wait too long.

Scene 7

CD2 - Track 8

Interlude and Vocalise. Heloise adjusts to the role of nun with apparent calmness, her face often lit with a secret smile. She is the respected Abbess of Le Paraclet. She is at her desk writing letters. Abelard is furiously active: reading, writing, teaching. He spends time writing in or otherwise attending to preparation of his book.

Scene 8

CD2 - Track 9

1121, at the west front of the Cathedral at Soissons.

Students enter.

Guido: Even though he's now an abbot,
 Our master still loves to teach—
 John: He's not giving up the habit,
 Not while truth's within his reach
 Berengar: Students come from Barcelona,
 Prague and Heidelberg and Roma,
 Geoffrey: They're still fascinated by him,
 But the churchmen want to try him.
 Guido: He has set his girl up nicely,
 In a place named Le Paraclet;
 John: She's the abbess and precisely,
 Teaches nuns the narrow way.
 Berengar: She is famous for her learning,
 Though her hidden breast is yearning
 Geoffrey: For the pleasures he remembers,
 Students: Even if his heart is embers.
 Guido: Now we're bound for this disaster
 Called a Council of the Church,
 John: There's a charge against our master,
 We won't leave him in the lurch;
 Berengar: Jealousy is what's behind it,
 Heresy is where you find it—
 Geoffrey: They have plotted long to catch him,
 But there's no one here can match him.
 Woman 1: There's the heretic.
 Man 1: Give me a stone.
They aim stones at Abelard.
 Man 2: He says there are three gods, not one.
 John: Stop. Who told you this?
 Man 2: Alberic.
 Woman 2: In the cathedral close.
 Guido: All he teaches is in the creed.

Geoffrey: Come and hear him.
 Berengar: You'll be enthralled.
 John: Move. The bishop's waiting for him.
 Guido: We can't work out what it is that
 Our master is doing wrong;
 John: He's aggressive, but if it's that
 We love him when he's on song.
 Berengar: No one beats him at debating,
 Nothing's quite that liberating;
 Geoffrey: He grows ideas fast as mushrooms—
 Students: He'll live on when we're in hushed tombs.
 Guido: Alberic and other scholars
 Are enraged by what he's said
 John: They say that to ask a question
 Lets old Nick into your head.
 Berengar: They would like to burn him for it,
 Stop his teaching or outlaw it.
 Geoffrey: He's a threat to blind believing,
 Who do they think they're deceiving?
 Guido: We have come here for the council
 Where they're trying Abelard;
 John: He has written on the Godhead—
 What he says is not so hard.
 Berengar: It's his method that offends them
 He asks questions and defends them—
 Geoffrey: Now because he steals their students
 Students: They've come after him like rodents.

CD2 - Track 10

The scene shifts to Abelard. He carries his book.

Abelard: I gave myself to human loving,
 Oak trees shaded us from time,
 But your kindness to me
 only meant I took you
 For the pleasure that was mine.
 I gave myself to human loving,
 Forgetting who you were or why,
 Thinking nothing could hurt me
 there in your arms,
 Or while my soul was in your eyes,
 Thinking nothing would hurt me
 there in your arms,
 With my soul deep in your eyes.
 They took away our human loving,
 Left us to quiver in the night,
 They took away my will to love you,
 Even though you mean more
 than my being to me,
 There is nothing—
 Even though when dreaming
 I know how your skin feels
 With its smooth and roughness,
 There is nothing—
 Even though when waking
 I believe you're here,
 There is nothing in my heart.
 We live apart in savage countries,
 Letters burn into our minds,
 Still I try to tell you

that the God who hurt us
 Has been nothing else but kind.
 I light the candle of our loving
 And turn caresses into words,
 But the darkness
 pushes to come in the door
 And wind blows out the candle flame,
 But the darkness
 pushes to come in the door
 And wind kills the candle flame.
 I hear my lips say that I love you,
 My eyes are burning in the dark,
 I reach and touch you
 as you come toward me
 And you press me shining
 with your body
 As you used to—
 And I try to feel as your young lover did
 When you began to touch him
 As you used to—
 But this book holds all
 my love can give to you
 For God has cut it from my heart.

CD2 - Track 11

Enter Cistercians followed by Townsfolk: They face Abelard.

Chorus: Your book is all your love can offer,
 But all your love is for yourself,
 You have tried to tear apart the gospel
 That has been spoken
 by our Lord Himself;
 You are summoned to us for your trial
 To answer charges
 that the church has made;
 Don't tell us about your sinful loving,
 Don't think
 that you can argue your way out;
 No, we've come to see the heretic
 Finally stand here condemned
 for all he's said,
 There's a new spring
 coming down from God,
 Touching all the fields
 with the blood-red flowers,
 Bringing us back here to see
 How the milk on Mary's breast
 Moistens our lips
 as our saintly Abbot says;
 Miracles wait for the faithful soul
 Who has faith—
 So ring the bells, ring the bells,
 Call on the bishops to gather now,
 Hear the charges listed on the scroll,
 We have found
 your soul is guilty of them all,
 Be prepared to bear
 the judgement handed down,
 Be prepared to bow your head.
 Your pride

has made you hated by the world,
 Even your monks
 plotting how to murder you,
 Your earthly love has been taken,
 Love has been taken,
 Ring the bells, ring the bells,
 Call the sweet Virgin to hear us now,
 Larks are rising to her from the fields,
 And her nightingales
 have brought us to our knees,
 A new spring
 is coming down to us from God;
 Ring the bells,
 ring the bells, ring the bells,
 Feel God's love now.

Scene 9

CD2 - Track 12

The trial. The cathedral. Abelard, Alberic, students, with mitred and gorgeously dressed prelates. Townsfolk in surround. Abelard jealously guards his book.

Abelard: This trial. This trial.
 They've met before to find me guilty.
 They won't permit me to answer
 Or use my reason.
 They have come here to convict me.
 She's not here by me
 I am alone now
 As I have long been
 Though she has long called to me.
 At the end of the trial
 They will show the hatred
 That is for me alone.

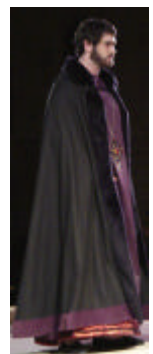
Alberic: You stand charged here
 Before us now;
 So many things you've written,
 So much that we find guilty.

Puffed up with pride,
 You dare to doubt,
 Just where we see our heaven,
 Just where we find our peace.

Your ideas move like dancers,
 Your teaching gives no answers,
 Your questions prick like lances,
 Your sun burns in our eyes.

Chorus: Burn, burn, burn, burn.

Alberic: Christ's holy bride
 Has been strangled by heresy,
 God's holy things
 Are talked of in the market-place;
 Let him be silenced.
 Let him who scanned the heavens



Go down go down to torment,
With all the wicked burning in fire.

Chorus: Burn your own book now
With your own hand;
Burn it!
They force Abelard to throw his book into the brazier, where it burns.

Abelard: She's not here by me,
I am alone.

Scene 10

CD2 - Track 13

Finale. Heloise, reading in her study at Le Paraclet.

Heloise: You write to me that you live in fear of mortal danger—
show some kindness, tell me now that it's not so.
If you died how could I stand to live on alone,
how could I stand to be the one to close your eyelids?
I who long to share this morning river with you,
now the mist is peaceful on the water.
Write to calm my terror
or my heart will burst with fear.
All I've ever done has been for your love only
I who daydream how we once were loving
see the places and the bliss that took your eyes,
cross my legs and feel you there inside me—
not for God have I ever done anything—
speak not of dying my eternal love
tell me that your storm is over.

Three heavy knocks. Heloise opens the door and is handed a letter from the Abbot of Cluny.

Heloise: It's Peter isn't it?

She opens the letter, reads the first few lines. From her reaction we know it has told her that Abelard has died.

There is one thing, I . . .
I still love you, now more than ever.
It's for you that I am weeping,
now there is no joy without tears.

But touch me, touch me.
While I'm here with you I'm happy.
Please embrace me . . . my love and husband.
They have left me your arms to hold me.

Men: You are His bride,
Women: I am your bride,
Men: Show Him your love,
Women: Show me your love,
Men: He'll always be here

Women: I'll always be here,
Men: Don't wait too long.
Women: Don't wait too long.
Men: Give him your word,
Women: Send me some word,
Men: Your bed is His,
Women: My bed is yours,
Men: The moment will come,
Women: The moment will pass,
Men: Don't wait too long.
Women: Don't wait too long.
Women: Don't wait too long.

Heloise: But touch me, touch me,
while I am here with you I am happy
Please don't leave me . . . my love and husband.

Chorus: The candle's still burning
how could you leave me alone
the days will be empty
now you have gone—
I smell your scent still in my clothes
I see you sitting at my desk
I feel our love still in my room
your music fills my heart with tears.

One day we made love down by the river
then we lay and looked up through the leaves
we were in love
and all we did had a simplicity,
we loved
and even God's time's had to stop
the oak leaves shone
we touched and wanted nothing more.

Heloise: You will never be dead to me,
not as long as I live—
and see you and all we did
in my mind's eye.

END

© 2002 Paul Kavanagh



