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20 anys en un dia, a la lluita xeremiers!
20 years in one single day : xeremiers, head into battle!

#TRACK1

Someone is cooking on the hub. You can hear sounds coming from the kitchen and a porqueret (a small learning fabiol) playing Mestre Guiemet in the background. The porqueret slowly moves forward until it reaches the foreground and stops.

Margalida - What are you doing, Grandma?

Grandma - I'm cleaning snails. Your uncle is coming to spend the day with us tomorrow, and he asked if I would cook some snails for lunch.

Margalida - Snails? But it's not Firó yet!

Grandma - I know that, Margalida. But as you know, your uncle doesn't live in Sóller, and only visits once in a while, when he can. So, if he feels like having snails when he comes over, it's okay to have them even if it's not Firó. Are you trying to tell me you don't like snails?

Margalida - Of course I do! I love snails!

Grandma - So what's wrong, then?

Margalida - Grandma, when I see snails, it reminds of how it smells everywhere in Sóller when they're cooking on Firó day – and that's not fair! It's such a long way away, still! I want to dress like a peasant and go fight the "Moors" with my dad!

Grandma - *(laughs)* Ah, Margalida... You are well and truly from Sóller.

Margalida - But Grandma...

Grandma - What is it?

Margalida - When I'm all grown up, I want to go out and play my *fabiol* with the Xeremiers de Sóller. Just like you – always at the front, leading the peasants from battle to battle.

Grandma - Well, think again, because Firó day with the xeremiers isn't just playing and fighting. The celebrations start very early in the morning to the music of the xeremiers and end very late at night; the xeremiers play until after midnight. Which means you have to play all day!

Margalida - That's not true!

Grandma - What do you mean?

Margalida - There are no battles in the morning. Firó starts after lunch and ends on the square, when everyone sings the *Balanguera*.

Grandma - Well, Margalida... I see there is a lot you still need to learn about Firó. Come now, I'll show you what Firó day is like for a xeremier. We are lucky the Xeremiers de Sóller have put out a record for the band's 20th anniversary, with all of the celebration's tunes.

CDs rustle and clang, whilst Grandma looks for the record.

Grandma - Ah, there it is. We'll listen to it. So, pay close attention to what I'll tell you.

Margalida - Alright, Grandma.

Grandma - This first track is called *Mateixa de Can Tamany*. It's an old tune which originated in Sóller. On every Firó day, at the break of dawn, there is a very solemn ceremony at the Monument where all of the historical figures are present and all the peasants who want to attend. Everyone keeps silent whilst a *fabioler* plays this tune, and everyone claps when he is finished.

#TRACK2 MATEIXA DE CAN TAMANY

#TRACK3

Grandma - Did you enjoy that?

Margalida - I enjoyed it very much! Someday, I'll be that *fabiol* player at the front, and I'll come out, right there in the middle of the crowd, in front of everyone, to play this tune.

Grandma - Of course you will, Margalida. But for now, do you want to find out more about how Firó goes for the xeremiers?

Margalida - Yes, please, Grandma!

Grandma - Well, after this ceremony at the Monument, everyone heads to the houses of Can Tamany to attend the traditional mass. And, as it couldn't be any other way, the xeremiers walk all the way upfront, followed by the historical figures, but they don't usually stay for mass.

Margalida - Don't they?

Grandma - The xeremiers are usually invited for breakfast at Can Sec de Dalt, so once they reach Can Tamany, they just keep walking, up to Can Sec. Once there, they enjoy everything there is to eat and drink – it's always very, very good.

Margalida - Are only the xeremiers invited for breakfast?

Grandma - Of course not, Margalida, there are loads of people there! But not just anyone can go – these people have been invited by the owners of the house and they are getting a little bit restless! Which is why we can't leave without having played some *jotes* and *boleros* so that people can dance – like the *Bolero de les Valentès Dones*, for instance, which is a bolero well and truly from Sóller.

#TRACK4 BOLERO DE SES VALENTES DONES

#TRACK5

Margalida - Now I want to listen to a *jota*.

Grandma - Well, well, how demanding you are getting, Margalida...

Margalida - You said you play *jotes* and *boleros* so people can dance. We've listened to a *bolero*, now I'd like to listen to a *jota*.

Grandma - Alright, let's see what we can find on the Xeremiers's record, then. Look, this *jota* was written about the investiture. This ritual takes place on the last Thursday before Firó to invest the new *Valentès Dones*. It kicks off the celebrations of Fira. As you already know, the ceremony starts with the entrance of the *Barrut*, who comes in carrying the stick of Can Tamany, along with a *colla*, his sidekick from the xeremiers.

Margalida - Yes.

Grandma - Well this tune is titled after the character with which the xeremiers are walking: *Jota des Barrut*.

#TRACK6 JOTA DES BARRUT

#TRACK7

Grandma - Now then, Margalida! Us xeremiers have a lot of fun up there, but time is moving fast. Other people would like to enjoy our xeremies, *fabiols* and *tamborinos*.

Margalida - Of course, we have to go into battle!

Grandma - Hold on. There is still time for that. First, we walk back down to the houses of Can Tamany. We always manage to reach them just when mass is drawing to a close. We usually play *Mateixa de Can Taman* again, but this time all the xeremiers play together. And right after that we play *Sor Tomaseta*.

Margalida - *Sor Tomaseta*! I know this one.

Margalida starts singing Sor Tomaseta and Grandma sings along with her. They sing the first verse.

Grandma - Well done, Margalida! That was very well sung.

Margalida - Thank you, Grandma. We learned it in school.

Grandma - That is very good. Now – where was I? Right! When we are finished playing *Sor Tomaseta*, we move to another house where we're also very much welcome. It is right by the houses of Can Tamany, and is also called Can Sec, which is why we call it Can Sec of Can Tamany Houses.

Margalida - Do you play again?

Grandma - Of course we do. It's usually very crowded there, and you'll find peasant women most of all, since this house is where their collective gathers on Firó morning. They always feel like dancing on a festive day.

Margalida - What songs do you play there?

Grandma - Many of them. Maybe you'll like listening to a tune the Xeremiers de Sóller wrote for those peasant women, and which they called *Jota de la ses Pageses*.

#TRACK8 JOTA DE SES PAGESES

#TRACK9

Grandma - Come to think of it, there is one song we always play in Can Sec de Can Tamany Houses. I'm sure you'd be happy to hear it.

Margalida - Which is it, Grandma?

Grandma - It's a song we play over and over throughout Firó day. At that time of the day, the song takes on a special meaning for us xeremiers.

Margalida - But which is it? What is it called?

Grandma - The song is called *No en volem cap*, and I'm certain you know it.

Margalida - Of course I know it! But why does it become so special for the xeremiers in that moment?

Grandma - Because every year, there is a moment which is magical to us xeremiers. We always end up walking into the kitchen, where the master of the house sits, surrounded by many, many peasant women – so many of them, in fact, that the xeremiers have to force their way in. The *fabiolers* don't have enough room to play their *tamborino*, and the xeremiers have to bend into strange positions so that their xeremies fit inside whilst they play. And in that kitchen, which feels like the inside of a sardine can - it's so tight, everyone sings and claps along to the music.

#TRACK10 NO EN VOLEM CAP

#TRACK11

Margalida - Grandma, I have a question.

Grandma - Tell me.

Margalida - Did Firó morning always go exactly like you told me?

Grandma - Well, child... It wasn't always like this. The celebration evolves. The customs of the people who take part in the celebration evolve too. The xeremiers have to adapt to those changes. But for many years, this is how Firó morning traditionally went. What never changes is that, at noon, as every other *Sóller*, the xeremiers go have lunch with their families or friends. Everyone does as they like. It is the only time that day when the xeremiers split up. But when they hear the ringing of the bells, they meet back at the *estiradors* square to listen to Captain Angelats' speech with the rest of the peasants, and then we walk onto the village main square playing *Bon Jesús*.

Margalida - Oh! I know how to play this one on my *fabiol*!

Margalida plays a little bit of Bon Jesús on her fabiol.

Grandma - Well done, Margalida. Well, when we walk onto the square, through that sea of handkerchiefs, we always play this tune.

Margalida - Wait.

Grandma - Yes, Margalida?

Margalida - If the peasant women are all waiting on the village main square, and the xeremiers always walk with the peasant men, how come there are peasant women in the xeremiers?

Grandma - I understand how this whole collective logic might seem very strict to you: the “Moors” stay with the “Moors”, the peasant women stay with the peasant women, the peasant men stay with the peasant men... This has to do with the historical roots of the celebration. But the xeremiers is a band in which you’ll find both, men and women. And our peasants understand and respect this singularity in the context of Firó.

Margalida - Ah!

Grandma - Would you think it’s fair if we xeremier women were told we can’t play on Firó day just because we are women – and that the xeremiers are going to go with the peasant men?

Margalida - No I wouldn’t! That would be so mean of the peasants.

Grandma - Exactly. Now the xeremiers have walked into the square, do you remember what happens next?

Margalida - The historical figures climb the stairs to city hall and address the crowd from up there. And after that comes the part I like most.

Grandma - Which is it, Margalida?

Margalida - When the bandits and scoundrels come in.

Grandma - Really? Why do you like this part the most, then?

Margalida - Because they come in shooting their rifles and pistols into the air!

Margalida imitates the sounds of rifles going off. Grandma laughs.

Grandma - Ah, child, how funny you are!

Margalida - When I’m grown up, I want to be a bandit!

Grandma - Well, of course; you’d be everything if you could have it your way.

Margalida - But it's true, Grandma!

Grandma - Well then there is a tune, which the xeremiers wrote, you should enjoy very much. It's called *Jota des Bandolers i Trabucaires*.

#TRACK12 JOTA DES BANDOLERS I TRABUCAIRES

#TRACK13

Grandma - Alright, Margalida. From the moment we exit the square to go to the harbour and fight the "Moors", I think you know pretty well how the celebration goes.

Margalida - But I want to know what other tunes you play throughout the rest of the day!

Grandma - I've told you already – we play loads! Let's see, how far can you count?

Margalida - To over one hundred.

Grandma - Well, that's how many tunes we can play on Firó day. Over a hundred.

Margalida - Are there more on the xeremiers' record?

Grandma - Of course there are.

Margalida - Can we keep on listening to some of them?

Grandma - Sure we can. Look, this song we mostly play on Fira Saturday to make the *caparrots* dance on the village main square. This is why it's called *Ball de caparrots*, and it, too, was written by the xeremiers.

#TRACK14 BALL DE CAPARROTS

#TRACK15

Margalida - The *caparrots* are so much fun!

Grandma - They really are!

Margalida - And when they dance, they all gather in a circle and spin, like this...

Grandma - Exactly, Margalida.

Margalida - But Grandma, I just realized something.

Grandma - What is it?

Margalida - I've only just realized that you xeremiers only play traditional music or tunes you've written and composed yourselves.

Grandma - No, that's not true, Margalida. On top of those, we play many other tunes that we learned on our trips abroad.

Margalida - Trips? Where to?

Grandma - We've been so lucky as to be invited to various traditional culture festivals all over Europe. We have represented Sóller and Majorca with our instruments everywhere.

Margalida - Where did these festivals take place?

Grandma - Well look, in Spain, we have been to Catalonia, to Asturias and to Galicia. And then we have gone to Germany, Italy, France, and even Scotland and Turkey.

Margalida - And during Firó, you play music from all those places?

Grandma - We do. The piece I'll play now is a piece we usually play on the night before Firó, when your beloved bandits make burnt rum. We learned this tune when we were in Balingen, Germany. A band from Galicia, with which we have kept a very strong friendship, taught us how to play it. The piece is titled *Pasdoble Argentino*, and I'm quite sure you'll know it. The xeremiers have a very funny choreography to go along with it.

#TRACK16 PASDOBLE ARGENTINO

#TRACK17

Grandma - Now, if you'd like, we'll listen to a piece we learned at a festival we've gone to a certain number of times – at least four that I can remember.

Margalida - Where does this festival take place?

Grandma - In Glasgow.

Margalida - Glasgow?

Grandma - A city in Scotland, in Northern Europe. They have the biggest world event dedicated to bagpipes there – I'm not joking.

Margalida - Really?!

Grandma - Really, Margalida. It's called Piping Live. They invite bagpipes bands from all over the world to have concerts, parades... Some only go to take part in the contests they organize there. They also have lectures, conferences, exhibitions...

Margalida - What did the Xeremiers de Sóller do there when they went?

Grandma - The organizers invited us to play at concerts and parades. I guess we got kind of lucky they invited us the first time around, and then people liked us enough that they extended their invitation to the following years. *(laughs)* What is nice about going back year after year is that you build relationships that last in time with other bands.

Margalida - What songs did you bring back from Scotland?

Grandma - One I'm sure will ring a bell for you. You must have heard it many times on TV and in movies. It's called *Scotland the Brave*.

#TRACK18 SCOTLAND THE BRAVE

#TRACK19

Margalida - Grandma, I'd like you to tell me more stories about your trips and the tunes you've learned all over the world.

Grandma - Then listen carefully, because this next song has a very special story, and the Xeremiers de Sóller keep a very fond memory of it. You know the story of the *Sóllerics* who sailed from harbour to harbour to the South of France, a very long time ago, to trade oranges that had been picked in Sóller?

Margalida - Of course, Grandma! For a very long time, *Sóllerics* sailed to different ports in France to bring oranges. Some *Sóllerics* families settled there, like ours did.

Grandma - Exactly, Margalida. Your great-grand-father – my father – was born in France. But, in time, he came back to Sóller to have a family and live here. Unlike my uncle and cousins, who stayed over in France, even though they still come over to visit from time to time.

Margalida - Really? I've never met them!

Grandma - Well, you see, Margalida, they come less and less often, and the last time there visited, you were too small to be able to remember it now. But let's get back to the story of that connection between Sòller and Southern France. One year, the Xeremiers de Sòller took part in a European project in which, aside from us, were many other bands from other parts of Europe. The organizers were a band from Occitanie. Occitanie is the region which takes up all the South of France, and where you'll find the ports where *Sòllics* used to sell their oranges. Alright?

Margalida - Alright.

Grandma - So at some point of the project, we stayed in Sète during a maritime tradition festival, which displayed historical boats from all over. The harbour in the city of Sète was one of the ports where *Sòllics* used to trade. We met people there, such as the mayor of Sète, who still remembered the smell that wafted through the harbour when the boats from Sòller came in, heavy with oranges. Some people thought Sòller was a variety of oranges and were very surprised to find out that the variety was actually called *canoneta* and that Sòller was only the city the oranges came from.

Margalida - Well, then.

Grandma - In Sète, Sòller and its oranges are still very much embedded in the collective memory. One of the members of the Occitan band, an older man, told us his father used to work in the port and was one of the men in charge of the unloading of the goods – among which were the oranges from Sòller. He even told us that he remembered playing with other children on the docks as a child, and could point to us the exact spot where the oranges would be unloaded from the boats.

Margalida - Wow! That must have been quite moving, right? I mean, it's a bit like you met a piece of history, isn't it?

Grandma - Yes, it was very moving. But hold on, because I'm not done telling you our story! In the end, it so happened that one of the concerts was organized on the very dock where they used to unload the oranges. Can you imagine? Right where our ancestors used to work – there stood the Xeremiers de Sòller, playing traditional music from our native land, proper Majorcan and *Sòllic* tunes. Some of us got teary-eyed for sure...

Margalida - Oh, please tell me you learned a tune in the port!

Grandma - Of course we did. Our friends from the Occitan band taught us a marine waltz, a traditional tune from Sète, called *Valse Louise*. When the Xeremiers recorded it on their 20th anniversary CD, we were able to

count on the participation of the traditional instrument from Sète: the *Autboi*.

#TRACK20 VALSE LOUISE

#TRACK21

Margalida - What's the next tune?

Grandma - Listen Margalida, the xeremiers don't always follow a set tracklist during Firó. There are certain pieces we'll play at specific moments throughout the day, but aside from them, there is not set order.

Margalida - No, Grandma, I mean on the xeremiers' CD.

Grandma - Oh, I beg your pardon, sweetheart. I misunderstood you. Let's see... Oh well, listen, this next piece is one that people expect at one the most paramount moments of Firó day.

Margalida - What moment?

Grandma - Let's see if you can guess which tune it is. So, we are back from the harbour, where there's been two battles. We've also fought a third battle at the *Pont den Barona*. The peasants are walking onto the village main square to fight the "Moors" who were occupying it. Our Captain Angelats has prevailed over the "Moor King" during their last fight, in front of city hall. He then climbs up to the balcony to perform his last speech and sing along all the *Sóllerics* who are crowding the square...

Margalida - *La Balanguera!*

Grandma - Exactly! Our island's hymn, Majorca's hymn. Everyone in Sóller is gathered on the square, and everyone is singing along to the *Balanguera*.

#TRACK22 LA BALANGUERA

#TRACK23

Margalida - What a spectacular ending! I got goosebumps just listening to *La Balanguera*.

Grandma - What do you mean, "ending"?

Margalida - Well, is it not an ending? Firó is over when *La Balanguera* stops playing, doesn't it? That's it.

Grandma - What do you mean, "That's it"? No, Margalida... Even if it has turned dark, the celebrations are not over.

Margalida - They're not?

Grandma - Try to remember. Last year, you were with me until the end of the festivities. Don't you recall waiting in front of the church for the historical figures? And walking back with the peasants, carrying the Virgin of Victory back to the hospice chapel?

Margalida - That's right! We bring her back because we had taken her to the church on Fira Saturday to give her offerings. I'd forgotten this!

Grandma - Ah, Margalidetta... how forgetful you are! And don't you remember this is when everyone sang a song in the chapel?

Margalida - No Grandma, I don't. Sorry.

Grandma - It's okay. Well, when we get there, we sing an old centuries-old Gregorian song.

Margalida - Centuries-old? In school, we were taught a century equals one hundred years.

Grandma - Then imagine how long we have been singing this song.

Margalida - So long!

Grandma - Right.

Margalida - What is it called?

Grandma - It's called *Salve Regina* – the *xeremiers* have also record their own version.

#TRACK24 SALVE REGINA

#TRACK25

Grandma - Once we step out of the hospice, the festivities are pretty much considered over.

Margalida - But I remember the *xeremiers* playing some more after that. And people walking down the street of the hospice and Moon Street with them.

Grandma - That's right Margalida. Do you know which tune the *xeremiers* play we they come out of the hospice?

Margalida - No, which is it?

Grandma - A piece we play over and over again all throughout the day, and that we haven't yet listened to: *Som Sólleric*.

Margalida - Oh, that's right!

Grandma - Do you want to listen to it now?

Margalida - Yes, please, Grandma!

Grandma - Go on, then!

#TRACK26 SOM SÓLLERIC

#TRACK27

Grandma - Once Firó is well and truly over, some people feel like partying some more. They start looking for a place to go on.

Margalida - Where do they go?

Grandma - Almost everyone stays right there on the village main square. Some bars will be open, and the "Moors" and peasants will gather there, as children of Sóller – which they all are.

Margalida - Do the *xeremiers* go too?

Grandma - Of course they do. As I told you, the *xeremiers* stay from the very beginning until the very end. Once everything is over, the *xeremiers* will usually meet at this bar called Es Pont. The owners are always very welcoming; they always have something prepared for us to eat. After a long day of walking up and down the city, we are very grateful for that.

Margalida - And what do you play there?

Grandma - We play a lot of other tunes, until after midnight. But there is one we always play there, out of habit. We like playing it in Bar Es Pont, because

it's like a little play-on-words between the name of the bar and the title of the song: *Els Ponts de París*.

It doesn't really make sense, but that's how the *xeremiers* are. We do things as they come, and only for the fun of doing them.

#TRACK28 ELS PONTS DE PARÍS

#TRACK29

Grandma - Go on, then, Margalida! You should go practice on your *fabiol* now, so that when you're a little older, you can come with your Grandma and the *xeremiers* to experience Firó!

Margalida - Yes, Grandma! I'm going to practice a lot so I can come play with you!

(She walks away playing Per Tocar Caminant on her porqueret, her small learning fabiol.)

Grandma - *(pensively)* Ah, little Margalida... How eager she is to come out with us *xeremiers* on Firó day! If only she knew I'm even more eager than she is...

#BONUS TRACK

Capitaine – *“Very well, xeremiers, very well.
You got away with it beautifully.
You fought well and prevailed
Over the “Moors” on the battlefield.*

*I congratulate you all,
Every single one of you,
and I thank your
Xeremies, tamborinos and fabiols.*

*(choir) And as long as the world is the world,
History will tell us
That on this day the Sóllerics
Acquired honour and glory”*

Chant - *Captain, Captain, Captain.... Let the Captain jump, jump, jump !*