

## GIVE ME MORE Poems/songs by Léonie Scott-Matthews.

Various artistes

If, like me, you spent much of a now-distant youth reading the lyrics on the back of LP sleeves while the big black disc was spinning on the turntable, possibly in an underlit garret, you'll be grateful to Léonie Scott-Matthews for sparing you the task.

In a welcome new approach to the business of conveying song-words, she recites them on one CD, then has them sung and played by a variety of singers and instrumentalists on its companion in the twin-pack. If anyone's used this welcome formula before, I haven't come across it. Welcome because, if you're writing in a style that could be termed English chanson, the lyrics are as vital as breath.

A seasoned actor and director, she gives these eleven poems a proper wind, so that when you come to hearing the settings of them, you've a degree of familiarity with the lines and their challenging diversity. At random: "To go to the city is like visiting an alien planet"; "I fear that mouth. Let me look at your face without that mouth"; "I want to beat your being into skeleton dust."

The imagery ranges over a broad horizon, from the clifftop nostalgia of childhood to the dire corridors of mental torment and emotional breakdown.

The musical treatments which such lyrics have drawn from their composers/performers have a properly broad stock of inflections, taking in folk, jazz blues and cabaret. Among the most arresting tracks are the poignant "Love Was," sung by Zoe Aronson; "Selling Death," (David Dinnell); "L'Idée Fixe" (after Paul Valéry), and "Gold of the Morning Light," both sung with powerful tenderness by Alice Old.

Strange, more-ish fruit, the whole thing – sweet in its bitterness, bitter in its sweetness, bold in its vision.

Ends.

Alan Franks is an author and former Times journalist. His most recent play was "Looking At Lucian," starring Henry Goodman at the Theatre Royal in Bath.