4

CHAPTER 4: FRENCH AND ITALIAN MUSIC IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter Outline

Prelude. (CHWM 68–69)

The fourteenth century was an unstable and secular age. Church authority was undermined by the move of the papacy to **Avignon** (1309–1378) and a schism between rival popes (1378–1417). Human reason became an authority in its own [**sphere**](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/04/outline.aspx), independent of church control, and human concerns became more important in literature, education, and art. Great literary works by Dante, Boccaccio, and Chaucer appeared in vernacular languages. A new musical style emerged in France, known as *Ars* ***Nova*after the *Ars nova*treatise attributed to *Philippe de Vitry*(**1291–1361). The most important new genre was the polyphonic art song.

Best known composers of 1400 is ***Guillaume de Machaut(in France) and  Francesco Landini(in Italy)Both were Secular. And Both wrote love lyrics.***

**Further** there was a separation of Church and state, The Church looked out for the Souls of man and the State the earthly concerns. Great growth happened in literacy, authors became more prevalent. remarkable creativity. Great works of the time include.

1. Dante’s divine comedy
2. Chausers Canterbury tails, and a knights tail.

I. The Ars Nova in France (CHWM 69–77, NAWM 24–27)

1. Ars Nova style centered on rhythm and notation. 1400-1450.

2. The Old method was coined Ars Antique.

1. *Roman de Fauvel-- 178 pieces of music. Of which 32 are motet, the first samples of the new style Ars Nova.*   
   Typical of the period is the *Roman de Fauvel,*a **satirical** poem with interpolated music, including thirty-four motets and numerous monophonic songs, many with texts referring to contemporary events. Satirizing both secular and ecclesiastical. (In the end of the tale the main characters children end up destroying the world).
2. Philippe de Vitry   
   The motets that Philippe de Vitry may have written in the *Roman de Fauvel*provide the earliest examples of *isorhythm*("equal rhythm").
3. Isorhythmic motet   
   In the *isorhythmic motets*by Philippe de Vitry in the *Roman de Fauvel,*the tenor features a repeating rhythmic pattern. **Music: NAWM 24**
4. Talea and color   
   The tenor of an isorhythmic motet is composed of a recurring **rhythmic pattern, called the *talea****,*and a recurring **melodic pattern, called the *color****.*One may be longer than the other, and their endings may or may not coincide. Upper voices may also be isorhythmic in whole or part to emphasize repeating rhythmic patterns in the tenor. **Isorhythm made it easier for singers to memorize music.Music: NAWM 25**
   1. ***Guillaume de Machaut-- Leading composer.***  
      *Guillaume de Machaut*(ca. 1300–1377) was the leading poet and composer of the French Ars Nova.
      1. Motets   
         Machaut’s isorhythmic motets are longer and more complex than Vitry’s. The upper voices are often partly isorhythmic.
      2. Hocket   
         Machaut frequently used *hocket*, in which voices rapidly alternate, each resting while the other sings.
      3. Mass   
         **Machaut’s *Messe de Nostre Dame*(**Mass of Our Lady) is probably the first polyphonic setting of the Mass Ordinary to be written by a **single composer** and [**conceived**](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/04/outline.aspx) as a unit. The Gloria and Credo are in the style of discant (mostly syllabic, with the four voices declaiming the long text together), and the Kyrie, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Ite, missa est are isorhythmic.

**Innovations: Writing Rhythm**  
With Ars Nova notation, composers could write rhythms that could not be notated in the thirteenth century. The long, breve, and semibreve could each be divided into either two or three of the next smaller note value; triple divisions were *perfect*(or *major*) and duple*imperfect*(or *minor*). The division of the breve was called *time,*and the division of the semibreve was called *prolation.*The *minim*was a new note smaller than a semibreve. The four possible combinations of time and prolation produced four different meters, each indicated with a different *mensuration sign.*No longer limited by the patterns of rhythmic modes, composers could now write anything that singers could sing, and they began to attach their names to their works. In the fourteenth century, French composers explored rhythmic innovations that the new system of notation allowed. Music Evolved from the beginning to basically what we have in 400 years.

* + 1. Kyrie   
       The Kyrie is typical of the isorhythmic movements of Machaut’s mass: the tenor carries the cantus firmus and, with the contratenor, is isorhythmic and forms the harmonic [**foundation**](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/04/outline.aspx). **Music: NAWM 25**

**Biography: Guillaume de Machaut**  
Machaut spent most of his career working for royalty, including kings of Bohemia, Navarre, and France. We know about his life and experiences through his poetry. Machaut was the first composer to make a special effort to organize his works for future generations. *His Story. Love visited. And Loves three children Sweet thoughts, Hope and Pleasure..*

1. Love songs   
   Machaut’s monophonic French songs continued the trouvère tradition and were written in **standard poetic forms** (*formes fixes*). Machout was considered the last great poet of this style.
2. Jocques De Liege wrote specials Musica.. is the longest surviving treatise on Music.
3. Virelai-- AbbaA  
   In his monophonic *virelai Foy porter*(NAWM 26), Machaut used rhythmic innovations (syncopation, imperfect time with minor prolation) made possible by Ars Nova notation. **Music: NAWM 26**

**A Closer Look:**The Standard Refrain Forms of Fourteenth- Century Chansons  
All fourteenth-century *chansons*have distinct patterns of repeated music and/or text. The virelai usually has three stanzas (bba), each preceded by the refrain (A). A final refrain concludes the song. A ballade typically consists of three or four stanzas, each sung to the same music (in the form aab) and ending with a refrain (C). In a rondeau, a refrain (AB) frames a stanza (aab), and the first half of the refrain (A) sounds midway through the stanza.

1. Rondeau  --ABaAabAB  
   Machaut’s *rondeau Rose, liz, printemps, verdure*(NAWM 27) is typical of his lyric style, with its long melismas, rhythmic sophistication, and treble-dominatedtexture. **Music: NAWM 27**
2. Ballades - aabC  
   *Ballades*were the most serious of the *formes fixes* and often had philosophical or historical themes. They were also the most challenging to write because they had the least repetition.

II. Italian Trecento Music (CHWM 78–81, NAWM 29–31) 14th Cnetury Italy

The fourteenth century in **Italy** was known as **the *trecento***. ***Most music from the time was not written down. The Great Schism of the time. Two Popes. One in Rome, Italy the other in Avignon France.***

1. Secular songs   
   Secular polyphonic songs were cultivated among the elite in certain cities in northern Italy, especially Florence.
2. **Squarcialupi Codex**—Had pictures of different Composers with there works.   
   The richly decorated ***Squarcialupi Codex*contains 354** pieces for two or three voices from the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries and was probably copied around 1410–1415.
3. **Madrigal 3** voices without an instrument.   
   The fourteenth-century *madrigal*(not to be confused with the sixteenth-century madrigal) is usually for two relatively equal voices that occasionally echo each other and sing long melismas on the last accented syllable of each line of poetry.**Music: NAWM 29**
4. Caccia   
   **The *caccia*is a strict canon**, often with a text about hunting. **Music: NAWM 30**
5. Ballata   
   The polyphonic *ballata*of the late fourteenth century was a lyrical piece whose AbbaA form resembles a stanza of the French virelai.
   1. ***Francesco Landini—He was Blind and known for His organ playing.***   
      ***Francesco Landini*(ca. 1325–1397) was the leading Italian composer of the fourteenth century. He is best known for his 140 ballate** for two or three voices. In a ballata, melismas occur on the first and next-to-last syllables of each line of poetry. **Music: NAWM 31**
      1. Landini **cadences – the music comes to a resting point.**   
         Many cadences use the ***under-third cadence****,*also known as the "**Landini cadence**," in which a sixth expanding to an octave is decorated by the upper voice descending a step before resolving to the octave. Many times ending in a Major Triad which was a new concept for this time.
      2. French influence   
         Italian composers began to absorb aspects of the French style in the fourteenth century, and in the fifteenth century, northern composers and musicians began to settle in Italy.

**Biography: Francesco Landini**  
Landini was from northern Italy and was an esteemed performer on the portative organ who first learned his art after being blinded by disease at a young age. Written accounts attest to his great skill. He worked at a monastery and then a church, yet no sacred music by him survives; he is known for his secular songs.

* + 1. English music   
       English music had a distinctive sound, and its qualities had an enormous impact on Continental developments in the fifteenth century.

III. The **Ars Subtilior** (CHWM 82–84, NAWM 28) Though Subtilior means subtle nit simple.

1. Later fourteenth century   
   In the later fourteenth century at courts in southern France and northern Italy, composers developed the Ars Nova style to a height of complexity and refinement, which led music historians to call it *Ars Subtilior.*This music was **intended for professional performers** and cultivated listeners. Highly complex and Very florid.
2. Rhythmic complexity   
   Composers, including Philippus de Caserta, tested the limits of Ars Nova notation with syncopations, different meters in different voices, and rhythmic disjunction, as seen in his ballade *En remirant vo douce pourtraiture*. **Music: NAWM 28**

**In Performance: Instruments and Musica Ficta in Fourteenth-Century Performance**  
In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, polyphonic music could be performed by a small group of voices or instruments or by a combination of the two. There was no uniform way of performing any particular piece. Instruments were classified as loud (*haut*or "high") or soft (*bas*or "low"). Soft instruments, such as strings, woodwinds, or portative organs, were used indoors. Loud instruments, such as *shawms,*trumpets, and trombones, were often used outdoors. Performers often altered notes chromatically, a practice known as *musica ficta.*The alterations were made to avoid tritones and to create smoother lines.