FOURTEENTH CENTURY

MUSIC

Increased attention to secular song, though much sacred music continued to be composed.
FOURTEENTH CENTURY

ROMAN de FAUVEL

Flatterie (Flattery)
Avarice (Greed)
Villanie (Villany)
Variété (Fickleness)
Envie (Envy)
Lâcheté (Cowardice)
FOURTEENTH CENTURY

ROMAN de FAUVEL

Flatterie (Flattery)
Avarice (Greed)
Villanie (Villany)
Variété (Fickleness)
Envie (Envy)
Lâcheté (Cowardice)
ROMAN de FAUVEL

Flattery (F)  
Greed (A)  
Villany (V)  
Fickleness (E)  
Envy (L)  
Cowardice (F)  

Fond Français 146, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
ARS NOVA

Philippe de Vitry (1291-1361)

*Ars Nova* (c. 1320)

“This completes the *ars nova* of Magister Philippe de Vitry”
ARS NOVA

Philippe de Vitry (1291-1361)

*Ars Nova* (c. 1320)

“This completes the *ars nova* of Magister Philippe de Vitry”

Vitry’s compositions among the 169 pieces of music in *Fauvel*
ARS NOVA

MENSURATION SIGNS

MODE = Division of the Long
TIME = Division of the Breve

PROLATION = Division of the Semibreve
Major / Minor
MODE: Division of Long
TIME: Division of Breve
PROLATION: Division of Semibreve

Perfect : Imperfect
Major : Minor
ARS NOVA

MENSURATION SIGNS

Temporary changes of Mode or Time are indicated by COLORATION

Use of Red Ink, rather than Black
Shifting emphasis to duple meters was criticized by Jacque de Liège

“Perfection is brought low, and imperfection exalted.”
ISORHYTHM

Motets of Philippe de Vitry some of the earliest uses of ISORHYTHM
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Motets of Philippe de Vitry some of the earliest uses of ISORHYTHM

Rhythmic structure of the tenor of motet
ISORHYTHM

TALEA
“cuttings” (pl. taleae)
Rhythmic pattern

COLOR
“color” (pl. colores)
The melodic notes of the tenor
ISORHYTHM

TALEA
“cuttings” (pl. taleae)
Rhythmic pattern

The tenor is laid out in segments of identical rhythm.
ISORHYTHM

TALEA
“cuttings” (pl. *taleae*)
Rhythmic pattern

Taleae in tenors in 1200s = short patterns
Taleae in tenors in 1300s = longer patterns
ISORHYTM

TALEA

“cuttings” (pl. taleae)

Rhythmic pattern

The slow pace of the tenor makes it less a melody and more of a foundational structure.
ISORHYTHM

COLOR

“color” (pl. *colores*)

The melodic notes of the tenor

The color may repeat,
but not necessarily in line with the rhythm.
ISORHYTHM

“In arboris / Tuba sacre fidei / Virgo sum”
attributed to Vitry
ISORHYTHM

“In arboris / Tuba sacre fidei / Virgo sum” attributed to Vitry

Tenor refers to the Virgin Mary
Duplum (*Motetus*) and Triplum also refer to Virgin Mary
ISORHYTHM

“In arboris / Tuba sacre fidei / Virgo sum”
attributed to Vitry

The tenor includes
two statements of the color

6 repetitions of the talea
ISORHYTHM

“In arboris / Tuba sacre fidei / Virgo sum”
attributed to Vitry

Coloration indicates changes from duple to triple

Introitus
HOCKET

“Hiccup”

Two voices alternating in rapid succession, each resting while the other sings

The device was developed in the thirteenth century
ARS NOVA HARMONIC PRACTICES

Greater prominence of imperfect consonances

Cadences required perfect consonances, but their resolution could be sustained

Parallel octaves and fifths continued to be used
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

The leading composer of the French *Ars Nova*

Born in northeastern France, middle-class family

Educated as a cleric and took Holy Orders
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

1323–1340, worked as secretary for John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia,

Resided in Reims after 1340

Royal patrons supported him, including the kings of Navarre and France
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

First composer to compile his complete works and to discuss his working method

He wrote his poems first, then the music
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(c. 1300-1377)

First composer to compile his complete works and to discuss his working method

He wrote his poems first, then the music

Liked music “sweet and pleasing”
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

He paid for the preparation of several illuminated manuscripts of his works

He composed many major musical works and numerous narrative poems
GUILLAUME de MACHAULT  
(c. 1300-1377)

23 motets, most from early in his career

20 are isorhythmic, 3 which use secular songs as tenors.

Often include hockets
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

Messe de Nostre Dame
“We Mass of Our Lady”
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

Probably the earliest polyphonic setting of the Mass Ordinary to be composed by a single composer and conceived as a unit

Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei
&
Ite missa est
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

In the fourteenth century, anonymous composers in France, England, and Italy set individual movements polyphonically.

A few mass “cycles” were assembled from individual movements.
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT  
(c. 1300-1377)

Composed for the cathedral in Reims

Performed at a Mass for the Virgin Mary  
celebrated every Saturday

After Machaut’s death, an oration for  
Machaut’s soul was added to the service,  
and performed until fifteenth century
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

UNIFYING DEVICES

Recurring motives

Tonal focus on D in the first three movements and on F in the last three
All six movements are for four voices, including a *contratenor* (“against the tenor”) that moves in the same range as the tenor.
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

UNIFYING DEVICES

Kyrie, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Ite, missa est are isorhythmic.
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT  
(c. 1300-1377)  

KYRIE  

Chant Kyrie *Cunctipotens Genitor*
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT  
(c. 1300-1377) 

KYRIE 

TENOR: 28 notes of chant, 4-note talea x 7
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

KYRIE

TENOR: 28 notes of chant, 4-note talea x 7
Contratenor also isorhythmic
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT  
(c. 1300-1377)  

KYRIE  

TENOR: 28 notes of chant, 4-note talea x 7  
Contratenor also isorhythmic  
Upper voices partially isorhythmic
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT  
(c. 1300-1377)

Kyrie I: Polyphony, Chant, Polyphony

Christe: Chant, Polyphony, Chant

Kyrie II: Polyphony, Chant

Kyrie III: Polyphony
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT  
(c. 1300-1377)  

Polyphonic songs (chansons, “songs”)  
in the *formes fixes*
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT
(c. 1300-1377)

“Treble-dominated” songs major innovation of the *Ars Nova*

The treble or *cantus* carries the text
Slower untexted tenor supports the cantus.

A contratenor may be added,
Triplum in same range as cantus
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT  
(c. 1300-1377)  

RONDEAUX  
Two musical phrases (A and B)  
Text includes a “refrain” (AB)  

Form: [AB] aA [ab] [AB]
GUILLAUME de MACHAUT  
(c. 1300-1377)  

RONDEAUX  

“Rose, liz, printemps, verdure”
A  Rose, liz, printemps, verdure,
Fleur, baume et tres douce odour,
B  Bele, passés en douçour,

a  Et tous les biens de Nature,
   Avez dont je vous aour.
A  Rose, liz, printemps, verdure,
   Fleur, baume et tres douce oudour.

a  Et quant toute creature
   Seurmonte vostre valour,

b  Bien puis dire et par honnour:

A  Rose, liz, printemps, verdure,
   Fleur, baume et tres douce oudour,
B  Bele, passés en douçour.
ARS NOVA  ⇒  ARS SUBTILIOR

Composers at the court of the Avignon popes across southern France and northern Italy cultivated complex secular music.
Palace of the Popes, Avignon
ARS NOVA  ➞ ARS SUBTILIOR

ARS SUBTILIOR a continuation of Ars Nova in secular polyphonic songs in the *formes fixes* and developing the complexities of Ars Nova notation.
ARS NOVA  ➔  ARS SUBTILIOR

Love songs intended for an elite audience

Pieces notated in fanciful shapes

Rhythmically complex
“Belle, bonne, sage”
Baude Cordier
“Tout par compas”
Baude Cordier
“Tout par compas”
Baude Cordier

It’s a Rondeau!
Performing Fourteenth-Century Music

There was no uniform way to perform polyphonic music.

Pictorial and literary sources indicate vocal, instrumental, and mixed groups.

All vocal performance was most common.
INSTRUMENTS

Instruments separated into 2 categories:

HAUT and BAS
HAUT ("high") instruments were loud, for outdoors and dancing.

Cornetts
Trumpets
Shawms
Sackbuts
INSTRUMENTS

BAS ("low") instruments were soft in volume and were played indoors

Stringed instruments: harps, lutes, and vielles

Portative organs

Transverse Flutes

Recorders
INSTRUMENTS

Percussion instruments were common in all kinds of ensembles
“FALSE MUSIC”

MUSICA FICTA, or Chromatic Alterations
“FALSE MUSIC”

Raising or lowering a note by a half-step to avoid the tritone

Pitches altered to make a smoother melodic line, especially at cadences.
“FALSE MUSIC”

Raising or lowering a note by a half-step to avoid the tritone

Pitches altered to make a smoother melodic line, especially at cadences.

The resulting pitches lay “outside the gamut” and were thus “false”, or ficta
“FALSE MUSIC”

Raising or lowering a note by a half-step to avoid the tritone

Pitches altered to make a smoother melodic line.

The resulting pitches lay “outside the gamut” and were thus “false” or ficta
“FALSE MUSIC”

Medieval singers were trained to recognize situations in which a *ficta* were needed, so accidentals were rarely notated.

(Modern editions *ficta* accidentals above the staff, to indicate editorial intervention)