Music and Verbal Meaning: Machaut's Polytextual Songs

By Elizabeth Eva Leach

Our modern experience of songs and singing, whether expert, amateur, or entirely uninformed and passive, is almost completely misleading when it comes to appreciating the singing of late-medieval lyric. My focus in this article is on polyphonic songs that align several texts for simultaneous delivery—a somewhat special category of work.[1] However, the fact of music's indispensability for these pieces reflects the broader cultural use of music as a meaningful—and not just a pleasant—component of lyric performance.[2] My exposition aims to bring out the potential significance of the dimension of performance—specifically sung musical performance—to scholars who normally consider only written forms of such works, whether poetic or musical. It thus addresses both those literary scholars who might want to know what kinds of meanings a musical setting might add to a written poem that they usually consider just as verbal text (written or spoken) and those musicologists who might want to consider the performed moment of a piece in conjunction with their more usual "reading" of it as a notated modern score.

Interest in musical performance as a topic of scholarly investigation is a relatively new aspect of musicology, which began as a nineteenth-century text-based discipline focused on composers and their works and used philological and quasi-scientific methods to recover and fix these works textually in an "imaginary museum."[3]

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See the Appendix below, pp. 590–91, regarding the seven sound files that accompany the online version of this article (available through Cambridge University Press).

[1] See the discussion of several fourteenth-century polytextual songs in Virginia Newes, "Amorous Dialogues: Poetic Topos and Polyphonic Texture in Some Polytextual Songs of the Late Middle Ages," in John Knowles, ed., *Critica musica: Essays in Honor of Paul Brainard* (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 279–306; and eadem, "The Bitextual Ballade from the Manuscript Torino J.II.9 and Its Models," in Ursula Günther and Ludwig Finscher, eds., *The Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino J.II.9,* Musicological Studies and Documents 45 (n.p., 1995), pp. 491–519.

[2] For further instances of the indispensability of music in single-texted works of Machaut see Elizabeth Eva Leach, "Counterpoint as an Interpretative Tool: The Case of Guillaume de Machaut's *De toutes flours* (B31)," *Music Analysis* 19 (2000), 231–51; and eadem, "Love, Hope, and the Nature of *Merci* in Machaut's Musical Balades *Esperance* (B13) and *Je ne cuit pas* (B14)," *French Forum* 28 (2003), 1–27.

[3] See Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford, 1992), and the essays in Michael Talbot, ed., *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* Liverpool Music Symposium 1 (Liverpool, 2000).

Medieval literary studies have also become increasingly interested in poetry in performance, whether in actual sonic performance or the more visual "performance" of a notated song on the page in a codex.[4] In both cases, the current reaction to the earlier perspective of considering literary and musical works only in their written forms is a refreshing corrective but has a tendency—unfortunate especially for studies of the Middle Ages—to approach the other extreme of imagining that music was only received in temporal performative versions in which all its (essentially sonic) meaning was disclosed.[5] Arguably music is and was never *only* sound.

Polytextuality and Genre

Polytextuality is a feature most readily associated, in medieval music, with the motet. The glosslike, or tropelike, texting of one or more voices added to a segment of rhythmicized plainsong has been the topic of much recent debate.[6] In particular, motets that present many voices singing different texts at once pose questions about their meaning. Why have several carefully crafted texts in the first place if it is not possible to hear even one of them in performance? In her 1997 book, *Allegorical Play in the Old French Motet,* Sylvia Huot explored these upper-voice texts' amplification of the liturgical moments cued by their tenor plainsong fragments. Read against a biblical reference, a calendrical moment, or a liturgical action, the upper voices could analogically gloss and amplify theological and existential

[4] See Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1987); Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut,* Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 49 (Cambridge, Eng., 2002); Maureen Barry McCann Boulton, *The Song in the Story: Lyric Insertions in French Narrative Fiction, 1200–1400* (Philadelphia, 1993); and Deborah McGrady, *Controlling Readers: Guillaume de Machaut and His Late Medieval Audience* (Toronto, 2006).

[5] See the reaction against what is seen as inappropriate Pythagoreanism in Christopher Page, *Discarding Images: Reflections on Music and Culture in Medieval France* (Oxford, 1993), and the initial framing that is inspired in part by Page's work in the rich and provocative work of Bruce W. Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford, Calif., 2001).

[6] See Sylvia Huot, *Allegorical Play in the Old French Motet: The Sacred and the Profane in Thirteenth-Century Polyphony* (Stanford, Calif., 1997); Gerald R. Hoekstra, "The French Motet as Trope: Multiple Levels of Meaning in *Quant florist la violete / El mois de mai / Et Gaudebit,*" *Speculum* 73 (1998), 32–57; Margaret Bent, "Deception, Exegesis and Sounding Number in Machaut's Motet 15," *Early Music History* 10 (1991), 15–27; Kevin Brownlee, "Machaut's Motet 15 and the *Roman de la rose:* The Literary Context of *Amours qui a le pouoir/Faus Samblant m'a deceü/Vidi Dominum,*" *Early Music History* 10 (1991), 1–14; idem, "Polyphonie et intertextualité dans les motets 8 et 4 de Guillaume de Machaut," trans. Anthony Allen, in Michel Zink et al., eds., *"L'hostellerie de pensée": Études sur l'art littéraire au moyen âge offertes à Daniel Poirion* (Paris, 1995), pp. 97–104; idem, "La polyphonie textuelle dans le Motet 7 de Machaut: Narcisse, la *Rose,* et la voix féminine," in Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet and Nigel Wilkins, eds., *Guillaume de Machaut: 1300–2000* (Paris, 2002), pp. 137–46; and idem, "Fire, Desire, Duration, Death: Machaut's Motet 10," in Suzannah Clark and Elizabeth Eva Leach, eds., *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned,* Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music 4 (Woodbridge, Eng., 2005), pp. 79–93. The chief skepticism as to the verbal subtlety of motets is expressed by Christopher Page; see his *Discarding Images,* chap. 3, and "Around the Performance of a Thirteenth-Century Motet," *Early Music* 28 (2000), 343–57. For an approach that compellingly mediates between the musical focus of Page and the intertextual focus of Huot see Suzannah Clark, "'S'en dirai chançonete': Hearing Text and Music in a Medieval Motet," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 16 (2007), 31–59, and the comments below, p. 569.

issues. This approach privileges the motet as a written, "readerly" document that needs decoding semantically aside from the moment of performance. Conversely, in an article in *Early Music* in 2000, Christopher Page focused instead on the nonsemantic "rush of vowels and consonants" aurally available in the moment of performance.[7] In analyzing the musical aspect of polytextuality, Page noted its subversion of the synchronized phrases and vowels of chant performance, its resulting sonic playfulness, and the therefore striking moments of serendipitous togetherness. Most recently, Suzannah Clark has successfully combined those seemingly opposing starting points to look at the way in which polytextual motets often contain musical clues as to how they should be read. She views reading and performance (whether heard or participated in) as mutually informing activities.[8]

Thirteenth-century motets have lent themselves particularly to this kind of scholarly enquiry; fourteenth-century motets are less likely to mix sacred and secular quite so flagrantly among their upper-voice texts. However, the disjunction between sacred and secular is still in play between the tenor part (still often a fragment of liturgical chant) and the upper voices, even in fourteenth-century motets. Anne Walters Robertson has put forward readings of Guillaume de Machaut's motets similar in type to those advanced for the thirteenth century by Huot.[9] Machaut wrote twenty-three motets, all of which are polytextual; some of the upper voices are in Latin, but most are in French, and virtually all of these are courtly love poetry. Robertson reads them in the light of their Latin tenor fragments, which seem to have been specially chosen from outside those chants that Machaut's thirteenth-century predecessors had regularly used for the motet. As well as the individual biblical and liturgical resonances of each motet, their ordering in the main Machaut manuscripts enables Robertson to understand them collectively as the steps on a spiritual journey whose model she locates in a mystical text, the *Horologium Sapientiae,* by Henry Suso.[10] In her reading, the motets are thus devotional songs, spiritual steps, and objects for contemplation in the context of the individual's relationship with God.[11]

Polytextuality in genres other than the motet is relatively less common.[12] Among the little more than two dozen surviving examples of polytextual song before c. 1400, double-texted songs predominate; triple-texted songs are much rarer. Whereas double-texted songs have anything from two to four voice parts, all triple-texted songs have three voice parts. Machaut is responsible for two of the three triple-texted

[7] Page, "Around the Performance," p. 343.

[8] Clark, "S'en dirai chançonete."

[9] Anne Walters Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims: Context and Meaning in His Musical Works* (Cambridge, Eng., 2002), pp. 79–186.

[10] Ibid., pp. 96–102.

[11] Moreover, they make sense both as individual items and as an ordered sequence; see Thomas Brown, "Another Mirror of Lovers? Order, Structure and Allusion in Machaut's Motets," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 10 (2001), 121–34; Jacques Boogaart, "'O series summe rata': De Motetten van Guillaume de Machaut. De Ordening van het Corpus en de Samenhang van Tekst en Muziek" (doctoral thesis, University of Utrecht, 2001); and Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut,* pp. 79–186.

[12] Its presence in song forms could be a signal of the role of tenors with French texts, sometimes rondeaux, whose upper voices replicate these repeating structures in some fashion, a topic recently explored in Mark Everist, "Motets, French Tenors, and the Polyphonic Chanson ca. 1300," *Journal of Musicology* 24 (2007), 365–406.

balades that survive and for one of the two four-part double *balades,* the other one being the famous lament for Machaut's death by Eustache Deschamps, set to music by the otherwise unknown composer F. Andrieu.[13] Unlike his contemporaries, it seems that Machaut did not write polytextual versions of rondeaux or *virelais;* instead, he had almost exclusive ownership of certain varieties of the polytextual *balade.*[14]

Male-Female Dialogue and the Amorous Chase: *Sans cuer/Amis/Dame* (B17)

Machaut's three polytextual *balades,* B17, B29, and B34, come from two periods of his creative activity, at least insofar as that can be established with any certainty from the contents of the manuscripts of his works.[15] B17 occurs in the earliest collected manuscript, C (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1586), and was therefore composed before c. 1350–56, the date of C.[16] The other two were first copied in Vg (the Ferrell-Vogüé manuscript, in a private collection without shelfmark), which dates from around 1370, although the inclusion of B34 in Machaut's poem the *Voir dit* (itself not contained in Vg but present in A [Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1584], which dates from the early 1370s) could mean that it comes from the early 1360s, when the poem's events purportedly take place.[17]

Two of these three songs present the words of two speakers who are in a dialogue of one kind or another.[18] B17 is a three-part canon—an amorous *chace*—in which the voices follow each other in conversational order.[19] One contemporary source that

[13] F. Andrieu, *Armes amours/O flour des flours* can be found in Gordon K. Greene, ed., *French Secular Music: Manuscript Chantilly, Musée Condé 564, Second Part,* Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century 19 (Monaco, 1982), no. 84. Lawrence Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research,* Garland Composer Research Manuals 36, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 996 (New York, 1995), p. 386 n. 95, notes a proposed identificaton of F. Andrieu with "Magister Franciscus," the composer of a *balade* that cites Machaut's *Phyton* (B38).

[14] That Machaut's works dominate the small corpus of polytextual songs suggests that this tradition was limited to the (not geographically inconsiderable) medieval *francophonie,* which included England, northern Spain, and northern Italy. This in turn perhaps suggests that musically contemplative courtly song represents a direct transfer of the aesthetic of the thirteenth-century French motet into the Francophone court.

[15] In addition, *lais* 16 and 17 have stanzas that are canonic *chaces,* but although different words are presented simultaneously, each voice ultimately presents the same text. The numbering of Machaut songs used here is based on that in Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut,* which represents—for the *balades* here—that used in the main musical editions; see Friedrich Ludwig, ed., *Guillaume de Machaut: Musikalische Werke,* 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1926–54); and Leo Schrade, ed., *The Works of Guillaume de Machaut,* Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century 2–3 (Monaco, 1956). Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut,* pp. 279–81, discusses their relative merits.

[16] The standard sigla for the Machaut manuscripts are detailed in Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut,* pp. xv–xvii and chap. 3. Vg, now the Ferrell-Vogüé manuscript, from the private collection of Elizabeth J. and James E. Ferrell, is currently on loan to the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

[17] In the *Voir dit* it is sent with a letter that has been dated 3 November 1363. See Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut,* pp. 362–64. It should be recalled, however, that *Voir dit* is a verisimilitudinous fiction rather than an accurate historical record.

[18] All three are discussed, together with other polytextual songs, in Newes, "Amorous Dialogues"; B34 is proposed as a model for a later polytextual song in eadem, "The Bitextual Ballade."

[19] On the musical *chace* in its cynegetic and amorous formats see Elizabeth Eva Leach, *Sung Birds: Music, Nature, and Poetry in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2007), pp. 175–203.

contains only the verbal texts introduces them with rubrics that clarify this point, giving respectively "Chanson de ioie et esplourez," "Response. la dame," and "Renvoy. lamant."[20] The three *balades* that are sung simultaneously share the same versification and the same rhyme types and substantially the same refrain, although it is adapted for each speaker. The lover speaks first: "Without my heart, I go away, lamenting and weeping," he says, but with hope in place of his heart, which stays with his lady. His lady answers him in the second text, saying, "Beloved, lamenting, downcast, and weeping, you take leave from me and wish me to believe that your whole heart has stayed with me." She rewards him with her own heart, in place of his, which stays with her. Finally, in the third *balade* text, the lover replies, giving his thanks: "Lady, through you I feel comforted of all the grief I used to have"; her love is reward enough, and joy now dwells in him in place of his heart, which stays with her.

Polytextuality here is a dramatization of a dialogue similar to that found in several other polytextual dialogue songs of this period, all in three parts, notably a triple-texted three-part rondeau by Jean Vaillant and another triple *balade* that is anonymous.[21] It might be argued that in all these cases a simple reading of these poems in sequence would achieve much the same effect, but Machaut's setting additionally dramatizes the dialogue by the use of the musical technique commonly found in the *chace*—the musical canon. In having the lover and his lady sing identical melodic lines a short temporal distance apart (effectively a "round" like the modern nursery rhymes "Frère Jacques" or "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"), the musicalization of the dialogue symbolizes at once their unity (they sing the same tune), their difference (they sing at different times, the lady replying and the lover then reaffirming), and the harmony of their relationship (because, by singing it in canonic imitation, they make consonant polyphonic music).

Male-Male Competition in *Quant Theseus/Ne quier* (B34)

The role of music is even more important semantically in Machaut's other two polytextual *balades*.[22] Like B17, B34 is a dialogue, but more of a writerly than a

[20] MS J (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5203); see Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut,* p. 373 n. 87.

[21] The songs are similar in their presentation of male-female dialogue, with a different text in each voice of the three-voice texture, although they lack the shared versification and the canonic technique of *chace* present in Machaut's B17. The three *balade* texts of the anonymous *balade Certainement puet on bien affirmer/Amis, de tant que vous avés desir/Dame vailans de pris et de valour* share two rhymes and a refrain line: "Estre secres vrais et loyaus amis." This piece can be found uniquely in PR (the Reina Codex, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. fr. 6771, fol. 53v), edited in Willi Apel, ed., *French Secular Compositions of the Fourteenth Century,* Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 53, 3 vols. (Rome, 1970–72), 2:26; and Gordon K. Greene, ed., *French Secular Music: Ballades and Canons,* Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century 20 (Monaco, 1982), p. 105. Jean Vaillant's rondeau *Tres doulz amis, tout ce que proumis t'ay/Ma dame, ce que vous m'avez proumis/Cent mille fois, ma douce dame chiere* does not share a refrain text between the voices because it is a rondeau, nor do the poems share rhyme types, although they have the same basic eight-line form. Vaillant's song is found uniquely in Ch (Chantilly, Bibliothèque du Musée Condé, MS 564), edited in Apel, *French Secular Compositions,* 1:229; and in Gordon K. Greene, ed., *French Secular Music: Manuscript Chantilly, Musée Condé 564, First Part,* Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century 18 (Monaco, 1982), p. 31.

[22] The two *balades* stem from a period in which Machaut had virtually stopped writing motets. It

performative one, with a hierarchy implied between the two poems that is nevertheless evident only in their musical setting. It presents the poems of two authors, Guillaume de Machaut and Thomas Paien, praising the same lady. Machaut's late masterpiece, the *Voir dit,* gives a fictional (but probably, like the rest of the poem, verisimilar) creative history for this piece. The protagonist Guillaume, writing to his beloved Toute Belle about the *balade Quant Theseus* by Thomas Paien, says that he has written a matching poem on the same versification and rhymes—something that was very hard because Thomas "took all the fat from the pot."[23] Moreover, Guillaume has set both poems to music in four parts. This is a thinly veiled (and possibly parodic) example of the male-male striving ordinarily inherent in the poetics of courtly love: ostensibly about the lady whom the poems praise, the poems and their setting are actually an all-male competition, addressed back and forth between the two poets. Simon Gaunt has commented on the way in which the assertion of masculinity in the context of courtly literature leads men to brandish poems like swords; he notes that this kind of competition tends to focus specifically, as here, on lyric exchanges.[24] In this particular competition, however, the stakes are upped by the setting of the entire exchange to music by one of the protagonists.

Guillaume places Thomas's poem in the top voice, a voice that is highest in pitch but fourth (that is, last) in importance in the contrapuntal hierarchy.[25] So the voice carrying Guillaume's poetry might lie "humbly" beneath that of Thomas's at important musical articulations (cadences involving all the voices together and marking the major sections of the *balade*'s musical structure), but Thomas's is a triplum-type voice in terms of its contrapuntal function (that is, it is at the very bottom of the contrapuntal hierarchy), whereas Guillaume's is the true cantus: it carries the octave sonority at major cadence points and has a slightly larger overall range. All phrases end together, and much of the syllabic declamation is aligned so that, almost syllable for syllable, Guillaume's text effaces and sonically obscures that of his rival. What can be heard in performance is neither man's poetry but rather a consonant four-part musical structure by Guillaume de Machaut.[26] Machaut's con-

seems likely that he exported certain aspects of "motet semantics" into the *balade* in these later polytextual cases.

[23] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and R. Barton Palmer, eds. and transs., *Guillaume de Machaut: Le livre dou voir dit (The Book of the True Poem),* Garland Library of Medieval Literature 106A, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 1732 (New York, 1998), letter 35, line 6481, and letter 37. Toute Belle comments on the two poems in letter 38, stating that Machaut's poem pleased her more. On the identity of Thomas Paien see Elizabeth Eva Leach, "Machaut's Peer, Thomas Paien," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 18 (2009), 91–112.

[24] Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature,* Cambridge Studies in French 53 (Cambridge, Eng., 1995), pp. 149–50: "the poem is a symbol of virility which enables the poet to assert his masculinity. . . . [L]inguistic prowess as a sign of masculinity is associated particularly with the lyric."

[25] See Elizabeth Eva Leach, "Machaut's Balades with Four Voices," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 10 (2001), 58–65.

[26] This is not to say that Machaut here prizes once-only listening comprehension over what I would consider the usual medieval experience of elite music (that is, many engagements in multiple media, including the visual performance of the written text and sonic performance as song or recited poem), since it would take plural engagements to work out what was going on. The apperception in the moment of performance remains important, but it is only one element of a more complex whole.

temporaries noticed his promotion of his own poetic prowess in this piece, despite the pose of humility. Many of its features recur in the only other double *balade* in four parts to have survived from this period, and which is clearly based on it, the *déploration* of Machaut's death by F. Andrieu and Eustache Deschamps.

Sentement and *Entendement* in *De triste cuer/Quant vrais amans/Certes* (B29)

Machaut's third and final polytextual *balade,* B29, is, at least at first glance, less easy to account for in terms of why its polytextuality makes sense (the text, based on Vg, and my translation are given in Figure 1; an edition of the musical setting, also based on Vg, is given in Example 1; the complete song is performed in Sound File 1). Unlike B17, it is not canonic in its musical process. Nor, like B17 and B34, does it dramatize a two-person dialogue: each poem has a separate speaker. Unlike B34, the line ends within the musical sections do not coincide; it is not presenting the results of a poetic competition. Even the refrain starts at different times in each voice (see Example 1, mm. 33–36). In modern discussions it is not one of Machaut's most prominent songs, yet it is arguably one of his most remarkable. It occurs only in the music section of his manuscripts but has strong links to several other parts of Machaut's complete works.[27] The focus here will be on just one of them, a thematic link to the narrative section of Machaut's *Prologue,* whose statement of courtly doctrine it amplifies and debates; but first an exposition of its three poetic texts and the contribution of their musicalization to their relational meaning will enable a clearer picture of music's unique power in this regard to emerge.

De triste cuer/Quant vrais amans/Certes (B29) sets three *balade* texts, built on the same versifications and rhyme types and sharing the same refrain, which speaks of sorrowful sadness and weeping tears of blood. Because in their musical setting they would all be sung simultaneously—like a three-man conversation with everyone speaking at once—their arguments are designed to be taken, conceptually, in parallel. These are texts made to be heard. That their verbal discord (obfuscating each text's semantic immediacy) is presented in musical concord suggests the possibility for nonimmediate (that is, reflective, studied) understanding and, ultimately, rational judgment.

Polytextuality in music has a specific effect, which seems at a first listening to militate against semantics in favor of the pleasures of pure sound.[28] However, the effect of three people "speaking" (in song) at once is not chaotic in musical terms

[27] In addition to the connection with the *Prologue* explored here, it is linked to the *Voir dit* through the close citation of its refrain in a letter from Guillaume to Toute Belle; see Leech-Wilkinson and Palmer, eds. and transs., *Le livre dou voir dit,* letter 8. It is also linked to a group of *balades* in the unnotated *Loange des dames,* which contains among its members some of the texts of B29's near neighbors in the music section. These further links are not germane to the specific point being made here and are explored more thoroughly in Elizabeth Eva Leach, *Guillaume de Machaut, Secretary, Poet, Musician* (Ithaca, N.Y., forthcoming in 2011).

[28] See, for example, the comments in Douglas Kelly, *Medieval Imagination: Rhetoric and the Poetry of Courtly Love* (Madison, Wis., 1978), p. 254. See also Page, "Around the Performance" (above, n. 6), for evidence that purely sonic pleasures are also present and meaningful.

FIGURE 1
Guillaume de Machaut's *De triste cuer/Quant vrais amans/Certes je di* (B29)
Text from the Ferrell-Vogüé manuscript (Vg), fols. 311v–312r
(See Example 1 for an edition of the music in Vg.)

I [Cantus]

De triste cuer faire joyeusement,
Il m'est avis que c'est chose contraire;
Mais cilz qui fait de joieus sentement,
Je di qu'il doit plus joieusement faire.
Et pour ce sont mi chant de rude affaire,
Qu'il sont tuit fait d'un cuer plus noir que meure,
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

S'en suis repris et blasmés durement.
Mais je ne sçay mon ouevre contrefaire,
Eins moustre ce que mes cuers scet et sent;
Et les meschiés dont j'ay plus d'une paire—
Voire de cent!—si pert à mon viaire
Qu'ay l'esperit, où ma vie demeure,
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

Et pour ce à tous suppli tres humblement
Que de mes chans blasmer se vueillent taire,
Car je ne sçay ne puis faire autrement
Pour Fortune qui tent à ce deffaire
Qu'aim miex que moy; n'elle ne me laist plaire
Qu'à ciaulz qui ont l'esperit à toute heure
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

II [Tenor]

Quant vrais amans aimme amoureusement,
De si vray cuer qu'il ne saroit meffaire,
Et sa dame a tel cuer que nullement
N'en puet merci, douceur ne grace attraire,
Cuer ne porroit avoir si debonnaire
Que la liqueur dou sien à l'ueil ne queure,
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

Qu'Ardans Desirs mourdrist secretement
Son triste cuer en douleur et en haire;
Pour ce ne fait pas si joliement
Com cilz qui joit et ou joie repaire;
Et s'en li prent Souvenirs son repaire,
Quant il y vient, il le fait sanz demeure
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

Qu'il ymagine et pense au grief tourment
Que sa dame li fait sentir et traire
Pour li servir et amer loyaument.
Helas! dolens, ci a povre salaire;
Miex li vaurroit sa vie user au Quaire
Qu'en tel service, où cuers et corps deveure
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

III [Contratenor]

Certes, je di et s'en quier jugement,
Que, quant Amours un cuer destreint et maire,
Pour ce qu'avoir ne puet aligement
De sa dame qu'est franche et de bonne aire,
Que li meschiés qu'Alixandre fist Daire
N'est pas si grant com cilz qui li court seure,
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

Mais il doit miex faire et plus proprement
Que cilz qu'Amours vuet de merci refaire,
Car grans Desirs li enseigne et aprent
Et li donne matire et exemplaire
Et sentement de son ouevre parfaire,
En douceur fine et d'un son le couleure,
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

Mais [cilz] qui a merci, a ce où il tent,
Si que Desirs à li plus ne s'apaire
Si ardemment ne si desiramment,
Eins amenrist et commence à retraire.
Et pour ce di, qui qu'il doie desplaire,
Que cilz fait miex qui d'Amours goust saveure
Triste, dolent, qui larmes de sanc pleure.

To compose joyously from a sad heart—in my opinion this is a contrary thing; but he who composes from joyous feelings, I say that he must compose more joyously. Because of this all my songs are a crude affair, because they are all composed by a heart blacker than a berry, *sad, sorrowing, and weeping tears of blood.*

So I am harshly reproved and blamed for it. But I do not know how to make my work contrary [to my heart], and so I show what my heart knows and feels; and the misfortunes of which I have more than a couple—truly a hundred!—appear in my face so that, where my life remains, I have a *sad, sorrowing* spirit*, weeping tears of blood.*

And because of this I beg everyone very humbly that they please stop blaming me for my songs, because I do not know how to do them any other way on account of Fortune, who is trying to unmake that which I love more than myself; nor does she allow me to please anyone except those who always have a spirit *sad, sorrowing, and weeping tears of blood.*

When a true lover loves lovingly from such a true heart that he would not know how to misbehave, and his lady has such a heart that he can in no way attract from it *merci*, grace or sweetness, he could not have a heart so debonair that the liquid from his heart would not seek a way out though his *sad, sorrowing* eye, *weeping tears of blood.*

Burning Desire secretly murders his sad heart in sorrow and in hatred; because of this he does not compose as merrily as he who rejoices where joy resides; and if Souvenir resides in him, when [Souvenir] comes there [that man] without delay composes [in a manner] *sad, sorrowing, and weeping tears of blood.*

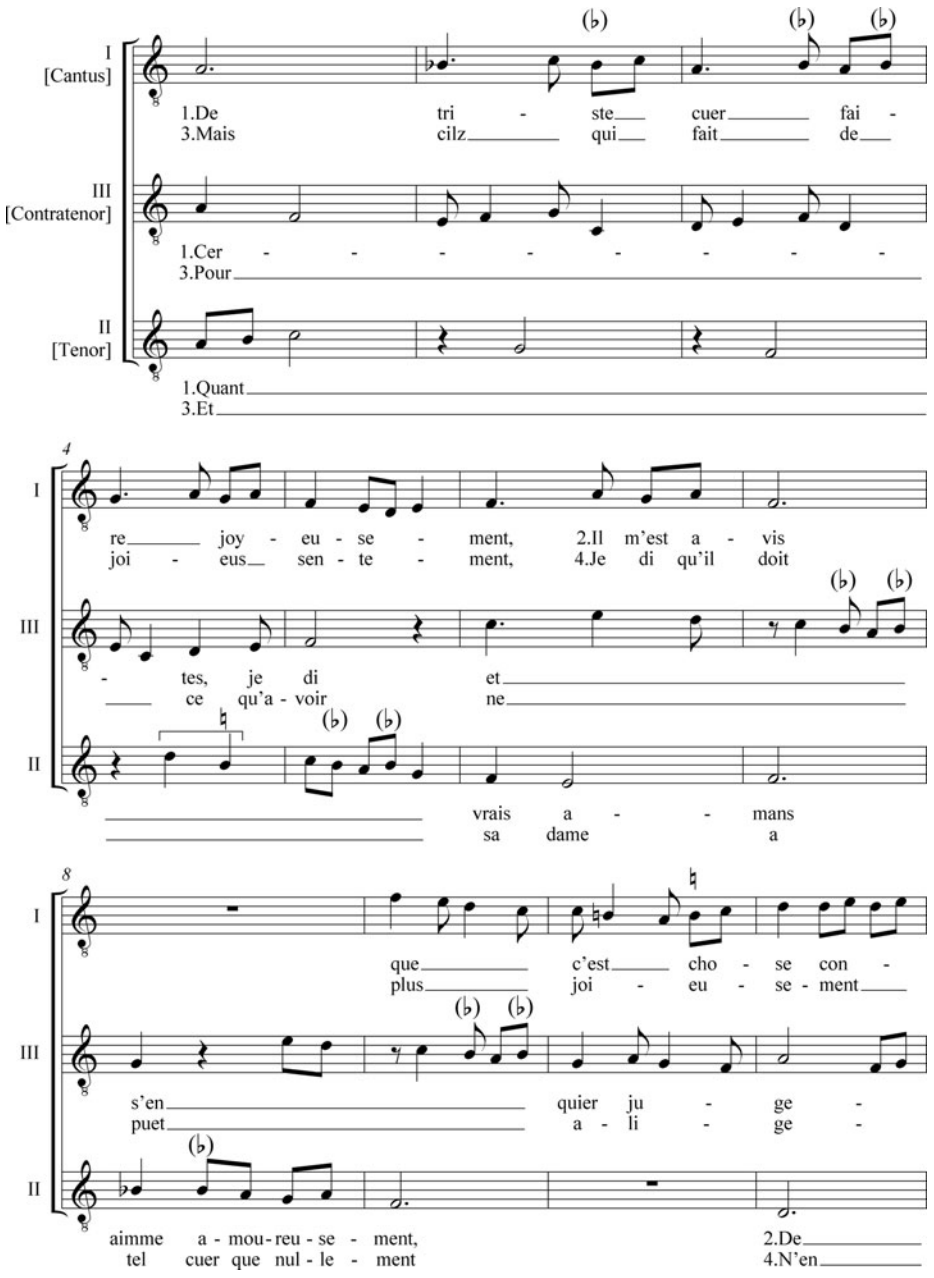
That he imagines and thinks of the deep torment that his lady makes him feel and bear in order to serve her and love her loyally. Alas, sorrowing, he has poor recompense; he would rather spend his life on a crusade than in such service, which devours heart and body, *sad, sorrowing, weeping tears of blood.*

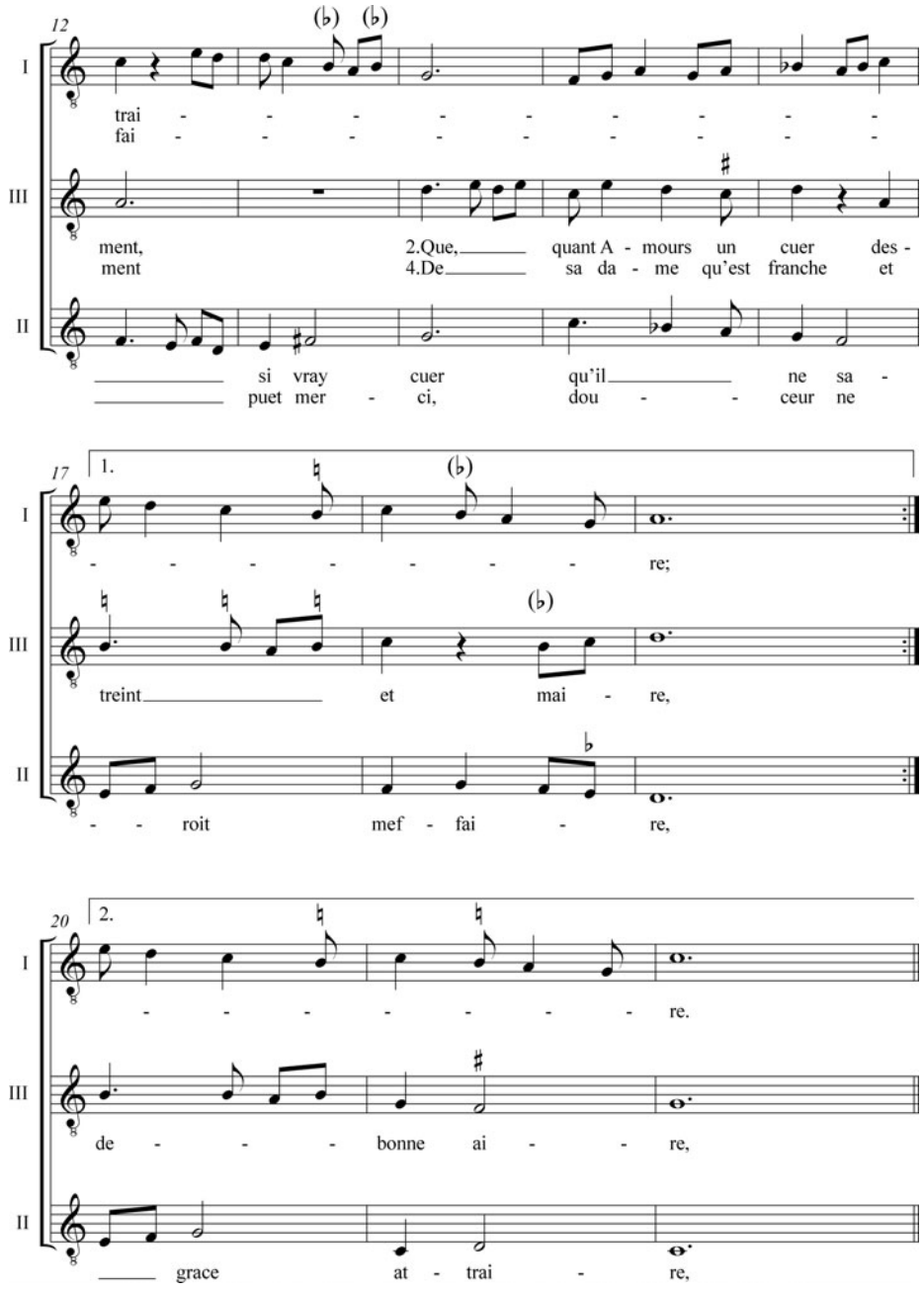
Surely, I say (and seek the judgment of it) that when Love destroys and mars a heart because it cannot have relief from its lady, who is noble and debonair, that the mischief that Alexander did to Darius is not so great as that which he runs after, *sad, sorrowing, and weeping tears of blood.*

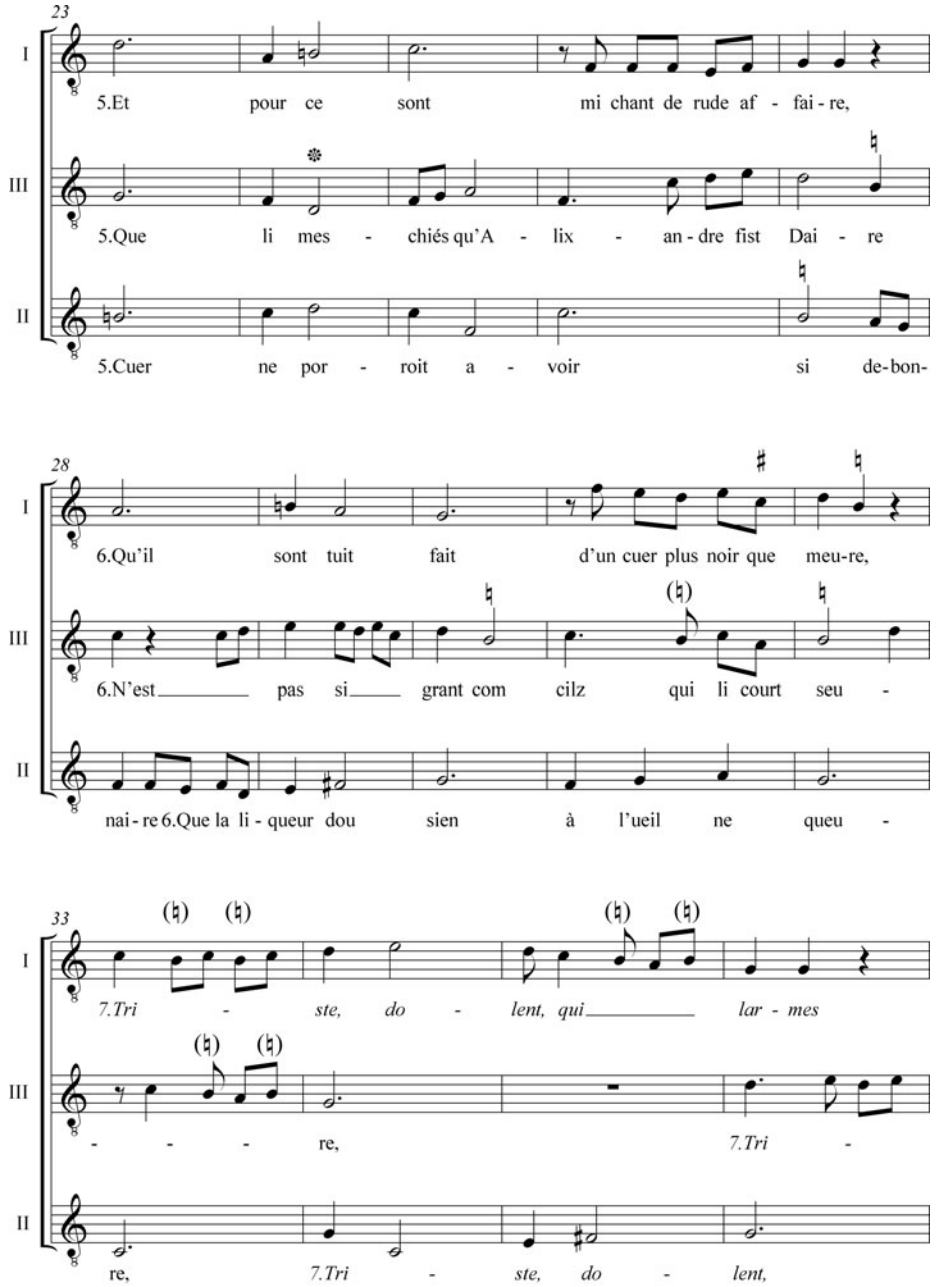
But he might do better and more properly than he whom Love wishes to remake through *merci,* for great Desire teaches and instructs him and gives him material and example and feeling with which to perfect his work in fine sweetness and color it with *sad, sorrowing* sound, *weeping tears of blood.*

But he who has *merci* has that which he is attempting [to get], with the result that Desire no longer appears to him so ardently nor so fervently, but rather diminishes and begins to retreat. And because of this I say, whoever it might displease, that he fares better who tastes the *sad, sorrowing* tang of love, *weeping tears of blood.*

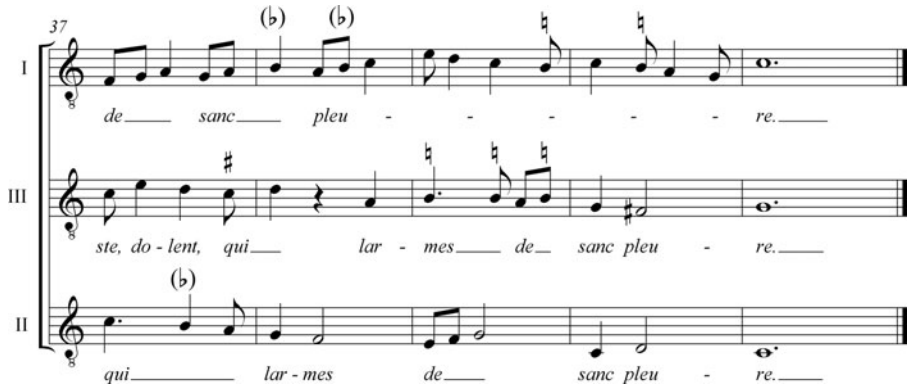
Example 1


I
[Cantus]
III
[Contratenor]
II
[Tenor]
1.De tri - ste cuer fai -
3.Mais cilz qui fait de
1.Cer - - - - - - - -
3.Pour
1.Quant
3.Et
4
re joy - eu - se - ment, 2.Il m'est a - vis
joi - eus sen - te - ment, 4.Je di qu'il doit
- tes, je di et
ce qu'a - voir ne
vrais a - - mans
sa dame a
8
que c'est cho - se con -
plus joi - eu - se - ment
s'en quier ju - ge -
puet a - li - ge -
aimme a - mou - reu - se - ment, 2.De
tel cuer que nul - le - ment 4.N'en


12
I
trai - - - - - - - - -
fai - - - - - - - - -
III
ment, 2.Que, quant A - mours un cuer des -
ment 4.De sa da - me qu'est franche et
II
si vray cuer qu'il ne sa -
puet mer - ci, dou - - ceur ne
17
1.
re;
treint et mai - re,
- - roit mef - fai - re,
20
2.
re.
de - - - bonne ai - - re,
grace at - trai - re,



❁ Reading from E (*E* in Vg B A; erased in G)



MSS A, B, E, and G = Paris, Bibilothèque nationale de France, MSS fr. 1584, 1585, 9221, and 22546, respectively. MS Vg = the Ferrell-Vogüé manuscript.

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but highly ordered and organized both rhythmically and harmonically. More familiar to modern audiences, the operatic ensemble forms a partial point of comparison since it usually involves a number of protagonists verbalizing private thoughts simultaneously. However, the comparison is not quite exact: the voices of an operatic ensemble are typically more differentiated in range than a medieval song, often enter in a staggered manner, and frequently sing a single textual phrase over and over, making overall aural comprehension far more possible. However, in both medieval song and opera the notation of the counterpoint (that is, the placing of the notes in the different voices temporally against one another so that they harmonize with one another) locks the declamation of the texts into a temporal framework in a manner not possible without it. And in both cases, interested listeners would have had ready recourse to nonmusical versions of the texts—spoken, written, remembered, or printed. A useful starting point for Machaut's song, then, is the three poems as they appear both in modern editions and on the manuscript page, that is, in sequence. Once they have been considered as sequential written or spoken texts, the additional meanings brought about by the music's pitting of them against one another will be considered further.

The manuscript presentation of these three poems (and this single song) is shown in Plates 1A and 1B. The first poem is *De triste cuer* (Figure 1, voice I; Sound File 2). The speaker—both poet-composer and lover—talks about making songs: "To compose joyously from a sad heart—in my opinion this is a contrary thing; but he who composes from joyous feelings, I say that he must compose more joyously." He goes on to explain that this is why his songs are all rather crude ("de rude affaire"), because they are composed from a heart blacker than a berry, which weeps tears of blood.[29] The crudeness of his song in turn means that he is blamed and

[29] Loss of blood in medieval physiology means losing that which makes one sanguine or happy: to weep blood is to increase sorrow. An antiphon for the Tuesday or Wednesday of Holy Week draws on a similar idea by using a disputed verse from Luke 22.44, in which Christ sweats tears of blood during

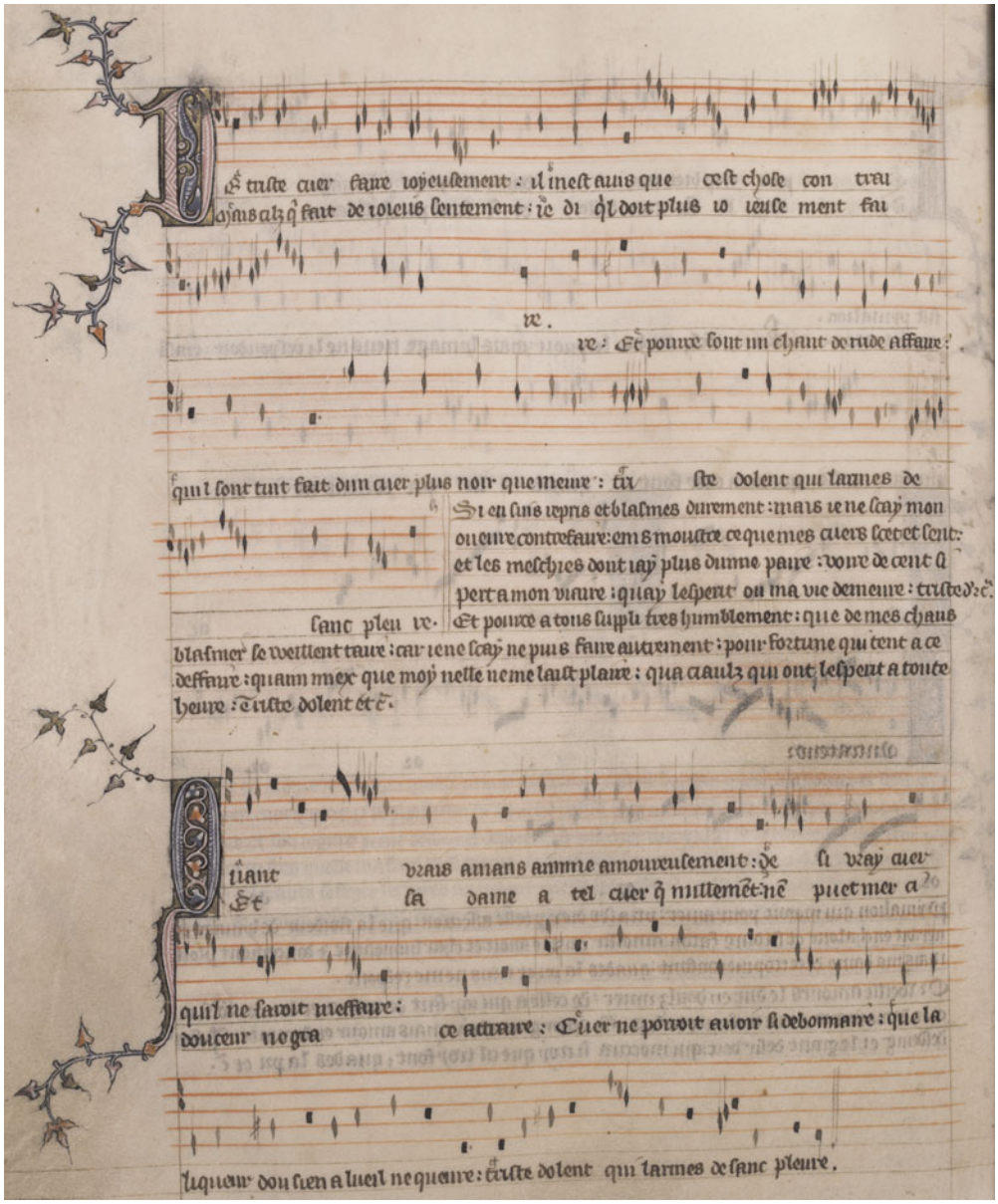

Plate 1A. Guillaume de Machaut, B29 in the Ferrell-Vogüé manuscript (Vg), fol. 311v, showing the voice parts *De triste cuer* and *Quant vrais amans*. On loan to the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Reproduced by kind permission of Elizabeth J. and James E. Ferrell. Digital imaging by DIAMM (www.diamm.ac.uk) (This image can be viewed in color in the online edition.)

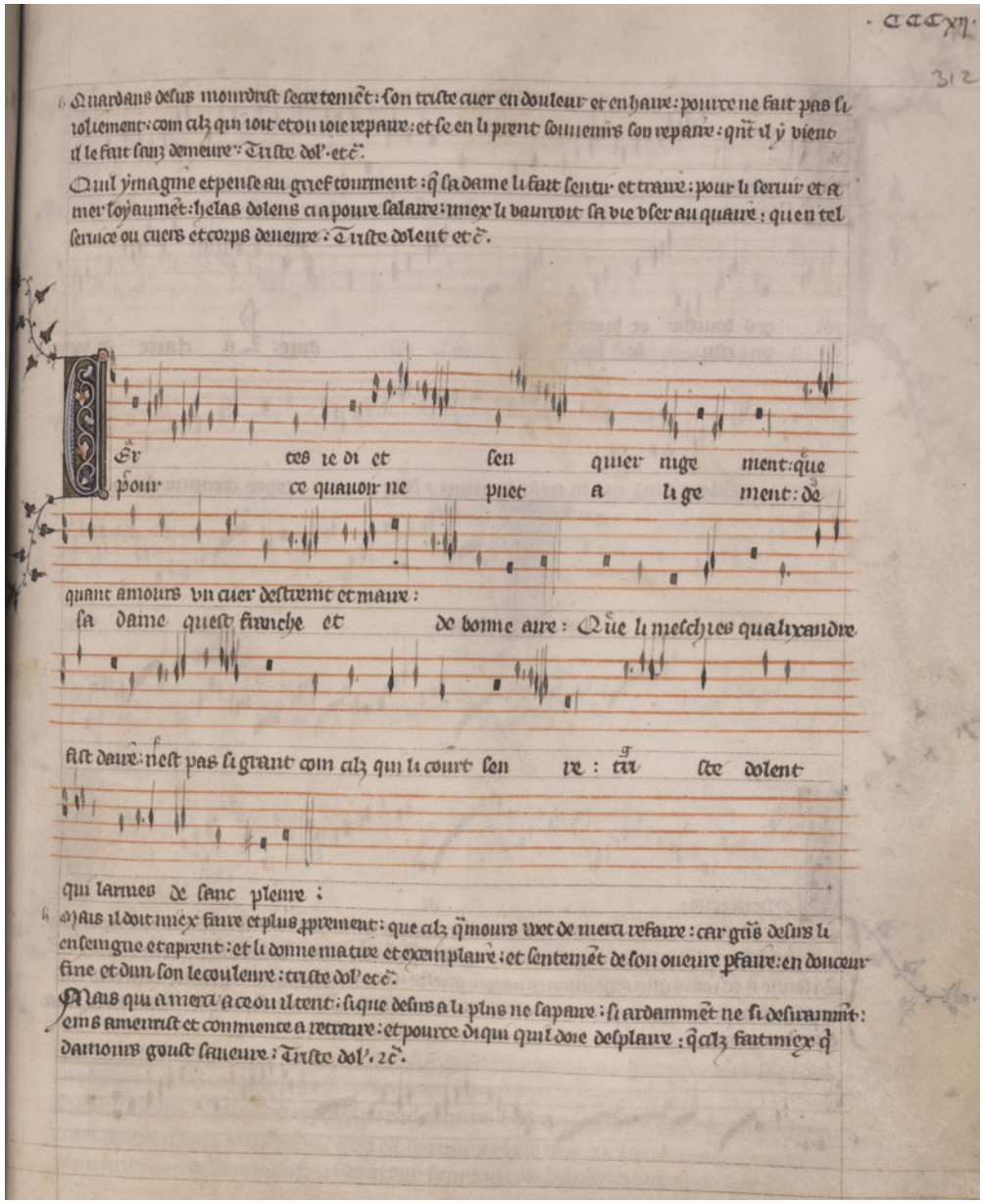

Plate 1B. Guillaume de Machaut, B29 in the Ferrell-Vogüé manuscript (Vg), fol. 312r, showing the voice part *Certes je di.*
On loan to the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.
Reproduced by kind permission of Elizabeth J. and James E. Ferrell.
Digital imaging by DIAMM (www.diamm.ac.uk)
(This image can be viewed in color in the online edition.)

reproved, because he cannot "counterfeit" his works ("mon ouevre contrefaire"). He humbly begs those who are blaming him to keep quiet because he is unable to do otherwise. Instead he blames Fortune, who won't let him love anything more than himself and allows him only to please those who have a similarly sorrowing spirit.

"Contrefaire" is often translated as "counterfeit" or "feign," but in this period it refers, as Stephen Perkinson has shown, to the copying of the outer appearance of a thing (rather than its inner essence).[30] While this might mean that the thing thus copied has the capacity to deceive, its fourteenth-century negative uses are closer to the idea of mindless (irrational) mimicking or mirroring than to the modern concept of duplicitous counterfeiting.[31] In music, the uses of the prefix "contra" (Latin), "contre" (French), or "counter" (English) frequently imply, not the faking of something, but rather something's counterpart. This is the sense of the prefix in "counterpoint" ("contrapunctus")—a musical technique in which a note in one voice is placed against (that is, simultaneously, *and* in harmony, with) a note in another. This is also the sense of the contratenor voice part as it relates to the tenor. The contratenor is not a specific voice type (it is usually in the same pitch range as the tenor and would thus similarly be sung by a tenor or baritone singer) but a description of contrapuntal function.[32] It might be better to envisage the prefix as meaning "with" rather than "against." The sorrowing lover of *De triste cuer* cannot make *joyful* musical poetry "against"—that is, simultaneously, and in harmony, *with*—his love situation because such joy would not portray it accurately.

The second poem, *Quant vrais amans,* has a rather different kind of narrator (Figure 1, voice II; Sound File 3). His voice is detached and clerkly as he ruminates on the fate of a true lover who loves truly ("Quant vrais amans aimme amoureusement"). Such a man, he opines, when faced with an immovable lady cannot, however noble he is, prevent his heart's liquid from issuing through his eyes. The mental image ("Souvenirs") of the lady comes to him and makes him compose without delay, but because he imagines the torment that his lady makes him feel, he does so weeping tears of blood. Desire murders his heart in sorrow and hatred, and thus he cannot compose as well ("si joliement") as someone living in joy. Sorrow is a spur to composition, but it does not produce compositions of the same quality as those

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the agony in the garden of Gethsemane. In Dante's *Inferno* 13 the suicides in the second circle of hell are transformed into trees that weep blood.

[30] See Stephen Perkinson, "Portraits and Counterfeits: Villard de Honnecourt and Thirteenth-Century Theories of Representation," in David S. Areford and Nina A. Rowe, eds., *Excavating the Medieval Image: Manuscripts, Artists, Audiences. Essays in Honor of Sandra Hindman* (Aldershot, Eng., 2004), pp. 13–35. On the significant use of this term in the refrain of another polytextual *balade* see Elizabeth Eva Leach, "Nature's Forge and Mechanical Production: Writing, Reading, and Performing Song," in Mary Carruthers, ed., *Rhetoric beyond Words* (Cambridge, Eng., 2010), pp. 72–95.

[31] In contracts (written in French) for the making of tomb images for the English King Richard II (1395), for example, the images should "contrefaire" the king and queen: see Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London, 1996), p. 103. This is a kind of portrayal, a representation, which is meant to be as close to the original as possible in its exterior representation.

[32] See Margaret Bent, "Naming of Parts: Notes on the Contratenor, c. 1350–1450," in M. Jennifer Bloxam, Gioia Filocamo, and Leofranc Holford-Stevens, eds., *"Uno gentile et subtile ingenio": Studies in Renaissance Music in Honour of Bonnie J. Blackburn* (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 1–12.

prompted by joy. The true lover imagined by the sententious voice here is in the same situation as the sad man described in Machaut's *Prologue,* who mentally pictures "the great beauty [and] the refined sweetness of the woman who does not care for him."[33] In the *Prologue* that man is unable to compose anything from his mournful material and has only desire and the knowledge ("povre espoir") that his sorrow will grow.[34] The clerkly voice of *Quant vrais amans* comments that such a man would rather spend his life on a crusade than endure the hardship of such a lady's service, which devours the sad, sorrowing heart and body with weeping tears of blood.[35]

The final poem, *Certes je di,* offers matching but opposite clerkly deliberation on the same set of issues (Figure 1, voice III; Sound File 4). This speaker asserts his clerkly authority through an opening historical comparison: the mischief Alexander the Great did to Darius is not as great as that which Love does to the man whose heart is destroyed by not having relief from his lady. However, he continues, there are advantages to such sorrow: such a man composes better and more properly than the one whom Love wants "to remake" ("refaire") by granting him "merci." In Machaut's courtly doctrine, *merci* fully granted would be *souffisance* which would cause what is described here: the ardency of desire diminishes and starts to recede ("amenrist et commence a retraire"). Desire gives the man whose heart is destroyed the matter, exemplar, and *sentement* ("matire et exemplaire, / Et sentement") with which to perfect his work in fine sweetness and colored with sorrow and tears of blood.[36] The speaker is forced to conclude that "he fares better who tastes the sad, sorrowing tang of love" (". . . cilz fait miex qui d'Amours goust saveure / Triste, doulent, qui larmes de sanc pleure," st. 3, lines 6–7).

The first speaker is the sorrowing lover whose songs reflect his sorrow; the second speaker maintains that such a man writes worse songs that a lover experiencing joy, while the third speaker conversely asserts that he writes better songs. In sequence the texts lay out a problem, the preferred solution, and then the contrary solution, resembling in form the juxtaposition of contradictory authoritative statements found in medieval *quaestiones*.[37] The solution and refutation of the objections must be supplied by the audience through the joint study of reading and listening. As literary scholars have remarked, the "new lyricism" of Machaut's *je* is distinct from the *je* of the thirteenth-century (musically monophonic) *grant chant* in its new emphasis on dialogue:[38] here the *je* of *De triste cuer* is not only in dialogue

[33] Ernest Hoepffner, ed., *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut,* 3 vols. (Paris, 1908–22), 1:8, st. 5, lines 68–69.

[34] Ibid., 1:8–9, st. 5, lines 77–84.

[35] The literal sense is to spend one's life in Cairo ("Quaire"), but that was a stopping point on the crusades and here operates metonymically.

[36] In the *Prologue* "matere et exemplaire" are given to Machaut not by Desire but by Love, in the shape of his three children. Nature, it should be noted, had already given him not *sentement* but *Sens*.

[37] See John Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy (1150–1350): An Introduction* (London, 1987), pp. 10–14 and 19, and especially the five-part model in table 2 (pp. 28–33); see also Anthony Kenny and Jan Pinborg, "Medieval Philosophical Literature," in Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg, eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100–1600* (Cambridge, Eng., 1982), pp. 30–33.

[38] Jacqueline Cerquiglini, "Le nouveau lyrisme (XIVe–XVe siècle)," in Daniel Poirion, ed., *Précis de littérature française du moyen âge* (Paris, 1983), pp. 275–92.

with his complaining audience but is also the subject of a dialogical response by the speakers of the other two poems set simultaneously as part of the same musical *balade*. The individuality of the three speakers is emphasized by the fact that their one piece of shared text, the refrain, starts at different times in each voice, a practice different from that in Machaut's other noncanonic polytextual *balade, Quant Theseus/New quier* (B34).

On the page in this sequence the three *balades* of *De triste cuer/Quant vrais amans/Certes* (B29) make an interesting set of views, but their value is significantly inflected—and their correct solution encouraged—by the arrangement of the poems into a musical whole. This is something that is not visible on the page—the musical parts are copied separately, so that the poems and their individual melodies appear in the sequence described and are not presented together visually in any kind of musical score.[39] However, the musical structure that results in performance inflects the value of the voices in this sequence. (It should be noted that in the modern edition the voices are arranged in a top-down sequence, as *De triste cuer/Certes/Quant vrais amans*. This reflects the usual layout for modern scores in which the voices are arranged according to their pitch content, with the lowest voice at the bottom and the highest at the top. In this regard, the modern edition's interest in giving a single viewer visual oversight of the contrapuntal whole inadvertently removes a layer of information that is visually present in the medieval presentation.)

The first-copied poem, the sorrowing lover trying to write with emotional faithfulness, has the melody of the uppermost voice, the highest range (*D–f*), and occupies the usual position of the cantus voice at the major section end cadences of the two parts of the *balade*—the closed cadence of the A section after the second time through (Example 1, m. 22) and the end of the refrain section, that is, the very end of the piece (Example 1, m. 41). The cantus voice in normal, single-texted *balades* is the voice that alone carries the words of the first-person speaker, usually, as here, a lover. In this regard, then, B29 conforms to a norm. What is unusual is the texting of the other two parts, which are usually untexted in fourteenth-century *balades*. The voice copied second, *Quant vrais amans,* which considers desire as the murderer of artistic creativity, occupies the traditional copying placement of the tenor part in three-part music; it is also functionally the tenor part, having the lowest and narrowest range (*C–d*), taking the lowest pitches at all major cadences, and governing the counterpoint. In range the third-copied voice, *Certes je di,* lies between the other two, going lower than the cantus but higher than the tenor (*C–e*). This voice is the least important to the contrapuntal structure (that is, it is the most possible to excise); singing just the other two voices, which actually agree with one another that sorrow produces bad music, would make musical sense.[40] Thus, in terms of its argument, *Certes je di* is the least in merit since its melody is the least vital to the musical harmony.

The tenor alone makes regular (i.e., rule-governed) counterpoint with the other two voices, each of which has only a musically functional relation with the tenor (Sound File 5 and Sound File 6 for tenor pairings with cantus and contratenor, re-

[39] Score format was not in use for songs in this period.

[40] *Quant vrais amans* and *De triste cuer* also come together to sing sustained unison notes far more frequently than either voice does with *Certes je di.*

spectively).[41] Copied between the other two parts, the tenor effectively mediates between them in musical, as in visual, terms; it is central and controlling. Poetically its clerkly speaker offers a commentary on the situation of the cantus voice and a refutation of his clerkly counterpart in the contratenor. For the tenor, desire is the enemy of poetry; for the contratenor it is the progenitor of poetry. They are literally tenor and *contra*tenor. But thesis and antithesis are here synthesized into a harmonious whole as an advisory accompaniment to the lover who is suffering; the music provides the "body" of the *quaestio,* the author's own view that will aid the production of a solution.[42] This harmony is mirrored in a musical hierarchy reflecting the rational hierarchy of these views, in which that of the tenor is most fundamental.

The opinions of the tenor and contratenor offer different views of lyric creation. *Certes je di* reflects the thirteenth-century troubadour and trouvère heritage—echoing Augustinian sign theory—in which desire generates (and therefore precedes) language, and the authenticity of the poet's desire creates poetry. *Quant vrais amans* is Machaut's contribution as outlined in the *Prologue,* where joy both creates music and is its result, because music's function is to provide joy to an audience.

The narrative section of Machaut's *Prologue* establishes a theory of poetic creativity based on the need for joy. Machaut thanks Nature and Love and promises to put all his understanding ("entendement") and feeling ("sentement"), heart, body, power, and whatever he has into composing "*dits* and little songs . . . double hockets, pleasing *lais,* motets, rondeaux, and *virelais* (which are called 'danced songs'), complaints, [and] grafted *balades.*"[43] All of these genres are to be found in each manuscript that the *Prologue* heads. Machaut writes that spending time composing songs causes happiness, gaiety, and joy because no one intent on such things quarrels or argues or thinks of immorality, hate, foolishness, or scandal. Composition requires concentration on its own process and thus precludes other thoughts:[44]

> Car quant je sui en ce penser,
> Je ne porroie a riens penser
> Fors que seulement au propos
> Dont faire dit ou chant propos;
> Et s'a autre chose pensoie,
> Toute mon ouevre defferoie.

[41] On the diagnosis of contrapuntal function in Machaut's music see Elizabeth Eva Leach, "Counterpoint and Analysis in Fourteenth-Century Song," *Journal of Music Theory* 44 (2000), 45–79, and "Machaut's Balades with Four Voices" (above, n. 25).

[42] See Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy,* pp. 28–30.

[43] Hoepffner, ed., *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut,* 1:6, st. 5, lines 11–16: ". . . chansonnettes / Pleinnes d'onneur et d'amourettes, / Doubles hoquès et plaisans lais, / Motès, rondiaus et virelais / Qu'on claimme chansons baladées, / Complaintes, balades entées." On the term *enté* see Ardis Butterfield, "*Enté:* A Survey and Reassessment of the Term in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Music and Poetry," *Early Music History* 22 (2003), 94.

[44] Hoepffner, ed., *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut,* 1:7, st. 5, lines 31–35. Around 1300 the Parisian music theorist Johannes de Grocheio acted as an apologist for various types of secular music using much the same argument; see Christopher Page, "Johannes Grocheio on Secular Music: A Corrected Text and a New Translation," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 2 (1993), 24–27; and Leach, *Sung Birds* (above, n. 19), pp. 207–8.

> [For when I am so minded (as to write poetry or song), I wouldn't be able to think about anything except this sole purpose of making the proposed *dit* or song; and if I were to think of something else, I would completely undo all my work.][45]

Even if he is composing about a sad matter ("s'on fait de triste matiere," line 43), the manner of composing it should be joyful, because a heart full of sorrow will never compose or sing well (". . . car ja bien ne fera / Ne gaiement ne chantera / Li cuers qui est pleins de tristesse," lines 45–47).

The idea that music causes joy when it is *heard* has a long pedigree stretching back to antiquity, but the idea that the composer should *compose* from his own joy seems to be Machaut's own stipulation.[46] He simply cannot agree ("je ne m'y puis accorder") with those who say that composing from a sad heart is better (the musical verb "accorder" here implies a lack of sonic concord with this view).[47] He maintains instead that when visual memory ("Souvenirs") brings the image of the lady to mind, only if the love is happy can it produce the joy required for song composition.[48] Machaut effectively extends to music the ideal of composing verse authentically according to one's "sentement," a powerful concept that ranged in reference from the personally experienced feelings of the speaker, through the idea of feeling in general, to more cognitive and intellectual resonances that are closer to its etymological root in *sens*.[49]

Machaut's view in the *Prologue* is clear, and its position within a late lyrico-narrative preface to his collected works suggests that this view is authoritative. But at various points in the works the follow the *Prologue* in the manuscripts, the composition of sorrowful songs appears to be argued for by some of Machaut's narrators in the same terms used by the speaker of *Certes je di:* because it is "selonc mon sentement" (in accord with my *sentement*). And in each case, for the sad poet to compose a joyful song would be to "contrefaire," to copy only the external appearance of the thing rather than its essence. Since to represent the essence of the poet-lover would be to represent sorrow, the composition that is designed to bring joy is made against that feeling and would present a joyous surface rather than portray a fully joyous essence.

Near the beginning of Machaut's *Remede de Fortune,* for example, the young, timid lover-protagonist relates how he writes in many different musical genres according to his fluctuating *sentement* because "he who does not compose according to his *sentement* 'counterfeits' (*contrefait*) his work and his song."[50] Similar

[45] Hoepffner, ed., *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut,* 1:7, st. 5, lines 37–42.

[46] A discussion of the views of Plato and Aristotle can be found in Mary B. Schoen-Nazzaro, "Plato and Aristotle on the Ends of Music," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 34 (1978), 261–73. See also Aristotle, *Politics* 8.5–6 and *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.10; Boethius, *De musica* 1.1; and Augustine, *Confessions* 10.50.

[47] Hoepffner, ed., *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut,* 1:8, st. 5, lines 52–55.

[48] Ibid., 1:8–9, st. 5, lines 56–84.

[49] See Nicolette Zeeman, "The Lover-Poet and Love as the Most Pleasing 'Matere' in Medieval French Love Poetry," *Modern Language Review* 83 (1988), 820–42. See also Ardis Butterfield, "Lyric and Elegy in *The Book of the Duchess,*" *Medium aevum* 60 (1991), 43–48.

[50] James I. Wimsatt, William W. Kibler, and Rebecca A. Baltzer, eds., *Guillaume de Machaut: Le jugement du roy de Behaigne and Remede de Fortune* (Athens, Ga., 1988), p. 189, lines 401–8: "Et pour ce que n'estoie mie / Tousdis en un point, m'estudie / Mis en faire chansons et lays, / Baladez, rondeaus,

statements are made by both lover and lady in the *Voir dit*. In each case the narrative reveals the lovers to be unreliable authorities, despite their seeming truth to their feelings. By the early 1370s, the date of MS A, their claims are additionally undermined because they make them in the context of a longer "book" (Machaut's collected works), whose reader is authoritatively directed by the *Prologue* to the correct understanding of this particular issue.[51]

The twin desiderata of music's joyfulness and the poet's authentic expression come into conflict because the latter does not allow the authentic representation of sorrow: sad songs displease an audience in need of music's joy, and yet a singer cannot guarantee the truth of his lyric if it does not accord with his own personal *sentement*. Or can he? Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet has contrasted the "new lyricism" of the fourteenth century with that of the thirteenth by identifying a shift in the manner of guaranteeing lyric truth parallel to an underlying change "from song to script." Bound closely with musical performance, thirteenth-century lyric was given its truth by being the direct communication of the singing body of the performer. As prosopopoeia, its emotional truth is sung, inhabited, and thus attested by a live presence. In the fourteenth century, however, the written lyric became orphaned from its singing body, and the projection of authentic *sentement* became the index of a new kind of truth anchored in writing.[52] The move from song to script is also one from singing to *sentement*. The problem of how to compose at once from *sentement* and on command for patrons or audiences thereby emerges as a new topos whose discussion in itself attests to authenticity of *sentement*.[53] As an example Cerquiglini-Toulet cites a rondeau by Christine de Pizan about smiling through tears to sing joyfully with a sad heart (see Figure 2). Christine's rondeau is clearly based on, and responds to, Machaut's *De triste cuer*. In Cerquiglini-Toulet's reading, the lyric of Christine (and by implication that by Machaut on which it is based) is not about a sorrowing lover unable to write joyful poetry but about a professional poet successfully negotiating the writing of poetry on command for patrons in a creative culture that elevates authentic authorial *sentement*.

Cerquiglini-Toulet recognizes that Machaut cannot be entirely annexed to the new lyricism since it is accompanied by a shift from the poetics of joy producing dance and song to the pleasures of reading and sorrow, and Machaut clearly values the former. Though he is interested in writing and *sentement* but is still employing the older poetics of joy governed by music and dance, Machaut is far more than merely a transitional figure between the two poetics. He actively attempts to bring the poetics of joy and hope into a written practice predicated on *sentement*. Although it might appear paradoxical given the new role of writing, music—especially polytextual music—is central to his efforts because it requires that writing and song be kept constantly in a mutually informing hermeneutic circle in the mind of

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virelays, / Et chans, selonc mon sentement, / Amoureus et non autrement; / Car qui de sentement ne fait, / Son oeuvre et son chant contrefait."

[51] The phrase occurs in Leech-Wilkinson and Palmer, eds. and transs., *Le livre dou voir dit,* p. 110, letter 8. Towards the end of the poem, as both lovers come under the sway of Fortune, Toute Belle composes an angry and sorrowful *virelai* "de mon sentement" (p. 586, letter 43), which is not set to music.

[52] See Cerquiglini, "Le nouveau lyrisme" (above, n. 38), p. 287.

[53] Ibid., pp. 285–86.

FIGURE 2
Christine de Pizan, *Rondeau* 11
Edited by Maurice Roy, *Œuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan,* 3 vols. (Paris, 1886–96), 1:153–54

De triste cuer chanter joyeusement
Et rire en dueil c'est chose fort a faire,
De son penser monstrer tout le contraire,
N'yssir doulz ris de doulent sentement.

Ainsi me fault faire communement,
Et me convient, pour celer mon affaire,
De triste cuer chanter joyeusement.
[Et rire en dueil c'est chose fort a faire.]

Car en mon cuer porte couvertement
Le dueil qui soit qui plus me puet desplaire,
Et si me fault, pour les gens faire taire,
Rire en plorant et trés amerement

De triste cuer chanter joyeusement.
[Et rire en dueil c'est chose fort a faire,
De son penser monstrer tout le contraire,
N'yssir doulz ris de doulent sentement.]

It is hard to sing joyfully from a sad heart and smile in grief, to show what is completely opposite to one's thoughts—a sweet smile doesn't come from sorrowful sentement.

But that is what I usually have to do, and to conceal what's going on with me I have to *sing joyfully from a sad heart and smile in grief; that's a hard thing to do.*

For in my heart I covertly carry what sorrow there is, which could upset me even more, and in order to keep people quiet, I therefore have to smile while crying very bitterly.

It is hard to sing joyfully from a sad heart and smile in grief, to show what is completely opposite to one's thoughts—a sweet smile doesn't come from sorrowful sentement.

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the reading-listening reader. The eye and ear as representative of the two teachable senses are the doors to memory in which knowledge can be stored and organized.[54]

Machaut's works, especially the lyrics, voice the thoughts of many lovers who try but fail to maintain hope; his musical works contain a number of songs expressing sorrow. But the frame of the book as a whole, opening with the *Prologue,* offers a means to interpret the necessary vicissitudes of human experience—life in the

[54] Hearing is typically considered more vital for learning than sight, but both senses are "teachable." Richard de Fournival's *Bestiaire d'amours,* which is copied in some late-thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century books containing trouvère lyrics set to music, opens with this image together with the citation of the opening of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* ("All men desire to know"); see Elizabeth Sears, "Sensory Perception and Its Metaphors in the Time of Richard of Fournival," in W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter, eds., *Medicine and the Five Senses* (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), pp. 17–20. On the relation of music to memory see especially Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley, Calif., 2005), chap. 6, "Visualization and the Composition of Polyphonic Music."

sway of Fortune—even if one can only be true to its demands intermittently.[55] Machaut's works show the essential humanity of both failure and striving to succeed, of both joy and sorrow, and of the authenticity of both written *sentement* and performative truth. By bringing them into conflict, he is able to address and reject a life of desire in favor of a life of hope, which is the consoling solution he brings to both readers and listeners.

B29 guarantees truth by the difficulty with which the listener-reader mentally combines, decombines, and recombines the competing voices whose musical harmony performs a rational hierarchy. For instance, the contratenor and cantus are not in counterpoint; that is, they do not make harmony between them. This is evident at the textual level since the assertion of the contratenor (*Certes je di*) that desire and sorrow improve the songs of the lover experiencing them is contradicted by the claim of the cantus (*De triste cuer*) that his audience is complaining about his songs because they reflect the desire and sorrow that produced them. The music makes this lack of agreement manifest. If the voice whose desire is producing sad song were to sing only with the singer who claims that this produces better songs, the result would "speak" for itself in sounding incomplete, inharmonious, cacophonous, and unpleasant, proving the point made by the poor lover in *De triste cuer* and the sage cleric in *Quant vrais amans*. The two parts do not make musical sense without the fundamental notes (and view) of the tenor (Sound File 7).[56]

Nearly three decades ago, Douglas Kelly saw Machaut's sublimation of desire through the use of hope as his most important contribution to the doctrine of courtly love.[57] More recently Sylvia Huot has called it "the consolation of poetry," a self-conscious rewriting of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* for a rather changed social structure in which secular and vernacular referents are more useful poetically than theology (although this does not stop them having serious religious and devotional resonances).[58] The relation to hope makes the loving experience

[55] Machaut's book—that is, each of the physical manuscripts of his poetry—effectively performs the function previously fulfilled by its author, who would have been a live didactic presence at court, aiding his employers and patrons in their interpretation of his texts and the understanding of the existential issues arising from them.

[56] When listening to Sound File 7 it is necessary to bear in mind the historical contingency of contrapuntal rules. To a modern listener, the combination of contratenor and cantus might sound quite consonant, but in medieval terms its held fourths (at the ends of sections) are regarded as dissonances. A certain amount of aural retraining is necessary to hear what Margaret Bent has termed "the grammar of medieval counterpoint"; see Margaret Bent, "The Grammar of Early Music: Preconditions for Analysis," in Cristle Collins Judd, ed., *Tonal Structures in Early Music,* Criticism and Analysis of Early Music 1, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 1998 (New York, 1998), pp. 15–59.

[57] Kelly, *Medieval Imagination* (above, n. 28), pp. 121–54.

[58] For a professional poet such as Machaut, the creation of poetry according to his own feelings is difficult: he was not of the social class for whom such feelings would be fitting of expression. However, the contratenor's point is also made: *merci* is not to be achieved since hope is about waiting for *merci* and maintaining joy in love through hope's combating of desire. This potential energy—the ongoing irresolution of desire without allowing it to prompt sad inarticulacy—is what generates poetry, avoiding the Scylla of desire's despair and the Charybdis of satisfaction's satiety. Desire is indeed necessary for creativity, but its resulting sorrow and despair can only be combated by the immediate deployment of hope, which turns desire into joy. And yet desire does not retreat because *merci* is not achieved but does remain expected. This ongoing state of expectation is only kept alive because desire must be continually combated by hope. The Christian resonances of this doctrine have been commented on at

self-sufficient and therefore socially safe. For the audience it enables sexual pleasures to be displaced into the pleasures of the text (which might largely be about erotic experience and can thereby offer vicarious pleasures). For the poet it enables something equally valuable: it allows the expression of joy and sorrow to be done with pleasure and sincerity but without making the achievement of love a precondition—a useful thing for a non-noble celibate professional. It thus preserves sincerity as well as proving the virtuous nature of erotic love poetry.

The argument that the *Prologue* categorically contradicts—that music should properly be composed out of sorrow when one is sad—occurs in *Certes je di,* where the musicalization of this text relative to the other two in the polyphonic complex exemplifies the exceptional power of music, in Machaut's hands at least, to instruct the emotional self through contemplation prompted by the two teachable senses: vision and hearing. This is not just polyphony in the metaphorical, literary sense employed in Bakhtinian readings but polyphony in the literal, music-technical sense of voices enacting language simultaneously and singing across, against, and with one another. Wrapping up this debate poem musically so that the question is posed simultaneously with its two debating answers offers a hierarchy to which listeners are directed because their senses are confused. In this the experience is analogous to love itself. Love causes confusion and sorrow when led only by the senses; *sentement* alone is not enough—*entendement* is required. Hearing these poems in their musical setting is not enough—they must also be read and rationalized. Deliberate aural obscurity redirects listeners to become readers, but the experience of reading will send them back again to the music, whose harmonic priorities make sense of the poems by placing them in a musical hierarchy.[59] Just as with his very similarly serious motets, Machaut turns B29 into an object of contemplation: it can be instanced but not thoroughly known in performance, while performance adds an extra layer of knowledge that cannot be read.[60]

Appendix
A Note on the Sound Files

The recording for the sound files accompanying this article in its online version was made in Oxford on Thursday 1 October 2009. It features a single singer, Gregory Skidmore (baritone), who performs all three voices. The recording engineer was John Duggan (www.john-duggan.co.uk); advice on Middle French pronunciation was given by Helen J. Swift. The

length in Anne Walters Robertson's reading of the motets (in *Guillaume de Machaut* [above, n. 9]) by viewing them as Christian allegoresis expressed in courtly vernacular terms. Psychoanalytical readings of desire and its substitutions have been pursued in Alexandre Leupin, "The Powerlessness of Writing: Guillaume de Machaut, the Gorgon and *Ordenance,*" *Yale French Studies* 70 (1986), 127–49. See also Sarah Kay, "Touching Singularity: Consolation, Philosophy, and Poetry in the French *Dit,*" in Catherine E. Léglu and Stephen J. Milner, eds., *The Erotics of Consolation: Desire and Distance in the Late Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, Eng., 2008), pp. 21–38.

[59] For a similar use of layout and repetition as a "polyphonic" meta-commentary on reading see McGrady, *Controlling Readers* (above, n. 4), pp. 140–41.

[60] The composition that results from sounding all these opinions together suggests that not only is composing from sorrow inadvisable but that composing from unmediated feeling per se is likely to lead, not to pleasure, but to blame.

files have been presented so as to enable the listener to hear all three voice parts individually, in any two-part combination, as well as to hear the full three-part song. All three stanzas of each *balade* text are recorded. The files may be accessed in the online version of this article at www.journals.cambridge.org/spc/S0038713410001302sup001.

Given that the song treats the relation between emotion and song composition, it is worth saying a little about the emotional content of the music of B29. Unfortunately we lack sufficient access to information about medieval performances to make clear pronouncements about features that typically affect the perception of music's emotional content. For example, we know little about tempo, pitch level, and vocal timbre, and even less about the practices of specific singers in performance or how audiences were affected. It seems likely that a great deal of the emotional representation of any song in this period was determined by the performer, in performance. Although we have pitches and rhythms specified in the notation, there is nothing else. This does not mean, of course, that singers did not "act" their songs but only that we do not know if, or how, they did. Some modern performers take their cue from the poetic text, representing joyful songs with lighter articulation and faster tempos and sadder songs with a more lugubrious pace and sustained vocal timbre. However, considered in its totality, B29 is straightforwardly neither a happy nor a sad song. The emotional states of the three *balades*' first-person singers are quite different from one another: while the cantus singer is experiencing sorrow (which, he says, is ruining his songs), the other two parts are more distanced and sententious. Might we then gain some idea of the emotional content from cues in the music—its harmonies or melodic motives? Unfortunately, studies of musical semiotics in music of later periods suggest that these features are historically contingent, and given that we lack the sources that might enable them to be deduced, this enterprise, too, seems rather impractical. However, a few features may be noted. First, the opening cantus line is quite striking: it has a descending sequence in a rhythm fairly unusual in this mensuration (mm. 2–4). Because the A section is repeated, we hear this passage six times. The cantus's rhythmic oddity continues with its striking rising sequence, grouped in paired semibreves, which cut across the ternary grouping that the mensuration sets up (mm. 15–16). That this passage is part of the "musical rhyme"—the shared ending section between the two musical parts of the song—means that we also hear this music six times. It would thus be possible to represent the cantus as singing rather uncomfortably within the time signature of the song as a whole, perhaps reflecting the singer's unhappy state and difficulty with song composition. In addition the song's three parts are noticeably full of musical figures that are shared with other Machaut songs, a feature that is apt given that it treats the subject of song composition.

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