
La Ballade, histoire et avatars d'une forme poétique

Sous la direction de Brigitte Buffard-Moret
et Mireille Demaules



HONORÉ CHAMPION
PARIS

**THE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY BALLADE
AT THE PRINCELY COURT:
SONGS BY GUILLAUME DE MACHAUT
AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES**

In its earliest manifestation in the thirteenth century, the ballade, as its name suggests, was intimately connected with dance¹, and, as such, music – and specifically, measured music – was intrinsic to its identity. In this early guise, this dance-song was accessible and memorable: its repetitive form was articulated by a catchy refrain that was often borrowed from a familiar existing song, and the straightforward style and “popular” tone of both its text and its music rendered the form eminently suited to choreographic and communal enjoyment². However, by ca. 1300 if not before, the ballade had begun to distance itself from its dance roots and to absorb elements of the lofty *grand chant*, which, by the 1310s, it displaced in the milieu of the French royal court, to judge from the notated examples of the *Roman de Fauvel* manuscript (BnF fr. 146)³. Given the dearth of extant ballades with musical notation from the 1320s and 30s, we know little about the development of the genre over those years. By mid-century, however, the ballade had assumed a new, progressive poetic and musical identity; with music and without, it captured the imagination of *faiseurs* and audiences alike for many decades to come,

¹ This essay was written as part of my research project “French Music in the Time of Jean de Berry”, supported by a Major Research Fellowship funded by The Leverhulme Trust, UK (2015-18), and of “*Ioculator seu mimus* (MiMus) Performing Music and Poetry in medieval Iberia” (ERC-CoG-2017-772762) led by Anna Alberni. My account of the ballade here builds on my previous research into the development of this form, with and without music, and of Ars nova song more generally, presented in Yolanda Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song: Citation and Allusion in the Age of Machaut*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

² Trouvère chansonnier Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 308, for instance, transmits the texts of thirteenth-century ballades (designated *ballettes*) and rondeaux, alongside *grands chants*, *jeux partis* and other traditional forms. For an account of the *ballettes* of this manuscript, see Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*, chapter 1.

³ *Ibid.*, chapters 2 (on Jehan de Lescurel) and 3 (on the *Roman de Fauvel*).

and for lyric poets and song-writers working at the cutting edge it now became the vehicle of choice. By 1350, leading poet-composers like Jean de Le Mote and Guillaume de Machaut were already experimenting extensively with the ballade⁴; by then, Machaut had produced some two hundred ballade poems that display an impressive diversity of forms (*tailles*)⁵, and he evidently played a major role, too, in the development of the intricate polyphonic musical style with which such lyrics became closely associated from this point on.

Over the ensuing decades, the ballade with and without music rapidly gained favour with organizers of *puy*s and other cultural manifestations, as well as with members of the aristocratic elite. At court, princes patronized the composition and performance of ballades and their inscription into books, and some even aspired to compose them: Valois prince Jean, duc de Berry, who we now know owned at least two of the extant manuscripts of Machaut's complete works⁶, took part in a collaborative exchange of ballade poems in the late 1380s⁷, while his nephew-in-law King Johan I of Aragon expressed great pride on learning how to compose polyphonic musical settings in the French style for such lyrics⁸.

⁴ On Jean de Le Mote as poet and composer, see *ibid.*, chapter 6 and 7. For another recent overview of Le Mote as poet, see Silvère Menegaldo, *Le Dernier Ménestrel? Jean de Le Mote, une poétique en transition (autour de 1340)*, Droz, Publications romanes et françaises, 265, 2015.

⁵ On the formal variety in Machaut's ballade lyrics see Marc-René Jung, "Les plus anciennes ballades de Machaut et la tradition antérieure de la ballade: Aspects métriques," in *Convergences médiévales: Épopée, lyrique, roman. Mélanges offerts à Madeleine Tjssens*, ed. Nadine Henrard, Paola Moreno, and Martine Thiry-Stassin, Brussels, De Boeck University, 2001, p. 287-97.

⁶ An ex-libris in BnF fr. 9221 (Ms E) indicates the prince's ownership. Anna Alberni and Stefano Cingolani discovered new evidence in a letter by Berry's niece, Yolande, Queen of Aragon, that identifies the prince as the original owner of Ferrell-Vogüé Codex (Ms Vg), and first presented this finding at a conference on Guillaume de Machaut at the University of Exeter in 2013; see Anna Alberni, "Machaut's Literary Legacy in the Crown of Aragon: the Catalan Chansonnier *Vega-Aguiló* and the anonymous *Roman du Cardenois*," in Nicola Morato and Dirk Schoenaers, eds, *The Moving Word. Studies in Medieval Francophone Culture outside France*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2018, p. 391-410. With Uri Smilansky, I identified the owner of BnF fr. 22545-6 (Ms F-G) with a chamberlain of the prince, from heraldry in the book; see "A Courtier's Quest for Cultural Capital. New Light on Machaut Manuscript F-G," in preparation.

⁷ See the responses to the *Cent ballades* in Alessandro Vitale-Broverone, "Recueil de galanteries (Torino, Archivio di Stato, J.b.IX.10)," *Le Moyen Français* 6, Ceres, 1980.

⁸ Barcelona, Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, Reg. 1658, fol. 108. This document, along with thousands of others relating to music and musicians at the medieval courts of Aragon, will soon be available on an online database created as part of the project "*Ioculator seu mimus*" (see note 1).

In this essay, I shall examine a selection of songs by Machaut and his younger contemporaries that illustrate how the ballade with music developed into a sophisticated, subtle and elegant form in the second half of the fourteenth century. These works demonstrate that while ballades without music were prized as vehicles for collective recreation at court, their transformation into song increased their potential to impress and, thereby, to heighten the standing of both author and aristocratic patron. As we will see, in the hands of Guillaume de Machaut and others active in the orbit of the Valois royal courts, the ballade with music became a potent symbol of cultural prestige, not least for an illustrious prince like Jean de Berry; on occasion, it even fulfilled an overtly political function.

CITATIONAL PLAY AND SOCIABILITY: MACHAUT'S BALLADE 34

By the 1350s, when the first of his extant collected works manuscripts was copied, probably for Jean de Berry's parents, Jean II of France (r. 1350-64) and Bonne of Luxembourg (d. 1349), Machaut had already produced an impressive corpus of poetry and music. In addition to several *dits*, this comprised many short refrain-lyrics, including 174 ballades, and a significant corpus of songs that includes *lais* and *virelais* set in the old way to single melodies, but also *rondeaux* and ballades that are distinguished by their polyphonic settings in the up-to-date *Ars nova* musical style. The character of Machaut's early polyphonic ballades, the first datable examples of this new approach to song, suggests that, by mid-century, the ballade had shed its former ties with dance, at least in the hands of advanced composers like him⁹. The ballade became Machaut's favourite song-form and the one in which he continually sought to innovate¹⁰, and it is in the 42 ballades with music he had completed by the time of his death in 1377 that we find his boldest musical thinking.

⁹ The *rondeau*, too, was no longer necessarily for dance, as the religious *rondeaux* sung in the annual Marian Miracle plays performed by the goldsmiths' guild in Paris from the late 1330s onward, suggest; see Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*, chapter 5. One of the ballades of the *Roman de la dame a la Licorne* (composed in 1350 for the Queen of France) serves dance in the story; space left for musical notation in the manuscript suggests this would have been a monophonic setting.

¹⁰ Machaut's very earliest ballades already reflect his highly experimental approach: in his first one he applied the "isorhythmic" principle associated with the motet, in his second he developed the melodic style and contrapuntal texture that would become more typical for these songs; his third and fourth he crafted around borrowed material.

As I have discussed in detail elsewhere¹¹, citational play, which had been a fundamental characteristic of thirteenth-century refrain-songs, remained a salient feature of the fourteenth-century ballade. Machaut's ballade lyrics are peppered with poetic motifs, fragments and refrains that hark back to the trouvère song repertoires, and although many such elements had remained part of the traditional vocabulary of lyric, in certain cases it is clear that Machaut drew quite deliberately on specific models from the past. His Ballade 12, *Pour ce que tous mes chans*, for instance, was crafted around text and music from a *ballette* from ca. 1300; the same material frames the *chace Se je ne chans* by Denis Le Grant, royal chaplain of Jean II of France, which invites us to wonder whether these works were the products of a citational joust between Machaut and his peer¹². Certain of the many textual replications that recur in Machaut's ballades can similarly be traced to earlier refrain-song models¹³. Others point to *grands chants* by his illustrious predecessors, notably Thibaut de Champagne; indeed, my recent findings have revealed that Machaut engaged far more deeply with the trouvères than previously suspected¹⁴, and that this was also true of certain of his successors from the French royal milieu ca. 1400¹⁵. It seems, then, that although it had now been supplanted by a new order of song-writing by 1350, the trouvère song tradition continued to resonate in the collective imagination, still carrying with it, perhaps, associations of prestige.

The allusive impulse inherited from the trouvères emphasizes the intrinsic sociability of the fourteenth-century ballade and its potential to serve for courtly and competitive exchange. Certain of Machaut's *chansons royales* suggest that he participated in city *puy*s in their address to

¹¹ *The Art of Grafted Song*, chapter 1. See also my "Citational Practice in the Later Middle Ages," in Mark Everist, ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval Music*, 2, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 1177-1206.

¹² *The Art of Grafted Song*, p. 299-305.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 292-99.

¹⁴ See Yolanda Plumley, "Guillaume de Machaut and the Advent of a New School of Lyric c. 1350: The Prestige of the Past," in Domenic Leo and Lawrence Earp, eds, *An Illuminated Manuscript of the 'Collected Works' of Guillaume de Machaut (BnF, ms. Fr. 1586): A Vocabulary for Exegesis*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2020 (in press). See also Jacques Boogaart, "Encompassing Past and Present: Quotations and their Function in Machaut's Motets," *Early Music History* 20 (2001), p. 1-86.

¹⁵ I have discovered a surprisingly extensive example of direct modelling on a trouvère grand chant in a ballade from ca. 1400; see Yolanda Plumley, "Memories of the Mainland in the Songs of the Cyprus Codex," in G. Clement and I. Fabre, eds, *Poetry and Music of the Ars Subtilior Period (1380-1430): The Codex Turin, BNU J.II.9*, Paris, Garnier, 2020 (in press).

the “prince” (judge), but many of his ballade lyrics, too, evoke the activity of these formal lyric contests in their repeated quotation and variation of familiar textual fragments. We find many instances where two or more of Machaut’s ballade lyrics are interconnected by a shared line or distinctive fragments, in addition to their common form, vocabulary and rhyme-words; in certain cases, this lyric process is especially deliberate and fulfils a generative purpose, as whole lines are redeployed systematically across a sequence of contiguous lyrics, migrating across incipits and refrains to form an intertextual network of poems on a specific theme¹⁶. Whether all the materials he re-deployed and developed in this way existed previously is hard to say. However, one particularly interesting case with music that sheds light on one occasion on which Machaut responded to the work of a peer is his Ballade 34, *Quant Theseus/Ne quier veoir*, which appears in his *Voir dit* from the early 1360s. This song sets two interrelated lyrics that Machaut tells us in the tale were written by him and a certain Thomas Paien, a secretary of Jean de Berry and fellow canon of Machaut’s at Reims cathedral¹⁷. From Machaut’s account, it seems Thomas set the stakes by composing his ballade lyric first; in *puy*-like fashion, this set the framework – in terms of form, refrain, theme, and vocabulary – within which Guillaume was then constrained to work. The latter, humorously protesting to his lady that this gave his lyric interlocutor an unfair advantage, strove to surpass his adversary by amplifying the quantity and the extravagance of his imagery, and by the general verve of his verse, as illustrated by the first stanzas of the two poems:

Thomas Paien

Quant Theseus, Hercules et Jason
 Cerchierent tout et terre et mer parfonde,
 Pour acroistre leur pris et leur renon
 Et pour veoir bien tout l’estat dou monde,
 Moult furent dignes d’onnour.
 Mais quant je voy de biauté l’umble flour,
 Assevis sui de tout si que, par m’ame,
 Je voy assez, puis que je voy ma dame.

Machaut’s response

Ne quier veoir la biauté d’Absalon
 Ne de Ulixes le scens et la faconde,
 Ne esprouver la force de Sanson,
 Ne regarder que Dalida le tonde.
 Ne cure n’ay par nul tour
 Des yeus Argus, ne de joie gringnour,
 Car pour plaiseance et sans aide d’ame,
 Je voy assez, puis que je voy ma dame.

¹⁶ See Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*, chapter 9, and especially p. 328-36; Machaut’s proto-narrative sequences may have inspired the author of the *Trésor amoureux*.

¹⁷ See Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*, p. 367-408 for a detailed analysis of this work and its progeny. In the tale, the poet-narrator also exchanges lyrics and songs with his lady Toute Belle in his *Voir dit* from the early 1360s; here the lyric exchange serves to stage a dialogue between the lovers; Guillaume’s lyrics and songs serve to instruct his young admirer in the gentle art of composition, but also to woo her.

Where Guillaume was entirely confident that he had gained the upper hand in this informal contest, however, was with the musical setting he provided for these paired lyrics. For this, he chose an unusual format: instead of the more usual arrangement of a single singing part (cantus) with one to three supporting parts, here two cantus voices of equal register present his and Thomas's poems simultaneously, over an accompaniment provided by two un-texted lower parts. The competitive relationship between the two ballade lyrics is thus staged musically. When recited, the poems would be read in sequence but now they are fused into an arresting, multi-dimensional musical edifice: the two sung melodies represent the two poets' voices, and like the lyrics, vie with one another for the listeners' attention and approbation. It is only when they join to sing the shared refrain, which encapsulates the culminating message of the song – that the lover desires to see nothing other than his lady – that the two texted melodies cease to compete and unite to present this message in a remarkably co-ordinated fashion. This moment is lent great rhetorical emphasis by the sudden slowing of pace and simplification of musical texture, and by the long pauses that articulate this statement.

In the *Voir dit*, the poet-narrator Guillaume declares himself very satisfied with his musical achievement in Ballade 34. Indeed, it seems the song was much admired for its ingenuity and novelty in French court circles because it was repeatedly imitated by other poets and composers. This includes songs by Grimace and Jean Vaillant, another servant of Jean de Berry¹⁸, and Fr. Andrieu, which variously adopt Machaut's musical solution to setting paired lyrics and echo distinctive musical motifs from Ballade 34, notably the striking rhetorical pauses used to such effect there to highlight the refrain. Andrieu's song sets to music a *ballade double* on Machaut's death by Deschamps and thus adds homage to the late poet-composer in musical terms.

MUSICAL ENCOUNTERS: INFLUENCES FROM THE MINSTREL TRADITION

It is tempting to imagine that the ballade lyrics by Païen and Machaut and Machaut's song-setting, along with some of the works this inspired, were presented at an occasion at which Jean de Berry was present; I have proposed elsewhere this may have been in Calais in 1363¹⁹. Linking these

¹⁸ Ursula Günther, "Die Musiker des Herzogs von Berry," *Musica Disciplina* 17 (1963), p. 79-95, at p. 82-3.

¹⁹ Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*, p. 384.

works to this patron rests of course on circumstantial evidence, but the very recent intelligence that now places this prince at the nexus of the surviving Machaut manuscripts invites us to reconsider the relationship between Machaut's works and this patron. Another song that Machaut presents in his *Voir dit* may offer further musical evidence to connect the author with the prince. Ballade 33, *Nes qu'on porroit les estoilles nombrer*, is also an interesting case to consider, however, because, once again, Machaut comments on this work in his tale, this time offering us rare insights into certain musical influences that inspired him.

Scholars have long mused as to what it was about Ballade 33 that prompted Machaut's particular pride and how we should understand the enigmatic comments he offers about the song. In two letters to his lady, the poet-composer twice discusses the song, commenting that he has now provided music for the lyric poem at her behest and has devised it "à la guise d'un res d'alemangne." The result strikes him as "moult estranges et nouviaus", and he considers it the best thing he has composed in a long time; its accompanying parts, he exclaims, are "aussi douces comme papins dessalés". He recommends that the lady learns it "einsi comme elle est faite sans mettre ne oster, et se wet dire de bien longue mesure" – presumably, as it is written, without adding ornamentation or altering it in any way, and at a slow tempo – and he encourages her to have it arranged for organ, bagpipe (*cornemuse*) or other instrument, for this, he suggests, is "sa droite nature"²⁰.

Daniel Poirion understood Machaut's comments to mean that the song was built around a borrowed melody called *un res d'alemangne*²¹, but more recently scholars have concluded that Machaut was suggesting that he had cast his song in the style of German instrumental music. Patrick Little and Frank Willaert independently suggested that "res" referred to a specific kind of Germanic dance called a *rei* or *reie*²², and building on this, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson proposed that the harmonic structure of

²⁰ Citations are from *Guillaume de Machaut. Le Livre dou Voir Dit*, ed. by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, translated by R. Barton Palmer, Garland Publishing, New York and London, 1998, p. 124 (slightly adapted).

²¹ Daniel Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1965, p. 202.

²² Patrick Little, "Three Ballades in Machaut's *Livre du Voir-Dit*," *Studies in Music* (University of Western Australia) 14, p. 45-60, at p. 50; Frank Willaert, "Hovedans: Fourteenth-Century Dancing Songs in the Rhine and Meuse area," in Erik Kooper, ed., *Medieval Dutch Literature in its European Context*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 168-87, at p. 177-8.

Machaut's song recalls the style of certain dance-songs with wind accompaniment by the Monk of Salzburg. Leech-Wilkinson suggested that while Ballade 33 might indeed have worked for the bagpipes, it would have been less easily adapted to the organ, at least the kind suggested by extant instrumental arrangements of fourteenth-century songs²³. Jennifer Bain's pertinent counter suggestion was that Machaut might have had in mind ensemble rather than solo performance, and that the portative organ was well suited for the intricate melodies of French songs from this period²⁴.

A passage from the *Les Eschéz d'Amours* (from c. 1377), that has been overlooked by musicologists sheds intriguing light on these questions. It describes an instrumental performance of a *res d'alemangne* by some enviably virtuosic minstrels²⁵, skilled practitioners of a host of instruments, who enthusiastically agree to entertain a great gathering before the Dieu d'Amours:

La oïst un res d'Allemaigne
De mainte guise moult estraigne,
Dances, estampiez, chansons
En pluseurs divers plaisans sons,
Et moult d'aultrez nottez nouvelles.²⁶

The narrative then lists a variety of soft (*bas*) instruments in connection with this performance ("qui faisoient moult douceiz nottez"), string instruments of diverse kinds, but also mentions the *orgues a main*, the portative organ; this is surely instrument Machaut felt would be ideal for an instrumental performance of his Ballade 33, as Bain surmised. Interestingly, the narrative goes on to stipulate that it was only when the company wanted to dance that the loud (*haulz*) wind instruments, including the *cornemuses*, started to sound. This implies that in this context, at

²³ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Le Voir Dit and La Messe de Nostre Dame: Aspects of Genre and Style in Late Works of Machaut," *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 2, 1993, p. 43-73, at p. 51-53.

²⁴ Jennifer Bain, "Balades 32 and 33 and the 'res d'alemangne'," in Elizabeth Eva Leach, ed., *Machaut's Music: New Interpretations*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2003, p. 205-219.

²⁵ "Ains jouoyent a l'envial / Li menestrel especial." *Les Eschéz d'Amours: A Critical Edition of the Poem and its Latin Glosses*, ed. Gregory Heyworth, Daniel E. O'Sullivan, and Frank Coulson, Leiden, Brill, 2013, lines 4293-4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, lines 4295-99. I have corrected the reading given there from 'on ros d'Allemaigne' to 'un res d'Allemaigne', in line with Christine Kraft's edition (which follows a different manuscript source), as cited by Frank Willaert, "Hovedans".

least, the performance of the *res d'alemangne* involved neither bagpipes nor other wind instruments, and that this form, as well as the *danses*, *estampiez* and *chansons*, and like the contemporary ballade, was listened rather than danced to. Also interesting is the reference to the playing of the *res d'alemangne* in “mainte guise moult estrainge” (many varied and strange ways), for this language directly echoes Machaut’s description of his Ballade 33.

Although we lack extant notated examples to inform us about its precise nature, this description of a performance of a *res d'alemangne*, together with the indirect evidence provided by the music of Machaut’s Ballade 33, suggests this was a musical form of some novelty, one associated with instrumental practice of a particularly striking and unusual kind, and that it was not necessarily intended for dancing. Machaut’s allusion to it in the *Voir dit* implies that the genre was already impressing listeners, including himself, some ten or fifteen years before the account of the *Eschez d’Amours* was written. What was it, then, about the setting of Ballade 33 that evoked this type of music? In light of the above insights into the performance tradition, it seems possible, as others have suggested, that it is something about the intricate motivic profile of Ballade 33 that evokes the elusive form; possibly, this imitates aspects of an improvisatory practice²⁷, but the manner in which the two accompanying parts meld together, each contributing to motivic exchange and harmonic support, might also have marked the song’s novelty in Machaut’s eyes.

NAMING THE PRINCELY PATRON

The motivic working of Ballade 33 is also fascinating for the light it sheds on Machaut’s compositional process, for it suggests that the poet-composer generated text and music in a surprisingly similar fashion. Ardis Butterfield has demonstrated how the lyric of Ballade 33 evolves

²⁷ I am not entirely convinced, however, by Bain’s argument that “in sheer motivic density, and in its repetitions and variation of melodic lines [Ballade 33] is unlike all the other songs of Machaut, including B32 with which it otherwise shares so much”; see Bain, “Machaut’s Balades 32 and 33,” p. 215-6, and her detailed analysis of the two works. Bain identified three main musical motifs in B33, two of which are developed only in the cantus and one in the lower parts, primarily the tenor. Marie Louise Göllner interpreted the motivic content slightly differently, tracing the regular exchange of a “rocking” rhythmic motif between the two lower parts, in “Guillaume de Machaut: Notation and Compositional Process,” *Anuario Musical*, 56 (2001), p. 21-31; however, that “rocking” motif, like the cantus ones, is not unique to B33.

out of material first presented in the *Voir dit* within one of the letters Guillaume sends to Toute Belle. It is developed further in a ballade without music that appears after Ballade 33, which itself shares turns of phrase with a lyric in virelai form that is presented thereafter. Machaut had evidently composed the latter some years previously, however, because it appears in his earliest extant manuscript; this existing lyric therefore generated the newer work²⁸. A similarly reiterative and derivative approach appears to lie behind the composition of the musical setting. As Bain noted, the cantus of Ballade 33 develops two idiosyncratic motifs, that were also plainly on the poet-composer's mind as he was composing the *Voir dit* since he used them together again in his Rondeaux 13 (*Dame, se vous n'avez aperceü*) and 17 (*Dix et sept, cinq*), and in Ballade 32 (*Plourés dames*), all of which songs feature in the tale. The first of these motifs comprises an ascent followed by a downward leap (see **Example 1**); the second, heard in Ballades 32, 33, and 36 (*Se pour ce muir*), is a sinuous and distinctive descending motif (see **Example 2**)²⁹. Neither motif was new for each is found, separately or in tandem, in certain earlier songs by Machaut. The second, in particular, plays a prominent role in Machaut's sung Ballades 26 (*Donnez, signeurs*), 27 (*Une vipere en cuer*), and 28 (*Je puis trop bien comparer*), which probably date from ca. 1360, thus close in time to Ballades 32, 33 and 36; but it occurs also in two earlier songs: briefly, in the *baladelle En amer a douce vie* from the *Remede de Fortune*, and, pervasively, in *Cinc, un, tresp* (Rondeau 6).

Why did Machaut return to this musical material so repeatedly? Was it meaningful to him simply for musical reasons? Or did it hold some extra-musical significance? Some years ago, I drew attention to an intriguing quotation of this same musical motif in an anonymous ballade, where, as in the *Voir dit* Ballades 32, 33, and 36, it is set at centre stage. *En mon cuer* brings Ballade 33 particularly to mind because it closely

²⁸ See Ardis Butterfield, "The Art of Repetition: Machaut's Ballade 33 *Nes qu'on porroit*," *Early Music* 31 (2003), p. 347-60, at p. 353, and Lawrence Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research*, New York and London, 1995, p. 349-50. On other passages in the *Voir dit* where material Machaut had explored already in earlier of his lyrics is integrated and re-worked, see Jacqueline Cerquiglini, "*Un engin si subtil*". *Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au XIV^e siècle*, Paris, Champion, 1985, p. 34-39.

²⁹ I have explored further how Machaut reworked musical ideas across formal boundaries in "Self-Citation and Compositional Process: Guillaume de Machaut's Lyrics with and without Music: the Case of 'Dame, se vous n'avez aperceü'," in Jennifer Bain and Deborah McGrady, eds, *A Companion to Guillaume de Machaut*, Leiden, Brill, 2012, p. 158-83; see also Plumley, *The Art of Grafted Song*, chapters 9 and 10.

imitates the start of that song at its own opening (see **Example 3**)³⁰. I discovered that the text of *En mon cuer* also encloses a subtle reference to a historical personage; its single stanza describes precisely the *cigne navré*, Jean de Berry's favourite device that he adopted ca. 1365:

En mon cuer est un blanc cine pourtrait
 Qu'Amour y a navré si doucement
 D'un dart d'amours, que ma dame y a trait.
 En la playe est un rubins d'orient:
 Un signes est que j'aim parfaitement
 La douce flour por qui telx maulz j'endure,
Quant je la voy en sa propre figure.

I noted, too, that distinctive musical material from *En mon cuer* is in turn quoted in a pair of interrelated sung ballades (by Trebor and Egidius) that form part of a larger intertextual network composed for Jean de Berry's second marriage of 1389³¹.

Jean de Berry has long been identified as the dedicatee of Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse*, but this musical evidence, and the recent discoveries that link the prince with several of the extant Machaut manuscripts, invite us to consider whether further works by Machaut can be connected with the prince. These new discoveries recently prompted Lawrence Earp to muse whether the musical motif quoted in *En mon cuer* was some kind of musical cipher for the prince³². Could it be that this musical fragment is an aural equivalent to the visual symbol of the wounded swan, a way of naming the prince in a similarly oblique manner but now in musical terms? It may seem anachronistic to suggest that musical material from this period carried extra-musical meaning of this kind³³, but this is certainly an interesting question, for we still understand little about how

³⁰ See the detailed analysis in Yolanda Plumley, "An 'Episode in the South' ? Ars Subtilior and the Patronage of French Princes," *Early Music History* 22 (2003), 103-68. *En mon cuer* employs the same unusual b-flat tonal type as Machaut's Ballade 36.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Lawrence Earp, with Domenic Leo and Carla Shapreau, *The Ferrell-Vogüé Machaut Manuscript*. Facsimile with Introductory Study, Oxford, Diamm Publications, 2014, p. 42.

³³ Indeed, the kind of "word-painting" familiar from later repertories is not typical of late medieval music, although some musical gestures in Machaut's music strongly suggest an expressive response to the words. See the commentaries to his motets in the new edition *Guillaume de Machaut: The Complete Poetry and Music*, vol. 9: *The Motets*, ed. by Jacques Boogaart, translation by Barton Palmer and Jacques Boogaart, with art historical commentary by Domenic Leo (Art Historical commentary), Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute Publications, 2018.

music from this period communicated with, and was understood by, contemporary listeners. Another song by Machaut that may strengthen Earp's hypothesis is Rondeau 6 (see **Example 4**), which, once again, is pervaded by this idiosyncratic musical material. Tantalisingly, like *En mon cuer*, its text encloses a covert reference to a patron: this time an anagram that spells JEHAN. The anagram prompted Ernest Hoepffner to link Rondeau 6 with Jean de Berry's marriage to Jeanne d'Armagnac in 1360, along with Machaut's un-notated ballade *Amis, je te porte nouvelle* (Lo212), which features a similar anagram (spelling JEHANE). These two items and certain others, Hoepffner proposed, were composed at the same time as the *Fonteinne amoureuse*, which itself names the composer and Jean de Berry by anagram³⁴. Although other candidates have been proposed as the dedicatee of Rondeau 6 and Lo212³⁵, the case of *En mon cuer* strengthens Hoepffner's hypothesis.

Whether Rondeau 6 was composed close in date to the Machaut ballades with which it shares this motivic material is unclear, but it seems plausible that this song was on Machaut's mind as he compiled his *Voir dit*. If its anagram indeed names Jean de Berry, then might its musical content, too, have carried an association with the prince? It seems worth mentioning that in the very *Voir dit* letters that speak of Ballade 33, Guillaume alerts his lady that he will send her this song together with his *Fonteinne amoureuse*. This suggests that the latter was still topical and on the poet-composer's mind when he composed Ballade 33; so, too, might have been its princely dedicatee and the rondeau Machaut had previously composed to honour him³⁶.

The songs discussed here illustrate well the subtlety and sophistication of ballades with music from the later fourteenth century, which, as we have seen, are often far more subtle and multi-layered than we might first suspect. Such works showcase the ingenuity of poet-composers of ballades in this period but they also shed valuable light on the refined tastes in music and verse of contemporary court society. But these cases also emphasize that there remains much to learn about late medieval

³⁴ Ernest Hoepffner, *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut*, Société des Anciens Textes Français 57, vol. 3, Paris, Champion, 1921, p. 255.

³⁵ See Lawrence Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research*, New York and London, Garland Publishing, 1995, p. 300 and p. 263.

³⁶ Earp suggests that Berry might have been the noble for whom Machaut tells us he was having his work copied (perhaps a reference to MS Vg); *The Ferrell-Vogüé Machaut Manuscript*, p. 43.

songs and the contexts and influences that shaped them. As we have seen, Ballade 33 offers intriguing clues about the influence of minstrels and the unwritten instrumental tradition on literate, church-trained musicians like Machaut. *En mon cuer*, on the other hand, evokes another familiar figure from the princely courts, the herald, whose history was closely entwined with that of minstrels but whose path inevitably must also have crossed that of poet-composers like Machaut. Its author's engagement with the language of heraldry invites us to consider how this song, and others like it, would have served alongside and interacted with the material objects and architectural spaces that displayed heraldry in visual form³⁷. The medium of song had the power to articulate such symbolic ciphers in a particularly arresting manner, one that lent great rhetorical emphasis by exploiting musical sound. By combining words and music, the fourteenth-century ballade offered a potentially powerful vehicle for political propaganda, as is artfully demonstrated in a work written a decade or so after Machaut's death, probably in 1389 (see **Example 5**). *S'aincy estoit* by Solage is an extravagant song that makes no secret of its dedicatee: in place of an anagram or heraldic allusion, the patron is named directly in the text, within a bold statement that is explicitly and unashamedly partisan. The music, however, adds a subtler endorsement: its complex rhythmic language and the general complexity of the musical style is a clear tribute to a lord who valued the most sophisticated music-making and the best musicians: the virtuosity of the cantus as it sings out his name as "Jhean duc gentilz de Berry" reinforces with impressive and emphatic verve the bald political statement encapsulated in this song, that this prince was to be respected and admired for his prestige, dignity and power. Songs like this one emphasize the significant contribution of music not only to the cultural politics of late fourteenth-century court society, but even to the staging of princely power.

Yolanda PLUMLEY
University of Exeter

³⁷ Exploration of how precisely musical works participated in this symbolic form of communication, with which court society was so familiar, is a subject that I shall explore in detail elsewhere.

APPENDIX

R13 breves 24–27
and 40–43

de

R17 breves 15–18

-se qua tor - se et

B32 breves 4–5

plou - - - - -

B33 breves 14–15

Example 1: Shared musical motif in Machaut's Rondeaux 13 and 17,
and Ballades 32 and 33 (BnF, fr. 1584).

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B32 breves 5–6

B33 breves 2–4

les

B36 breves 4–5

qu'a - - - - - mours ay bien

Example 2: Shared musical motif in Machaut's Ballades 32,
33 and 36 (BnF, fr. 1584).

© Yolanda Plumley.

B33

Nes que on por - roit les de
Et les gou - tes de

En mon cuer
En mon cuer
D'un dart d'A - - - - - est mours

Example 3: Interrelationships between Machaut's B33 (BnF, fr. 1584) and *En mon cuer* (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Panciatichiano 26). © Yolanda Plumley.

Cinc, un, trese,
Tenor

huit, neuf d'a - mour fi - - - - - ne

Example 4: Guillaume de Machaut, Rondeau 6 (BnF, fr. 1584). (edition by Yolanda Plumley, Anne Stone and Uri Smilansky). © Yolanda Plumley.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, the middle staff is the Tenor line, and the bottom staff is the Contratenor line. The music is in a 3/8 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

System 1:

Vocal line: Du bon / Et le

Tenor line: (Two-measure rests, then eighth notes)

Contratenor line: (Quarter notes)

System 2:

Vocal line: Jhe an duc / mon de se

Tenor line: (Quarter notes)

Contratenor line: (Quarter notes)

System 3:

Vocal line: gen tilz de Ber ry / roit a

Tenor line: (Quarter notes)

Contratenor line: (Quarter notes)

Example 5: *S'aincy estoit* by Solage
 (Bibliothèque du Château de Chantilly, MS 564). (edition by Uri Smilansky).
 © Yolanda Plumley.

Liée au chant et à la danse, la ballade serait apparue au XIII^e siècle dans la littérature du Nord de la France et a joui d'un incontestable prestige dans la poésie de la fin du Moyen Âge. Proscrite par les poètes de la Pléiade, elle a cependant résisté au XVII^e et au XVIII^e siècles, pour renaître sous une forme complètement différente, non fixe, dont la thématique, empruntée notamment à la ballade anglaise, s'inspire de la légende, de l'histoire et de la complainte ; elle connaît un grand succès au XIX^e siècle tant en France que dans la littérature européenne. De nos jours, la ballade a investi le domaine de la chanson, continuant une tradition populaire, d'extension européenne, sans lien apparent avec le genre aristocratique médiéval. Que peuvent avoir en commun, à part la dénomination, une ballade médiévale, une ballade romantique, une ballade en prose et une ballade chantée de nos jours ?

Avec le souci d'allier une perspective comparatiste à l'étude de cette forme poétique, dix-huit spécialistes reconsidèrent cette question, et d'autres attenantes, permettant des découvertes insolites sur les surprenantes métamorphoses de la ballade.

Brigitte Buffard-Moret est professeure de langue française et de stylistique à l'université d'Artois. Ses travaux de recherche portent sur les formes de la poésie française héritées de la chanson. Elle a notamment publié un Précis de versification (Paris, Dunod, 2001, rééd. revue et augmentée, Armand Colin, 2017), et La Chanson poétique du XIX^e siècle, origines, statut et formes (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006, Prix Louis Barthou de l'Académie française 2007).

Mireille Demaules est professeure de littérature française du Moyen Âge à l'université d'Artois. Spécialiste du récit de rêve dans la littérature romanesque et allégorique du XII^e au XV^e siècle, elle est l'auteure d'un essai sur le sujet, La Corne et l'Ivoire (Paris, Honoré Champion, 2010), et a dirigé un volume collectif intitulé Expériences oniriques dans la littérature et les arts du Moyen Âge au XVIII^e siècle (Paris, Honoré Champion, 2016).

