

**MUSIC IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH ROMANCE:  
MUSICAL THEORY AND MUSICAL PRACTICE, c. 1200–1400**

by

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I, Emilia P. Klimova, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:

## Abstract

This thesis examines the depiction of music as an affective force in three kinds of narrative from the corpus of insular romance – kingship quest romances, romances engaging with magic, and Tristan romances – which represent a thematic cross-section of ‘music romances’, as I am dubbing them. The attitudes to the representation of music and musicians in these samples of music romances is, even within a single set of case studies, fluid and variable, but I will show how these romances draw from a shared pool of musical tropes which create a commonality between seemingly disparate texts. I argue that the differences in the portrayal of music’s affective, transformational capabilities in the case studies are primarily a function of the thematic concerns of these texts and their respective genres and modal possibilities. In each case study, one of the romances depicts music’s affective force in its ideal form, where the other challenges the ideal by inverting or undermining the tropes, devoting more attention to the limitations and shortcomings of music’s capabilities. I will look at the various kinds of narratives that these tropes enable: the same set of tropes binding these narratives together allows for considerable range in the representation of concerns about and attitudes to the powers of music.

Bringing together the disciplines of medieval musicology and medieval literary studies, I argue that the primary audiences of medieval romance would have been familiar with certain musical contexts, and that these frameworks would have facilitated their understanding and appreciation of music as depicted in the romances, especially in scenes of ritualised elite entertainment. Building on scholarship that discusses music’s affective powers in the Middle Ages, this thesis rests on a conviction of music’s ability – as an aesthetic, social, and affective phenomenon – to influence the physical world and the emotional state of listeners. I trace the development of these principles in medieval musical treatises and their inheritance from classical and late antique precursors, especially Boethius, who curated this older tradition. My analysis reveals a shift from theoretical music (*musica speculativa*) to practical music (*musica practica*) in the medieval period, moving away from classical thought; argues for the centrality of education in debates as to whether musical skill is innate or acquired; and shows how abstract precepts of harmony (whether understood as the music of the spheres, social

harmony, or the temperate individual) manifest themselves as material effects registered in the listener's affect.

## Statement of Impact

The insight and expertise presented in my research into the role of musical theory and musical practice in medieval romance could be put to beneficial use in a number of ways, both inside and outside academia.

Within academia, my work will be beneficial towards further research in areas of shared interest for musicology and literary studies. My own work has looked at a small corpus of texts, but there is a wider body of medieval poetry that can be explored through the lens of musicology. More broadly, my thesis will be of value to scholars from other research areas, such as history and linguistics, potentially opening up new collaborative cross-disciplinary projects between departments and even universities. I feel that this exchange of knowledge, approaches, and perspectives would be of great value to the field of medieval studies.

In terms of further contributions to academia, aspects of my work offer up points which could be additionally explored in journal articles, building up avenues of research which could be expanded incrementally over many decades. Potentially, my work will also be of value on the curriculum of those university courses which look at the development of the medieval romance genre and the cultural history of late medieval music and musicians. Aside from scholarly journals, this research could be made accessible to the wider public through media such as blogs covering various aspects of medieval music, culture, and literature.

My work should also be beneficial outside academia, through such public-engagement enterprises as workshops and seminars aimed at enriching and expanding public awareness of medieval music and romance. My findings on the musicality of medieval poetry may also be helpful to musicians who perform early music, as a way of informing their performances not just of song and instrumental music, but of medieval romances. One such example would be an event where romances are sung or recited to musical accompaniment, letting a modern, non-academic audience experience what medieval storytelling might have been like. My research might also be a point of reference to film-makers or game developers looking to depict medieval music in their own media. This potential would be equally interesting to the general public, and to

schools looking to run musico-literary workshops, as it would enrich immersion in the texts being studied.

In the course of my work it has come to my attention that there are many medieval romances in Old French which are inaccessible to public and undergraduate readers as there are no modern or widely available translations. What translations there are, are often from the nineteenth century and possess glaring inaccuracies or creative reinterpretations which affect the sense of these texts. Because my work focuses on the etymological nuances of musical keywords in romance, it will be of value to future translations looking to provide a more accurate, varied reading of the poetic language of these texts.

Over all, there are many directions in which my work can be expanded to shed more light upon insular cultural inheritance.

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I owe immense gratitude to my two wonderful supervisors, Emma Dillon and Chris Stamatakis, without whose insightful and patient advice, selfless help, and meticulous attention to detail, this project would never have come together. Thank you for taking on and steering my thesis with such aplomb, for the many hours of editing and reading, for your unwavering cheerleading and support, and for showing me how to take a step back and see the bigger picture every time I got frazzled by the details. I am also deeply grateful to Susan Irvine, who has been incredibly generous and kind with her friendship and advice over the years, regarding various pieces of writing and navigating the academic field more generally. Nigel Ramsay shared with me his immense expertise of manuscripts, archives, and his own academic experiences, sent me many relevant and interesting references to follow, and offered many cups of coffee. Alison Channon went above and beyond in more ways than I could count, and I doubt if I could have stayed sane through this project without her friendship: thank you for helping in a thousand different ways, rick-rolling, proofreading, and drinking wine. Alexander Millington has come to the rescue countless times when I got stuck, armed with fry-ups, terrible fantasy books, insight, wisdom, and snarky marginal comments about florid prose. You're right – Chaucer's *Man in Black* must surely be a reference to the Dread Pirate Roberts. Calum Cockburn has been a fantastically patient friend and flatmate, looking at drafts, bouncing ideas, and co-organising conferences. He has shown an instinctual awareness of when to keep the diet coke flowing. Ethan Doyle-White took me on diverting historic walks, kept a sharp eye out for typos, and offered an archaeological perspective. Christoph Witt and Maria Rupprecht checked various strands of my German, and enlightened me on cultural aspects that would have gone entirely over my head. Thank you to Mike Bintley for his friendship, the chance to teach on his module, and showing me the Thomas Tallis. Simon Thomson, Hadas Elber-Aviram, Chantelle Martins, and Kim Rastberger, for commiserating over deadlines, for many stimulating discussions about books, and for being inspirational. Thank you also to the UCL English department for much help over the years. Last but not least, I owe endless thanks to my family, particularly my parents, grandparents, and uncle, who offered unwavering support, faith, and enthusiasm for my work over the years, fussed over me with every visit, and offered hugs whenever I needed them most. It would be impossible for me to find the words to adequately thank all the friends and colleagues who have enriched my life over these four years.

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## PART I

### CHAPTER ONE

#### MUSICAL PRACTICE AND THE ROLE OF MUSICIANS IN SOCIETY

##### 1. Prologue

In the Middle English *Sir Tristrem* (late thirteenth century), there are many illustrative episodes which demonstrate the affective power ascribed to music and the musician in medieval romance. This power stems from an understanding of music theory as well as from practical musical learning, and it can be used to create alliances and enchant listeners. The words used to depict scenes of music in insular romances contain clues, often preserved at an etymological level, that relate to music's affective power. This thesis will assess these powers either as a positive force or in terms of music's dangerous applications and its peculiar limitations, and will consider how musical ideas were encoded in a set of musical tropes that distinguish music romance from the wider romance genre.

Beside *Sir Tristrem*, other aristocratic musicians in the text demonstrate a similar command of this harmonic power. While *Tristrem* is away, King Mark receives a visit from an Irish earl disguised as a wandering minstrel:

Fram Irlond to the King  
 An harpour com bituen.  
 An harp he gan forth bring,  
 Swiche no hadde thai never sen  
 With sight.  
 Himself, withouten wen,  
 Bar it day and night.  
 (ll. 1809–1815)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sir Tristrem*, in *Lancelot of the Laik and Sir Tristrem* ed. A. Lupack (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Middle English Texts, Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 156–265.

The harp, which is so remarkable that – in a conventional formulation that recurs in these music romances – no one in the court has ever seen its equal, is an emblem of music’s affective power and the harper’s connection to universal harmony.<sup>2</sup> He takes it with him wherever he wishes to go, an inseparable facet of his identity. Yet, if the music is an extension and manifestation of universal harmony, then he also brings this power with him latently, always ready to be called forth at need. In fact, this earl is identified through his music: rather than naming him, the narrator chooses to refer to him as ‘He that the harp brought’ (l. 1817). His personal identity is superseded by his musical identity. In many ways, the musician is his music. His harp is beautifully made and prestigious – ‘Richelich it was wrought’ (l. 1819) – befitting its role as a conduit of universal harmony and the earl’s status. The fact that it was constantly carried around his neck suggests that it serves as a kind of badge of office. However, he will not play without a reward. Aware of the appeal of music as well as the fascination commanded by a skilled performance and beautiful harps, the harper waits until he has an eager audience before stating his terms. The image he presents to the court is a carefully-constructed veneer:

‘Thine harp whi wiltow spare,  
Yif thou therof can ought  
Of gle?’  
‘Out no cometh it nought  
Withouten giftes fre.’  
(ll. 1822–1826)

‘Gle’ implies a knowledge of secular music, vocal and instrumental, yet his powers to enchant are considerably more than that.<sup>3</sup> ‘Gle’ also refers to a given source of joy, a sense of glee – in this instance, music conjures a feeling of extreme bliss in the listeners.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in this scene, the earl is summoning the traditional demand for payment and recalling music’s social implications beyond its aesthetic effects: good music necessitates good reward, in order for social harmony to exist from its performance. Once he has been promised a reward and his enthralling performance is over, he asks to be given the queen for his payment, and the king must oblige. It is an

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<sup>2</sup> For a list of the key tropes of music romance, see Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Carter, *A Dictionary of Middle English Musical Terms* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), pp. 169–72; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18735&egs=all&egdisplay=open>, retrieved on 19.03.18.

<sup>4</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18735&egs=all&egdisplay=open>, retrieved on 19.03.18.

ambitious request but, as I will demonstrate, the powers of music wielded by the musician-knights in the romances are such that the king could not possibly challenge him without greater detriment to himself and his reputation. Tristrem used a similar ruse earlier in the text, when he was injured and in need of the healing arts of the Irish queen – he sat in a boat, teasing his listeners with snippets of music, until the queen agreed to help:

An heye man he was like,  
 Thei he wer wounded sare.  
 His gles weren so sellike  
 That wonder thought hem thare.  
 His harp, his croude was rike  
 (ll. 1222–1226)

Tristrem's music, then, is enchanting. 'Sellike' denotes something remarkable or unusual, but also something that is a marvel, something supernatural, that seems a wonder to his listeners.<sup>5</sup> This sense is corroborated by 'wonder' in the following line, which also suggests something extraordinary and strange, a marvel that potentially violates the natural order.<sup>6</sup> These scenes offer fine examples of the way in which the depiction of music and musicians, influenced by classical ideas about the power of music, carries symbolic value within the text. In this thesis, I will examine just what is entailed by this representation and how a set of musical tropes deployed within romances enables writers to explore the nature and potential of music's powers.

While tracing the use made of musical tropes by a range of music romances, I am not proposing a chronological explanation for the rise and fall of particular tropes or for the changes in how they are deployed. Instead, I venture a thematic analysis of three groups of romances, selected as case studies of how some of these recurring musical tropes function.<sup>7</sup> My analysis shows not only how music romances draw on these tropes, but also how they occasionally invert or frustrate them.

The basis for my classification of certain texts as music romances lies in the particular interest shown by these romances in musical themes (especially harmony) and in plots which hinge on displays of musical skill or revelations of identity through

<sup>5</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED39317>, retrieved on 19.03.18.

<sup>6</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED53375>, retrieved on 19.03.18.

<sup>7</sup> For a serviceable list of tropes, see Appendix A. For a table of romances that I am classifying as music romances, see Appendix B.

musical performance. This centrality of musical themes is reflected in the frequency with which particular tropes recur in the texts. Some of the most frequently recurring elements include an unrealistic combination or number of instruments performing together, the employment of a minstrel disguise by the protagonist or by his (or her) love interest, and a notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes an audience.<sup>8</sup> Such tropes serve as the constituent features of music romance and have a function for both the writers and the audiences of these romances.

For this study, I have decided that a minimum of four musical tropes is necessary to qualify a text as a music romance; the appearance of only one or two musical elements in a given text has a greater chance of being incidental. These tropes, while appearing in varied combinations across different romances, recur with sufficient frequency as to constitute a recognisable set of themes and set-pieces in the corpus of medieval music romance: conventions come and go, some are reused and some expanded, and as such music romances employ different combinations and numbers of tropes. As will be evident from the table detailing music romances (Appendix B), some texts deploy numerous tropes while others gesture more loosely to a few. My primary case studies have been selected based on the number of recurring tropes, or, in the case of *Havelok the Dane*, on the way in which a text inverts or undermines these tropes while mirroring the narrative patterns of other music romances – the absence of music in such texts is as significant as the presence of it in others.<sup>9</sup>

It is worth noting that many of the tropes which I have identified as relevant for music romances (Appendix A) are also to be found in an older and broader catalogue by Stith Thompson (Appendix C), which brings together tropes from a diverse spectrum of sources, including folktales and ballads, as well as medieval romance.<sup>10</sup> This overlap suggests the wider presence of the same sorts of musical ideas as are explored in the music romances. However, while Thompson's objective was to compile a catalogue of tropes, my work will go a step further by categorising these tropes under specific headings that distinguish between action, character, narrative structure, and metanarration, and by analysing their role within a given text. For ease

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix A, cross-referenced to Appendix C.

<sup>9</sup> For a table of music romances with the corresponding manuscripts in which they are found, see Appendix D.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix C, and Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folk-Tales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*, 6 vols. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989).

of analysis, I have divided the tropes into eight utilitarian categories: tropes relating to the identity of the protagonist; musical performance; musical effects; musical skills; physical artefacts; the role of minstrels; narrative and structural features; and metanarrative features. The range of these categories and the scope of the romances in which they feature indicate the breadth of the proposed subgenre of ‘music romances’ as a critical category.

Music romances allow writers to express a range of attitudes towards music’s powers. Music’s ability to heal and create restful sleep in some romances is contrasted with its sinister ability to seduce knights away from their quest in others. Such uses of musical tropes produce comparable patterns to those found in non-music romances, where a protagonist undergoes, and is transformed by, some kind of quest. Music also helps construct the protagonist’s identity in those instances where the protagonist is a musician: either the music itself or a musical instrument becomes symbolic of the protagonist’s true identity, social status, and even knightly prowess. In these instances, it can work in tandem with other tropes, such as a contest that proves the protagonist’s prodigious musical skill or a performance which awes the audience, imbuing romance plots with nuanced readings about the personal value of musical skill as well as the significance of public recognition of this skill and its role as a bringer of social cohesion.

The concern with music’s powers is especially apparent from the number and frequency of tropes falling under the category of ‘musical effects’. Two tropes in particular – ‘a notable musical performance ... which awes the audience’; and ‘music’s ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony ... in the listener’ – occur on twenty-six occasions in the corpus of music romances surveyed in Appendix B. This prevalence suggests that romance writers found music’s transformative properties narratively useful, not just as a convenient reflection of a character’s (often the protagonist’s) distinguishing skill, but also more suggestively as a plot device for effecting some kind of transformation or bringing about a romance’s dénouement. Music’s transformative facility is available to both male and female musicians, and it applies to musicians irrespective of whether they possess innate musical talent or have learnt the craft. Moreover, tropes relating to a character’s musical ability allow us to gauge the character development of the musician-protagonist: for instance, in *Sir Tristrem*, the dwindling number of musical scenes parallels Tristrem’s degeneration from a celebrated member of the court to an exile who rejects music. The type and

frequency of such musical tropes allow writers and readers of music romances to chart a protagonist's narrative arc.

Another of the most prominent tropes (which also features in Thompson's index) is the use of music as a marker of heavenly harmony. Skill in music goes beyond the local narrative function of revealing a character's true identity or aptitude for rule, allowing writers of romance to hint at more symbolic resonances in their narratives: music in these romances hints at the achievement of social harmony mirroring the underlying universal harmony posited by Boethian theory. Often, though not always, it appears alongside a scene of collective festivity accompanied by music – a trope occurring in twenty-one romances surveyed in Appendix B – and even suggestively symbolises the romance's own narrative concord or resolution. The prevalence of this trope of musical festivity attests the attractiveness of such musical tropes to romance writers: structural, narrative functions in these romances blur suggestively into more metanarrative possibilities.

Due to the inevitably limited scope of this study, I will not look closely at every romance that features a large number of musical tropes, since my aim is to present a number of focused case studies. Therefore, some romances which contain numerous musical tropes but do not fit the narrative patterns of the other case studies, such as *Bevis of Hampton* (in which the protagonist is not himself a musician and music is not functional for his development, because his wife's significant musical performance scene takes place while he is away), warrant a separate examination beyond the scope of this thesis. Romances, such as *Amis and Amiloun* and *Ipomadon*, which feature the minimum four tropes but in which music plays a loosely symbolic role rather than fulfils a major narrative function, are nonetheless included in Appendix B to show that some texts are located on the very periphery of the taxonomy of what can be considered a medieval music romance. Others, which survive in sole, incomplete copies, such as *Lay le Freine*, possess some musical elements (the minimum four tropes), though we cannot know if more were present in the missing portions of the text.

I hope to demonstrate that the recurrence of tropes across several romances shows that they are more than just throw-away conventions or incidental plot-points. In each case the poet is invoking the idea and expectations of music romance for audiences to register. The recurring motifs allow us to find the cultural traces of

musical practice in romance, and to explore the narratives enabled by these tropes. The presence of the same tropes in other extant medieval literature, such as Chaucer's *The House of Fame*, and especially in parodic texts, such as *Tournament at Tottenham* or Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*, suggests that they were known well enough to be recognised as reusable conventions in other kinds of writing too. While the tropes are not exclusive to music romance, my analysis will focus solely on their use in this genre.

The introductory section of this thesis (Part I) looks at the influence and development of the idea of music's harmonising force – its ability to stir the affect of the listener. Much of this theory derives from Boethius (c. 480–525), and specifically his conviction that harmonic power resides within everything – a concept categorised as *musica mundana*. Thus, the harmonic ratios that govern the movement of the planets find equivalents in the metaphorical harmonies of the human subject (the *musica humana* that reverberates between body and spirit) and the audible harmonies of instrumental music (*musica instrumentalis*). I discuss the ways in which these concepts are already present in the Old English *Apollonius*, which explores many of the tropes concerned with music and the figure of the minstrel that later recur in medieval music romance. This minstrel figure came to embody ideas of *musica speculativa* and *musica practica*, offering a bridge between medieval romances and their Old English predecessor. The next section (Part II) closely examines three paired sets of case studies, in which music is directly relevant to the narrative. In each case, one of the two romances offers an illustration of the ideal use of music's powers, whereas the other explores the disruption or debasement of these idealising conventions. While there are notable differences between the three sets of case studies, each romance makes use of musical tropes in a way that actively engages with questions about the nature, application, and reach of music's powers, and about music's place as a harmonising force within medieval society.

In the first chapter of Part II, I look at several kingship quest romances (*Horn*, *Horn Childe*, and *Havelock the Dane*) which are usually classified as part of the Matter of England subgenre of romance. I examine how the accomplished figure of the musician-knight protagonist of these romances demonstrates an attitude to music and musical practice that is strikingly different from that of classical and medieval theoretical texts, in that musical practice is no longer simply inferior to musical theory. These romances venture musical achievement, eloquence, and education as alternatives to the martial prowess required elsewhere of knights (particularly those who will

become kings), as in earlier literary traditions such as *chanson de geste*. These music romances centring on kingship quests dwell on music's ability to create social cohesion through the conjuration of extreme joy: the *Horn* texts offer a positive model of this use of music and the value of elite musical education, whereas *Havelok* devotes more attention to music's limitations by undermining the trope of the protagonist trained in music, so that he must undergo more hardship and rely on other skills to secure his birthright. Untrained in music himself, Havelok is forced to rely on the music of others (specifically professional minstrels) to create social cohesion and reputation.

The next chapter discusses a selection of romances (*Sir Cleges*, *Sir Orfeo*, *Sir Degaré*, and *Lybeaus Desconus*) which are engaged with musical magic. In these texts, supreme musical skill allows the musician to surpass ordinary competence and to access the powers of universal harmony as a form of natural magic. As musical magic, harmony takes on a supernatural quality, bringing luck, taming wild beasts, and awing fairy kings, yet some of these texts also address the dangers of musical magic in the wrong hands and reflect a certain wariness about magic's instrumental properties.

The third case study examines a pair of Tristan romances (*Romance of Silence* and *Sir Tristrem*), which address the consequences of the abandonment of music as a result of excessive indulgence in *fin'amor*, and promote the idea of moderation. Silence remains loyal to her musical calling, which aids her in her endeavours, while Tristrem's rejection of music creates chaos. The Conclusion of this thesis contends that while the authors of medieval insular romances may not have been professional musicians, they were aware of, and drew upon, the concept of harmonic powers, either to portray music as a force for joy and social cohesion and as an emblem of the responsibilities incumbent on those who wield it, or to explore the limitations of these powers. It is the purpose of this thesis to use the close analysis of a selection of insular romances to demonstrate the ways in which the role of musical theory and practice in medieval society (and consequently the representation of medieval musicians) was handled in the corpus of medieval music romances as they deployed, or undermined, a set of musical tropes.

### 1.1 Music in romance: a proposition

The focus of this dissertation is a group of medieval romances in which music, influenced by theoretical conceptions of musical theory, plays a key role in shaping the narrative, through either the presence of musicians or musical performance. These texts represent a subgenre, termed ‘music romances’ in what follows, and usefully illustrate the extent to which musical culture played a role in their construction and reception. Of course, this category is anachronistic: it is as much a construction as other labels which have been assigned to medieval texts, such as ‘Arthurian’ or ‘Matter of England’. Yet I argue that ‘music romances’ made deliberate use of musical ideas, and that though they would not have been termed ‘music romances’ by their medieval audiences or poets, they share a common point of reference in contemporary musical practice and in their sustained recourse to musical tropes, which sets them apart from other romances in the tradition. They were shaped not only by contemporary medieval ideas of music theory, as transmitted through various treatises and glosses of late antique sources, but also by the changing status of *musica practica*, and contemporary ethical and cultural concerns. This project will focus on medieval romances dating from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century, though I will also examine relevant predecessors such as the Old English *Apollonius* (eleventh century), and Geffrei Gaimar’s *Haveloc* episode (1135–1140).<sup>11</sup>

A crucial context for music romances is contemporary musical theory, crucial both as an intellectual tradition and in its bearing upon the musical practices of medieval England. Illuminating theory’s place in romance, and mapping the context and meaning of its foundational conceptions of music’s ethical and affective powers, will constitute an important contribution in the present study. The forms of harmonic theory prevalent in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had been transmitted and developed by a series of influential late antique and medieval thinkers, including Boethius (c. 480–525) in his *De Musica* and *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Macrobius (fl. c. 400) in his *Commentary on the ‘Dream of Scipio’* (early fifth century), Regino of Prüm (c. 840–915) in *De Harmonica Institutione* (late ninth century), Jacobus (c. 1260–after 1330) in his *Speculum Musicae*, Guillaume de

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<sup>11</sup> Leonard Neidorf, ‘The Dating of Widsið and the Study of Germanic Antiquity’, *Neophilologus* 97 (2013), pp. 165–83.

Machaut (1300–1377) in *Le Remède de Fortune* (1340s) and *Prologue*, and Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400) in *Boece*.<sup>12</sup> The medieval sources reference their predecessors, and sometimes each other, forming a genealogy of musical theory. While there is a consensus regarding music's powers, the theorists are often at variance when it comes to explaining the nature of heavenly music. The majority of musical theory dating from the period of the romances mediated the work of Boethius, which, like most medieval musical theory, opens with a claim that harmonic power resides within everything and the musician needs only the knowledge of harmonic principles in order to wield this power.<sup>13</sup> Accounting for late medieval concepts of *musica speculativa* (the theory, as opposed to the practice, of music) will thus, of necessity, require a further look back to the late antique traditions, and to Boethius in particular, because these traditions serve as precursors to the depiction and function of music in medieval insular romance.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will examine the significance of these theories as they fed into the narrative themes and tropes of insular music romances analysed in Part II. Texts such as *King Horn*, *Sir Orfeo*, and the Tristan corpus of romances are rich in musical themes and references, which endow these texts with a layer of symbolic meaning deriving from the musical context. These romances address both the powers and dangers of music, serving as models of good musicianship and of the ideals of an elite education while providing cautionary examples of musicians who transgress and misuse music. The prevalence of music in these texts is not surprising, given the well-attested kinship between music, manners, and literature, as repeatedly articulated by Chaucer and John Gower (1330–1408) in England and Guillaume de Machaut and Eustache Deschamps (1364–1406) on the Continent, and given the interest in musical learning demonstrated by the medieval elite.

In order to examine the music romances in terms of their treatment and reception by poets and readers in the Middle Ages, I will focus on the Boethian model as a primary reference point. Boethius' continued inclusion in medieval treatises and the popularity his work enjoyed among elite medieval readerships demonstrate his

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<sup>12</sup> Elina Hamilton, 'Walter of Evesham and *De Speculatione Musicae*: Authority of Music Theory in Medieval England', *Musica Disciplina* 58 (2013), pp. 153–66 (p. 154). See also Nan Cooke Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1958); James I. Wimsatt, 'Chaucer and Deschamps' "Natural Music"', in *The Union of Words and Music in Medieval Poetry: Symposium on Medieval Poetry and Music*, ed. R.A. Baltzer, T. Cable, and J.I. Wimsatt (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991), pp. 132–50.

<sup>13</sup> Nicolas Bell, 'Readings and Interpretations of Boethius's *De Institutione Musica* in the Later Middle Ages', in *Sapientia et Eloquentia: Meaning and Function in Liturgical Poetry, Music, Drama, and Biblical Commentary in the Middle Ages*, ed. N. Bell and G. Iversen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 365–80 (p. 372).

enduring relevance and authority into even the early modern era. To establish the medieval context for musical theory, I will also engage with a number of theorists who were contemporary to the romances under consideration. I will offer a brief overview of the work of Guillaume de Machaut, John of Tewkesbury's (fl. 1351–1392) *Quatuor Principalia Musice*, and Jacobus' *Speculum Musicae*. I will also consider Walter Odington's (fl. 1300) *De Speculatione Musicae*, among others. I will argue that, over time, musical practice overcame the prejudice which had been inherited from the classical world, in which it occupied an inferior position relative to *musica speculativa*.

In the Middle Ages, following late antique philosophy, music was firmly divided into musical theory (*musica speculativa*, what I refer to as '*musica*' in this thesis) and music in practice (*musica practica*), the practice and performance of music, vocal and instrumental. *Musica speculativa* is specifically the theoretical study of harmony, intervals, ratios, and the relation between the spheres. This theory was developed from (attributed) Pythagorean ideas about intervals and the music of the heavens, which often overlaps with mathematics, theology, and astrology, and which considers performance its baser off-shoot. By understanding the harmony of the spheres, one would be able to achieve this harmony in oneself and one's soul. As Plato states in Book III of his *Republic*:

τούτων ἔνεκα κυριωτάτη ἐν μουσικῇ τροφή, ὅτι μάλιστα  
καταδύεται εἰς τὸ ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς ὃ τε ῥυθμὸς καὶ ἁρμονία,  
καὶ ἔρωμενέστατα ἄπτεται αὐτῆς φέροντα τὴν  
εὐσχημοσύνην, καὶ ποιεῖ εὐσχήμονα, εἴαν τις ὀρθῶς τραφῇ.

[musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated, graceful].<sup>14</sup>

This point follows from a discussion of harmony and the effects that various musical scales have upon their environment.<sup>15</sup> Plato considers musical learning the most powerful 'instrument' because it allows harmony to enter and influence the soul.

<sup>14</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, trans. F. M. Cornford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 87, 401d. Greek text from Plato, *Opera*, ed. J. Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903), located at *Perseus Digital Library*, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

<sup>15</sup> See *The Republic of Plato*, Book III, from 398c; See also Claude Palisca, 'The Ethos of Modes During the Renaissance', in *The Emotional Power of Music: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Musical Arousal, Expression, and Social Control*, ed. T. Cochrane, B. Fantini, and K.R. Schere (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 103–16; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 3–31.

According to this vein of classical thought, theoretical study was the most authentic form of music, far superior to the practical learning of instruments. Here, theoretical knowledge informs how a canny musician might access these powers through the playing of instruments. The belief that education is the key to grace through music is one that is also prevalent in the music romances themselves. The main goal of *musica speculativa* was to determine the way the universe had been constructed around the idea of harmony, and to understand how harmony could transform the physical world, whether at the level of an individual listener's affect or at the more macrocosmic scale of larger social constructions.<sup>16</sup> The idea of the music of the spheres, or musical metaphysics, remained a cultural mooring-point in late medieval and early modern England. While I will be looking more at *musica speculativa* than *musica practica*, it is my aim to demonstrate that both disciplines, which began to be drawn together in the period in question, influenced romances.

In the rest of this chapter, by way of an introduction to the sources under review, I shall examine some of the core ideas developed in musical theory from the fifth century BCE to the late fourteenth century CE, and outline the means by which such ideas circulated in medieval culture, before turning to the romance tradition itself. First, however, I will examine the place held in the scholarly arena of romance studies by the dual approach (espoused here) that combines musicology with literary criticism.

## 1.2 Approaches: between literary studies and musicology

There have been several very important scholarly works published about the role of music in medieval culture. Studies of late medieval music fall loosely into two categories: studies which are focused on the historical repertoires, their performance practice, and reception in notated and literary sources; and studies devoted to the theoretical traditions of *musica speculativa*, to its teaching, intellectual foundations, and its relationship to the history of notation. There are, of course, many points where these two approaches intersect, not only with each other, but also with the study of literature.

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<sup>16</sup> Bell, 'Readings', p. 365; Katherine Steele Brokaw, *Staging Harmony: Music and Religious Change in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Drama* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2016), p. 18.

My own study of music in romance, not surprisingly, benefits considerably from the history of medieval musical theory, and its late antique heritage. Particularly pertinent to contextualising music's place in romance is Philipp Jeserich's recent monograph, *Musica Naturalis: Speculative Music Theory and Poetics, from Saint Augustine to the Late Middle Ages in France*.<sup>17</sup> This study combines approaches from musicology and literary theory, providing an invaluable and detailed view of the treatment and teaching of speculative musical theory throughout the Middle Ages. Jeserich examines Eustache Deschamps' *L'Art de Dictier* (1392), challenging the view that the medieval tradition continues in an unbroken line from classical theory. Rather, classical ideas were reshaped and re-adapted to fit new developments in medieval musical theory and practice, such as polyphony. There is a connection between changing musical contexts (such as polyphony) and changing social ideas (such as those concerned with the skills and duties of elite amateur and professional musicians). Jeserich discusses the connection between melody (*musique artificielle*) and poetry (*musique naturelle*), drawing upon medieval treatises on rhetoric. Jeserich furthermore demonstrates the prevalence of Boethius, Macrobius, and Augustine in the education of undergraduate students of liberal arts, and discusses the way these theorists were used by their medieval counterparts, such as Deschamps and Jacobus, to construct their own ideas relevant to the rapidly developing music of the Middle Ages.<sup>18</sup> I will use this scholarship as a foundation for my own work, and expand upon it to reflect on how changing ideas about music, and the classical foundation of medieval theory, influenced medieval romance.

In addition to Jeserich's work, several notable books and articles have traced the influence of Boethius on medieval culture, literature, and music. Elizabeth Elliot, Nicolas Bell, and Gerald O'Daly, to name just three, have contributed significantly to the study of the impact of Boethius on medieval thought.<sup>19</sup> Inherited musical theory was revered in the Middle Ages, yet it was also adapted to suit each theorist's goals, especially so in an English context. For instance, Elina Hamilton provides an examination of the English context for musical theory as transmitted by Walter

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<sup>17</sup> Philipp Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis: Speculative Music Theory and Poetics, from Saint Augustine to the Late Middle Ages in France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 125–7. Jacobus is the theorist formerly referred to as 'Jacques de Liège'. See Margaret Bent, *Magister Jacobus de Ispania, Author of the Speculum Musicae* (London: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Elliot, *Remembering Boethius: Writing Aristocratic Identity in Late Medieval French and English Literatures* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Gerald O'Daly, *The Poetry of Boethius* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Bell, 'Readings', pp. 365–80.

Odington of Evesham (fourteenth century), demonstrating the extent to which classical musical traditions were still held in authority in the insular world.<sup>20</sup> As will be examined in more detail later, Nicolas Bell further charts the continued transmission of the work of Boethius in medieval England.<sup>21</sup> Over the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there is some shift in the priority of different theories. In England, at least, there was some subjectivity in how musical theories were understood and applied. The three sets of romance mark a notable departure from classical thought regarding the question of what is considered true, authentic music or how such music could be accessed, as the intellectual climate of the time favoured a move from *musica speculativa* alone to *musica practica* or to a combination of the two.

Another important study that sheds light on the dissemination of music theory in medieval England is Katherine Zieman's *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England*. Zieman demonstrates the wide-reaching extent of musical literacy and music teaching (at least of basic musical theory) in the liturgical environment among students, some, but not all, of whom were bound for monastic careers.<sup>22</sup> This study serves as a corrective to Frank Harrison's earlier work on the history of the liturgical music of medieval Britain from the Norman Conquest to the Reformation, which argues that the style of ecclesiastical music did not change until new religious ideas were introduced in the Tudor era.<sup>23</sup> However, Zieman locates this change in the late Middle Ages instead, attributing it to musical education. She also draws a connection between musical literacy and grammar. This connection, in turn, leads to literacy and later educational reforms, and Zieman dwells on the hostility of the clerical class concerned with lay 'misreading' of authority. The ability to read, and to understand, music began with religious song, but quickly spread out into lay performance, secular and devotional. Zieman's primary focus is on liturgical music and musical literacy, whereas I consider the question of secular elite musical education and literacy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in an attempt to delineate the audience of medieval romance.

Pursuing the theme of music pedagogy in England from another perspective, Bruce Holsinger examines the role of music and music education in the medieval

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<sup>20</sup> Hamilton, 'Walter of Evesham', pp. 153–66.

<sup>21</sup> Bell, 'Readings', pp. 365–80.

<sup>22</sup> Katharine Zieman, *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) pp. 8–17.

<sup>23</sup> Frank L. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958).

perception of the body and senses, demonstrating that music was an intrinsic part of medieval life, and often used as a marker of one's place in society.<sup>24</sup> He argues that Chaucer's *The Prioress's Tale* exemplified the Boethian idea that the body and soul were connected through universal harmony. A connection between music, veneration, and education is also drawn in Andrew Albin's paper on the *Officium* (early 1380s), prepared in honour of Richard Rolle of Hampole (1305–1349), composed for public performance and serving as a kind of conduit for mystical song into the physical world.<sup>25</sup> Another important aspect of Holsinger's work is on music's affective powers in the medieval and early modern period.<sup>26</sup> His research has helped to bring the idea into critical discourse, though he does not apply it to medieval romance specifically. My aim is to fill this gap by looking at music's influence on the listener's affect in the romances.

Holsinger, Jeserich, Susan Rankin, and Jamie James have also contributed significantly to work on the universality of the concept of universal harmony and the way it shaped medieval perceptions of music and its powers.<sup>27</sup> Much of Rankin's scholarship has been focused on drawing connections between music and medieval religious ritual. She proposes that the notion of heavenly harmony was widely known in the Carolingian milieu of the ninth century, and that, while classical musical diagrams and examples remain mostly unchanged in the Middle Ages, the explanations themselves change. Her study focuses on John Scot Eriugena's (late ninth century) use of Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis*, and its interactions with sources such as Boethius. Jamie James draws together science and music, demonstrating the close connection between the two disciplines in the Middle Ages. Their shared goal, James asserts, was to determine the arrangement of the cosmos: heavenly harmony could be experienced on earth through sound. Like Rankin, James suggests that late antique musical theory, as with astronomy, was changed to be adapted to a medieval context. The connection between music and science is important, as this scholarship follows in the footsteps of Christopher Page's work addressing misconceptions about the medieval understanding of music; the connection between music, mathematics, and science; what music, if any,

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<sup>24</sup> Bruce W. Holsinger, *Music, Body and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Albin, 'Canorous Soundstuff: Hearing the Officium of Richard Rolle at Hampole', *Speculum* 91 (2016), pp. 1026–39

<sup>26</sup> Holsinger, *Music*, pp. 295–343.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Rankin, 'Naturalis Concordia Vocum cum Planetis: Conceptualising the Harmony of the Spheres in the Early Middle Ages', in *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture*, ed. S. Clark and E.E. Leach (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 3–19; Jamie James, *The Music of the Spheres: Music, Science and the Natural Order of the Universe* (New York: Grove Press, 1993).

was intended for the elite; and clerical instrumental practice.<sup>28</sup> Common to all these accounts is the constant overlap between written, theoretical studies of music and practical performance: these points of intersection constitute an important context for the presence of musical thought in romance.

The English tradition equally emphasises the importance of late antique ideas, while adapting them for a contemporary context. A more recent contribution to the study of these overlaps between musical theory, number theory, and literary traditions is found in the work of Tekla Bude.<sup>29</sup> Bude's work is particularly illuminating on the permeable boundaries between musical thought and literature, concentrating on musical metaphysics of the late medieval and early modern periods. Bude's examination of musical mathematics in Fitt 15 of *Pearl* elucidates the importance of classical logic, a medieval system of colour and number symbolism, and medieval musical theory, such as that found in John of Tewkesbury's *Quatuor Principalia Musicae*, in defining God's grace within the poem.<sup>30</sup> Bude proposes that infinity and measurable time are defined through music and numbers within the poem, creating a tension between the numbered physical world and immeasurable infinity. This approach is invaluable to my own study as it illuminates the extent to which a medieval poetic text could be shaped by ideas relating to music.

While scholarship devoted to the theoretical and pedagogical contexts for medieval music thus draws attention to the wide diffusion of musical thought, studies addressing music-in-practice also indicate the permeable boundaries between auditory and intellectual traditions of music. In the Middle Ages, music was not only studied in the universities and performed by minstrels, but constituted an element of daily life across society in the form of church bells and liturgical song.<sup>31</sup> In the form of universal harmony, it was present even when it was not audible, and there is a marked difference between the audible music permeating the physical world and the inaudible music of the spheres. Emma Dillon, Christopher Page, Katherine Zieman, and Bruce Smith have presented a great deal of varied and compelling evidence highlighting the extent to

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<sup>28</sup> Christopher Page, *Discarding Images: Reflections on Music and Culture in Medieval France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> Tekla Bude, 'Music and Mathematical Theology in *Pearl* 15', *Glossator* 9 (2015), pp. 286–307; 'Panis Angelorum: Piers Plowman and Rollean Canor', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 29 (2016), pp. 3–27.

<sup>30</sup> Tekla Bude, 'Mathematical Theology', pp. 286–307.

<sup>31</sup> A dynamic study of medieval music as a whole, with a section devoted specifically to medieval English music, can be found in Mark Everist (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), particularly Peter Lefferts' overview of English music, pp. 105–20.

which medieval England was a world of sound.<sup>32</sup> This idea of the omnipresence of music and the blurring of musical categories in medieval society feeds into my own examination of the scope of musical symbolism in poetry. Unlike in the French tradition, there were no lyric inserts or musical notation in insular romances: yet even in the absence of audible performance or musical notation, music is, I contend, fundamentally present in these texts.

In a study of English mysticism and music, Andrew Albin's work on *Melos Amoris*, a mystical treatise by Richard Rolle, examines the many voices within the book, arguing that a seemingly silent manuscript can encode auditory experience within its pages.<sup>33</sup> A connection is made between the *cantor* and the alliteration encoded on the page, as well as between the worshipper's song and God: infinite love is expressed and read through an 'outpouring of melodious sound'.<sup>34</sup> A dialogue is created between mystical music and verbal music, enabling the singer to achieve a transcendent state of musical being. I hope to show that this union of theoretical and practical music, and the resultant state of supreme musical understanding, is very similar to what emerges in the music romances of the Middle Ages, especially in romances concerned with magic such as *Sir Orfeo*. This layering of meaning whereby the linguistic, symbolic, and visual elements cooperate and overlap demonstrates the importance of material culture in the study of sound. Meaning is derived not just from the sense of the words but from their representation on the manuscript page. Rolle's work encodes poetic verse, human song, and angelic song, the last of which can be likened to the music of the spheres. Albin points out that the *melos* of the title 'refers to multiple musics: it cites the biblical Song of Songs, whose language and imagery the text frequently borrows; it signals the text's distinctively sonorous stylistics and most crucially, it crowns angelic song as the highest of Rolle's spiritual sensations'.<sup>35</sup> Rolle shows that mysticism readily aligns with certain concepts from *musica*, particularly when music is the means of achieving transcendent joy. In my work, I will build on this analysis by exploring the way in which insular romances treat music as a source of intense, and sometimes transcendent, emotion.

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<sup>32</sup> Emma Dillon, *The Sense of Sound: Musical Meaning in France, 1260–1330* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Christopher Page, *Owl and Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100–1300* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Ziemann, *Singing the New Song*.

<sup>33</sup> Andrew Albin, 'Listening for *Canor* in Richard Rolle's *Melos Amoris*', in *Voice and Voicelessness in Medieval Europe*, ed. I. R. Kleiman (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), pp. 177–97.

<sup>34</sup> Albin, 'Listening for *Canor*', p. 177.

<sup>35</sup> Albin, 'Listening for *Canor*', pp. 177–8.

Beyond the evidence preserved in literary manuscripts, medieval England was rich in musical composition and performance, both in the heavenly sphere of liturgical and devotional music and in vernacular song. Both were important reference points for the music imagined in Rolle's angelic singers, but also, crucially, in the world of romance. Although much of the music of the British Isles is now lost, Helen Deeming and John Stevens have done considerable work in compiling examples of the repertoires that would have circulated in medieval Britain, demonstrating the linguistic and thematic fluidity of the songs that would have been known contemporaneously with the romances studied in this thesis.<sup>36</sup> These collections offer examples of religious song, such as *Nowell, Nowell: Tidings True* and *Sancte Marie, Virgine*, along with lullabies such as *Lullay My Child*, and courtly songs such as *De Ma Dame* and *Mult S'Asprisme li Termes*.<sup>37</sup> The range and purpose of songs in a medieval repertory would have been broad, and these songs are useful in providing a rich lyrical background for the creation of music romances in which song and music played such a key role. My work will incorporate this idea of the blending of religious and secular conceptions of music, as evidenced by the lyric collections, as theoretical ideas about music filtered down into secular society and literature.

A number of studies illuminate the function and prestige of music in medieval and Tudor courts, where it was performed by courtiers and professional musicians, and also point out the presence of musical performance in the environments frequently represented in romances.<sup>38</sup> Being able to perform music and compose poetry was a marker of education and *courtoisie* among the medieval elite, a way to succeed in the medieval court. Penelope Gouk, Katherine Steele Brokaw, Mathew Milner, Christopher Marsh, and others have noted the wariness with which music was treated in late medieval and early modern eras due to its perceived connection with alchemy, and by extension the condemned magical practice of necromancy.<sup>39</sup> In my study of the romances, this tension will prove important when examining the disquiet which was sometimes directed towards musical magic in the later Middle Ages. This distrust was

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<sup>36</sup> Helen Deeming (ed.), *Songs in British Sources c. 1150–1300* (London: Stainer and Bell, 2013); John Stevens (ed.), *Mediaeval Carols* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1958).

<sup>37</sup> See Deeming, *Songs in British Sources*.

<sup>38</sup> John Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen, 1961).

<sup>39</sup> Penelope Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic in Seventeenth Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*; Mathew Milner, *The Senses and the English Reformation* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011); Robert Wegman, *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe, 1470–1530* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

reflected in the treatment music receives in those romances where it is being unscrupulously exploited by the texts' antagonists.

Given these suspicions about music's troubling capacity to enchant its listeners, concerns over 'demonic' music extended to musical performances, as well as audience's receptions of them, in church and secular settings. Notably, the concept of the affective power of music and its ability to exert social influence and control is one that continues to excite modern scholars, psychologists, and musicologists alike, as in recent studies by Tom Cochrane, John A. Sloboda, and Klaus R. Scherer, among others.<sup>40</sup> In the music romances, this potency is commonly reflected in a number of tropes: music affects one's environment and is instrumental in social advancement. A notable difference can be seen between the positive depiction of musical magic in some texts and the suspicion with which it is regarded in others, which suggests that musical magic in romance has the potential for both social cohesion and fragmentation, and its application depends on the character of individual musicians.

Particularly pertinent to the present project is the substantial musicological scholarship devoted to the role of music in medieval French romance, treated as usefully analogous in many ways to English romance in the late medieval period. This wealth of scholarly interest is unsurprising, given the rich musical material to be found in that corpus of French texts. John Haines has documented the development of songs in Romance languages, and their interaction with literary romance, examining the role of men's songs and the role, and relative scarcity, of women's songs – findings that corroborate Maureen Boulton's demonstration of specific medieval categories of performance, based on existing social ideas about certain kinds of music and their effects.<sup>41</sup> Haines aptly demonstrates how and why there are fewer surviving examples of popular songs than religious, and how this survival rate was changed by the advent of literacy, a point I will address in my examination of how romances treat popular ideas about music. Just as importantly, Haines draws attention to popular song

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<sup>40</sup> Ruth Katz, *Divining the Powers of Music: Aesthetic Theory and the Origins of Opera* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986); Tom Cochrane, Bernardino Fantini, and Klaus R. Scherer (eds.), *The Emotional Power of Music: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Musical Arousal, Expression, and Social Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Patrik N. Juslin and John Sloboda (eds.), *Handbook of Music and Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>41</sup> John Haines, *Medieval Song in Romance Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). See also Maureen Boulton, *The Song in the Story: Lyric Insertions in French Narrative Fiction, 1200–1400* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

traditions such as work songs, laments, carols, and lullabies.<sup>42</sup> He notes that while surviving pages of notation are a worthwhile source of information about medieval musical practice, this evidence is not exhaustive, as there is far more music under the surface that was not, or could not be, recorded. Comparably, I will attempt to find music within the narratives of insular romances which crucially, unlike their Continental counterparts, do not contain lyric inserts or musical notation.

Moving away from the music itself, Haines examines the changing identity of medieval musicians. He begins with an examination of twelfth- and thirteenth-century musicians, before considering their impact and reception in the centuries following.<sup>43</sup> Haines stresses the fact that the identity of troubadours is a fluid one, based in history but constantly reimagined to fit current social and scholarly trends. He looks at how writing down the lyrics, notating them, and adding fictional, or simply fictionalised, *vidas* (biographies) for the troubadours contributed to their evanescent identity within medieval society. Writing of the example of the trouvère Adam de La Halle (c. 1244–1288), Haines observes that Adam had a keen awareness that he was constructing his own literary history: '[h]e honed it through his many works – poems, songs, plays and polyphonic compositions'. I would suggest, in my overview of the role of the medieval minstrel and the varying function of medieval music in romance narratives, that the same could be said not only of troubadours but also of their professional counterparts, the minstrels, who were no less self-conscious in constructing their identity and dictating their reception. There were practical reasons for these changes, which Gretchen Peters attributes to the growth of specialisation due to the rise of the medieval guild.<sup>44</sup> Guilds offered musicians the chance to collaborate while providing a financial safety-net and an alternative to employment at court.

Secular music increasingly found its way into written form as ideas evolved about what was worthy of being recorded. This rise of secular music coincides with the rise of music romances, which unashamedly depict secular musicians engaging in secular music. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw the growth of secular

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<sup>42</sup> In the medieval context, work songs (*chansons de toile*) refer to Old French narrative songs sung while performing manual tasks such as sewing. Carols, in this context, refer to ballad songs performed by men and women taking part in a circular dance, the carol. See M. Zink, *Les Chanson de Toile* (Paris: Champion, 1978) and A. L. Klink and A.M. Rasmussen (eds.), *Medieval Woman's Song: Cross-Cultural Approaches* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); John Stevens, 'Medieval Song', in *The Early Middle Ages to 1300*, ed. R. Crocker and D. Hiley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 357–442.

<sup>43</sup> John Haines, *Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères: The Changing Identity of Medieval Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>44</sup> Gretchen Peters, *The Musical Sounds of Medieval French Cities: Players, Patrons and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

musical literacy, as the production of *chansonnier* manuscripts increased and as prominent secular composer-poets generated large volumes of music and poetry for select patrons and, more broadly, for the musically literate members of the medieval elite. Yet while there were many English lyric books and individual sheets produced, insular romance stands apart as lacking musical notation or lyric inserts. When depicting musical performance, French romances sometimes interpolated lyrics either written for the narrative or borrowed from popular songs and recycled within the plot – what Ardis Butterfield has termed ‘romans à chansons’. Emma Dillon’s account of the creation and reception of the *Roman de Fauvel*, which offers a valuable example of in-text musical interpolations, provides insight into how such a text might have been read and how musical meaning was encoded into the construction of the manuscript page.<sup>45</sup> Ardis Butterfield expertly examines this connection in scholarship spanning from 1987 to the present day.<sup>46</sup> An inspiration for the methodology of this thesis, Butterfield’s approach is both literary and musicological, focusing on the culturally rich climate of late thirteenth-century Arras. Butterfield surveys notated medieval music, notated inserts in musical manuscripts, and musical performance within the narratives of late medieval texts, demonstrating the extent to which this music was affected by poetry. Butterfield argues that it is the narrative that influenced how songs took form on the page. My thesis will emulate Butterfield’s jointly musicological and literary-critical approach, though my focus will lie in examining how musical theory and musical practice affected narrative poetry, rather than looking at how narrative dictates the shape of songs. Maureen Boulton’s work has complemented that of Butterfield and other musicologists working in this area: she provides a thorough examination of the contexts in which lyrics are used and their function within medieval literature, including French romances.<sup>47</sup> Boulton demonstrates that musical performance usually centred around moments of high emotion and that the kind of music performed in the text was dictated by the performer’s social status and gender, once again confirming that music was a social marker. Boulton’s analysis of the relationship between lyric and text, forged once the two were fused together in the narrative, offers a helpful parallel to my own study of the treatment of musical theory

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<sup>45</sup> Emma Dillon, *Medieval Music-Making and the Roman de Fauvel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> A fine example can be found in Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>47</sup> Boulton, *The Song*.

in romance. Boulton sees these lyrics as carrying particular messages within the text, creating a connection between words and music, which I hope to continue in my work.

Two further influential studies for this project, particularly given their focus on English source material, are those of Christopher Page and Andrew Albin, mentioned above. Page's scholarship, in particular, offers a vital model for an approach that embraces the intersections of music and romance. His main focus in this area has been on musical practice between 1100 and 1300, in both French and English language traditions, seeking always to locate this musical practice in the broader purview of literary, performative, and intellectual contexts.<sup>48</sup> This approach impacts on the interpretation of romance in numerous ways. For instance, using literary, documentary, and pictographic evidence, Page examines the significance of the *vielle* for professional minstrels. As discussed in Chapter III and in my overview of musical instrument ownership later in the present chapter, the historical prevalence of particular instruments, such as the *vielle*, the horn, and the harp, renders them the instruments of choice for the protagonist of the music romances. Page also provides a detailed analysis of the *Roman de Horn* and its musical interludes, offering even more localised models for a dual approach to romance as musical and literary practice. More recently, Albin has looked at the music of Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale* in the light of the poem's structure and meaning, arguing that, as in the words of the eponymous Prioress, the poem itself is a song, which contains another song within it, in a Russian-doll-like structure.<sup>49</sup> In this way, song constructs layers of meaning within the text, as different symbolic meanings can be read into the poem itself. Medieval music was self-referential, and it was used to create a mythos behind *musica practica* and its practitioners. Lisa Colton's recent book, *Angel Song: Medieval English Music in History*, explores the ways in which perception and knowledge of medieval music have been constructed throughout later history, engendering its own narrative and process of storytelling.<sup>50</sup>

Thus far, I have outlined accounts of music as a historical phenomenon, and its traces in literary and pedagogical practices. Another important trend among musicologists has been to examine music as social history, and particularly to consider

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<sup>48</sup> Christopher Page, *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Instrumental Practice and Songs in France 1100–1300* (London: Dent, 1987); Page, *Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Studies on Texts and Performance*, Variorum Collected Studies (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997).

<sup>49</sup> Andrew Albin, 'The Prioress's Tale, Sonorous and Silent', *The Chaucer Review* 48 (July 2013), pp. 91–112.

<sup>50</sup> Lisa Colton, *Angel Song: Medieval English Music in History* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

its contexts of performance. This aspect of music history will be particularly important to music romances, since performance and performers are often crucial to the narrative dénouement. Evidence regarding medieval performance practice is limited, but Linda Marie Zaerr's reconstructions, informed by her own experience as a performer, provide an invaluable perspective on the frequent and detailed descriptions of musical interludes in romances.<sup>51</sup> My aim is to offer a complementary reading of how cultural needs determined the perception and portrayal of music's powers: different sub-groups of romance offer different attitudes to music's powers and limitations.

Questions relating to performance have also been approached in scholarship on other medieval genres and later periods. Richard Rastall's meticulous work focuses on early English drama rather than medieval romance, but his approach towards determining the performance of (pre-composed and improvised) music in morality, miracle, and biblical plays is instructive when assessing the musical subtext in medieval romance.<sup>52</sup> Rastall looks at surviving notated music, account rolls, and documentary evidence, as well as the description of music in stage directions and dialogues of the play texts themselves, before considering modern staging concerns of medieval drama. However, he stresses that, just as with medieval romance, performance reconstructions remain largely speculative. He also examines the connection between stage music and heavenly music, contending that earthly music comes to be representative of heavenly, in a way which is analogous, I shall argue, to that found in medieval romance. Rastall and Zaerr join other scholars, including JoAnna Dutka, in arguing that the lack of lyric inserts or notated music in texts does not mean that there was no music during the performances.<sup>53</sup> Albin makes a similar point when analysing the sophisticated sonorous landscape of the Chester Shepherds play (c. 1500): the construction of a soundscape created a sense of Christian community for the audience.<sup>54</sup> This play contrasts celestial song and human song, creating distinct physical and spiritual spheres of musical presence by means of acoustic, melodic, and verbal content. I will make a similar point regarding the musical subtext of the romances, which engendered a sound landscape accessible even through silent reading.

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<sup>51</sup> Linda Marie Zaerr, *Performance and the Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012).

<sup>52</sup> Richard Rastall, *The Heaven Singing: Music in Early Religious Drama*, vol. I (Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 1996); Richard Rastall, *Music in Early English Religious Drama: Minstrels Playing* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001).

<sup>53</sup> JoAnna Dutka, 'Music and the English Mystery Plays', in *Comparative Drama* 7 (1973), pp. 135–49.

<sup>54</sup> Andrew Albin, 'Aural Space, Sonorous Presence, and the Performance of Christian Community in the Chester Shepherds Play', *Early Theatre* 16 (Dec 2013), pp. 33–57.

The soundscape of medieval romances is an important thread in current scholarship, and one which has not gone unnoticed in literary theory as well as musicology. After all, in the Middle Ages, following classical precedent, music and poetry were tightly implicated in each other, at least until the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>55</sup> Calvin S. Brown states that ‘the poet and the lyre were almost inseparable. When they did separate [...] music almost ceased to exist’, so that even in the early Middle Ages the musician was ‘by definition both poet and composer’.<sup>56</sup> In the Introduction to their volume on words and music, James I. Wimsatt and Thomas Cable concur, proposing that ‘[m]edieval music and poetry are in many ways one’.<sup>57</sup> In the anonymous fourteenth-century dream-vision poem *The Assembly of Gods*, the poet adapts the Orpheus legend to current thought by calling him a musical poet: ‘Orpheus was there with hys harpe / And as a poet musykall made he melody’ (ll. 400–401).<sup>58</sup> In *The Fall of Princes*, John Lydgate (c. 1370–1451) calls Orpheus a ‘laureat poete’ (l. 5845), due to his ‘rethoriques suete’ (l. 5844), before mentioning his harp (‘And off his harpe yiff ye list to lere’, l. 5846), suggesting that he considered the categories of ‘poet’ and ‘musician’ very closely connected, if not interchangeable, at least where the figure of Orpheus was concerned.<sup>59</sup> In *L’Art de Dictier*, Eustache Deschamps talks about music’s effects, dividing music into two kinds: ‘musique artificiele’ (melodic music) and ‘musique naturel’ (poetry).<sup>60</sup> He then explains that despite this division, music and poetry are inseparable, comparing their unity to a marriage (‘comme un mariage en conjunction de science’).<sup>61</sup> John Stevens suggests that the unity of words and music ceased to exist towards the end of the fourteenth century and into the early modern era, as poetry came to be classified as part of the *ars rhetorica* and music grew

<sup>55</sup> Calvin S. Brown, *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1963), pp. 44–5; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED33843>, accessed 02.05.2018; For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between poetry and music in the classical and medieval periods, see James Anderson Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations Between Poetry and Music* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), particularly pp. 4–30, pp. 95–6. For a parallel study, see also Steven Scher, *Verbal Music in German Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Brown, *Music and Literature*, p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> James I. Wimsatt and Thomas Cable, ‘Introduction’, in *The Union of Words and Music in Medieval Poetry: Symposium on Medieval Poetry and Music*, ed. R.A. Baltzer, T. Cable, and J.I. Wimsatt (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991), pp. 1–14 (p. 1).

<sup>58</sup> See stanza 58, ‘Discord and Atropos’ *The Assembly of Gods*, ed. O.L. Triggs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1895), p. 13, retrieved from <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=cool.ark:/13960/t8w95r18g;view=1up;seq=98>.

<sup>59</sup> John Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, ed. H. Bergen, EETS (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 165. Digital edition by Ann Arbor, Michigan, Proquest LLC (2011). Retrieved from <https://literature-proquest-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk>, accessed on 11.05.2018.

<sup>60</sup> Eustache Deschamps, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. G. Raynaud and A. Queux de Saint-Hilaire (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1878–1903), VII, pp. 269–70; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 74–5; Wimsatt, ‘Chaucer and Deschamps’, pp. 132–50.

<sup>61</sup> Eustache Deschamps, *Oeuvres Complètes*, pp. 271–2; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 74–5.

in complexity beyond the reach of the amateur composer.<sup>62</sup> However, ‘poet musykall’ is used in *The Assembly of Gods* to mean not just a writer of verse but also a performer of music, even at a time when the two categories were beginning to separate. Despite a looming period of specialisation, in Lydgate and Chaucer’s day skill in music and poetry was still often combined. Edward IV’s *Liber Niger* (1474) suggests that the duties of an esquire of the King’s household (a post Chaucer acquired in 1368) lay ‘[i]n talking of Cronicles of Kings, and of other Pollicies, or in pipeing or harpeing, synginges, or other actes marcealls, to help occupy the court, and company estraingers, till the time required of departing’.<sup>63</sup> In theory then, even though he was not a practising musician, Chaucer’s duties would have included singing and playing instruments.<sup>64</sup> The significance of music and musicians in medieval texts and the interdisciplinarity of medieval romance – entwining literary and musical cultures – have also been noted by literary scholars such as Peter Dronke, Brooke H. Findley, and Melissa Furrow.<sup>65</sup> My own study is aimed at further bridging the gap between literary and musicological approaches in the analysis of medieval romance.

From a literary standpoint, David Rollo stresses the perceived power of words in the Middle Ages, bringing together the medieval disciplines of poetry and magic, particularly during the rise of secular Latin, and later vernacular, literacy from around the turn of the twelfth century.<sup>66</sup> Rollo argues that the written word possessed a kind of ‘verbal magic’ in the Middle Ages: the ability to read and write, and consequently to access ancient knowledge, gave an individual a certain power and status in society. The power of literacy was prestigious and potentially dangerous, especially for the clerical class who felt that their prerogative was being encroached upon by a secular elite.<sup>67</sup> Rollo outlines the role of magic in medieval society and

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<sup>62</sup> Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, pp. 34–6. For the division of music and poetry at the end of the Middle Ages, see Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities* and Brown, *Music and Literature*, pp. 45–6.

<sup>63</sup> *Liber Niger*, in *The Household of Edward IV*, ed. A.R. Myers (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 76–197 (p. 136); Nigel Wilkins, *Music in the Age of Chaucer* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979), pp. 111–12.

<sup>64</sup> Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, p. xiii, p. 36.

<sup>65</sup> Peter Dronke, *Verse with Prose from Petronius to Dante: The Art and Scope of the Mixed Form* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Brooke H. Findley, *Poet Heroines in Medieval French Narrative: Gender and Fictions of Literary Creation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Melissa Furrow, ‘Chanson de Geste as Romance in England’, in *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance*, ed. L. Ashe, I. Djordjević, and J. Weiss (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010).

<sup>66</sup> David Rollo, *Glamorous Sorcery: Magic and Literacy in the High Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

<sup>67</sup> For a discussion of the extent to which the medieval social context affected literature, see Charles Muscatine, whose scholarship laid the groundwork for many modern critics by looking at the influence of the religious, social, and financial changes of the fourteenth century in England, and the thematic and stylistic influence these contextual pressures exerted over contemporary poetry. See, for example, *Poetry and Crisis in the Age of Chaucer* (Notre Dame and London: Notre Dame University Press, 1972) and *Chaucer and the French Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

medieval romance, providing a new perspective on a broad spectrum of work by scholars such as Richard Kieckhefer, Corinne Saunders, Linda Marie Zaerr, and Michelle Sweeney.<sup>68</sup> The work of Joseph Ortiz is focused on a later period, but his discussion of the role of music in the creation of community and Shakespeare's use of music (instrumental and vocal) to encode connotative, symbolic meaning is valuable for its methodological suggestiveness.<sup>69</sup> These critical approaches open the way to my own examination of musical magic in the second case study, addressing romances in which music gives protagonists power over their environment.

Magic was central to medieval conceptions of music, and *musica speculativa* was closely tied to the practice of 'natural magic'.<sup>70</sup> Katherine Steele Brokaw demonstrates a connection between anxieties about the corporeality of music and the perceived power over the affect of listeners.<sup>71</sup> Rollo argues that magic is symbolic of the power that language and literacy held in the Middle Ages, monopolised by a scholarly elite. Due to the abuse of this system, certain medieval texts served as a warning, both to the reader against misappropriations of this power and to the listener who might be 'enchanted' through listening to the words of poets. In my discussion of romances concerned with magic, I will build on this scholarship by demonstrating that this idea is prevalent in romance, where magic is simultaneously enabling and dangerous.

The preceding account serves as a backdrop to my investigations in Part II. In the next chapter, I briefly turn my attention to the Old English *Apollonius* in order to provide a foundation for the tropes found in the later English tradition of music romances, to which *Apollonius* serves as an important precursor. First, however, I will attempt to delineate the primary audience of insular medieval romance.

### 1.3 Determining the audience of medieval romance

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<sup>68</sup> Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Corinne Saunders, *Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010); Linda Marie Zaerr, 'Songs of Love and Love of Songs: Music and Magic in Medieval Romance', in *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. A. Classen (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2008), pp. 291–317; Michelle Sweeney, *Magic in Medieval Romance from Chrétien de Troyes to Geoffrey Chaucer* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).

<sup>69</sup> Joseph Ortiz, *Broken Harmony: Shakespeare and the Politics of Music* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*, pp. 18–19. For further discussion of natural magic, see Sophie Page, *Magic in the Cloister: Pious Motives, Illicit Interests, and Occult Approaches to the Medieval Universe* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013) and Kieckhefer, *Magic*.

<sup>71</sup> Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*, p. 19.

Pinpointing the audience of medieval romance is a complex but necessary process for reconstructing the contexts in which romances were consumed.<sup>72</sup> The provenance, ownership, and year in which the manuscripts preserving these romances were compiled remain uncertain, as surviving evidence is patchy.<sup>73</sup> Further complications arise from the fact that we have no way of accounting for the total audience of any given manuscript, which might have comprised, beyond manuscript readers, all the active and passive listeners present during a particular reading or performance of a text, the latter of which perhaps included household servants.<sup>74</sup> For this reason, my examination will focus on romances' primary audiences, made up of the intended consumers for whom the manuscript had been compiled, and whose intention it was to listen to or read the romance.<sup>75</sup> This group consisted of the direct owner of the manuscript, along with his or her family members and any guests or companions present in the household. Of necessity, these primary consumers would have been members of the medieval elite: those who had an interest in literature, could afford to commission such a manuscript, and who possessed the ability to read these romances. Over time, participating in these activities became, in itself, a marker of belonging to this group.<sup>76</sup> Such homogeneity across the various strata of the elite makes it even more difficult to pinpoint the specific individual or group for whom these romances might have been intended.<sup>77</sup>

Beginning around 1300, individual lay patrons or private households began commissioning and purchasing manuscripts, with a large portion of surviving romances being commissioned during the fourteenth century.<sup>78</sup> While certain surviving manuscripts, such as the Auchinleck, were luxuriously made, most romance manuscripts are more utilitarian, but this functionality does not automatically imply an

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<sup>72</sup> Carol M. Meale, "gode men/wiues maydnes and alle men": Romance and its Audiences', in *Readings in Medieval Romance*, ed. C.M. Meale (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 209–26 (pp. 209–10).

<sup>73</sup> Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances* (München: W. Fink, 1976), pp. 17, 51; Meale, "gode men", pp. 209–10, 213; McDonald, 'Fragments', p. 238; Cecil H. Clough, 'Introduction: Culture and Society', in *Profession, Vocation, and Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. C.H. Clough (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1982), pp. 1–6 (p. 2). See also Derek Pearsall, 'Middle English Romance and its Audiences', in *Historical and Editorial Studies in Medieval and Early Modern English: for Johan Gerritsen*, ed. M. Arn and H. Wirtjes, with H. Jensen (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1985), pp. 37–47 and Robert Levine, 'Who Composed Havelok for Whom?', *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992), pp. 95–104.

<sup>74</sup> The idea of the primary audience in itself is complex and difficult to delineate: see Meale, "gode men", p. 209; McDonald, 'Fragments', p. 238.

<sup>75</sup> Meale, "gode men", p. 209.

<sup>76</sup> P. R. Coss, *The Foundations of Gentry Life: The Multons of Frampton and their World, 1270–1370* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> Meale, "gode men", p. 216.

<sup>78</sup> Hahn and Symons, 'Medieval Romance', pp. 354–5; Carol M. Meale, 'Patrons, Buyers and Owners: Book Production and Social Status', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 201–38.

owner being of lower status or unable to afford luxury items.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, a *de luxe* manuscript did not necessarily belong to a member of the upper echelons of the aristocracy.<sup>80</sup> However, Carol M. Meale gives the examples of expensively-made manuscripts (Bodley 264, Harley 326, and Longleat MS 257) which furnish evidence that, alongside the gentry and mercantile elites, some of the readership of Middle English romances came from the nobility itself.<sup>81</sup>

The rise in secular manuscript ownership and production in this period can be attributed to the growth of elites beyond the aristocracy and an increase in literacy amongst this group.<sup>82</sup> As we shall see, the same phenomenon accounts for the rise of professional instrument-makers in busy urban areas and locales associated with the elite.<sup>83</sup> In the late Middle Ages, the elite strata of society consisted of several social groups (the nobility, the mercantile elite, the rural gentry, and the urban elite), which are not always easy to disambiguate. The permeability of these categories, especially outside the peerage, meant that one could simultaneously belong to several groups at once.<sup>84</sup> The late medieval period facilitated the growth and expansion of the elite with the inception of a rank below esquire, the gentleman – a category which came to include members of the rural gentry and urban, mercantile strata, and which made up the majority of romance readership by virtue of vastly outnumbering smaller groups such as the nobility.<sup>85</sup>

The gentry and urban elite read, commissioned, and circulated courtesy books, ‘mirror of princes’ texts, and medieval romances which provided models of knighthood and *gentillesse*, sharing the same literary tastes as the upper echelons of the nobility, although gentry and urban readers are usually associated more with Middle English romances than French romances.<sup>86</sup> However, gentility was also a quality

<sup>79</sup> Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, p. 19

<sup>80</sup> See Viscount Dillon and W. H. St John Hope, ‘Inventory of the Goods and Chattels belonging to Thomas, Duke of Gloucester’, *Archaeological Journal* 54 (1897), pp. 275–308 (p. 301).

<sup>81</sup> Meale, ‘gode men’, pp. 214–15.

<sup>82</sup> Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, p. 26; Jeremy Montagu and Gwen Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels: Carvings of Musicians in Medieval English Churches* (Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press, 1998), p. 18.

<sup>83</sup> Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, p. 13.

<sup>84</sup> Christopher Dyer, ‘Households Great and Small: Aristocratic Styles of Life Across the Social Spectrum in England, 1200–1500’, in *The Elite Household in England, 1100–1550: Proceedings of the 2016 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. C.M. Woolgar (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2018), pp. 5–28 (p. 5).

<sup>85</sup> Michael Johnston, ‘The Household and Literary Production in England, 1350–1500’, in *The Elite Household in England, 1100–1550: Proceedings of the 2016 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. C.M. Woolgar (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2018), pp. 93–109 (pp. 95–8); Maurice Keen, *Origins of the English Gentleman: Heraldry, Chivalry and Gentility in Medieval England, c. 1300–c. 1500* (Gloucester: Tempus, 2002), pp. 101, 109; Nicholas Orme, ‘Education and Recreation’, in *Gentry Culture in Late-Medieval England*, ed. R. Radulescu and A. Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 63–83 (pp. 66, 76); Jewell, ‘Cultural Interests’, pp. 132–4.

<sup>86</sup> Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, ‘Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts’, in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 279–316 (pp. 291–2); Keen, ‘Chivalry’, p. 43; Meale, ‘Patrons, Buyers and Owners’, p.

ascribed to all the aristocracy, irrespective of specific rank, and the recognition of a particular group termed ‘gentlemen’ did not serve to separate it from higher estates, but rather to show a connection in ideology.<sup>87</sup> In practical terms, therefore, there was no great distinction either between different categories of the elite in terms of their customs, ideals, social spaces, lifestyle, familial and marital connections, practices, domestic life, and property ownership, or in their desire to invest time and money in the acquisition of education and the pursuit of cultivated reading.<sup>88</sup> The interest of families such as the de la Poles in romances concerned with chivalric ideas does not imply an aspiration for social advancement, despite rare instances where such advancement did take place.<sup>89</sup> Meale points to *Havelok the Dane*, which describes an audience of ‘gode men’, suggesting that the romance was aimed at just such a gentle, elite audience, who would have been its primary consumers.<sup>90</sup>

Trilingual collections such as Harley 2253 further demonstrate the point that at least some members of the gentry read in more than one language, and we know that children of the gentry were sometimes taught additional languages from childhood, as in the case of Margaret Plumpton, daughter of Yorkshire esquire William Plumpton, who at the age of four in 1463 could already speak French.<sup>91</sup> Another example is that of Walter de Bibbesworth, a mid-thirteenth-century Essex knight, who wrote a treatise on language for a noblewoman named Denise de Monchesney, to assist her in teaching her children French, though household chaplains or private masters may also have been charged with teaching children.<sup>92</sup> The ability of elite women to read French is suggested by the fact that many elite women owned romances, which made up ‘the second largest generic grouping amongst women’s books in the Middle Ages as a whole’.<sup>93</sup> As such, there is no reason to assume that only English texts were intended for the gentry, or that these readers were any less discriminating, sophisticated, or

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202; Orme, ‘Education and Recreation’, pp. 66–7; For suggestions of late medieval book ownership being even more widespread than surviving evidence might suggest, see Kate Harris, ‘Patrons, Buyers and Owners: The Evidence for Ownership and the Role of Book Owners in Book Production and the Book Trade’, in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 163–200.

<sup>87</sup> Keen, *English Gentleman*, p. 102.

<sup>88</sup> Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, p. 43; Camille, ‘Seeing and Reading’, p. 30. For the development of the concept of gentility into the gentle class of the later Middle Ages, and its place among the late medieval elite, see Keen, *English Gentleman*; Dyer, ‘Households Great and Small’, p. 28; Meale, ‘“gode men”’, p. 224, fn. 52.

<sup>89</sup> Meale, ‘“gode men”’, p. 220.

<sup>90</sup> Meale, ‘“gode men”’, p. 209. See also Johnston, ‘The Household’, p. 95.

<sup>91</sup> Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1989), p. 170.

<sup>92</sup> Coss, *Gentry Life*, pp. 217–18; Johnston, ‘The Household’, p. 97; For a detailed discussion of tutors within a medieval household, see Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066–1530* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984), pp. 18–36.

<sup>93</sup> Meale, ‘“...Alle the Bokes”’, pp. 138–9.

educated than consumers of Anglo-Norman literature, once again demonstrating that romance collections had a broad, elite readership: the number of surviving bilingual and trilingual collections suggests that, for a period of time, English and Anglo-Norman texts were consumed by readers of a similar social background.<sup>94</sup>

A number of manuscripts have been placed within an elite gentry milieu, including the Findern Manuscript (Cambridge University Library Ff.1.6), from mid-1440s Derbyshire, which has been associated with female ownership and literary interests.<sup>95</sup> This collection contains one of two surviving copies of *Sir Degrevant*, which I suggest falls under the category of music romance. We also know, for instance, of East Anglian gentry families who owned *de luxe* manuscripts containing the prose romance of *Ponthus and the Fair Sidone* and two versions of *Generides*, and of the Ireland family from Hale in Lancashire, who possessed copies of *Sir Amadace*, *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, and *The Avowynge of King Arthur*.<sup>96</sup> Other manuscripts containing music romances have been ascribed to possible mercantile ownership, including Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61, which contains *The Erle of Tolous*, *Lybeaus Desconus*, *Sir Cleges*, and *Sir Orfeo*, and Cambridge University Library MS Ff. 2.38, likely to be of Leicestershire provenance, containing *The Erle of Tolous*, *Octavian*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Bevis of Hampton*, and *Sir Degare*.<sup>97</sup>

The range of materials in extant wills shows which texts were considered valuable, including works of music theory or at least something approaching theory in the case of Boethius.<sup>98</sup> This evidence suggests that elite men and women inherited books on a broad range of subjects, from literary verse and history to works on the natural world and mystical treatises such as those of Richard Rolle, whose writings touched on the powers of music.<sup>99</sup> For instance, Elizabeth Berkeley, the first wife of

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<sup>94</sup> Meale, “‘gode men’”, pp. 211–12.

<sup>95</sup> For other romances associated with women, or commissioned for a community of women, see Meale, “‘gode men’”, p. 222; On women’s connection to the manuscript and role in compilation respectively, see Kate Harris, ‘The Origins and Make-Up of Cambridge University Library MS Ff.1.6’, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 8 (1983), pp. 299–333, and Julia Boffey, ‘Women Authors and Women’s Literacy in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century England’, in *Women and Literature in Britain*, ed. C.M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 159–82 (pp. 169–71); Rita le Jeune, ‘Role Littéraire d’Aliénor d’Aquitaine et de sa Famille’, *Cultura Neolatina* 14 (1954), pp. 5–57; June Hall McCash, ‘The Role of Women in the Rise of the Vernacular’, *Comparative Literature* 60 (Winter 2008), pp. 45–57; Carol M. Meale, ‘Women’s Voices and Roles’, in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture, c.1350–c.1500*, ed. P. Brown (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 74–90, and Carol M. Meale, ‘Reading Women’s Culture in Fifteenth-Century England: The Case of Alice Chaucer’, in *Medievalitas: Reading the Middle Ages*, ed. P. Boitani and A. Torti (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996), pp. 81–101; Meale, “‘...Alle the Bokes’”, pp. 128–58.

<sup>96</sup> Meale, “‘gode men’”, pp. 220–22.

<sup>97</sup> Meale, “‘gode men’”, p. 220.

<sup>98</sup> Jewell, ‘Cultural Interests’, p. 137.

<sup>99</sup> For some examples, refer to Jewell, ‘Cultural Interests’, p. 135; For further evidence of the scope of female book ownership, including amongst members of the prominent Percy family, see Meale, “‘...Alle the Bokes’”, particularly p. 137 and pp. 141–3.

Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, was the patron of the 1410 translation of *Consolation of Philosophy*, made by John Walton.<sup>100</sup> Extant evidence suggests that there was interest in romances from both male and female elite readers in the late Middle Ages, and that various strata of the elite owned romances in French and in Middle English: romance ownership is found in the Roos and Percy families, the de Bohun family, and the household of the Earl of Cambridge.<sup>101</sup> Testators bequeathed romance books to children, relations, and acquaintances of either gender, and Meale suggests that Arthurian romances, particularly the Tristan and Lancelot texts, were not only numerous and widely circulated but owned predominantly by women, even if we must assume they were in French (a few examples notwithstanding).<sup>102</sup>

Of known English copies, there are two examples of individuals from different levels of the elite owning romance books. A copy of a prose *Merlin*, explicitly translated from French and predating Malory's text, provides an example of elite aristocratic ownership, as it belonged to Eleanor Guldeford, from Kent, a member of a family prominent in the court of Henry VII. An example of gentry or mercantile ownership appears in the will of Isabel Lyston of Norwich (January 1490/91), which leaves an English version of *Partonope of Blois* (based on a twelfth-century French romance) to her daughter, Margery, wife of William London, an elite landowner and member of an influential mercantile family.<sup>103</sup> In addition, there are a number of music romances which can be attributed to particular owners, possibly in English though sometimes the language remains uncertain: Margaret Talbot, the Countess of Shrewsbury, commissioned John Lygdate's *Guy of Warwick*, concerned with her ancestor, in approximately 1424, and Margaret Courtenay, Countess of Devon, lists three romance texts in her will (dated 1390/91), including a 'livre appelle Tristram'.<sup>104</sup> Joan Beaufort owned a *Tristram*, along with other romances. In 1420, the will of Dame Matilda Bowes, of Yorkshire, lists a book 'yat is called Trystram', possibly in English.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> For the parallel Continental example of the Countess of Artois who owned and travelled with Boethius texts and romances in 1308 and 1313, see Susan Groag Bell, 'Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture', in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Erler and M. Kowaleski (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1988), pp.149–87 (p.154) and Margaret Wade Labarge, *Medieval Travellers* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p. 70.

<sup>101</sup> For a detailed discussion and examples, see Jewell, 'Cultural Interests', p. 138; Meale, "'...Alle the Bokes'", pp. 136–43.

<sup>102</sup> Meale, "'...Alle the Bokes'", pp. 139–41.

<sup>103</sup> Meale, "'gode men'", pp. 222–3.

<sup>104</sup> Meale, "'...Alle the Bokes'", pp. 137–42.

<sup>105</sup> For further examples of elite women bequeathing and inheriting romances, including *Tristrem* and *Lancelot*, in the late Middle Ages, see Meale, "'...Alle the Bokes'", pp. 139–42 and Jewell, 'Cultural Interests', p. 136.

More direct involvement in manuscript production and annotation among the elite serves to emphasise further their interest in romance, as with the translations made by the London skinner and elite merchant Henry Lovelich in the first half of the fifteenth century (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 80) or the Findern Manuscript (Cambridge University Library MS Ff. 1.6), from southern Derbyshire, written in over forty hands and inscribed with many names of women who shared kinship ties, suggesting it may have been used as a ‘women’s book’.<sup>106</sup> The inscribed names give us an idea of its readership and circulation: the manuscript’s primary audience would have included members of the Findern, Shirley, Francis, and Cotton households, who appear to have had diverse literary interests. This manuscript contains *Sir Degrevant* (a music romance), along with two musical fragments, secular lyrics, excerpts from Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, and some works of Chaucer’s including *The Parliament of Fowls*, texts thematically concerned with music and harmony. Other manuscripts which can be attributed to domestic circulation amongst a gentry milieu include the two Thornton Manuscripts (Lincoln Cathedral Library MS 91, containing *Octavian* and *Sir Degrevant*, and BL MS Additional 31042, containing *Richard Coeur de Lion*), made by Robert Thornton of East Newton in North Yorkshire, who was an amateur compiler with an interest in both prose and verse romances, and the trilingual Harley 2253, dated to after 1329.<sup>107</sup>

The latter manuscript reflects the vibrant literary culture flourishing in the thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries in the South-West Midlands.<sup>108</sup> The scribe’s hand allows us to trace the manuscript’s milieu to the Ludlow area around 1314–1349.<sup>109</sup> The holographs in Harley 2253 contain over a hundred names: while none of them can be identified as the manuscript’s patron with any certainty, they do give us an idea of the society in which the scribe would have worked, suggesting the patron may have belonged to gentle families in the Shropshire area near Ludlow.<sup>110</sup> Revard offers several possibilities based on these documents and the political contents of Harley 2253. One possibility is that the patron might have been Joan Mortimer (1291–1341)

<sup>106</sup> Meale, “...Alle the Bokes”, p. 220.

<sup>107</sup> Johnston, ‘The Household’, pp. 98–9; Meale, “‘gode men’”, p. 221; Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, p. 45; Barbara Nolan, ‘Anthologizing Ribaldry: Five Anglo-Norman Fabliaux’, in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. S. Fein (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 289–328 (pp. 296–7); Carter Revard, ‘Scribe and Provenance’, in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. S. Fein (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 21–110 (p. 62).

<sup>108</sup> Corrie, ‘Harley 2253, Digby 86’, p. 441.

<sup>109</sup> Revard, ‘Scribe’, pp. 21, 69; Meale, “‘gode men’”, p. 211.

<sup>110</sup> Revard, ‘Scribe’, pp. 22–3. For a comparison to a later trilingual miscellany from the same geographic area and social milieu, see Corrie, ‘Harley 2253, Digby 86’, pp. 427–9.

or her son Sir John Talbot (1318–1355), or members of other influential land-owning families of ‘county-magnate status’ from the locality, such as the Ludlows of Stokesay Castle, influential wool merchants who had achieved knighthood and boasted connections with other prominent families such as the FitzAlans and FitzWarins. The manuscript’s contents suggest an interest in Flemish clothiers, the state of property taxes, and the wool trade; the political texts point to an affiliation with Richard FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel; and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, an ancestral romance, specifically references a Ludlow and Hodnet ancestor with familial connections to the Fitzwarins. The manuscript was most likely made for a son of Sir William Ludlow and Matilda de Hodnet, probably Sir Laurence Ludlow.<sup>111</sup> However, another possibility lies with the Cheynes of Cheney Longville or, less likely, the Mortimers of Wigmore, and members of prominent ‘burgess/mercantile/franklin families’ such as the Orletons or Aces. Revard posits that the scribe himself might have been a member of a ‘newly gentle’ literate burgess, franklin, or knightly family such as the Lingens, and a person of independent status producing the manuscript both for himself and for his household.<sup>112</sup>

The *de luxe* Auchinleck Manuscript is one that has been harder to place within a particular sphere of the elite. Several theories have been put forward as to the status and gender of the original owner.<sup>113</sup> Thorlac Turville-Petre proposes a patron from the peerage possessed of a taste for English romances, most likely a member of the prominent Norman chivalric families listed in the manuscript’s Battle Abbey roll, such as the Beauchamp or Percy families.<sup>114</sup> Felicity Riddy uses the same list to suggest that the patron was a noblewoman, Katherine de la Pole, pointing to the possibility of female interest in and patronage of English romances, beyond their well-attested interest in French romance.<sup>115</sup> Ralph Hanna III attributes the transmission of some romance manuscripts across England to wealthy trading families such as the de la Poles, as well as to members of the urban elite.<sup>116</sup> Pearsall and Cunningham, as well as A. I. Doyle, suggest a member of the wealthy London merchant elite towards the end of the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>117</sup> Peter Coss, studying the dissemination of

<sup>111</sup> Revard, ‘Scribe’, pp. 29, 73, 77–81, 86.

<sup>112</sup> Revard, ‘Scribe’, p. 23.

<sup>113</sup> Meale, ‘gode men’, p. 212.

<sup>114</sup> Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290–1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 136–8.

<sup>115</sup> Riddy, ‘The Auchinleck Manuscript’. Katherine de la Pole’s name occurs in the Battle Abbey Roll on fols. 105v–107.

<sup>116</sup> Hanna, *London Literature*, p. 126.

<sup>117</sup> Derek Pearsall and I.C. Cunningham, ‘Introduction’, *The Auchinleck Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates’ MS. 19.2.1* (London: Scholar Press, 1977), p. viii.; Meale, ‘gode men’, p. 212; A.I. Doyle, ‘English

romance, proposes a member of the rural gentry as patron.<sup>118</sup> All these suggestions agree that the patron was wealthy enough to afford a *de luxe* manuscript, whether a member of the peerage, country gentry, or mercantile elite.<sup>119</sup> If the manuscript had been produced on speculation, rather than on a specific commission, as some scholars posit, then the romance texts, which comprise a large portion of the manuscript, were evidently in sufficient demand that a ‘bookshop’ would gamble on the manuscript’s purchase.<sup>120</sup> Whatever the means of production, romances were undeniably popular among a broad spectrum of the medieval elite.

There is no way to delineate a single social group as the primary audience of medieval romance. An examination of wills, inventories, and even the few surviving autographs among manuscript codices helps reconstruct the milieu in which these romances were consumed, but there is a danger in interpreting these findings as a complete catalogue of romance audiences because of the accidents of survival to which such ephemera are prone. One can say that the primary audience was elite and wealthy, with a certain degree of educational accomplishment, and one can also say that, by the late Middle Ages, the per-capita size of the various strata of the elite, as well as surviving evidence of manuscript ownership, suggests that the audience of specifically Middle English romances was predominantly of the country gentry and mercantile elite groups. In the next section, I examine the musical milieu of the late medieval period to demonstrate that the same elite groups which participated in the patronage and primary consumption of romances were interested in owning and learning to play musical instruments.

#### 1.4 Musical milieu in late medieval England

Scholars of medieval music and education widely agree that the ability to play an instrument was more widespread in the Middle Ages than today.<sup>121</sup> As with

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Books in and out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII’, in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 163–82, particularly p. 165.

<sup>118</sup> Peter Coss, ‘Aspects of Cultural Diffusion in Medieval England: The Early Romances, Local Society, and Robin Hood’, *Past and Present* 108 (Aug. 1985), pp. 35–79; Meale, “‘gode men’”, p. 212.

<sup>119</sup> Hanna, ‘Auchinleck Manuscript’, p. 94; Hanna, *London Literature*, p. 25; Phillipa Hardman and Marianne Ailes, *The Legend of Charlemagne in Medieval England: The Matter of France in Middle English and Anglo-Norman Literature* (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 2017), pp. 178–80; Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, pp. 134–6.

<sup>120</sup> Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, pp. 113, 134; Timothy A. Shonk, ‘A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript: Bookmen and Bookmaking in the Early Fourteenth Century’, *Speculum* 60 (1985), pp. 71–91 (p. 89); Pearsall, and Cunningham, ‘Introduction’, p. ix; Edwards, ‘Manuscripts’, p. 96.

<sup>121</sup> See Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum Multitudo*, p. 26, and Frederick Crane, *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments: A Provisional Catalogue by Types* (Iowa: University Iowa Press, 1972); Christopher Page, ‘String-Instrument Making in Medieval England and Some Oxford Harp-Makers, 1380–1466’, in *Music and Instruments of*

pinpointing the audience of medieval romances, determining the context of musical learning and practice among the medieval elite is a complex process hampered by poor survival of documents, instruments, and archaeological remains. Our knowledge of the types of instrument prevalent in the medieval period, and the milieu in which they would have been played, must largely rely on documentary, literary, and iconographic evidence, allowing for a possibly exaggerated portrait arising from the latter two kinds.<sup>122</sup> Most extant documents date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the number of surviving instruments, or records of instruments, is unlikely to reflect the number which had been originally produced.<sup>123</sup> Nonetheless, for all the patchiness of the surviving record, suggestive evidence survives of an overlap between the elite communities who consumed music romance and the elite communities who were actively engaged in musical practice, if not also familiar with some degree of theoretical knowledge. It has also been suggested that the same scriptoria which worked on producing and illuminating *de luxe* literary manuscripts were also engaged to illuminate and produce collections of polyphony. Accordingly, such manuscripts may have shared similar sites of production, spheres of circulation, and consumers.<sup>124</sup>

Some figures who were patrons of household chapels and of composers were also owners of romance manuscripts, such as Margaret Beaufort, daughter of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset and mother of King Henry VII.<sup>125</sup> For men and women from the wealthy echelons of medieval society, the ability to play an instrument, sing, and compose verse was considered a valuable accomplishment because these skills were integral to many elite social rituals, the domestic sphere, and the battlefield.<sup>126</sup>

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*the Middle Ages: Studies on Texts and Performance*, Variorum Collected Studies (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), Ch. III, pp. 44–67; Howard Mayer Brown and Keith Polk, ‘Instrumental Music c.1300–c.1520’, in *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. R. Strohm and B.J. Blackburn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 97–162; For classical and medieval authorities on the necessity of aristocratic musical learning, see Orme, *From Childhood*, pp. 167–70.

<sup>122</sup> Crane, *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments*, pp. ix, 26; Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, p. 22.

<sup>123</sup> Kermode, ‘The Merchants’, pp. 10–11.

<sup>124</sup> Wathey, *Royal and Noble Households*, pp. 14–15.

<sup>125</sup> C.M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 177.

<sup>126</sup> Orme, *From Childhood*, pp. 165–7; Nicholas Orme, ‘The Education of the Courtier’, in *English Court Culture in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 63–85 (p. 83); J. Michele Edwards, ‘Women in Music to ca. 1450’, in *Women and Music: A History*, ed. K. Pendle (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991, 2001 reprint), pp. 26–53 (pp. 37, 49); Howard Mayer Brown, ‘Songs after Supper: How the Aristocracy Entertained Themselves in the Fifteenth Century’, in *Musica Privata: Die Rolle der Musik im Privaten Leben*, ed. M. Fink, R. Gstrein, and G. Mossmer (Innsbruck: Edition Helbling, 1991), pp. 37–52 (pp. 41–3); Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum Multitudo*, p. 26; Karin Pendle, ‘Musical Women in Early Modern Europe’, in *Women and Music: A History*, ed. K. Pendle (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991, 2001 reprint), pp. 57–96 (p. 66). There are extant didactic medieval treatises touching on the question of women’s musical education, such as the anonymous *La clef d’Amors* (fifteenth century), written for elite women of noble and gentle classes, and the Italian *Del Reggimento e costume di donna* by Francesco da Barberino (1264–1348). For further literary and visual examples, see Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1982), pp. 28–31.

Froissart relates that Sir John Chandos was obliged by King Edward to sing some songs which his minstrels had brought back from Germany, and in 1363 Lord de Coucy won the prize for singing and dancing in a competition at court, which suggests that amateur performance played a role in the entertainment provided at elite gatherings.<sup>127</sup> Beyond their patronage of secular and religious music, many elite figures, from the royal family and upper aristocracy to wealthy urban merchants and gentry, were skilled musicians themselves.<sup>128</sup>

Medieval romances such as *Sir Tristrem* and *Sir Orfeo* offer a detailed depiction of the musical education of their protagonists. These ideals of cultural attainment are not entirely the stuff of fiction as they reflected the virtues and ideals of romance audiences.<sup>129</sup> Children in elite households could be taught by their masters, professional minstrels, and members and servants of the household.<sup>130</sup> Recovered fragments of musical instruments made for the hands of a child show that musical learning was part of some medieval children's upbringing, though few documents survive concerning the process of musical teaching.<sup>131</sup> Wealthy amateurs across the strata of the elite, who could afford tutors, tended to learn *bas* (soft) instruments.<sup>132</sup> Extant records show that merchants and gentry purchased instruments and paid for tutors to master them, took instruction in singing, and even purchased written repertory.<sup>133</sup> One such example is that of George Cely, a wool merchant belonging to the Staple Company in Calais: Cely engaged Thomas Rede, a professional harper, as his music tutor in 1474, in order to learn the lute and harp, and did so again in 1475, to revise the pieces which he had learned.<sup>134</sup> The evidence of the education provided in such establishments as the Inns of Court further suggests that, as with their reading

<sup>127</sup> John Southworth, *The English Medieval Minstrel*, p. 102; Constance Bullock-Davies (compiler), *A Register of Royal and Baronial Domestic Minstrels 1272–1372* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1986), p. xiv; Orme, *From Childhood*, pp. 165–6; Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. G. Brereton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 168.

<sup>128</sup> Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum Multitudo*, p. 26; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', pp. 99, 112.

<sup>129</sup> Nicholas Orme, 'The Education of the Courtier', in *English Court Culture in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 63–85 (p. 65).

<sup>130</sup> Orme, *From Childhood*, pp. 167–8; Southworth, *Minstrel*, pp. 142–3; Peters, *Musical Sounds*, p. 183.

<sup>131</sup> Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, p. 153. Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 9; Richard Rastall, 'The Minstrels of the Great Households in England, c. 1330–1500', in *The Elite Household in England, 1100–1550: Proceedings of the 2016 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. C.M. Woolgar (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2018), pp. 237–57 (p. 249); Edwards, 'Women in Music', p. 26. See also Orme, *From Childhood*.

<sup>132</sup> Peters, *Musical Sounds*, p. 183; Orme, *From Childhood*, pp. 163–74, 178–80; Orme, 'Education and Recreation', pp. 66, 76; Orme, *Medieval Children*, pp. 165, 176–8; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', pp. 112, 148–9, p. 157; Page, 'String-Instrument Making', p. 59.

<sup>133</sup> Pendle, 'Musical Women', pp. 57–96 (p. 66).

<sup>134</sup> Alison Hanham, *The Celys and their World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 2002 reprint), p. 33; Rose, *Calais*, p. 106; Theodor Dumitrescu, *The Early Tudor Court and International Musical Relations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 54–5; Peters, *Musical Sounds*, pp. 185–6, 252; Spring, *The Lute*, pp. 28–9. For further information on the songs that Cely wished to learn, see David Fallows (ed.), *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415–1480* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

ability, members of the medieval gentry community possessed varying degrees of musical literacy.<sup>135</sup>

Extant evidence of instruments from the period covered by this thesis is rare, and only a dozen surviving instruments predate 1500.<sup>136</sup> Scarcity of instruments from the medieval period can be attributed to several factors, such as the poor survival in the soil of materials which were most commonly used in the production of instruments, including wood, leather, parchment, horn, and lead or tin alloys.<sup>137</sup> Most excavated fragments pertain to remains of simpler, more durable instruments from the lower ranks of society, but fragments of instruments of a higher status are also sometimes found in such places as the London waterfront sites.<sup>138</sup> String instruments are represented in the archaeological record by such remains as tuning keys and pegs, and occasionally even minor wooden fragments and tail pieces, from sites around Britain.<sup>139</sup> Such finds suggest that musical instruments played an important role in households across various strata of medieval society.<sup>140</sup> Flutes have a particularly high survival rate, with the greatest frequency of finds located at urban sites and sites associated with the elite.<sup>141</sup> Poor survival does not translate to a lack of popularity: there are no extant medieval lutes, thanks to the fragility of the instrument's ribbed construction, even though it was one of the most popular instruments of the late medieval and early modern periods.<sup>142</sup>

Monetary worth is another factor influencing the survival of musical instruments and their presence in wills and property lists. Most functional instruments, even those owned by the highest echelons, were relatively inexpensive, and thus would not have been preserved.<sup>143</sup> In his work on the medieval lute, Christopher Page found only fourteen instances of instruments appearing in printed collections of English

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<sup>135</sup> Tim Shaw, 'Music', in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. R. Radulescu and A. Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 151–67 (p. 163).

<sup>136</sup> Crane, *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments*, p. ix.

<sup>137</sup> Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, p. 115; Jeremy Montagu, *The World of Medieval & Renaissance Musical Instruments* (New York: The Overlook Press, 1976, 1980 reprint), p. 22; Angela Wardle, 'Musical Instruments', in *The Medieval Household Daily Living c.1150–c.1450*, ed. G. Egan (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press), pp. 283–90 (p. 284).

<sup>138</sup> Crane, *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments*, p. ix; Wardle, 'Musical Instruments', p. 284.

<sup>139</sup> Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, p. 131; Wardle, 'Musical Instruments', pp. 284–6.

<sup>140</sup> Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, p. 163; Martin Biddle, *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester: Artefacts from Medieval Winchester*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

<sup>141</sup> Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, pp. 153, 168; H. Leaf, 'Medieval Bone Flutes in England', in *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies: Animals in Material Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Pluskoski (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007), pp. 11–17.

<sup>142</sup> Spring, *The Lute*, p. 6.

<sup>143</sup> Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, pp. 80–81.

wills.<sup>144</sup> Such instruments tended to be predominantly *de luxe* models, and many of them would have been made for display rather than function, as sound quality often suffered from highly-decorative construction.<sup>145</sup> Jeremy Montagu offers the example of valuable ivory instruments of later periods, which had very poor tonal quality, but which survive more frequently than their usable equivalents.<sup>146</sup> Such instruments would not have been used in performance by musicians, even though we often see their like producing beautiful music in romance: any such scene foregoes realism and operates at a more symbolic level.

The British Museum citole, which has wear-marks on the trefoil and neck, shows that some elaborate instruments were capable of good tonal quality, unhampered by their decorative carvings. Even these were probably reserved for special functions.<sup>147</sup> The citole is the only instrument of its kind extant in such a good condition, and it would have been a costly item in the fourteenth century, yet even such a valuable piece was remade into a violin in the sixteenth century.<sup>148</sup> A study by Phillip Lindley places the instrument's provenance in East Anglia, which overlaps with an area of elite manuscript production and consumption. The resemblance of the carvings on the citole to fourteenth-century decorative carvings and marginal decorations in manuscripts allows us to date it to *c.* 1300–1330 and to determine the broader social and cultural milieu for which it would have been made, as it implies a deliberate connection between literary culture, manuscript decorations, music, and visual art.<sup>149</sup> Alice C. Margerum ventures the possibility that it was made for an elite woman, and it would certainly have been beyond the means of an ordinary minstrel.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Christopher Page, 'The 15th-Century Lute: New and Neglected Sources', *Early Music* 9, No. 1, Plucked-String Issue 1 (1981), pp. 11–21.

<sup>145</sup> Page, 'The 15th-Century Lute', p. 19; Crane, *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments*, p. xiv; Kathryn Buehler-McWilliams, 'The British Museum Citole: An Organological Study', in *The British Museum Citole: New Perspectives*, ed. J. Robinson, N. Speakman, and K. Buehler-McWilliams (London: The British Museum, 2015), pp. 125–42 (p.127); Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 135; Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, pp. 80–81.

<sup>146</sup> Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, pp. 80–81.

<sup>147</sup> Buehler-McWilliams, 'The British Museum Citole', pp. 127, 136–7; Andrew Taylor, 'Love and Measure: The Courtly Associations of the Late Medieval Citole', in *The British Museum Citole: New Perspectives*, ed. J. Robinson, N. Speakman, and K. Buehler-McWilliams (London: The British Museum, 2015), pp. 39–44 (p. 39); Lindley, 'The Decorative Sculpture', p. 1–15; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 135.

<sup>148</sup> Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, p. 30; Crane, *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments*, p. 14; Naomi Speakman, 'Introduction', in *The British Museum Citole: New Perspectives*, ed. J. Robinson, N. Speakman, and K. Buehler-McWilliams (London: The British Museum, 2015), pp. v–ix; Lindley, 'The Decorative Sculpture', pp. 1–15; Alice C. Margerum, "'Alioquin Deficeret Hic Instrumentum Illud Multum Vulgare": A Brief Overview of Citoles in Art and Literature c. 1200–1400', in *The British Museum Citole: New Perspectives*, ed. J. Robinson, N. Speakman, and K. Buehler-McWilliams (London: The British Museum, 2015), pp. 15–39 (p. 33); Taylor, 'Love and Measure', p. 41.

<sup>149</sup> For a detailed discussion of the resemblance of the citole carvings to fourteenth-century carvings in stone and wood, and English manuscript decoration such as those of the Peterborough Psalter (before 1318) and Ormesby Psalter (*c.* 1310) see Lindley, 'The Decorative Sculpture', pp. 1–15; and Alexander, Jonathan and Binski, Paul (eds.), *The Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400* (London: Royal Academy of the Arts and

Very little is known about the clients who might have purchased instruments.<sup>151</sup> Few craftsmen were devoted solely to the production of musical instruments, which were probably sold more widely and by a broader range of craftsmen than the evidence would have us suppose.<sup>152</sup> The growing number of craftsmen who specialised in the making of string instruments in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries suggests a rising demand which coincides with growing ranks of the urban merchant elite.<sup>153</sup> London harpmakers such as John Bore and Robert Somerton (active *c.* 1416), and John de Toppclyf of York, purveyed a trade in more costly instruments which was much more lucrative, producing luxury instruments for an elite milieu ranging from wealthy merchants, to the nobility, and even to the king.<sup>154</sup> The *de luxe* harps produced by Bore, two of which were purchased by Henry V, could cost around 46s. 8d. – such instruments were likely of a kind with the British Museum citole.<sup>155</sup> Extant records of functional instruments owned by professional minstrels and elite amateurs suggest they were usually worth roughly between 4d. and 9s. in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>156</sup> A more expensive example is also seen in the instance of Robert Wolvedon, treasurer of the York Minster, who lists both a clavicymbal and a lute, jointly valued at £4, in his will of 1432, which he left to Thomas Gednay, one of several gentlemen he was educating in his household.<sup>157</sup>

These records confirm the wider existence of functional instruments in elite hands and their relative value, and show the difference in price with *de luxe* manuscripts of the period. It is plain to see why mundane instruments may not have ordinarily warranted a place in wills and inventory rolls, and it is likely that the

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Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), catalogue number 521; Mary Remnant, 'The Gittern in English Medieval Art', *GSF* 18 (1965), pp. 104–9; Mary Remnant and Richard Marks, 'A Medieval Gittern', in *Music and Civilisation: The British Museum Yearbook* 4 (1980), pp. 83–134 (pp. 98–101).

<sup>150</sup> Margerum, "'Alioquin Deficeret'", p. 33.

<sup>151</sup> For further detail about surviving documents and names of instrument makers, see Page, 'String-Instrument Making', pp. 44–67, particularly p. 49, and Gretchen Peters, *The Musical Sounds of Medieval French Cities: Players, Patrons and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>152</sup> Page, 'String-Instrument Making', pp. 48, 57–8; Peters, *Musical Sounds*, pp. 186–7.

<sup>153</sup> Page, 'String-Instrument Making', pp. 54–8.

<sup>154</sup> Page, 'String-Instrument Making', pp. 58–9.

<sup>155</sup> Page, 'The 15th-Century Lute', p. 19. For record of a costs, see F. Devon (ed.), *Extracts from the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer Henry III–Henry VI* (London, 1837), p. 367. Page, 'String-Instrument Making', p. 47.

<sup>156</sup> See, for instance, Page, 'String-Instrument Making', p. 52; Coss, *The Foundations*, pp. 31, 248; Spring, *The Lute*, p. 18; *Household Book of John, Duke of Norfolk, and Thomas Earl of Surrey, temp. 1481–1490*, ed. J.P. Collier (London: W. Nicol, 1844), pp. xxiii, 218; Bullock-Davies, *A Register*, Page, 'The 15th-Century Lute', p. 19; Hanham, 'Musical Studies', p. 271.

<sup>157</sup> Orme, *From Childhood*, p. 168; *Testamenta Eboracensia*, ed. J. Raine, vol. I. (Surtees Society 4, 1836), pp. 91–2. For a comparative example of the cost of lodgings, robes, livestock, and food, see Spring, *The Lute*, pp. 28–9 and Alison Hanham, 'The Musical Studies of a Fifteenth-Century Wool Merchant', *The Review of English Studies* 8, No. 31 (1957), pp. 270–4 (p. 273).

majority of instruments circulating amongst the elite were cheap and functional.<sup>158</sup> On rare occasions, instruments do appear in comprehensive medieval inventory lists, such as the fifteenth-century register kept by the Chancellor of the University of Oxford.<sup>159</sup> Such records demonstrate the wide-spread presence of musical instruments across the social strata, showing that simple, useable instruments were inexpensive enough to be affordable by poorer members of the gentry, but were also owned by the upper echelons of the medieval elite. Henry Bolingbroke, later King Henry IV, was praised for his musical skill by a contemporary, while extant documents prove his musical inclinations, showing that he purchased a recorder in 1387–1388, worth 3s. 4d.<sup>160</sup> Henry's first wife, Mary de Bohun, was also a musician: forty strings were purchased for her harp in 1387–1388 and we know that she sang while Henry played the recorder during his stay at Monmouth in 1386.<sup>161</sup> Henry IV's second wife, Joan of Navarre, also had an interest in music: she had her cithara (harp) repaired while imprisoned at Leeds Castle in late 1419.<sup>162</sup> The son of Henry IV and Mary de Bohun, later Henry V, was also brought up to be musical: in 1395–1396, Henry IV rewarded a man for presenting his then ten-year-old son with a harp, and additional harp strings were purchased for the boy in 1397.<sup>163</sup> Many years later, in 1420, when Henry V was on campaign in France, he purchased new harps to be sent for him and his queen, Catherine.<sup>164</sup>

The above overview is not comprehensive, but offers a cross-section of instrument ownership across strata of the medieval elite, from the royal household to the country gentry and wealthy urban merchants. These are the same social groups who would have constituted the primary readers of medieval romance. Literary interest can also be found, albeit later in the fifteenth century, alongside ownership of musical instruments: in 1471, Lady Elizabeth Bruyn of Essex left a double harp and a copy of

<sup>158</sup> Page, 'The 15th-Century Lute', pp. 19–20.

<sup>159</sup> Page, 'The 15th-Century Lute', p. 19. The instruments listed include two lutes, priced at 4d. and at 10d., a hornpipe valued at 1d., and two harps valued at 4d. and 2s. respectively – only one of these instruments is valued above 10d.

<sup>160</sup> Orme, *From Childhood*, pp. 165, 169; Orme, 'The Education of the Courtier', p. 83; Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain*, pp. 220–21. See BL Additional MS 35295, fol. 262, TNA, DL 28/1/2 f. 16v., and TNA, DL 28/1/2/ f. 25v.

<sup>161</sup> Southworth, *Minstrel*, pp. 111–12; Orme, *From Childhood*, pp. 165–6, 169; Orme, 'The Education of the Courtier', p. 83. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain*, pp. 220–21. See BL Additional MS 35295, fol. 262, TNA, DL 28/1/2/ f. 25v, and TNA DL/28/1/6 f.36. See also James Hamilton Wylie, *History of England Under Henry the Fourth*, 4 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884–1898), vol. III, p. 325, vol. IV, pp. 170–80.

<sup>162</sup> A.R. Myers, 'The Captivity of a Royal Witch: The Household Accounts of Queen Joan of Navarre, 1419–21', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 24 (1940), pp. 263–284 (pp. 267, 269); C.M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 241.

<sup>163</sup> TNA DL/28/1/6 f.36. Southworth, *Minstrel*, pp. 111–12; Orme, *From Childhood*, p. 166. See also Wylie, *History of England*, vol. III, p. 325, vol. IV, pp. 170–80.

<sup>164</sup> Southworth, *Minstrel*, p. 114; Orme, *From Childhood*, p. 166; Frederick Devon (ed.), *Extracts from the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer Henry III–Henry VI* (London: J. Murray, 1837), pp. 363, 367

*The Canterbury Tales* to a man named Robert Walsall.<sup>165</sup> The milieux of music consumption and romance consumption suggestively align.

### 1.5 The musical ethos of late medieval manuscripts

Of the thirty-eight late medieval insular manuscript volumes that house the corpus of twenty-five music romances as classified by this thesis, some contain a considerable number of music romances (six manuscripts contain three or more, and one contains eleven), and in certain instances particular music romances appear together, co-circulating in ways that seem more than purely coincidental (*Amis and Amiloun*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *Richard Coeur de Lion*, and *Sir Degaré* co-circulate in the Auchinleck Manuscript and British Library MS Egerton 2862). Moreover, of these four, *Bevis of Hampton* and *Sir Degaré* also co-circulate in Cambridge Ff.2.38; and *Bevis of Hampton* and *Richard Coeur de Lion* also co-circulate in Gonville and Caius MS 175/96).<sup>166</sup> Non-romance texts in manuscripts containing music romances also sometimes possess suggestive musical resonances or musical leanings, creating a network of musical associations that might have been recognised by, and held significance for, the intended audiences.<sup>167</sup>

An excellent example of a codex densely filled with musical contents is the Auchinleck Manuscript, which contains a striking number of music romances (including the trope-heavy *Sir Orfeo*, *Sir Tristrem*, the ‘Stanzaic’ *Guy of Warwick*, and *Bevis of Hampton*).<sup>168</sup> The consecutive placement of *Sir Tristrem* (ff. 281r.a–299, stub) and *Sir Orfeo* (ff. 299, stub–303r.a), romances of two famous harpers, directly after the psalm *David the King* (ff. 280r.b–280v.b), a source often credited as a key origin story for the harper-hero in the Western literary tradition, suggests that the compiler of this manuscript intentionally grouped these music-themed texts together. A structurally different kind of text in the volume, the fragment of *The Seven Wise Masters* (ff. 84 r.b stub–99v.b), which recasts the ancient *Seven Sages* cycle within the framework of metrical romance, is also concerned with the theme of learning and the acquisition of

<sup>165</sup> Meale, “...Alle the Bokes”, p. 142.

<sup>166</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>167</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>168</sup> Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, pp. 121–6.

the liberal arts, including music.<sup>169</sup> Elsewhere, the musical competence of at least some readers is intimated by the rare extant example of musical notation in a codex containing medieval romance, in National Library of Scotland MS. Advocates 19.3.1 (second half of the fifteenth century), a miscellany of country-gentry provenance from the Derbyshire area later used as a commonplace book.<sup>170</sup>

The contents of Harley 2253 likewise reveal sustained connections to musical thought. Beyond a music romance (*King Horn*, fols. 83r–92v), this manuscript contains one of the most significant gatherings of English secular lyrics dating from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.<sup>171</sup> Some of these lyrics take the form of carols, pastourelles, and revedies, the latter two forms associated with French song.<sup>172</sup> These songs include *Feroy Chaunson* (fol. 76r), a lament of a rejected lover, *The Meeting in the Wood* (fols. 66v–67r), and *Lenten ys come with love to toune* (fol. 71v.a), a Middle English pastourelle, and *Alysoun* (fol. 63v), a Middle English song of springtime love. The proximity of these musically-inflected lyrics to the romance of *King Horn* is unlikely to be coincidental: these examples are all found within booklet 5 of the manuscript (quires 7–11), in the hand of Scribe B, which suggests that the material concerned with musical ideas was deliberately placed within the same booklet; some musical elements are found in other booklets too. Such a diverse exploration of musical themes also suggests that the intended audience must have had at least a passing interest in secular medieval music.

The manuscript also has non-romance poems which explore the role and figure of the minstrel. The Anglo-Norman *Le Jongelur d'Ely et le Roi d'Angleterre* (in booklet 6) might have been intended to play off the minstrel episodes in *King Horn* and possibly those in romances found in other manuscripts too, such as *Sir Cleges* and *Sir Orfeo*, calling up, only to invert or modify, similarities with those texts.<sup>173</sup> It introduces the figure of a wandering minstrel who encounters the King of England in a

<sup>169</sup> *The Seven Sages* is also found alongside several music romances in Cambridge, University Library MS Ff.2.38, which also contains *Octavian*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Sir Degaré*, *Bevis of Hampton*, and *Le Bone Florence of Rome*.

<sup>170</sup> See *The Digital Index of Middle English Verse* (<https://www.dimev.net/Records.php?MSS=NLS1931>)

<sup>171</sup> Theo Stemmler, 'Miscellany or Anthology? The Structure of Medieval Manuscripts: MS Harley 2253, for Example', in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. S. Fein (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 111–22 (p. 111); Nolan, 'Anthologizing Ribaldry', p. 296.

<sup>172</sup> Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, p. 46; Ruth J. Dean and Maureen Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999), p. 77, Item 127. Susanna Greer Fein (ed.), *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, vol. II (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2014), retrieved from <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/fein-harley2253-volume-2>, accessed on 15.05.2019; Thomas G. Duncan, 'Middle English Lyrics: Meter and Editorial Practice', in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. T.G. Duncan (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 19–38 (p. 19).

<sup>173</sup> For non-musical parallels, see Nolan, 'Anthologizing Ribaldry', pp. 299–300, 311.

wood and proceeds to mock courtly chivalric affectations and to instruct the king in the importance of moderation.<sup>174</sup> As in music romances, the use of ‘mesure’ in this poem is evocative of moderation (‘mesure’ encompassing the senses of ‘moderation’ and ‘musical meter’) and tempering for good conduct and reputation, which suggests that this vocabulary of musically-informed moderation had a certain currency among readers and owners of chivalric and minstrel narratives.<sup>175</sup> The jongleur is permitted to speak boldly to the king, who eventually finds wisdom in his words: instead of a physical challenge, which a reader might expect in such a setting, the king must unravel the sense of the minstrel’s riddles and gain self-awareness.<sup>176</sup> As in many music romances, the minstrel wears a musical instrument around his neck like a badge of office – in this case, a richly decorated drum. This depiction of the instrument recalls not only the unique status enjoyed by musicians in romance, for whom instruments, crucially, provide access into elite spaces, but also the way the identity of the musician is closely tied to the music with which this figure is associated.

Musical literacy (in the sense of technical understanding of notation) outside liturgical contexts was not widespread in this period – an exception to, more than a rule of, the transmission of lyric texts – so it is likely that a compiler would not have distinguished between literary lyrics that were intended for reading and songs intended to be sung, and would have few qualms binding them together.<sup>177</sup> Carols, in particular, were a form that was structurally compatible with singing, and many survive with music.<sup>178</sup> Certain secular lyrics that lack notation in one copy will have been copied with music in another, suggesting that at least some of them were meant to be performed, and that the lack of music in, for example, Harley 2253 does not necessarily mean that none of the lyrics was ever sung.<sup>179</sup> Susanna Fein proposes that *Blow, Northern Wind* (fols. 72v.a–73r.b), a secular love lyric in carol form, was ‘obviously designed for singing’ based on its stanzaic structure, the use of repetitions

<sup>174</sup> Nolan, ‘Anthologizing Ribaldry’, pp. 294, 302.

<sup>175</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27525>, accessed on 04.04.18; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 267–8.

<sup>176</sup> Nolan, ‘Anthologizing Ribaldry’, pp. 297–300.

<sup>177</sup> Andrew Taylor, *Textual Situations: Three Medieval Manuscripts and Their Readers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 20. For further discussion of the carol, see Deeming, *Songs in British Sources*; John Stevens (ed.), *Mediaeval Carols* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1958); and David Fallows, *Henry V and the Earliest English Carols: 1413–1440* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>178</sup> Karl Reichl, ‘The Middle English Carol’, in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. T.G. Duncan (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 150–70 (pp. 158–60).

<sup>179</sup> Thomas G. Duncan, ‘Introduction’, in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. T.G. Duncan (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), pp. xiii–xxv (pp. xxiii–xxiv).

in stanzas 2, 6, and 9, and the strong suggestion that its origins lie in older folk-song.<sup>180</sup> However, it is worth noting that stanzaic form could also simply be an inheritance from a sung-lyric tradition, or even an aspect of the literary lyric unrelated to song.<sup>181</sup> Harley 2253 also contains an ABC for women (booklet 3, fols. 49r–50v), an alphabetic list of women’s virtues, which may also have been sung, given the form of the poem’s stanzas.<sup>182</sup> There is such a rich variety of music-oriented material in this codex that its compiler seems to presuppose some musical knowledge and interest from its primary audience and owners. While there are no examples of music theory even in a manuscript so steeped in musical ideas, implying that this is a collection more interested in performance and the ubiquity of everyday music than in an academic exploration of more philosophical, abstract musical ideas, this absence does not necessarily mean that such an audience would not have been able to appreciate the nuanced interplay of harmony and the symbolic role of instruments in the text. Theory is not found in collections of romance, even though readers may have simultaneously owned a book of Boethius and a collection of romance.

A final important example is Bodleian MS Digby 23, a composite volume comprising two sections: *The Song of Roland* (Part II, late twelfth century) and Calcidius’ translation of Plato’s *Timaeus* (Part I, early twelfth century), a text which includes a discussion of music’s powers. Musical themes (such as the role of the oliphant in the narrative) are central to *Roland*, which implies that the two works may have been bound together deliberately: the two halves were already kept together by the thirteenth century.<sup>183</sup> The manuscript contains many glosses from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, demonstrating continued interest and study of its contents.<sup>184</sup> Music can also be found sharing a codex with Breton lais in British Library MS Harley 978 (last quarter of the thirteenth century), a monastic trilingual miscellany which contains a broad range of materials, including both the lais and fables of Marie de France and various musical pieces in English and Latin, such as the medieval round ‘Sumer is icumen in’, which is accompanied by musical notation.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> See Dean and Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, pp. 66–76. For the discussion of *Blow, Northern Wind*, see Fein, *The Complete Harley 2253*, vol. II, retrieved from: <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/fein-harley2253-volume-2-article-46-introduction>, accessed 17.11.2019.

<sup>181</sup> Duncan, ‘Introduction’, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

<sup>182</sup> Dean and Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, pp. 115–16, Item 201.

<sup>183</sup> Taylor, *Textual Situations*, p. 3.

<sup>184</sup> Taylor, *Textual Situations*, p. 44.

<sup>185</sup> Taylor, *Textual Situations*, pp. 2–5, 83.

From this survey of documents, the musical and the literary are found coming together within the space of individual codices, suggesting that, in many cases, musical and literary cultures appealed to the same kinds of readership and seem to presuppose more than just passing or incidental knowledge of musical practice. This idea is underlined further by my exploration of the use of musical tropes within music romances, which contends that such references in romance are more than convenient stock phrases. This visible overlap between music and romance, not just in the same broad social milieu but within individual codices, suggests a wide co-circulation of musical and literary ideas. Next, I offer a brief overview of medieval ideas of *musica* that played a role in shaping the tropes of music romance.

## 2. Music theory as a context for romance

The English romance tradition took shape in contexts highly attuned to music and poetry in their incarnate, audible form as composed, performed, and heard. It was also highly responsive to the theoretical conceptions of music – as a harmonic force capable of moderating the movement of planets, as well as the humours and behaviour of men and women. The next section of this Introduction looks more closely at the ideas of music – that is, *musica*, the conception formulated through the discipline of musical theory – that were contemporary with music romances. What ideas of music were current at the time of romance’s engagement with *musica*? What sources did composers and readers of romance draw on to inform their understanding of the musical behaviours of romance characters and the symbolism behind in-text musical interludes? How and where were these ideas disseminated, and, beyond the traditions of romance, what other literary contexts engaged with the concepts of musical theory? In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will trace the most important musical authorities from the sixth century to the end of the fourteenth, charting the development of key ideas which came to influence the romances. I will demonstrate how the diffusion of musical learning out of the clerical context made certain ideas of *musica* known beyond the monastery and university walls. Lastly, I will trace the influence of musical theory on medieval romance with a view to setting up a closer analysis of this influence in Part II of the thesis.

## 2.1 Authorities and ideas: sixth to the fourteenth century

By the thirteenth century, the close association between music, astronomy, and the supernatural had become a standardised feature of the discipline of *musica*, which was construed as part of the quadrivium.<sup>186</sup> While the learned debate over celestial tones and intervals continued to the end of the Middle Ages, the belief in the powers of music remained unchallenged.<sup>187</sup> As well as offering a brief intellectual history of the medieval tradition of musical theory, in this section I will show what kinds of context for *musica*, and ideas emanating from it, were available to a medieval secular audience. The ensuing overview of the theoretical commentary available to medieval scholars via Boethius is by no means exhaustive, but will focus on aspects of musical theory which had a measurable impact on romances.

Medieval scholars and philosophers had access to a diverse body of writings about music on which to base their own interpretation of *musica*. The most widely-read of musical authorities of the Middle Ages were Augustine of Hippo, Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636), and classical learning was known through their work, which was in itself a gloss and revision of late antique ideas about musical harmony. Christian Leitmeir has suggested that, along with the scholarly value lent by calling upon ancient authority, these medieval intermediaries also provided behavioural guidance.<sup>188</sup> The same kind of guidance, I hope to demonstrate, was also found in the romances. In terms of musical learning, certain prevalent aspects of *musica*, especially pertaining to the power of harmony, formed the ‘canon’ of harmonic theory which spread out of scholarly contexts and into a lay environment, influencing secular song, mystery and liturgical plays, and romances.<sup>189</sup> What followed in the medieval period was a slow re-evaluation of various strands of musical theory as the works of classical authors were adapted to new contexts.<sup>190</sup>

<sup>186</sup> In the medieval university curriculum, the *quadrivium* consists of four subjects (arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music), which follow the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic), and together make up the seven liberal arts, based on a classical model that encouraged logical thought.

<sup>187</sup> Rankin, ‘*Naturalis Concordia*’, p. 3.

<sup>188</sup> Christian Thomas Leitmeir, ‘*Sine Auctoritate nulla Disciplina est Perfecta: Medieval Music Theory in Search for Normative Foundations*’, in *Between Creativity and Norm-making: Tensions in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras*, ed. S. Müller and C. Schweiger, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions* 165 (Leiden, 2012), pp. 31–60.

<sup>189</sup> Hamilton, ‘Walter of Evesham’, pp. 154–5.

<sup>190</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, p. 118; Gilles Rico, ‘*Auctoritas Cereum Habet Nasum: Boethius, Aristotle, and the Music of the Spheres in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries*’, in *Citation and Authority in Medieval*

Boethius' later prominence in the study of *musica* can be partly attributed to his place on the medieval university curriculum. It was largely through his translations that classical musical theory (including Ptolemaic and Platonic ideas) was studied in the post-antique era.<sup>191</sup> The chance rediscovery of *De Institutione Musica* (c. 505) in the late eighth century led to the prominence of Boethius' text in the scholarly milieu of Charlemagne's court, remaining the standard authority on music for well over a thousand years after its composition.<sup>192</sup> *De Institutione Musica*, together with Augustine's *De Musica*, offers a complete overview of late antique theory as it was known by medieval scholars. We know that the two works were often studied as a 'set', appearing bound together in manuscripts, as in the example from Charlemagne's court library. The two works were still being produced in single codices in the fourteenth century.<sup>193</sup> Isidore's *Etymologies* also survives in more than a thousand manuscripts, along with citations by theorists such as Jacobus in his *Speculum Musicae*, Ugolino of Orvieto, and Marchettus of Padua (c. 1274–1319) who combined Boethian theory with his work on *ars nova*.<sup>194</sup>

Boethius remained strikingly popular among young scholars, earning the chagrin of Bavarian monk Otloh of Saint Emmeram (eleventh century), who complained that clerks sometimes gave more weight to Boethius than to the Bible.<sup>195</sup> *De Institutione Musica* was the only compulsory medieval music textbook, and Boethian theory was on the syllabi of the universities of Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge.<sup>196</sup> This practice is demonstrated by a booklist dated to c. 1230–1245, in which it is the only musical text mentioned, and an earlier booklist (1213), which belonged to the English scholar Alexander Nequam, and which recommends the '*musica Boecii*' as a text which will give a solid understanding of the arts.<sup>197</sup> The *Musica Speculativa* of Johannes de Muris of the Sorbonne (c. 1290–1350) serves as a testament to the continued relevance of Boethius: Johannes reworked it to respond to

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and *Renaissance Musical Culture*, ed. S. Clark and E.E. Leach (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 20–9 (pp. 20, 28); Hamilton, 'Walter of Evesham', pp. 153–66; Bell, 'Readings', pp. 379–80.

<sup>191</sup> Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, trans. C.M. Bower (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), from *Arithmetic, Praefacio* (4.27–5.4).

<sup>192</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals*, p. xx; John Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry 1500–1700* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 24–5; Rankin, '*Naturalis Concordia*', p. 15.

<sup>193</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, pp. 117–18, 150.

<sup>194</sup> James Mckinnon (ed.), *Strunk's Source Readings in Music Theory: The Early Christian Period and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 39; Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 4; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 67–8.

<sup>195</sup> Howard Rollin Patch, *The Tradition of Boethius* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1970), p. 31.

<sup>196</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, pp. 151–2; Patch, *The Tradition of Boethius*, pp. 38–45; Christopher Page, *The Owl and The Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100–1300* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 139.

<sup>197</sup> Page, *The Owl*, pp. 139–40.

his teaching needs, writing two abridgements between 1323 and 1325.<sup>198</sup> The syllabi of a *studium generale* education suggest that first-year students would have been expected to focus on the first two books of *De Institutione*, the first book of which dwells primarily on music's powers; the union of body and soul through harmony; and the classification of music into *instrumentalis*, *humana*, and *mundana* (respectively, practical music, the music of the soul, and the music of the spheres).<sup>199</sup> As Boethian theory was compulsory, even those students who decided to leave the university without completing their studies would have been familiar with his ideas of harmony.

The use of Boethian theory together with the *ars nova*, a largely secular musical style associated with the late Middle Ages, suggests a change in how the theory and practice of music were viewed in the late medieval period. However, Nicolas Bell observes that even in the thirteenth century, the scholastic manuscript tradition still differentiated between the study of more practical treatises on choral singing and theoretical works including those of Boethius: Boethian treatises are found combined with other texts that formed part of the *quadrivium*, but not with modern practical treatises such as those on polyphonic practice.<sup>200</sup> Yet, outside the university, poet-composers such as Machaut began to combine practice with theory. Furthermore, Boethius' manuscripts show evidence of collation, marginal commentary, excerpting, scribal alteration, and 'simplification', further implying that his work was the subject of intense and on-going study and critical rumination.<sup>201</sup> This engagement is a natural continuation of what Boethius himself was doing with his antique source material. Even at a time when formal learning was scarce, manuscripts of Boethius continued to be widely copied, in part due to the broad scope of his work and in part to the authority of his name.<sup>202</sup>

What, then, were the key concepts of music formalised in *De Institutione Musica*? The *musica* that Boethius curated for his medieval readers, and the *musica* that they then passed onwards, boasted a link to ancient scholars and to theoretical aspects, such as the concept of harmony, that were directly derived from classical thought. However, what those scholars and their medieval counterparts would have

<sup>198</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, p. 237.

<sup>199</sup> Page, *The Owl*, p. 139; Rankin, '*Naturalis Concordia*', p. 7; Leo Treitler, 'The Troubadours Singing Their Poems', in *The Union of Words and Music in Medieval Poetry: Symposium on Medieval Poetry and Music*, ed. R.A. Baltzer, T. Cable, and J.I. Wimsatt (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991), pp. 15–49 (p. 17).

<sup>200</sup> Bell, 'Readings', pp. 372–73.

<sup>201</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals*, pp. xxxviii–xxxix; Bell, 'Readings', p. 372.

<sup>202</sup> Patch, *The Tradition of Boethius*, p. 21; Rankin, '*Naturalis Concordia*', p. 15.

understood by terms such as ‘harmony’, ‘scale’, and ‘interval’ would not have been the same as in the late antique period.<sup>203</sup> There was no continuous surviving notational or performance practice that lasted from the time of the classical sources to Boethius’ day.<sup>204</sup>

Given the importance of Boethius for secular medieval musical thought, it will be useful to examine the scope of his influence on late medieval musical theory. This wide availability of Boethius’ work and its ambient presence in late medieval theories of harmony suggest that it is not unlikely that the authors of medieval romance and their audiences would have been reasonably familiar with certain aspects of Boethian theory, not just in general, lay terms but perhaps also through specific knowledge of his writings and through exposure to his ideas in the writings of others. The popularity of *De Institutione Musica* in the Middle Ages is borne out by the number of surviving texts and fragments. Calvin M. Bower’s inventory lists 137 copies in existence by 1500.<sup>205</sup> *De Institutione musica* was held in private hands, universities, and monastic libraries.<sup>206</sup> Nicolas Bell argues that the circulation of Boethius in the thirteenth century is widespread enough for us to suppose that the writers and readers of treatises, especially those individuals connected to universities, would have had a working knowledge of Boethian theory.<sup>207</sup> Boethius’ other major work that exerted a palpable influence on musical thought, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, was no less widespread in England and on the Continent, with over four hundred manuscripts of the *Consolatione* surviving to the present day. The earliest known translation of the treatise is the Old English text attributed to King Alfred (848–899).<sup>208</sup> This text was, in turn, used by Nicholas Trevet (c. 1265–1335), who cited the Alfredian text several times alongside other sources and who translated and transposed a lengthy passage in Old English, and was possibly also read by John Walton (fl. early fifteenth century), who additionally used both Chaucer’s *Boece* and Trevet for his 1410 translation.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals*, p. xxv; Henry Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 71.

<sup>204</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, pp. 16–17; Edmund A. Bowles, ‘Haut and Bas: The Grouping of Musical Instruments in the Middle Ages’, *Musica Disciplina* 8 (1954), pp. 115–40 (p. 115).

<sup>205</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, p. 150; Boethius, *Fundamentals*, p. xxxviii.

<sup>206</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, p. 150.

<sup>207</sup> Bell, ‘Readings’, pp. 372–73.

<sup>208</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, pp. 119–20.

<sup>209</sup> Scholars remain divided on the extent to which Old English was read after the thirteenth century, but there is evidence of at least some interest in Old English texts. For Trevet’s use of the West Saxon Boethius, see Hans Sauer, ‘Knowledge of Old English in the Middle English Period?’, in *Language History and Linguistic Modelling: A Festschrift for Jacek Fisiak on his Sixtieth Birthday*, vol. I (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), pp. 791–814 (pp. 792, 802–804); B.S. Donaghey, ‘Nicholas Trevet’s use of King Alfred’s Translation of Boethius, and the Dating of his

In the period during which romance flourished, vernacular literature provided another vital medium for the circulation of the ideas and ideals of *musica* developed in post-antique and Boethian theory. Chaucer was closely familiar not only with Boethian philosophy but also with his work on music. In *The House of Fame*, the words of his encyclopaedic eagle suggest that he studied *De Institutione Musica*; and in the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, Chauntecleer's crowing is described as 'moore feelynge' in music than had 'Boece, or any that kan synge'.<sup>210</sup> In fact, Chaucer made copious glosses, to clarify his own close translation of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, in *Boece*.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, vernacular poetry often served as a teaching aid. Charles Muscatine suggests that certain passages in romance come with 'extraliterary' intent: for example, passages relating to courtly etiquette are meant to instruct readers and listeners. The same approach can be read into musically-rich passages in the romances: these passages taught *musica* through poetry.<sup>212</sup> For example, Andrew Albin suggests that, in the *Prioress's Tale*, the more learned readers would have understood that the poem's concerns with music's compelling effects on the mind and body alluded to Boethius' summary of music's powers and the connection between music and the body.<sup>213</sup> Chaucer invokes musical theory elsewhere in his work, mentioning the harmony of the spheres in *Troilus and Criseyde* when delineating 'The erratik sterres, herkenyng armonye / With sownes ful of heuenysssh melodie' (Book V, ll. 1811–1813).<sup>214</sup> 'Harmony' and 'melody' are keywords recurring in discussions of both *musica practica* and *musica speculativa*. While such references are largely generic, the volume of musical conceits found in Chaucer's original works, as much as in his translation of Boethius, suggests a greater, more sustained interest in *musica*.

The second reference in the *Parliament of Fowls* draws a clear connection between celestial and earthly music, as explained in Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*, via Macrobius' commentary:<sup>215</sup>

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Commentary', in *The Medieval Boethius* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer 1987), pp. 1–31; B.S. Donaghey, 'The Sources of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*', *Anglia* 82 (1964), pp. 23–57; Nicole Guenther Discenza, *The King's English: Strategies of Translation in the Old English Boethius* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), pp. 127–8.

<sup>210</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Parliament of Fowls*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L.D. Benson, 3rd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 259.

<sup>211</sup> A.J. Minnis, "'Glosynge is a glorious thyng": Chaucer at Work on the *Boece*', in *The Medieval Boethius* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer 1987), pp. 106–24 (pp. 106–7).

<sup>212</sup> Muscatine, *Chaucer and the French Tradition*, p. 28.

<sup>213</sup> Albin, 'The Prioress's Tale', pp. 96–7.

<sup>214</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L.D. Benson, 3rd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 584.

<sup>215</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 63.

And after shewed he him the nyne speres,  
 And after that the melodye herde he  
 That cometh of thilke speres thryes three,  
 That welle is of musyk and melodye  
 In this world heer, and cause of armony.  
 (ll. 59–63)<sup>216</sup>

As in music romances, the gap between *musica speculativa* and *musica practica* had become much narrower by Chaucer's day: Chaucer does not seem to consider theoretical music superior to performance. 'Melodye', encompassing both the local and the cosmic, the earthly and the celestial, referred simultaneously to harmony and consonance, an ordinary tune, or the music of the spheres.<sup>217</sup> Melody, in the sense of celestial music, is the source of the 'musk and melodye' that we hear in the physical world, and it engenders harmony in social, human constructs, not just in the natural world. In *The Book of the Duchess*, the Man in Black, central to the poem's dream vision, mourns his lack of musical knowledge, which compromises the quality of his songs.<sup>218</sup> Musical knowledge, then, is imperative for a praiseworthy performance – we will see the same theme recur in the romances, in which musical instinct in itself is typically inadequate without musical training or an ability to reify *musica* through practical musical performance.

Emma Dillon demonstrates that the same connection between theory and practice is visually attested in the collection known as the *Notre-Dame Polyphony* (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. 29.1), which shows musical practice in the form of polyphony as the embodiment of theoretical thinking, recalling the Boethian division of music into human, instrumental, and celestial.<sup>219</sup> The use of this kind of imagery, representing scholarly *musica speculativa*, in a collection of musical repertory written for performance, shows the close connection between theory and practice at the time of the manuscript's production.<sup>220</sup> Similar attention to the importance of musical practice is found in insular romances. In these texts, the presentation of music suggests not only a performance event within the narrative (typically, the protagonist playing music) but also, for example, the value of practical

<sup>216</sup> Chaucer, *Parliament*, p. 386.

<sup>217</sup> Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 269–73.

<sup>218</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, pp. 63, 65.

<sup>219</sup> Dillon, *Music-Making*, pp. 50–51.

<sup>220</sup> Dillon, *Music-Making*, p. 50; Bell, 'Readings', pp. 373–4.

musical education, the importance of music for creating social connections, and the supernatural credentials of music in exerting a mysterious or enchanting force over the listener's affect.

Poets such as Guillaume de Machaut and Jean Froissart also drew connections between music (both theory and practice) and the art of poetry.<sup>221</sup> Initially, the idea of lyrical poetry as *musica* stemmed from Augustinian doctrine in *De Musica*.<sup>222</sup> The lack of any marked differentiation between poetry and music, as well as between poets and musicians, for most of the Middle Ages suggests that *musica* and poetry were still closely connected in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when most music romances were being written. For example, Guillaume de Machaut often mixed prose with sung lyrics, recalling the style of Boethius' prosimetrical *Consolatione*.<sup>223</sup> While he is known today chiefly as a composer, Machaut was equally renowned for his poetry, with a considerable output of purely literary works and compositional treatises which had a significant impact on the composition of lyric poetry in the late fourteenth century.<sup>224</sup> Machaut's *Prologue* (c. 1372), a verse treatise on poetry, rhetoric, and music, is a fine example of the presence of music even in the absence of notation.<sup>225</sup> It demonstrates the unity of these disciplines in the mind of one of the leading poet-composers of the fourteenth century. In the *Prologue*, Machaut is visited by two allegorical figures, Nature and Love, each bringing three children. Nature's children are Sense, Rhetoric, and Music, while Love's are Sweet Thought, Pleasure, and Hope: all are deemed necessary for successful authorship. These offspring – ranging from faculties and disciplines to affects and sentiments – also symbolise the harmonious unity of emotional and intellectual concerns, and the representation of these concerns through musical poetry. Machaut argues that the poet-musician must compose in joy in order to bring joy through his music.<sup>226</sup> This idea is very much in line with Boethian theory concerning the effects of harmony on the surrounding world, and also in line with the role of music in conjuring joy in the romances. Secular poet-composers such as Machaut combined in themselves theoretical and practical musical knowledge, suggesting that by the late Middle Ages an educated layman could command some knowledge of *practica* and *speculativa* in equal measure.

<sup>221</sup> Elliott, *Remembering Boethius*, pp. 6–10.

<sup>222</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, pp. 102–10.

<sup>223</sup> Elizabeth Eva Leach, *Guillaume de Machaut: Secretary, Poet, Musician* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 99.

<sup>224</sup> Wilkins, *Music in the Age of Chaucer*, p. 9.

<sup>225</sup> See Manuscript A (f. Er. Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS Francais 1584; Leach, *Guillaume*, p. 88.

<sup>226</sup> Leach, *Guillaume*, pp. 88, 100.

It is unsurprising given Machaut's prolific output that his work went on to have a strong influence on contemporary poets and immediate successors, including Chaucer. Like Chaucer, he had some clerical training and held a number of administrative positions during his lifetime, a fairly common trajectory for a fourteenth-century vernacular poet.<sup>227</sup> His clerical training, however, also meant that he would have been familiar with *musica speculativa*, through the compulsory Boethius, if through no other texts. Machaut twice uses Boethius as a source, in *Prologue* and *Remède de Fortune*, adapting ideas from the *Consolatione* for a courtly setting.<sup>228</sup> There must have been enough elite interest to necessitate this reworking, which would inevitably have disseminated Boethian thought on the powers of harmony and music's ability to evoke particular emotions.<sup>229</sup>

Machaut, then, was aware of the importance of the book as a repository of music and verse. This familiarity makes him a key figure in the transformation of a written text into a multi-layered 'visual "performance space" involving carefully planned narratives, illuminations, musical notation, and paratextual rubrics and marginalia'.<sup>230</sup> This kind of multi-media display confirms the harmonious interpenetration of musical theory and reified musical representation and practice. In this way, Machaut also created several layers of performance – which form a kind of polyphony, as various meanings of the aural and visual text were unlocked by his audience.<sup>231</sup> In this layered performance, meaning is conveyed not just through linguistic channels but also through imagery, and potentially through sound. Machaut's method of encoding musical meaning on the page ensured that not only sound but also various associated symbolic meanings survived, enabling one to listen with the eyes. This thread is also found in Middle English and insular music romances, in which narratives, although lacking formal musical notation and lyric-inserts, musical symbolism is encoded through renderings of musical performance and instruments and through the use of musical terminology and tropes.

The connection between poetics and musical theory is also present in the work of John of Garland [Johannes de Garlandia] (1195–after 1272), another scholar who

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<sup>227</sup> Leach, *Guillaume*, pp. 1–7.

<sup>228</sup> Elliott, *Remembering Boethius*, p. 14; Leach, *Guillaume*, p. 2.

<sup>229</sup> See Sylvia Huot, 'Guillaume de Machaut and the Consolation of Poetry', *Modern Philology* 100 (2002), pp. 169–95.

<sup>230</sup> Leach, *Guillaume*, pp. 3, 92.

<sup>231</sup> Leach, *Guillaume*, p. 130.

had been a student in Oxford and Paris.<sup>232</sup> In his *Parisiana Poetria* (1220), Johannes demonstrates that the study of musical theory includes poetics and metrical discourse: poetry is part of theory and influenced by it. Eustache Deschamps' *Art de Dictier* and Evrart de Conty's *Echecs Amoureux* also play a part in bringing speculative theory into the secular elite context in which, and for which, their work was written: Deschamps argued that instrumental music was the domain of low-born men and the music of spoken verse of the high-born.<sup>233</sup> *Echecs* demonstrates familiarity with the quadrivium, and here Evrart depicts music as able to affect mood and disposition, creating excessive emotion. These ideas have an enduring currency, and are equally prominent in music romances.

*Echecs* shows close familiarity with the theory of Boethius, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella (360–428).<sup>234</sup> Capella's *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* features Harmony, a maiden of Mercury able to soothe the gods and gladden the heavens with *aethera cantibus numerisque laetificans, et nostra tantum modo cupit celebrare palatia, exosa terrigenae stoliditatis ignaviani* ('her song and rhythms; and she desires only to make our palaces resound, detesting the ever-increasing dullness and spiritlessness of the earthborn').<sup>235</sup> Here, *numerus* variously connotes 'musical measure', 'melody', 'rhythm', 'time', 'harmony', and 'numbers'.<sup>236</sup> The Middle English word 'modulacioun', which designated music – melody or harmony – that was pleasing by virtue of being correctly measured, offers a lexical analogue of sorts to this staple term from Latin musical theory: it occurs, for instance, in John Trevisa's English translation of Bartholomew Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum* ['On the Properties of Things', c. 1398], in the description of 'simphonia' as the 'temperate modulacioun acording in sownes hiȝ and lowȝ' producing an 'armony' whereby 'hiȝe vois acordeȝ so þat if oon discordeȝ, it grieueȝ þe hieryng'.<sup>237</sup> For Capella, Harmony's

<sup>232</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, p. 263; Bell, 'Readings', p. 370.

<sup>233</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, pp. 269–70; Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 107; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 330–31.

<sup>234</sup> Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*, pp. 270–71.

<sup>235</sup> Martianus Capella, *The Seven Liberal Arts: The Marriage of Philosophy and Mercury*, trans. W.H. Stahl and R. Johnson, vol. II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), IX, 899, p. 349. For the Latin, see Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii, et de Septem Artibus Liberalibus Libri Novem*, ed. U.F. Kopp (Francofurti ad Moenum: Fransiscum Varrentrapp, 1836), p. 697; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 11–13.

<sup>236</sup> William Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin-English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=Numerus>, accessed on 01.04.2018, and *Latin Dictionary*, <http://www.latin-dictionary.net/search/latin/Numerus>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>237</sup> John Trevisa, *Translation of Bartholomew de Glanville's De Proprietatibus Rerum*, London, British Library, MS Add. 27944, fol. 333<sup>v</sup>. For a critical edition, see John Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's*

sphere of influence is both music and poetry, and, even for her, music is a result of hard work. While she plays and sings, a discussion ensues amongst the gods:

talibus Harmoniae carminibus oblectati omnes permulsique  
divi, nec minor quippe ex fidibus suavitas quam vocis  
modulamine resultabat; denique qua industria comparatum  
quibusve assequendum ediscendumque opibus vigili cura  
repromittat, ut in tam dulcem eblanditamque mollitiem  
intima mentium liquescat affectio.

[Harmony's songs delighted and soothed the spirits of all the gods; and the strains that poured forth from her stringed instruments were no less sweet than the melody of her voice. Hereupon a discussion ensued, to which Jupiter listened with admiration, regarding the pains and labour involved in the production of that music and the effort and unabated concentration that must have gone into the mastery and attainment of harmonies so soft and caressing to enthrall the innermost emotions of their hearts].<sup>238</sup>

*Industria* tells us that effort is needed to master this music, which is both theoretical (in 'harmoniae') and practical (in 'ex fidibus'), 'fides' denoting a stringed instrument or chord.<sup>239</sup> *Modulamine* refers to rhythm or melody, but is also suggestive of tempering – of modulation needed to tune and command the powers of harmony, in order to melt listeners' hearts.<sup>240</sup> After this reference to practical musical performance, Harmony proceeds to discuss the details of rhythmic and harmonic composition for the remainder of the last book of *De Nuptiis*, in accordance with standard harmonic treatises. Once more, as we will discover in the romances themselves, performance and theory are tied closely together through the enabling agency of poetic form, with the goal of affective transformation of the pliable listener.

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*Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum: A Critical Text*, ed. M.C. Seymour, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975–1988). See also Carter, *Dictionary*, p. 300.

<sup>238</sup> Martianus Capella, *The Seven Liberal Arts*, trans. Stahl and Johnson, IX, 920, p. 356; Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis*, ed. U.F. Kopp, p. 714.

<sup>239</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=ex%20fidibus>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>240</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=modulamine>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

## 2.2 Questions of practical music from late antiquity to the Middle Ages

What, then, were the ideas of music that had the most sustained life in the long transmission history of *De Institutione Musica*? Perhaps the most important was that of the connection between music and temperance. Boethius cites a legend about Pythagoras calming a drunken adolescent by playing a peaceful musical mode, *ita furentis animum adulescentis ad statum mentis pacatissimae temperavit* ('thereby tempering the disposition of the frenzied youth to a state of absolute calm').<sup>241</sup> *Temperavit*, 'tempering', also has specific musical connotations relating to tuning: in Pythagoras' case, he tempers the mood of the youth in the same way that one would tune an instrument to be harmonious.<sup>242</sup> Further examples of music's powers are given: Terpander and Arion of Methymna cured citizens of Lesbos and Ionia from illness through song, and Ismenias the Theban used similar means to cure a number of sciatica sufferers. In the classical world, the power of music was well known and widely employed. Amphion, a son of Zeus, could move stones through music and song, and Orpheus was able to charm people, animals, and objects with his music. Boethius tells us that:

Pythagorici, cum diurnas in somno resolverent curas, quibusdam cantilenis uterentur, ut eis lenis et quietus sopor inreperet. itaque experrecti aliis quibusdam modis stuporem somni confusionem purgabant, id nimirum scientes quod tota nostrae animae corporisque compago musica coaptatione coniuncta sit.<sup>243</sup>

[The Pythagoreans, when they wanted to relieve their daily concerns in sleep, employed certain melodies so that a mild and quiet slumber would fall upon them. Likewise upon awakening, they purged the stupor and confusion of sleep with certain other modes, for they knew that the whole structure of our soul and body has been joined by means of musical coalescence.]<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals*, pp. 5–7; Chadwick, *Boethius*, p. 92; Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *De Institutione Arithmetica Libri Duo, De Institutione Musica, Libri Quique*, ed. G. Friedlein (Leipzig: B.G. Teubneri, 1867), p. 185.

<sup>242</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=temperavit>, accessed on 01.04.2018; *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/temper>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>243</sup> Boethius, *De Institutione*, pp. 185–6.

<sup>244</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals*, pp. 5–7.

The taxonomy of ‘little songs’ or ‘ditties’ (*cantilenis*) suggests that simple, mundane music could be just as powerful as scholarly or professional music.<sup>245</sup> The reference to using certain *modis* (measures, rhythms, scales) in order to wake up also hints that different modes were thought to have different affective properties in retuning the discordant subject.<sup>246</sup>

While theory and practice steadily evolved, ideas concerning musical powers remained fairly constant. Aegidius of Zamora (c. 1240–1318 or later) similarly cites Isidore’s theories about music’s power in his *Ars Musica*, explaining music’s ability to influence feelings, rile up warriors, charm animals, restore sanity, and exorcize evil spirits, because, in Zamora’s words,

mathematicos tradere, quod multi daemones harmoniam  
ferre non possunt, et quandoque nulli, forte propter  
contrariam dispositionem per harmoniam corporibus in  
quibus habitant superuenientem.

[according to the magicians, many demons cannot endure  
harmony, and indeed none can when a fortuitous change in  
disposition is wrought through harmony in the bodies in  
which they dwell]<sup>247</sup>

Demons, the antithesis of heavenly harmony (*harmoniam*), cannot abide it, and no one can resist its affective powers. Here, *mathematicos* encompasses both mathematicians and astrologers, who were often conflated with magicians in classical and medieval thought.<sup>248</sup> In the late thirteenth century, then, music was still likened to a force none could resist, a force associated with magicians and capable of dispelling demonic discord. A century later, John Trevisa wrote in *Polychronicon* (1387) that Pythagoras could ‘bringe here mynde out of strif of þowʒtes to reste, by song and soun of

<sup>245</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=cantilenis>, accessed on 01.04.2018; *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/temper>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>246</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=modis>, accessed on 01.04.2018; *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/temper>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>247</sup> Mckinnon, *Source Readings*, pp. 138–9; Joannes Aegidius de Zamora, *Ars Musica*, ed. and trans. M. Robert-Tissot, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* 20 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1974), p. 44; Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, pp. 22–3.

<sup>248</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=mathematicos>, accessed on 01.04.18. For a connection between astrologers and magicians, see Eugene D. Dukes, *Magic and Witchcraft in the Dark Ages* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996), and Kieckhefer, *Magic*.

strings'.<sup>249</sup> Roughly midway between Aegidius and Trevisa, Jacobus' *Speculum Musicae* claimed that measured music, as with the music of Boethius' day, actively strives for concord and rejects discord – for Jacobus too there is a connection between music and harmony's affective powers.<sup>250</sup>

Medieval English scholars also actively relied on Boethian conceptions of music's intimate proximity with universal harmony. The treatise *Quatuor Principalia Musicae* (c. 1350), which has been attributed to Friar John of Tewkesbury (fl. 1351–92), references Boethius' division of music, while also drawing on the newer work of Walter Odington of Evesham (fl. 1300), author of the widely disseminated *De Speculatione Musicae*.<sup>251</sup> Similarly, Robert of Handlo (fl. 1326) drew on *De Speculatione Musicae* in his treatise, *Regule cum Maximis Magistri Franconis cum Additionibus Aliorum Musicorum Compilate a Roberto de Handlo*, along with Franco of Cologne and John of Garland.<sup>252</sup> Robert Kilwardby (c. 1215–1279), author of *De Ortu Scientiarum Liber Divisionum Boethii* among other treatises, argued that music was the basis for everything in the physical world and the natural order, defining *musica* as *numerus harmonicus* (an Aristotelian mathematical science of 'harmonic numbers'), which could conjure up set emotions in listeners.<sup>253</sup> Again, *numerus* connotes 'melody', 'measure', 'rhythm', and the harmony of the spheres. In Middle English, aside from the arithmetic connotation, 'nombre' ('number') maintained its connection to music, as it could refer to musical proportions, natural harmony, arithmetical proportion as applied to harmonic intervals, and rhythm.<sup>254</sup> Even into the late fifteenth century, Thomas Norton of Bristol's *The Ordinal of Alchemy* (c. 1477)

<sup>249</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 62; for John Trevisa, see John Trevisa, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*, ed. J.R. Lumby, The Rolls Series, No. 41, III (London: 1871), pp. 203–13.

<sup>250</sup> Mckinnon, *Source Readings*, pp. 164, 167; Hamilton, 'Walter of Evesham', p. 156; Bell, 'Readings', pp. 370–71.

<sup>251</sup> Stefano Mengozzi, *The Renaissance Reform of Medieval Music Theory: Guido of Arezzo Between Myth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 149–50. See Edmond de Coussemaker (ed.), *Scriptorum de Musica Medii Aevi Nova Series a Gerbertina Altera*, 4 vols. (Paris: Durand, 1864–76; reprint ed., Hildesheim, Olms, 1963). For an analysis of Walter of Evesham, see Hamilton, 'Walter of Evesham', p. 153; Bell, 'Readings', p. 378. For the text itself, see Walter Odington, *Summa de Speculatione Musicae*, ed. F.F. Hammond, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* 14 (Rome, 1970); Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 124–5.

<sup>252</sup> See Robert de Handlo, *Regulae Cum Maximis Magistri Franconis Cum Additionibus Aliorum Musicorum*, ed. and trans. L. Dittmer (Brooklyn, New York: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1959).

<sup>253</sup> Thomas Glick, Steven J. Livesey, Faith Wallis (eds.), *Medieval Science, Technology and Medicine: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 300; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, p. 22; Treitler, 'The Troubadours', pp. 17–19.

<sup>254</sup> Carter, *Dictionary*, p. 331; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED29697>, accessed on 03.04.18.

attests this connection between number theory and practical musical performance:

‘Withowte tru nombre no Man truly may singe’ (l. 2364).<sup>255</sup>

Musical knowledge is not only the subject of medieval English musical treatises but also a familiar topic in poetry. *The Court of Sapience*, a richly intertextual poem attributed to John Lydgate and usually dated to the mid-fifteenth century, mentions a wide range of medieval theoretical writing on the liberal arts.<sup>256</sup> Music is depicted in its practical and theoretical incarnations, covering the standard points of musical theory from Pythagorean first principles to intervals to notes and to theorists such as Isidore.<sup>257</sup> We see Dame Musica seated with her ladies Armonyca, Rethmica, and Metrica, numbering the notes as she plays them: ‘The song she prycked, she numered notes trewe, / Theyr melodye formed an heven newe’ (ll. 2022–2023).<sup>258</sup> Music can create a kind of utopia on earth, an idyllic state achieved through playing ‘true’ notes – the correct notes, or, alternatively, notes that are authentic and connected to heavenly music – and this music metaphorically creates a new heaven, a new instantiation or incarnation of celestial harmony.<sup>259</sup> Once again, mention is made specifically of numbering, with an implication that numbering is musical as much as mathematical. The clerks are duly impressed with the cleverness of the measured music, ‘And sayd that musyk was the pure connynge / And veray wey of trewe parfyte syngynge’ (ll. 2029–2030). The suggestively polysemous use of ‘connynge’ creates a bridge between musical practice (via ‘skill’, ‘mastery’, and professional ‘competence’) and abstract theory (via ‘knowledge’ and an ‘ability to understand’).<sup>260</sup> These lines demonstrate music’s abstract purity and perfection – an aesthetic criterion – as well as its connection to proportion and integrity, which makes the enchanted listeners eager to hear more:

She taught them than whiche were tunes parfyte,  
And yave hem lust to here theyr concordance,  
Whiche tunes eke ben cleped inparfyte,  
And whiche in song shold be theyr governaunce.

<sup>255</sup> Thomas Norton, *The Ordinal Of Alchemy*, ed. J. Reidy, EETS (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), extant in British Library Add. MS. 10302; *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <http://www.oed.com/oed2/00160580>, retrieved on 07.04.2018.

<sup>256</sup> *The Court of Sapience*, ed. R.E. Harvey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. ix.

<sup>257</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 74.

<sup>258</sup> *The Court of Sapience*, ed. Harvey, p. 69. All subsequent quotations from this edition.

<sup>259</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED46999>, accessed on 02.04.18.

<sup>260</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED9330>, accessed on 02.04.18.

Proporcyon she had in remembraunce  
(ll. 2066–2070)

The power of *musica* is irresistible, as the clerks long to hear its reified ‘concordaunce’, part of a process by which ‘proporcyon’ (anterior, accessed from the realm of theory) is materialized or perfected through practical song. Music, then, has a dual function. ‘True’ singing is the result of well-measured music: again, theory and practice need to come together to create authentic music. Furthermore, the music provides ‘gouvernaunce’ that will help them avoid imperfect melodies, always striving towards perfect harmony. This term suggests guidance regarding good singing, but also guidance on how to achieve a musical affinity that will allow them to reach or recreate universal harmony, as it has suggestive connotations of astrological influence.<sup>261</sup> Dame Musica teaches the clerics about notes, proportions, intervals, and the solfege, a syllabic system used to refer to notes on a scale, until the pupils are eager to hear the intervals and ‘parfyte’ tunes for themselves (ll. 2050, 2059–2060, 2066–2072). The ability to read music enables a deeper understanding of its nature and allows pupils to spot which songs are ‘trewe’ and which are illusionary or deceptive: ‘The notes they knowe therby and theyr chaungyng, / And proveth eke whiche songe is fals or trewe’ (ll. 2063–2064). This aptitude for seeing through music’s illusions and recognising inauthentic music plays a significant role in music romances, as discussed in ensuing chapters.

*The Court of Sapience* then moves from theory to practical instruments and minstrels, drawing together *musica speculativa* and *musica practica*, in keeping with a growing proximity between these fields in late medieval society as a whole. Hollander notes that while the poem is a summary of the university curriculum, it nonetheless makes a connection between *musica* as a liberal art and minstrelsy, by describing instrumental music – ‘And with them was eche instrument, ywys, / That is of musyk and of mynstralcye’ (ll. 2089–2090).<sup>262</sup> Dame Musica engenders ‘joye and blisse’ in those who help her ‘provynce with her armonye’ (ll. 2087–2088). Similarly, from perhaps half a century earlier, in his *Reson and Sensuallyte* (c. 1408), Lydgate depicts minstrels in the garden of delight, full of courtly splendour and harmony.<sup>263</sup>

<sup>261</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED19166>, accessed on 02.04.18.

<sup>262</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 77; *The Court of Sapience*, ed. Harvey, p. 71.

<sup>263</sup> John Lydgate, *Reson and Sensuallyte*, ed. E. Sieper, EETS (London: Oxford University Press, 1901), p. 146. All references to this edition. Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 78.

The garden has been equipped with every kind of instrument and music, to allow for ‘al maner Mynstralcye / That any man kan specifye’ (ll. 5569–5570) as well as songs, dances, and new music (‘Songes, stampe, and eke daunces, / Dyuers plente of plesaunces, / And many vnkouth notys newe’, ll. 5573–5575). Here, ‘vnkouth’ refers to unknown new music, possibly a new musical trend such as the *ars nova* of the fourteenth century, and the musically complex *ars subtilior* which followed it.<sup>264</sup> That the ‘notys newe’ are ‘vnkouth’ suggests that this music would have been simultaneously exciting and potentially unpleasant to unaccustomed ears. Lydgate stresses, and even baulks at, the variety of instruments on offer (‘And Instrumentys that dyde excelle, / Many moo than I kan telle’, ll. 5577–5578). He follows in Machaut’s footsteps by explaining that some are more noble than others (‘Harpys, Fythels, and eke rotys, / Wel accordyng with her notys, / Lutys, Rubibis, and geterns, / More for estatys than taverns’, ll. 5579–5582), effecting a division of instruments into *haut* and *bas*.<sup>265</sup> Most importantly, Lydgate claims that no discord can exist within such a bastion of harmony, ‘And ther wer founde noo discordys’, ‘Passyng of gret[e] melodye, / And floutys ful of armonye’ (ll. 5584, 5591–5592). This idealising portrait of unqualified harmony marks a significant claim, given that some of the instruments listed would not, in reality, sound agreeably together, suggesting that the ideal of harmony over-rides the sound-quality of individual instruments.<sup>266</sup>

Depictions of performance in medieval art and literature do not always adhere to historical realities. Many scenes featuring an unlikely number or combination of instruments should be read for their symbolic value rather than realism. In practice, several factors affected the grouping and number of instruments that could be used in performance, giving rise to the division of instruments into *haut* and *bas*. This division was tied into practical considerations such as tuning restrictions, dynamics, and the timbre and acoustics of instruments from different families, as well as preconceived notions about which instruments were appropriate for particular spaces (for private as opposed to public spaces, for intimate as opposed to ostentatious occasions), and the status and gender of the musician. While fictional representations of performance often have *haut* and *bas* instruments playing together, documentary

<sup>264</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED48094>, accessed on 02.04.18.

<sup>265</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, pp. 78–9; Bowles, ‘Haut and Bas’, pp. 115–40; Howard Mayer Brown and Keith Polk, ‘Instrumental Music c.1300–c.1520’, in *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. R. Strohm and B.J. Blackburn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 97–162 (pp. 136–56).

<sup>266</sup> Linda Marie Zaerr, ‘Music and Magic in *Le Bel Inconnu* and *Lybeaus Desconus*’, *Medieval Forum* 4 (2004), <https://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/Volume4/Zaerr.html>, accessed 15.03.2018.

evidence, such as payment records, and the acoustic qualities of these instruments reveal that, with only a very few exceptions, such performances were only ever the stuff of fiction.<sup>267</sup>

*Haut* instruments were used primarily outdoors, in hunts and processions, on ceremonial and celebratory occasions, at civic functions, and on the battlefield, while *bas* instruments were predominantly used indoors, or in quiet, intimate settings.<sup>268</sup> Civic records suggest that cities tended to employ predominantly *haut* musicians, though exceptions to this principle can be found, as with the citole and gittern, which had better volume and projection than other *bas* instruments such as psalteries and lutes.<sup>269</sup> Certain *haut* instruments, particularly trumpets, were considered part of an elite category in themselves: trumpet instrumentalists were highly-skilled professionals who had undertaken their training separately from other musicians, possibly because these instruments were not intended for orchestral or melodic performance but for use in sounding particular signalling patterns.<sup>270</sup> This hypothesis is supported by the fact that trumpets, like other *haut* instruments (such as long and short horns) depicted in performance scenes, were constructed so as to play only a few notes.<sup>271</sup> These instrumental differences mirror differences in the way that musicians were hired: *bas* instrumentalists tended to be hired based on ability rather than to perform a specific function in a group of performers, while their *haut* counterparts were appointed to fulfil a set, clearly-defined role.<sup>272</sup>

The disparity between the performance-settings associated with the two groups was largely rooted in practical concerns. The dynamics of early instruments were not versatile and most attempts at variation would have rendered the sound discordant, making it impossible to use soft and loud instruments together, with the exception of certain loud instruments, notably the cornet and sackbut, which offered some variation in dynamics.<sup>273</sup> Their incompatible acoustic properties make orchestral performance

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<sup>267</sup> Spring, *The Lute*, p. 29; Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, p. 2; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 154.

<sup>268</sup> Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, pp. 16, 50–51; Spring, *The Lute*, p. 29; Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum Multitudo*, pp. 19–20, 30; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', pp. 139–41; Christopher Page, 'The 15th-Century Lute: New and Neglected Sources', *Early Music* 9, No. 1, Plucked-String Issue 1 (1981), pp. 11–21 (p. 11).

<sup>269</sup> Peters, *Musical Sounds*, pp. 250–5; Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, pp. 16, 80; Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum Multitudo*, p. 26; Mauricio Molina, 'Li autres la citole mainne: Towards a Reconstruction of the Citole's Performance Practice', in *The British Museum Citole: New Perspectives*, ed. J. Robinson, N. Speakman, and K. Buehler-McWilliams (London: The British Museum, 2015), pp. 104–11 (p. 106).

<sup>270</sup> Peters, *Musical Sounds*, p. 194; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', pp. 100–101.

<sup>271</sup> Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, pp. 16, 51.

<sup>272</sup> Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', pp. 147, 159.

<sup>273</sup> Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, p. 51; Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, pp. 24–5; Spring, *The Lute*, p. 29.

extremely unlikely: loud *haut* instruments would render most *bas* instruments inaudible.<sup>274</sup> Even within their own instrumental groups, not all *bas* instruments were played together, due to their different tuning and sound. Many medieval instruments were played either solo (the most common practice with *bas* instruments), or in small groups with other instruments of complementary acoustics.<sup>275</sup> Some standard ensembles are known: gittern with lute or fiddle; harp and lute; tabor and fiddle; two harps or two lutes; and citole with fiddle.<sup>276</sup> Singing was usually accompanied by a single instrument, most commonly the harp, fiddle, or (later) the lute, and sometimes with a bowed instrument.<sup>277</sup>

Many instruments were also unlikely to be found together because their periods of popularity did not overlap.<sup>278</sup> For example, it is probable that only three soft wind instruments were in common use between 1300 and 1520, quite unlike the many varieties that are depicted in simultaneous use in poetry.<sup>279</sup> The bowed lyre fell out of favour and disappeared from medieval art in the tenth century and reappeared only at the end of the fourteenth.<sup>280</sup> The citole and rotta, associated with genteel music in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, had become instruments of lower-ranked minstrels by the end of the fourteenth century, and thus would not have been played by elite amateurs or by minstrels at elite functions.<sup>281</sup> The lute became a favourite among professionals and elite amateurs as the status of the citole, gittern, and harp faded.<sup>282</sup> It is unlikely that many minstrels or elite amateurs would persist in playing unfashionable instruments or that these instruments would be used together in the same space.

Another significant factor is that of context. *Bas* instruments were predominantly associated with professional and elite amateur performers in the late Middle Ages, with the harp being the most prestigious and the fiddle the most versatile

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<sup>274</sup> Spring, *The Lute*, p. 30; Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, p. 51; Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, pp. 24–5.

<sup>275</sup> Rastall, 'Citolors in the Household', p. 49; Spring, *The Lute*, pp. 29–30; Peters, *Musical Sounds*, pp. 200, 252; Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, p. 50.

<sup>276</sup> Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 159; Rastall, 'Citolors in the Household', p. 49; John Southworth, *The English Medieval Minstrel*, p. 72; Spring, *The Lute*, p. 29.

<sup>277</sup> Rastall, 'Citolors in the Household', p. 49; Peters, *Musical Sounds*, p. 252; Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, p. 51; Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, p. 36; J. Michele Edwards, 'Women in Music to ca. 1450', in *Women and Music: A History*, ed. K. Pendle (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 26–53 (p. 37).

<sup>278</sup> Margerum, "'Alioquin Deficeret'", p. 27.

<sup>279</sup> Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 154.

<sup>280</sup> Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, p. 33.

<sup>281</sup> Margerum, "'Alioquin Deficeret'", pp. 27–8; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 150.

<sup>282</sup> Spring, *The Lute*, pp. 19, 29; Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, pp. 40–41; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 150; Peters, *Musical Sounds*, p. 220.

for much of the period.<sup>283</sup> The harp was unlikely to be played alongside the rebec, which was of a lower status and largely associated with informal, rustic music.<sup>284</sup>

Furthermore, the division of instruments within elite households suggests that certain instruments were considered more suitable for male than female musical performance and listening: drums, trumpets, and pipes were considered too ‘inciting’ and strident for female players or listeners, unlike soft, ‘calming’ instruments such as the psaltery.<sup>285</sup>

The above evidence confirms that many group performance scenes in literature and art, especially involving multiple instruments from different domains playing simultaneously, are not realistic. Rather, such scenes are a poetic construct, conjured for their symbolic suggestiveness or narrative function (for instance in signalling narrative resolution by producing seemingly impossible harmony from disparate parts).<sup>286</sup> *Bas* instruments were used to represent heavenly order, and angelic figures were often shown holding them.<sup>287</sup> Emma Dillon suggests that unrealistic, loud performance scenes featuring implausible combinations of *haut* and *bas* instruments serve as ‘sonic tropes’ which create a festive soundscape in the text: they gesture to the unique communal experience of listeners, to the ‘order and interaction’ of a community joined through sound, so that the boundaries of the performance space become limitless and expand to give the sense of a court, even a kingdom, as a single, united whole.<sup>288</sup> Poets of romance were less interested in practical acoustics, but were probably still familiar with performance conventions of their day. Implausible depictions of performance in literature were probably deliberate, and all the more noteworthy and striking *because* they were practically implausible. The harmony created by an unlikely multitude of instruments can be read as representative of the greater power of harmony (social, narrative, divine) that creates concord out of discordant constituents. The musical idyll represents total concord, which reaches above and beyond the realm of mortal music.

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<sup>283</sup> Brown and Polk, ‘Instrumental Music’, pp. 152, 158; Peters, *Musical Sounds*, pp. 17, 251; Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, pp. 50, 33.

<sup>284</sup> Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, p. 27.

<sup>285</sup> Rastall, ‘Citlers in the Household’, p. 50; Rita Steblin, ‘Gender Stereotyping of Musical Instruments in the Western Tradition’, *Canadian University Music Review* 16 (1995), pp. 128–44 (pp. 128–9).

<sup>286</sup> Margerum, “‘Alioquin Deficeret’”, p. 23; Montagu, *Musical Instruments*, p. 19; Montagu and Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels*, pp. xiii, 2; Wardle, ‘Musical Instruments’, pp. 283–4.

<sup>287</sup> Spring, *The Lute*, p. 29; Edmund A. Bowles, ‘The Role of Musical Instruments in Medieval Sacred Drama’, *Musical Quarterly* 45 (1959), pp. 67–84 (p. 74).

<sup>288</sup> Emma Dillon, ‘Song and Soundscape of Old French Romance’, in *Thinking Medieval Romance*, ed. K.C. Little and N. McDonald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 155–71 (pp. 160, 163, 164); Peter Noble, ‘Music in the Twelfth-Century French Romance’, *Reading Medieval Studies* 19 (1992), pp. 17–31; Page, ‘Voices and Instruments’, pp. 151–9.

The inclusion of both theory and practice in musical instruction manuals and poetry alike reflected the importance of studying practical performance rather than theory alone. Practice came to flourish despite the traditional scholarly condemnation of both practical music and musicians as inferior.<sup>289</sup> In the late Middle Ages, a scholarly education in music included both theory and practice.<sup>290</sup> This permissiveness reflects a shift in the theoretical approach in the thirteenth century, from pure *musica speculativa* towards more practical treatises on performance and notation, written for singers and musicians.<sup>291</sup> With the growth of secular musical literacy, this growing acceptance of *musica practica* as a way of achieving true music (which I will refer to as ‘musical authenticity’) and of accessing the powers of harmony can likewise be seen in medieval romances.

### 2.3 Diffusion of musical learning

Thus far, we have seen the range of theoretical and literary sources through which foundational ideas of *musica* circulated. Through what institutional and intellectual channels did the ideas of music flow? What were the lines of transmission, and how did they eventually come to be accessible as a resource for romance writers and audiences? Drawing on studies by Bell, Zieman, and Brokaw, and on the work of Page and Albin devoted to source transmission and provenance, I here explore the diffusion of musical learning, with a particular focus on the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

While, as established above, ideas about harmony and the cosmos as defined through *musica* were commonplace in the monastic and university environments of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the growth of literacy and the development of elaborate secular musical theory in the *ars antiqua* and *ars nova* styles meant that this specialist knowledge spread further. As Susan Rankin argues in her examination of how harmony was conceptualised in the Middle Ages, harmony was a ubiquitous force in both the medieval world at large and, more narrowly, the domain of scholars who composed verse.<sup>292</sup> Zieman suggests that the simultaneous growth of general literacy

<sup>289</sup> The anonymous ninth-century *Musica Enchiridis*, for example, is a manual that uses late antique theory and vocabulary to teach singing and notation. See Mckinnon, *Source Readings*, pp. 79–86.

<sup>290</sup> Joscelyn Godwin (ed.), *Music, Mysticism and Magic: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 163–70.

<sup>291</sup> For a detailed discussion of the impact of a liturgical musical education on medieval literacy and musical awareness, see Zieman, *Singing the New Song*.

<sup>292</sup> Rankin, ‘*Naturalis Concordia*’, pp. 3–19.

and musical literacy can be attributed, at least in part, to a rise in secular education from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>293</sup> Skill and knowledge were important for medieval musicians and scholars of *musica* alike, though scholarship was considered much more prestigious than practice precisely because thinking was considered a more noble pursuit than doing.<sup>294</sup>

David Rollo's study of literacy in medieval England and France suggests certain tensions in scholarly, monastic circles concerning the spread of learning to the aristocracy and later to the younger sons who made up the class of clerks and city officials.<sup>295</sup> There were also instances of clerks who, upon earning their bachelor's degree, subsequently went into professional secular life.<sup>296</sup> We know from payment records and other documents that clerks were likely to interact with minstrels and poets at court. Certain clerks, including Chaucer and Gower, even had duties connected with music and performance, and through such channels learning could reach beyond religious enclosures.<sup>297</sup> Most students left university before getting their bachelor's degree (50–80%), some taking over family estates, becoming tutors, or taking on clerical work.<sup>298</sup> However, since Boethian theory would have been on the first-year syllabus, it was likely that all students were exposed to the basic concepts of *musica*, including the powers of music.<sup>299</sup> More broadly, evidence suggests a considerable incidence of secular and clerical interchanges. Surviving records show that minstrels stayed in monasteries in the course of their travels, a cross-fertilization that would expose them to monastic musical learning.<sup>300</sup> While most surviving musical fragments come from a monastic setting, evidence of cross-overs between monks and musicians can be detected in melodic and stylistic borrowings. Regrettably, much documentary evidence has been lost, but notwithstanding the loss of the repertory, suggestive patterns are still apparent.

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<sup>293</sup> Zieman, *Singing the New Song*, pp. 8–17.

<sup>294</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals*, pp. 50–51.

<sup>295</sup> Rollo, *Glamorous Sorcery*, pp. ix–xxiii.

<sup>296</sup> W.R.J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (New York: Longman, 1987), p. 14; Michelle P. Brown, *The British Library Guide to Writing and Scripts: History and Technique* (London: The British Library, 1998), pp. 71–3; see also Zieman, *Singing the New Song*.

<sup>297</sup> Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, pp. 3–4; Carol Parrish Jamison, 'A Description of the Medieval Romance Based Upon "King Horn"', *Quondam Et Futurus* 1 (1991), pp. 44–58 (p. 45).

<sup>298</sup> Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 67.

<sup>299</sup> Karras, *From Boys*, p. 67.

<sup>300</sup> See, for example, John Noake, *The Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester* (London: Longman, 1866), pp. 177–8; Bowles, 'Haut and Bas', p. 116.

The number of literary manuscripts commissioned and disseminated increased considerably from around 1300, reflecting a rise in elite literacy.<sup>301</sup> Scholarly work began to cross over into more popular genres and ideas of *musica* began to reach a wider audience. Geffrei Gaimar, writing in the twelfth century, seems aware of the incipient spread of knowledge and education beyond the monastic setting and into the aristocratic court. His approach is similar to that of many of the poets and theorists who succeeded him, in adapting theory to more popular, contemporary tastes. Gaimar's *History of the English (Estoire des Engleis)* (1135–1140), the oldest surviving vernacular verse historiography, adopts a secular view of history aimed at this new audience, which requires both education and entertainment.<sup>302</sup> In the epilogue of his work (ll. 6501–6518) he addresses a fellow historian, David, saying that accounts of history should include and celebrate courtly activities such as feasting, hunting, and the display of splendour, among others (ll. 6507–6517). He states that 'd'ïço devreit hom bien chanter, / nient leissi[e]r ne trespasser' ('this is indeed the sort of material that should be celebrated in poetry, with nothing omitted and nothing passed over', ll. 6517–6518).<sup>303</sup> Gaimar seems to be firmly of the opinion that popular appeal is necessary for scholarly work. A similar phenomenon applies to the dissemination of musical theory. Although the in-depth knowledge of *musica speculativa* and related arithmetic calculations was the domain of the learned scholar, less technical aspects of this knowledge would have already become more widely known, enabling its recirculation in the form of courtly songs, poetry, and romances. This spread of learning had a marked effect on the narrative qualities of medieval literature: within a certain sub-group of texts, literary themes and social concerns, such as courtliness, military achievement, and social instability, were expressed and explored via the representation of musicians and the powers of universal harmony.

These suggestive overlaps between musical and non-musical, sacred and secular, and non-literary and literary contexts mean that the presence of musical theory in romances should not in itself be unexpected, since music enjoyed a kind of cultural

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<sup>301</sup> A. S. G. Edwards and Derek Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 257–78; For an overview of court literacy in the later Middle Ages, see V.J. Scattergood, 'Literacy in the Court of Richard II', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 29–43. For an analysis of male Latinate literacy amongst the merchant class in the fourteenth century, see Barbara A. Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experiences of Childhood in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>302</sup> Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis/History of the English*, trans. I. Short (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. ix–xv.

<sup>303</sup> Gaimar, *Estoire*, trans. Short, pp. xv, 352–3.

ubiquity in and around medieval literature. In romances, a courtly musical display and the generous reward of minstrels and protagonists showed the host to be possessed of the required chivalric virtues of honour and generosity. A belief in the powers of music, combined with the practical reality whereby minstrels were the means of creating and spreading (or ruining) reputations in the medieval period, influenced the way minstrels were viewed in society and portrayed in fiction. In the final section of this chapter, I will detail the main points of intersection between musical theory and romance and in particular their convergence around ideas connected to the powers of universal harmony.

## 2.4 Tracing the influence of music theory on medieval romance

Having established the musical and social context in which music romances would have been written, I will outline the themes in musical theory which are connected most directly to the romances. The romances under consideration in this thesis, beyond staging scenes of musical performance, draw inspiration from musical theory as they explore, in a literary, narrative medium, both the powers and the limitations of music in chivalric and courtly settings. Classical theoretical ideas about music's powers remained current by being transmitted through Boethius and other literary sources in the musical, liturgical, and mystical traditions. Plato's *Timaeus* (c. 360 BCE) was particularly influential. This dialogue is concerned with the role of music in the world's creation by means of the World-Soul, which constantly regenerates itself in a movement towards a state of perfect harmony in the universe.<sup>304</sup> The harmony of the World-Soul is self-perpetuating, capable of swaying the soul and spreading harmony to others, an effect not unlike ripples in a pond.<sup>305</sup> While the World-Soul is not directly named in the romances, unlike other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century poetry, it is still implicitly pervasive, if only in the suggestive metaphor and image system of universal harmony. It serves as an invisible veil of music surrounding the world, which can be accessed by a skilled musician. In romances which depict the ideal of music's affective capabilities, the protagonist's journey, like the narrative itself, echoes the World-Soul's process of regeneration, starting at a point of disharmony and 'regenerating' through various quests and challenges until harmony is achieved at the end. This

<sup>304</sup> Plato, *The Works*, trans. T. Taylor and F. Sydenham, vol. II (Frome: Prometheus Trust, 1996), pp. 396–7.

<sup>305</sup> Plato, *The Works*, trans. Taylor and Sydenham, p. 404; Rankin, 'Naturalis Concordia', p. 5.

harmony then spreads outward, engendering extreme joy in the protagonist's subjects and reaffirming social harmony within the kingdom at large.

Knowledge and understanding play an important role in this process, as classical and medieval theorists held that the intellect was a key ingredient in the creation of the world, and was needed to understand and access authentic music. A connection can be drawn here with the necessity of musical study, learning, and practice which is repeatedly asserted in the romances. Plato also contends that the human race was created out of harmony, and for the sake of harmony was granted the ability to hear, but harmony can only truly be useful when employed in conjunction with intellect. This harmony must be used not only to counter the taint of dissonance which the soul acquires in the physical world but also to return it to the order from which it ultimately originated.<sup>306</sup> In general, in insular romances the protagonist's intellect is tested as a prerequisite for the harmonious ending, although some texts go beyond this familiar convention to question the reach of harmonic power and explore scenarios where music is absent or misused.

Following the *Harmonica* (second century CE) of Claudius Ptolemy, Boethius details how harmony is used both to balance the connection between the World-Soul and the physical world and also to influence the inhabitants of the natural world.<sup>307</sup> The *Harmonica* asserts that harmony is omnipresent, even in moments of perceived silence; harmony is 'creative of order and symmetry' in sound, and in the world around it.<sup>308</sup> However, harmony is not an inflexible force: to understand harmony is to gain an understanding of the way the world is put together. In the romances, this knowledge, together with practical skill, enables the protagonist to change and order the world according to his will.

In the later Middle Ages, harmony was still deemed to be capable of altering its environment. It was manifested in the form of musical goals, such as rhythm and melody, and also engendered extreme forms of various emotional states and communal bonds such as joy, love, and peace as well as behaviour such as lawfulness. Harmony's ability to affect the physical world is a concept that moves seamlessly out of *musica* and into the narratives of medieval romance. Medieval theorists often cite examples of

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<sup>306</sup> Plato, *The Works*, trans. Taylor and Sydenham, pp. 448–9.

<sup>307</sup> Chadwick, *Boethius*, pp. 100–101; Claudius Ptolemy, *Harmonics / Harmonica*, ed. and trans. J. Solomon (Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. xxxi; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>308</sup> Ptolemy, *Harmonics*, pp. xxxvi, 140–4; Rankin, 'Naturalis Concordia', pp. 13–15.

how playing certain modes can achieve exactly these goals of musical harmony and societal order.<sup>309</sup> In the opening of *De Institutione Musica*, Boethius sets up a number of modes as having different moods, which can affect listeners in predetermined ways, and furthermore he explains the dangers of playing an incorrect mode. The depiction of music in romance evokes these powers in response to contemporary thought concerning the value and danger of musical powers and the necessity of musical skills for courtly accomplishment and for members of the broader medieval elite. As I will demonstrate, the general principles of music's ability to influence the physical world and to allow listeners to transcend physicality through unearthly bliss are recurring tropes in the romances analysed in Part II.

The preceding discussion has surveyed the variety of contexts in which these foundational ideas came to interact with romance – not only through the dissemination of musical theory but also through re-handling in contemporary poetry, literature, and other modes of intellectual production. Crucially, these ideas came into contact with romance through musical practice and via the interventional, intermediary role of musicians in society. These points of connection, especially those effected through the figure of the musician, are important vehicles through which the ideas of musical theory contributed to the composition and reception of music romances.

Before moving on to the case studies in Part II, I will briefly explore the Old English *Apollonius* and John Gower's *Apollonius of Tyre*, both of which engage with musical tropes pertinent to medieval music romances. I discuss how the fictional minstrel came to embody the ideas of *musica* discussed above. In the first instance, *Apollonius* usefully serves to illustrate the transition from earlier traditions to the music romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

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<sup>309</sup> For example, Ptolemy's *Harmonica*, Book III, Chapter 7, used by Boethius, equates the seven modes in scalar order: frenzy – Mixolydian, excitement – Phrygian, pleasure – Lydian, neutral state – Dorian, depression – Hypophrygian, relaxation – Hypolydian, deep sleep – Hypodorian. See Ptolemy, *Harmonics*, p.151, fn. 152.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *APOLLONIUS: PRECURSOR TO THE MUSIC ROMANCES*

Medieval ideas about harmony and music's powers affected not only the way music was portrayed in romances but also how the minstrel was perceived in society. As manuals for musical performance and songbook collections became more common, and as the concept of recognisable or codified musical effects became better known outside the monastic environment, the social and practical roles of music and the perception of musicians changed accordingly. In this section, I discuss the extent to which the profession of medieval minstrel acquired a symbolic association with universal harmony and thus with the theory of music's affective force. I aim to explore how medieval musical theory combined with social necessity to influence the construction of the minstrel trope in literature, which is visible in England from Old English texts to the insular music romances of the later Middle Ages. Literary textual evidence, backed up by documentary evidence such as court payment records, helps determine the social context behind the various tropes concerned with minstrel identity prevalent in the corpus of medieval romance. For my literary analysis, I examine the presence of musical thought and the depiction of music's powers in the Old English *Apollonius* and John Gower's Middle English *Apollonius of Tyre*, which both offer an important gauge of the literary representation of minstrels.

The fictional representation of the minstrel in medieval literature often emphasises the power and influence commanded by the musician. He is widely travelled, well received, and able to use the powers of music to his own ends. Crucially, he does so through musical practice rather than solely through recourse to theoretical knowledge. One distinction between minstrels as represented in literature and as they existed historically is that, in their historical manifestations, they were reliant on the patronage system for their livelihood. In romances, too, a reciprocal relationship is typically portrayed between the fictional musician and patron, but it is depicted there as an equal exchange where the minstrel is rewarded for an important service rendered.

The role of the historical minstrel and poet in the secular aristocratic court has never been definitively established. Some historical evidence suggests that minstrels were merely low-ranking servants, completely subject to the will of their patron, whereas other evidence makes them out as something more autonomous. Most likely, they were a bit of both, depending on skill and status. As discussed in the previous chapter, we know that skilled minstrels were highly valued: Roger of Howden, chancellor to Richard I, ‘enticed with gifts singers and minstrels (*cantores et joculatores*) from France that they might sing of [the king] in the streets’.<sup>1</sup> An examination of medieval minstrels’ duties and livery allowance suggests that they played a varied and significant role at court and in the medieval city, their supplementary roles ranging from keepers of the hunt and waits to clockmakers.<sup>2</sup> This varied assortment of roles corresponds with the range of musical and non-musical skills demonstrated by fictional musicians.

The broad skillset and ability to access elite spaces also made the guise of minstrel ideally suited for enterprising knights, giving rise to a prominent trope in medieval romance. There are recorded accounts of historical knights claiming to be minstrels and sneaking into prestigious post-tournament feasts.<sup>3</sup> Henri de Laon wrote a complaint in *Le Dit des Hérauts* (fourteenth century) about low-ranking knights who pretended to be minstrels and then ended up in a compromising position when asked to perform.<sup>4</sup> As we will see in Part II, in *King Horn* (last part of the thirteenth century) the protagonist succeeds in infiltrating a heavily-guarded fortress by disguising himself and his companions as minstrels, singing and juggling.<sup>5</sup> In fiction and in history, minstrels are accorded a certain licence since they are not usually considered to represent political biases or to pose military threats. The most important duty of minstrels pertained to entertainment, and through entertainment they helped garner prestige and reputation for their patrons.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 169; Henry J. Chaytor, *The Troubadours and England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 120; Jamison, ‘A Description’, p. 45; Chaytor, *Troubadours*, p. 10; Bullock-Davies, *A Register*.

<sup>3</sup> David Crouch, *Tournament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 108–9.

<sup>4</sup> Crouch, *Tournament*, pp. 188–93; Henri de Laon, ‘Le Dit des Hérauts’, ed. A. Långfors, in *Romania*, 43 (1914), pp. 216–25.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the significance of disguises in medieval literature, see Jane Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness in Medieval Romance* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 189; Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 169.

The payment records of royal and baronial courts confirm that minstrels were paid, and often paid well, for their work.<sup>7</sup> They received regular salaries as members of the household and additional rewards when visiting foreign courts.<sup>8</sup> The lucrative rewards granted to minstrels are also frequently attested in medieval fiction. However, there is perhaps a little more to the frequent in-text reminders that a good patron remembers to distribute payment and rewards.<sup>9</sup> The assurance that a fictional minstrel can create a glorious reputation for his patron comes with an underlying suggestion that this reputation can be undermined in the same way.<sup>10</sup> A minstrel may hope to profit from a flattering portrayal, or to avenge a slight by disparaging an ungenerous patron. My argument below begins by surveying representations of minstrels in literary sources in order to establish a background for the tropes through which musicians' powers and skills are depicted in music romances. These depictions convey both advantages and limitations of the patronage system.

### 1. *Apollonius* as a proto-music-romance

Unlike other early medieval texts, *Apollonius* continued to exert a considerable influence throughout the Middle Ages. It was known through its Latin, Old English, and Middle English incarnations, and parts of its narrative were recycled by medieval romances. *Apollonius* contains many of the tropes that recur later in music romances, which it prefigures in its presentation of minstrels as courtly, worldly, and powerful, due to their command of the power of music. This power is a product of theoretical learning and practical skill, establishing a pattern reprised by medieval romance.

Notably, the plot of *Apollonius* remains virtually unchanged throughout its long history.<sup>11</sup> My analysis focuses on the importance of musical education for the social advancement of the musician-knight, in the figure of Apollonius, and on music's ability to influence listeners. I begin by discussing the importance of minstrel

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<sup>7</sup> See Bullock-Davies, *A Register*, and *Menestrellorum Multitudo: Minstrels at a Royal Feast* (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Press, 1978).

<sup>8</sup> Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 189; Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 189.

<sup>10</sup> Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 4; Chaytor, *Troubadours*, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, in *Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations*, ed. E. Archibald (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), p. 3; Albert H. Smyth, *Shakespeare's Pericles and Apollonius of Tyre* (Philadelphia, 1898; reprinted Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), pp. 19–24; Anne Wilson, *The Magical Quest: The Use of Magic in Arthurian Romance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 25; Robert M. Longworth, "Sir Orfeo", the Minstrel, and the Minstrel's Art', *Studies in Philology* 79 (1982), pp. 1–11 (p. 6).

payments in *Apollonius*, and then outline the treatment of musical power and musical knowledge which colours later retellings too, such as Gower's in *Confessio Amantis* (c.1386–1392). I contend that *Apollonius* can be considered a proto-music-romance particularly in its treatment of themes pertaining to the power of music, and that a musical education and an awareness of music's power are key to the positive ending with which the narrative concludes.

There is no doubt that *Apollonius* was popular fare in the Middle Ages, and its origins in antiquity lent the text a great deal of inherited authority.<sup>12</sup> There are numerous allusions to, and borrowings from, the *Apollonius* corpus in surviving texts from a variety of genres.<sup>13</sup> Striking narrative and thematic parallels can be found in Middle English, Danish, Old Norse, Old French, and Occitan texts, sometimes directly linking *Apollonius* with the Arthurian court. The vagueness and cursoriness of certain references makes viable the assumption that audiences and readers were closely familiar with the original story all over medieval Europe.<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Archibald calls *Apollonius* the earliest English romance, and posits that it is the only romance to survive through the Old English, Middle English, and Modern English periods.<sup>15</sup> Another version of the text available in medieval England was the Latin *Gesta Apollonii* (c. 500 CE).<sup>16</sup> To date, *Apollonius* survives in 114 manuscripts compiled between the ninth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>17</sup> In the late 1380s and early 1390s, the *Apollonius* legend appeared as a morality tale in Gower's handling, having already featured in the Latin *Gesta Romanorum* at the start of the fourteenth century.<sup>18</sup> This extensive surviving corpus demonstrates the broad and lasting spectrum of engagement with the narrative by medieval poets, readers, and audiences. That this narrative came to serve as a model for music romances – bequeathing a range of tropes to all three kinds of romance discussed in Part II (kingship quest romances, romances engaging with magic, Tristan romances) – is, then, unsurprising.

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Hanning, *The Individual in Twelfth Century Romance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 56.

<sup>13</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 47–58.

<sup>15</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 3, 47; Wilson, *Magical Quest*, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Dronke, *Verse with Prose*, pp. 70–2; Wilson, *Magical Quest*, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, p. 3; Wilson, *Magical Quest*, p. 25; *Apollonius of Tyre*, in *The Old English 'Apollonius of Tyre'*, ed. P. Goolden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. xiv, xiii.

<sup>18</sup> P. J. Enk, 'The Romance of Apollonius of Tyre', *Mnemosyne* 1, Fourth Series (1948), pp. 222–37 (p. 222); *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, p. 48.

## 2. Courtly virtues, minstrelsy, and learning in the medieval *Apollonius*

What role does *Apollonius* play in establishing the prominent tropes underpinning music romance? The character of Apollonius can be read as a representative model of Plato's 'philosopher king': a scholar and musician who rules wisely, enjoying the love of his subjects and serving as an example of successful kingship (Book VI, xx–xxii, 484a–502c).<sup>19</sup> In music romances which offer a positive depiction of music, protagonists must demonstrate musical prowess in order to complete their narrative arc successfully and attain kingship. Old English texts and medieval romances alike frequently emphasise that good kings and knights are able to secure followers, allies, and a social position through music. Katherine Steele Brokaw observes that musical harmony is community-forming in two ways: it temporarily subsumes the individual into a larger communal identity, and it symbolises the community's oneness.<sup>20</sup> Because of its social agency, music serves as the perfect medium for a fictional king to demonstrate his worth. It is significant that, even in later incarnations of the narrative, musical skill is a marker of Apollonius' *courtoisie*, which depended not only on generosity and adherence to rules of etiquette but also on education, intelligence, and accomplishments, equally valuable to a courtier and his magnate.<sup>21</sup> According to the prevailing medieval view, music was an essential part of elite culture for both men and women, playing a significant role in creating a positive impression on one's peers, superiors, and subjects.<sup>22</sup> The *Apollonius* narrative promotes the necessity of education and intelligence for the musician-king, in line with the suggestive metaphor of harmony, since harmony, as discussed earlier, must be understood sensitively before its powers can be accessed and unleashed.<sup>23</sup>

The *Apollonius* narrative in its several incarnations puts a great deal of emphasis on both theoretical knowledge and practical music. Early in the narrative, Apollonius is forced into exile when he is betrayed by the corrupt king Antiochus, who

<sup>19</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Cornford, pp. 189–211.

<sup>20</sup> Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*, p. 105.

<sup>21</sup> Discussed in detail in the *Liber Niger* from the reign of Edward IV to Henry VIII, see *Liber Niger*, ed. Myers, pp. 126–7; Burnley, *Courtliness*, p. 34; Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 150; Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 73; Jamison, 'A Description', p. 51.

<sup>22</sup> Nigel Wilkins, 'Chaucer and Music', in *Words and Music in Medieval Europe* (Surrey: Ashgate Variorum, 2011), XIV, pp. 1–12 (p. 1); Zaerr, *Performance*, p. 52; Page, *Voices and Instruments*, p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> Joscelyn Godwin, *The Harmony of the Spheres: A Sourcebook of the Pythagorean Tradition in Music* (Rochester: Inner Traditions International, 1993), p. 25; Ptolemy, *Harmonics*, pp. 145–7; Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Cornford, p. 88.

repeatedly breaks his word and commits numerous vicious acts. Escaping the king's assassination attempt, Apollonius is shipwrecked in the kingdom of the honourable Archistrates. This king accepts and rewards the destitute prince, who is now seemingly just a wandering musician. Archistrates' court celebrates such bright pursuits as feasting, music, and education, and Apollonius is appointed as the music tutor to the princess Achistrate before becoming her husband. One day, they embark on a sea voyage with their infant daughter, Thaise, and Archistrate appears to die at sea. Grief-stricken, Apollonius goes into exile, leaving his daughter to be fostered, until, at last, everyone is reunited, largely due to Thaise's musical skill and classical education.

The importance of a theoretical education is emphasised from the very beginning of Gower's version, in which Apollonius is a worthy knight possessed of all the requisite skills for good leadership.<sup>24</sup> Gower makes a point, early on, of describing Apollonius as eloquent and well-educated:

Of every naturel science,  
Which eny clerk him couthe teche,  
He couthe ynowh, and in his speche  
Of wordes he was eloquent;  
(VIII, ll. 390–393)<sup>25</sup>

The 'naturel science' which Apollonius has been so thoroughly taught would have included musical theory, as one of the liberal arts, and he has learnt every one. Jamie James, in his work surveying music from the classical era to the Romantics, demonstrates that science and music were closely connected in the Middle Ages via theories concerning the purpose and nature of universal harmony in the works of such theorists as Boethius, Augustine, and Marsilio Ficino.<sup>26</sup> Gower's poem has the clearest reference to the quadrivium of all the retellings of the legend. The opening description of Apollonius as a young prince confirms, as do his subsequent actions, that he is well-educated in the classical tradition. His education amounts to the accomplishment of what Robert Hanning calls *engin*: an innate talent, ability, or skill; ingenuity used to trick, outsmart, or educate.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, its etymon, the Latin *ingenium*, spans these

<sup>24</sup> Neal, *The Masculine Self*, p. 150; Karras, *From Boys*, pp. 64–5.

<sup>25</sup> John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, ed. R.A. Peck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980; 1997 reprint), p. 419. All subsequent references to this edition, unless stated otherwise.

<sup>26</sup> See James, *The Music of the Spheres*.

<sup>27</sup> Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 111; Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 150, *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?size=First+100&type=headword&q1=engin&rgxp=constrained>, accessed on 03.04.2018; *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/engine>, accessed on 03.04.2018.

variant meanings, and denotes genius and talent (inviting questions that will recur later as to whether such a skill is only innate or can be learned), as well as machination and fraud.<sup>28</sup> Notably, *engin* is the use of trickery instead of physical force: according to Geoffroi de Charny's *Livre de Chevalerie* (XXXV, ll. 1–25), a knight of supreme worth possesses intelligence and wisdom in addition to prowess (which is endurance, common sense, strength of will, courage, and military skill), and proves the best at everything he undertakes – skills that Apollonius demonstrates throughout the narrative.<sup>29</sup> Intimating the qualities of craft and craftiness, this ingenuity has both positive and negative connotations, and it recurs as a theme throughout the various medieval iterations of the story, especially in connection with the clever use of music by Apollonius and his daughter.

Apollonius' love of learning is immediately evident as he has imbibed everything that his tutors could teach him. In the Old English version of the tale, education and careful reasoning are very important. Apollonius is described as *snotor* ('prudent'), a man who *se getruwode on his snotornesse and on ða boclican lare* ('trusted to his prudence and to his book-learning'), once again blurring rigid distinctions between skills that are innate and acquired.<sup>30</sup> From the beginning of the poem, then, we are assured that Apollonius has a grasp of *musica speculativa*, and once he enters the court of Archistrates he is shown to be a skilled practical musician and a tutor of both *musica practica* and *musica speculativa*. In short, Apollonius is not only well-liked but also possesses all the necessary skills to be successful as a knight and future king.<sup>31</sup>

This learning stands Apollonius in good stead in all versions of the story and sets up several tropes that reappear in music romances, including a notable, awe-inspiring musical performance in a hall.<sup>32</sup> When he is ship-wrecked in the kingdom of Archistrates, the king generously invites him to a feast in his hall and Apollonius easily impresses the court with his skill as a harper and singer. At first, when Apollonius arrives at the king's banquet in Gower's text, he is deeply sorrowful and

<sup>28</sup> Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 106.

<sup>29</sup> Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry: Text, Context and Translation*, ed. R.W. Kaeuper and E. Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 155; Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 150.

<sup>30</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, IV, pp. 4–7; *Apollonius of Tyre*, in *The Old English Version of the Story of Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. B. Thorpe (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1834), p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> Karras, *From Boys*, p. 67; Helmut Nickel, 'The Tournament: An Historical Sketch', in *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, ed. H. Chickering and T.H. Seiler (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), pp. 213–63 (p. 213); Burnley, *Courtliness*, p. 101.

<sup>32</sup> For the full list of key tropes see Appendix A.

Archistrates bids his daughter Archistrate to play her harp to cheer up their guest (ll. 759–762).<sup>33</sup> The king’s suggestion that she take away the young man’s tears and sorrow with her harp also appears in the Latin and Old English texts. Archistrates is demonstrably aware of music’s affective ability to alter mood. In Gower’s text, the princess does her best to cheer Apollonius up by singing and playing (‘With harpe bothe and ek with mouthe / To him sche dede al that sche couthe’, ll. 763–764), but her efforts fail to move him. She cannot compare with Apollonius, aptly named after the god of music, and even plays the wrong melody. Apollonius kindly explains her shortcomings, offering to teach her:

‘Bot if ye the mesure pleide  
Which, if you list, I schal you liere,  
It were a glad thing for to hierere.’  
‘Ha, lieve sire’, tho quod sche,  
‘Now tak the harpe and let me se  
Of what mesure that ye mene.’  
(ll. 768–773)<sup>34</sup>

The word ‘mesure’ in reference specifically to music recurs in the poem. It connotes, on a practical level, a heard melody or rhythm of a melody, and, in its theoretical purview, abstract proportion and harmony.<sup>35</sup> Immediate, local effects have more far-reaching consequences, just as ‘glad’ suggests not only a melody pleasant to hear in itself as an isolated aesthetic phenomenon, but also music’s ability to conjure a subsidiary feeling of joy that lasts beyond the musical event – after all, the princess was meant to be cheering Apollonius with her music. In the Latin description of her performance, *melos cum voce miscebat* (her ‘voice mingled her tune with song’), *miscebat* meaning not just ‘mingled’ but also ‘stirred up’, and *melos* not just a ‘tune’ but also, more suggestively, harmony or the music of the spheres.<sup>36</sup> She evokes the harmony of the spheres with her *voce* – her ‘voice’ or, read contextually, her ‘song’ – and everyone except Apollonius is impressed at her music.<sup>37</sup> He seems to think her attempt has fallen flat – because she has not been properly taught. Could it be that she

<sup>33</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, pp. 429–30.

<sup>34</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, p. 430.

<sup>35</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27525>, accessed on 04.04.18; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 267–8.

<sup>36</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 128–9; Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=miscebat> and <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=voce>, accessed 03.04.18; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 269–73.

<sup>37</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=voce>, accessed 03.04.18.

has accessed one form of *melos*, the basic, earth-bound melody, but not the other, the celestial music of the spheres?

While Archistrate's music, in the Old English text too, does not succeed in transforming the listener's emotions, Apollonius offers a demonstration of music that does. The Old English version follows the Latin in offering an interlude in which the king admonishes Apollonius for failing to praise the princess' harp-playing; Apollonius quickly explains that, while the princess is a good musician, she has not been well taught. His criticism is directed not at her musical ability but her musical tuition, which prohibits her from using music's powers to the full:

‘Ic ongitte þæt soðlice þin dohtor gefeol on swegcræft, ac heo næfð hine na wel geleornod. Ac hat me nu sillan þa hearpan; þonne wast þu nu þæt þu git nast.’ Arcestrates se cyning cwæð: ‘Apolloni, Ic oncnawe soðlice þæt þu eart on eallum þingum wel gelæred.’<sup>38</sup>

[‘I can see that truly your daughter has fallen into music-making, but she has not learned it well. But command the harp to be given to me now; then you will know what you do not yet know.’ Arcestrates the king said: ‘Apollonius, truly I know that you are well instructed in all things.’]<sup>39</sup>

It is significant that Apollonius describes the princess' musical learning so off-handedly – she has fallen into it (*gefeol*) and thus, denied Apollonius' systematic tuition, is not rigorously trained, skilled, or well-instructed (*wel geleornod / wel gelæred*), in either technical skill or theoretical learning (senses encompassed by the verb *geleornod* and cognate past participle *gelæred*).<sup>40</sup> If Apollonius were given a harp, his listeners would immediately gain knowledge; the emphasis falls on transferable knowledge, or rather its lack (*nast*), to be rectified through listening to Apollonius' music. Knowledge acquired through practice and knowledge imparted through performance are intimately bound together in these verbal clusters.<sup>41</sup> Powerful music is not innate or instinctual but a learned ability, because the learning process is what

<sup>38</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVI, pp. 26–7.

<sup>39</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 45.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Bosworth and Thomas Northcote Toller (ed.), *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 406; Thomas Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth: Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), p. 352.

<sup>41</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 727.

gives it value, a staple motif of later music romances. This kind of learning was also connected to courtliness. Young children of the aristocracy and lower echelons of the medieval elite were taught to perform and appreciate music, and many would grow up to be notable patrons of musicians and poets, as well as amateur musicians and poets themselves.<sup>42</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon king's belief that Apollonius is *eallum þingum wel gelaered* ('well learned in all things') suggests both a full education and a sound knowledge of music. In the Latin, the value of this knowledge is made more explicit: Archistrates says that Apollonius *in omnibus es locuples* (is 'richly gifted in every way', or 'rich in all things'), suggesting that such knowledge, or talent, can be conceived of in material or even monetary terms.<sup>43</sup> All three texts, then, depict Apollonius as skilled in theory and, crucially, practice: his knowledge in itself is remarkable, but it is insufficient without the accompanying virtue of audible, practical performance.

Apollonius' privileged knowledge makes universal harmony available to him. When he begins to play, an otherworldly stillness descends upon the hall, enchanting the listeners:

Apollonius his hearpenægl genam, and he þa hearpestrengas mid  
cræfte astirian ongan, and þare hearpan sweg mid winsumum  
sange gemægnde.<sup>44</sup>

[Apollonius took his harp-pluck and began to play the harpstrings  
– with skill, and he combined the sound of the harp with a  
delightful song.]<sup>45</sup>

(In the Latin: [...] *animumque accomodat arti. miscetur vox cantu  
modulata chordis*, 'devoted his mind to his art. In the song his  
voice blended harmoniously with the strings')<sup>46</sup>

The repetition of *hearpenægl* / *hearpestrengas* / *hearpan* and the alignment of *cræfte* ('skill') with material rather than theoretical concerns places the emphasis on practical

<sup>42</sup> Nigel Wilkins, 'Music and Poetry at Court: England and France in the Late Middle Ages', in *Words and Music in Medieval Europe* (Surrey: Ashgate Variorum, 2011), XIII, pp. 183–204 (pp. 188–9).

<sup>43</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 128–9.

<sup>44</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVI, pp. 26–7.

<sup>45</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 45.

<sup>46</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 128–9.

music.<sup>47</sup> By contrast, in the Latin, the emphasis on the necessity of devoting one's mind to the art of music suggests a need for learning and concentration for good musicianship – *accomodat* gestures to a devotion or application to a particular subject.<sup>48</sup> It brings together the concept of an internalised art, an innate quality, and study, a learnable skill: Apollonius picks up his plectrum, in an act of physical, audible musicianship, but applies his mind to his art, which suggests something closer to an intellectual, theoretical kind of musicianship.

Further, in the Latin, the description of the voice blending with music recalls the earlier description of Achistrate's entwining of song and voice (*melos cum voce miscebat*), only now it carries a reference to harmony achieved via sensitive modulation: *miscentur vox cantu modulata chordis* ('In the song his voice blended harmoniously with the strings'). *Cantu* denotes 'song', 'poetry', or (more troublingly) 'incantation', while *miscentur*, as previously noted, means not only 'mix' and 'mingle' but also 'stir up' – the voice mixes with the string, but also stirs up harmonic powers.<sup>49</sup> *Modulata* suggests mechanical tuning and appropriate measure or melodic timing, but also soothing and harmonising through correct proportions, as well as balancing the humours or elements of the emotions and affect.<sup>50</sup> In Middle English, a *modulatur* is both someone who tunes an instrument and a skilled performer.<sup>51</sup> Notably, Gower's version uses 'tempreth', again connoting modulation and harmonic powers: 'He takth the Harpe and in his wise / He tempreth and of such assise/Singende' (ll. 777–779), 'assise' akin to the Latin 'modulata' in conveying 'correct or proper measure'.<sup>52</sup> The Old English *astirian* denotes not just the movement of strings but also the agitation of something deeper, here implicitly the stirring up of harmonic powers that lie behind or beyond this local instantiation of musical skill.<sup>53</sup> In all these lexical clusters, individual examples of Apollonius' skill are emblematic or symptomatic of something larger or more encompassing than it bespeaks. *Winsumum*, ancestor of the modern 'winsome', describes something generally pleasant but also, more specifically, something pleasant

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<sup>47</sup> Toller, *Supplement*, p. 133.

<sup>48</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=accomodat>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>49</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=cantu> and <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=Miscentur>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>50</sup> Carter, *Dictionary*, p. 299; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED44748>, accessed on 01.04.18.

<sup>51</sup> Carter, *Dictionary*, p. 300.

<sup>52</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, p. 430. See *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED2626>, accessed on 02.04.18.

<sup>53</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 55.

to the mind or senses, suggesting music's affective reach and lasting transformational capabilities.<sup>54</sup>

It is notable that Apollonius changes his clothes before he performs, thereby assuming the identity of a minstrel. The scene is one of self-laureation, a transformation not only to a musician-poet but more brazenly to the archetypal musician-poet:

Apollonius þa ut eode and hine scridde and sette ænne  
cynehelm uppon his heafod, and nam þa hearpan on his hand  
and in eode and swa stod, þæt se cyngc and ealle þa  
ymb sittendan wendon þæt he nære Apollonius ac þæt he  
wære Apollines, ðara hæðenra god.<sup>55</sup>

[Apollonius then went out and clothed himself and put a  
garland on his head, and took the harp in his hand and went  
in and then stood, so that the king and all those sitting about  
thought that he was not Apollonius but that he was Apollo,  
the god of the heathens.]<sup>56</sup>

The fact that he is not quite Apollonius any more but seems almost to be the god Apollo suggests that, by assuming this guise and fulfilling the audience's expectations of a *performance* of minstrelsy, Apollonius becomes closely connected to the archetypal force of universal harmony, a musical force greater than himself. Apollonius' demonstration is also consonant with the way minstrels would exchange new music upon meeting at court, in the course of their travels or at the late medieval minstrel schools. Notably, Gower's Apollonius, de-paganised and likened to an angel rather than to Apollo, handles the harp like a professional minstrel, his music reminiscent of the harmony of the spheres:

He takth the harpe and in his wise  
He tempreth, and of such assise  
Singende he harpeth forth withal,  
That as a vois celestial  
Hem thoghte it souneth in here ere,  
As thogh that he an angel were.  
Thei gladen of his melodie  
(ll. 777–783)<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 1286.

<sup>55</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVI, pp. 26–7.

<sup>56</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, p. 430.

We are told explicitly that the audience gladdens upon hearing this ‘melodie’, which bears the dual connotation of *musica mundana* (‘celestial’) and *musica instrumentalis* (‘Singende he harpeth’). The princess is moved most of all, in a staged testimony of music’s affective powers. At its heart, this episode exemplifies practicality in music. Apollonius begins with the tuning (‘He tempreth’), which comes with practical and theoretical connotations of harmonising. Then, he begins to play (‘harpeth forth withal’), in imagery likening music to a force moving out of the harp, centrifugally, when the musician performs. Such scenes, Christopher Page remarks, are common to medieval music romances: the courtly performer takes up the harp (usually at the urging of another character), spends some time tuning the instrument, and finally performs beautifully, to the audience’s amazement.<sup>58</sup> Page suggests, moreover, that it is the Apollonius story which serves as a formative model for elaborate performance scenes in later texts.<sup>59</sup>

The connotations of prescribed behaviour and moderation suggest a learned, systematic approach to music, theoretically and practically. However, Apollonius’ music is also distinctive enough that it is able to compel the audience in unusual or extraordinary ways – it is somehow different and more powerful than that of other musicians as his singing combines with his harping. Since Apollonius enchants the court with ‘a vois celestial’ (l. 780), Gower appears to allude to the harmony of the spheres, on which Apollonius’ music ostensibly draws and through which he has the power to affect mood and create friendships. Apollonius plays the harp in his own way (‘his wise’), implying a recognisable musical style distinct from that of the princess or other conventional performers. The power inherent in Apollonius’ voice and musical knowledge reveals his high birth, which the princess spots immediately:

Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed  
That he is of gret gentillesse.  
Hise dedes ben therof witesse  
Forth with the wisdom of his lore  
It nedeth nocht to seche more,  
He myhte nocht have such manere,  
Of gentil blod bot if he were.  
(ll. 788–794)<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Page, *Voices and Instruments*, p. 97.

<sup>59</sup> Page, *Voices and Instruments*, pp. 103–6.

<sup>60</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, p. 430.

Musical skill, a marker of ‘gret gentillesse’ or elite social status and behaviour, is consonant with his ‘gentil’ blood and ‘manere’ (bearing, or customary practice).<sup>61</sup> The musical performance is described as though it were a brave, knightly deed (‘dedes ben therof wisse’) and his musical accomplishment as the result of instruction and education. The ‘wisdom of his lore’ possibly hints behind that training to knowledge of music theory, ‘lore’ variously encompassing education, instruction pertaining to a science, craft, or field of study (secular or religious), and a kind of erudition or spiritual wisdom bordering on theoretical understanding.<sup>62</sup>

Listening to Apollonius’ music, the princess falls in love (*incidit in amorem*) with the same ease that she fell, untutored, into the art of music. In the Latin, the phrase for Apollonius’ talents is *omnium artium studiorumque esse cumulatum*: Apollonius has mastered ‘every kind of talent and learning’. *Artium*, ambivalently, denotes both knowledge, science, art, or practical skill and, more troublingly as with ‘engin’, trickery, cunning, or artfulness, negative connotations tainting the word’s positive associations.<sup>63</sup> The same ambivalence hinted at in *engin* as to whether the skill is innate or acquired recurs in the collocation here: *studiorum* refers to pre-existing, ingrained ‘enthusiasm’ and ‘zeal’ as much as it does to acquired ‘learning’,<sup>64</sup> and *cumulatum* suggests the accumulation of skills and achievement of perfection through practice.<sup>65</sup> Overall, musical skill, whether used for good or ill, is represented as the product of learning combined with innate affinity or aptitude.

In the Old English text, Apollonius wins the princess because he is *on eallum godum cræftum swa wel wæs getogen, þa gefeol hyre mod on his lufe* (‘so well instructed in all useful skills, [that] her mind fell in love with him’).<sup>66</sup> As discussed shortly, *mod* refers to both mind and spirit: it can be inferred that her mind succumbs to his musical skill on an intellectual level, and her spirit succumbs to the powers of

<sup>61</sup> *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/manner>, accessed on 07.04.2018; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED52950>, accessed on 07.04.2018.

<sup>62</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED26096>, accessed on 01.04.18.

<sup>63</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 128–9; Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=artium>, accessed on 01.04.2018; *Perseus Tufts Latin Study Tool*, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?!=artium&la=la>, accessed on 01.04.18.

<sup>64</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=studiorumque>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>65</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=cumulatum>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>66</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVII, pp. 26–7.

*musica* in a more affective fashion.<sup>67</sup> Familiar combinations of the practical and theoretical, the innate and the acquired, run through this passage too: the princess is won over by Apollonius' possessing all kinds of learning but also every innate talent and skill, *cræftum* suggesting both art, knowledge, or book learning and also ability or talent.<sup>68</sup> When the king requests that Apollonius tutor the princess, he addresses the prince as *Lareow Apollonius* (Old English) and *Apolloni Magister* (Latin), both phrases implying the discipline of book learning.<sup>69</sup> The Old English *Lareow* was used to translate Latin terms – such as *pædagogus*, *dogmatista*, and *magister* – linked specifically with expert authority, theoretical education, and later with medieval universities.<sup>70</sup> In the Old English poem, we are reminded, in a phrase that anticipates Gower's opening description of Apollonius, that he *wel wæs getogen* – 'well taught' or 'well instructed'.<sup>71</sup> Apollonius' extraordinary skill and musical technique are portrayed as practical and learned, not innate; and theoretical learning alone is insufficient to access harmonic powers. Significantly, these skills are *godu* – 'good', in the sense of useful – and they certainly prove invaluable to Apollonius and Thaise (Tarsia in the Latin version).

Given that the princess' mind (*mod*) falls in love with Apollonius, the Old English text seems to suggest not only the seductive allure of learning, and especially that of learning music, but also the affective powers of music. Music has the capacity to affect the listener's rational faculties and emotions. After the performance, the princess demonstrates her generosity. In Gower's poem, her rich gifts serve as the trappings of a court minstrel position: 'Of clothes and of good atir / With gold and selver to despende' (ll. 822–823). These rewards make Apollonius 'wel at ese' (l. 825), as they would any minstrel afforded a post in a royal household. Apollonius fittingly reciprocates with good service ('And he with al that he can plese / Hire serveth wel and faire agein', ll. 826–827), an important facet of his role as minstrel.<sup>72</sup> In an ideal dynamic between patron and minstrel, a fair exchange maintains a harmonic balance. The king also bids that a good chamber be prepared for Apollonius, so music is already helping him regain his social position, recalling the trope of music as a practical tool for achieving such ends as finding allies or securing professional posts. In the Old

<sup>67</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 693.

<sup>68</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 128–9; Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 168.

<sup>69</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 128–9; *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVII, pp. 26–7.

<sup>70</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 621.

<sup>71</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 460.

<sup>72</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, p. 431.

English text, Apollonius is similarly rewarded with gold, silver, robes, and servants ('twa hund punda goldes', 'feower hund punda gewihte seolfres', 'þone mæstan dæl deorwurðan reafes', 'twentig ðeowa manna'), prompting Apollonius to call the princess *lare lufigend*, a 'lover of learning'.<sup>73</sup> Recalling the princess' earlier request to learn the harp, this epithet first and foremost must refer to technical skill, yet since Apollonius will teach her all he knows she will, presumably, also learn musical theory (*musica speculativa*).

The Old English and Latin texts make an explicit connection between music, learning, supernatural skill, and happiness. Apollonius' music leaves its impress on his listeners' minds and appeals to their affective sensibilities: *cantusque memor credit 'genus esse deorum'* ('the memory of his singing made her believe "that he was descended from the gods"'), *cantus* encompassing both singing and more troublingly (via *incantare*) enchantment.<sup>74</sup> Three sentences later, the princess tells her father that *hesterna studia me excitaverunt* ('yesterday's display of learning kept me awake'), now coupling practical skill (*cantus*) with scholarly, theoretical learning (*studia*).<sup>75</sup> *Studia* obviously denotes 'scholarly study', yet it has a broader affective reach too, connoting 'passion', 'enthusiasm', and 'zeal', while *excitaverunt* – as with the Old English *astirian* encountered above – means 'stir up', 'encite', and 'excite'.<sup>76</sup> Evidently, her feelings have been stirred up by both his music and his learning; once more, the realms of scholarly training and affect overlap.

In the Old English version, the music, in addition, prompts the princess to ask for tuition. She is moved to learn: *Ac þæt mæden hæfde unstillen niht, mid þære lufe onæled þara worda and sanga þe heo gehyrde æt Apollonige* ('But that young woman had a disturbed night, excited by love of the words and songs that she heard from Apollonius').<sup>77</sup> Here, she is moved by both music (*sanga*) and eloquence (*worda*), *sang* in itself encompassing both 'song' or 'poetry', just as *sangere* referred to poets as

<sup>73</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVII, pp. 28–9; *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 46; Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 28; Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, pp. 22, 25.

<sup>74</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 130–31; see *Etymology Online*, retrieved from <https://www.etymonline.com/word/enchant> on 17.03.2018, and <https://www.etymonline.com/word/incantation>, accessed on 17.03.2018; Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*, pp. 155–6; Zaerr, 'Music and Magic'; Gary Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic: Towards a Historiography of Others* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 1–2.

<sup>75</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 130–31.

<sup>76</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin-English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=studia>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>77</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVIII, pp. 28–31; *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 47.

well as musicians.<sup>78</sup> The king also equates music with happiness when he makes his request of Apollonius: in the Old English, *Min dohtor girnð þæt heo mote leornian æt ðe ða gesæligan lāre ðe þu canst* ('My daughter desireth that she may learn from thee the happy lore that thou knowest'), and in the Latin, *studiorum tuorum felicitatem filia mea a te discere concupivit* ('my daughter has formed a desire to be taught the happiness of your learning by you').<sup>79</sup> She ascribes happiness to this learning, which will in turn enable her to conjure happiness. This connection might seem incidental, were it not that the entire episode began when Archistrate attempted (and failed) to use music to make Apollonius happy, only to have him show her how such music is to be played.

The nature of Apollonius' skill is unpacked further in the ensuing narrative. In the Old English text, Archistrate tells the king *Me awehton þa gecnerdnessan þe Ic girstandæg gehyrde* ('I was kept awake by the achievements that I heard yesterday').<sup>80</sup> Because *gecnerdnessan* ('achievements') encompasses such assets as diligence, desire, eagerness, and scholarly learning, it implies a connection to theoretical as well as practical music, and thus to knowledge of universal harmony.<sup>81</sup> The king is delighted by this request and tells Apollonius that he will be richly rewarded.<sup>82</sup> Just as in Gower, the Old English Apollonius reciprocates by teaching her the best he can: *hire tæhte swa wel swa he silf geleornode* ('taught her as well as he himself had been taught').<sup>83</sup> This is a fair exchange. Notably, the Old English Archistrates considers musical education more important than marriage: when suitors come to ask for the princess, he stresses that she cannot speak to them as she is busy with her studies – *Min dohtor is nu swiðe bisy ymbe hyre leornunga* ('My daughter is devoting herself to study').<sup>84</sup> Again, the use of *leornunga* implies a more rounded education than simply learning musical instruments as a practical skill.

The joint significance of practical skill and theoretical learning continues to resound in the narrative. Archistrate must put in effort and work in order to learn different instruments, melodies, and tuning. Doubtless, given the prevalence of Boethius in medieval learning, the theory and tuning which Apollonius teaches are

<sup>78</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, pp. 861, 816.

<sup>79</sup> Latin text and translation in *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 130–31; Anglo-Saxon translation in *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 47, and original text in *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVIII, pp. 28–31.

<sup>80</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVIII, p. 28; *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 47.

<sup>81</sup> Toller, *Supplement*, p. 305.

<sup>82</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XVIII, pp. 28–31; *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 47.

<sup>83</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 48; *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XIX, p. 30.

<sup>84</sup> *Apollonius*, ed. Goolden, XIX, pp. 30–31; *Apollonius*, ed. Thorpe, p. 48.

the same as the classical theory expounded by late antique theorists and mediated via Boethius. Notably, in Gower's version, the fact that his instruction includes both instruments and tempering, or tuning, probably reflects the teaching of harmonic theory:

He tawhte hir til sche was certein  
Of harpe, of citole, and of rote,  
With many a tun and many a note  
Upon musique, upon mesure,  
And of hire harpe the temprure  
He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe.  
(Book VIII, ll. 828–833)<sup>85</sup>

This portrait is in line with the education received by historical aristocrats and other members of the medieval elite in the late Middle Ages: the household book of Edward IV, the *Liber Niger*, speaks about the necessity of children being taught song, instruments, and other aspects of a musical education.<sup>86</sup> The 'temprure' of the harp suggests both practical tuning and also the more theoretical aspect of tempering concerned with universal harmony. In the Middle Ages, 'mesure' also referred to moderation and tempering, and in the context of music connoted both the rhythmic pattern of a tune, melody, or poem, and the balance of harmonic proportions and ratios.<sup>87</sup> 'Musique' had even broader connotations than 'mesure', referring to the practical, performative aspects of music as something sung, played, and heard, while also connoting the music of the spheres and the musical theory that formed part of the quadrivium education – it is at once a science and an art.<sup>88</sup> 'Musique' is a power that maintains order in the natural universe, albeit one that can be used for evil no less than for good in Christian and Neo-Platonic thought.<sup>89</sup> Both terms, 'musique' and 'mesure', reflect a blending of the traditions of *musica speculativa* and *musica practica*, and

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<sup>85</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, p. 431.

<sup>86</sup> *Liber Niger*, ed. Myers, p. 136.

<sup>87</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27525>, accessed on 04.04.18; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 267–8.

<sup>88</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED28966>, accessed on 04.04.18; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 304–9.

<sup>89</sup> Carter, *Dictionary*, p. 308.

share a connection to poetry which, as with the Old English *sang*, can also be found in the capacious Latin term *musica*.<sup>90</sup>

In the course of this teaching, Archistrate falls in love with Apollonius ('Hire herte is hot as eny fyr', l. 846), producing a match of which the king and queen approve because of his 'gret gentillesse' (l. 791) and 'gentil blod' (l. 943).<sup>91</sup> Recalling a trope familiar from music romance in which a character falls in love after being impressed by musical skill, Gower states that these lessons in music cause the princess to fall so deeply in love with Apollonius that she begins to pine for him until she becomes ill. This passage follows on directly from the description of the lessons (ll. 834–866). Apollonius' consequent royal marriage and the restoration of his rightful social class are brought about by the power of music and, shortly afterwards, he learns that he is now also a king in his own right. Further adventures follow in the second half of the text, involving Apollonius, his wife, and their daughter Thaise. The queen, seemingly dying during a voyage, is buried at sea only to be washed ashore and revived. She joins a nunnery, from which she is later retrieved by Apollonius. Thaise receives a good education, comparable to her father's, when Apollonius leaves her to be fostered in Thrace:

Sche was wel tawht, sche was wel boked,  
So wel sche spedde hir in hire youthe  
That sche of every wisdom couthe,  
(ll. 1328–1330)<sup>92</sup>

She is taught practical music, but the phrase 'wel boked' suggests a more theoretical branch of learning too – she is so well taught, the poet tells us, that there is no equal to her anywhere in the land. The Latin text also pays much attention to Tarsia's education in the liberal arts and music, along with her foster sisters:

Itaque puella Tarsia facta quinquennis traditur studiis artium  
liberalibus, [...] et ingenio et in auditu et in sermone et in  
morum honestate docentur.

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<sup>90</sup> Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=musica>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>91</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, p. 432.

<sup>92</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, p. 445.

[When Tarsia was five, she was put to study the liberal arts  
[...] They were taught to use their intelligence, and the arts  
of listening, discussion and decent behaviour.]<sup>93</sup>

The use of *ingenio* in this passage is suggestive as the term also appears in chivalric manuals of behaviour, and possesses positive connotations of education, innate talent, and ability, along with negative connotations of trickery and guile, as with the Middle English *engin*.<sup>94</sup> In this passage, the application of *ingenium* is a necessary part of education, something that should happen after the study and acquisition of musical prowess. The liberal arts are suggestive of the quadrivium and a medieval university-style education, which would have included logic, debate, and of course musical theory, and thus like her parents Tarsia is taught both *musica practica* and *musica speculativa*. Gower also retains the sequence that follows: when Thaise's jealous foster-mother sells her to a brothel, she defends her virtue and convinces Leonin, the owner of the establishment, to let her be a tutor instead, unconsciously echoing Apollonius' story. Just as did her father before her, Thaise uses learning and music to out-manoeuvre an antagonist and eventually to secure a royal marriage:

Sche can the wisdom of a clerk,  
Sche can of every lusti werk  
Which to a gentil womman longeth,  
And some of hem sche underfongeth  
To the citole and to the harpe,  
And whom it liketh for to carpe  
Proverbes and demandes slyhe,  
And other such thei nevere syhe,  
Which that science so wel tawhte:  
(ll. 1483–1491)<sup>95</sup>

Thaise's knowledge extends beyond that of an ordinary 'gentil woman': she teaches her students wisdom, proverbs, instrumental musical performance on the harp and citole, as well as 'to carpe', namely to 'recite' or 'sing'. 'Wisdom of a clerk' again evokes a theoretical, quadrivium education, and she has learned this together with

<sup>93</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 142–3.

<sup>94</sup> Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 111; Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 150, *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?size=First+100&type=headword&q1=engin&rgxp=constrained>, accessed on 03.04.2018; *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/engine>, accessed on 03.04.2018; Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin–English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=ingenio>, accessed on 01.04.2018.

<sup>95</sup> Gower, *Confessio*, pp. 449–50.

practical music represented in this catalogue by the citole and harp. She also teaches ‘proverbes and demandes slyhe’, evocative not only of wisdom but verbal cleverness and trickery. The reference to music as a ‘science’, especially in light of the many practical examples of music in the text, is suggestive because the word could refer generally not only to knowledge, book-learning, and the various branches of the liberal arts but also to empathetic knowledge or discernment (more affective qualities) and specifically to a skill or handicraft (a practical rather than theoretical discipline).<sup>96</sup> This text suggests that musical power is accessed not just through affinity and practice, but through theoretical learning. It is an innate talent that must be developed through the study of abstract theory and honed through practice. Like her father when he arrived at the court of Archistrates, Thaise uses her music, wisdom, and eloquence to make her way. In the Latin version, she insists to her suitor, prince Athenagoras, that *honestate docentur* (‘to teach honesty’ or ‘decent behaviour’) will serve her just as it did her father, making her noble lineage plain for all to see:

Habeo auxilium studiorum liberalium, perfecte erudita sum;  
similiter et lyrae pulsum modulariter inlido. Iube crastina die  
in frequenti loco poni scamna, et facundia sermonis mei  
spectaculum praebeo; deinde plectro modulabor et hac arte  
ampliabo pecunias cotidie.

[I have the benefit of the study of the liberal arts: I am fully educated. I can also play the lyre with a rhythmic beat. Have benches put up tomorrow in some crowded place, and I shall offer entertainment with my eloquent talk. Then I shall make music with a plectrum, and through this skill I shall make more money every day.]<sup>97</sup>

Her boast of being able to play the lyre *pulsum modulariter* implies that she can play rhythmically, but the term also evokes the modulation of different scales according to harmonic principles used to affect the mood of listeners. Tarsia does not have the least doubt that her skills in music and eloquent speech will carry her through without any problems.<sup>98</sup> In this passage, *studiorum liberalium* furnishes another clear reference to an education not dissimilar from a university curriculum, and thus including *musica speculativa*. Her studies and her practical, instrumental

<sup>96</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=byte&byte=169530593&egdisplay=open&egs=169558876>, accessed on 04.04.18.

<sup>97</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 154–5.

<sup>98</sup> Wilson, *Magical Quest*, p. 40.

skills (*lyrae pulsum modulariter inlido*) make her fully educated, *perfecte erudite*, complete in the realms of both theory and practice: they make up a full set, and enable her to command the powers of universal harmony. She uses a combination of these skills to stun her audience, earning her a great deal of money and reminding us of the monetary as well as symbolic cultural worth of musical performance.<sup>99</sup> Along with the Latin original, Gower may also have been using the same element of Boethian philosophy as Guillaume de Machaut in his *Confort d'Ami* (1357), where it is stressed that an education will keep one safe from various dangers:

Mais qui bien moriginez  
 Et en vertus enracinez,  
 Fortune n'a nulle puissance  
 De lui faire anui ne grevance  
 Quant aus meurs; car s'elle a l'avoir,  
 Les vertus ne puet elle avoir  
 (ll. 1933–1938)<sup>100</sup>

[But over the man who is well educated  
 and in whom the virtues have taken root,  
 Fortune has no power  
 to hurt or injure  
 his integrity; for if she has his goods,  
 she cannot have his virtues.]<sup>101</sup>

This Boethian idea concerning the importance of learning, in Tarsia's case, especially of musical learning and eloquence (the *facundia sermonis*), seems to permeate not only mirror-for-princes and similar educational literature but also medieval romance. A similar thread is to be found in Jean de Meun's translation of Boethius, *Li Livres de Confort de Philosophie* (c. 1304) and *Roman de la Rose* (1277), in which elite secular education and wisdom are closely linked to Boethius' description of the wise, *gentil* man who has a certain command over Fortune.<sup>102</sup>

It is through their musical and poetic skills that Apollonius and Thaise find their way out of danger and towards a reunion. In the Latin text, Tarsia's music and

<sup>99</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 154–5.

<sup>100</sup> Guillaume de Machaut, *Confort d'Ami*, in *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. É. Champion, tome III (Paris: Ernest Hoepffner, 1921), p. 69.

<sup>101</sup> Translation from Elliott, *Remembering Boethius*, p. 23.

<sup>102</sup> Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae / The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. P.G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

storytelling are the reason she is sent to distract her father from his sorrow, leading to their eventual mutual recognition. This section appears in verse in the Latin version of the text, indicating that it is sung (*his carminibus coepit modulata voce canere*, ‘In a musical voice she began to sing these songs’) and that this is a moment of intense emotion, as Tarsia recounts the story of her troubled life. It is this song which is the first step in bringing about eventual recognition and harmony.<sup>103</sup> Her voice is described as *modulata*, again suggesting a facility for modulation between different modes, which were believed to produce different results in the physical world. Though Apollonius does not immediately recognise Tarsia, he generously rewards the ‘minstrel’ with two hundred gold pieces before sending her away. In this way, he demonstrates generosity to minstrels. On the second day Tarsia tests his eloquence and intelligence by asking him riddles. Once he succeeds in this challenge, they discover each other’s true identities, leading Apollonius to reclaim his daughter, queen, and throne.

The powers of harmony, then, are accessed through a combination of *musica practica* and *musica speculativa*, which can be used to conjure bliss or empathy in the listener. The story of Apollonius, in all its incarnations, exemplifies the power of music, as well as advocating the generous treatment of minstrels and retainers. The simultaneous use of eloquence and music across all versions of the Apollonius narrative suggests that European medieval audiences would have been familiar with the importance of this aspect of the story.<sup>104</sup> Gower’s *Apollonius* suggests that, by the late fourteenth century, musical theory and practice were equally valued by elite audiences.

The Apollonius texts set up many of the musical tropes that will be relevant to the following chapters. The same concern with practical and theoretical music can be found in the kingship quest romances, where music is either a product of instinct, or education, or both, to various levels of success. Ideas of universal harmony were inevitably adapted and reinterpreted to fit the social context of the writer, attesting both the existence of certain shared cultural ideas about music in the Middle Ages and also the diffusion of musical learning.<sup>105</sup> The process of learning and playing music brings about personal harmony for the protagonists, saves them from danger and poverty, and

<sup>103</sup> *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. Archibald, pp. 160–61.

<sup>104</sup> Jamison, ‘A Description’, p. 47.

<sup>105</sup> Rico, ‘Auctoritas’, p. 28; Hamilton, ‘Walter of Evesham’, pp. 155–7; Zieman, *Singing the New Song*, pp. 56–7.

also restores greater harmony to their subjects, which is expressed through excessive joy conjured by musical performance. In Part II of this thesis, I present three case studies – respectively, kingship quest romances, romances concerned with magic, and the Tristan corpus – as a cross-section of medieval music romance, in order to offer up some suggestions on how medieval musical learning and practice, as well as the musical tropes evoked in the Apollonius tradition, feed into these texts.

## PART II

### CHAPTER THREE

#### MUSIC IN KINGSHIP QUEST ROMANCES

This chapter will serve as the first of three case studies, offering a nuanced reading of the role of music's harmonic powers in medieval romance by identifying the ways in which music's effects are treated in these texts. A discussion of three kingship quest romances following parallel narrative threads will form the bulk of this chapter, as I aim to explore the complex inter-relationship between romance and music in which music serves as a source of joy and social cohesion. The texts discussed in this chapter are usually classified within the much more capacious category of 'Matter of England' romances, though my interest is more specifically in how two kingship quest romances within this wider tradition focus on musical references and deploy musical language. More precisely, my analysis will centre on the presence in these two insular romances of musical tropes that recur with particular frequency in kingship quest romances: namely, a scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels at a feast); the role of an instrument or musical skill in marking out the protagonist's true identity or aristocratic prowess; the professional licence for minstrels to enter restricted areas; and the training in music of the protagonist or the protagonist's love interest.

The so-called 'Matter of England' romances, a loose corpus of narratives centring on English characters, settings, and socio-political mores, comprise a group of ten texts, many of which can be found in the Auchinleck Manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1).<sup>1</sup> They are divided into those that are set before the Norman Conquest (*Guy of Warwick*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *Athelston*, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, and *King Horn*) and those set after (*Gamelyn*, *Havelok the Dane*, *Richard Coeur du lion*, *Waldef*, and *Fouke Fitzwarin*). While the original patron of the Auchinleck Manuscript remains unknown, the manuscript shows

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<sup>1</sup> See Neil Cartlidge, *Boundaries in Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 29–41; Ralph Hanna III, 'Reconsidering the Auchinleck Manuscript', in *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference*, ed. D. Pearsall (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), pp. 91–102 (pp. 94–5); Edwards and Pearsall, 'English Poetic Texts', pp. 257–8.

a marked interest in chivalric romance. This manuscript serves as a good example of its kind because there are many surviving vernacular English manuscripts constructed following the same model as the Auchinleck, scattered over a considerable geographical area, suggesting that such books would have been popular and widely available. Notably, Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg.iv.27, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108, London, British Library, MS Harley 2253, and Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 4407, art. 19, each contain *King Horn*, or *Havelok*, or both, in whole or in fragmentary form, and follow the Auchinleck model.<sup>2</sup> *King Horn* was widely available and read, as evidenced by the extant manuscripts.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61, which includes a range of lay and religious texts, contains a number of romances (*Sir Isumbras*, *The Earl of Toulous*, *Lybeaus Desconus*, and *Sir Orfeo*) as well as courtesy texts concerned with chivalric behaviour (*How the Wise Man Taught his Son*, John Lydgate's *Dietary*, *How the Good Wife Taught her Daughter*, and *Stans Puer ad Mensam*).<sup>4</sup> Thus, on this evidence, romances and courtesy books were found together in the same miscellany manuscripts, both promoting the idea that certain modes of conduct offered a means of achieving societal harmony. These collections demonstrate a desire not just to hear such texts but to own them in a tangible, accessible form, as well as a willingness to spend money on romances.<sup>5</sup>

Matter of England romances are often concerned with nostalgia for a lost 'heroic' age, which is achieved through the literary construction of an Old English past.<sup>6</sup> Possibly due to this concern with nostalgia, heroes such as Havelok and Horn, who are taken from the popular history of pre-Conquest England, face practical issues of kingship, law, and reclamation of lost thrones, challenges that are very different

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<sup>2</sup> Hanna, 'Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 98. For a discussion of the thematic arrangement of the contents of the Auchinleck Manuscript, see Maldwyn Mills and Gillian Rogers, 'The Manuscripts of Popular Romance', in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. R. Radulescu and C.J. Rushton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), pp. 49–66; Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies', p. 279; N.R. Ker, 'Introduction', in *Facsimile of British Museum MS Harley 2253*, EETS, o.s., 255 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965). For a table of music romances and the manuscripts in which they occur, see Appendix D.

<sup>3</sup> Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> A. S. G. Edwards, 'Manuscripts and Readers', in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture, c. 1350–c. 1500*, ed. P. Brown (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 91–106 (p. 96); Claire Sponsler, 'Lydgate's *Dietary* and Consumer Conduct', in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. K.M. Ashley and R.L.A. Clark (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 1–22.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Hahn and Dana M. Symons, 'Medieval Romance', in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture, c. 1350–c. 1500*, ed. P. Brown (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 341–57 (p. 354).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Allen Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 52–5; Jamison, 'A Description', p. 54.

from the obstacles faced by Chrétien de Troyes's knights.<sup>7</sup> In this chapter, my focus will be on the romances of *King Horn* (last part of the thirteenth century), *Horn Childe and Maiden Rinnild* (c. 1320), and *Havelok the Dane* (end of the thirteenth century). The first two of these texts will offer a model of the positive use of music's affective powers by employing musical tropes in which protagonists successfully move their auditors through music, while the third demonstrates the limits of music's reach in the hands of a king who is not a trained musician by undermining those same tropes underpinning the other two texts. All three romances stress the importance of musical learning, both practical and theoretical, and in assessing them I will consider how the value placed upon musical education amongst the medieval elite influenced the literary representation both of music and of music's connection to the powers of universal harmony.

In music romances, a command of musical theory and practice is necessary for a protagonist to succeed. In the kingship quest texts, specifically, musical education is paramount for protagonists to be able to use music as a socially cohesive force, excepting those instances where it is used as a mark of true kingship, where prior education is not important. The musician-knights use their musical skills to command the powers ascribed to music in Boethian theory in order to influence others, defuse conflict, and create alliances. In the process of achieving his ends, the protagonist uses music to evoke a sense of extreme joy or sorrow in his audience. Those who lack a musical education are limited to using music only as a way of proving their legitimate kingship, though they must resolve other conflicts without the advantages that music confers. The cultural status of music can be gauged in these kingship quest romances not just through the portrayal of musician-protagonists and their performances but also through the use of musical keywords in the texts.

### 1. Musical education in the kingship quest romances

It is first necessary to offer a brief social background for the romances, in order to provide a context for the connection between music and chivalric accomplishments.

The Matter of England subgenre of romances looks back to the *chansons de geste* and

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<sup>7</sup> Laura Ashe, 'The Hero and his Realm in Medieval English Romance', in *Boundaries in Medieval Romance*, ed. N. Cartlidge (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 129–48 (p. 142); ThorlacTurville-Petre, 'Havelok and the History of the Nation', in *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, ed. C.M. Meale (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 121–34 (pp. 122–3).

Old English heroic poetry in its glorification of warlike behaviour and social responsibility towards king and kingdom, though these ideas are approached through the language and conventions of medieval romance.<sup>8</sup> The concept of chivalric identity was tied not just to military accomplishment but to education in literacy and musical skills, which were also promoted in the romances.<sup>9</sup> The Horn romances demonstrate the full extent of the social advantage that harmonic powers give a trained musician, enabling him to conjure particular feelings in those who hear his music and thereby to reconfigure or restore societal harmony. By contrast, *Havelok* shows that a knight without a musical education cannot access the full extent of music's powers and is therefore inhibited in engendering a harmonious society.

As discussed in Chapter I, a lot of scholarship has detailed the social and literary milieux which provide the backdrop for the romances in question. On the musical front, the way the quadrivium was studied and interpreted changed in the twelfth century.<sup>10</sup> Musical theory and musical practice were being re-evaluated, so that musical practice started to make an appearance in theoretical musical treatises: according to Guy Beaujouan, 'the study of music was already beginning to shift from its theoretical and mathematical orientation to focus on the concerns of artistic practice'.<sup>11</sup> Teachers of the quadrivium and the theorists were beginning to make connections between Gregorian chant and Boethian theory, and to regard music theory and practice as a language and as the dignified equal of grammar, namely as a system whose utility and instrumentality derive from its material application.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, the behavioural and educational virtues which had previously been the prerogative of kings had become the virtues of the nobility, before extending more

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), p. 49; Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 72; Scott Gwara, *Heroic Identity in Beowulf* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2008), pp. 4, 30, 43; Jamison, 'A Description', p. 54; Elizabeth Salter, *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art and Patronage of Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 29–30. For the various incarnations of 'chivalry' available in the medieval period, see Arno Borst, 'Knighthood in the High Middle Ages', in *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe: Selected Readings*, ed. F.L. Cheyette (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), pp. 180–91 (p. 183); Janet L. Nelson, 'Bad Kingship in the Earlier Middle Ages', in *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages*, Variorum Reprints (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), VIII, pp. 1–26; Karras, *From Boys*, p. 21; Orme, 'The Education of the Courtier', p. 64.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Wathey, 'The Marriage of Edward III and the Transmission of French Motets to England', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 45 (1992), pp. 1–29; J.W. Sherborne, 'Aspects of English Court Culture in the Later Fourteenth Century', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 1–27.

<sup>10</sup> Guy Beaujouan, 'Transformation of the Quadrivium', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R. L. Benson, G. Constable, and C.D. Lanham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 463–87 (pp. 465–6).

<sup>11</sup> Beaujouan, 'Transformation', p. 466.

<sup>12</sup> Beaujouan, 'Transformation', pp. 465–6.

widely into the secular medieval elite.<sup>13</sup> As this elite became more interested in scholastic learning and in expressing their refinement through patronage, these accomplishments came to be valued alongside feats of arms.<sup>14</sup> The more complex chivalric manuals, dating from the twelfth century onwards, reflect these literary, social, economic, and educational changes.<sup>15</sup> Romances, like chivalric manuals, portray education, eloquence, and music as necessary chivalric accomplishments. These episodes from music romances inevitably reflected real educational practices, providing a separate but comparable model of behaviour for readers to those found in chivalric handbooks.<sup>16</sup>

The romances, initially a product of the cultural renaissance of the twelfth century, were influenced by the trivium and the ancient *auctores*, already known to the clerical *literati*.<sup>17</sup> These texts, alongside courtesy books and treatises, in their emphasis on education seem to be turning the debate in favour of an understanding of artistic skill and aesthetic accomplishments as learnable crafts. To give an early example, in the French romance *Dolopathos* (c.1222–1225, a version of the *Seven Wise Masters* narrative based on a Latin original of c. 1200), great attention is paid to the education of Lucien, the then-seven-year-old protagonist. Lucien begins studying the liberal arts and proves very diligent: he is taught eloquence ('Bien fu parlanz et de bons dis', l. 1468) and correct behaviour, alongside the liberal arts ('De toutes les arts liberax / Et il fu cortois et loiax', ll. 1421–1422).<sup>18</sup> In this romance, as in historical practice, courtesy texts are taught as part of grammar, alongside music and the other liberal arts.<sup>19</sup> The French context of the early thirteenth century seems to foreshadow a change in the way the liberal arts were treated in literary romances, both Continental and insular, since earlier texts had regarded such education suspiciously.<sup>20</sup> In a much later example, the

<sup>13</sup> Georges Duby, 'The Culture of the Knightly Class: Audience and Patronage', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R.L. Benson, G. Constable, and C.D. Lanham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 248–62 (p. 254); Salter, *English and International*, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Duby, 'The Culture', pp. 254–5.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy: Medieval Courtesy Books and the Gawain-Poet* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), p. 45; Raluca Radulescu, 'Literature', in *Gentry Culture in Late-Medieval England*, ed. R. Radulescu and A. Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 100–118 (pp. 109–13).

<sup>16</sup> Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, pp. 51–5; Radulescu, 'Literature', pp. 100–118; Orme, 'Education of the Courtier', pp. 64–5; R. H. Davis, *A History of Medieval Europe* (London: Pearson, 2006), p. 333; Helen Phillips, 'Rites of Passage in French and English Romances', in *Rites of Passage: Cultures of Transition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. N. McDonald and W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), pp. 83–108 (p. 84).

<sup>17</sup> Duby, 'The Culture', p. 259.

<sup>18</sup> Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, pp. 55–6.

<sup>19</sup> Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, pp. 55–6. For another relatively early Continental example, see also the thirteenth-century Occitan romance of *Flamenca*, where both male and female characters are taught liberal arts, including music.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Page, 'Music and Chivalric Fiction in France, 1150–1300', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 3 (1984–1985), pp. 1–27 (p. 20).

household book of Edward IV, *Liber Niger*, concerns the education of the king's sons and the boys brought up with them as their companions:

to lern them to ryde clenely and surely, to drawe them also to justes, to lerne hem were theyre harneys; to haue all curtesy in wordez, dedes and degrees, dilygently to kepe them in rules of goynges and sittinges, after theybe of honour. Moreouer to teche them sondry langauges and othyr lernynges virtuous, to herping, to pype, sung, daunce, and with other honest and temperate behauing and pacience; and to kepe dayly and wykely with these children dew conuenity with correccions in theyre chambres according to suche gentylnen; and eche of them to be vsed to that thinges of virtue that he shal be most apt to lerne.<sup>21</sup>

They had to learn physical skills, such as riding and jousting, but also non-military skills including etiquette and languages, as well as a full set of musical accomplishments: dancing, singing, playing the harp, and piping (which, respectively, represent indoor and outdoor music, the courtly and the military). As previously discussed, playing soft instruments in particular was considered a necessary accomplishment for the medieval elite.<sup>22</sup> The implication is that these skills are to be acquired through 'lernynge': they are not necessarily innate. They are also more than simply aesthetic accomplishments, because they are encoded as social 'virtues' (learning and behaviour that is 'virtuous' and 'honest'), leading to a code of conduct described, in suggestively musical terms, as 'temperate'. In the *Liber Niger*, elite accomplishments are being inflected as both socially virtuous and ethically 'temperate'.

According to the classical theory of harmony, the basis for much medieval writing, music had the ability to affect the physical world in various ways, from healing sickness to inciting battle rage. Kingship quest romances offer a similar view of music as a handy skill to be employed as and when needed. Their treatment of music emphasises the importance of learning and practice in gaining successful command over the powers of harmony, an aptitude capable of influencing the soul and behaviour of one's listeners. The notion of music's power, once the domain of *musica humana*, had become more closely tied to *musica instrumentalis* in the late Middle

<sup>21</sup> *Liber Niger*, ed. Myers, pp. 126–7.

<sup>22</sup> Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 99. On aristocratic musicianship and the patronage of minstrels, as well as the appreciation and composition of poetry, see Wilkins, 'Music and Poetry', pp. 183–205.

Ages, as demonstrated by the emphasis on both theoretical learning and practical skill in the romances.

In medieval music romance, protagonists are trained in music and use music to achieve their goals, which often culminate in kingship. Musical skill takes time and practice, but in the hands of a knowledgeable musician it can become a potent tool for creating social bonds and navigating social boundaries.<sup>23</sup> By the fourteenth century, the ideals embodied by the figure of the courtly musician-knight came to be absorbed into chivalric instructional manuals so that the ideal chevalier was not only a fighter but also a musician.<sup>24</sup>

The *Roman des Eles* (c.1210), a manual of chivalry by Raoul de Houdenc, stipulates that a knight should have an appreciation of music and song, as well as being courteous, generous, honourable, and a good host.<sup>25</sup> Such manuals were often read alongside other semi-instructional texts such as the biography of William Marshal, *Histoire de Guillaume de Marechal*, detailing his rise to fame, fortune, and success by means of his prowess at tournaments, his skill in musical performance, and generosity towards musicians.<sup>26</sup> The prevalence of this kind of instructional literature attests the transmission and pervasiveness of this ideology. Mirror-for-princes literature played a similar role. When he was still a prince, in about early 1327, Edward III was presented with two mirror-for-princes books by Walter de Milemete.<sup>27</sup> The first, surviving as London, British Library, MS Additional 47680, contains a Latin *Secretum Secretorum*, concerned with *sciencia regalis*, which claims to be Aristotle's advice to Alexander on how to acquire the 'virtues appropriate to a ruler'.<sup>28</sup> Edward must engage in more than the military aspects of his station.<sup>29</sup> He must cultivate *otium* (which can mean leisure time, peace, or academic pursuits), *negotium* (public service), and *honestum solacium*

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<sup>23</sup> Karras, *From Boys*, p. 30.

<sup>24</sup> Karras, *From Boys*, p. 158; Margaret Switten, 'Chevalier in French & Occitan Vernacular Literature', in *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, ed. H. Chickering and T.H. Seiler (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), pp. 403–49 (p. 410).

<sup>25</sup> Georges Duby, 'The "Youth" in Twelfth-Century Aristocratic Society', in *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe: Selected Readings*, ed. F.L. Cheyette (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), pp. 198–209 (pp. 202–3); Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 126; Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, pp. 23–4; Wilkins, 'Chaucer and Music', p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Duby, 'The "Youth"', pp. 202–3; Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 126; Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 23; Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Hanna III, *London Literature 1300–1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 116. These manuscripts survive as British Library, MS Additional 47680 and Oxford, Christ Church, MS 92.

<sup>28</sup> Hanna, *London Literature*, pp. 116–17.

<sup>29</sup> Hanna, *London Literature*, p. 117.

(earnest consolation).<sup>30</sup> In other words, in order to be an ideal ruler, Edward is advised that he must balance the *vita activa* with the *vita contemplativa*.<sup>31</sup>

Musician-knights were sometimes a historic reality, as music and knighthood were brought into close contact, and sometimes the lines between the two disciplines became blurred. In a reactionary move, Pierre d'Alvernhe (late twelfth century), in his *Caintraï d'Aquest*, criticises a knight who thinks that knighthood can be achieved through singing instead of the sword.<sup>32</sup> When a late twelfth-century troubadour, Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, was knighted, during a period of changing ideas, he chose to pursue knightly accomplishments through poetry and singing, a decision met with occasional disapproval in the ongoing debate over whether a true knight should prove himself through music or combat.<sup>33</sup> He was not the only one of his profession to be raised into the knightly class. Jausbert de Pucibot was born into a wealthy family but lost his fortune and took up minstrelsy: he played the fiddle, sang, composed, travelled between courts, and was eventually rewarded with a knighthood and lands.<sup>34</sup> Chivalric identity in the later medieval period is increasingly achieved in more permissive ways, and comes to be constituted by a broader set of accomplishments beyond the purely martial ones.

The romances discussed in this chapter explore the affective powers of music through this emergent figure of a musician-knight, who uses the powers of *musica* to influence the physical world. Christopher Page observes that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, no source engaged as fully with music's aesthetic qualities as the romance – however, I would suggest that in these romances music's affective powers stretch beyond merely aesthetic enjoyment.<sup>35</sup> This idea is echoed in contemporary musical treatises, such as de Grocheio's *De Musica* (late thirteenth century), which emphasised the importance of music for urban well-being due to its influences on morality: it presents Paris as an example, detailing the types of music available there, and its role in maintaining the health of the city and its citizenry. The treatise claims that *trouvère* music encourages generosity, while narrative songs about the struggles of

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<sup>30</sup> C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879). Retrieved from <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>, 02.03.2018.

<sup>31</sup> Hanna, *London Literature*, p. 117.

<sup>32</sup> Switten, 'Chevalier', p. 418.

<sup>33</sup> Switten, 'Chevalier', p. 418; Karras, *From Boys*, p. 3; Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 196.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Page, 'Court and City in France 1100–1300', in *Antiquity and the Middle Ages from Ancient Greece to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. J. McKinnon (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 197–217 (pp. 208–9); Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 100.

<sup>35</sup> Page, 'Music and Chivalric Fiction', p. 2.

heroes encourage hard work.<sup>36</sup> In de Grocheio's sociological conception, music – secular or liturgical – influences behaviour in a positive way, so that music's powers are seen as being encouraging rather than dangerously coercive.

Musical knowledge plays an important role in kingship quest romances centring on the fortunes of musician-knights. While all the protagonists of music romances are to some degree aware of the usefulness of music, the importance of intellect and education in unlocking the benefits granted by an understanding of harmony is especially evident in these texts. It is important to know how to use music correctly: Boethius cautioned that any subtle alteration to the tonality of a piece of music could completely change its character and that of its listeners, causing chaos and inciting dangerous conflict.<sup>37</sup> However, in certain texts, such as the kingship quest romances, fears of music's coercive powers are dispelled by music's role in creating joy and social cohesion. Even away from the world of romance, texts such as John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (c.1159), one of the most influential political works for the late medieval period, depict musical power in a positive way that negates fears of musical compulsion. In a sociological vein comparable to de Grocheio a century later, John equates the properties of consonant music with good kingship, using musical metaphors (of consonance, dissonance, and proportional or temperate tuning) to describe the harmony of a well-governed city run by moderate princes:<sup>38</sup>

Si enim citharedus aliique fidicines multa diligentia  
 procurant, quomodo oberrantis cordae compescant uitium,  
 et eandem aliis unanimem reddant, faciantque dulcissimam  
 dissidentium consonantiam, cordis non ruptis sed tensis  
 proportionaliter uel remissis; quanta sollicitudine oportet  
 principem moderari nunc rigore iustitiae, nunc remissione  
 clementiae, ut subditos faciat quasi unanimes esse in domo  
 et quasi discordantium in ministerio pacis et caritatis  
 operibus unam faciat perfectam et maximam armoniam?  
 Hoc autem certum est, quia tutius est cordas remitti  
 intensius quam protendi. Remissarum namque intensio  
 artificis peritia conualescit et debitam soni reddit gratiam;  
 sed quae semel rupta est, nullo artificio reparatur. Profecto,  
 si sonus exigitur quem non habent, frustra tenduntur et  
 saepe citius uenitur ad nullum quam ad eum qui nimis  
 exigitur. Ait ethicus:

<sup>36</sup> Christopher Page, 'Music and Instruments before 1300', in *The Early Middle Ages to 1300*, ed. R. Crocker and D. Hiley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 445–85 (p. 472).

<sup>37</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals*, pp. 2–3.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought, 300–1450*, Book IV, Ch. iii (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 114.

Est piger ad penas princeps, ad praemia uelox,  
 quique dolet, quotiens cogitur esse ferox.<sup>39</sup>

For if the cithern player and other minstrels manage by great diligence to curb the fault of a wayward string and restore it to harmony with the others, producing the sweetest consonance of dissidences not by breaking the strings but by stretching or relaxing them proportionally, then how much more should care be taken by princes to be moderate – at one time by the vigour of justice, at another by the forgiveness of mercy – so that the subjects are made to be of a single mind as in a household and the works of peace and charity create one perfect and great harmony out of pursuits which appear discordant.

But this is certain: that it is safer to relax strings than to stretch them too tensely. For of course the tension of relaxed strings may be regained by the skill of the craftsman and they should regain their pleasing sounds; but those which are once broken no craftsman may repair. Indeed, if a sound is required which they do not have, then they are stretched in vain and frequently soon come to nothing rather than to the excess which was required. As the moralist has it:

‘The prince is reluctant to punish, quick to reward, and is saddened whenever he is thought to be fierce’.<sup>40</sup>

The objective of the good minstrel, according to this passage, is to dispel chaos, or *discordantium*, represented by the discordant string of the harp, by restoring the instrument to harmony through tuning. Harmony is achieved not just through theoretical contemplation but through active musicianship – the physical tuning of a harp. When this metaphor is applied to the socio-political sphere, this harmony must be created through diligence and moderation, through careful and capable rulership likened to the harmonising of disparate (or seemingly disparate) elements within a composite whole – a *concordia discors* (‘dissidentium consonantium’, ‘quasi discordantium ... armoniam’). John’s analogy is particularly suggestive when applied to the music romances, in which harmonious rule is achieved through musical practice, an education that teaches the musician-king how to tune strings gently and how to maintain or restore social cohesion. Musical compulsion, literal and metaphorical, is

<sup>39</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policratici Sive de Nugis Curialium et Vestigiis Philosophorum Libri VIII*, ed. C.C.I. Webb, vol. I (Oxonii: e Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1909), book IV, ch. VIII, p. 264, 530b. John’s quotation is from Ovid, *Epistolae ex Ponto*, i.2.123–124.

<sup>40</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. and trans. C.J. Nederman, Book IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 51–2.

depicted as a positive force for social order. The tuning process is carried out carefully, through relaxation rather than stringency (*tensis proportionaliter uel remissis*). This approach suggests the need for patience and wisdom, and a sensitivity gained through practice: a good musician knows better than to break the string of his harp recklessly.

The idea of the usefulness of music in the hands of those who are well-trained, and the limitations or dangers of it in the hands of those who are not, can be seen in the repeated emphasis on learning and practice. The powers of music are a tool, but they must be used knowledgeably and skilfully. John of Salisbury goes on to state that attaining wisdom depends on a proper understanding of music:

Socrates etiam in senectute didicerit musicam credens, si  
musica deforet, sibi cumulum sapientiae defuturum.<sup>41</sup>

[Even Socrates devoted himself to music, believing that he  
would deny himself the pinnacle of wisdom if he were to  
disregard music.]<sup>42</sup>

This passage proposes that music is a medium for wisdom, and to deny music is therefore to preclude some parts of wisdom. *Erec et Enide* (late twelfth century), the first of Chrétien de Troyes' romances and usually credited as the earliest Arthurian romance, shows a similar concern with learning the necessary skills for good kingship in order to succeed in one's quest.<sup>43</sup> During Erec's coronation, we see that the sciences of the quadrivium (music, astronomy, geometry, and arithmetic) are embroidered by fairies on Erec's coronation robe:<sup>44</sup>

Et la tierce oevre ert de Musique  
A cui toz li deduiz s'acorde,  
Chanz, et deschanz, et sanz descorde,  
D'arpe, de rote, et de viele.  
Ceste oevre estoit et boene et bele,  
Car devant lui gisoient tuit  
Li estrumant et li deduit.  
(ll. 6708–6714)

<sup>41</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policratici Sive*, vol. II, book VIII, ch. xii, pp. 309–10, 758a.

<sup>42</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, p. 183.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph J. Duggan, 'Afterword', in Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, trans. B. Raffel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 221–9.

<sup>44</sup> Duggan, 'Afterword', p. 229. See ll. 6750–6794.

The third chose to show Music,  
 Which blends with every human  
 Pleasure, in counterpoint  
 And song, with harps and lutes,  
 And viols – a beautiful picture,  
 With Music seated and in front  
 of her tools and delights.  
 (ll. 6774–6780)<sup>45</sup>

Music, along with other examples of necessary learning, is inscribed on Erec's clothing, and this music creates and intertwines itself with joy both in harmonic accord, 's'acorde', and 'sanz descorde', without disharmony. 'Deschanz' is counterpoint, something which is in creative tension with 'chanz', the basic melody of a song, hence provoking the poet to add the phrase 'sanz descorde' to preclude suggestions that the 'chanz' and its counterpoint are clashing. Successfully singing 'deschanz' above the main melody heavily relied on adhering to careful harmony. There is a suggestion in this passage that harmony can be achieved through the mixture of sounds, and this principle has important implications when the metaphor is applied to social organisation, conceived of as a composite of different but complementary parts. Practical music in the form of instruments, notation, and song is alluded to on Erec's robes, along with quadrivium subjects, which suggests a balance between *musica practica* and *musica speculativa*: for the figure of Music, the theoretical concepts and musical instruments are complementary, seen as her tools and delights. As we shall see, in *Havelok* the protagonist is disadvantaged by missing out on just such a musical education. By this analogy, music becomes an important skill for a wise king, who must acquire it through active learning in order to use it well.

John Gower also examines the importance of musical learning in Book VII of *Confessio Amantis*, in which he discusses the education of Alexander, who encounters music as the second part of mathematics.<sup>46</sup> In this passage, it is notable that *musica practica* (represented by 'melodie', 'vois', and 'soun of instrument') is listed alongside the more theoretical, abstract disciplines of 'the science of Musique', 'Armonie' and mathematics (the liberal arts of the university curriculum). This categorisation is suggestive of the way practical music was perceived in the later Middle Ages:

<sup>45</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec et Enide*, in *Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. M. Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1952), p. 204; Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, pp. 212–13.

<sup>46</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 71.

The seconde of Mathematique,  
 Which is the science of Musique,  
 That techeth upon Armonie  
 A man to make melodie  
 Be vois and soun of instrument  
 Thurgh notes of acordement,  
 The whiche men pronounce alofte,  
 Nou scharpe notes and nou softe,  
 Nou hihe notes and nou lowe,  
 As be the gamme a man mai knowe,  
 Which techeth the prolacion  
 Of note and the condicion.  
 (ll. 162–174)<sup>47</sup>

Alexander is being taught not only theory and notation, but also practical music. ‘Acordement’ evokes accord, harmony in the theoretical sense, but also physical strings sounding simultaneously. In keeping with John of Salisbury’s portrayal, musical accomplishment is measured through the successful combination of disparate elements (‘scharpe’ and ‘softe’, ‘hihe’ and ‘lowe’). Beyond this physical aptitude, Gower’s science of *musica* creates harmony, and he, like so many music theorists, emphasises the importance of training and knowledge, alongside practice. Gower echoes the late antique argument that a true musician is not simply one who plays an instrument but, in Boethius’ terms, *qui ratione perpensa canendi scientiam non servitio operis sed imperio speculationis adsumpsit* (‘who has gained knowledge of making music by weighing with the reason, not through the servitude of work, but through the sovereignty of speculation’).<sup>48</sup> Contemplation, speculation, and reason are necessary to master *canendi*, ‘singing’. The hierarchical implications of Boethius’ terms here, elevating the sovereignty (*imperio*) of theoretical contemplation over the hard graft (*servitio operis*) of practical application, are reversed or at least brought under duress in the kingship quest romances, in which kingly aspirations and chivalric identity cannot be fulfilled by abstract theory alone without material enactment and musical performance too. Given these contexts for musical thought outside of the romance genre, the following section turns to the romance case studies directly to discuss how these texts treat the concept of music’s affective powers and measure their

<sup>47</sup> For ll. 1–270, see John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, ed. R.A. Peck (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004).

<sup>48</sup> Gottfried Friendlein (ed.), *De Institutione Musica, Libris Quinque*, by Boethius (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1867), p. 224; Boethius, *Fundamentals*, p. 51.

reach. I will look specifically at music's ability to conjure extreme joy, or sorrow, as a means of creating social cohesion by transforming listeners.

## 2. Case studies: *Horn* and *Havelok*

Music in romance, when performed by an exceptional, educated musician, is able to stir the affect of the listener by influencing his mood. In kingship quest romances, this music is associated with aristocratic performance and is used as a means of demonstrating royal lineage; the trope functions as a narrative device to prove the protagonist's kingly credentials. In the Horn romances, music appears in the form of practical performance, as a skill that helps a knight disguise (and then ultimately reveal) his true identity, and it also plays a part at the level of deeper symbolism through the metaphorical suggestiveness of words that evoke concepts from *musica*. When the protagonist plays music, his skill surpasses ordinary worldly performance. He is able to instil a sense of euphoric joy in his listeners, through the connection of music with the powers of universal harmony. The musical vocabulary, imagery, and narrative tropes used in these poems overlap with ideas from *musica*, especially those of transcendent bliss evoked through music.

Music is treated very differently in the narratives of *Horn* and *Havelok*, even though the texts follow a very similar narrative structure. In *Horn*, harmonic powers fulfil their potential, while in *Havelok* music falls short of its ideal socio-political reach. This failure shows the limitations of such powers. I will demonstrate that the key difference in the handling of harmonic powers in these texts lies in the musical education, or lack thereof, received by respective protagonists. I will begin with the positive use of music in *King Horn* before proceeding into a discussion of *Havelok*'s disillusionment about music's affective capabilities and an analysis of the way his lack of musical learning undermines that particular trope of music romance. That *King Horn* and *Havelok* co-circulated in the same volume (Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108) suggests that at least some compilers and readers may have been alert to these romances' contrasting attitudes towards music's affective powers and to their distinctive handling of shared narrative tropes.

## 2.1 Music's affective powers in *King Horn* and *Horn Childe and Maiden Rinnild*

The first kingship quest text under consideration is the romance of *King Horn*, based on the Anglo-Norman *roman d'aventure*, *Le Roman de Horn*, by Thomas (c.1170).<sup>49</sup> This poem tells the exile-and-return story of Horn, a prince of Sudene who is cast adrift with twelve companions when Saracens kill his father.<sup>50</sup> The boy is taken in by Aylmar, the king of Westernesse, and educated there as befits a nobleman. Eventually, he falls in love with the king's daughter, Rimenhild. He must prove himself a worthy knight before he can marry her, but is betrayed by Fikenhild, one of his companions, and is banished again. This time he sails to Ireland, where he wins the favour of the king and the friendship of his sons. At last, Horn returns to Westernesse and rescues Rimenhild by disguising himself as a minstrel. In the end, he rewards his loyal companions, restores order in Sudene, and rules as king. In the course of the text, Horn demonstrates both his mastery of the affective powers of music and also the usefulness of music as a disguise.

In the incomplete *Horn Childe and Maiden Rinnild*, Horn is also raised with a band of companions who are given land and swear allegiance to him. When his lands are usurped, they escape and are taken in by King Houlac, who orders the boys to be taught appropriate courtly skills – the use of weapons, hunting, etiquette, music, and chess.<sup>51</sup> Horn falls in love with Rinnild, the king's daughter, but is betrayed by two of his companions, Wikard and Wikel, and banished. He joins the court of the Welsh king, Elidan, and helps the Irish king, Finlak, by avenging his father's death. When he returns to England and rescues Rinnild, Horn avenges himself on the traitors, marries the princess, and reclaims his lands, at which point the poem breaks off.

In both these texts, the powers of music are presented as positive and considerable, and they hinge on the idea of musical education. In both, Horn is fostered by a king, and educated according to the requirements of a nobleman, which include music. Coupled with this educational development, his superior musical skill allows him access to music's affective powers. The importance of a musical education

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of the *Romance of Horn*, see Rosalind Field, 'Courtly Culture and Emotional Intelligence in the Romance of Horn', in *Medieval Romance and Material Culture*, ed. N. Perkins (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 23–40.

<sup>50</sup> The romance survives in three manuscripts: Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg.4.27.2.; British Library, MS Harley 2253; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108.

<sup>51</sup> Karras, *From Boys*, p. 30; Burnley, *Courtliness*, p. 54; Jamison, 'A Description', p. 50.

is stressed early in both texts. In *King Horn*, when the prince is first taken in by King Aylmar, Athelbrus, the king's steward, is instructed to teach Horn and his companions all they would need to know to acquire the post of steward themselves one day. The skills Horn must learn are the standard necessary accomplishments of a knight, including hunting, jousting, serving at table, and, crucially, musical performance:<sup>52</sup>

Stiward, tak nu here  
 My fundling for to lere  
 Of thine mestere,  
 Of wude and of rivere,  
 And tech him to harpe  
 With his nailes sharpe,  
 Bifore me to cerve  
 And of the cupe serve.  
 Thu tech him of alle the liste  
 That thu evre of wiste;  
 And his feren thu wise  
 Into othere servise.  
 Horn thu underfonge  
 And tech him of harpe and songe.  
 Athelbrus gan lere  
 Horn and his y-ferre.  
 (ll. 231–246)<sup>53</sup>

The combination of 'mestere' and 'lere' in this passage is significant. 'Mestere' ('mastery') could refer to a formal education in the quadrivium, or courtly accomplishments, and sometimes to a craft – the mastery of a particular subject, skill, or area of knowledge – whereas 'lere' suggests a more formal process of learning, reflection, or teaching.<sup>54</sup> Given the dismissal of book-learning in other romances, the fact that the boys are taught to write shows that this text takes a different view of educational matters.<sup>55</sup> While it is not mentioned in this passage, later we see that the boys had also been taught literacy, when Athulf writes Horn a letter dictated by Rimenhild ('A writ he dude devise; / Athulf hit dude write', ll. 938–939).<sup>56</sup> As I will discuss in the next section, this combination of 'mestere' and 'lere' also appears in *Havelok*, where it represents a completely different kind of learning. The word 'lere'

<sup>52</sup> Burnley, *Courtliness*, p. 57.

<sup>53</sup> Donald M. Sands (ed.), *Middle English Verse Romances* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1986), pp. 22–3.

<sup>54</sup> University of Michigan, *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27837> and <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED25185>, both accessed on 20.03.2018.

<sup>55</sup> Page, 'Music and Chivalric Fiction', pp. 1–27.

<sup>56</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 40.

appears twice in this passage (and ‘teche’ three times), yet Horn seems to be learning with some degree of instinct, because we are told ‘Horn in herte laghte / Al that he him taghte’ (ll. 247–248), and the earlier ‘lere’ could also be read as a kind of instinctual, visceral understanding rather than just technical knowledge.<sup>57</sup> Horn’s learning is connected with the heart, not the mind, which suggests that there is an instinctive element to his music.

Harping and singing complete Horn’s education. The romance makes use of both indoor courtly music (‘harpe and song’, l. 244) and outdoor military music (‘Horn gan his horn to blowe; / His folk hit gan iknowe’, ll. 1383–1384).<sup>58</sup> In *King Horn*, both his harp and his horn serve as identity markers at different points in the text: Horn’s set of skills strikes a balance between these two aspects of chivalry. In medieval literature, the possession of a harp is often symbolic, becoming a visual marker of the musician-protagonist’s identity and skill.<sup>59</sup> Historically, the harp, and later the vielle, was the preferred instrument of the elite amateur repertory, and it was also played by professional minstrels.<sup>60</sup> This musical common ground was a source of anxiety for the late medieval nobility, however, and the divide between aristocratic and professional musicians is reinforced in medieval romance by the fact that amateur aristocratic music is depicted as more authentic and powerful, easily surpassing professional performance.<sup>61</sup> Routinely, kings, harps, and even the composition of lais are tied closely together in the music romances.<sup>62</sup> In *Sir Orfeo* and the early fourteenth-century *Lai le Freyne*, quoted below, two nearly identical passages tell us that:

In Breteyne bi hold time  
his layes were wrought, so seith this rime.  
When kinges might oure y-here  
of ani mervailles that ther were,  
thai token an harp in gle and game,  
and maked a lay and gaf it name

<sup>57</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, pp. 22–3.

<sup>58</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 23.

<sup>59</sup> Marilyn Lawrence, ‘The Protean Performer: Defining Minstrel Identity in Tristan Narratives’, in *Cultural Performance in Medieval France: Essays in Honour of Nancy Freeman Regalado*, ed. E. Doss-Quinby, R.L. Krueger, and E.J. Burns (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), pp. 109–19 (p. 115). For further discussion of the role of medieval musical instruments, see Page, ‘Music and Instruments before 1300’, pp. 445–85; Dickson, ‘The Image’, p. 200.

<sup>60</sup> Keith Polk, ‘Patronage and Innovation in Instrumental Music of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century’, *Historic Brass Society Journal* 3 (1991), pp. 151–78 (pp. 152–5); Brown and Polk, ‘Instrumental Music’, p. 157; Roslyn Rensch, *Harp and Harpists, Revised Edition* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989, 2007 reprint), p. 76.

<sup>61</sup> Page, ‘Music and Chivalric Fiction’, pp. 19–20.

<sup>62</sup> Zaerr, *Performance*, p. 84.

(ll. 13–18)<sup>63</sup>

This passage tells us that Breton kings composed words and music themselves, instead of delegating the task to a professional musician. Their engagement with music was direct, practical, and proprietorial – ‘maked a lay and gaf it name’ – and the act of making and naming a lai is also suggestive of deliberate use of music to preserve a record of grand and marvellous deeds (‘ani mervailles that ther were’). These kings personally composed and performed ‘in gle’, just as minstrels did in court entertainments (gestured to in the formulaic collocation ‘gle and game’). Here ‘gle’ reasserts the close connection between the affective powers of music (the joy it conjured for composer and listener) and the figure of the skilled musician-king.

This kind of upbringing has historical parallels. In the 1474 stipulation in the *Liber Niger*, sons of the elite who were brought up with Edward IV’s sons had to be ‘vertuously’ trained, taught ‘in grammar, musicke and other cunning, and exercises of humanyte, according to their byrthes’.<sup>64</sup> Here, too, musical education is closely linked to elite status, and performance is used in conjunction with theoretical learning in a balance between the practical and the intellectual. Further, in the *Liber Niger*, music is considered an aristocratic ‘vertu’ – the term meant physical skill and moral quality, as well as any unusual ability, talent, or area of expertise. ‘Vertu’ was also used to refer to a ‘particular mental faculty or power of the soul necessary for thought’ or for ‘imagination’. This capacious term thus encompassed physical, moral, and intellectual qualities. In looser applications, ‘vertu’ could also connote something that possessed occult properties, the power to conjure magic or to confer a supernatural ability on something, to influence one’s environment, or to affect life on earth, including by means of celestial bodies (in ways that are suggestively reminiscent of universal harmony).<sup>65</sup> As we shall see, the time and effort spent on musical learning is a valuable investment that allows a knight to play on a par with professionals, and even to surpass them.

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<sup>63</sup> Quotation from *Lai le Freyne*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. A. Laskaya and E. Salisbury (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Middle English Texts, Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 68–78. See also *Sir Orfeo*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. A. Laskaya and E. Salisbury (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Middle English Texts, Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 26–41.

<sup>64</sup> Society of Antiquaries, *A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household* (London: John Nichols, 1790), p. 29.

<sup>65</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED51027>, accessed 25.04.2018; *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/virtue>, accessed 25.04.2018.

Horn's intelligence surpasses that of his companions, as we are told that he is 'of wit the beste' (l. 178).<sup>66</sup> In some versions of the romance, when he adopts the disguise of a wanderer, he calls himself 'Goodmind' instead of Cutberd, gesturing to his education and willingness to learn.<sup>67</sup> Horn's education, coupled with his innate capacity (the catch-all term 'wit' connoting both innate intelligence, the faculty of understanding, and ingenuity) gives him access to musical powers.<sup>68</sup> This facility marks a clear change in perception from the days of Boethius, who found practical music lacking in that regard, as stated in his discussion of the three classes of musicians – theoretical, poetic, and instrumental:

Sed illud quidem, quod in instrumentis positum est ibique totam operam consumit, ut sunt citharoedi quique organo ceterisque musicae instrumentis artificium probant, a musicae scientiae intellectu seiuncti sunt, quoniam famulantur, ut dictum est: nec ququam afferunt rationis, sed sunt totius speculationis expertes.

[But those of the class which is dependent upon instruments and who spend their entire effort there – such as kitharists and those who prove their skill on the organ and other musical instruments – are excluded from comprehension of musical knowledge, since, as was said, they act as slaves. None of them makes use of reason, rather they are totally lacking in thought.]<sup>69</sup>

Boethius, and the theorists who followed him, saw musical instruments as an obstacle, rather than a conduit, to a true understanding of music – he is prejudiced against musical performers, who are perceived to be lacking in intellectual faculties, lacking *rationis*, 'thought' or 'rationality'. In Boethius' hierarchy, even 'skill' (*artificium*) is tarnished by association with the lowly, earth-bound realm of labour and effort (*operam*), quite removed from the rarefied, ethereal remit of true musical knowledge (*musicae scientiae intellectu*). Yet even here there is room for the acceptance of

<sup>66</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 21.

<sup>67</sup> Wilson, *The Magical Quest*, p. 6. For an earlier, Occitan predecessor concerned with musical disguises, musical education, the authenticity of performance as proof of nobility, and the importance of minstrels in a noble court, see the *chanson de geste* entitled *Daurel et Beton* (c. 1168). Notably, Beton, the usurped heir disguised as a minstrel, demonstrates his innate nobility when he refuses the offer of payment to perform for a princess: a true minstrel, or the true son of a minstrel, would have accepted payment for his music. See *Daurel et Beton: Chanson de Geste Provençale*, ed. P. Meyer (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1880), p. 64, and *Daurel and Beton*, trans. J. Shirley (Felinfach: Llanerch Publishers, 1997), p. 84; Zaerr, *Performance*, p. 30.

<sup>68</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED52981>, accessed 25.04.2018.

<sup>69</sup> Friendlein, *De Institutione*, pp. 224–5; Boethius, *Fundamentals*, p. 51.

practical music found in the later Middle Ages which nuances Boethius' rigid conviction that those musicians who spend all their time concentrating *just* on practical music have no appreciation for the higher truth. In the later dispensation, *musica practica* and *musica speculativa* are both necessary for the rounded musician.

Indeed, medieval music romances view musical practice as indispensable. In *King Horn*, there is a notable emphasis on the importance of musical skills in the king's stipulation regarding the boys' education, given above: Horn must learn not only song but also harping, which is mentioned twice in this passage and with a peculiar tactility in the curious detail that he is to learn how to play 'With his nails sharpe'.<sup>70</sup> These skills prove their worth later in the text. As I will discuss in due course, it is because of this musical training that Horn and his companions are able to pass for a travelling band of minstrels at will. In the poem, music is more than merely a temporary guise: it becomes a key element of Horn's underlying identity. From the moment he is rescued by Aylmar, Horn (and specifically Horn's reputation and 'name') is associated with music. The king tells him:

Horn, thu lude sune  
By dales and by dune!  
So shall thy name springe  
Fram kinge to kinge  
(ll. 213–216)<sup>71</sup>

The pun here plays on the hero's given name and the *bas* instrument, as if metonyms for each other. The horn was considered an important instrument in the *bas* repertory due to its ceremonial and military use, with horn players being trained separately and classified as a separate category from other musicians.<sup>72</sup> Aristocratic hunters were also expected to be able to sound and interpret a number of calls, which were necessary for communication.<sup>73</sup> By articulating this association, the king recognises how Horn's name is emblematic of prodigious musicianship and aristocratic identity, explaining his seamless ability to switch between these identities later in the poem. The sound of the horn carries far – Aylmar is predicting that Horn's name, and consequently his fame (a primary knightly concern), will go at least as far as the sound of the

<sup>70</sup> Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', p. 99.

<sup>71</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 22.

<sup>72</sup> Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', pp. 100–101.

<sup>73</sup> Cummins, 'The Hound', p. 160.

instrument.<sup>74</sup> ‘Sune’ could refer to a loud sound, and specifically a musical sound or note, and it was also used to mean reputation or boast.<sup>75</sup> Thus, the king is making a pun which refers simultaneously to music and reputation. This comparison stresses another connection between knights and minstrels: minstrels travelled between courts, spreading the fame of worthy knights and patrons and, through these tales, the minstrel’s fame and reputation also grew. At the end of the poem, Horn’s deeds are similarly immortalised in ‘Horne’s song’ (l. 1542): in the hands of real minstrels, music is a medium for narrative and reputation, but as we shall see, in Horn’s hands, it is something even more potent.<sup>76</sup>

When Horn first sets out to prove his worth so that he can gain Aylmar’s permission to marry Rimenhild, he takes his horse and sings as he leaves the castle (‘The fole bigan to springe, / And Horn murie to singe’, ll. 597–598), evoking another prominent trope of music romance, where a journey is accompanied by song.<sup>77</sup> Narratively, such journeys suggest the evolution or assertion of a character’s musical identity, and indeed music accompanies Horn’s progress through various life stages: as a steward in training, a knight setting out on his first quest, an experienced knight rescuing his bride, and a celebrated king.<sup>78</sup> Setting out on his first quest, Horn is full of joy and hope. As such, his singing is ‘murye’ because there is little doubt that he will indeed prove himself a worthy knight. There is a dual etymology to be read from the word ‘murye’ (‘merry’), which evolved from the Old English *myriglic*, an adverb that meant ‘agreeably’ or ‘pleasantly’ but which could mean ‘melodiously’.<sup>79</sup> The word was also quite possibly related to the Old English *myrgan / mirgan*, ‘merry’.<sup>80</sup> The feast held after Horn’s dubbing is also described in these words: ‘Murie was the feste / Al of faire gestes’ (ll. 525–526), symbolising the great promise of Horn’s future career, where ‘gestes’ could mean, broadly, entertainment but more specifically the singing of

<sup>74</sup> Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 126; Burnley, *Courtliness*, p. 9; Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 24.

<sup>75</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED41806>, accessed 20.04.2018.

<sup>76</sup> Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 126; Dobozy, *Re-membering*, pp. 148–95.

<sup>77</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 31.

<sup>78</sup> Karras, *From Boys*, p. 12; Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 197; Mary Hynes-Berry, ‘Cohesion in King Horn and Sir Orfeo’, *Speculum* 50 (1975), pp. 652–70 (p. 658). For a discussion of the rite of passage in medieval romance, see Phillips, ‘Rites of Passage’, pp. 83–108.

<sup>79</sup> Toller, *Supplement*, p. 645.

<sup>80</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 645. See, for example, ‘*Swa mycclē līpelīcor*’ and ‘*myriglicor was gehyred se sealmsang*’ or ‘*coepit psalmodia lenius audiri*’ (he began gently to hear/listen to the singing of the psalms) from Gregory’s *Dialogues* (Book IV, Ch. xvi), translated into English for King Alfred, in Gregory I, *Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen über das Leben und die Wunderthaten italienischer Väter und über die Unsterblichkeit der Seelen*, trans. Bishop Werferth of Worcester, ed. H. Hecht (Leipzig: Georg H. Wigand’s Verlag, 1900), p. 286. For notes and analysis of the dialogues, see David Yerkes, *Syntax and Style in Old English: A Companion to the Two Versions of Wærferth’s Translation of Gregory’s Dialogues* (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1982), p. 9.

gestes, namely poems and songs of heroic deeds.<sup>81</sup> ‘Singe’, originating from the Old English *ge-singan*, meant singing in general, but particularly singing as an expression of extreme emotions: great joy or great sorrow.<sup>82</sup> It also possessed a secondary meaning of afflicting or being afflicted by a particular musical effect, such as humming or ringing. Horn is melodious as a musician, and his music is capable of conjuring intense feelings, such as joy, as demonstrated in this scene, one of several in a poem whose opening apostrophe to the listener posits a close kinship between song and auditory pleasure: the formulaic opening, ‘Alle beon he blithe / That to my song lythe! / A sang ich schal you singe’ (ll. 1–3), seems more than merely a conventional address to an audience since it binds together the principals of joy and listening, ‘blithe’ and ‘lythe’, before it has even introduced the subject or hero of the romance. Any who hear his song will be joyous, and ‘blithe’ also meant eager and obedient, suggesting that the song can not only engender immediate sensory effects but also influence long-term behaviour.<sup>83</sup> Horn’s ability to engender musical joy through merry singing suggests his innate connection to music’s powers. Boethius wrote that even though the harmony of the spheres is impossible for humans to hear, it can still affect them, especially when it is accessed by a musician with a connection to the powers of universal harmony.<sup>84</sup> It is possible that Horn’s musical connection to universal harmony speaks to the universal harmony found in all human souls.<sup>85</sup>

Music becomes so emblematic of Horn that he is easily recognised by the call of his horn. When he is about to attack Sudene to reclaim his kingdom, he sounds his horn and his followers emerge from the boat to gather under his banner:

Horn gan his horn to blowe;  
His folk hit gan y-knowe;  
Hi comen ut of stere,  
Fram Hornes banere;  
(ll. 1383–1386)<sup>86</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 30; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18470>, accessed on 20.04.18.

<sup>82</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 412.

<sup>83</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 17; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED5249>, accessed on 20.04.18.

<sup>84</sup> Rico, ‘Auctoritas’, p. 24; Rankin, ‘*Naturalis Concordia*’, p. 7; Boethius, *Fundamentals*.

<sup>85</sup> Plato, *The Works*, trans. Taylor and Sydenham, pp. 448–9.

<sup>86</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, pp. 50–51.

This is a scene suggestive of *The Song of Roland* as Horn's Irish warrior band hear the sound of the protagonist's horn at a great distance, immediately recognise it, and rally to defeat the Saracens. The scene leaves some questions unanswered. Do they rally solely because Horn is near, or does the horn call inspire warlike behaviour? In this instance, music not only creates a warlike mood but becomes inextricable from the protagonist. It is something unique to him, a marker of his identity, just as is his voice, so that his followers can easily recognise ('y-knowe') the horn as his just from its call. This scene appears to draw on the topos of the musical instrument as a marker of a protagonist's true identity, one which hearkens back to an earlier scene when play is made on the exiled Horn's name. This creates a sense of continuity and perhaps indicates that the personal identity quest portion of the narrative has come full circle now that Horn has reclaimed his land and birthright. Horn's reclamation of the city is also coloured with musical imagery: 'He let belles ringe / And masses let singe' (ll. 1393–1394). Here, the musical sound is emblematic of, and perhaps even brings into effect, great social change, as the kingdom becomes Christian once more. Unsurprisingly, just three lines after this triumph, there is further emphasis on merriment, as if Horn has now become a metonym for joy: 'And makede feste merie; / Murye lif he wroghte' (ll. 1398–1399).<sup>87</sup>

The next important musical interlude occurs when Horn must rescue Rimenhild a second time. Fikenhild has built a towered fortress specifically to keep Horn out, with the intention of marrying Horn's wife himself. When Horn goes to rescue Rimenhild, he chooses to use his musical skills over his military ones, and disguises himself as a minstrel ('Harpe he gan schewe', l. 1473), drawing on the frequently-employed trope of the minstrel disguise, which allows the protagonist access to restricted locales.<sup>88</sup> This strategy is very successful: despite Fikenhild's desperation to keep Horn away, he and his men prove unable to recognise Horn in this disguise and welcome him inside. As discussed in Part I, a recurrent trope in romance narratives is that minstrels are a welcome presence at feasts, processions, and other important social occasions.<sup>89</sup> A minstrel is allowed access to select gatherings – spaces from which

<sup>87</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 51.

<sup>88</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 53.

<sup>89</sup> Zaerr, *Performance*, p. 16; Lawrence, 'The Protean Performer', p. 111; Jamison, 'A Description', p. 45; Dobozy, *Re-membering*, pp. 148–95.

other strangers are excluded – because he is an entertainer and deemed to present no military threat.<sup>90</sup> An armed knight would not have received quite the same welcome.

A similar tale can be found in William Dugdale's *Monasticum Anglicanum*, from the records concerning Lacock Abbey. In 1196, William Talbot set out to find Ela, the abducted heiress and future Countess of Salisbury, who was being kept under guard in Normandy.<sup>91</sup> In the style of Blondel looking for the imprisoned Lionheart, the account claims that the knight wandered around Normandy and sang under castle windows until Ela sang a response. Having located the correct castle, Talbot used his musical skills to disguise himself as a minstrel and infiltrate the castle, escaping with the heiress and returning her to her future husband, William Longespee. A king disguised as a minstrel has mythic precedence also: according to legend, King Alfred disguised himself as a minstrel to spy on the Norsemen.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, Olaf Guthfrithson used the same trick to infiltrate Athelstan's camp at Brunanburh, and Baldulf to infiltrate York in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*.<sup>93</sup> Horn and his band are let into Fikenhild's fortress precisely because they appear to be musicians, playing instruments and singing songs ('Hi gunne murie singe / And makede here gleowinge', ll. 1481–1482), while everyone else is turned away at the door: 'Ne mai ther come inne / Noman with none ginne' (ll. 1469–1470).<sup>94</sup> Since they are already playing merry music when they arrive at the gate, their easy welcome might be in part due to the guards succumbing to music's affective power. This passage again hinges on the combination of 'murie', 'singe', and 'gle'. 'Gleowinge' refers to the sound of minstrelsy, but also to the sound of merriment, since to 'gleowen' is to amuse, to evoke joy, pleasure, and bliss, or to divert through music.<sup>95</sup> 'Gleowinge' can also refer to brilliance and splendour, and so the implication from this extract is that Horn's

<sup>90</sup> Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 68; Dobozy, *Re-membering*, p. 174.

<sup>91</sup> Sir William Dugdale (compiler), *Monasticum Anglicanum, Cartae ad Prioratum de Lacock in Agro Wiltoniensi Spectantes*, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis, and B. Bandinel, part I, vol. 6 (London: Harding and Lepard, 1830), p. 501 (retrieved from <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k133603q>); *Annals and Antiquities of Lacock Abbey, in the County of Wilts*, ed. W.L. Bowles and J.G. Nichols (London: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1835), p. 88.

<sup>92</sup> Chaytor, *The Troubadours*, p. 7; Andrew Taylor, 'Fragmentation, Corruption and Minstrel Narration: The Question of the Middle English Romances', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 22, Medieval Narrative Special Number (1992), pp. 38–62 (p. 38).

<sup>93</sup> Chaytor, *The Troubadours*, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 53; Chaytor, *The Troubadours*, p. 6.

<sup>95</sup> Carter, *A Dictionary*, pp. 173–4.

musicianship is not only technically masterful but also able to affect the disposition of its listeners.<sup>96</sup>

It is striking that, despite having grown up with Fikenhild, Horn is not recognised. No one looks too closely at a minstrel's face, because he is defined through his music, and Horn takes full advantage of this slippage. He is allowed to sit with his harp and sing:

He sette him on the benche,  
 His harpe for to clenche.  
 He makede Rymenhilde lay –  
 And heo makede walaway.  
 Rymenhild feol y-swowe –  
 Ne was ther non that louwe.  
 Hit smot to Hornes herte  
 So bitere that hit smerte.  
 (ll. 1487–1494)<sup>97</sup>

In singing his lay, Horn intentionally directs his music at Rimenhild, causing her to respond with 'walaway', a musical term for a lament and an expression of sorrow, grief, and distress.<sup>98</sup> This exchange, a kind of collaboration, has the pattern of a musical call-and-response, and she is undeniably responding to the music: the two equal clauses are carefully balanced with a conjunction, linking action and consequence, and Rimenhild's visceral response (swooning) finds a counterpart in Horn's affective reaction ('Hit smot' Horn's heart 'that hit smerte'). The effect of Horn's music over the entire audience is striking and immediate. Rimenhild is so moved by his song that she swoons, and everyone else is deeply affected, falling to an eerie silence, even though the music is not directed at them. Horn himself is perhaps upset not just at the sight of Rimenhild's distress, but on account of the music he and Rimenhild are collaboratively performing: he was not similarly affected during her previous rescue, when she was equally distraught, and the chief difference now is the presence of music.

<sup>96</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18735&egs=all&egdisplay=open> and <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18779>, accessed on 20.04.18.

<sup>97</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 53.

<sup>98</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED52045&egs=all&egdisplay=open>, accessed on 20.04.18.

This scene is contrasted with an earlier episode, the first rescue, which ends in the marriage of Horn and Rimenhild. At that point, Horn has not yet reclaimed his throne but already there is celebration and musical joy, and he pointedly performs it from the king's chair:

Telle ne mighte tunge  
That glee that ther was sunge.

Horn sat on chaere  
And bad hem alle ihere  
(ll. 1269–1272)<sup>99</sup>

'Here' could refer both to the music and to the story Horn is about to tell. Horn is behaving like a minstrel while declaring himself a king. When he sits on a throne and addresses Aylmar, explaining that he does not begrudge his banishment and asserting his true lineage, he reiterates his name, 'Horn is mi name' (l. 1276), echoing the king's words at the beginning of the text.<sup>100</sup> This scene parallels a similar instance of musical splendour in the coronation of *Havelok*, but, as we shall see, Havelok can only hire musicians rather than claim to be a musician himself. The romance of *King Horn* offers a positive and recuperative depiction of music's powers, as music accompanies key moments in Horn's life, completing the cycle of exile and return, because Horn was given a musical education during his formative years.<sup>101</sup> His identity is inextricable from his music.

The Northern retelling of the Horn legend, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rinnild* (c. 1320), which survives in an incomplete form and descends from the Anglo-Norman *Le Roman de Horn*, likewise details all the courtly skills that Horn must learn in King Houlac's court.<sup>102</sup> In this version, Horn's father, King Hapeolf, appoints his retainer Arlaund as a tutor to Horn and his companions (in the fourth stanza of the text), and once Horn's father is killed, Arlaund is made Horn's guardian. This early focus on education, which follows on from a short introduction about Horn's father, birth, and companions, shows the importance of education in this text too. Arlaund is chosen because of his skill:

<sup>99</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 48.

<sup>100</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 48.

<sup>101</sup> Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 203.

<sup>102</sup> The only surviving copy is found in the Auchinleck Manuscript, 317<sup>v</sup>–323<sup>v</sup>. See *Horn Childe and Maiden Rinnild*, ed. M. Mills (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988), pp. 11–28, 44.

On hunting was him most coupe,  
 For to blowe an horn wiþ mouþe  
 & houndes lede biside;  
 To harpe wele & play at ches  
 & al gamen þat vsed is,  
 & mo was in þat tide.  
 Hapeolf Arlaund bitauzt  
 Horn & his children auzt  
 (ll. 40–47)<sup>103</sup>

In this version of the romance, there is also a reference to courtly music, chess, hunting, and war, denoting the different aspects of aristocratic identity. At his father's court, Horn is taught outdoor music in the form of the horn, and indoor, courtly music in the form of the harp. He is taught 'auzt', everything. When Horn is fostered by King Houlac, Houlac also expresses his concern that the boy is properly educated:

He had Harlaund schuld him lere  
 Þe riȝt forto se;  
 Þe laws boþe eld & newe,  
 Al maner gamen & glewe  
 (ll. 272–275)<sup>104</sup>

Horn's father and foster father are both determined that he receive the correct aristocratic education. While Houlac makes no mention of the physical, martial aspects of this education, he does mention music, just as Hapeolf did earlier. The use of 'glewe', or 'glee', once again in the familiar collocation of 'game and glee' encountered above in *Sir Orfeo*, is suggestive of music's ability to evoke joy, and the fact that he is to be taught 'al maner' of glee suggests that he will learn different kinds of music and thus be able to use different musical powers or musical modes as befits the occasion. In this passage, 'gamen' complements 'glewe': it does not refer simply to games and tricks, but to feeling or instilling amusement, merriment, and joy.<sup>105</sup> The reference to 'laws' in this catalogue of disciplines is also notable. Maldwyn Mills points to the fact that this word does not necessarily refer to legal studies, but could also mean 'styles' or 'modes', creating further suggestive ambiguity in the poem's

<sup>103</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 83.

<sup>104</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 88.

<sup>105</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18152>, retrieved on 20.04.2018.

frame of reference.<sup>106</sup> The *Middle English Dictionary* entry for ‘laue’ confirms this permissive range: aside from legal connotations, it could mean the force or power of human instincts or faculties, the handling of arms, the rules of grammar, modes of correct behaviour and manners, and ultimately the correct way of doing things. These connotations are suggestive not just of a courtly, elite education but also of a more formal education in grammar, which was taught alongside music. This reference to learning ‘the correct way of doing things’, immediately followed by a reference to ‘gamen and glewe’ in the same run-on clause, suggests that the correct way of doing things refers to the correct way of playing music, old and new. If understood in terms of dynamic application, ‘law’ could also refer to authority, power, and force: in this case, a part of Horn’s power lies inextricably in music.<sup>107</sup> As a result of his training (and specifically his book-learning) in these disciplines (‘Harpe & romaunce he radde ariȝt’, l. 286), Horn gains insight into all kinds of music (‘Of al gle he hadde insiȝt’, l. 287), a point to which I will return.

Like *King Horn*, this text also draws a connection between ‘horn’, the instrument, and ‘Horn’, the protagonist. When Rimmild, King Houlac’s daughter, has Horn sent to her bedchamber, she gives him a horn, along with other gifts, as a pledge of her love. In this version of the narrative, it is the princess who draws the connection between Horn’s name and the instrument:

‘Horn’ sche seyd ‘is þi name;  
 An horn y schal ȝiue þe ane,  
 A michel & vnride;  
 Al yuore is þe bon,  
 Sett wiþ mani a riche ston,  
 To bere bi þi side.’  
 (ll. 385–390)<sup>108</sup>

The act of naming reaffirms Horn’s inalienable connection to music, and Rimmild duly gifts him an instrument which matches his name: it is her first and most important gift. The horn itself seems disproportionate, as though its unruly size is meant to match Horn’s musical skill. It is described as ‘michel & vnride’, which suggests something

<sup>106</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 112.

<sup>107</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED24815>, retrieved on 20.04.2018.

<sup>108</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 91.

that is excessive, or beyond the usual size. ‘Vnride’, in particular, insists on this exceptional property, denoting something unrestrained, inordinate, and excessive.<sup>109</sup> The other gifts are equally rich and knightly, befitting Horn’s true identity. Even in exile, his loss of status cannot disguise his nobility. Throughout the text, Horn is portrayed as wise, companionable, and warlike, but it is equally important that he is skilled in music, showing a balance of aptitudes and accomplishments:

Hor[n] was boþe war & wise,  
 At hunting oft he wan þe priis,  
 Loued he noþing mare;  
 Harpe & romaunce he radde ariȝt,  
 Of al gle he hadde insiȝt  
 Pat in lond ware.  
 (ll. 283–288)<sup>110</sup>

The text specifies that Horn has ‘insiȝt’ or knowledge of all the ‘gle’ to be found in the land, suggesting that he is not only the best musician but also aware of the uses of music. Superior harping, which associates him with historic and legendary harpers, is the attribute that sets the protagonist apart from everyone else, including other musicians, and is thus integral to his chivalric identity.<sup>111</sup> ‘Insiȝt’ suggests something greater than an ordinary knowledge of the repertory: it suggests a capacity to comprehend intelligently and wisely, to possess mental or spiritual insight of something beyond ordinary comprehension.<sup>112</sup> Horn has learned all the ‘gle’ of the land, a musical education that goes beyond aesthetic accomplishment. In addition, Horn has a deep understanding of music, based on both education (reading) and instinct. The Middle English etymology of *rēden* reveals that this verb connoted ‘to recite’, ‘to chant’, and ‘to perform with music or song’.<sup>113</sup> ‘Radde’, applied here to harping and romance, implies not simply that Horn has acquired expertise in these modes by reading, but also that he has the capacity to perform or recite them – Horn has practical skills, not just theoretical understanding. Thus Horn is an all-round

<sup>109</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED49576>, retrieved on 20.04.2018.

<sup>110</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 88.

<sup>111</sup> Dickson, ‘The Image’, p. 119.

<sup>112</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 88; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED22962>, retrieved on 20.04.2018.

<sup>113</sup> Karl Reichl, ‘Orality and Performance’, in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. R. Radulescu and C.J. Rushton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), pp. 132–49 (pp. 135–6); *Middle English Dictionary*, University of Michigan, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED36308>, retrieved on 08.01.2018.

learned musician, possessed of both theoretical knowledge, *musica speculativa*, and skill in performance, *musica practica*.

It is notable that in this romance, during the first rescue sequence, Horn does not wield music but King Mogin, the man who intends to marry Rimmild, does. At first, Horn hears the approaching party from far away – ‘fro fer herd glewe / wiþ tabournes bete & trumppes blewe’ (ll. 901–902) – and then, when Horn is permitted to proceed to the castle with the king’s company, the king again moves off ‘wiþ gle & game’ (l. 935).<sup>114</sup> In the hall, this imagery of ritualised music and joy continues:

þe tromps [blewe], þe glewemen pleyd  
 (þe bischopes had þe grace yseyd)  
 As miri men of molde  
 (ll. 964–966)<sup>115</sup>

The reference to trumpets and ‘glewemen’ is closely followed, in a familiar pattern, by attention to communal merriment (‘miri men’). In the hall, just as in the wedding procession, ‘gle’ remains a running theme, first heard from far away and then permeating the scene. When Horn sets out to defeat King Mogin at his own wedding tournament, thus publicly winning Rimmild for himself, he rides out with his own musical procession, ‘Wiþ trump & tabourun out of toun’, this time making use of military music to guide his steps to victory. Regrettably, the ending of the romance, which might have included a second rescue sequence similar to the musical disguise scene in *King Horn*, is missing. However, the surviving portions of the text uphold the same emphasis on the importance of musical education for wielding music’s powers, instilling joy in one’s listeners, and gesturing to a restoration of jeopardised identity and threatened social harmony. The quest Horn is invested in is not simply an individualistic one, but has consequences for the kingdom as a whole. His command of music, his ‘insigt’ into ‘al gle’, plays a role in restoring social order within the community, symbolised by five days of feasting, ‘Wiþ mete & drink riche and onest’. The ‘onest’, lavish celebrations hint at the wholesome restoration of joy and order within the polity of Horn’s kingdom.

Next, I will examine the romance of *Havelok the Dane*, in order to compare the ways in which the Horn romances and *Havelok* approach the question of music’s

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<sup>114</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 102.

<sup>115</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 103.

powers differently. The notable absence of Havelok's musical ability in the English text, and the very narrow treatment of it in the Anglo-Norman poems, along with frequent reference to education, or lack thereof, seem to suggest that musical powers are limited in instances where the protagonist has not received formal musical training. This training is the domain of the medieval elite. Horn, brought up in a royal household, has access to it, and Havelok, brought up as a destitute fisherman's son, does not.

## 2.2 The limitations of music in *Le Lai d'Haveloc* and *Havelok the Dane*

*Havelok the Dane* follows the same broad narrative pattern as *King Horn*.<sup>116</sup> Upon the deaths of their fathers, both Havelok, a prince of Denmark, and his future bride Goldeboru, an English princess, are made the wards of men who promptly break their oaths to take care of the children. Havelok's two sisters are killed by the usurper Godard, but Havelok is saved and taken to England by Grim, a fisherman, who notices Havelok's 'kynmerk', the birthmark of a king. Havelok's upbringing is marked by its lack of exposure to music: without such training, he lives as a fisherman and is married to Goldeboru by her guardian in order to humiliate the princess. However, Havelok gathers allies and frees his and Goldeboru's kingdoms from the usurpers – his success is credited to his impressive appearance and the kynmerk, though he also seems to have an instinct for combat, demonstrated in the second half of the romance.

The Havelok narrative is also found in two insular, Anglo-Norman texts. The first, Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* (c. 1141–1150), contains a section known as 'the *Haveloc* episode'. The second is the anonymous Anglo-Norman *Le Lai d'Haveloc* (early thirteenth century).<sup>117</sup> Both serve as predecessors to the English

<sup>116</sup> Preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108, and Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 4407.

<sup>117</sup> This is the narrowest set of dates proposed by Paul Dalton, 'The Date of Geoffrey Gaimar's "Estoire Des Engleis", the Connections of His Patrons, and the Politics of Stephen's Reign', *The Chaucer Review* 42 (2007), pp. 23–47 (p. 31); Alexander Bell in his edition of Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), dates it to 1135–1140, and Ian Short more narrowly to between March 1136 and April 1137 (see 'Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber Vetustissimus*', *Speculum* 69 (1994), pp. 323–43 (pp. 336–40), and 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 14 (1992), pp. 229–49 (p. 244). The Anglo-Norman version of the Havelok story can be found in two incarnations. One of these is the episode in Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, extant in three of the four manuscripts of *Estoire*: Durham Cathedral C. iv 27 (early thirteenth century), Lincoln Cathedral MS A. 4. 12 (later thirteenth century), and London, British Library, Royal 13. A xxi (late thirteenth century). The second is the *Lai d'Haveloc*, extant in London, College of Arms, Arundel XIV (Manuscript H, late fourteenth century), and Cologny-Genève, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Codex Bodmer 82 (Manuscript P) late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century. For the Anglo-Norman text, see *Le Lai d'Haveloc and Gaimar's Haveloc Episode*, ed. A. Bell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1925) and for the

romance. While Gaimar composed in Anglo-Norman, he understood English and actively engaged with the Anglo-Saxon literary tradition, largely through translating the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.<sup>118</sup> In the Anglo-Norman texts, Haveloc regains his crown and followers because he is the only one able to sound a magical horn, which corroborates the evidence of his royal birthmark and a miraculous glow that comes from his mouth when he sleeps. In the Middle English *Havelok*, music is used solely to emphasise the splendour of Havelok's court – at no point does he play music or directly benefit from music's powers. Havelok is not entirely unaware of the importance of music – he uses music as a marker of social prestige – but its function is limited to a cosmetic, ornamental, or subsidiary one since he has no facility to exploit music's affective powers. As a counterpart to Horn, Havelok is comparatively vulnerable and inhibited.

The disadvantages that Havelok faces due to his ignorance of music serve to stress the importance of musical education alongside innate musical affinity in the Havelok corpus by deliberately undermining the tropes concerned with the advantages of musical skill and learning. Even in the Anglo-Norman poems, where music is the factor that leads to Haveloc's restoration to kingship, he is only able to use it in that single instance where it serves as an aptitude test: only the rightful heir can sound the enchanted horn (ll. 671–734).<sup>119</sup> Haveloc's inherent, if limited, aptitude for music is a way of proving his true identity – a different kind of 'kynmerk' – but this does not make up for his lack of musical education. No other access to music's harmonic powers is possible, and Haveloc himself states that he knows nothing about musical performance. For this reason, he initially has no intention of sounding the horn, since all the other knights who have tried have failed:

si rei u dreit air nel feïst;  
 de Denemarche le dreit air  
 Le pö[ei]t ben soner, pur vair,  
 mes altre home ja nel cornast;  
 nuls hom pur nient s'en traveillast.  
 (ll. 679–683)

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translation see Glyn S. Burgess and Leslie C. Brook (eds.), *Twenty-Four Lays from the French Middle Ages* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016).

<sup>118</sup> *Le Lai d'Haveloc*, ed. Bell, pp. 3–23; Jamison, 'A Description', p. 48.

<sup>119</sup> Gaimar, *Estoire*, trans. Short. All subsequent quotations and translations of *Estoire des Engleis* are from this edition.

[It is a fact that the legitimate heir of Denmark was perfectly able to sound it, but no other man could ever have done so, and anyone else would simply have been wasting his breath.]

The fact that no one else can sound the enchanted horn casts music and musical skills as necessary components of a proof of royal lineage and courtly character: only the true heir ('le dreit air') of Denmark can sound it, despite the fact that Haveloc has no musical training. A comparable episode in which sounding an enchanted horn serves as a way of legitimising kingship, and one where music influences the mood and behaviour of listeners, can be found in the Joy of the Court quest in Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide* (late twelfth century). In the garden of the Castle Brandigan, Erec discovers that he must defeat the knight Mabonagran and sound an enchanted horn to win the challenge – when he does so, all who hear it feel extreme joy and a compulsion to attend court.<sup>120</sup> The prerequisite of creating such music is elite, amateur status – there is a marked difference between the professional musician and the knight who connects with the music instinctually.<sup>121</sup> In a familiar binary, musical aptitude is the result either of inborn talent (a royal birthright) or diligent practice and education (the labour and effort implicit in the phrase 's'en traveillast' above). The use of 'soner' in this passage leaves some room for ambiguity. The word is derived from 'so' and it could mean merely physical 'sound', but it also connoted more elaborate 'melody' or 'song' (as in 'sonet').<sup>122</sup> The implication here is that Haveloc's efforts produce something more structurally and recognisably musical than simple noise. Yet, strikingly, Haveloc first refuses the challenge on the basis of his ignorance: 'Quant cil le tint, si l'egardat, / E dist kë unkes ne cornat. / Al seignur dist: "Lerrai ester!"' ('He took hold of it and, looking at it, declared that he had never before blown a horn. "I'll pass," he said to the lord', ll. 703–705). He dismisses the challenge specifically because he has never blown a horn before ('unkes ne cornat'). This scene is jarring, and unmistakably draws attention to

<sup>120</sup> See Duggan, 'Afterword', p. 229. For a historical tournament where a horn needed to be sounded by contestants as part of the proceedings, see Jean Froissart's chronicle regarding a tournament held in 1390 at St Inglevert, between Calais and Boulogne, in Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. K. de Lettenhove, XIV (Brussels, 1870–77, reprinted Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1967), pp. 105–51, especially pp. 105–8. Retrieved from <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k38935n/f1.image>, accessed on 02.05.2017.

<sup>121</sup> Zaerr, *Performance*, p. 31.

<sup>122</sup> Elizabeth Aubrey, 'References to Music in Old Occitan Literature', *Acta Musicologica* 61, Fasc. 2 (1989), pp. 110–49 (pp. 111–15); *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/soner>, accessed 20.04.2018; *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500)*, <http://www.atilf.fr/dmf/>, accessed 20.04.2018.

Haveloc's lack of musical skill by frustrating readerly expectations and by undermining certain tropes, such as those relating to the protagonist's musical training and to a notable musical performance in the hall which awes the audience. The latter trope, however, is re-established once he is persuaded to sound the horn despite his reluctance, thus awing the listeners and revealing his true identity.

A similar sequence is present in *Le Lai d'Haveloc*. Haveloc bluntly refuses on account of his lack of exposure to practical music-making:

Cil I respunt: 'Sire, ne sai;  
Unques mes cor ne maniai.  
Jo n'en voldreie estre gabez'.  
(ll. 895–897)

[Haveloc replied, 'My lord, I do not know how to do this. I have never touched a horn and would not like to be laughed at'.]<sup>123</sup>

'Ne sai' suggests that Haveloc lacks knowledge, understanding, and ability ('saveir') – specifically, he has not been formally taught.<sup>124</sup> As Morgan Dickson observes in an essay on the knightly harper, Haveloc might well have been a harper if his life had followed a different path – one that offered a chance at the proper education.<sup>125</sup> Under ordinary circumstances, he would be unable to play an instrument and would indeed come off poorly from such a challenge. This narrative, however, offers an exception: while performative music in music romance is usually a result of long practice, this rule is suspended in scenes where an enchanted instrument is used to legitimise kingship. When Haveloc is persuaded to try, the result is immediate:

Tresk'a sa buche le tuchat,  
Le corn tant gentement sonat  
Ke unc ne fu ainz oï son per:  
nuls horn ne sout si bien corner!  
(ll. 715–718)

<sup>123</sup> *Le Lai d'Haveloc*, ed. Bell, p. 211; Burgess and Brook, *Twenty-Four Lays*, pp. 283–4.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Kelham and David Wilkins, *A Dictionary of the Norman or Old French Language* (London: E. Brooke, 1779), pp. 212–14; *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, [http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/saver\[1\]](http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/saver[1]), accessed on 20.04.2018.

<sup>125</sup> Morgan Dickson, 'The Image of the Knightly Harper: Symbolism and Resonance', in *Medieval Romance and Material Culture*, ed. N. Perkins (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 119–214 (p. 204).

[As soon as his mouth made contact with it, the horn sounded, and it did so so sweetly that the like of it has never been heard before: no one knew how to blow a horn so well!]

Haveloc's latent musical talent is a sign of his royal blood. Just a touch ('Tresk'a sa buche le tuchat') is enough for the horn to sound, in a description of seemingly effortless, instinctual contact that recalls the strangely precise tactility between player and instrument witnessed in *Horn's* description of playing the harp with 'nails sharpe'. The horn sounds 'gentement', a polyvalent word encompassing social as well as aesthetic connotations: it could mean nobly and courteously, but also well, sweetly, and splendidly.<sup>126</sup> The beauty of the horn call is unparalleled, extraordinary, even though Haveloc is not a musician and the instrument is not one used for melodic performance, as one might use a harp. This is a moment of musical instinct enabled by aristocratic lineage. The acoustic nature of the instrument does not matter. It is simply a gateway for harmony, and becomes representative of it, so that the beauty of the music transcends the practical limitations of the instrument.

In *Le Lai d'Haveloc*, Sigur refers to the horn as 'the king's horn' ('le cor le rei', l. 880), implying not only the fact that it belonged to the late king but that it is the horn that will identify a king, as if a king-maker of sorts. When Haveloc attempts to sound it,

Le cor benesquit e seigna.  
 Haltement e ben le sona.  
 Le cor sona par tel aïr  
 K'um le pot mult de loinz oïr.  
 A grant merveille le teneient  
 Cil ki en la meisun eteient.  
 (ll. 903–908)

[He sounded the horn with such force that it could be heard a long way off. It was regarded as a great marvel by those who were in the house.]<sup>127</sup>

<sup>126</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/gentement>, retrieved on 17.04.2018.

<sup>127</sup> *Le Lai d'Haveloc*, ed. Bell, pp. 211–12; Burgess and Brook, *Twenty-Four Lays*, pp. 283–4.

‘Haltement’ tells us that the sound is extremely loud and carries far, and ‘ben’ that he plays it ‘successfully’ or ‘correctly’ despite his lack of musical education. That the sound is considered a ‘merveille’ by those who hear it not only registers the performance as remarkable but also suggests a supernatural component, another prominent trope that would be recognised by audiences familiar with the mechanisms of music romance.<sup>128</sup> In both *Le Lai d’Haveloc* and Gaimar’s *Haveloc* episode, once the horn sounds, Haveloc passes the test and regains his crown. Yet this scene is strangely isolated and marks the only instance in which music plays a significant role in confirming Haveloc’s noble identity. Haveloc does not suddenly become a skilled musician just because of a single episode of musical instinct – he still lacks musical training and the opportunity to cultivate it into a formative part of his regal identity. Miraculously demonstrating musical facility only the once, when Haveloc goes to war he must use military skills to secure his kingship.

The next significant musical episode in Gaimar’s text occurs after Haveloc’s coronation. His indirect use of music in this episode draws attention to the absence of his own musical training. Haveloc celebrates with great festivities, enacting kingly generosity and prestige (‘Grant feste [...] e grant baldoire’, l. 757). Having won back his rightful throne, Haveloc uses musicians to create a show of splendour as a way of displaying his kingship, and his fame is preserved in ‘la vrai estoire’ (l. 758), the true history or true story – the domain of minstrels and poets. His continued fame rests in the hands of others, the minstrels, since he himself has no direct access to music’s historiographic functions or affective powers that would allow him to embed his reputation in his subjects’ memory. Unlike the composer-kings mentioned earlier in this chapter, if Haveloc wants a song made he must rely on others to do so: music has been demoted from a defining accomplishment of the individualist romance protagonist to a dispensable accessory no longer central to the protagonist’s chivalric identity.

In the Middle English *Havelok*, the limitations of music in the hands of the protagonist are even more prominent, as music is present solely as an indirect, cosmetic entity. This romance provides an anti-type, perhaps as a response (intentional or incidental) to texts such as *King Horn* which idealise music’s powers in the chivalric quest for identity. The narrative of *Havelok* follows the same broad

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<sup>128</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/merveille>, accessed 20.04.2018.

exile-and-return pattern as *Horn*, but a significant difference in their trajectory occurs early in the text. While Horn had been taken in by a king and thus received a musical education befitting a member of the elite, Havelok, raised by a fisherman, is consigned to a world of physical labour, a *vita activa* at some remove from the learned realm of the *vita contemplativa*. His success is based on the fact that he is physically strong and outwardly attractive, qualities on which other characters often remark. Denied a musical education, that necessary aspect of a nobleman's upbringing, Havelok's life takes a completely different direction from Horn's, and the conditions for becoming a musician-knight elude him. Havelok's narrative strains against the expected conventions of kingship quest romances, since the musical route towards a restored identity available to Horn remains beyond Havelok's reach.

Grim, who fosters Havelok along with his own children, provides for the physical needs of his household, making sure they have shelter and food. Havelok recognises the hard work required to do so – 'Havelok was war that Grim swank sore' (l. 788) – and decides that he must also learn to work: 'For leren sum good to gete / Swinken ich wolde for my mete' (ll. 797–798).<sup>129</sup> Learning appears twice in this part of the romance, on both occasions in reference to manual toil rather than the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. When Havelok sets out to be a fisherman, he works hard to learn his craft: 'So wolde he his mester lere' (l. 823). The combination of 'mester' and 'lere' here refers to the craft of fishing, when elsewhere in the corpus of kingship quest romances (for instance in *King Horn* above) it had been used in reference to a more genteel kind of accomplishment, innate power, or university learning.<sup>130</sup> Horn and Havelok achieve two very different kinds of mastery. In *Le Lai d'Haveloc*, Grim makes a similar point. Having brought up Haveloc like the son of a fisherman, Grim, who was once a baron, is concerned that the boy lacks 'saveir' (knowledge, understanding, ability).<sup>131</sup> Grim fears that he will not learn what he needs to know, living amongst fishermen:

K'il n'ert nori entre tel gent

<sup>129</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 79.

<sup>130</sup> University of Michigan, *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27837>, accessed on 20.03.2018.

<sup>131</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, [http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/saver\[1\]](http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/saver[1]), accessed 20.04.2018.

Ou il p[e]ust alques entendre  
 Afetement e sens aprendre  
 (ll. 162–164)

[He was not being raised among the kind of people from whom he could in some way learn good manners and acquire wisdom.]<sup>132</sup>

This collocation of learning (‘entendre’, ‘aprendre’) and wisdom (‘sens’) recurs a few lines later when Haveloc is enjoined to begin his quest to regain his heritage:

Tu ne sez ren de lur mester;  
 Ici ne poez saveir nul ben  
 Ne ja ne g[a]aigneras ren.  
 Va t’en, bel fiz, en Engleterre  
 Aprender sense avoir quere  
 (ll. 172–176)

[You know nothing of their trade. Here you cannot learn anything useful or ever make any money. Fair son, go to England in order to gain wisdom and learn to fight]<sup>133</sup>

In the first passage, ‘nori’, from ‘noreture’, refers to instruction or education, the sustaining fare – wisdom and martial skill – that should befit the noble subject like Haveloc.<sup>134</sup> In the second passage, ‘mester’ (‘craft’, ‘skill’) denotes a debased discipline of manual toil that is quite removed from the mastery (‘power’, ‘classical education’) that Haveloc ought to have according to his rank.<sup>135</sup> Once again, *Le Lai d’Haveloc* strains against the expected conventions of the kingship quest narrative, redeploying the terminology usually applied to the knightly subject in what are now unexpected or incongruous contexts.

The distinction between the usages of this shared vocabulary in the Horn and the Havelok romances is quite pronounced. Similar phrasing is used in *King Horn* to describe how Horn works as hard at being a knight as Havelok does at being a fisherman. Horn, who is newly knighted, tells Rimenhild that before he can marry her he must prove that he is a knight in more than just name:<sup>136</sup>

<sup>132</sup> *Le Lai d’Haveloc*, ed. Bell, p. 182; Burgess and Brook, *Twenty-Four Lays*, p. 275.

<sup>133</sup> *Le Lai d’Haveloc*, ed. Bell, pp. 182–3; Burgess and Brook, *Twenty-Four Lays*, p. 275.

<sup>134</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/nureture>, accessed 20.04.2018; Henri Moisy, *Glossaire Comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen: H. Delesques, 1889), p. 683.

<sup>135</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, [http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/mester\[1\]](http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/mester[1]), accessed 20.04.2018.

<sup>136</sup> Phillips, ‘Rites of Passage’, pp. 85–6.

We beth knightes yonge,  
 Of o dai al isprunge;  
 And of ure mestere  
 So is the manere:  
 (ll. 551–554)<sup>137</sup>

Here, ‘mestere’ refers to chivalric accomplishments, military and courtly, which Horn must demonstrate, especially given the use in the same passage of the word ‘manere’, which is also suggestive of courtly etiquette. Horn’s learning is chivalric – hunting, combat, eloquence, and music. Havelok’s is not: fishing, bartering, kitchen work. Thus, the difference in the social status of the two foster-households, Horn’s and Havelok’s, determines the course of the two protagonists’ lives. These formative milieux are crucial since, in the early part of their respective narratives, before they reclaim their rightful identities, both protagonists consider themselves to be of low birth. Despite his place in the king’s household, Horn speaks of his ‘thralhod’ (ll. 423, 443) and states that he is ‘ibore to lowe’, too low-born to marry the princess (l. 421).<sup>138</sup> Havelok, horrified at being forced to marry Goldeboru, argues that he cannot provide for a wife, as he has no wealth or property: even his clothes belong to the castle cook – ‘aren the kokes and ich his knave’ (l. 1146).<sup>139</sup> Thus, the only real difference which affects Havelok’s access to a musical education, and consequently music’s powers, is the status of his foster-father and the educational environment in which he is brought up.

As discussed earlier, Horn’s musical and military skills earn him a welcome at other prestigious courts, when he is exiled from his foster-father’s household. Havelok’s lack of a musical education means that he endures more hardship than Horn does on his way to reclaiming his throne. Allies are harder to come by, the princess only comes to love him after an angelic vision reveals his birthright, and he must use physical labour and combat to achieve his ends, because the musical assets of the musician-knight are unavailable to him. While Horn finds a place in the retinue of the Irish king, and is offered the king’s daughter for a bride, Havelok becomes a kitchen boy, dressed in a garment that Grim had sewn out of a sail. When Havelok comes to the attention of the traitorous Earl Godrich, he does so not

<sup>137</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 30.

<sup>138</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 27.

<sup>139</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 86.

through musical skill, a courtly joust, or a brave deed, but through his physical strength in a stone-throwing contest. All the marks of kingship he possesses have physical manifestations – unlike in the Anglo-Norman texts, it is the kynmerk that proves that Havelok is the true king, not an enchanted horn (l. 2156).<sup>140</sup> While Havelok seems to acquire instinctual swordsmanship after deciding to reclaim his kingdom, he never displays any musical skill.

The only moment when Havelok makes strategic use of music is at the end of the romance. After the rightful king has ascended his throne, there is an obligatory scene of courtly celebration. Music and romance reading come into play, heralding a new period of joy. During the coronation sequence, the ease with which Havelok has stepped into his kingly role is striking:

When he was king, ther moughte men see  
 The moste joye that moughte be:  
 Buttinge with the sharpe speres,  
 Skirming with talevas that men beres,  
 Wrastling with laddes, putting of ston,  
 Harping and piping, full good won,  
 Leik of mine, of hazard ok,  
 Romanz-reding on the book;  
 Ther moughte men here the gastes singe,  
 The gleumen on the tabour dinge.  
 (ll. 2320–2329)<sup>141</sup>

The mention of ‘joye’ is suggestive not just of the subjects’ elation at having the rightful king restored but also of musical joy, or ‘gle’, conspicuously absent from the narrative until this point. Eight lines down, there is mention of ‘gleumen’ – musicians who conjure glee, or joy, through their music – and the reading of romance, coupled with the singing of jests, conjures a scene of communal courtly recreation whose purpose is the release of joy and the generation of pleasure.<sup>142</sup> Notably, it is not Havelok who possesses the skill of manipulating his audience’s emotion through music. However, despite his simple upbringing, he demonstrates an awareness of the role of music in creating a courtly, aristocratic display. This episode marks a

<sup>140</sup> Phillips, ‘Rites of Passage’, p. 93.

<sup>141</sup> Sands, *Middle English Verse Romance*, p. 112.

<sup>142</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18735&egs=all&egdisplay=open>, retrieved on 19.03.18; Joy is mentioned several times in relation to Havelok’s reign, as we are told that ‘The feste of his coruning / Lastede with gret joying’ (ll. 2948–2949), and that he chose to remain in England ‘with joye and game’ (l. 2963). However, none of this joy is actively created by Havelok, as it is in the Anglo-Norman poem.

transformational moment, signalled by the presence of music: the beginning of a new reign by the rightful king. The harping, piping, singing, and tabours all represent the powers of harmony and evoke the ideal of social cohesion through the joining of different types of practical music – there is instrumental music, singing, and also the reading of romances, hinting at a deep-seated connection between music and poetry as courtly modes. This consonance of different modes loosely recalls the ideal of harmonious diversity espoused above in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*. The singing of *gestes* after Havelok's coronation crucially links the English text with French poetic and musical traditions, and it evokes earlier, epic, oral traditions of narrative recitation. It also creates a connection between these older heroes and our protagonist, who joins their ranks when his exploits are recorded in verse for posterity, to be recited or performed through song for future generations.<sup>143</sup> Havelok's rightful kingship is very visible (and audible) and once he has succeeded to the throne he brings 'joye' to his court, albeit without using music's powers himself.

Havelok's life is much harsher than Horn's, and much of his suffering is the result of a lack of musical and courtly education. If Horn's narrative offers an ideal of kingship achieved through the exercise of music, *Havelok* stands as an anti-type that falls short, drawing our attention to the shortcomings of Havelok's up-bringing by the deployment of several tropes that are either undermined or that appear to be undermined only to be reinforced later in the text, deliberately playing with our expectations of how musical tropes are to be deployed in the narrative. Havelok does not choose to neglect music's powers, but simply cannot access them because he was never taught music, and so his path to kingship is more challenging. He must always choose combat and physical labour in situations where Horn would choose music and courtly prowess.<sup>144</sup> In the Anglo-Norman texts, Havelok can only access music's powers once, to prove his identity, but he must rely on physical strength when facing all other challenges. The romances of *Horn* and *Havelok* seem like mirror images in their respective treatment of the powers and limitations of music in the hands of an exiled, questing knight. While the affective powers of music are hinted at in both narratives as efficacious and considerable, they depend on the acquisition of the correct musical education by the protagonist. This duality is reflective of the debate, discussed in the previous section, over whether a knight ought to be a warrior or a musician-poet,

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<sup>143</sup> Karras, *From Boys*, p. 33.

<sup>144</sup> Nickel, 'The Tournament', p. 234.

and indeed over whether musical talent is innate or only acquired through training and practice. The English text goes further than the Anglo-Norman in this treatment – while skill at combat is presented as innate to some extent, music is not. Moreover, unlike the more inflexible view of traditional musical theory, which deems *musica speculativa* superior in every way to *musica practica*, these romances suggest that the complementary disciplines are both necessary and must be combined or carefully balanced in order for the protagonist to access and subsequently wield music's powers. In this way, music is being demystified: instead of treating music as a mystical, innate power or inexplicable talent bequeathed to an exceptional few, these romances treat it as something that can be learnt, provided one acquires the right kind of education. The treatment of the musical tropes which appear in these texts suggests that music's role in society is being thought through by these poets. In the kingship quest romances, the tropes are instrumental in signifying resolution, legitimate rule, and restored order at the end of the romances, to a greater or lesser degree, in accordance with a protagonist's musical skill.

In the following chapter, I will consider how the idea of music's powers is approached in romances concerned with magic, which offer a different view of musical power and its uses from that which is advanced in the kingship quest texts. I will discuss how oral, folkloric tradition and ambivalent ideas about magic colour the way in which music, and especially musical magic, is treated in these texts, by analysing the romances of *Sir Orfeo* and *Lybeaus Desconus*. The two romances offer examples of the use of musical magic as a positive and negative force respectively, contrasting wariness about music's coercive capabilities with more positive literary representations of music's ability to charm enemies, create allies, and establish one's elite identity. The fears over music's affective reach, or at least the limits to its application, as already witnessed in the Havelok romances and explored through the process of undermining established tropes, will be further discussed in the final chapter, which is concerned with the jaded view of courtliness, musical accomplishment, and *fin'amor* in the Tristan corpus of romances.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCES ENGAGING WITH MAGIC

My objective in this chapter is to explore the way different approaches towards music and magic are portrayed in the case-study romances. I will consider how wary attitudes towards magic are voiced through literary depictions of music's affective powers in a set of romances that explicitly engage with magic. My primary focus will be on the romances of *Sir Orfeo* (late thirteenth or early fourteenth century) and *Lybeaus Desconus* (1325–1350), two romances concerned with magic, and the etymological connections between music's affective powers and magic. The tropes that play the most prominent role in these romances have to do with the power that music holds over listeners. These tropes include: music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener; a notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience; an association between music, a musician, or a valuable musical instrument and supernatural marvels, the Fairy Otherworld, or earthly magical practice; music's ability to enchant, or to conjure illusions; and music's role in evoking heavenly harmony or marking the romance's own narrative concord or resolution. If kingship quest romances consider the applications of music in helping to restore order to a fractured kingdom, to heal societal disharmony, then the romances examined in this chapter seem rather to consider the effects of music in restoring balance to the distracted individual: in these music romances, music informs the behaviour of the protagonists, harmonising their 'discordant impulses' and restoring them to wholeness.<sup>1</sup> Music forms an important constituent in these romances not only because of the role played by musicians and musical performance in terms of narrative development but also because of a stock vocabulary that shares a thematic and etymological connection with musical terminology.<sup>2</sup> In narrative terms, music additionally serves as a test of worth, as already witnessed in the role played by the horn in kingship quest romances. These

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<sup>1</sup> A.C. Spearing, 'Sir Orfeo: Madness and Gender', in *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, ed. J. Gilbert and A. Putter (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 258–72 (p. 265); Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> For a broader discussion of key musical vocabulary used by medieval musical writers, see Jeremy Yudkin, 'The Influence of Aristotle on French University Music Texts', in *Musical Theory and its Sources: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Barbera (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), pp. 173–89.

several traits solidify into recognisable conventions, as attested by the sequel to Chrétien's *Perceval* (twelfth century): Alardin du Lac lives in a pavilion that is defended by two statues, one holding a harp, and the other a dart. When a dishonourable person attempts to enter the tent, the dart is thrown at him and the harp sounds discordantly; when a worthy knight enters, the harp's music heals any wounds he might have and he awakens from a deep, restful sleep.<sup>3</sup>

In the texts under discussion, music and musicians, when they feature, typically exert a strange sway over their listeners, and in ways that seem sympathetic to a literary fascination with magic. Magic is understood in this chapter as a force that is somehow extraordinary or marvellous – an otherwise unexplained agency capable of affecting the physical world when deployed by those who possess the skill and ability to use it. Its ability to have a visceral, material effect on the listener is reflected in the ambiguous handling of musical magic in music romances. While the effects of music in these texts are neither benevolent nor malevolent in their own right, some texts depict music's affective force over listeners in a more positive light than others. In these romances, music's powers depend on the intent of the musician who wields them.<sup>4</sup> The romance of *Sir Orfeo*, for instance, offers a positive treatment of musical coercion: Orfeo's use of music's affective powers, the result of his training in music, allows him to complete his personal quest and rescue his queen. The romance of *Lybeaus Desconus*, on the other hand, offers a much more uneasy depiction of musical magic: Lybeaus, who was raised in the wilderness and thus lacks a musical education of his own, falls prey to the nefarious applications of music at the hands of sorcerers. While this power is not necessarily evil in itself, the malicious or selfish intent of the magician leads to its misuse.<sup>5</sup>

Medieval musical theory and the medieval understanding of the function of natural magic share a point of intersection in the question of music's affective powers. Prevalent cultural ideas about universal harmony, as discussed in Part I of this thesis, suggested that those who were familiar with musical theory and musical practice could use their knowledge to influence the world around them, because the world and

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<sup>3</sup> Lucy Allen Paton, *Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1903, 1970 reprint), pp. 168–9.

<sup>4</sup> Laurence Wuidar (trans. Kristen Gray Jafflin), 'Control and the Science of Affect: Music and Power in the Medieval and Renaissance Periods', in *The Emotional Power of Music: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Musical Arousal, Expression, and Social Control*, ed. T. Cochrane, B. Fantini, and K.R. Schere (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 271–86 (pp. 275–6).

<sup>5</sup> Spearing, 'Madness', p. 265; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 2.

everything in it was created out of universal harmony.<sup>6</sup> Music was believed to charm the hearer, affect mood, and conjure sleep – for good or ill – provided one knew how to use it.<sup>7</sup> Nicolas Bell emphasises the same point in his analysis of *De Speculatione Musicae* by Walter Odington.<sup>8</sup> The treatise was written for a reader who was familiar with theory and also a practising musician, and proposes that, by understanding theory, the reader could become better at singing in a way that would begin to approach universal harmony. As Bell puts it, ‘by understanding the logical justification behind everything he does, his singing will be more genuine, and the analogy with the perfect harmony and rhythm of the cosmos will become closer’.<sup>9</sup> What Bell refers to as ‘genuine’ music in Odington’s treatise corresponds with the concept that I have termed ‘authentic music’ in this thesis: music that is able to echo the harmony of the spheres and make use of its affective powers. In medieval romance, such music is no longer the prerogative of theorists alone but of practical performers too, who may also possess theoretical learning or perform for reasons other than financial gain. The affective powers of music, the notion that various scales had a particular physical, emotional, or psychological effect on the listener, inform later medieval musical theory and romance alike, uniting *musica practica* and *musica speculativa* in both cases.<sup>10</sup> The romances discussed in this chapter exploit this premise to explore the nature and extent of musical magic: as wariness of clerical necromancy spread to other forms of magic, such as natural magic, musical magic also came to be regarded with suspicion, a point to which I will return in my discussion of clerical magic and music in *Lybeaus Desconus*.<sup>11</sup> As in the kingship quest texts, education plays an important part in allowing or limiting a protagonist’s command of music’s powers.<sup>12</sup> While Orfeo receives a musical education, the untrained Lybeaus has no means of resisting or

<sup>6</sup> Glick, Livesey, and Wallis, *Medieval Science*; Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 87. See, for example, Robert Kilwardby’s *De Ortu Scientiarum Liber Divisionum Boethii*; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>7</sup> See Boethius, *De Institutione Musica*, in Boethius, *Fundamentals*, pp. 3–8, and Martianus Capella, *The Seven Liberal Arts*, trans. Stahl and Johnson, IX, 899, p. 349.

<sup>8</sup> See *Ars Musica*, by Aegidius of Zamora in McKinnon, *Source Readings*, pp. 138–9 and *Ars Musica*, ed. and trans. M. Robert-Tissot. Another example can be found in Macrobius’ *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*. See Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. W.H. Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 189–200. The Latin text can be found in Macrobius, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, trans. J. Willis (Stuttgart and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1994), pp. 99–110; Godwin, *Harmony*, pp. 25–6; Hynes-Berry, ‘Cohesion’, p. 654.

<sup>9</sup> For analyses of Walter of Evesham, see Hamilton, ‘Walter of Evesham’, p. 153; Bell, ‘Readings’, p. 378; For the text, see Walter Odington, *Summa de Speculatione Musicae*, ed. F. F. Hammond, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* 14 (Rome, 1970).

<sup>10</sup> Bell, ‘Readings’, p. 379.

<sup>11</sup> Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, pp. 22–3; Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), ‘Control and the Science’, p. 272; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>12</sup> Zaerr, ‘Songs of Love’, p. 191.

<sup>13</sup> Godwin, *Harmony*, pp. 25–6; Hynes-Berry, ‘Cohesion’, p. 654.

countering the musical powers of educated musicians. In the romances concerned with magic, music's affective or 'psychotropic' power is the result of an innate affinity and active learning: it is both an art and a science, the result of both inborn talent and educational training, and the product of *musica speculativa* coupled with *musica practica*.<sup>13</sup>

The connection between universal harmony and magic follows on from the idea of music's ubiquity in the fabric of creation and the physical world. It is through harmony that the World-Soul is connected to the physical world, and similarly all living things are connected to celestial harmony.<sup>14</sup> This idea is explored by a number of medieval theorists discussed in Part I, but for this chapter I will emphasise a particular point made by Macrobius, who was on the medieval university curriculum alongside St Augustine of Hippo and Boethius, and who was discussed by medieval writers such as Eustache Deschamps, Jacobus, and Geoffrey Chaucer in the *Parliament of Fowls*.<sup>15</sup> Macrobius describes the World-Soul as the source of life and musical harmony:

Inesse enim mundanae animae causas musicae quibus est  
intexta praediximus, ipsa autem mundi anima viventibus  
omnibus vitam ministrat:

Hinc hominum pecudumque genus vitaeque  
volantum  
Et quae marmoreo fert monstra sub aequare  
pontus.

Iure igitur musica capitur omne quod vivit, quia caelestis  
anima, qua animator universitas, originem sumpsit ex  
musica.

[We have just explained that the causes of harmony are traced to the World-Soul, having been interwoven in it; the World-Soul, moreover, provides all creatures with life: 'Thence the race of men and beast, the life of winged things, and the strange shapes the ocean bears beneath his glassy floor.' Consequently it is natural for everything that breathes to be captivated by music since

<sup>13</sup> Brenno Boccadoro (trans. Kristen Gray Jafflin), 'The Psychotropic Powers of Music During the Renaissance', in *The Emotional Power of Music*, ed. T. Cochrane, B. Fantini, and K.R. Schere, pp. 287–307 (p. 295).

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Macrobius, *Commentary*, trans. Stahl, Book II, Ch. III, Section 11, pp. 195–6, and Macrobius, *Commentarii*, trans. Willis, p. 106.

<sup>15</sup> Hamilton, 'Walter of Evesham', p. 154; Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis*; Margaret Bent, *Magister Jacobus de Ispania, Author of the Speculum Musicae* (London: Routledge, 2015); Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 63; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, pp. 3–31.

the heavenly Soul that animates the universe sprang from music.]<sup>16</sup>

The classical Greek term *mousiké* referred neither to poetry nor tonality but specifically to song as a single unified whole, loosely analogous to the theoretical argument that music is in everything and everything is music.<sup>17</sup> For this reason, it was generally accepted in medieval musical theory that the goal of the musician was to attempt to create a semblance of celestial music in the physical world, though the coercive potential of music's powers was sometimes condemned as dangerous along with other kinds of astrological and magical practice.<sup>18</sup> Edward A. Lippman, in *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece*, states that 'the ethical task of music consists in bringing the music of man into accord with its cosmic prototype'.<sup>19</sup> As I shall demonstrate, in the music romances, especially those which are engaged with magic, music is a powerful force that can be harnessed by trained musicians, such as Sir Orfeo, or by educated clerics.<sup>20</sup> The keywords that describe Orfeo's performance in the poem intimate that his music is transcendent and suggestive of a quality that extends beyond ordinary mortal music.<sup>21</sup> In this sense, what I term Orfeo's musical magic, and what Patricia Vicari calls 'magical music', is reliant on the incarnation of universal harmony and on the Orpheus figure's divine origins ('His fader was comen of King Pluto, / And his moder of King Juno', ll. 43–44).<sup>22</sup> Seth Lerer, in his article on artistry in *Sir Orfeo*, refers specifically to this power as Orfeo's 'artistry', which could move the spirit or bring about 'order in Creation', adding that '[h]e effects this restoration through his powers of music and narrative performance'.<sup>23</sup> Orfeo's harp was also used by poets in medieval literature, including romance, as a symbol of magic and enchantment as the musician and the instrument became conduits for musical magic.<sup>24</sup> In this romance, Orfeo's harping enables a kind of music that transcends the purely worldly or physical realm of *musica instrumentalis*. Lerer observes that the use of the

<sup>16</sup> Macrobius, *Commentary*, trans. Stahl, Book II, Ch. III, Section 11, p. 191; Macrobius, *Commentarii*, trans. Willis, p. 106.

<sup>17</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, pp. 139–40; Zaerr, 'Music and Magic'.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Lippman, *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 92.

<sup>20</sup> E.C. Ronquist, 'The Powers of Poetry in "Sir Orfeo"', *Philological Quarterly* 64 (1985), pp. 99–177 (pp. 99–101).

<sup>21</sup> Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', p. 272; Saunders, *Magic*, p. 200.

<sup>22</sup> Patricia Vicari, 'Sparagamos: Orpheus Among the Christians', in *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, ed. J. Warden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 63–83 (pp. 74–5); *Sir Orfeo*, ed. Laskaya and Salisbury, pp. 26–41.

<sup>23</sup> Seth Lerer, 'Artifice and Artistry in Sir Orfeo', *Speculum* 60 (1985), pp. 92–109 (p. 93).

<sup>24</sup> Aisling Byrne, *Otherworlds: Fantasy and History in Medieval Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 27.

word ‘melodie’ in reference to Orfeo’s music is particularly suggestive of this transcendence, in part due to references to Orfeo’s melody as evocative of paradise and in part due to the large portion of Middle English poetry in which this word is used in reference to a hero’s or saint’s procession into heaven.<sup>25</sup> Unsurprisingly, the instrument that defines his identity, the harp, was a staple Pythagorean emblem in antiquity and medieval culture of cosmic proportion and the harmony of the spheres, a sacred instrument closely associated with heavenly music, the music ‘of grace and goodness’ rather than the terrestrial music of ‘sensuality and ribaldry’.<sup>26</sup>

Musical magic in music romances is often ambiguous, both benevolent and malevolent, invitingly mysterious and dangerously illicit – a disquieting uncertainty that lends itself to association with the Fairy Otherworld and constitutes a generic convention or trope, to which I will return later.<sup>27</sup> The ambiguity over the source and status of musical magic as represented in the romances, is illustrated in this curious scene from *Sir Cleges* (late fourteenth century), a romance that places strong emphasis on the tropes of the helpful minstrel and the minstrel’s loyalty, especially compared to other servants. Though Sir Cleges is not a musician, and does not gain access to the powers of universal harmony as a practitioner himself, he benefits from heavenly music due to his kindness. When the poem begins, he is famed for his generosity, but after twelve years his wealth begins to run out and his retainers leave his service.<sup>28</sup> On Christmas Eve, in a moment of despairing reflection as he nostalgically dwells on bygone feasts, he hears minstrels playing a heavenly or otherworldly kind of music and becomes convinced that all shall be well. In the morning, he finds a cherry tree unseasonably in fruit, which he decides to present to King Uther, hoping for his aid. The sequence where Cleges hears minstrels on Christmas Eve is a turning-point in the narrative, in a scene suggestive of supernatural music:

Sore syheng, he herd a sowne  
 Off dyverse mynstralsy,  
 Off trumpers, pypers, and nakerners,  
 Off herpers notys and gytherners,  
 Off sytall and of sautrey.  
 Many carrals and grete dansyng

<sup>25</sup> Lerer, ‘Artifice and Artistry’, p. 104.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Masi, ‘The Christian Music of *Sir Orfeo*’, *Classical Folia* 28 (1974), pp. 3–20 (p. 19).

<sup>27</sup> Jolly, Raudvere, and Peters, *Witchcraft*, pp. 68–9; John Haines, ‘Why Music and Magic in the Middle Ages?’, *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 5 (2010), pp. 149–72 (p. 157).

<sup>28</sup> Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 17; Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 31; Duby, ‘The “Youth”’, pp. 202–3; Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, pp. 23–4.

In every syde herd he syng,  
 In every place, treuly.  
 (ll. 98–105)<sup>29</sup>

It is as though Cleges is being surrounded by harmony, performed by unseen minstrels as if from ‘every syde’, though the text leaves some room for ambiguity as to whether Sir Cleges alone hears these sounds, whether they are outwardly audible to others, or whether they are supernatural and perceptible only to this unusually receptive listener sufficiently attuned to heavenly music. This set-piece catalogue of instruments, a trope witnessed in other medieval romances, such as *Lybeaus Desconus* and *Squire of Low Degree*, follows the convention of an unrealistic assemblage of disparate instruments, both wind and string, brought harmonically together. Such scenes of polyphonic overkill, of implausible numbers of minstrels playing all at once, encode what Linda Marie Zaerr defines as a ‘marvellous encounter’, a scene of impossibly reconciled differences that was common in medieval romance and ‘may represent a kind of musical equivalent to the *locus amoenus* topos’.<sup>30</sup> The paratactic succession of distinct instruments, a staple for descriptions of feast entertainments, suggests that the normal difference (the ‘dyverse’ range) of the constituent elements has been, temporarily, suspended in this miraculous scene, and likeness prevails in place of discord. The notable sound patterning – the internal rhyme of ‘-ers’ (ll. 100–101), the sibilance of ‘Sore sygheng ... a sowne’, ‘sy tall and ... sautry’, or ‘syde herd he syng’ (ll. 98, 102, 104), the anaphora of ‘Off’ or ‘In every’ (ll. 99–102, 104–105) – suggests an attempt on the poet’s part to replicate the sense of accord, the magical elision of difference, through his own euphonic combination of sounds. Cleges, notably, hears ‘carols’, a term poised between round dances and religious songs.<sup>31</sup> Any opposition between secular and sacred has been dispensed with, as the minstrels produce a kind of music in which expected binaries are magically collapsed: sacred and secular, heavenly and human, religious and courtly. Cleges interprets this festive, supernatural music as a message from Christ to abandon his sorrow and celebrate, the ‘myrth’ (l. 112) engendered by the music prompting him to a renewed commitment to charity. As suddenly as this music had appeared it is gone, implicitly the result of otherworldly intervention, the only residue of the episode being the cherry tree, the key to Cleges’s

<sup>29</sup> *Sir Cleges*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. A. Laskaya and E. Salisbury (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Middle English Texts, Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 377–93. The quote comes from Text B, found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61, which is the more complete manuscript.

<sup>30</sup> Zaerr, ‘Music and Magic’.

<sup>31</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED6846>, accessed 17.03.2018.

financial salvation. In view of the ambiguous representation of supernatural music in this romance, I will begin with a brief overview of the connection between musical magic and musical theory. Lastly, I will examine the romance of *Sir Orfeo* as an example of the positive use of musical magic, and *Lybeaus Desconus* as a testimony to the misuse of this power.

### 1. The connection between musical theory and magic

There is a marked gap in the scholarship that addresses the intersection of music and magic in the Middle Ages. Apart from cursory mentions of this relationship in broader studies such as Richard Kieckhefer's *Magic in the Middle Ages*, the only in-depth study of musical magic is to be found in *La Musique et la Magie* by Jules Combarieu (1909), and even this work does not focus on the medieval period. A more recent article by John Haines, 'Why Music and Magic in the Middle Ages?', in part addresses this gap in medieval scholarship, pointing out connections between chant and incantation, astrology and celestial music, and musical notation and esoteric sigils.<sup>32</sup> Haines states that medieval musical treatises contain vocabulary and concepts that are closely related to magical practice, a shared linguistic arena that has yet to receive much critical attention beyond Linda Marie Zaerr's seminal article.<sup>33</sup> I hope that my work in this chapter will go some way towards beginning to fill this gap, by examining musico-magical symbolism and vocabulary in select medieval romances.

Magical elements are present in both *musica speculativa* (for instance in musical treatises) and *musica practica* (for example, in the use of liturgical chant in necromantic practice). A number of manuscripts from the Middle Ages include musical treatises bound together with magical texts, including Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 3713 (eleventh-to-thirteenth century), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 7378A, and London, British Library, MS Royal 12 C VI (thirteenth-to-fourteenth century). John Haines has proposed that this combination of musical theory and magic is deliberate, given their unifying themes and traits such as the coded writing of musical notation on the one hand and esoteric formulas on the

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<sup>32</sup> Kieckhefer, *Magic*; Jules Combarieu, *La Musique et la Magie: Étude sur les Origines Populaires de l'Art Musical, Son Influence, et Sa Fonction dans les Sociétés* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1909); Haines, 'Why Music', pp. 149–72.

<sup>33</sup> Haines, 'Why Music', p. 154; Zaerr, 'Music and Magic'.

other, which share visual and functional similarity.<sup>34</sup> Natural magic used the innate, marvellous properties of objects, substances, and astrological forces to manipulate people and events.<sup>35</sup> The idea is evoked in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, in which Chaucer's Physician is said to practise 'magyk naturel' (l. 416) by studying the way the stars cause maladies.<sup>36</sup> The magic that might lie behind medieval music was usually believed to be powered by natural, celestial forces making use of universal harmony rather than heretical, demonic worship.<sup>37</sup>

Music's affective powers allow the musician to influence his listeners. The precept is well attested in classical antiquity, and endures into the Neoplatonism of Plotinus in the late antique period. Plotinus' description in the *Enneads* (c. 270 CE) of the latent powers of music countenances the possibility of a magical force:

Πέφυκε δὲ καὶ ἐπωδαῖς τῷ μέλει καὶ τῇ τοιαύτῃ ἡχῇ καὶ  
τῷ σχήματι τοῦ δρωόντος· ῥέλκει γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα, οἷον τὰ  
ἐλεεινὰ σχήματα καὶ φθέγματα. [Ἄλλ' ἢ ψυχῇ] οὐδὲ γὰρ  
ἡ προαίρεσις οὐδ' ὁ γόγος ὑπὸ μουσικῆς θέλγεται, ἀλλ' ἡ  
ἄλογος ψυχῇ, καὶ οὐ θαυμάζεται ἡ γοητεία ἢ  
τοιαύτη· τῆαίτοι φιλοῦσι κηλούμενοι, κἂν μὴ τοῦτο  
αἰτῶνται παρὰ τῶν τῇ μουσικῇ χρωμένων.

[The tune of an incantation, a significant cry, the mien of the operator, these too have a natural leading power over the soul upon which they are directed, drawing it with the force of mournful patterns or tragic sounds – for it is the reasonless soul, not the will or wisdom, that is beguiled by music, a form of sorcery which raises no question, whose enchantment, indeed, is welcomed, exacted, from the performers.]<sup>38</sup>

The melody of such an incantatory tune has a power ostensibly impossible to resist. Plotinus seems both fascinated and terrified by the total vulnerability of the soul (at least of the soul unchaperoned by reason) to music's enchantments, and by the way in

<sup>34</sup> For a more detailed discussion, and a table comparing the contents of the manuscripts, see Haines, 'Why Music', pp. 160–63.

<sup>35</sup> Corinne Saunders, 'Subtle Crafts: Magic and Exploitation in Medieval English Romance', in *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance*, ed. L. Ashe, I. Djordjević, and J. Weiss (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 108–24 (p. 109); Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 9; Page, *Magic*, pp. 31–3.

<sup>36</sup> Corinne Saunders, 'Violent Magic in Middle English Romance', in *Violence in Medieval Literature: A Casebook*, ed. A. Classen (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 228–9; Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic', *American Historical Review* 99 (1994), pp. 813–36 (p. 834).

<sup>37</sup> Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', pp. 283–5.

<sup>38</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. S. Mackenna, revised by B. S. Page (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p. 323. For the Greek text, see *Les Ennéades de Plotin*, trans. M.N. Bouillet (Paris: Hachette, 1857), iv, 40, retrieved from <http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/philosophes/plotin/enneade44gr.htm>, accessed 13.03.2018.

which music might be likened to a kind of sorcery that disarms the soul's instinctual guards, namely its innate ability to raise questions or to put up resistance. This kind of magical music presents a perilous force that is, inadvertently, welcomed by the defenceless soul. In his English translation of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* (trans. 1387), John Trevisa recounts the legend of Pythagoras hearing the hammers that inspired his discovery of intervals and harmony. He goes on to say that Pythagoras could 'bringe here mynde out of strif of þowʒtes to reste, by song and soun of stringes' – music was capable of affecting the emotions and mind of the hearer, a therapeutic force restoring the troubled or distracted listener to equanimity and composure.<sup>39</sup>

The music romances discussed in this chapter draw on an established connection between the affective powers of music and effects produced through magical arts.<sup>40</sup> Some aspects of this connection were viewed in a positive light, and others less so. Corinne Saunders has remarked that the appeal of magic lies precisely in its power and ambiguity, because it provides the person wielding it with a mysterious advantage which tends to be temporarily obtained or summoned in a moment of high emotional pitch.<sup>41</sup> A convenient catalyst of narrative, magic (and for our purposes specifically musical magic) remains a troubling plot device because of its implications for the character of those who wield it and because of its disturbingly invisible reach. Medieval and early modern distrust of musical powers has precedence in the classical era: Plato, for instance, distrusted musical power left in the wrong hands, going so far as to suggest that certain modes and lyrico-poetic subject-matter should be outlawed as they provoke aggressive, licentious, or rebellious behaviour.<sup>42</sup> Music's ability to cause harm is also registered by Isidore's *Etymologies* (VIII.ix.9), which describe the way sorcerers use songs (*carminis*): *Hi et elementa concutiunt, turbant mentes hominum, ac sine ullo veneni haustu violentia tantum carminis interimunt* ('They agitate the elements, disturb the minds of people, and slay without any drinking of poison, using the violence of spells alone').<sup>43</sup> *Carminis*, better

<sup>39</sup> Hollander, *Untuning*, p. 62; for John Trevisa, see John Trevisa, *Polychronicon Ranulphi*, pp. 203–13; Hynes-Berry, 'Cohesion', p. 654.

<sup>40</sup> Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Saunders, 'Subtle Crafts', p. 108.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Laws, 701a. Haines, 'Why Music', pp. 149–72; Penelope Gouk, 'Music as a Means of Social Control: Some Examples of Practice and Theory in Early Modern Europe', in *The Emotional Power of Music*, ed. T. Cochrane, B. Fantini, and K.R. Schere, pp. 307–14 (pp. 307–8); Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, pp. 23–6; Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', pp. 275–6.

<sup>43</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, trans. S.A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 182; Latin text retrieved from *The Latin Library*, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/isidore/8.shtml>, accessed 13.05.2018.

translated here as ‘songs’ than ‘spells’, implies that magicians use the violence of sung music to destructive purpose.

Education was needed to enable music to be used correctly, and correct use enabled the wholesome transformation of listeners.<sup>44</sup> Late antique theorists, such as Augustine in his *De Musica*, were quick to condemn particular kinds of music, if not music in its entirety, because of a fear of its ability to tempt the senses and affect emotions, even against the listener’s will.<sup>45</sup> Music was so closely tied with the theory and practice of magic that there was no clear boundary between music intended as magical and music as a ‘non-magical force’.<sup>46</sup> This concern about music’s more dangerous use is found in *De Eodem et Diverso* by Adelard of Bath (twelfth century), a philosopher and practical musician who discusses the favourable powers of universal harmony, such as calming and healing, before letting his argument take a darker turn, detailing how music’s effect on animals is used as an unfair advantage to hunt and trap them.<sup>47</sup> Fish are driven into nets by the sound of a bell, deer are unwillingly put to sleep by hunters through the use of song, and wild, even dangerously untameable, birds are lured by song to be trapped in snares.<sup>48</sup> Music can be used to aid but it can also be used to cause great harm.

For some romances, too, magic was neither good nor evil in itself, and its effects depended on the intent of the user.<sup>49</sup> A protagonist’s ethical qualities and ingenuity were demonstrated partly by how he chose to use musical magic. A continuity in the way magic is portrayed in the romances and in the vocabulary describing its uses can be found across several countries, authors, and generations. The shared musico-magical vocabulary includes words such as variants of the Middle English ‘magik’ and ‘merveille’.<sup>50</sup> Another example of a lexical connection between music and magic can be found in the kinship between the Old French ‘canter’ (‘to sing’), ‘incantacion’ (‘enchantment’), ‘encantement’ (which could mean ‘song’, ‘chorus’, or ‘magical spell’), and ‘enchanter’ (‘to enchant’), or the Middle English ‘chaunten’ (both ‘to sing, to descant’ and ‘to lay under a magic spell’), ‘incantacioune’

<sup>44</sup> Gouk, ‘Music as a Means of Social Control’, p. 308. See also Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), ‘Control and the Science’, pp. 271–86.

<sup>45</sup> Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, pp. 45–8; Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), ‘Control and the Science’, p. 272.

<sup>46</sup> Tomlinson, *Music*, p. xiii; Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*, pp. 18–19; Saunders, ‘Violent Magic’, p. 227.

<sup>47</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Adelard of Bath, *Conversations with his Nephew: On the Same and the Different, Questions on Natural Science, and on Birds*, ed. and trans. C. Burnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 69–86 (p. 71); Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, pp. 45–8.

<sup>48</sup> For the translation, see Adelard of Bath, *Conversations*, p. 53.

<sup>49</sup> Saunders, ‘Violent Magic’, p. 239.

<sup>50</sup> Sweeney, *Magic*, pp. 18–19, 28–9.

(‘magic’, ‘sorcery’, ‘a charm’), ‘enchaînement’ or ‘chaînement’ (‘the act of using magic’ or ‘magical power’), and ‘enchaînent’ (‘to hold spellbound’).<sup>51</sup> Christopher Wilson and Michela Calore similarly define ‘charm’ as ‘the practice of chanting or reciting verse with magic power’.<sup>52</sup> These words share a common Latin ancestor, *incantare* (‘to bewitch’, ‘put a spell upon’, and, most importantly, ‘to sing spells’), which in turn derives from *cantare* / *canere* (‘to sing’).<sup>53</sup> Because of this connection, wariness of magic parallels a wariness of musical magic, as evidenced by such texts as *Lybeaus Desconus* and *Sir Degaré* (early fourteenth century), whose protagonists lack a musical education and view musical magic as a danger.<sup>54</sup>

Medieval attitudes towards magical practice evolved, as magic came to be perceived as a heretical activity more than a learned one. The scholarly practice of magic, based on ancient Jewish, Arabic, and Greco-Roman lore, began to take root in the late eleventh century, but with it arose the practice of necromancy (black magic) and thus heresy, earning censure from the Church and becoming a severely punishable offence by the fourteenth century.<sup>55</sup> This condemnation is evidenced by surviving treatises produced by Church authorities, such as the decretal *Super Illius Specula* (1326) of Pope John XXII, and fourteenth-century inquisitorial manuals such as the *Directorium Inquisitorium* (1376) of Nicholas Eymerich, which differentiated between heresy and sorcery.<sup>56</sup> Eymerich argued that the nature of magic, as either innocent or demonic, depended on practice and intent. Common sorcery did not involve ritual techniques, invocation, or worship of spirits as necromancy did: it had more mundane applications such as healing, finding lost objects, and changing the weather.<sup>57</sup> However, over time, the church began to subsume this practice within the existing

<sup>51</sup> Zaerr, ‘Songs of Love’, p. 314; Zaerr, ‘Music and Magic’; *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/enchantment> and <https://www.etymonline.com/word/chant>, retrieved on 17.03.2018; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 68–9; Tomlinson, *Music*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>52</sup> Christopher Wilson and Michela Calore, *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary* (London: Continuum, 2007), p. 93. See *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/incantation>, retrieved on 17.03.2018; Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*, pp. 155–6; Zaerr, ‘Music and Magic’; Tomlinson, *Music*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>54</sup> Page, *Magic*, p. 46; Michael D. Bailey, ‘From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages’, *Speculum* 76 (2001), pp. 960–90 (p. 963); Jolly, Raudvere, and Peters, *Witchcraft*, pp. 23–4; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 194.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example: Frank Klaassen, ‘Learning and Masculinity in Manuscripts of Ritual Magic of the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 38 (2007), pp. 49–76; Jolly, Raudvere, and Peters, *Witchcraft*, pp. 4–13; Edward Peters, *The Magician, The Witch, and the Law* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978), pp. 33–34; Bailey, ‘From Sorcery’, p. 964; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 19–36. On changes in the treatment and perception of magic, especially literate magic, see Frank Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2013).

<sup>56</sup> Alan C. Kors and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe 1100–1700* (London: Dent, 1973), pp. 82–92; Bailey, ‘From Sorcery’, p. 971; Jolly, Raudvere, and Peters, *Witchcraft*, pp. 23–4.

<sup>57</sup> Bailey, ‘From Sorcery’, pp. 971, 977; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 56–94.

framework of clerical heresies.<sup>58</sup> In addition to clerical strictures, another factor that influenced magic's initial acceptability and subsequent condemnation was its varying prominence in the aristocratic court.<sup>59</sup> Courtiers hired sorcerers and practised magic themselves in order to secure wealth and status, leading to the growth of magic-related literature aimed at a courtly readership.<sup>60</sup> In turn, this interest in and widespread practice of courtly magic led to an escalating fear of magic, most prominent in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as certain courtiers suspected supernatural interference to be the cause of their misfortunes.<sup>61</sup>

Magic was simultaneously a source of fear and fascination, and it is unsurprising that the literary alignment of music and magic reflected this ambiguity.<sup>62</sup> The categorisation of musical magic remained ambiguous into the fifteenth century, as even the widely-read exorcism treatise, *Malleus Maleficarum* (surviving in 34 copies between 1486–1699), considered musical powers to be natural and capable of banishing evil, useable by those who knew how to command them. This conviction of music's ability to banish demons endures as late as the musical treatise *Complexus Effectuum Musices* (before 1480) of Johannes Tinctoris.<sup>63</sup> Thus, in order to avoid the controversy associated with real magical practice, the source behind the marvellous and magical in romance had to remain inexplicable, an ambiguity that helped blur the line between the licit, natural harmonic powers of the World-Soul and the illicit, supernatural magic of the Otherworld.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the source of the magic is usually left entirely out of the narrative.<sup>65</sup> In the case of musical magic, universal harmony would have been the implicit source, but the nature of this magic is still deliberately downplayed to avoid problematic associations and to retain an air of ambiguity as to its origins and nature.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Page, *Magic*, p. 45; Bailey, 'From Sorcery', pp. 965–6, particularly, p. 977; Kieckhefer 'Specific Rationality', p. 820.

<sup>59</sup> Peters, *The Magician*, p. 46; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 96–100.

<sup>60</sup> Peters, *The Magician*, p. 50; Page, *Magic*, p. 46; Jolly, Raudvere, and Peters, *Witchcraft*, pp. 21–2; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 96–100; Bailey, 'From Sorcery', p. 967.

<sup>61</sup> Peters, *The Magician*, p. 46; Kieckhefer 'Specific Rationality', p. 834; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 96–100.

<sup>62</sup> Kieckhefer, 'Specific Rationality', p. 834; Haines, 'Why Music', p. 159.

<sup>63</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', pp. 284–5.

<sup>64</sup> John Finlayson, 'The Marvellous in Middle English Romance', *Chaucer Review* 33.4 (1999), pp. 363–408 (p. 388); Kieckhefer, 'The Specific Rationality', pp. 820–1; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 112.

<sup>65</sup> Finlayson, 'The Marvellous', pp. 367, 388; Sweeney, *Magic*, pp. 26–7. For the development of medieval ideas of magic, and their classical inheritance, see Dukes, *Magic and Witchcraft*.

<sup>66</sup> Macrobius, *Commentary*, trans. Stahl, p. 193; Macrobius, *Commentarii*, trans. Willis, pp. 102–3; Haines, 'Why Music', p. 157.

As an ontologically neutral force, musical magic gains its valence depending on how it is handled.<sup>67</sup> On the one hand, writers of romance recuperated magic by allying it with medicine and the sciences of the quadrivium.<sup>68</sup> The coronation robe in Chrétien de Troyes' late twelfth-century *Erec et Enide* is made by fairies and embroidered with symbols of the quadrivium, including music.<sup>69</sup> This interweaving of traditions and learned associations elevated magic in romances beyond mere literary convention or aesthetic distraction in a narrative to something more symbolic or emblematic of deep-seated cultural activities.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, romance also drew upon the distrust of magic especially as it was aligned with violence.<sup>71</sup> For this reason, *Sir Orfeo* and *Lybeaus Desconus* offer such different treatments of musical magic. To early medieval theorists, true music was a science, not an art or craft, yet in these narratives ideas of the affective powers of music combine with Otherworld artifice and supernatural force to produce protagonists such as Orfeo whose command of music stems from both instinct and formal learning, as well as from both *musica speculativa* and *musica practica*, and whose applications of music are uncertainly split between usefully therapeutic and mysteriously unknowable.

## 2. *Sir Orfeo* and musical joy

The Breton lai romance of *Sir Orfeo* combines the classical Orpheus myth, known in the medieval period through Virgil, Ovid, and Boethius, among others, with elements from earlier Celtic folk-tales.<sup>72</sup> There is no surviving source for the poem, although it was preceded by a lost Anglo-Norman *Lai d'Orphéy*, which is referenced in the thirteenth-century *Le Lai de l'Éspine* ('le lai lor sonne d'Orphéy', l. 185) and the late twelfth-century *Floire et Blancheflor* ('et harpe le lai d'Orphéy', l. 862), among

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<sup>67</sup> Saunders, *Magic*, p. 179.

<sup>68</sup> Sweeney, *Magic*, pp. 13–14; Peters, *The Magician*, pp. 63–81; Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, p. 31.

<sup>69</sup> Saunders, *Magic*, p. 184; Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, p. 31.

<sup>70</sup> Sweeney, *Magic*, pp. 13–14.

<sup>71</sup> Saunders, 'Violent Magic', pp. 228–9.

<sup>72</sup> Donovan, *Breton Lay*, pp. 152, 157; Longworth, 'Sir Orfeo', pp. 3–7; Helen Conrad-O'Briain, 'Some Reflections on Sir Orfeo's Poetic Mirror of Polity', in *Studies in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance: Texts in Honour of John Scattergood*, ed. A.M. D'Arcy and A.J. Fletcher (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 76–90 (pp. 80–81); Saunders, *Forest*, p. 133; Baswell, 'Antiquities', p. 239. For a discussion of the ways in which medieval writers appropriated and changed the Orpheus legend to be relevant to their contemporary society, see John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970). Also see *Consolation of Philosophy*, Book III, poem 12, which was also referenced by Geoffrey Chaucer.

others.<sup>73</sup> There are also two surviving Alfredian translations of the Orpheus myth in Old English, part of Boethius's *Consolacione*: these texts make no mention of the Fairy King, ympe-tree, or happy ending, which suggests that these elements creep into the story later, most likely in the courtly, post-Conquest world.<sup>74</sup> The Old English and later medieval manuscripts attest to continued interest in the Orpheus myth. The widespread references to the Orpheus myth in literary and instructional texts suggest that it was widely known as a cultural reference-point. As discussed in the previous chapter, the appearance of *Sir Orfeo* in a large compilation such as the Auchinleck Manuscript (ostensibly intended for a lay readership of gentry) and a personal anthology such as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61 (a codex scribed idiosyncratically by one Rate around 1500), both of which contain instructional and religious texts besides romances, suggests that it held particular appeal for elite patrons compiling collections for domestic use.<sup>75</sup> *Sir Orfeo*'s presence in the Auchinleck Manuscript alongside kingship quest romances suggests these romances were of interest to the same readerships, and were read in the same period.<sup>76</sup> Both *Sir Orfeo* and *Lybeaus Desconus* are present together in Ashmole 61, and *Sir Orfeo* and *Sir Degaré* co-circulate in the Auchinleck Manuscript, suggesting that these pairs of texts might have been read together, possibly for their contrasting depictions of music.

The English romance adapts the Orpheus myth for a medieval audience by replacing the underworld with the Otherworld, and giving the story a happy ending, because happy endings (especially endings sanctioned through the stable, legal institution of marriage) had become a staple of Breton Lais in the English tradition.<sup>77</sup> Whereas Eurydice, the wife of Orpheus, is bitten by a snake and passes to the underworld, her medieval analogue Heurodis falls asleep under a grafted fruit tree

<sup>73</sup> Donovan, *Breton Lay*, pp. 146–7; Alice Lasater, 'Under the Ympe-Tre or: Where the Action is in "Sir Orfeo"', *Southern Quarterly* 12 (Jul. 1974), pp. 353–64 (pp. 355–6); *Sir Orfeo*, ed. A.J. Bliss (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. xl–xli, 31–33; Spearing, 'Madness', pp. 260–61; E. Lyle, 'Orpheus and Tristan', *Medium Aevum* 50 (1981), pp. 305–8 (p. 305). For the *Lai d'Épine*, see Alexandre Micha (ed.), *Lais Féeriques des XIIIe et XIIIe Siècles* (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1992). See *Le Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, ed. J-L. Leclanche (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1980).

<sup>74</sup> Lasater, 'Ympe-Tre', p. 354; *Sir Orfeo* survives in three manuscripts: Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck), c. 1330; London, British Library, MS Harley 3810, from the early fifteenth century; and the late fifteenth-century Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61. The two surviving Alfredian translations in Old English, part of Boethius' *Consolation*, are found in London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho A vi (mid tenth century), and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 180 (mid eleventh century). See Spearing, 'Madness', p. 258.

<sup>75</sup> Edwards, 'Manuscripts and Readers', p. 96; Hanna, 'Auchinleck Manuscript', pp. 94–5; Edwards and Pearsall, 'English Poetic Texts', pp. 257–8; Hahn and Symons, 'Medieval Romance', p. 354.

<sup>76</sup> Hanna, 'Auchinleck Manuscript', pp. 94–5; Edwards and Pearsall, 'English Poetic Texts', pp. 257–8.

<sup>77</sup> Donovan, *Breton Lay*, p. 148; Baswell, 'Antiquities', pp. 239–40; Spearing, 'Madness', pp. 260–61.

(‘ympe-tre’) and is abducted by the king of Fairy.<sup>78</sup> Aggrieved, Orfeo leaves his kingdom under the rule of his steward and sets off to wander the wilds, taking nothing but his harp. Eventually, after ten years in the wilderness, Orfeo follows a company of fairy women back to their country, claims to be a minstrel, gains admittance to the Otherworld, and wins back Heurodis from the Fairy King as his reward for a good performance. The narrative arc is pointedly at odds with Ovid’s version, in which Orpheus asks that Eurydice’s life and fate be rewoven ‘to the music of his harp’: the gods pity him because of his mournful harping and allow him to retrieve her, provided he does not look back or speak to her until they are clear of the underworld, but at the last minute he looks back and she is lost forever.<sup>79</sup> Alone, Orpheus wanders the world playing his harp so beautifully that the beasts, plants, and stones move to be nearer his music and obey his will. The wild animals are not afraid to go near him, nor do they attack, attesting music’s ability to calm and charm, to engender sympathy, to defuse hostility. Most notably, Orpheus comes to an unpleasant end when he uses his music to enchant a group of young men to follow him, forsaking their lovers, and is torn apart by a group of spurned Bacchic women as a consequence. In Ovid’s narrative, his music leads ultimately to a physical fragmentation of his body into broken parts, which follows the emotional fragmentation he suffers at the loss of Eurydice. Sir Orfeo, by contrast, succeeds in saving his wife, and his performance at the end of the text results in reintegration and cohesion, as he reclaims his rightful identity and all his listeners share in the experience of transcendent musical bliss upon hearing him play.

The purpose of the two Orphic narratives is different, as is the reception of the protagonist’s music, since the Middle English version stresses a positive depiction of the affective powers of this music. Ovid’s concept of the soul being rewoven to the music of a harp (Orpheus’ and Sir Orfeo’s most important possession) draws on the symbolism of the harp as an instrument representative of universal harmony. Eurydice’s soul is animated by music, and returns to music after death. The close connection between the soul and universal harmony – between manifestations of *musica humana* and *musica mundana* – is important in this narrative. In the Middle English version, we witness Orfeo’s growing connection to the powers of music as he plays alone in the wilderness and learns to rely on this power, a connection more

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<sup>78</sup> Lasater, ‘Ympe-Tre’, p. 357; Curtis R. H. Jirsa, ‘In the Shadow of the Ympe-Tre: Arboreal Folklore in Sir Orfeo’, *English Studies* 89 (2008), pp. 141–51 (p. 143).

<sup>79</sup> Donovan, *Breton Lay*, p. 149.

obviously between *musica humana* and *musica instrumentalis*.<sup>80</sup> The direct connection between the soul and music in Ovid's narrative is suggestive of an innate musical affinity, which the composer of the Middle English text supplements with greater emphasis on Orfeo's musical learning and practice.

The very taxonomy of the 'lai' implies a form that is intrinsically invested in music and might even be expected to be sung, given its self-conscious references to its distant origins in oral minstrelsy. *Sir Orfeo* opens with a nostalgic portrait of the Bretons who 'token an harp in gle and game / And maked a lay and gaf it name' (ll. 19–20), although when Chaucer's Franklin ostentatiously launches into an example of the 'layes, / Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge' he leaves some scope for ambiguity as to whether such 'layes with his instrumentz they songe, / Or elles redder hem for hir plesaunce' (ll. 710–711, 712–713). Whether or not *Sir Orfeo* was performed to music, music was woven into the narrative, linguistically and thematically. The use of metanarrative tropes is another notable feature of *Sir Orfeo*. The romance is framed by one of these tropes at the beginning (in its reference to earlier minstrels or kings composing and singing songs of noteworthy heroes and deeds) and at the end of the text (as its conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance). This literary self-consciousness seems deliberate and serves to acknowledge the ways in which some of the romances discussed in this thesis draw upon certain metanarrative tropes.

When Orfeo's wife, Heurodis, is abducted by the Fairy King, Orfeo abandons his throne to live in the wilderness, until he finds his way into the fairy realm at long last. He does not set out in search of his wife because he thinks the matter is hopeless, and at that point perhaps it is.<sup>81</sup> He begins the narrative as a consummate harper at court, but I would suggest that it is only after his sojourn in the wilderness that he is able to save the queen, because he has become aware of a more innate musical connection, removed from stylistic courtly performance, which brings into play the trope of the exiled musician. This romance intimates the necessity for both practical and learned excellence and also an innate connection to music. In this text, isolation leads to a positive outcome because it is used to strengthen musical understanding: Orfeo, keeping possession of his harp as the only remnant of his courtly existence,

<sup>80</sup> Macrobius, *Commentary*, trans. Stahl, Book II, Ch. III, Section 11, pp. 195–6; Macrobius, *Commentarii*, trans. Willis, p. 106.

<sup>81</sup> Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, 'The Significance of Sir Orfeo's Self-Exile', *Review of English Studies* 18 (1967), pp. 245–52 (pp. 246–7); Conrad-O'Briain, 'Reflections', pp. 83–4; Ronquist, 'The Powers', p. 103.

must play and contemplate music in solitude, away from the distracting trappings of court.<sup>82</sup>

According to Boethius, self-knowledge is necessary for tapping into universal harmony, because *humanam vero musicam quisquis in sese ipsum descendit intellegit* ('whoever penetrates his own self perceives *musica humana*', I.2).<sup>83</sup> *Musica humana* was an integral part of human creation and the human soul, not otherwise perceived by human ears. As James Anderson Winn neatly sums up, music is able to conjure extreme joy because, according to medieval theorists, 'the power of ordinary, physically produced and perceived music arose from its being a faint worldly echo of the perfect mathematical music of the universe'.<sup>84</sup> The music of the spheres, *musica mundana*, could reach and affect the mortal *musica instrumentalis* through *musica humana*, which served as a bridge between the two.<sup>85</sup> Orfeo must transcend the ordinary, mortal *musica instrumentalis* in order to master a higher degree of music, and this exaltation can only be achieved at some remove from the court setting, which is too worldly and distracting and in which music is too tightly bound up with courtly identity to transcend the physical world.<sup>86</sup> This sense of remove from the court is quite different from the depiction of music in kingship quest romances, in which music plays a significant role in the courtly social setting. This difference in perception can partly be attributed to the different preoccupation of the romances concerned with magic, which are more interested in the use and misuse of music's powers than in the practical use of music in securing allies and engendering social cohesion (although these factors do still play an important role in the texts).

Despite his courtly musical education and prodigious skill, it is only after a period of practice and contemplation in the wilderness that Orfeo appears to access the powers of universal harmony: something changes as, instead of relying on his knights or his might as a king, he begins to rely on music, having left the court barefoot, with nothing but his harp, undertaking the life of a hermit or penitent. According to Guillaume de Machaut, Orfeo overcomes all obstacles in his way precisely because of

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<sup>82</sup> Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness*, pp. 64–6; Conrad-O'Briain, 'Reflections', pp. 83–5; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 27.

<sup>83</sup> See Boethius, in Boethius, *Fundamentals*; Rankin, '*Naturalis Concordia*', p. 7; Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*, pp. 18–19; Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', pp. 275–6.

<sup>84</sup> Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, p. 33.

<sup>85</sup> Rankin, '*Naturalis Concordia*', p. 7; Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, p. 33.

<sup>86</sup> Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', p. 276.

his reliance on the power of music.<sup>87</sup> This idea simultaneously feeds into the perception of authentic music as the domain of the elite amateur musician, and critiques the courtly environment as too shallow and distracting to foster that very kind of elevated music that evokes universal harmony.<sup>88</sup>

Orfeo's harping provides a source of comfort during his self-exile, tames wild beasts, charms the Fairy King, reanimates the inert Heurodis, and re-establishes Orfeo's kingly status. As a conduit for universal harmony, his harping represents a civilizing force that enables him to complete his personal quest and also to bring harmony to the kingdom at large, drawing on tropes familiar from the kingship quest romances of the last chapter. Orfeo's adventure quest takes place in the Fairy Otherworld, an imprecise setting which allows for greater exploration of the marvellous and the magical.<sup>89</sup> Crucially, during his time in exile in the wilderness, he abandons his name and courtly identity: the courtly trappings that were central in kingship quest romances must here be stripped away in order for a deeper connection with music to become possible.<sup>90</sup> Even though Orfeo behaves more like a musician than a soldier throughout the text, at the end of the poem he is lauded as a worthy minstrel *and* knight, and his own story is preserved for all time by minstrels who make songs about his adventure.<sup>91</sup>

Harpours in Bretaine after than  
 Herd hou this mervaile bigan,  
 And made herof a lay of gode likeing,  
 And nempned it after the king.  
 That lay 'Orfeo' is y-hote;  
 Gode is the lay, swete is the note.  
 (ll. 597–602)<sup>92</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Nigel Wilkins, 'The Devil's Music', in *Words and Music in Medieval Europe* (Surrey: Ashgate Variorum, 2011), XVII, pp. 1–11 (p. 10); Leach, *Guillaume*, p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Albrecht Classen, 'The Quest for Knowledge Within Medieval Discourse: The Metaphysical and Philosophical Meaning of Love', in *Words of Love and Love of Words in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. A. Classen (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2008), pp. 1–54 (pp. 38–9); James Wade, *Fairies in Medieval Romance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 15.

<sup>89</sup> Byrne, *Otherworlds*, p. 26; Mary Ferguson, 'Folklore in the "Lais" of Marie de France', *Romanic Review* 57 (1966), pp. 3–24 (p. 4); Saunders, *Forest*, p. 95; Finlayson, 'The Marvellous', p. 364. For a discussion of medieval 'Otherworlds', see also Howard Rollin Patch, *The Other World: According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950).

<sup>90</sup> Bliss, *Naming*, pp. 64–6.

<sup>91</sup> Carol Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987), pp. 30–31; Switten, 'Chevalier', p. 410; Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900–1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 261; Crouch, *Tournament*, p. 150.

<sup>92</sup> *Sir Orfeo*, ed. Laskaya and Salisbury, pp. 26–41. All quotations from *Sir Orfeo* from this edition.

Thus Orfeo achieves the ultimate in fame: immortality through music.<sup>93</sup> By way of a fitting conclusion to the romance, Orfeo's musical reach seems to extend beyond the narrative itself, and to influence the telling of his own story hereafter. Orfeo's tale, which the minstrels immortalise, is also infused with musical magic, perhaps intimated in 'mervaile' (a wonder, a marvel) in the passage above. 'Mervaile' is a term frequently used in medieval romance, laden with magical potential, connoting not just an astonishing feat or a miracle but also the strangeness of the verbal representation of that marvellous thing.<sup>94</sup> The notes of the 'lai' are 'swete', suggesting both skilled composition (an aesthetic criterion) and pleasurable reception (a sensory, affective criterion). Orfeo's dedication to his music is clear from the outset, and his intrinsic identity as a musician is reiterated at the end of the narrative here, as the textual legacy of his art takes on his name ('nempned', 'y-hote'). In fact, music comes to stand in for his identity: throughout his journey, Orfeo adopts a number of minstrel and beggar disguises, his harping the one constant reminder of his core identity.<sup>95</sup> In this romance, the motif of musical skill as a marker of the protagonist's identity is used differently from the way it is deployed in kingship quest romances: while in the latter texts, musical skill ultimately helps assert the protagonist's true identity, in *Sir Orfeo* the same skill, and the minstrel-disguise motif, risk jeopardising Orfeo's identity. It is also important that he loves music above all other courtly achievements, as established at the poem's opening:

Orfeo mest of ani thing  
 Lovede the gle of harping.  
 Siker was everi gode harpou  
 Of him to have miche honour.  
 Himself he lerned forto harp,  
 And leyd theron his wittes scharp;  
 He lerned so ther nothing was  
 A better harpou in no plas.  
 In al the world was no man bore  
 That ones Orfeo sat bifore –  
 And he might of his harping here –  
 Bot he schuld thenche that he were  
 In on of the joies of Paradis,  
 Swiche melody in his harping is.  
 (ll. 25–38)

<sup>93</sup> Burnley, *Courtliness*, p. 9; Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>94</sup> See *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/marvel>, accessed 17.03.2018; Page, *Magic*, p. 31. On the several meanings of 'merveille', see *Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27476>, accessed 17.03.2018.

<sup>95</sup> Ronquist, 'The Powers', p. 105.

Orfeo's love is not just for harping, but for the 'gle of harping', which can be taken to mean the enjoyment he feels playing the harp but also the 'gle', or joy, conjured through music and appreciated by him and his listeners – this is a point to which I will return. Notably, his own harping brings honour to other harpers, suggesting not only his superiority as a musician but also the collective, collaborative, cohesive implications of his music. He loves the harp best of all, and it is the only thing he takes with him when he leaves the court: he easily sets aside his kingship but he does not consider leaving behind his music.

As in the kingship quest romances, this poem emphasises the importance of learning for Orfeo's success. He is shown as a proactive student of music. The phrase 'Himself he lerned forto harp' could be taken to mean that he, too, learned to harp so that he could play like other harpers, but it also suggests that he learned by himself, without a teacher, guided only by his own intuition, 'his wittes scharp': he needs time to learn and must employ considerable intelligence to hone his skill. This phrasing suggests something more than just mechanical playing, but rather intellectual engagement, a more theoretical approach to learning: in *King Horn*, harp-playing was couched in terms of manual tactility ('And tech him to harpe / With his nails sharpe', ll. 235–236), whereas *Sir Orfeo* places its emphasis as much on the application of the musician's sharp wits. The portrait of Orfeo depends on both his practical training and his intellectual affinity: the importance of learning is undeniable, as 'lerned' appears twice in three lines, and Orfeo puts in deliberate effort to surpass other harpers ('He lerned so ther nothing was / A better harpou in no plas') – his superiority is important, and it is in part the result of hard work, combining the tropes that establish music as a learned skill, the training of the protagonist, and the protagonist's prodigious musical skill surpassing other musicians. This combination of tropes places emphasis on the importance of musical learning and the need for training in order to acquire superior musical skill.

Further suggestions of music's connection to musical theory are found in the appearance of the term 'melody' (l. 38), which was used to refer not just to the harmonious consonance of sounds in earthly music but also to the music of the spheres, as well as to the material manifestations of *musica mundana* and *musica*

*instrumentalis* in emotional, spiritual, or social harmony, consonance, and accord.<sup>96</sup> As we will see shortly, the merging of the earthly music of minstrels and the implicit celestial music of the spheres in the course of Orfeo's performance recurs at the end of the text, when Orfeo performs in his own castle. Orfeo's music harnesses both *musica practica* and *musica speculativa* and gestures to his facility with musical magic. Further, his music evokes 'joies of Paradis', a phrase suggestive of the music of the spheres and also the ability of musical performance to conjure a sense of extreme bliss in the listeners, a bliss which transcends the physical world. Orfeo succeeds in echoing the music of the spheres with his song. Seth Lerer points out that the poet insists on a repetition of the word 'melody', which recurs throughout Orfeo's journey in the text, appearing in all five performance scenes.<sup>97</sup> Music accompanies him through various stages of growth, and closes the poem when a new lai is composed about Orfeo.

Here, too, 'melody' and 'joies', part of a recurrent wordlist, appear in consecutive lines, suggesting a connection, even a causal connection, between the two. Notably, the only times in the text that 'paradis' (l. 37) is used are in describing Orfeo's music here and, later, the court of the Fairy King ('The proude courte of Paradis', l. 376), creating a thematic connection between Orfeo's music and the world of fairy magic: both can enchant, transport the senses, or stun.<sup>98</sup> Boethius and Macrobius similarly suggest that the inescapable compulsion of music is due to the fact that universal harmony is too much a part of our being for us to resist it, recalling that kind of musical coercion of which Augustine was so wary in *De Musica*. This connection to *musica mundana* makes listeners vulnerable even to music heard in the physical world.<sup>99</sup> According to both ancient and medieval theorists of music, listeners inevitably succumb to the affective powers of music so that their thoughts and behaviour are reshaped by it, because the human soul still carries in it a memory of the celestial music of which it had once been a part.<sup>100</sup> The commentary (c. 1305–1307) on Boethius's *Consolatione* by Nicholas Trevet draws particular attention to the restorative function of Orphic song and harping, drawing its listeners into sympathetic concord with universal harmony: 'Orpheus, then, by his sweet lyre, that is, his eloquence, brought wicked, brutal, and savage men to right reason' (*Iste autem per*

<sup>96</sup> Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 269–76; *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27261>, accessed 17.03.18.

<sup>97</sup> Lerer, 'Artifice and Artistry', p. 102.

<sup>98</sup> Byrne, *Otherworlds*, pp. 26–7; Longworth, 'Sir Orfeo', p. 11.

<sup>99</sup> Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence*, pp. 45–8; Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', p. 272.

<sup>100</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals*, p. 3; Macrobius, *Commentary*, trans. Stahl, pp. 191–7; Macrobius, *Commentarii*, trans. Willis, pp. 101–7.

*suavitatem citharae id est eloquentiae impies brutales et silvestres reduxit ad normam rationis*).<sup>101</sup> In Trevet's schema, Eurydice represents 'the affections' (*id est pars hominis affectiva*), suggesting that, at a mythic or symbolic level, Eurydice is to be won back through the restorative powers of Orphic harping as they work on, are attuned to, and animate the 'affective part' of the listener.

In the wilderness, Orfeo grows to appreciate fully his inherent, inalienable connection with music, which becomes useful as more than a staple courtly skill. While other knights delight in chivalry most of all, Orfeo loves harping, and unlike professional musicians he performs because of this love, and not for money: I would suggest that it is this authentic connection with music that allows him to access and unleash music's powers.<sup>102</sup> The term 'authentic music', as discussed in Part I, refers to music in its purest form, closest to that of universal harmony. In the classical era and the early Middle Ages, this music was believed to be *musica speculativa*, but over the medieval period there were signs that this conceptualisation had shifted, at least in some contexts, from the rarefied context of abstraction and musical theory to a more materialised, instrumental, performed kind of musical practice, here embodied by Orfeo's harping. To achieve this kind of music, Orfeo requires theoretical knowledge and practical skill, acquired through nurture, as well as an innate musical instinct, a part of his nature. For this reason, those who hear him play think themselves in paradise: his music is skilfully executed and genuinely felt, making it superior to that of other musicians, and evocative of the heavenly music of the spheres, even before he is fully aware of its potential.<sup>103</sup>

The exile-quest, usually a journey of discovery for the exiled knight, changes the way Orfeo responds to the obstacles he faces. At the beginning, he responds as a knight, relying on his military might and a conventionally chivalric code of behaviour, without recourse to either music or magic: when Heurodis tells him of the Fairy King's decision to take her away forever, Orfeo attempts to defend her with military might ('Orfeo hath his armes y-nome, / And wele ten hundred knightes with him', ll. 182–183). He reacts like a king, not like a musician.<sup>104</sup> After ten years in exile, having

<sup>101</sup> Cited in Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages*, pp. 110–11.

<sup>102</sup> John Southworth, *The English Medieval Minstrel* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989), pp. 134–5; Meg Bogin, *The Women Troubadours* (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1980), p. 14; Ronquist, 'The Powers', p. 101.

<sup>103</sup> Bogin, *The Women*, p. 14; Southworth, *Minstrel*, pp. 134–5.

<sup>104</sup> Gervase Mathew, 'Ideals of Friendship', in *Patterns of Love and Courtesy*, ed. J. Lawlor (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), pp. 45–26 (p. 55); Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 75; Karras, *From Boys*, p. 159.

finally spotted his wife amongst the fairy hunters, he seizes hold of his harp immediately, as a knight might grab a sword, and follows after them ('And henge his harp upon his bac', l. 344).<sup>105</sup> Andrea Pisani Babich, in her article on the role of kingdoms in *Sir Orfeo*, sees the Fairy King's threat as a test for Orfeo, who is too caught up in courtly matters at the beginning of the narrative.<sup>106</sup> As we shall see in the next chapter, this concern with the overwrought and distracting nature of courtly life is one to which poets keep returning. At the poem's opening, Orfeo enjoys a splendid life but this position does not allow for further personal growth or achievement, diminishing his worth as a knight.<sup>107</sup> Orfeo's military might is useless in the Otherworld, where he must exploit music's affective powers to counter the supernatural magic holding sway over Heurodis.<sup>108</sup> In order to achieve this goal, he must first be alone in the wilderness, with nothing but his music.<sup>109</sup> It is striking that his approach to his obstacles changes so markedly after his exile, where he has had nothing but music to rely on. Usually, an exile quest involves the knight facing a test of courage or physical prowess, as we saw in the previous chapter, but we only ever see Orfeo spend time on his music, suggesting that this is the arena in which he is to be tested – by manipulating tropes familiar to audiences of music romances, the writer of this romance is able to play on readers' expectations about the protagonist's narrative development. The romance's structural rhythm of exile and return, digression and progression, suggests that this period in the wilderness is ultimately a narrative prerequisite for the conclusion of Orfeo's quest. The Fairy King's challenge could be read as a trial of musicianship, made up of different stages of learning, such that Orfeo's last encounter with the king serves as his final test.<sup>110</sup>

During his exile in the forest, Orfeo's only source of joy is his harp, 'whereon was al his gle' (l. 267), and consequently the music (also 'gle') that the harp produces.<sup>111</sup> When this joy is released it charms all who hear it. The Old English etymon for *gle* is *glīw*, which encompasses 'music', 'minstrelsy', and 'joy'.<sup>112</sup> In Middle English, 'gle', a recurrent word in the musical vocabulary of the romances (as

<sup>105</sup> Spearing compares the madness of Heurodis with mental disharmony and Shakespeare's description of King Lear's 'untun'd and jarring senses' (IV.vii.15) on the analogy of a musical instrument that is out of tune. See Spearing, 'Madness', pp. 264–5. See also, Wade, *Fairies*, p. 98, and Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 190.

<sup>106</sup> Wade, *Fairies*, pp. 76–7; Andrea G. Pisani Babich, 'The Power of the Kingdom and the Ties that Bind in Sir Orfeo', *Neophilologus* 82 (1998), p. 477; Ronquist, 'The Powers', p. 104.

<sup>107</sup> Byrne, *Otherworlds*, p. 47; Gros Louis, 'The Significance', p. 249.

<sup>108</sup> Longworth, 'Sir Orfeo', p. 10; Ronquist, 'The Powers', pp. 104–5.

<sup>109</sup> Byrne, *Otherworlds*, p. 110.

<sup>110</sup> Wade, *Fairies*, pp. 73–110.

<sup>111</sup> Babich, 'The Power', p. 483.

<sup>112</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 481; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 169–74.

witnessed in the previous chapter), could refer to the source of joy in addition to the feeling itself, and it retains the Old English duality of both an affective field of reference ('bliss', 'joy', 'pleasure') and a cultural one ('entertainment', 'minstrelsy', 'music'). However, it also acquires a darker undertone, as the word could be used to mean 'intrigue' and 'scheming', suggestive of the malevolent potential, if not purpose, of music's coercive powers.<sup>113</sup> I will return to the latter definition in my analysis of *Lybeaus Desconus*, in which 'gle' appears in a somewhat unsavoury context: its disquieting connotations suggest that music's affective powers can also be misused, to ill purpose. This dual potential for positive or negative use invests musical magic with ambiguity and suggests that its nature depends on the musician's intent, not any virtue or malice inherent in the music itself.<sup>114</sup> Intrigue and scheming, after all, are aspects of human behaviour, not musical qualities.

In *Sir Orfeo*, however, musical taming or coercion is unfailingly depicted in a positive light. There are two important, parallel scenes that attest this portrayal. In both episodes, Orfeo uses magic to tame his audience, figuratively and literally, as in both instances the audience is in some way wild – the wild beasts of the wood, and the wild, dangerous courtiers of the fairy court. First, Orfeo uses his music on wild animals, both for company and also to stave off danger during his exile:

He toke his harp to him wel right  
 And harped at his owen wille.  
 Into alle the wode the soun gan schille,  
 That alle the wilde bestes that ther beth  
 For joie abouten him thai teth,  
 And alle the foules that ther were  
 Come and sete on ich a brere  
 To here his harping a-fine –  
 So miche melody was therin;  
 And when he his harping lete wold,  
 No best bi him abide nold.  
 (ll. 270–280)

In this passage, the wild beasts succumb to the power of music, serving as a surrogate, attendant court as Orfeo's music creates order in the wild wood.<sup>115</sup> Even

<sup>113</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18735>, accessed on 20.03.2018; Carter, *A Dictionary*, pp. 169–73; A. W. Mathew and W.W. Skeat (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Middle English: From AD 1150 to 1580* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), digital edition (2008) retrieved from <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/10625/10625-h/dict2.html>, accessed 02.04.2018.

<sup>114</sup> Haines, 'Why Music', p. 157.

<sup>115</sup> Babich, 'The Power', p. 483.

animals feel joy at the sound. Music's ability to affect animals – creatures which were largely thought to lack reason by medieval thinkers – shows that this power works on a subconscious level that is independent of rational engagement.<sup>116</sup> Orfeo harps 'at his owen wille', which suggests both that he is playing because he wants to and that he is using his will, or intention, to direct the music so that it tames the wild beasts, who are drawn by 'joie', a term once again found in close proximity to 'melody'. As in other episodes hinting at universal harmony, here the music carries far, encompassing the whole wood. 'Schille' suggests that it is 'loud' and 'resounding', if not also, in more affective than purely physical terms, something 'melodious' and 'pleasing to the ear'.<sup>117</sup> Unlike other medieval literary protagonists who were in a similar situation, Orfeo does not go mad in the wilderness, despite his misery.<sup>118</sup>

The conviction that music is able to cure madness is witnessed in other medieval literature.<sup>119</sup> One such text is the *Vita Merlini* (twelfth century), attributed to Geoffrey of Monmouth, which describes Merlin's flight into the wilderness, descent into madness, and subsequent restoration to sanity through the music of a passing minstrel.<sup>120</sup> When the minstrel first comes upon Merlin lamenting in the wilderness, he uses his music, narrating the tale of two Welsh women subject to a similar kind of wasting madness, to restore Merlin to his right mind and recalibrate his imbalanced emotional state:

In fidibus querulis dicebat talia cantans  
 Nuntius, et modulo uatis demulserat aures,  
 Mitior ut fieret congauderetque canenti.  
 Ocius assurgit uates – iuuenemque iocosis  
 Affatur uerbis – iterumque mouere precatur  
 Cum digitis cordas, elegosque sonare priores.  
 Admouet ille lire digitos iussumque reformat  
 Carmen item, cogitque uirum modulando furorem  
 Ponere paulatim – cithare dulcedine captum.  
 Fit memor ergo sui – recoliturque quod esse solebat

<sup>116</sup> Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', p. 272.

<sup>117</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=byte&byte=177699962&egdisplay=open&egs=177702604>, retrieved on 13.03.2018.

<sup>118</sup> See, for example, the twelfth-century *Vita Merlini* (ll. 165–170) and *The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones* in Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Life of Merlin*, trans. B. Clarke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1973), pp. 60–61; Sir Thomas Malory, *Complete Works*, ed. E. Vinaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 304–5.

<sup>119</sup> Spearing, 'Madness', p. 264.

<sup>120</sup> Saunders, *Forest*, pp. 115–17; Bliss, *Naming*, p. 65; Jacques Le Goff and Arthur Goldhammer (trans.), *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 50.

Merlinus – furiasque suas miratur et odit.  
 Pristina mens rediit – rediit quoque sensus in illo  
 (ll.198– 209)

[This was the song the messenger sang to his plaintive strings; and with his air he soothed the listening prophet to calmness and to sympathy with the singer. Suddenly the prophet sprang up, accosted the young man with a lively greeting and begged him to sound his instrument once more and play again the lament he had just played. So the singer plucked at the strings of his instrument and picked out the song, as he was asked, a second time. Little by little, as he played, he coaxed the madman to put by his wild mood under the sweet spell of the guitar. So Merlin came to himself, recollected what he had been, and thought of his madness with astonishment and loathing. His normal state of mind returned, and his power of feeling too.]<sup>121</sup>

The terminology in the passage draws on music’s implicitly therapeutic and captivating possibilities noted earlier.<sup>122</sup> The noun ‘carmen’ denotes both ‘song’ in the first instance and also ‘a magic formula’ or ‘incantation’, compounding the incantatory suggestiveness built into the participle ‘cantans’ (singing).<sup>123</sup> Little wonder that Merlin is said to have been caught or captivated (‘captum’) by the spell of the cytharum’s strings, and that the cumulative effect of the minstrel’s playing (‘modulo’, ‘modulando’) is to retune or repropotion Merlin’s mind and senses: ‘modulor’ denotes the act of regulating as well as of singing or playing.<sup>124</sup> The music, representative of harmony and order, is drawing Merlin in, modulating his mind back into a state of sanity.<sup>125</sup> Merlin himself is no musician, and when he returns to the chaos of the court he again descends into madness: it is only by being constantly serenaded that he can remain sane.<sup>126</sup> In Orfeo’s case, on the other hand, the order and harmony which his music embodies shields him from madness.<sup>127</sup> Yet the duration of

<sup>121</sup> Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Life of Merlin*, pp. 62–3.

<sup>122</sup> Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, p. 50; Jamison, ‘A Description’, p. 49. For the historical significance of forests, see Gillian Rudd, “‘The Wilderness of Wirral’”, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Arthuriana* 23 (2013), pp. 52–65.

<sup>123</sup> See ‘carmen, n.’, senses I.i and II.B.5, in C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), accessed via <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=carmen&la=la#lexicon>, on 02.04.18.

<sup>124</sup> See ‘modulor, v.’, senses I and II, in C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), accessed via <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=mödülor&la=la&can=mödülor0#lexicon>, on 02.04.18.

<sup>125</sup> Spearing, ‘Madness’, p. 264.

<sup>126</sup> Saunders, *Forest*, p. 117.

<sup>127</sup> Saunders, *Forest*, pp. 137–8; Ronquist, ‘The Powers’, p. 111.

its effects is merely temporary, as with Merlin: the king must keep playing to maintain calm in the forest.<sup>128</sup> In both the *Vita Merlini* and *Sir Orfeo*, music is compulsive and a source of compulsion: just as Merlin has to keep hearing the minstrel's music in order to stay sane, Orfeo must keep playing if he wants the beasts in the forest to stay near.<sup>129</sup> Once the music stops, once its tranquillising effect has ceased, the animals flee. Orfeo spends ten years with the animals and his harp for company, and his use of music following this episode suggests that this experience teaches him something about the coercive applications of music.

The second important taming scene occurs when Orfeo finds his way into the fairy kingdom, adopting the guise of a minstrel rather than a warrior with an army.<sup>130</sup> Garbed in his pilgrim's gown, he brings his harp with him ('His sclavain he dede on also spac / And henge his harp opon his bac', ll. 343–344), as if an indispensable accessory, because we are told that he otherwise kept it safely in a hollow tree when he was not playing it (l. 268). Arriving at the Fairy King's palace, Orfeo pretends to be nothing 'bot a pover menstrel' (l. 430) out to make a profit from his music – 'Yete we mot proferi forth our gle' (l. 434) – an explanation that the king accepts, allowing him to perform. This episode recalls the trope of the minstrel being permitted to enter a restricted area by virtue of his profession. The kingship quest romances invoke the same trope in relation to ordinary, mortal courts, but *Sir Orfeo* takes it a step further by demonstrating that this trope is equally valid beyond the world of mortals, drawing together the uncanny, as represented by the Fairy Otherworld and the familiar topos of the minstrel's ability to infiltrate select spaces. This second episode echoes the first:

Bifor the king he sat adoun  
 And tok his harp so miri of soun,  
 And tempreth his harp, as he wele can,  
 And blisseful notes he ther gan,  
 That al that in the palays were  
 Com to him forto here,  
 And liggeth adoun to his fete –  
 Hem thenketh his melody so swete.  
 The king herkneth and sitt ful stille;  
 To here his gle he hath gode wille.  
 Gode bourde he hadde of his gle;  
 (ll. 435–445)

<sup>128</sup> Babich, 'The Power', p. 483.

<sup>129</sup> Babich, 'The Power', p. 483.

<sup>130</sup> Saunders, *Forest*, p. 138; Burnley, *Courtliness*, p. 106.

In this romance, music is treated to a number of descriptions that are very visceral. In the above passage, we are told that the melody is ‘so swete’ and at the end of the poem the image recurs in reference to Orfeo’s story having been turned into a lai (‘swete is the note’, l. 602). This sensory, gustatory description conjures a moment of synaesthesia, where the force of the music is such that one is able to taste it.

There are clear parallels in the two scenes of taming. It is telling that Orfeo’s music has the same effect on the Fairy King as it did on the wild animals: his dangerous potential, like that of the untamed beasts, is dissipated by the music.<sup>131</sup> In this passage, ‘tempreth’ seems to connote not only the physical tuning of the harp but also the tempering of the affects of the listeners. The notes of the harp are ‘blisseful’ – the music is joyous, but it is also a source of joy as it conjures bliss in the listeners, holding sway over them and drawing them in.<sup>132</sup> According to the *Middle English Dictionary* and other lexicographic aids, ‘bliss’ can be used to denote an emotion which supersedes ordinary enjoyment, a kind of perfect happiness, ecstasy, or the joy of heaven: the music momentarily allows listeners to transcend the physical world and be brought closer to celestial harmony, *musica mundana*, restoring them to a harmonious disposition in the process.<sup>133</sup> The Fairy King represents wild, natural magic which can be tamed to order and fairness by the harmony of Orfeo’s harp. That he is moved to stillness (‘ful stille’) suggests that the performance has a calming or stunning effect on him.<sup>134</sup> Notably, his reaction is framed by several recurring examples of vocabulary denoting musical joy (‘miri’, ‘blisseful’, and the repetition of ‘gle’ in the two last lines of the passage). The Fairy King has ‘gode wille’ to hear this music, but hearing it also creates good will towards the musician. The affective power of Orfeo’s music does not go against nature, or force an unnatural shape on its environment – instead, it works by bringing out the inherent harmony that is part of everything.<sup>135</sup>

The final stage of Orfeo’s journey takes place in his own kingdom, where he tests his steward by pretending to be an itinerant harper seeking help. While the

<sup>131</sup> Saunders, *Forest*, p. 138.

<sup>132</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED5236>, accessed 13.03.2018; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 169–74, p. 462.

<sup>133</sup> See *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/bliss>, and the *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED5228>, both accessed 17.03.18.

<sup>134</sup> Babich, ‘The Power’, p. 483; Byrne, *Otherworlds*, p. 116.

<sup>135</sup> Lerer, ‘Artifice and Artistry’, p. 93.

romances often draw on the motif of the positive and sympathetic depiction of minstrels and their loyalty (usually compared to other servants), in this case it is the king-disguised-as-a-minstrel who is testing the loyalty of his non-minstrel servant, a loyalty gauged through the servant's treatment of wandering musicians. Orfeo claims to be not only a poor, wandering musician – 'Icham an harpoure of hethenisse; / Help me now in this destresse!' (ll. 512–513) – but also a foreigner. Yet the steward loyally informs him that 'Everich gode harpoure is welcom me to / For mi lordes love, Sir Orfeo' (ll. 517–518). The steward associates Orfeo so closely with the role of 'harper', that he welcomes minstrels as a matter of course. At the castle, Orfeo witnesses first-hand how well minstrels have been treated in his absence. There are many musicians playing every kind of instrument, simultaneously: 'Miche melody thai maked alle' (l. 423). This collection of *haut* and *bas* instruments playing together harmoniously is not realistic, yet the fact that they do sound pleasant in this idealised performance (a trope familiar from other music romances) suggests music's harmonising power at work, intimated again by the re-use of 'melody' in this context – here straining towards the sense of 'psychological, social, or spiritual harmony'.<sup>136</sup> At first, Orfeo simply sits and listens, before, in a final, symbolic act just prior to reclaiming his identity, he begins to play:

He toke his harp and tempred schille;  
The blissefulest notes he harped there  
That ever ani man y-herd with ere –  
Ich man liked wele his gle.  
(ll. 526–529)

The same set of descriptions is used for his music as during the two scenes of taming, as intimated by the re-use of the same keywords – 'tempred' (ll. 426, 437), 'schille' (ll. 272, 426), 'blisseful' (l. 438), 'gle' (ll. 434, 444, 445). Orfeo's harping is powerful ('schille') in more than just sound: his is the most beautiful music anyone present had ever heard 'with ere'. This addendum, more than just a throwaway tag for the convenience of rhyme, suggests that Orfeo's performance surpasses the audible music that his listeners normally encounter. By adding 'with ere', the poet is showing how this audience is able to appreciate the music as a heard phenomenon, even if, beyond that, Orfeo's music might also somehow be in dialogue with the music of the spheres,

<sup>136</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27261>, accessed 20.05.2018; Also see Zaerr, 'Music and Magic'; Aubrey, 'References to Music', pp. 129–30.

the celestial music that lies beyond their hearing. Temporarily, he makes the harmony of the spheres accessible to his audience in the physical world. The use of ‘blissefulest’ enforces the image of ecstatic joy that is simultaneously earthly and spiritual.<sup>137</sup> Orfeo’s musical skill neatly ties up all the dissonant threads of the poem, as he finally reveals his identity.<sup>138</sup> By the end of the romance, he has learned that music is much more than a courtly skill: music’s affective powers, more potent than military might, are able to alter or command the mood and character of listeners, even supernatural ones.

The most significant tropes treated in *Sir Orfeo* are concerned with the affective nature of music’s powers, including its ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener. This motif is usually drawn upon in the course of a scene which evokes the motif of a notable musical performance which awes the audience. In this romance, the affective power of music, and the figure of the musician, are portrayed in a positive light. Fear of musical coercion is dispelled through a depiction of music that creates order and good will in a supernatural court, and has a transcendent effect on human listeners, by allowing them a glimpse of the music of universal harmony. Orfeo’s musical skill is the result of practical, deliberate learning and contemplation, and it is only because of this combination of learned skill with innate instinct that he is able to transcend ordinary earthly music. Yet, while the powers granted by universal harmony are in themselves neutral, they can be misused with dangerous consequences, given music’s ability to affect the souls and behaviour of listeners.<sup>139</sup> In the following section, I will examine romances which demonstrate a more blatant misuse of musical magic, thus undermining the trope of social harmony and cohesion created through music.

### 3. *Sir Degaré, Lybeaus Desconus, and the abuse of musical magic*

Whereas knights learn to use the powers of music in a positive way that creates joy, harmony, or social cohesion, sorcerers and clerics, who are not bound by chivalric ideals, are more often portrayed using music for nefarious ends. This depiction reflects

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<sup>137</sup> See *Etymology Online*, [https://www.etymonline.com/word/bliss?ref=etymonline\\_crossreference](https://www.etymonline.com/word/bliss?ref=etymonline_crossreference), accessed 14.03.18; Carter, *Dictionary*, pp. 456–66.

<sup>138</sup> Longworth, ‘Sir Orfeo’, p. 8.

<sup>139</sup> Tomlinson, *Music*, p. 67; Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), ‘Control and the Science’, p. 272.

a distrust of clerical magic, and perhaps with it a distrust of the quadrivium education. In the romances of *Sir Degaré* and *Lybeaus Desconus*, musical magic is misused by spell-casters to conjure sleep, beguile, and create illusions for their own wicked purposes. Both texts are found in several miscellany collections which contain romances, shorter poetry, and historical, religious, and reference material.<sup>140</sup> *Sir Degaré* narrates the tale of a would-be knight, the son of a princess and her fairy ravisher, who is brought up by a hermit and must undergo a series of adventures to prove his worth as a knight before discovering his parentage. In the course of his adventures, Degaré comes across a castle full of maidens. He is taken in for the night, fed, and falls in love with the mistress of the castle, who leads him to her bed chamber and sends him into an enchanted sleep with music:

The levedi on here bed set,  
 And a maide at here fet,  
 And harpede notes gode and fine;  
 Another broughte spices and wine.  
 Upon the bedde he set adoun  
 To here of the harpe soun.  
 For murthe of notes so sschille,  
 He fel adoun on slepe stille;  
 So he slep al that night.  
 (ll 836–844)<sup>141</sup>

In this instance, the lady uses the powers of her harp to send Degaré to sleep. Listening to ‘the harpe soun’ has an immediate effect. Her notes are described as ‘gode and fine’, intimating her skill and the lulling beauty of the music. This description also suggests that, despite the eerie situation, the lady’s intentions are not malicious. As in *Orfeo*, the adjective ‘sschille’ is used to describe the notes. The music is at once soothing and ‘sschille’ – resonant, powerful, and carrying, as well as pleasing to the ear – and Degaré falls asleep very rapidly, which again suggests that the music imparts a supernatural effect.<sup>142</sup> Fortunately, Degaré’s lady does not intend him any harm: she simply wants to request his help in chasing away an aggressive, unwanted suitor, and Degaré is not magically compelled to stay longer. She needs help despite her magic

<sup>140</sup> *Sir Degaré* is found in the Auchinleck MS, Advocates Library of Scotland, MS 19.2.1 (between c. 1330 and 1340); London, British Library, MS Egerton 2862 (late fourteenth century); Cambridge, Cambridge University Library MS Ff. 2.38 (c. 1420–1450); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poetry 34 (c. fifteenth century). For more detail, see, J. A. Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre (eds.), *A Book of Middle English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p. 112.

<sup>141</sup> *Sir Degaré*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. A. Laskaya and E. Salisbury (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 101–29. All future references to this edition.

<sup>142</sup> See, for example, Macrobius, *Commentary*, trans. Stahl, p. 195, Book II, Ch. III, Section 10, and Ptolemy, *Harmonics*, Book III, Ch. 7, p. 151, n. 152.

and this episode ends happily: Degaré defeats the lady's other suitor and rides off to find his father, before returning to marry her.<sup>143</sup> The lady's vulnerability makes her a more palatable figure for a magic-wary audience than a similar lady in *Lybeaus Desconus*, who pretends to need help only to bewitch the hero.

In a revealing moment of consciousness, Degaré seems to be aware of the supernatural origin of his deep slumber. When he wakes up, the lady chides him for having slept so long, and he defends himself by blaming the harp outright for putting him to sleep: 'Certes the murie harpe hit made, / Elles misdo nowt I ne hade' (ll. 858–859). As in the romance of *King Horn*, the harp is described as a source of 'murthe', invoking the same connotations built into the Old English etymon *myrighlice* ('pleasant', 'melodious').<sup>144</sup> There is a noticeable repetition of keywords here, with the earlier 'murthe' (l. 842) followed by 'murie' (l. 858), stressing a particular quality of the harp, namely its ability to conjure pleasure in its listeners. Degaré is not angry or afraid, even though he is confident that the harp is to blame. Though innocent, the scene countenances the potential for musical magic to be used unwisely or to ill purpose, recalling theorists' suspicions regarding the soul's susceptibility to the affective compulsion of gratifying music.<sup>145</sup>

Musical magic is depicted as much more threatening in *Lybeaus Desconus*, an English retelling of the Old French *Le Bel Inconnu* (late twelfth to early thirteenth century).<sup>146</sup> There are six surviving manuscripts of *Lybeaus Desconus*, ranging from the late fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and references to it exist in successive romances, along with Chaucer's *Sir Thopas* and Malory, all attesting its continued appeal.<sup>147</sup> The late London, British Library, MS Additional 27879 (c. 1650) contains *Lybeaus* and *Degaré*, with a more positive depiction of magic in *Sir Landevale*. Like Sir Degaré, Lybeaus is unaware of his true parentage: he is the illegitimate son of Sir Gawain. One day, Lybeaus discovers a dead knight in the forest, puts on his armour, and sets out to prove his worth at King Arthur's court. There, he is given the challenge of accompanying a maiden called Elene, and her dwarf companion (named Theodeley

<sup>143</sup> Finlayson, 'The Marvellous', p. 390.

<sup>144</sup> Toller, *Supplement*, p. 645.

<sup>145</sup> See, for example, Wuidar (trans. Jafflin), 'Control and the Science', pp. 275–7.

<sup>146</sup> Zaerr, 'Songs of Love', pp. 294, 312. For a further discussion of the parallels in the treatment of music and magic in *Le Bel Inconnu*, see also Zaerr, 'Music and Magic'.

<sup>147</sup> *Lybeaus Desconus* survives in a number of manuscripts from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii; London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 306; London, Lincoln's Inn Library, MS 150; Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61, as well as the seventeenth-century London, British Library, MS Additional 27879. See the introduction to the text in *Lybeaus Desconus*, ed. E. Salisbury and J. Weldon (Kalamazoo: MI, Medieval Institute Publications, 2013).

in the Lambeth text), on a quest to rescue their mistress, the Lady of Synadoun. There are two kinds of music in this romance. One is represented by Theodeley, who is a squire, storyteller, and musician: he issues the call to adventure and protects the knight during the quest. The second is represented by the fairy seductress of the Ile d'Or, who uses musical magic to bewitch Lybeaus, and by two clerics, who have taken over Synadoun.<sup>148</sup> In *Le Bel Inconnu*, the figure of the sorceress of the Ile d'Or is not truly evil. She uses musical magic to create obstacles in order to facilitate the young knight's learning quest, and they marry in the end. She is contrasted with the malicious clerics he meets later.<sup>149</sup> In *Lybeaus*, however, the intentions of the Dame L'Amour are notably corrupt.

In the Lambeth version of the poem, Lybeaus meets Theodeley first, who is a fine example of chivalry and musicianship, and it is a while before he comes across any other musicians.<sup>150</sup> Theodeley is a 'gentill boourdour' ('noble entertainer') of great fame and he will help Lybeaus become a famed knight.<sup>151</sup>

Wyde were spronge his fame,  
By northe and eke by southe;  
Mekyll he couthe of game,  
Sotill, sawtrye in same,  
Harpe, fethill, and crowthe.  
He was a gentill boourdour  
Amonge ladyes in boure,  
A mery man of mouthe.  
(ll. 143–150)<sup>152</sup>

Theodeley is a good minstrel, with command of many stringed instruments, and the necessary eloquence ('mery man of moouthe') expected in the repertoire of courtly accomplishments (the 'game') befitting a minstrel-knight.<sup>153</sup> The use of 'mery' here, if more than a convenient or formulaic epithet, again evokes music's ability to conjure joy. The list of string instruments which Theodeley has mastered (citole, psaltery, harp, fiddle, and crowthe), all of which were used in *bas* music, is a display of elite musical

<sup>148</sup> Zaerr, 'Songs of Love', p. 312. On the composition style of *Lybeaus Desconus*, see Maldwyn Mills, 'The Composition and Style of the "Southern" *Octavian*, *Sir Launfal* and *Libeaus Desconus*', *Medium Aevum*, 31 (1962), pp. 88–109.

<sup>149</sup> Zaerr, 'Music and Magic'. The romance survives in Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 472.

<sup>150</sup> The manuscript used for this discussion is the Lambeth Palace MS 306. *Lybeaus Desconus*, ed. M. Mills, EETS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 83.

<sup>151</sup> Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 161; Mathew, 'Ideals of Friendship', pp. 46–7. For a different interpretation of Theodeley, see Zaerr, 'Music and Magic'.

<sup>152</sup> *Lybeaus*, ed. Mills, p. 83. All future references to this edition unless stated otherwise.

<sup>153</sup> Peters, *The Magician*, p. 65.

accomplishment and a marker of courtliness.<sup>154</sup> Over the course of their journey together, Theodeley and Elene come to respect Lybeaus, and spread his fame as loyal minstrels would for their patron.<sup>155</sup> They represent a wholesome brand of minstrelsy, and neither Theodeley nor Elene poses a danger to Lybeaus. Nor is he in danger during physical combat, as he easily bests the opponents he meets in the Wirral. However, like Orfeo, Lybeaus must learn that there are times when a sword will be of little use. It is not until he leaves the wilderness for the strange city, the Ile d'Or, that he meets a truly dangerous opponent.

Not realising that he has been set up, Lybeaus rescues the lady of the Ile d'Or, the Dame L'Amour, from a giant. The lady proves to be a beautiful and learned enchantress, one whose learning is a source of unease for this romance, suggesting an attitude of anxiety towards the combination of learning and clerical magic, clerical necromancy, and the amalgamation of magical categories.<sup>156</sup> We are told in the Lambeth Manuscript that she 'Cowthe more of sorcerye / Than other suche fyve' (ll. 1486–1487), but the Naples manuscript takes this incidental reference to the occult considerably further, stating that 'Cowthe more of sorsery / Than othir wicchis fyve / Sho made him melody, / With al maner of mynstralsy' (ll. 1508–1511).<sup>157</sup> This text likens her to a witch, whom she surpasses in the occult arts. A belief in witchcraft, or the causing of harm through magical means, had been present in European culture long before the Middle Ages. However, in the late medieval period the concept was increasingly given explicitly satanic and diabolist associations, becoming specifically associated with the growing condemnation of magical practice and demonic worship.<sup>158</sup> The fact that the poet in the Naples manuscript describes her playing various melodies directly after this comparison to 'wicchis' links the music to her ostensible witchcraft. The depiction of fairy figures such as the Dame L'Amour and Morgan le Fey in romance changed to reflect these concerns.<sup>159</sup> Such characters were recast as mortals whose powers stemmed from necromancy, 'clergie', 'astronomy',

<sup>154</sup> Page, *Music and Instruments*, p. 10; Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 73; Brown and Polk, 'Instrumental Music', pp. 149–52.

<sup>155</sup> Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 161; Mathew, 'Ideals of Friendship', pp. 46–7; Bradley-Cromey, 'The "Recréantise"', pp. 450–51.

<sup>156</sup> Page, *Magic*, p. 45; Bailey, 'From Sorcery', pp. 965–966, 977; Kieckhefer, 'Specific Rationality', p. 820.

<sup>157</sup> For Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29, see *Lybeaus Desconus*, ed. E. Salisbury and J. Weldon (Kalamazoo: MI, Medieval Institute Publications, 2013).

<sup>158</sup> See, for example, Kors and Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe*, pp. 112–229; Bailey, 'From Sorcery to Witchcraft', pp. 960–90; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 176–200.

<sup>159</sup> Wade, *Fairies*, pp. 2–6; Helen Cooper, *English Romance in Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 173–217.

and, more broadly, the liberal arts.<sup>160</sup> The mistrust of magical and musical knowledge underlies the way the lady is described: education, especially in the seven liberal arts, could be associated with magic.<sup>161</sup> The French text explicitly reveals her knowledge of the quadrivium, aligning that learning with her competency in the potentially darker arts of enchantment and astrology, stating that:

Les set ars sot et encanter  
 et sot bien estoiles garder  
 et bien et mal – tot ço savoit.  
 (1933–35)

[She knew the seven liberal arts and she knew  
 enchantment and how to read the stars and good and evil  
 – all this she knew.]<sup>162</sup>

Later in the poem, she explains in more detail how her father made sure she was educated in ‘l’encantement’, with emphasis on the process of learning (l. 4932):

Onques n’ot oir ne mais que moi,  
 si m’ama tant en bonne foi  
 que les set [ars] me fist apre[ndre]  
 tant que totes les soc entendre.  
 Arismetiche, dyomotrie,  
 ingremance et astrenomie  
 et des autres asés apris.  
 (ll. 4935– 4941)

[My father was a very powerful king, a most intelligent and courtly man. I was his only heir, and he loved me so dearly that he had me study the seven liberal arts until I had mastered them all. I learned a great deal about arithmetic and geometry, necromancy and astronomy, and all the other arts as well.]

Given this emphasis on knowledge (‘sot’ / ‘sot’ / ‘savoit’) and learning (‘aprendre’, ‘entendre’, ‘apris’), it is clear that she is aware of the difference between good and

<sup>160</sup> Wade, *Fairies*, pp. 10–38, 11.

<sup>161</sup> Zaerr, ‘Music and Magic’.

<sup>162</sup> Text and translation in Renaud de Beaujeu, *Le Bel Inconnu: Li Biaus Descouneüs, The Fair Unknown*, ed. K. Fresco, trans. M. Hasselman and C. Donagher (New York: Garland, 1992).

evil. She never uses her magic to enchant the knight into staying with her.<sup>163</sup> This dimension is missing from the Middle English texts. Lybeaus, however, is unaware of any danger. The Dame L'Amour invites him into her city and makes him lord of it. She persuades him to remove his armour, both a literal safeguard and chivalric symbol, in favour of rich clothing (ll. 1467–1471), further weakening his defences. Then she uses musical magic to force Lybeaus to stay in her city for twelve months.<sup>164</sup>

Thus, while in the French text her magical knowledge is largely celebrated, only hinting at darker applications, in the Lambeth version her learning is decidedly tainted with associations of 'sorcery' (l. 1486). Because her learning is corrupt, so is her use of music:

She made hym suche melodye  
Of all maner mynstralsye  
That any man myght discryve.  
Whan he sawe hir face  
Hym thought that he was  
In paradice on lyve;  
With false lies and fayre  
Thus she blered his eye:  
Evill mote she thryve!  
(ll. 1488–1496)

While her magic does not cause the knight physical harm, it harms his honour and reputation – a far more serious threat. The lady's enchantment – visual as much as aural – causes Lybeaus to break his word to Arthur, and to his companions, and to abandon his quest. Attention is drawn to the close connection between sorcery and music through the rhyme of 'sorcery' and 'melodye', the Boethian, celestial connotations of this latter noun now sullied by phonetic association with sinister and occult practices. To achieve her ends, the Dame L'Amour, as an incomparable sorceress and musician, uses 'melodye' and 'all maner mynstralsye' – a repertoire of different kinds of music, an assault on the senses, quite at odds with the intimations of harmonious accord built into the image of 'al maner Mynstralcy'e' encountered in Lydgate's *Reson and Sensuallyte* (l. 5569) or 'dyverse mynstralsy' encountered in *Sir Cleges* (l. 99).<sup>165</sup> This misuse of music temporarily undermines the trope of music as a marker of heavenly harmony and narrative concord, though the trope is finally restored

<sup>163</sup> Zaerr, 'Music and Magic'.

<sup>164</sup> Zaerr, 'Songs of Love', p. 294; Ronquist, 'The Powers', pp. 99–100.

<sup>165</sup> Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 38.

during the celebrations that conclude the romance. There is a suggestion of magical compulsion and illusion in this episode: the moment Lybeaus sees her face, he thinks he is in ‘paradise’. Orfeo’s musical magic was also described as evocative of ‘paradise’, but here the music is being used wickedly, and Lybeaus’ sensory guard has already been weakened by her visual irresistibility. This paradise is exposed as a ‘false’ anti-type of true heavenly music. She has ‘blered his eye’ with magical illusions, ‘false lies and fayre’: the latter phrase is suggestive not only of magic’s ability to conjure beautiful, ‘fair’ illusions, but also of ‘fairy’ or supernatural magic. Unlike in the French text, we are left in no doubt as to the lady’s character: the apotropaic phrase ‘evill mote she thryve’ disturbingly hints at her nefarious triumph.

If the sensory overload of words and music and vision can bewitch, the poet shows that chivalric obligation can break the spell, suggesting that there is a limit to the power of musical magic. When Elene finds Lybeaus, she shames him for behaving dishonourably, and he immediately awakens from his enchantment. This episode seems to reprise fears about enchantment amongst the chivalric class:<sup>166</sup>

‘Knyght, thou arte false in thi laye  
Ageynes Kynge Arthure!  
For the love of a woman  
That mekyll of sorcery canne  
Thow doste thee grete dissehonour:  
(ll. 1501–1505)

That Lybeaus should be accused of being ‘false’ in his ‘laye’ (in the first instance ‘promise’, but additional meanings include ‘song’ or ‘tale’) further corroborates the impression in this part of the romance that we are being presented with a false anti-type of true heavenly music. Sorcery perverts the chivalric code, and untunes the universal harmony latent in the world. There is an implied contrast here between false love created by ‘sorcery’, which brings ‘dissehonour’, ‘sorowe’, and ‘shame’ (l. 1511), and the later love of the Queen of Synadoun, whom Lybeaus marries in splendour.<sup>167</sup> The Lambeth text reprises this connection between sorcery and dishonour in Lybeaus’ next dangerous encounter, when he reaches the enchanted city of Synadoun. The queen is being held captive not by a knight or giant but by two clerics, Mabon and Yrain,

<sup>166</sup> Finlayson, ‘The Marvellous’, p. 394.

<sup>167</sup> For more on the conjuration of false love through musical and non-musical magic, see Zaerr, ‘Music and Magic’.

who are trained in necromancy and whose enchanted hall emblematises the fusion of music and magic:

Two clerkys ben hir foone,  
 Fekyll of bloode and bone,  
 That havyth ydoo this dede.  
 They ar men of mynstrye,  
 Clyrkys of nigermansye,  
 Here arte for to rede.  
 (ll. 1752–1757)

The clerics are described as men of ‘mynstrye’. It is the same word that appeared in the romances of *Horn* and *Havelok*, but here it is used in a different way. In *Lybeaus Desconus*, the word is indicative of the clerics’ association with church office, and potentially constitutes another reference to clerical magic and the liberal arts, as the word indicates a practice of ‘particular arts’ – as discussed earlier, such an education would have included music. At the same time, it is related to ‘mastery’ – superior strength, skill, accomplishment, knowledge, or innate power – but not unremarkably ‘mynstrye’ is also related to ‘minstrely’, via the Latin *ministerium* and the Late Latin *ministerialem*.<sup>168</sup> This semantic kinship is evocative of the common origin of the word, and later in the text we will see a demonstration of musical magic at work. The narrowing in meaning must have been fairly recent, as the first written example of the Old French ‘menestrel’ is dated to *c.* 1164, and variations of *menestrerio* / *menestrerie* in reference to minstrels are still in use in the late fourteenth century, at least on the Continent.<sup>169</sup> This word-cluster is also evocative of the clerics’ university education and knowledge of the quadrivium, as well as their magical skill. This depiction of clerics, and clerical magical practice, suggests an anxiety about clerical necromancy, which usually meant demonic magic.<sup>170</sup> Such clerical caricatures consistently play up the false (‘Fekyll’) or perverted applications of institutional learning.

Before venturing to the castle, Lybeaus is warned by a fellow knight that the castle is guarded by magic. It is protected ‘by nygrymauncye / Iwrought with fayreye’ (ll. 1767–8). Here, we have two different kinds of magic: fairy magic and necromancy.

<sup>168</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27837>, accessed on 20.03.18, and *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/minstrel>, retrieved 17.03.18; Southworth, *Minstrel*, p. 3.

<sup>169</sup> Southworth, *Minstrel*, pp. 3–8.

<sup>170</sup> Kors and Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe*, pp. 85–8; Klaassen, ‘Learning’, p. 53; Bailey, ‘From Sorcery’, p. 966; Zaerr, ‘Songs of Love’, p. 291; Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 152; Finlayson, ‘The Marvellous’, p. 395.

As discussed earlier, medieval theorists divided magic roughly into natural and demonic, demonic magic pertaining specifically to the learned magic of the ‘clerical underworld’.<sup>171</sup> Yet in this passage, the clerics’ enchantment is of conflicting origins: it belongs to the clerical underworld (‘nygrymauncye’) and also to the world of Fairy (‘fayreye’). This blurring of magical categories suggests a confusion about magical sources and traditions. Either way, this battle is one that Lybeaus does not know how to fight. When he rides into the magical palace the next day, he finds a great hall full of silent instruments:

And at the hall he alight;  
 Trumpys, hornys, sarvyse,  
 Right byfor that highe deys,  
 He herde and saughe with sight,  
 (ll. 1835–1838)

The hall is equipped for a feast, but it stands empty. While the emptiness of the wilderness is usually depicted as a formative *rite de passage* in the lais, it is unnatural for a royal court to be empty: this scene is jarring because it undermines the tropes of collective festivity accompanied by music and the notable, awe-inspiring performance in a hall. This hall differs greatly in its ethos and appearance from the splendid, busy, and noisy court of Arthur at the beginning of the poem. The clerics, who are attempting to gain wealth and social advancement, do not possess an understanding of courtesy and the gift-giving rituals required for a functional chivalric court. They also lack the chivalric code to guide their use of magic into honourable channels. Instead, they have locked out all the courtiers and filled the palace with illusory constructs. The only people in the palace are minstrels, yet their lack of interaction with Lybeaus suggests that perhaps even they are an illusion, created from the clerics’ own musical knowledge.<sup>172</sup> The minstrels, an eerie symbol of enchantment, are without an audience and thus represent a kind of displacement, and in this case the misuse of musical magic too:

With harpe, lute, and roote  
 And orgone noyse of note,

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<sup>171</sup> Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 9.

<sup>172</sup> Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, p. 86. See *Liber Niger*, ed. Myers, p. 136; Zaerr, ‘Music and Magic’; Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, p. 115.

Grete gle they maden all;  
 With sotill and sawtery,  
 Suche maner mynstralsye  
 Was never within wall.

(ll. 1851–1856)

The minstrels make ‘grete gle’ yet they have no audience. ‘Gle’ is a keyword that has appeared in nearly every scene of musical magic discussed thus far, but in this passage it has undergone a change. The positive meaning of ‘gle’ as extreme musical joy has been manipulated to undergo a corruption firstly through its association with necromancy and malicious intent, and secondly through the unnatural setting of this music. Instead of evoking joy in a bustling court, this ‘gle’ is performed in an empty palace. The scene seems to embody the word’s secondary connotation of ‘mockery’, ‘scheming’, and ‘intrigue’, as it mocks not just Lybeaus, who appears particularly susceptible to music’s powers, but also the convention of the minstrel performance.<sup>173</sup> Here, instead of creating order, or social cohesion, as it did in *Sir Orfeo* and *Horn*, the music is used as a tool in the clerics’ schemes to achieve power by enchanting a city. Once again, a false version of an ideal is presented to us, ‘Suche maner mynstralsye’ recalling the dark applications of ‘al maner of mynstralsy’ at the hands of Dame L’Amour above and contrasting with the benevolent ‘dyverse mynstralsy’ depicted in *Sir Cleges*.

Another suggestion of a supernatural undercurrent comes from the description of their music as unearthly. Their brand of minstrelsy ‘Was never within wall’, as if it were incomparably beautiful. This description is part of a recurring pattern, one that has also appeared in *Horn* and *Orfeo*. In each instance, the music is depicted as exceptional, of such beauty that its like has never been encountered before, even by other musicians. It is so unusual as to defy description. In the Lambeth manuscript, the sentiment of exceptional music appears twice, in the passage above and in the earlier passage describing the musical magic of the Dame L’Amour (ll. 1489–1491). The repetition of this description, and its appearance in scenes portraying the disquieting exploitation of magic’s affective powers, is more than just generic convention. Rather, it is a gesture to something that passes normal modes of realist description. This perplexing scene suggests displacement, something unnatural, *unheimlich*. It is

<sup>173</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18735>, accessed 13.03.2018.

reminiscent of the warning Lybeaus receives before he enters the palace: there is fairy magic to be found inside. Perhaps this music does not belong here because it is meant for the wilderness or the Otherworld, not the aristocratic court; used here, it points to a manipulation or transgression of the conventions summoned up by music romances.

The clerics lack a basic understanding of court functionality, and they are deficient in other aristocratic accomplishments too, despite the fact that chivalric manuals were a reading staple in cathedral schools and universities.<sup>174</sup> For Lybeaus, chivalry is physical – prowess and skill are proven through combat – and it is also a matter of innate honour. These martial possibilities are not available to clerics, who choose instead to play a psychological game, letting the knight wander through their eerie palace until he gets tired:<sup>175</sup>

He sett hym on the deys:  
 The mynstrales weryn in pees,  
 That were so tryste and trye;  
 The torchis that brent bright  
 They queynte anone right:  
 The mynstrellys weren awaye.  
 The dorres and wyndowes all  
 They betten in the hall  
 As hit were dynte of thonder;  
 (ll. 1875–1883)

The minstrels, described as ‘tryste and trye’ (reliable and true), are once more unnaturally silent, and when the lights go out, they vanish as well, just as mysteriously as the minstrels encountered before by Sir Cleges, although here the vanishing is laden with more sinister implications.<sup>176</sup> Given the negative connotations of their ‘gle’ and the illusory nature of their magic, one has to wonder how reliable and true they really are – we are presented with yet another false anti-type, a perversion akin to Dame L’Amour’s counterfeit ‘paradise’. Following their disappearance, the palace thunders and shakes, in another unsettling display of magic that Lybeaus has no way of resisting. It is not until the clerics tire of their game and ride into the hall that Lybeaus manages to defeat Mabon, while Yraine escapes. This victory can be credited to the fact that Lybeaus is back on more familiar ground now that the clerics are facing him

<sup>174</sup> Duby, ‘The Culture’, pp. 257–8; Scattergood, ‘Literary Culture’, pp. 29–43.

<sup>175</sup> Kaeuper and Bohna, ‘War and Chivalry’, pp. 275, 276.

<sup>176</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED47299>, accessed on 20.03.18.

in combat and have ceased with their magical assault. The Naples and Ashmole texts offer a more complete conclusion, with both clerics being defeated.<sup>177</sup>

While it would be impossible to claim that every reference to music in medieval romance inevitably conjured a connection to *musica* in the minds of the romance's audience, such a connection was nonetheless possible and activated long-encoded ideas about the beneficial qualities as well as the dangers of music's power. In the sub-group of medieval romances concerned with magic, celestial or supernatural music – and the distinction between celestial and supernatural seems alarmingly fragile throughout – is accessible to musicians who have simultaneously received advanced musical training and possess some kind of intuitive connection to music. Protagonists who possess musical knowledge and skill that surpasses ordinary human ability offer a positive model of the use of music's affective powers to tame the wilderness, diffuse supernatural threats, and create a sense of unified, transcendent joy in listeners who might experience a moment of celestial harmony. These motifs later recur in the work of Christine de Pisan (1364–c. 1430) whose *Le livre de l'Advision Cristine* speaks of Orpheus using the powers of harmony to restore the distempered body and to affect mood: 'tant mélodieusement faisoit sons a la herpe que par les proporcions des accors tant a point ordenez il garnissait de plusieurs maladies et les tristes faisoit estre ioyeux' ('he made such melodious sounds with his harp that he cured many of the sick and made the sad happy through the well-ordered proportions of his harmonies').<sup>178</sup> Harmonic proportions are recreated through music to modulate mood in a socially beneficial way.

However, a certain wariness of musical magic in the real world also left its mark on the romances, so that those protagonists who have not learned music for themselves are in danger of being overcome by its powers. The musical tropes in these texts serve a cautionary function, allowing readers to recognise that music, while it can have a positive effect, can also be dangerous when misused. Here, music's coercive sway is corrupted, being used to control listeners for selfish or wicked purposes, to create illusions, frighten, or enchant the auditor into sleep or servile obedience, thereby

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<sup>177</sup> For the Naples text, see *Lybeaus Desconus*, ed. E. Salisbury and J. Weldon (Kalamazoo: MI, Medieval Institute Publications, 2013). For Ashmole 61, see George Shuffelton (ed.), *Codex Ashmole 61: A Compilation of Popular Middle English Verse* (MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008).

<sup>178</sup> Christine de Pisan, *Le Livre de l'Advision Cristine*, ed. C. Reno and L. Dulac (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), p. 63 and *Christine's Vision*, trans. G.K. Macleod (New York: Garland, 1993), p. 68.

(if often only temporarily) undermining tropes which depict music as a positive force that creates harmony and social cohesion. The act of undermining a trope only to reinforce it later in the text (or vice versa) is used to manipulate the reader's expectations, to create deliberate contrast between positive and negative depictions of magic, such as by offering two contrasting treatments of the motif of the notable musical performance which awes the audience. A trope that is restored later in the text can be interpreted as indicative of the restoration of harmony to the narrative, while a trope that is first established and then dismantled can be read as a comment on the limitations of music's power. These romances reflect a fear of music's corporeality – its ability to control the bodies of its listeners beyond their conscious will and in such a way that, unlike in *Havelok*, protagonists who lack musical skill seem untroubled by their ignorance. While some depictions of musical magic demonstrate music's ability to offer a temporary state of transcendence through joy, others explore the dangerous potential of musical coercion. In the final chapter of this thesis, I examine two examples from the Tristan corpus of romances, which share many tropes with kingship quest romances and the corpus of romances concerned with magic. My aim is to demonstrate the way musical tropes were used to offer a cautionary depiction of *fin'amor* and its corrosive influence on the musician-knight.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONSEQUENCES OF ABANDONING MUSIC IN TRISTAN ROMANCES

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the *Romance of Silence* (thirteenth century), composed by a poet calling himself Heldris of Cornwall, and the anonymous *Sir Tristrem* (late thirteenth century), which belong to the Tristan corpus of romances, itself a subset of the broader genre of Arthurian romance.<sup>1</sup> *Silence*, which is set after the fall of Camelot, serves as a sort of sequel to the Tristan and Isolde narrative. As with the other case studies chosen for this thesis, the narratives of the two texts discussed here follow a very similar trajectory to each other, with one crucial difference concerned with the treatment of music. *Silence* offers a celebratory model for the use of music's affective powers whereas *Tristrem* will be considered as the anti-type in which these ideals are questioned and music's limitations addressed. This variation within the Tristan romances reflects a certain unease regarding the concept of *fin'amor*: its distinctive conventions were not always depicted in a positive light, offering a conflicted portrayal of courtly love as having a corrosive influence on the musician-knight.<sup>2</sup> The aim of this chapter is to extend the discussion that preceded it, drawing together ideas of music's affective powers and assessing the consequence of the rejection of these powers by a musician-protagonist. I will devote analysis to the linguistic features of these texts, particularly the multivalence of a set of recurring keywords rich with literal and metaphorical applications, and the musical tropes that recur with particular prominence in Tristan romances, in order to trace how an ideal of music is constructed and then dismantled in these narratives. There are several tropes that feature most prominently in the Tristan romances and play the most significant role in the narratives. These tropes include: the disguising of the protagonist, or the protagonist's love interest, as a professional musician; the training in music of the protagonist or the protagonist's love interest; the prodigious nature of the protagonist's musical skill that

<sup>1</sup> Survives in Wollaton Library Collection, MS WLC/LM/6.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of *fin'amor*, its treatment by troubadours, and the criticism it received from medieval writers, see Michael Bryson and Arpi Movsesian, *Love and its Critics: From the Song of Songs to Shakespeare and Milton's Eden* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2017), pp. 121–94. For a reading of *Silence* as a parody of Chrétien's romances, see Karen Pratt, 'Humour in the *Roman de Silence*', in *Arthurian Literature XIX: Comedy in Arthurian Literature*, ed. K. Busby and R. Dalrymple (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 87–103.

far surpasses professional minstrels; and the infatuation with the protagonist by a character who has been impressed by the protagonist's musical skill. Having flirted with models of exemplary or outstanding musicianship, both romances (*Sir Tristrem* more than *Silence*) countenance what happens when music is denied or abandoned, or when the musician is no longer fully in control of it or its effects. In short, these romances warn against the failure of the musical ideal. The ideal is still clung to in *Silence* but is undermined and emptied out by the end of *Sir Tristrem*, resulting in a kind of regression or dwindling that is broadly in keeping with the topos of *recreantise* – the languor or laziness or complacency of the knight in the wake of completing a task or quest.

In both texts, the protagonists are raised in secret and removed from their rightful place in society. *Silence* follows the 'aventure' (l. 1658) of a female protagonist, a descendant of Tristan, who is raised as a boy due to a change in inheritance laws.<sup>3</sup> She is brought up without a very clear conception of her place in the prevailing gendered divisions of her society and dreams of being a knight. When she finds out that this identity is impossible for her as a woman, she chooses instead to run away with a pair of travelling minstrels and learn their trade, still disguised as a young man. Adopting this identity, she endures a series of adventures, including the misdirected passions of the Queen of England, exile to France, and an encounter with the wizard Merlin. In the process, Silence is knighted, successfully demonstrating that she is capable of becoming what Susan Aronstein neatly terms a 'complete knight', embodying the educated ideal of prowess in the court and the battlefield.<sup>4</sup> The narrative culminates in Silence's reconciliation with her father and marriage to the King of England, when she relinquishes her identity as a 'man'. Music not only allows her to gain knowledge and support herself on her journeys but it also explicitly becomes the means by which she restores harmony in her father's kingdom and earns herself a place of honour at the various courts she visits. Her ability to conjure a sense of joy through music eventually leads to her being knighted. In the last fragment of the text, however, Silence is sent to capture Merlin, who can only be caught by a woman – a seemingly impossible task. In that instance, Silence does not use music, perhaps

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<sup>3</sup> See Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart*, trans. M. and R. Middleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 24, on the significance of this term for the Arthurian genre. For a discussion of the poet's possible identity, see Erin F. Labbie, 'The Specular Image of the Gender-Neutral Name: Naming Silence in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana* 7.2 (1997), pp. 63–77.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Aronstein, *An Introduction to British Arthurian Narrative* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2012), p. 79.

because she is already beginning to set aside the skills of nurture in favour of the feminine identity and nature necessary to accomplish this final quest. *Silence* plays inventively with some familiar motifs, particularly the tropes concerned with the minstrel-disguise and music's role in restoring harmony at the end of the narrative, showing how familiar tropes can be given twists in the narrative by functioning in slightly unexpected ways. It seems noteworthy that the tropes relating to the protagonist's identity are not deployed to secure or assert Silence's identity (as they did in the kingship quest romances) but rather to put it in jeopardy. Instead of asserting her 'true' identity, the disguise remains a disguise, possibly because of her gender, and music helps to restore order to her father's lands, rather than to her own.

Following a broadly comparable narrative arc, *Sir Tristrem*, the Middle English version of the Tristan legend, tells the story of Tristrem, the orphaned nephew of Mark, King of Cornwall, who is brought up by his late father's steward and who through a series of mishaps ends up employed in King Mark's court. In the course of his service, he becomes severely wounded and must go to Ireland to seek healing, in disguise as a minstrel, as only the Irish queen can save him. There, he becomes a music tutor to Ysonde, the Irish princess. When he returns to Cornwall, he is sent on a quest to bring back Ysonde as a bride for Mark. On the journey to Cornwall, the pair accidentally drink a love potion and continue their relationship after Ysonde's marriage to Mark. What follows is a series of discoveries, exiles, and pardons until they are unable to talk their way out of a compromising entwinement after being caught one final time. Tristrem is exiled for good, and travels to Brittany, where he marries Ysonde of the White Hands, the daughter of the local duke, in a moment of despair, because she has the same name as his beloved. When Tristrem receives another poisoned wound, he sends for the help of Queen Ysonde, but his wife falsely tells him that the queen is not coming and he dies of despair. When the queen arrives too late to save him, she dies of sorrow and they are buried together. Tristrem's portion of the poem begins by detailing his meticulous musical education, which plays an important role in helping him secure his post at Mark's court and favour in the Irish court. In Ireland, his music saves his life by earning the queen's healing aid. Later in the poem, it also enables him to defeat Ysonde's abductor. Yet in the last portion of the text, Tristrem misuses and abandons music, a dereliction that results in his death. Musical skill and musical power (or the abandonment thereof) are intertwined thematic concerns in all major events in the romance.

The two romances overlap in their narrative shape and plot devices, inviting comparison. Silence and Tristrem share similar origin stories, both the offspring of courtier parents who are secretly in love. Their respective parents are finally brought together by a brave deed, and worry that their union may not be accepted by the king.<sup>5</sup> While Tristrem's parents decide to elope, Silence's parents ask the king's permission to marry and remain within society's fold. Both texts promote the importance of education in shaping the identity of the protagonists. Like Tristrem's mother Blanchefleur, Silence's mother Eufemie is well versed in the seven liberal arts – 'Des .vii. ars ert moult bien aprise' (l. 403) – which suggests that she must be educated in *musica*.<sup>6</sup> Early in their respective narratives, Tristrem and Silence both rely heavily on music as a means of survival: they disguise themselves as minstrels to secure social bonds and charm enemies, and for this reason special emphasis is placed on their musical education and training. As a fosterling, Tristrem learns the music of all the lands and diligently dedicates himself to hours of musical study, implicitly a combination of practical and theoretical training. When he is abducted as a boy of fourteen and set ashore in Cornwall, he embarks on a professional musical career as a matter of course, and as a means of survival. Silence, however, is not abducted, but instead chooses of her own volition to set off with a pair of travelling minstrels, becoming their servant in exchange for learning their trade. However, where Silence is focused entirely on her music and, rejecting *fin' amor*, appears absolutely immune to the romantic overtures of the English queen, Tristrem and Ysonde cannot help their passion, as it is induced by magic. Tristrem's love potion functions like poison as he is consumed by his obsession to the point where music is relegated in priority to a distant second: whereas Silence is duly rewarded for her commitment to music, Tristrem no longer uses it to achieve his ends, a choice that leads ultimately to his death.<sup>7</sup>

This treatment of chivalric duty marks a departure from romances such as *Sir Orfeo*, where frantic dedication to courtly love, to the point of abandoning all else, is depicted in a positive light. This departure signals a certain disillusionment with the rhetoric of *fin' amor* in *Tristrem* and *Silence*, in which courtly love is painted as equally destructive.<sup>8</sup> Musical power becomes useless in the face of intemperate love. While

<sup>5</sup> Sharon Kinoshita, 'Heldris de Cornuälle's *Roman de Silence* and the Feudal Politics of Lineage', *PMLA* 110 (1995), pp. 397–409 *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance*, trans. S. Roche–Mahdi (MI: Michigan State University Press, 1992), p. xii.

<sup>6</sup> Karras, *From Boys*, p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, trans. A.T. Hatto (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), pp. 7–9.

<sup>8</sup> Bryson and Movsesian, *Love and its Critics*, pp. 121–94.

music is depicted as socially cohesive and personally advantageous, obsession is revealed as a destructive force in society.<sup>9</sup> Geoffroi de Charny explained in his *Livre de Chevalerie* that while love affairs are inevitable and can engender more knightly motivation in turn, these undertakings must be approached with moderation – an idea ironically echoed by Queen Eufeme in *Silence*, who repeats several times that her secret affair with Silence must be approached with ‘mesure’ (‘moderation’, ‘tempering’, ll. 3844, 3855) to avoid gossip, even as she obsessively and aggressively sets out to seduce the minstrel, undermining her own supposed concern with moderation.<sup>10</sup>

Arthurian romances are recognisable as narratives centring on the quests of King Arthur, the wizard Merlin, and the knights of Camelot. They focus on the protagonist’s individual quest, and are marked by decadent descriptions and even a kind of nostalgia for a lost age of chivalry, identity quests, and enchantment.<sup>11</sup> *Sir Tristrem* is what Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann calls an ‘untypical’ romance as it possesses Arthurian elements not through references to Arthur and his knights but through association with the wider Tristan corpus, itself an atypical member of the Arthurian romance family.<sup>12</sup> Tristan romances are more concerned with the internal narrative of the doomed love of Tristan and Isolde, and sometimes with their relatives and indirect descendants, than with adventures centred around Camelot and its milieu. As a romance countenancing not only the doomed relationship between Tristan and Isolde but also the failure of chivalric ideals, *Sir Tristrem* depicts music as a force unable to perform the kinds of roles witnessed in previous chapters: here, it risks falling short of the socially cohesive function it performed in the kingship quest romances or the personally restorative role it enjoyed in correcting emotional disturbance in the romances concerned with magic, as its affective capabilities and its harmonising properties of deriving concord from discord are increasingly called into doubt. *Sir Tristrem*, like *Silence*, serves as a warning about the consequences of abandoning music in favour of a more personal, excessive agenda. In the Tristan romances, the

<sup>9</sup> D.S. Brewer, ‘Courtesy and the Gawain Poet’, in *Patterns of Love and Courtesy*, ed. J. Lawlor (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), pp. 54–86 (p. 54); Hanning, *The Individual*, p. 21; Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and its Commentaries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 6, 73.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffroi de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 31; see also Pratt, ‘Humour’, pp. 87–103.

<sup>11</sup> Sarah Kay, *The Chansons de Geste in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 49; C. J. Douglas Canfield, *Word as Bond in English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 3; Bradley-Cromeey, ‘The “Recréantise”’, p. 451; Burnley, *Courtliness*, pp. 56–7; Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution*, pp. 33–48; Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, pp. 39–53.

<sup>12</sup> Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution*, p. 44.

presence of familiar musical tropes does not spur character development or narrative development as they did in the romances encountered in Chapters 3 and 4. Several of the same tropes recur (such as the minstrel-disguise topos), but in ways that do not seem instrumental to the establishment of a character's true identity or to the fulfilment of a narrative trajectory.

## 2. Compromised ideals in the *Romance of Silence*

The *Romance of Silence* offers a positive treatment of music's affective powers, as minstrels in the text actively engage with their environment through music's ability to evoke joy, pain, and sorrow in an audience.<sup>13</sup> Silence acquires musical skills in the course of her adventures and remains loyal to her musical calling for the duration of the text. However, even as *Silence* celebrates and affirms music's affective potency, the text also challenges several conventional representations of musicians familiar from the romance tradition, particularly with regards to how they treat their peers and how their relationships with employers are calibrated. The poem begins with one such deconstruction of the expected paradigm: instead of a short introduction praising minstrels who compose lais for generous patrons, Heldris opens with a diatribe of 106 lines condemning greedy patrons who devalue the work of minstrels and poets by promising rewards and then refusing to pay up, claiming that the honour and generosity of ages past has been replaced by greed ('Honor lor est si esloignie', 'Honour is so scarce with them', l. 41).<sup>14</sup> This unusual introduction, announcing a present remove from a nostalgically-reimagined past of wholesome interactions between patrons and minstrel-poets, intimates Heldris' intention of subverting and challenging the metanarrative trope of minstrels composing songs of worthy heroes in order to explore the ways in which greed can taint the career of musician-poets. Another prominent trope, that of helpful minstrels, is subverted in the text when the minstrels who become Silence's teachers decide to murder her. Similarly, the trope of music's ability to conjure love, while it is not exactly undermined, is treated as a detriment rather than a positive development for the protagonist. In this section, I address the question of

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<sup>13</sup> Mary Ellen Ryder and Linda Marie Zaerr take a different view, arguing that, despite the power ascribed to minstrels, the language used to describe her actions diminishes Silence's agency in the text. See 'A Stylistic Analysis of "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana* 18 (Spring 2008), pp. 22–40 (p. 25).

<sup>14</sup> *Silence*, trans. S. Roche-Mahdi. All subsequent references and translations are from this edition.

musical education and the connotations of the protagonist's name, considerations that feed into the text's exploration of the conflict between nature and nurture as well as the capacity of music to create harmony.

For a poem obsessed with the tension between textuality and orality, between silence and performed sound, the heroine's name seems especially incongruous with her chosen profession.<sup>15</sup> Heldris pays much attention to the naming of characters in the poem, indulging in a number of puns, parallels, and cross-references to the wider Arthurian corpus.<sup>16</sup> Silence is named twice in the text, once by her father at her baptism and once by herself when she runs away with the minstrels. Her evident agency and autonomy in the poem is further emphasised by her rejection of her given name in favour of a pseudonym the better to match her new goal: the pursuit of musical education and experience. In the first naming scene, her father chooses what she will be called:

Sel faisons apieler Silense  
 El non de Sainte Paciense,  
 Por cho que silensce tolt ance.  
 Que Jhesus Cris par sa poissance  
 Le nos doinst celer et taisir  
 (ll. 2067–2071)

[We shall call her Silence,  
 after Saint Patience,  
 for silence relieves anxiety.  
 May Jesus Christ through his power  
 keep her hidden and silent for us.]

The decision is loaded with cultural bias: it prescribes desirable female behaviour – meekness and silence – and reflects the contemporary belief that women are prone to gossip.<sup>17</sup> From the beginning, Silence is ironically misnamed: growing up as a boy she enjoys freedom as she roams the woods, receives an education, and bests boys at jousting; and when she runs away, she earns fame as a minstrel and is eventually knighted, winning tournaments and excelling at warfare. 'Silence', as both name and virtue, does not align with expected masculine behaviour, the pursuit of fame by young

<sup>15</sup> Linda Marie Zaerr, 'When Silence Plays Vielle: The Metaperformance Scenes of "Le Roman de Silence" in Performance', *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 42 (2009), pp. 99–116.

<sup>16</sup> For the significance of names in identifying texts from the Arthurian corpus, see Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution*, p. 41. Caroline A. Jewers, 'The Non-Existent Knight: Adventure in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana* 7 (1997), pp. 87–110 (p. 99).

<sup>17</sup> *Silence*, trans. S. Roche-Mahdi, pp. xx–xxii; Jewers, 'The Non-Existent Knight', p. 91.

knights, and it fits even less when Silence chooses to become a professional minstrel.<sup>18</sup> If her name was meant to ascribe to her a particular character, then the masculine and professional role she assumes completely undermines this branding, until her gender is revealed and her name reverts to a feminine form, potentially signalling a new submission to set gender roles.<sup>19</sup> The count's hopes that his daughter will be 'celer et taisir' ('hidden and silent') are frustrated as she makes her way in the world through the power of her voice and instruments. Her father's assumption that silence relieves anxiety ('ance'), in part a reflection of his fear that his ruse will be discovered, strains against the generic premise encountered in other music romances in this thesis, namely that music brings harmony to troubled individuals and fractured kingdoms. However, disguised as a musician, Silence gains the ability to soothe and relieve anxiety by exploiting the affective powers of music, and in the process recuperates the convention that music performed by a skilled minstrel is a benign and restorative force in medieval romance.

As the minstrels with whom she travels grow progressively threatened by her skills, and thus hostile towards her, the poet inverts expected roles. Through reuse of the word 'taisir', the poet now associates silence with the minstrels. As Silence's musical skills grow, wealthy patrons ask for her, while silencing the other two minstrels: 'Qu'il harpe et viiele a plaisir / Et c'on les fait por lui taisir' ('he [Silence] was asked to play harp and viiele as much as he pleased, / and they were silenced so people could hear him', ll. 3157–3158). When they visit the duke of Burgundy, the same pattern emerges:

Li menestrel i ont joé  
 Mais il i sont si desjoé  
 Que il n'osent un mot tentir  
 Car li dus nes violt consentir,  
 Ne mais Scilence solement.  
 Celui voelent oïr la gent:  
 Et cil en ont angoisse et honte  
 (ll. 3237–3243)

[The minstrels began a concert there,  
 but they were so disconcerted  
 that they didn't dare say a word,

<sup>18</sup> Labbie, 'Specular Image', pp. 63–77; Zaerr, 'When Silence Plays Vielle', pp. 99–116.

<sup>19</sup> Labbie, 'Specular Image', pp. 66–8; Jewers, 'The Non-Existent Knight', pp. 92–3; Ryder and Zaerr, 'A Stylistic Analysis of "Le Roman de Silence"', pp. 22–40. For gender roles and cross-dressing, see Robert S. Sturges, 'The Crossdresser and the "Juventus": Category Crisis in "Silence"', *Arthuriana* 12 (2002), pp. 37–49.

because the duke didn't want to hear them;  
 he just wanted to hear Silence alone.  
 Everyone wanted to hear only him,  
 and the minstrels were enraged and humiliated at this.]

In another instance of a strain against the expected, conventional romance collocation of music and a concord shared between performer and audience, her performance evokes rage and shame ('angoisse et honte', a recurring pair of keywords) because the minstrels are demoted to silence, unwilling to say a word ('un mot'). Other incongruities lace this passage: the quality inextricably connected to the protagonist's name, 'Scilence', is undermined by the fact that everyone only wants to hear her music; the tense wordplay between the rhyme pairs 'joé' and 'desjoé' pits their playing ('joé') with rejection ('desjoé'), and seems to take us away from the expected process witnessed in previous chapters by which discord yields concord, and, in the terminology of Chrétien's foundational romance *Erec et Enide*, chanz is derived from harmonious deschanz.<sup>20</sup> This reverse silencing, literal and metaphorical, is important to the narrative for several reasons. First, it helps to deconstruct the idyllic image of minstrels presented in other romances, as well-travelled, comfortable, and accepting of being upstaged by musicians of superior talent. This text exposes the intense competitiveness and instability of the profession and the dangerous consequences of professional jealousy. Secondly, the silencing plays on the heroine's name and creates a contrast between, on the one hand, her aristocratic and instinctual pursuit of music in the name of the knowledge and practical skill used to assert her identity, and more abstract understanding of *musica speculativa* ('Sens and savoir aprendre et quere', l. 2850, and 'Poras des estrumens aprendre', l. 2862), and, on the other, the minstrels' mercantile pursuit of it for the sake of profit. She cannot comprehend why they should react so violently as to plot her murder, because to her the monetary aspect of the job does not matter.

Their disengagement, their opting for silence, also raises the question about the possibility that musical ideals have become debased, in this case due to the corruption of the musicians' hearts through greed and professional resentment.<sup>21</sup> A conventional assumption of music romances, the stock trope that harmonious music inevitably

<sup>20</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/desjoier>, accessed on 17.04.2018.

<sup>21</sup> Corinne Saunders, 'Mind, Body and Affect in Medieval English Arthurian Romance', in *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice*, ed. F. Brandsma, C. Larrington, and C. Saunders (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 31–46.

dispels nefarious designs and restores interpersonal concord within a community, comes under duress, as does the hypothesis that music's affective powers cannot consciously be resisted by the listener. Instead of letting Silence's music instil in them joy or temperance, as it does for other listeners, the minstrels experience a growing sense of hatred, humiliation, and rage:

Li diols lor est es cuers colés  
 Que lor mestiers est refolés  
 (ll. 3245–3246)

[Their hearts were pierced with grief  
 that their craft was so disdained.]

They are offended that their craft and their mastery of musical powers ('mestier') have been upstaged, and instead of feeling pride for their student's exceptional skill they feel grief ('colés', better translated as 'rage' or 'choler'). The use of 'refolés' is particularly telling, as it connotes flooding, overwhelming – their mastery is completely overwhelmed by hers, just as they are overwhelmed by envy. This idea reappears twice more, and they complain that no court will want them after hearing Silence play: 'Que en cort mais, u mestier fasce / N'iermes oï. Tant l'ont ame' ('never to be heard at any court / where he has performed. He has become so popular', ll. 3280–3281). Her popularity creates discord instead of cohesive harmony: her 'mestier fasce' ('mastery', 'masterful actions') has cancelled out theirs.<sup>22</sup> This sense of mutual exclusivity recurs a few lines down, 'Et c'on nos fait por lui taizir' ('And silence us so that he can perform', l. 3312), a close echo of 'Et c'on les fait por lui taisir' (l. 3158) encountered above. The verb 'taisir' / 'taizir' occurs twice in reference to the minstrels being silenced for Silence, a pointed variation on her father's hope that she will be 'celer et taisir' (l. 2071) such that, in an ironic reversal, she becomes a popular, public figure as other minstrels are rendered mute.<sup>23</sup> This section of the text appears to question the traditional depiction of the perfect romance minstrel figure, such as Orfeo or Apollonius, whose superiority awes the other minstrels without earning their hostility or disrupting their careers. In addition, it countenances the failure of harmonious music to placate the disturbed passions of its listeners, leaving them unmoved in the right way and even devoid of compunction at being unmoved in the right way.

<sup>22</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, [http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/mester\[1\]](http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/mester[1]), accessed on 17.04.2018.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of the paradox between speech and silence in the text, see R. Howard Bloch, 'Silence and Holes: The *Roman de Silence* and the Art of the Trouvère', *Yale French Studies* 70 (1986), pp. 81–99.

Silence chooses specifically to be a male minstrel and thus to engage in a form of public music that will offer travel opportunities. Brooke Findley, in an examination of poet-heroines in French texts, argues that it is by adopting this identity that Silence, along with other cross-dressing women musicians of medieval romance, finds a means to shape her narrative and identity through performance.<sup>24</sup> By choosing the career of a minstrel, and then a minstrel-knight, Silence successfully subverts Nature in favour of Nurture, two personifications which participate in an ongoing debate and struggle of one-upmanship throughout the narrative. While this point has been well examined from the perspective of gender studies, my own discussion will focus on the consequences of this tussle in regards to the nature of musical learning and consequently the nature of music's affective powers as learned or innate.<sup>25</sup> There are many references to the ongoing conflict between Nurture and Nature in the text, and the poet's voice often switches allegiance.<sup>26</sup> Nature, who possesses 'grant force' ('great powers', l. 1805) and is credited with creating 'mervellose' works (l. 1870), appears to win in the end when Silence returns to living as a woman. However, the text also suggests that Nurture is able to suspend or even overcome Nature. A delicate balance is struck with regards to Silence's musical skill, which is a product of both Nature, in the form of natural affinity, and Nurture, in the form of arduous learning.<sup>27</sup> The question of whether, in this literary tradition, musical powers are presented as innate or learned has been explored in all the romances examined thus far, and in this case the poet deliberately sets up this tension early in the text, even before Silence is born.

At the beginning of the romance, her mother, Eufemie, is bemoaning the suffering caused by her (supposedly) unrequited love for Cador, Silence's father.<sup>28</sup> Eufemie implies that her suffering is the product of Nurture, since she claims that Nature could free her ('S'en moi peüst valoir Nature', 'If Nature could assert her strength in me', l. 1027) were it not that love has made her 'desnaturés' ('dis-natured', l. 1031), implicitly recognising Nature's limitations. This idea is encountered many times in the text. First, Nature's fallibility is suggested when she realises that she has been tricked by Silence's parents, who claim that they have had a son: Nature is

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<sup>24</sup> Findley, *Poet Heroines*, p. 233.

<sup>25</sup> Simon Gaunt, 'The Significance of Silence', *Source: Paragraph* 13.2 (July 1990), pp. 202–16; Peggy McCracken, 'The Boy Who Was a Girl: Reading Gender in the "Roman de Silence"', *Romanic Review* 85 (November 1994), pp. 517–36; Pratt, 'Humour', pp. 87–103.

<sup>26</sup> Kristin L. Burr, 'Nurturing Debate in *Le Roman de Silence*', in *Founding Feminisms in Medieval Studies: Essays in Honor of E. Jane Burns*, ed. L.E. Doggett and D.E. O'Sullivan (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016), pp. 33–44.

<sup>27</sup> Gaunt, 'The Significance', p. 202.

<sup>28</sup> Bryson and Movsesian, *Love*, pp. 124–5.

insulted that they have made Nurture out to be her superior, “[“]Quanses que miols valt Noreture / Que face m’uevre!” dist Nature’ (ll. 2267–2268). In fact, when Nature and Nurture are arguing over Silence, Nurture insists that ‘Jo l’ai tolte desnaturee’ (‘I have completely dis-natured her’, l. 2595). Later in the text, when Silence is knighted and wins a tournament, the poet asserts that Nurture ‘Puet moult overer contre Nature’ (‘can do a great deal to overcome Nature’, l. 5154). Nature is not infallible or insuperable. This conflict comes to a head in the question of education, which is presented as a powerful force: when Silence is being brought up as a boy, her education is used specifically as a way of controlling or countering Nature. As soon as she is old enough she begins her training:

Car l’enfant fist letres aprendre  
 Si tost com il i pot entendre.  
 Car por icho le violt destraintre  
 Et faire entor ostel remaindre,  
 Qu’en tel liu le portaist enfance  
 U li enfes par ignorance  
 Descovrist as gens sa nature  
 Se fust falsee Noreture.  
 (ll. 2367–2374)

[he had the child learn his letters  
 as soon as he was capable of it,  
 for he wanted to restrain him by this means  
 and make him stay inside the lodging  
 rather than spend his childhood somewhere  
 where, not knowing any better,  
 he might reveal his nature to people,  
 thus contradicting nurture.]

The ability to write shows the extent of Silence’s learning and recalls discussions about the requirements of chivalric masculinity, which came to encompass not just physical, military skill but also literacy and education.<sup>29</sup> In the case of accessing music’s powers, literacy is necessary for the theoretical education that is required along with musical practice. Silence’s love of education follows the model set up in *Apollonius* and offers another point of convergence with the Tristan corpus. More troublingly, Carolyne Larrington, advancing the line of argument set down by David Rollo, suggests that in

<sup>29</sup> Page, ‘Music and Chivalric Fiction’, pp. 1–27; Carolyne Larrington, ‘The Enchantress, the Knight and the Cleric: Authorial Surrogates in Arthurian Romance’, in *Arthurian Literature XXV*, ed. E. Archibald and D.F. Johnson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 43–66.

the late Middle Ages literacy came to be ‘a necessary precondition for sorcery’ too – later in the text, we will see that the minstrels suspect Silence’s musical skills have demonic origin.<sup>30</sup>

The strain between *musica speculativa* and *musica practica* witnessed in other chapters seems to reach a kind of resolution in the person of Silence. The verb ‘aprendre’ and noun ‘lapresure’ are used, in various forms, to encompass both a theoretical understanding of music and a more practical, instrumentally-focused kind of training or apprenticeship, in both of which Silence becomes expert, as if each were a necessary complement to the other. Reconciling these separate strands, Silence fulfils the ideal articulated by St Augustine in *De Musica Libri Sex*, that *Musica est scientia bene modulandi* (‘Music is the science of modulating well’), a fusion of the theoretical and the practical: Augustine’s *modulandi* encompasses an abstract mathematical science of harmonic ratios and a material, acoustic practice of musical skill in singing or playing an instrument harmoniously.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the opposition between musical skill as an innate talent and musical skill as an acquired craft or art nurtured through diligent practice is resolved by Silence, who seems to harness both possibilities.<sup>32</sup> Her aptitude derives from both Nature and Nurture: ‘Ainz est moult liés de l’apresure / Car cho li fait bone nature’ (‘he was very glad of such learning – / that was the effect of his good nature’, ll. 2383–2384). This fusion of natural inclination and an aptitude honed through practical instruction culminates in the suggestion that Silence is self-taught: ‘il meïsmes se doctrine’ (‘he taught himself’, l. 2386).

The portrait of Silence as an autodidact recurs in the poem, when her minstrel teachers decide that her incredible skill comes from having taught herself, or else is the result of her learning from demons, since she could not possibly have learned from her human instructors. They venture a connection between music, or musical proficiency, and the supernatural:

Il l’a appris par lui meïsmes,  
U li malfet li ont appris  
Ki en tel baldor l’ont ja mis.  
(ll. 3318–3320 )

<sup>30</sup> Larrington, ‘The Enchantress’, p. 54.

<sup>31</sup> Treitler, ‘The Troubadours’, pp. 18–19. For St. Augustine, see Augustine, *Oeuvres*, ed. G. Finnaert, and F.-J. Thonnard (Bruges: Desclée, 1947), p. vii; Whitaker, *University of Notre-Dame Latin-English Dictionary*, <http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=modulandi>, accessed 03.04.18.

<sup>32</sup> For an in-depth discussion of this conflict, see Gaunt, ‘The Significance’, pp. 202–216.

[He learned it all by himself,  
or else some demons taught him  
to attain such excellence.]

The accusation of demonic origins ('malfet') draws on a nascent fear in the Middle Ages that excessive musical skill and the musical powers that derive from it originated in the devil and were designed to lead listeners into sin, even as the devil was also connected with the darker aspects of musical magic.<sup>33</sup> Struggling to rationalise or explain Silence's prodigious talents, the minstrels resent her 'baldor' – her musical 'excellence' and 'force' but also the 'joy' or 'merrymaking' subsequently stirred in an audience.<sup>34</sup> They find the excellence of her music and the joy it evokes, its affective force, to be uncanny.

Rather than deriving from a supernatural source, Silence's talent can be traced to diligent application, in keeping with the tendency of other romances encountered in previous chapters to demystify the well-springs of musical proficiency. Much emphasis is put on hard work:

'Et que tu painne i voelles rendre  
Poras des estrumens aprendre'  
(ll. 2861–2864)

['and are willing to work very hard  
you will learn how to play instruments']

Here 'painne' meant 'to make an effort', 'to strive', or 'to exert oneself', but it could also be used to denote hardship or suffering, suggesting the exhausting degree of hard work necessary for mastery. Yet Silence is determined to succeed: 'voelles rendre' meant a deliberate pursuit of a wish, illustrating the need for focus and discipline to realise her goal.<sup>35</sup>

Practical musical skills are depicted as a result of hard work, yet the speed and facility with which Silence masters this practical dimension suggests innate talent, a

<sup>33</sup> Lewis Eugene Rowell, *Thinking About Music: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983), p. 67; Carolyn Larrington, *Women and Writing in Medieval Europe: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 222; C. Frugoni, 'The Imagined Woman', in *Silences of the Middle Ages*, ed. C. Klapisch-Zuber (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1992), p. 395.

<sup>34</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/baudur>, accessed on 17.04.2018.

<sup>35</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, [http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/voil\[1\]](http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/voil[1]), accessed on 17.04.2018.

point to which I will return. In just three years, Silence learns to play her instruments so effectively that she easily surpasses the minstrels:

Il a des estrumens appris,  
 Car moult grant travail i a mis  
 Qu'ains que li tiers ans fust passés  
 A il ses maistres tols passés,  
 Et moult grant avoir lor gaagne.  
 Por quant si ont moult grant engage  
 Que nus d'als ne set que il face:  
 (ll. 3139–3145)

[he learned to play instruments so well,  
 he put such effort into it,  
 that before the end of the third year  
 he had completely surpassed his masters  
 and earned a great deal of money for them.  
 They were so humiliated by this  
 that they didn't know what to do.]

On this evidence, 'grant travail' is required in the mastery of *musica practica* or *musica instrumentalis*, and this effort translates into 'gregnor grasce' (great skill, l. 3146) in the person of Silence herself, the financial reward of 'grant [...] gaagne' (a great deal of money) for the minstrel band, and, rather than renewed cohesion within the group, 'grant engage' (great humiliation) and 'grant anguissce' (great jealousy or anguish, l. 3159) amongst her former mentors. The implication of this scene is that music has fallen short of its expected function in the romances: while, on a personal level, Silence's musical efforts allow her to 'achieve greater self-discipline' by reconfiguring or conditioning her internal will through a test of diligence ('Paint d'acesmer sa volenté', l. 3229), they simultaneously bring not harmony and wonder but monstrous, unnatural discord to the rest of her troupe: 'Oïés mervellose descorde!' (l. 3205).

Surpassed by Silence's superior skill, the minstrels, motivated by financial gain and inclined to consider their profession in purely transactional terms, reduce musical knowledge to a commodity that Silence has stolen from them. Silence is accused of plundering their knowledge and craft ('emblé nostre savoir', l. 3268) and appropriating their professional expertise: 'Oïl, atolt nostre savoir' ('Of course! he has all our knowledge', l. 3274). This terminology likens superior skill to a trade secret that can be stolen. The accusation of theft recurs throughout these lines, coupled with the

frustration, couched in suggestively economic terms, that the stolen commodity has accrued in value: the minstrels lament that ‘Nos savoirs monteplie en lui’ (‘Our talents are multiplied in him,’ l. 3271), resulting in neither joy nor financial reward but merely ‘grant anui’ (‘great grief’, l. 3272).

Silence’s audience does not share any of these suspicions, however. Her skill, and implicitly her ability to use music’s affective power, ensures that she is always welcome, as attested by the ease with which, after parting ways with the minstrels, she finds employment at the court of Brittany, where she holds a place of ‘grant honor’ (l. 3478), yet another virtue or accolade to merit that overfamiliar epithet ‘grant’. For Silence, unlike her minstrel tutors who treat music as financially instrumental, music’s appeal lies in its affective possibilities:

Se ne ses donc aucune rien  
 Por tes compaignons conforter  
 Ne te volront pas deporter  
 (ll. 2846–2848)

[If you don’t know a single way  
 to entertain your companions,  
 they won’t want to spend time with you]

‘Conforter’ reaffirms music’s ability to comfort and lull an audience of potential companions who might be won over by the sound of her playing, and the sentiment is echoed later in the narrator’s claim that Silence ‘fait moult a amer: / De se harpe, de se viiele’ (‘did many other endearing things; / with his harp, with his viiele’, ll. 4970–4971). Even this affective ideal, however, is threatened with debasement in this romance, when the English queen, Eufeme, takes a liking to Silence and summons her to her chamber on the pretext of having Silence soothe her with music. In reality, her design is to seduce the young man:

De le harpe le doit deduire,  
 Mais cho li porra anchois nuire  
 Que sa nature li canjast.  
 (ll. 3717–3719)

[He’s supposed to soothe her by playing the harp,  
 but he might get into trouble instead  
 for having changed his nature.]

Silence's musical skill, jeopardising rather than (as witnessed in other romances) securing her true identity, makes her attractive to the queen, especially since the harp was often used in romance as a symbol of desire.<sup>36</sup> This passage evokes music's ability to conjure a sense of calm and then promptly subverts it: instead of peace, her music will evoke 'nuire' ('trouble', 'harm', and 'danger'). 'Deduire' describes the music's intended effect – 'to soothe', 'to evoke a sense of joy', even 'to distract' from trouble – but it also allows for a lustful pun, because it also connoted enjoyment of erotic pleasures.<sup>37</sup> While Silence's intention lies in the former category, Eufeme's strays into the latter. Indeed, instead of conjuring peace or engendering tranquillity, this music merely manages to magnify the queen's lust: 'Cho dist qu'il l'asoägera' ('She said he would relieve her distress', l. 3736), punning once more on an innocent sense of alleviating anguish and on a more lascivious sense of delivering sexual satisfaction.<sup>38</sup>

Unlike the other romances encountered thus far, *Silence* dwells repeatedly on music's inadvertent stirring of affect in all the wrong ways. Silence's music, beyond enflaming the queen sexually, also causes Eufeme unbearable pain:

Sa harpe a cil bien atenpree  
 Si a grant dolor destenpree  
 A oués la dame de roïne  
 Ki sor lui s'apoie et acline:  
 Et plus et plus de cel s'esprent  
 Que sil harpe si dolcement.  
 (ll. 3742–3747)

[The youth's harp was in perfect tune.  
 This only caused our lady queen –  
 who was sitting next to him and leaning against him –  
 unbearable pain.  
 Her desire for the harper, who played so sweetly,  
 grew stronger every minute.]

Her desire for Silence seems to grow progressively, 'plus et plus', as the minstrel plays 'dolcement' ('sweetly' or 'lullingly'), confirmation that her feelings are amplified by

<sup>36</sup> Zaerr, 'Songs of Love', p. 292.

<sup>37</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/deduit>, accessed on 17.04.2018; ATILF–CNRS & Université De Lorraine, *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330–1500)* (2015), <http://www.atilf.fr/dmf>, accessed on 17.04.2018.

<sup>38</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/asuager>, accessed on 17.04.2018.

the music. The ultimate results of Silence's playing are quite at odds with the theoretical model of music's pacifying, therapeutic effects encountered in previous chapters: her well-tuned harp ('bien atepree'), ostensibly an instrument associated with the affective nuances of tempering listeners or moderating and regulating feelings, produces the inverse condition in its listener ('destepree') – a distempering, a discord engendered out of concord in a reversal of the paradigm encountered in previous chapters. Yielding only 'grant dolor', Silence's playing points up a tension between source and target, instrument and listener, affective design and affective result, a dissonance belied by the consonance expected from a rhyme pair, much like the tension witnessed earlier in the joining of 'joé' and 'desjoé' (3237–3238).

The episode with Queen Eufeme is meant, at least in part, to critique courtly love, echoing a cynicism that runs through the text and reflects a striking wariness of, or at least weariness with, this social construct and literary formula. Love is depicted as a malady and the antithesis of learning and reason, even in the positive courtship of Silence's parents. Eufemie, Silence's mother, describes her love as a deteriorating malady exacerbated by thoughts of the beloved: 'Si senti plus grief mon malage / Amors m'a mis en noncaloir' ('and felt my malady grow worse / Love has made me incapable of action', ll. 786–787). Love is debilitating, and even her intelligence ('ars') and learning ('engiens', akin to the *engin* and *ingenium* encountered in the Apollonius narratives in Chapter II) cannot help her and therefore hold no worth ('n'i puet valoir', l. 788). Eufemie's expressive credentials, her apparent facility for eloquence announced in her name, come into doubt, as the mechanisms of courtly love jeopardise her articulacy and render her inactive. The destructive nature of obsessive love recurs as a theme in the Tristan corpus: in Tristrem's case, obsession taints his use of music's powers before overwhelming him so conclusively that he is unable to use them at all. Later, when Eufeme, the Queen of England, sets out to seduce Silence, her obsession is cast as very destructive, and it is deeper even than that of 'Tristrans por Izelt (l. 3700). The queen's actions lead to treachery ('deloialté', l. 3696) and evil deeds ('mesaventure', l. 3697) because of her mad rage ('faite rage') and lust ('ardour', l. 3698). In an ironic reversal, she insists that Silence must treat their future relationship with moderation, 'mesure' (ll. 3844, 3855), an evocatively musical ideal which the temperate Silence constitutionally and (as a minstrel) professionally espouses. This treatment of *fin'amor* as an irresistible condition, immune to rational efforts of restraint, is in line with similar concerns registered in the historical record. Medieval

medicinal texts list remedies for obsessive love: in his penitential manual, Thomas of Chobham (fl. 1200–1233) provides recipes for those who cannot be dissuaded from the mental and physical disease (*morbus*) – ‘insane love’ – by other means.<sup>39</sup> Lovesickness was considered a form of madness – an obsession which led to insomnia, melancholia, and weakness, and which could be fatal if left untreated.<sup>40</sup> Embodying moderation, Silence, perhaps unsurprisingly, never falls in love, which saves her from meeting the same end as Tristrem. Even when she is married to King Ebain at the end of the text, this union remains questionable since no mention is ever made of love.

For all of its inadvertent implication in enflaming *fin’amor*, music in this romance retains some lingering traces of its familiar societal function of restoring collective unity within the court and kingdom. When Silence decides to leave with the minstrels, her father assumes that she was abducted and banishes all minstrels from his lands on pain of death (ll. 3118–3122, 3491–3510). When Silence returns to her father’s lands and lodges at an inn, the innkeeper spots her musical instruments and they unsettle him: ‘que damage / Ai requelloit de tel ostage’ (‘what trouble and sorrow / I get from a guest like you’, ll. 3494–3495), he exclaims, noting that ‘cis diols est vostres’ (‘the sorrow is yours as well’, l. 3549). Despite this equation between minstrels and social discord, an unexpected association that pits minstrels in opposition to their conventional role in romances as harbingers of festive concord and civic unity at public gatherings, Silence remains confident in music’s powers. When warned about her impending execution, she chooses to pick up her instruments and spend her last night performing:

Dont prent sa harpe et sa viiele,  
 Si note avoec a sa vois biele.  
 N’i a celui d’illuec entor  
 Ne face a l’ostel donc son tor.  
 Moult i a borjois assanblés  
 (ll. 3521–3525)

[Then he took his harp and vielle  
 and sang beautifully as he played.  
 Everyone from all around  
 came running to the inn.  
 There was a crowd of townspeople]

<sup>39</sup> Wack, *Lovesickness*, pp. 27–9. Thomas de Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1968), pp. 389–90.

<sup>40</sup> Wack, *Lovesickness*, pp. xi–xii, 6.

The harmonious combination of Silence's beautiful voice and strumming, a formulaic pairing witnessed earlier in the Apollonius tradition in which Archistrate marries her tune with her song (*melos cum voce miscebat*), attracts people from all around town to hear her. Deprived of music for four years, when they hear her joyous music they are wonderstruck: 'N'i a celui ne s'esmervelle' ('They were all amazed, every one of them', l. 3533). What impresses them, as the poet keeps asserting, is an affective quality associated with her music: 'Maine sa joie et son deduit' ('[Silence] continued to perform joyously', l. 3535), the near-synonymous terms 'joie' and 'deduit' offering, in addition, a pun on 'joer', the playing of an instrument, as if Silence, like Orpheus, cannot play without instilling delight in the assembled listeners.<sup>41</sup>

Yet once again, even here, Silence's performance engenders an inadvertent set of emotions in her audience, just as it does when playing in the chamber at Eufeme's request. While her music is sufficiently moving that the public begs the count for a stay of execution, the immediate, visceral pleasure enjoyed by her listeners is only temporary and yields to a more lingering, nostalgic recollection of her playing and the pained prospect in her audience that such rare music might abruptly cease soon thereafter. The same keywords, 'joie' and 'deduit', encountered twenty lines earlier reappear after the count has agreed to suspend the execution, only this time they are partnered with their antitype: 'Mellent o joie lor anui, / Tolt por le biel deduit celui' ('Their joy was mingled with sorrow / at the thought of the youth's exquisite performance', ll. 3557–3558). Intermingled with their feeling of 'joie' ('joy') is their 'anui' ('sorrow'), recalling the minstrels' aforementioned 'anui' (l. 3272) upon hearing Silence's music and resentfully conceding her superior skill. This scene simultaneously enforces and undermines the trope of music's ability to conjure feelings of harmony and pleasure in the listeners, because at the same time it also (unintentionally) evokes a sense of sorrow. Merlin, who recognises Silence and notes that she has learned to play musical instruments, goes on to praise her for having left the inhibiting environment of the court to become 'plus senés' ('all the wiser', l. 3583) through trial and hardship ('penés', l. 3584), yet another illustration of how musical 'science' (translated here as 'wisdom' or 'knowledge', l. 3590) requires dislocation from the courtly milieu, just as Orfeo had needed to refine his art alone in the wilderness, removed from the distractions and debasement of the court. After her performance, Silence asks her father

<sup>41</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/gate/D/juer>, accessed on 17.04.2018.

to be ‘soldoiés’ (‘paid for it’, l. 3663), a plea not for money, the expected remuneration for minstrels (as discussed in Part I), but for a more metaphorical, less materialistic reward. Prioritising social harmony above personal, financial recompense, she asks for the ban on minstrels to be lifted, thus restoring the conditions for music-making and communal joy – ‘Tols li país est esclairiés / Que Silences est repairié’ (‘The whole country was glad / that Silence had come home’, ll. 3675–3676). Silence returns to vanquish silence: within ‘repairié’ (‘return’) lies a punning secondary meaning of ‘reparer’ (‘repair’, ‘mend’), a hint that Silence’s musical proficiency will restore societal harmony and heal the rift brought about by the former banishment of minstrelsy.<sup>42</sup>

Yet even in this triumphant recognition (and reconciliation) scene, the romance does not entirely resolve its underlying tensions. We are left unsure as to the nature of Silence’s skill (whether innate or the result of theoretical learning, whether the product of her birth or her dislocation from the court) and the narrative refuses to answer these questions as it promptly moves off to track Silence’s next adventure in the household of Ebain. Indeed, the next scene, Silence’s awkward encounter with the seductress Eufeme, reveals how short-lived were the therapeutic effects of Silence’s music, since her playing now merely conjures unguarded passions. This romance never conforms in full, or for long, with the expected conventions and paradigms of the minstrel-knight witnessed elsewhere in the music romance tradition. In the final 2000 or so lines of the romance, music disappears into the background as Silence achieves glory at tournament and on the battlefield, before another confrontation with Queen Eufeme sends her on a seemingly impossible quest to capture Merlin. This incongruous abandonment of music in the second half of the poem further adds to the slightly dissatisfying, non-conformist direction of this romance, undermining expectations of a musical dénouement witnessed in the romances of previous chapters.

### 3. Musical failings in *Sir Tristrem*

The Tristan corpus of romances has Celtic origins, and the exact point at which the Tristan legends were added to the Arthurian corpus remains uncertain. King Arthur’s

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<sup>42</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, [http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/reparer\[1\]](http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/reparer[1]) and <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/repairer>, accessed on 17.04.2018.

name was already linked to Tristan's in surviving Welsh Arthurian fragments, such as the *Ystoria Trystan*, usually dated to before 1100.<sup>43</sup> These fragments, composed in prose and verse, considerably predate the French Arthurian tradition of the twelfth century and are thus examples of the story as it was told before the intervention of French influence.<sup>44</sup> Legends and myths centring on Tristan proved popular subject matter for adventure romances because they could be easily transformed into chivalric fare to answer the literary tastes of their audiences.<sup>45</sup>

Loomis hails the Tristan narrative as 'the favourite love-story of the Middle Ages', and the many surviving versions of the text, enjoying currency across several countries and in several languages (including German, French, Icelandic, and Old Norse), give credence to this claim.<sup>46</sup> The earliest extant Old French accounts, composed by Beroul and Thomas of Britain, survive in fragmentary form from the mid to late twelfth century.<sup>47</sup> The Middle English *Sir Tristrem* (late thirteenth century) survives in a single, incomplete copy in the National Library of Scotland, the Auchinleck MS (Advocates 19.2.1), fols. 281a–299b. In order to do justice to *Sir Tristrem*'s placement in the wider Tristan tradition, I will draw where relevant on *Tristran* by Thomas of Britain and will also look at relevant passages from Gottfried von Strassbourg's *Tristan* (first decade of the thirteenth century), a more detailed narrative based on the poem by Thomas.<sup>48</sup>

Tristrem is born in Hermonie (or 'Ermonie', l. 74), which has been posited as Armenia and the South of France, amid other locations, but which also brings to mind 'harmony', especially given his remarkable musical abilities.<sup>49</sup> Tristrem grows up believing he is the son of the knight Rohand, his father's former steward, who ensures

<sup>43</sup> Eisner, *The Tristan Legend*, pp. 5–6; Pearsall, *Arthurian Romance*, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Eisner, *The Tristan Legend*, p. 7.

<sup>45</sup> Tony Davenport, 'The Medieval English Tristan', in *A Companion to Arthurian Literature*, ed. H. Fulton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), pp. 278–95 (p. 278).

<sup>46</sup> Roger Sherman Loomis, *The Development of Arthurian Romance* (New York: Dover Publications, 1963, reprinted 2012), p. 78. See, for example, the Norse *Tristrams saga ok Isöndar* (1226; written by Brother Róbert) and the twelfth-century German *Tristrant* by Eilhart von Oberge. Davenport, 'The Medieval English Tristan', p. 282; Saunders, *Magic*, p. 132; Joyce Hill (ed.), *The Tristan Legend: Texts from Northern and Eastern Europe in Modern English Translation*, Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (Leeds: The University of Leeds Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, 1977), p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Saunders, *Magic*, p. 132; Thomas of Britain, *Tristran*, ed. S. Gregory (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1991). *Tristran* by Thomas is incomplete and survives in nine fragments of varying lengths. The surviving fragments which make up the bulk of Gregory's edition of *Tristran* and which I will be using are: Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd. 15.12 (a single leaf from the late thirteenth century); Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Douce d. 6. (22 leaves, mid-thirteenth century); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fr. d. 16 (two sets of fragments, 14 leaves, late twelfth to early thirteenth century). See Eisner, *The Tristan Legend*.

<sup>48</sup> Strassbourg's *Tristan* follows Munich Manuscript Cgm 51 (Staatsbibliothek): see *Tristan*, ed. Karl Marold (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969).

<sup>49</sup> *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, <http://www.anglo-norman.net/D/Ermenie>, accessed on 17.04.2018. See Caroline D. Eckhardt, 'The Meaning of "Ermonie" in "Sir Tristrem"', *Studies in Philology*, 93 (1996), pp. 21–41.

that Tristrem is properly educated in music, training that helps him secure important alliances, win the affections of Ysonde, and out-play other minstrels.<sup>50</sup> Like *Silence*, the poem stresses the importance of a complete education:

The child he set to lore  
 And lernd him al so swithe;  
 In bok, while he was thore,  
 He stodieth ever, that stithe.  
 Tho that bi him wore  
 Of him weren ful blithe,  
 That bold.  
 His craftes gan he kithe  
 Ogaines hem when he wold.  
 (ll. 278–286)<sup>51</sup>

Tristrem's instruction, which expressly involves books and would therefore seem to pertain to *musica speculativa*, is understood as a set of 'craftes', a word that could refer, variously, to artistic dexterity or technical skill (more befitting of *musica instrumentalis*), as well as, more abstractly, a kind of power or sorcery or deception, and even theoretical learning or a formal body of teachings.<sup>52</sup> In the course of his education, Tristrem is taught every song ('ich a lede') and every mode of playing ('ich maner of glewe'), old-fashioned and new, of every country ('everich playing thede, / Old lawes and newe', ll. 289–292). Given the familiar play on 'glewe' ('gle' as both instrumental music and joy) and the suggestively Boethian theory in which different modes have different effects in moving feeling in the listener, the implication of 'ich maner of glewe' is that Tristrem has been taught to harness music's modal ethos and master music's affective powers. This collocation of terms – 'glewe' in combination with 'old lawes and newe' – recalls the similar phrasing from *Horn Childe* encountered in Chapter 3: 'Þe laws boþe eld & newe, / Al maner gamen & glewe' (ll. 274–275).<sup>53</sup> In both texts, 'laws' implies a theoretical system or formal, authoritative framework of established rules according to which one learns to play music correctly,

<sup>50</sup> Chaytor, *Troubadours*, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Sir Tristrem*, in *Lancelot of the Laik and Sir Tristrem* ed. A. Lupack (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Middle English Texts, Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 156–265. All further references to this volume.

<sup>52</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED10147>, accessed 13.03.2018.

<sup>53</sup> *Horn Childe*, ed. Mills, p. 112.

and with the most potent effect.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, later in the text we will see Ysonde accused of having been taught badly, leading to a misapplication or misuse of music.

What makes Tristrem the best musician is, apparently, his training and systematic study, both theoretical and practical. In Chapter 17 of the Norse *Tristrams saga ok Isöndar* (1226, written by Brother Róbert), we are told specifically that Tristram had been educated in the seven liberal arts.<sup>55</sup> In the German text, his book learning is equally detailed: there Tristan undertakes ‘der buoche lêre und ir getwanc’ (‘The study of books and all its stern discipline’, l. 2083).<sup>56</sup> His achievements are, admittedly, the result of hard work, but once he begins to apply his mind he learns the rules of the discipline faster than any other child (ll. 2083–2090), hinting at some kind of innate, pre-existing affinity. As in the Middle English text, in the German version Gottfried stresses the idea of learning (‘lêre’, ‘gelernete’, l. 2089) in combination with practice:

so vertete er sîner stunde vil  
 an iegelîchem seitpil:  
 dâ kêrte er spâte unde fruo  
 sîn emzekeit sô sêre zuo,  
 biz er es wunder kunde.  
 er lernete alle stunde  
 hiute diz, morgen daz,  
 hiure wol, ze jâre baz.  
 (ll. 2091–2100)

[he also spent his hours playing stringed instruments of all kinds, practising from early to late till he became incredibly skilled at them. He was learning the whole time, today this, tomorrow that, this year well, next year even better.]

The fusion of diligence (‘emezekeit’, especially of an arduous, ‘sêre’ kind) and learning (‘lernete’) results in his becoming ‘wunder kunde’, ‘wunder’ implying something extraordinary and exceptional, perhaps even something bordering on the supernatural, and ‘kunde’ bridging the realms of theoretical knowledge and artisanal

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<sup>54</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED24815>, retrieved on 20.04.2018.

<sup>55</sup> Davenport, ‘The Medieval English Tristan’, p. 282; Saunders, *Magic*, p. 132.

<sup>56</sup> Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, ed. Marold, p. 33; translation from Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, ed. Hatto, p. 68. Henceforth all references to the German text and translation from these editions. I will follow the texts in using ‘Tristan’ and ‘Isôt’ for the German text, ‘Tristran’ and ‘Yseut’ for the Anglo-Norman, and ‘Tristrem’ and ‘Ysonde’ for the Middle English.

craft.<sup>57</sup> As with Silence, Tristan's skills represent the culmination of much effort and practice.

Tristrem secures his position at Mark's court through music. In the Middle English poem, when Tristrem joins Mark and his court at their feast, a harper comes out to play, whom Tristrem berates, and then replaces, for his inferior skills. In a ritualised scene of competitive one-upmanship, Tristrem concedes,

‘Bot Y the mendi may,  
Wrong than wite Y the.’  
The harpou gan to say,  
‘The maistri give Y the  
Ful sket.’  
(ll. 555–559)

This episode has precedence in the Apollonius tradition, and the minstrel's polite response is an idealisation that sits in contrast to the more realistically competitive minstrels depicted in *Silence*. The ‘maistri’ in which Tristrem excels encompasses both artisanal skill or acumen in a particular *métier* and also, more troublingly, cunning, deceit, and trickery, a semantic field comparable to that covered by ‘engin’ encountered in Part I above.<sup>58</sup> Beyond winning over rival musicians and the assembled court, Tristrem also manages to impress Mark sufficiently for him to offer Tristrem a minstrel post at court: we are told that he is given rich robes and other trappings of courtly employment, as well as lodgings, an idealising, nostalgic portrait of a properly functioning patron-minstrel relationship.<sup>59</sup>

At this point in the narrative, Tristrem is evidently aware of music's affective power and social instrumentality. Once his true identity is revealed and he is grievously wounded fighting a giant, he asks to be set adrift on a ship with nothing but his harp. Like Orfeo and Silence, he chooses to bring his harp instead of his weapons, to play in his isolation: ‘Mine harp to play me thare’ (l. 1148). In order to trick the Queen of Ireland, who is the only healer able to help him, Tristrem claims to be Tramtris, a merchant, and draws the attention first of passing sailors, and then of the queen,

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<sup>57</sup> Matthias Lexer, *Middle High German Hand Dictionary*, <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=sere>, <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=wunder>, <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=emzecheit>, and <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=kuende>, accessed on 18.05.2018.

<sup>58</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED26571>, retrieved on 20.04.2018.

<sup>59</sup> Green, *Poets and Prince-Pleasers*, pp. 13, 22; Labarge, *Travellers*, p. 193.

through the beauty of his music. Even injured, he is still able to play well enough to move his listeners and win them over. From his ship can be heard music and *lais*: ‘Al maner of gle / And al maner of lay’ (ll. 1190–1191), recalling the previous account of Tristrem’s proficiency in a range of musical modes (‘ich maner of glewe’, l. 290) and musical styles, fashions, and traditions (‘ich a lede’, l. 289). The queen is informed that a talented man is wasting his potential due to his suffering, and this portrait of a musician being unable to play to his full capacity is sufficiently distressing that she is moved to ‘sorwe’ (l. 1196) and stirred into action, just as the threatened execution of Silence had tainted the court’s joy with sorrow (‘Mellent o joie lor anui’). Tristrem’s onshore audience registers the mismatch between his ideal state and his present physical shortcomings: they twice lament that he is not living up to his potential for merriment – in the formulaic phrases ‘A miri man were he / Yif he olive ware’ (ll. 1198–1199) and ‘Yif he in hele ware, / He wer a miri man’ (ll. 1231–1232). The parallel passage in Gottfried’s poem stresses the shortcomings not just of the man but also of his music, which lacks full engagement or conviction. Because Tristan is injured, his heart is not in his music:

wan swaz er in dâ spiles getete  
 mit handen oder mit munde,  
 daz engie niht von grunde:  
 daz herze dazn was niht dermite.  
 [...]  
 ez enheizet doch niht rehte spil,  
 daz man sus ûzen hin getuot  
 âne herze und âne muot.  
 (ll. 7530–7533, 7538–7540)

[since the sounds that he made for them with hands or lips did not come from the depths – his heart was not in his music. [...] what one plays superficially in a heartless and soulless way cannot really claim to be music.]

Gottfried’s text heightens the distance between an imagined ideal and mundane actuality – between the intuitive model of musicianship, of ‘rehte spil’ (‘authentic’ or ‘correct’ music) in which the emotions and affect, the heart and soul, ‘herze’ and ‘muot’, of the performer himself are intimately connected to the sounds he produces, and the underwhelming reality in which there is merely a simulacrum of music, an inauthentic kind of sound artificially or mechanically coaxed from the instrument. This

disjunction hints, troublingly, at a sundering of *musica humana* from *musica instrumentalis*.

Indeed, in the Middle English text, there is the suggestion that Tristrem is remarkable at least as much for his instruments as for the skill or force of his music. Once again the expected ideal is undermined. We are told that ‘His gles weren so sellike / That wonder thought hem thare’ (ll. 1224–1225), ‘gles’ here referring not, as previously, to kinds of song or to Tristrem’s ability to conjure particular feelings of joy from his melodies, but rather, more mundanely, the instruments themselves.<sup>60</sup> ‘Wonder’ has been transferred from the musician’s notional skill to the physical medium of that skill, ‘His harp, his croude’, both described as ‘rike’ (l. 1226). This epithet, ‘rike’, suggests that the harp and fiddle are notable because they are beautifully made, ornate and precious as material artefacts (in line with the trope of exceptionally valuable musical instruments), rather than because they are, in other senses of the adjective, ‘loud, resounding’, or ‘spiritually effective’, since these are instruments that are seen rather than heard.<sup>61</sup> They are listed along with other physical possessions (his chess ‘tables’, l. 1227), and their virtue seems to lie less in their theoretical abilities of musical compulsion to conjure particular emotions than in their spectacle, as *objets d’art* pleasing to the eye rather than to the ear: ‘Swiche seighe thai never are / Er than’ (ll. 1229–1230).

Once Tristrem has been healed, once he has been restored to physical completion, he begins to play music to entertain the Irish court, winning renown just as he did at Mark’s court. Restored to full health, he has the opportunity to uphold the ideal of ‘rehte spil’ that was jeopardised by his wounded state. The poet explains that Tristrem is frequently called to chambers and feasts as everyone is eager to hear his songs:

He made his play aloft;  
His gamnes he gan kithe.  
Forthi was Tristrem oft  
To boure cleped fele sithe  
To sete.  
Ich man was lef to lithe,  
His mirthes were so swete.

<sup>60</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, sense 3.b, ‘an instrument of music’, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18735>, accessed 13.03.2018.

<sup>61</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED37439>, accessed 13.03.2018.

(ll. 1248–1254)

The use of ‘gamnes’ in this passage allows for an ambiguity between ‘gamen’ and ‘gamme’ which present a conundrum for editors of the poem. ‘Gamen’ meant (musical) ‘joy’ and ‘pleasure’, both earthly and spiritual, as in the collocation of ‘gamen and gle’.<sup>62</sup> However, a secondary association is created with *musica* through the form ‘gamme’, which perhaps recalls Guido of Arezzo’s hexachordal system of tones (known as the *ut, re, mi*), arranged in a scale starting from the lowest note (‘gamut’ or ‘ut’), invitingly suggesting another connection between romance and musical theory current in the period.<sup>63</sup> The whole court yearns to hear Tristrem’s music (‘lef to lithe’) because his songs are so ‘swete’ – the expected, formulaic term used to convey a pleasant melody but possibly also suggesting a kind of sensory experience that is immediate and compelling, something perceived and appreciated viscerally, as further hinted by the description of his songs as ‘mirthes’, court entertainments that are inherently a source of joy or an occasion of delight in their listeners.<sup>64</sup> Yet the ideal, apparently regained with Tristrem’s return to health, proves short-lived: the ease with which he here integrates himself in the court through his displays of musicianship makes for a striking contrast with the last portion of the romance, where his music falls away ineffectually.

At court, Tristrem’s skill gets him an appointment as Ysonde’s tutor. She is also known for her love of learning and specifically her love of music (‘gle was lef to here’) and literary romances (‘romaunce to rede aright’, ll. 1257–1258). Tristrem, still under his adopted pseudonym, is scrupulous in his tuition:

Sir Tramtris hir gan lere  
 Tho with al his might  
 What alle pointes were,  
 To se the sothe in sight,  
 To say.

(ll. 1259–1263)

<sup>62</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18146>, accessed 13.03.2018.

<sup>63</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18157>, accessed 13.03.2018.

<sup>64</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27915>, accessed 13.03.2018.

Tristrem's diligence and thoroughness extend to his instruction of Ysonde in 'alle pointes' – the phrase broadly connotes 'everything essential' but more specifically encompasses 'techniques of harping', all 'musical notes or phrases', and even 'the divisions on a scale', a kind of teaching which would likely include minutiae about the various effects of various musical modes.<sup>65</sup> The reach and intensity of Tristrem's tuition is implicit in the pleonastic, alliterative phrase 'To se the sothe in sight, / To say', as if Tristrem were uncovering for Ysonde some hidden or mystical truth behind the science of music, the same idea gestured to earlier in the German text's 'rehte spil'. This ideal of music as 'sothe' and 'rehte' evokes the idea of authentic music discussed in previous chapters: it is more than just superficial noise or aural ornamentation, but something that has a close connection to an ideal of music accessed by those who are especially attuned to *musica mundana*. It is this musical truth or authenticity which makes Tristrem's music all the more potent, setting it apart from the purely commercial music of career-musicians. Indeed, Tristrem stays in Ireland to teach Ysonde not just until she is familiar enough with the repertory of songs to play them mechanically but until she understands them intimately or intuitively:

Ysonde he dede understand  
 What alle playes were  
 In lay.  
 (ll. 1283–1285)

Tristrem's wide-ranging tuition gives her a rounded education in music, likely to encompass both *musica practica* and *speculativa* – a thorough grounding not only in the repertory but also in the science or theory of musical effects. The verb 'understand' implies an intellectual, discriminating comprehension of 'playes' beyond a merely functional acquisition of technical mastery in the various genres of music-making, storytelling, and singing, since the verb was readily applied to scholarly knowledge.<sup>66</sup> Formal technique and affective reach once again overlap, since the category 'playes' encompassed both musical, narrative forms themselves and the emotional responses to them ('joy' and 'pleasure'). That he should be instructing her about 'all playes [...] in lay' further suggests that his tuition covers a particular quality *within* *lais* rather than

<sup>65</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, senses 6.a, 3.c, 14.d, and 14.c, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED33862>, accessed 13.03.2018.

<sup>66</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED48362>, accessed 13.03.2018.

simply different subgenres or modes *of lai*, and these qualities yield more troubling connotations, especially in the context of the rest of the romance. ‘Pleie’ denoted not only ‘skill’ but also ‘craft’ – the two meanings often blurred into each other and were difficult to distinguish in medieval texts – and even more explicitly underhand stratagems (‘tricks’, ‘deception’), in a pattern encountered previously with other musical keywords in the romances which do not shy away from a wariness about music’s powers.<sup>67</sup> In the Middle Ages, minstrels were sometimes associated with trickery and, indeed, in the Gottfried version Isôt’s power to charm is ascribed to Tristan’s excellent teaching in music and deportment.<sup>68</sup>

Music’s capacity to charm, for good ends or ill, laces the next part of the narrative. As discussed in Part I, an Irish earl wins Ysonde from Mark by means of his music, and upon learning of this conquest Tristrem takes his rote with a view to a rescue. Tristrem’s music has an immediate effect over Ysonde:

Swiche song he gan sing  
That hir was swithe wo.  
Her com swiche lovelonging,  
Hir hert brast neighe ato.  
(ll. 1860–1863)

Evoking ‘swiche lovelonging’ in his listener, Tristrem instils in her feelings of pained yearning and sorrowful desire for an absent lover. The ‘wo’ engendered in her by Tristrem’s music – an intense affective response that is registered at a somatic level, as her heart almost bursts in two (‘hert brast neighe ato’) – parallels the pain accidentally caused to Queen Eufeme by Silence’s harp. Like a *pharmakon*, Tristrem’s music is both poison and cure, and having inculcated momentary sorrow in Ysonde it is promptly hailed, by a knowing Ysonde herself, as the remedy for her distracted behaviour:

‘Within a stounde of the day  
Y schal ben hole and sounde.  
Ich here a menstrel; to say,  
Of Tristrem he hath a soun.’  
(ll. 1871–1874)

<sup>67</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED33653>, accessed 13.03.2018.

<sup>68</sup> Zaerr, ‘Songs of Love’, p. 303.

Immersion in Tristrem's sound ('soun') will induce soundness of mind ('sounde') in Ysonde. Music's fabled properties of being able to coax concord out of discord and harmonious unity out of dissonant tension, underpin her surety that she 'schal ben hole' within a brief space. Curiously, as soon as the earl has cursed the minstrel for causing Ysonde pain ('Dathet him ay / Of Tristrem yif this stounde', ll. 1875–1876), he immediately proceeds to promise him a reward with the very considerable sum of a hundred pounds and an invitation to join the retinue, as if he himself had fallen prey to some musical charm devised by Tristrem. Once Ysonde has been set ashore, Tristrem changes his music to have a different effect, playing 'mirie notes' – melodic, delightful notes, which are joyful in themselves and evoke joy in others (even the earl, who is described upon hearing it as 'Glad a man', l. 1896).<sup>69</sup> Her restoration is attributed to the 'vertue of his gle' (l. 1894), 'virtue' here encompassing, simultaneously, the excellence or quality of his playing, his unusual talent or expertise, and the intellectual or, more troublingly, supernatural power or magical property of his music in holding sway over his environment.<sup>70</sup> Compounding earlier hints that this mysterious affective power lies not only in the musician's music but also in his instruments, Tristrem's parting insult to the earl as he snatches Ysonde away on his horse – 'With thine harp thou wonne hir that tide; / Thou tint hir with mi rote' (ll. 1913–1914) – juxtaposes harp and rote and invests some degree of compulsive agency in the instruments themselves.<sup>71</sup>

With increasing insistence, the poem shows Tristrem being subsumed by his obsession. Ideals of musicianship are steadily undermined not only by these eerie suggestions of magical misuse but also by hints that music is subservient to erotomania. Coupled with these disquieting undertones of supernatural or magical charm, the second half of the romance is replete with suggestions that his ministrations are less musical than erotic. Even before Tristrem has seized Ysonde away, the poet hints that his motivations are those of the irrationally lovestruck knight rather than the therapeutic minstrel:

<sup>69</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED27890>, accessed 13.03.2018.

<sup>70</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED51027>, accessed 25.04.2018; *Etymology Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/virtue>, accessed 25.04.2018.

<sup>71</sup> For a close analysis of the symbolism behind the instruments, see Jennifer Loooper, 'L'Épisode de la Harpe et de la Rote dans la Légende de Tristan: Étude sur le Symbolisme de Deux Instruments de Musique', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 38 (1995), pp. 345–52.

His gle al for to here  
 The levedi was sett on land  
 To play bi the rivere;  
 (ll. 1882–1884)

From this point on, the functional ambiguity of the terms ‘play’ and ‘gamen’ – each permitting both musical and sexual connotations – becomes less pronounced, as the words take a decided shift towards the erotic. ‘Play’ in particular, a surprisingly blunt, uneuphemistic verb for describing amorous dalliance, parodically undercuts the high-blown pretensions of courtly love and musical performance alike. After the rescue from the earl, Tristrem and Ysonde spend seven days in the wood, and the joy that she experiences has more obviously amorous than musical origins:

Was ful of gamen and play.  
 Her blis was ful brade,  
 And joieful was that may  
 (ll. 1918–1920)

Familiar keywords (game, play, bliss, joy) that might be expected to have primarily musical associations in this context have been denuded of those resonances and now apply more or less exclusively to sexual entertainment: this music romance pulls against its musically-invested sources as the code of *fin’ amor* comes into the ascendancy. Gottfried’s poem, by contrast, retains its musical bearings: in a similar episode found later in the narrative, the pair is exiled to a cave in the woods and sustained through the joy and harmony conjured by their music (ll. 17204–17228).

The taint over Tristrem’s use of music grows as the narrative progresses such that, once Tristrem is caught with Ysonde and exiled, his music is in thrall to his obsession. After a number of adventures, Tristrem finds his way to the court of the Duke of Brittany, where he once again secures his social position through music. However, in contrast to his arrival at Mark’s court or the Irish court, this manoeuvring is not done to achieve social integration in the manner that might be expected of a minstrel-knight. Instead, Tristrem is consumed by his infatuation with Ysonde, and his music comes to be tarnished by this overwhelming obsession: this scene witnesses his last performance in the text and leads directly to personal and social fragmentation.

Whereas overlapping, proximate, or ambiguous identities in *Silence* (Eufeme/Eufemie, Scilensiüs/Scilentiä) were ultimately, if only narrowly, negotiated through the protagonist's application of music, *Sir Tristrem* veers towards a different narrative conclusion as music exacerbates rather than resolves indeterminate identities. At his new court, Tristrem composes songs about his love of Queen Ysonde, but the duke's daughter, Ysonde of the White Hands, mistakenly believes that the music is for her, and falls in love with him:

Of Ysonde he made a song  
 That song Ysonde bidene.  
 The maiden wende al wrong  
 Of hir it hadde ybene.  
 Hir wening was so long,  
 To hir fader hye gan mene  
 For nede.

(ll. 2654–2660)

Tristrem does not return her feelings, as he still longs for the queen, yet he intentionally lets the deception stand because this woman shares the name of his beloved ('For sche Ysonde hight', l. 2673). Here, too, the poet evokes the trope of a character falling in love with the protagonist because of his music: the trope is not undermined as such, but the result is undeniably a negative one. The poet stresses the confusion caused by the song through the use of doubling, 'Of Ysonde he made a song / That song Ysonde bidene' (ll. 2654–2655) – the uncertainty over the intended referent designated by 'Ysonde' in each line is registered in both the chiasmus and the suggestive rhyme pairing of 'song' and 'wrong', inverting any implicit ideal of authentic music or 'rehte spil'. Where in other romances encountered in this thesis music has served as a tool for restoring characters to their true identities, here firm correspondences between signifier and signified, name and referent, music and audience disintegrate, frustrating expectations set up by familiar tropes and familiar narrative arcs witnessed in other music romances. Gottfried's poem suggests even more forcefully that Tristan's music deceitfully charms Isôt of the White Hands into falling in love with him:

und al der trügeheite,  
 die Tristan an si leite;  
 sô was ie daz diu volleist,

diu ir herze allermeist  
 an Tristandes liebe twanc,  
 daz er daz alsô gerne sanc:  
 ‘Îsôt ma drûe, Îsôt m’amîe,  
 en vûs ma mort, en vûs ma vîe!’  
 daz locte ir herze allez dar.  
 daz was, daz ir die liebe bar.

(ll. 19407–19416)

[But of all the duplicity to which Tristan subjected her the crowning deed that compelled her to love him was that he liked to sing ‘*Isot ma drue, Isot mamie, / En vus ma mort, en vus ma vie!*’ This kept luring her heart towards him, this is what engendered her affection.]

Tristan’s compulsive repetition of his ambiguous song produces its effects through ‘trügeheite’ (‘deceit’, ‘falsehood’, ‘betrayal’), a term that could refer to unintentional misunderstandings but which was usually deployed in the more malevolent sense of deliberate betrayal or deceit.<sup>72</sup> The following lines suggest that the effect is both volitional on Tristan’s part and irresistible on Isôt’s: ‘an si leite’ (from ‘leiten’, ‘to lead’) implies an intentional design that Tristan is carrying out, and his repeated singing is specified as the force that entirely lures (‘locte ... allez dar’) her heart. This verb, ‘locte’, ambivalently points to both innocuous meanings (‘to attract’, ‘to entice’, ‘to draw close’) and more sinister ones (‘to hunt’, specifically animals) just as ‘twanc’ denotes both an embrace and a more violent kind of coercion. That Isôt is comprehensively overwhelmed is implied first by ‘hertze’, a favoured and recurrent term of Gottfried’s found in contexts that are not always just amatory, which connotes something more all-encompassing than merely ‘heart’ and could refer to the entirety of a person’s emotional being, or soul; and secondly by ‘volleist’ (‘completion’, ‘full capability’), which suggests totality and an irresistible power.<sup>73</sup> As with the *Vita Merlini* and *Sir Orfeo* discussed in the previous chapter, the implication here is that, whatever the affective intensity of the song, it is through repeated performance of a

<sup>72</sup> Lexer, *Middle High German Dictionary*, <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=truegeheit>, accessed 18.05.2018.

<sup>73</sup> Lexer, *Middle High German Dictionary*, <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=leiten>, <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=lockeht>, [http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=twanc\\_ges](http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=twanc_ges), <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=herz>, and <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=volleist>, accessed 18.05.2018.

piece of music ('alsô gerne sanc') that a particular emotional state is sustained in the listener.<sup>74</sup>

This scene, packed with intimations of both the musician's duplicity and the coerciveness of music's affective force, constitutes the last time we see Tristrem play music in the Middle English, Middle High German, and Anglo-Norman poems. It is as though after this moment Tristrem abandons music entirely, or possibly is unable to access and reproduce it as he once was, since he has become consumed by his obsession with Ysonde. Instead, hereafter we are shown musical interludes either witnessed by or performed for Tristrem, rendering his own silence that much more prominent. Among these interludes is a scene of wedding celebration in the town of Sayn Matheus, which seems to provide a contrast to Tristrem's socially destructive marriage. Gesturing faintly to the expected trope of music as an instrument of collective festivity or social cohesion, it serves as a troubled reminder of the festive, communally-cohesive ideal of music from which Tristrem has departed:

Ther was miche solas  
Of alle maner soun  
And gle  
Of minestrals up and down  
Bifor the folk so fre.  
(ll. 2856–2860)

This wedding is depicted as a joyous occasion and recycles a number of keywords and phrases that now ironically recall the very qualities of varied, comprehensive music ('alle maner soun') that were formerly associated with Tristrem ('ich maner of glewe', 'Al maner of gle / And al maner of lay', ll. 290, 1190–1191). Tristrem's own wedding conspicuously lacks the 'solas' celebrated here: in his case, we are not treated to a similar scene of harmony, social cohesion, and splendour.

In the closing phases of the narrative, Tristrem is pointedly separated from music. The crisis of identity hinted at earlier, when Ysonde (Tristrem's paramour) was confused with Ysonde (of the White Hands), plays out with a new variation here, as Tristrem's musical identity becomes progressively weakened. The next mention of musical performance occurs when Ysonde plays a song composed by Tristrem:

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<sup>74</sup> Lexer, *Middle High German Dictionary*, <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/Lexer?lemma=gern>, accessed 18.05.2018.

Tristrem made a song  
 That song Ysonde the sleighe  
 And harped ever among.  
 (ll. 3026–3028)

The expected bond, the shared identity, between composer and performer is broken here, as Ysonde harps the song devised by the now absent Tristrem. Ysonde learned music from him, and her frantic repetition of his song seems an attempt to conjure up an associative connection with Tristrem through music. Having been forbidden to correspond with Tristrem in any way, she finds a means of connecting with him through his music, flaunting it under Mark's nose by playing continuously.<sup>75</sup> Once again, the effect depends on repeated performance – music's effects, though potent, are short-lived, and only endure as long as the performance endures. In Thomas' version of the tale, Tristan's absence is even more marked, since Yseut both composes and sings her own song: 'E fait un lai pitus d'amur' ('and composed a tragic lay about love', l. 834).<sup>76</sup> Yet even here – in the apparent accord between performer and song, and in the harmonious intertwining of voice and instrument ('La voiz acorde a l'estrument' ('her voice in tune with her instrument', l. 845), as in *Silence's* aforementioned 'Si note avoec a sa vois biele') – the vestiges of harmony are illusory. The knight Cariado, who overhears Yseut, likens her song to the ominous cry of the wood-owl, 'Car sun chant, signefie mort' ('since its song betokens death', l. 874). In an apparent perversion of the many therapeutic, restorative, and harmonising functions of music posited by medieval theorists and illustrated in the other music romances encountered thus far, Yseut agrees with Cariado, confessing that 'Bien voil que sa mort signifit' ('I am very happy for it to betoken its death', l. 879). The peculiar force of 'Bien voil' conveys eagerness and a moribund volition – instead of creating bliss, forging a transcendent connection with universal harmony, propagating social cohesion, or reasserting a jeopardised identity through her music, Yseut uses it to achieve entropy and to articulate a kind of death drive.

This episode seems to mark a final break with, or debasement of, the ideal of music for both Tristrem and Ysonde in all versions of the narrative. Eventually, Tristrem is injured while rescuing an abducted maiden: where previously he had

<sup>75</sup> *Middle English Dictionary*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED40801>, accessed 18.05.2018.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas of Britain, *Tristan*, ed. Gregory, pp. 44–5. All references to Gregory's edition.

liberated Ysonde by using music to charm her abductors, here he uses his sword, and his previous infection returns. Instead of setting off to find healing and using music to achieve this goal, he wastes away in sorrow. The abandonment of music due to erotic distress finds concise emblematic expression in Chaucer's *Manciple's Tale*, in which the cuckolded Phebus desists from playing and destroys his instruments: 'For sorwe of which he brak his mynstralcie, / Bothe harpe, and lute, and gyterne, and sautrie' (ll. 267–268).<sup>77</sup> Tristrem's silence in the last part of the poem is as ominous as Ysonde's song: he even dies without an instrument in his hand, shorn of the trappings that had seemed integral to his minstrel-knight identity on his boat journey to Ireland. The deaths of Tristrem and Ysonde have consequences beyond merely the personal and local. In Thomas' account, Tristran's reign was regarded as a source of comfort by his people ('A tut ceus del rengne ert confort', 'He was of succour to all in the realm', ll. 3061), such that his untimely death constitutes a calamity for the kingdom at large: 'Unques si grant chaitivesun / N'avint a ceste regiun' ('Never was this country so afflicted / by such a calamity', ll. 3066–3067). The ending of the Middle English poem is missing but it is not unreasonable to suppose that the narrative ends as tragically as the other retellings, given that the last surviving part of the text builds towards Tristrem's death through his infected wound.<sup>78</sup> Tristrem's obsession with *fin'amor* overwhelms his musical credentials to the point of erasure, so that the expected harmonising applications of music that tend to coincide with the structural climax of a romance – social cohesion, communal joy, the restoration of an identity falsely jeopardised, and a festive ending sanctioned through the institution of marriage – are notably absent in this case.

In the primary texts analysed above, both protagonists receive a musical education and possess superior musical skills that enable them to use music's affective force over an audience. Both texts depict this affective power as the result of a combination of practice, theoretical learning, and innate affinity, and both are concerned with the destructive effect of courtly love on the dedicated musician. However, Silence actively pursues a musical career for the sake of gaining musical knowledge and mastery; she retains her musical identity throughout the narrative, due to her immunity to *fin'amor* and her dedication to hard work and learning, in both the

<sup>77</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L.D. Benson, 3rd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 285.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, trans. Hatto, and *Sir Tristrem*, ed. Lupack.

practical and theoretical spheres of music. Tristrem, on the other hand, abandons his devotion to music in favour of Ysonde. When music becomes of secondary importance and is displaced by courtly love, when he regresses from minstrel-knight to narrowly erotomaniac knight, he stops using music's powers to influence the world around him, denying the possibility of the festive narrative closure enjoyed by other music romances discussed in this thesis. While these romances share many of the same tropes as kingship quest texts and romances concerned with magic, they use these tropes to explore a different set of concerns: they caution against allowing obsession to replace social cohesion and devotion to music, which results in isolation from society, as well as social and personal fragmentation.

Both texts invert certain tropes in a way that is jarring enough to catch the attention of a reader. In the case of *Silence*, the most prominent tropes that are inverted or otherwise compromised are those of the helpful minstrel and of the narrative sequence where a character falls in love with the protagonist because of his or her music. The former trope is undermined completely, while the latter is not undermined entirely but leads to undesired and dangerous consequences for *Silence*. The latter trope also appears in *Sir Tristrem*, where intemperate love leads to the abandonment of music and a tragic ending for Tristrem and Ysonde. While *Silence* offers a positive model of musicianship, *Sir Tristrem* unravels this idea by portraying a minstrel who abandons his music. In the case of *Silence*, as with the protagonist in *King Horn*, temporary exile leads to return and restoration – when music is used well, narrative and identity each come full circle, and culminate in harmony. In Tristrem's case, music is both misused and abandoned, and his exile leads to isolation, social fragmentation, and death. Musical power only lasts so long as one is a dedicated musician. These texts are preoccupied with illustrating the dangers of abstract, potentially immoderate *fin'amor* at the cost of one's musical dedication: here, the musical ideal is not an abstract principle, an inalienable quality hard-wired into a character, but a temporary set of behaviours that exist only for as long as the musician performs as a musician.

## CONCLUSION

### 1. Musico-literary debates

A cursory glance at the case studies of medieval insular romance discussed in this thesis might lead a reader to assume that references to music, musicians, and musical power in these texts amount to no more than conventional set-piece scenes, empty formulas, and convenient rhyme pairs or metrical fillers. According to this reading, music would serve a merely cosmetic or ornamental function in these romances: it would constitute no more than a shorthand for ritualised courtly entertainment – no more than ‘game and gle’, a formulaic component of romance genres. Closer inspection, however, reveals that music is handled sensitively by the writers of these romances: its appearances – even in the form of reusable tropes – are more nuanced than formulaic. Writers clearly *do* use musical tropes as an expected element in the narrative: during court scenes that feature minstrel entertainments and various instrumental combinations; in scenes of trial in which protagonists need to prove their worth or reaffirm their identity; or as part of a narrative’s festive conclusion in which music fulfils a recreational need and marks restored order and political renewal. However, these tropes are used at times with considerable subtlety, sometimes enforcing and sometimes undermining the idea of music and its powers, as required by those individual narratives. The frequent appearance of these tropes across the seemingly disparate corpus of texts evokes a sense of unity – a possibility that these ‘music romances’ could function as a distinctive subgenre of medieval romance. Crucially, writers of these music romances seem fascinated by the *idea* of music (especially as an ideal of harmony) and by the metaphorical suggestiveness of a musical vocabulary. The philological analysis in this thesis has sought to correct any assumption that music in these romances is simply incidental.

A second misconception that my analysis seeks to refute is the assumption that the musical keywords deployed by these writers are used in un-nuanced or haphazard ways, without much grasp of musical theory or musical practice. The assumption perhaps derives from moments in these romances when the poets baulk at the task of describing wondrous music, and seem to resort to lazy representations of music as indescribable, ineffable, and mysterious. Routinely, these music romances resort to a

register of wonder and hyperbole when describing the talents or performance of prodigious musicians – listeners in one romance are treated to better music than ‘ever ani man y-herd with ere’ (*Sir Orfeo*); the effects of a song in another are beyond telling (‘Telle ne mighte tunge / That glee that ther was sunge’, in *King Horn*); and the music performed in another is a source of ‘wonder’ (*Sir Tristrem*), or a marvel described with superlative epithets (as when Orfeo’s harping is said to produce ‘the blissefulest notes’). Such hyperbole perhaps suggests a failure of realist description or technical lexis to convey the effects and power of music, exposing the limitations of the vocabulary and generic conventions available to writers of romance in dealing with a mysterious phenomenon deemed to be ineffable in its origins, processes, and effects. Yet what my analysis has sought to show is that these romances do not simply rely on impressionistic or casual use of the terms available for describing music.

Recurrent keywords are deftly used in these narratives, and become susceptible to acquiring potentially new (and sometimes troubling) resonances on each occasion that they are reused and redeployed. What this thesis hopes to chart, through its close philological analysis, is how a set of keywords (including recurrent terms such as ‘gle’, ‘mirthe’, ‘craft’, ‘game’, and ‘pley’) shift in their connotation and reference across and even within individual romances. A term describing a form of musical entertainment or minstrelsy (such as ‘gle’ or ‘mirthe’) also comes to denote the affective response engendered in a listener; words that describe an aesthetic virtue (‘temprure’ and ‘mesure’) can also encompass desirable social criteria simultaneously; polysemous words such as ‘craft’ or ‘mester’ blur the distinctions between innate talents and acquired skills, and even shade into suggestions of trickery or deceit. Music exists within these romances both as a performed form and as a symbolic idea: both as a literal event in a narrative and as an emblem – as an aesthetic form and a socially-inflected goal of harmony. For instance, music romances carefully draw out, rather than casually pass over, the metaphorical suggestiveness of verbs of ‘tempering’ as they examine how proportionate harmony might be achieved by a skilled musician, how it might be recreated as social cohesion, or how it might manifest itself as the psychological recalibrating of a distempered protagonist. Such keywords invite, and merit, close scrutiny.

My aim in this thesis has been to examine the treatment of music’s affective powers in three sets of insular medieval romance from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, namely kingship quest romances, romances concerned with magic, and

Tristan romances. The romances I selected for my case studies share a preoccupation with the powers of music and the status of musicians. The third suggestion I wish to make in this thesis is that the musical preoccupation of these case studies demonstrates that a number of romances which have previously been classified into disparate generic categories by critics can also be grouped together according to musical features. This is further demonstrated by the recurrence of musical tropes in the wider corpus of romances examined in Appendix B: I suggest that these texts can be classified as music romances for their sustained engagement with recognisable tropes and narrative mechanisms. The patterns by which musical tropes are applied in the case studies also bear witness to the uses to which music and musicians were put as *literary* conventions within medieval romance, the same tropes being cast in a positive or negative light in accordance with the thematic concerns of a given text.

Assessing these music romances in terms of a reusable stock of musical conventions and topoi, and the consequences of the narratives enabled by the use and reuse of these tropes, I propose that the case-study texts articulate different attitudes to music's power. The differences in the treatment of musical concepts within the texts most concerned with magic, and as such with music's coercive powers, suggest an ambiguity in the perception of the nature and source of music's compulsive sway, the implication being that music is a neutral force that can be used constructively or destructively in accordance with the character of the user. The other two groups of case studies take a less wary approach to music: in kingship quest romances, musical skill is depicted as a positive and useful tool for creating social cohesion, while in the Tristan romances music's potential for negative effects is superceded by the worrisome consequences of abandoning music. This varying treatment of music suggests a constant re-evaluation, by writers and readers of romance, of the powers and application of music. The case studies reveal complicated and sometimes ambiguous or conflicting stances regarding musical ideas and questions concerning the source, nature, and societal function of music's powers.

The case-study romances were chosen on the basis of sharing thematic concerns and following a broadly similar narrative structure. One text in each case study celebrates music's powers and constructs a kind of ideal model for the roles that music might usefully play, while the other takes a different, contrariant view. The second case study in each set, by challenging or recalibrating some of the conventions that underpinned the narratives of the first case study, offers an opposing perspective

and highlights the ambiguities inherent in attitudes to music's powers and role in society. However, the treatment of music in the paired case studies is not always a strictly binary one: in the *Romance of Silence*, for instance, the division between the ideal of music and its shortcomings was shown to be remarkably permeable. Given their pliable handling of shared tropes, the three categories of music romance considered in Part II show a great deal of versatility in their representation of music as a tool of personal growth and social transformation. According to helpful terminology borrowed from a structuralist approach, 'two different orders must be held together in the mind – the order of the original and the point of view which undermines the original'.<sup>1</sup> It is the permissiveness and flexibility of each of these three sets of romance that allow a more equivocal approach to music, interrogating its mysteries and questioning the reach or durability of its powers. Romance serves as a vehicle for conceptualising and reconceptualising music.

But more than that, music serves as a vehicle for conceptualising and reconceptualising romance. Music in insular romance functions as a malleable convention in the fulfilment of the expected narrative arc. Music in each of the three sets of case studies analysed here either enables or strains against the conventions of romance plots (such as the exile-and-return pattern or the restoration of the protagonist's identity). As such, music either proves instrumental in the completion of the protagonist's quest or is emptied out of its transformative properties and reduced to a hollow token. In *Havelok*, for instance, at the moment of socio-political restoration achieved through music, Havelok himself is unable to deliver, and in *Sir Tristrem* the eponymous character fails to deploy music as he might be expected to, languishing into erotic torpor. In such examples, music points not to the attainment but to the failure of an expected achievement, undermining a particular set of music romance tropes: music functions here as a marker of something lacking, of something that has not been properly fulfilled or correctly applied in the familiar romance arc. The second of each chapter's major case studies disrupts the expectations that the first romance in each pairing seemed to uphold. In these cases, music as an expected device for restoring harmony jostles for ascendancy with other romance devices and conventions (for instance, the completion of a personal quest or the irresistibility of magic or the insuperable force of *fin'amor*). The resolution to this tussle between the competing constituents seems to be determined by which force (music, a drive for completing a

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 178.

quest, magic, *fin'amor*) has the greater affective sway, and thus which force primarily acts as the cause or agent responsible for bringing about the text's narrative conclusion.

A central component of my analysis has involved examining the lexical suggestiveness of the key terms found in these texts. I propose that these recurring keywords demonstrate a certain level of familiarity with particular musical contexts by writers and their primary audiences, a level of understanding that would have enabled audiences to read into the thematic and symbolic use that is made of music by these romances. This vocabulary conceptualises music as a force capable of influencing the physical world by stirring the affect of listeners. In this light, my work is complementary to the research of scholars such as Jane Gilbert, on the role of emotion in the *Lancelot* corpus, proposing that emotion could be classified as a category of 'magical thinking'.<sup>2</sup> Gilbert goes on to explain that 'affect theory aims to describe phenomena that overwhelm and overspill the familiar categories which allow us to grasp the world and bend it to usable form'.<sup>3</sup> Music's effects function in a similar way in insular romance by 'overspilling' the parameters of ordinary, mundane experience and becoming something unusual, marvellous, or supernatural – even ineffable. Gilbert's arguably anachronistic approach can be defended because it finds a ready equivalent in the late Middle Ages: the theory that different kinds of music could, mysteriously, provoke different kinds of affective responses was well known in medieval England. Guido of Arezzo's *Micrologus* (c. 1026), the most widely circulated authority on musical theory in the period along with Boethius, discussed the emotional qualities of the modes, and his work seems to have gained some traction in English circles to judge by the existence of commentaries on it, such as the anonymous thirteenth-century *Metrologus*.<sup>4</sup> Music's affective capabilities are constantly being grappled with by music romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

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<sup>2</sup> Jane Gilbert, 'Being-in-the-Arthurian-World: Emotion, Affect and Magic in the Prose *Lancelot*, Sartre and Jay', in *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice*, eds. F. Brandsma, C. Larrington, and C. Saunders (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 13–30. See also Jean-Paul Sartre's *Esquisse d'une Théorie des Émotions*.

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert, 'Emotion, Affect and Magic', p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Claude Palisca, 'Guido of Arezzo', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. S. Sadie (New York: Macmillan, 2001), 10:522–526.

## 2. Summary of findings

The purpose of Part I was to establish the kinds of social, cultural, and theoretical contexts from which the principles of music's effects were drawn and to delineate the likely readership of medieval romance in order to assess readers' familiarity with the musical concepts and terminology drawn on by music romances. I began by tracing the development of musical theory after the classical period as it was translated and disseminated in the medieval period through the work of late antique theorists such as Macrobius and Boethius. This early theory was already concerned with the power of musical effects, though this power was aligned with the knowledge of musical theory, *musica speculativa*, more than with musical practice, *musica practica*. It was seen to exist as a cosmic precept (*musica mundana*) or as a figurative harmony between body and soul (*musica humana*) rather than as sublunar effects taking material, practical, audible form (*musica instrumentalis*). I also attempted to outline the possible audience for medieval romance in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and charted the aspirations and reality of professional musicians in the early medieval period, to consider how these concerns were both idealised and challenged in the figure of the musician-knight of the case studies. Chapter II examined the role of musical education in the up-bringing of members of the medieval elite, established many of the musical tropes which play a significant role in medieval romance, and discussed the ambiguous literary middle ground where music's power is represented as the result of both theoretical learning and practical skill. From this analysis, I discussed the shift in consciousness away from classical thought, which allowed medieval audiences to view *musica practica* in a more welcoming light, due to the growing need for the members of the medieval elite to possess musical skills in their repertoire of accomplishments. I suggested that, in the Middle Ages, musical education, both theoretical and practical, was recognised as a necessity for the successful acquisition of music's powers, and that medieval romance engaged with these alternatives to military knighthood through protagonists who accomplished their quests through musicianship and minstrelsy rather than feats of arms.

Central to this training was a grasp of musical harmony, especially the ability to derive concord out of discord, allowing practitioners to engender social harmony and to temper individual behaviour. Eustache Deschamps, in the course of his

discussion of the quadrivium, labels music ‘the medicine of the liberal arts’ because of its uplifting, recreational, and therapeutic powers:

Musique est la derreniere science ainsis comme la medicine des .vii. ars; car quant le couraige et l’esperit des creatures ententives aux autres ars dessus declairez sont lassez et ennuyez de leurs labours, musique, par la douçour de sa science et la melodie de sa voix, leur chante [...] ses chants delectables et plaisans.<sup>5</sup>

[Music is the final, and the medicinal science of the seven arts; for when the heart and spirit of those applied to the other arts treated above are wearied and vexed with their labours, Music, by the sweetness of her science and the melodiousness of her voices, sings them her delectable and pleasant melodies]<sup>6</sup>

Such pronouncements gesture to a sympathetic proximity between theory and practice – between music as abstract ‘science’ and music as performed ‘melodie’ or audible ‘voix’ – as complementary agents in the rebalancing of the vexed listener’s affect. Whether in the form of theoretical instruction or practical training, education also played a part in the ongoing debate over the nature of musical skill: the romances hesitate to declare whether this skill was simply a product of innate instinct or whether it was acquired through learning and practice, or through a combination of the two; and these romances also refuse to offer a simple correlation between whether music is praised or viewed with suspicion and whether it is the result of innate talent or diligent learning.

What I found from my analysis is that the idea of affective music, which had previously been considered the sole prerogative of *musica speculativa*, had by the late twelfth century started to become the domain of the practical musician instead. This shift in the valuation of musical knowledge and skill in the twelfth century coincides with a greater lay interest in music, an interest evidenced by the increased production of privately-owned song books and recurrent musical references by writers towards the end of my chronological window including Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate. The insular romances discussed in this thesis substantiate this broad shift towards a more practical, embodied understanding of music’s affective force. While the music romances are

<sup>5</sup> Eustache Deschamps, *Oeuvres Complètes*, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> Eustache Deschamps, *L’Art de Dictier*, translated by Christopher Page, ‘Machaut’s “Pupil” Deschamps on the Performance of Music: Voices or Instruments in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Chanson’, in *Music and Instruments*, Variorum Collected Studies (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997) Ch. II, pp. 484–91 (p. 488).

certainly fascinated by the *idea* of song and the metaphorical possibilities of harmony, they seem especially interested in the applications of practical music by their protagonists. Theory alone and untethered celestial music prove insufficient, and require the objective correlative of heard performance. The prominence given here to audible, instrumental music perhaps explains why *musica practica* features in these narratives as a necessary part of musical training to complement the Pythagorean, mathematical abstraction of *musica speculativa* or the Augustinian model of musical cosmology founded on the ideal of harmonic ratios, in which music is understood in terms of an unchanging science of mathematics. Performance embodies what, left unvoiced or at the level of abstract theory, remains inert; in these romances, a listener's affect is moved by *musica practica*.

In Chapter III, I established what shape the contextual ideas discussed in Part I take in kingship quest romances. This first set of case studies treated *King Horn* and *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild* as literary examples idealising and celebrating music's affective reach, and *Havelok the Dane* and the Anglo-Norman *Lai d'Haveloc* as works in which music's powers are limited. The narratives of these two sets of texts follow the same broad arc of exile and return, with one key difference: while Horn is adopted by a king who ensures that he receives the appropriate education, Havelok is brought up by a fisherman who provides for his primary needs but falls short of being able to teach the boy music, literacy, or other elite accomplishments. Education holds a central place in this chapter, as does music's ability to create joy and social cohesion when wielded by those who possess the necessary instruction. A case for innate instinct is made in the identification scene of Gaimar's *Haveloc* fragment and the *Lai d'Haveloc*, where Haveloc is presented with an enchanted horn that is meant to identify the rightful heir of Denmark. For this one instance in the text, Haveloc, though devoid of musical training, is able to conjure indescribably beautiful, melodic music that evokes extreme joy in the listeners. In the period covered by this thesis, perceptions of music had already moved away from certain principles of classical theory and music had come to be regarded as something that is to be learned and studied rather than a mysterious, mystical, innate talent peculiar to a chosen few. The necessity of a musical education, especially for a king, is found in such medieval treatises as John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, though of course the idea has a longer lineage and can be traced back to classical origins: Plato explained the importance of a musical education for inculcating the right kind of affective sensibility in *The Republic*

(Book III, ix (401d)). While Havelok sounds the enchanted horn once, he is never again able to draw on music's powers (and the Middle English Havelok is never even presented with this challenge) – for the remainder of the text, he solves his problems through combat and hires other musicians to perpetuate joy and harmony at his coronation. In contrast, the lengthy descriptions of musical education in *Horn* and *Horn Childe*, which precede the protagonist's ability to use music's powers, present this skill as learnable, provided one has access to the best tutors (the stipulation of Plato's *Republic*) as well as the diligence needed for such learning.

The protagonists' aptitude and love of learning are deeply commended in the kingship quest romances which present a less whimsical view of musical skill than some of the other case studies. Kingship quest romances seem to focus on the role of music in creating social cohesion through the communal joy of listeners. Music's function in these texts seems to lie in healing societal fractures and bringing together the various social constituents of a kingdom – a fulfilment, at a metaphorical level, of the power of music to harmonise disparate parts, to temper dissonantal elements into harmonic sympathy with each other. The manipulation of hearers' affect in the kingship quest romances is socially implicated: the idea of a *concordia discors* is a compelling one in these romances, allowing their writers to invoke a socio-political ideal of harmony conjured out of potential discord or hostility – a harmonious relationship between part and whole. Musical harmony cooperates in these texts with the narrative arc of romance: the story culminates in the reunifying of what had been sundered, the restitution of what had seemed to be displaced, and the retuning of what had lapsed into confusion and discord.

Romances engaging with magic, the subject of Chapter IV, offer a somewhat different view of music's powers, paying greater attention to the marvellous but ultimately ambiguous nature of music's force. A sense of wariness about music's affective powers is much more evident in these texts, possibly because of the connection between music and magic due to (sometimes) shared celestial origins, the potentially threatening ability of both arts to affect the physical world and the free will of listeners, and the necessity of education to comprehend fully the theoretical aspects of both disciplines. This connection is bolstered by manuscripts – such as Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MSS lat. 3713 and lat. 7378A; and London, British Library, MS Royal 12 C VI – which contain materials related to both magic and *musica*. The texts concerned with magic, more than kingship quest romances and

Tristan romances, seem concerned with the supernatural potential of music, whether used for good or ill.

In these romances, as in the kingship quest texts, music acts as a civilising force, provided that its powers are not misused, and becomes a narrative device for engineering a wondrous conclusion. Even in the wilderness, at some remove from the civility of the court, Orfeo's music is harmonious, restorative, and ordering: Orfeo transforms from a knight who uses martial methods at the start of the text into a fully-fledged musician following this period of personal growth during his wilderness exile. The tacit fear that these case studies raise and attempt to assuage is the suspicion that music's effects are disturbingly indistinguishable from magical intervention. Part of the reason why music's affective powers play a more prominent role in the case studies of romances engaging with magic is that these texts are inherently concerned with manifestations of the inexplicable or supernatural. In their handling of music and musicians, these texts articulate a distrust of magic and music's powers. When the romances participate in the debate over whether musical powers stem from innate aptitude or are acquired through learning, they tend to address musical magic in connection with education. The power of the sorceress and necromancers in *Lybeaus Desconus* is implicitly and explicitly attributed to education, especially the formal education of the quadrivium. Even in texts which favour the marvellous over the rational, music's ambiguous power is still somewhat demystified by the introduction of learning and study as a prerequisite for its use, once again articulating a conviction that music was a learnable craft. Music is no longer simply an innate talent or manifestation of cosmic harmony but a culturally-contingent phenomenon that can be acquired through training and manipulated or perverted by magic.

The romances analysed in Chapter V take a different thematic turn from the other case studies. In these texts, the musical focus moves away from (but does not completely neglect) the theme of societal and personal cohesion, in favour of an examination of the relationship between musicians and music. This concern is explored against a number of additional motifs such as the imperfection of knightly protagonists and the fallibility of their chivalric virtues, the nature of music as either learned, instinctual, or a combination of the two, and music's potential for creating societal and personal fragmentation instead of cohesion. The texts offer a disenchanting view of the concept of *fin'amor*, which is cast in opposition to both the figure of the courtly musician and the societally harmonising function of music. Whereas music can

be socially cohesive, capable of engendering joy and promoting harmony within a court or kingdom, courtly love tends to be socially (and indeed personally) corrosive. The figures of Silence and Tristrem, who share a similar origin story and musical education, are positioned on different sides of this binary: while Silence aligns herself with a higher order of musical skill and learning, intent on gaining wisdom and experience, Tristrem's musical ambitions and interests are pushed aside by his obsession with Ysonde. Where Silence's skill, the result of discipline, grows more prodigious and her music helps to effect social repair, restoring some of the tropes that are threatened earlier in the text, Tristrem's (and Ysonde's) music increasingly falls short of any notional ideal as it is used to trick and deceive, becomes equated with inertia and death, and ceases altogether just at the moment when Tristrem might have used it to save his life. Tristrem seems more and more removed from the music that once constituted his identity, and is abstracted into a strangely disembodied idea of music, changing from a performer of music to an associative memory that is conjured into being by Ysonde when *she* performs a tune composed by him. The *Romance of Silence* never quite relinquishes its faith in a musical ideal, whereas *Sir Tristrem* concedes the limitations of music in the face of inexorable, entropic *fin' amor*.

More so than the poems of Chapters III and IV, these two romances stress the necessity of diligence and hard work for the achievement of musical excellence. For the most part, the *Tristrem* poet is more concerned with the abandonment of music than the origins of musical skill, whereas the *Romance of Silence* stages the familiar debate between heredity and environment – between innate aptitude and strenuous application. This is done through the anthropomorphic figures of Nature and Nurture who fight over the heroine and her choices throughout the text, leaving the narrator in a state of apparent *aporia*, unable to decide between them. Even if Silence herself possesses an innate, natural affinity for music, some hereditary talent that endows her with a special sympathy with *musica*, the romance repeats its portrait of her skill as the product, at least in part, of diligence, practice, effort, travail, and labour – a kind of manual agency cultivated over a number of years.

### 3. Broader implications

If the genre of romance seems an unusual place to start in describing vernacular song then this is an accident of modern scholarly emphases.

(Ardis Butterfield, 'Vernacular poetry and music', p. 215)<sup>7</sup>

While the romance poets may not have been professional musicians, they and their audiences possessed sufficient familiarity with the concept of harmonic powers to be able to draw on their symbolism in the romances. Far from being a decorative staple, or a stock interlude used as extra narrative padding, music in the medieval romances addressed in this thesis is used to explore such anxieties as social fragmentation, supernatural or magical coercion, and immoderate *fin'amor*. A particularly prominent thread running through the texts is what might be labelled the demystification of musical power. The late antique depiction of a marvellous, ambiguous force connected to innate musical understanding came to accommodate a more sympathetic view of effort and learning as enablers of musical skill beyond musical instinct alone. The romances help to effect a movement away from Augustine's perplexed discussion of music's affective powers, and his vague understanding that the 'emotions of our spirit' ('affectus spiritus nostri') are 'stirred' ('excitentur') by corresponding 'modes in voice and chant' ('proprius modos in voce atque cantu') as a result of some 'mysterious inner kinship' ('nescio qua occulta familiaritate').<sup>8</sup> The insular romances discussed in this thesis go some way towards making sense of Augustine's 'nescio qua'.

In the period covered by this thesis, there is evidence that considerable weight is placed on music's affective, psychotropic powers. Abstract precepts of harmony (rarefied celestial music) from the late antique period cede ground to an understanding of a more reified, embodied, materialised kind of music whose effects are registered in the affect of the listener. These powers of music to move human affections through pleasurable effects are, then, not exclusive to the liturgical or ecclesiastical tradition, but are recognised and exploited in secular contexts and appear in secular genres of literature too. In this respect my work on romances supports the findings of Nicolette

<sup>7</sup> Ardis Butterfield, 'Vernacular Poetry and Music', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music*, ed. M. Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 205–24 (p. 215).

<sup>8</sup> Augustine, *Confessionum Libri XIII*, ed. M. Skutella, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 27* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), Bk. X, 33.49; Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. H. Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 207–8.

Zeeman, although she focuses more on musical expressivity than effects.<sup>9</sup> Insular romance contributes to a broader shift of focus away from the implicit source (the music of the spheres, or theoretical *musica*) that lies behind a musical performance, to its end-point – namely, the reception of music as it is heard and felt by the listener or as it induces a transformation in a community or kingdom. Rarely do these romances mention a form or mode of music (‘gle’ or ‘mirthe’) without also charting how those modes stir or move their listeners in emotive ways, and it has been the purpose of this thesis to trace those connections in insular romance.

Yet even more than that, this thesis not only aims to fill the gaps in literary scholarship on insular romance by focusing on how music’s affective power is represented in these narratives, but also seeks to draw attention to the interest (and anxiety) shown by the romances in representing the brevity of these emotive effects. Music’s affective powers are often represented as having an immediate, therapeutic effect (sometimes described as a synaesthetic experience, a sensory overload in which the listener is portrayed as being able to taste the sweetness of the sound), but these effects are sometimes exposed as temporary. The transformation of the listener risks being no more than provisional. The implicit fear is that music is ‘palliative, not curative’, and that its ‘usefulness’ is offset by its evident ‘limitations’.<sup>10</sup> These short-term effects are a temporary fix for more entrenched and far-reaching problems, whether those problems involve the restoration of a vexed listener to an ordered mindset or the restitution of a fractured society. The *Vita Merlini* exposes the temporary duration of music’s calming effects, and the *Romance of Silence* contrasts immediate, visceral joy with the return of remembered sorrows. Indeed, this particular romance actively countenances the possibility that music’s affective powers can even be resisted by listeners. As such, *Silence* puts some pressure on assumptions inherited from classical and late antique theory (Plotinus, for instance) which posited the soul’s total vulnerability to music and the futility of reason’s defence against its affective effects, or other theories which argued (in the Boethian model) that *musica mundana* is ubiquitous and underpins both the internal *musica humana* within the listener and also the externally-perceived sound of *musica instrumentalis*. That is to say, insular romance not only draws on the theoretical models of music’s coercive sway outlined in

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<sup>9</sup> Nicolette Zeeman, ‘The Theory of Passionate Song’, in *Medieval Latin and Middle English Literature: Essays in Honour of Jill Mann*, ed. C. Cannon and M. Nolan (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), pp. 231–51.

<sup>10</sup> These terms, used in reference to late medieval and early modern drama, are borrowed from Brokaw, *Staging Harmony*, p. 106.

Part I of this thesis, but also challenges them or at least considers the literary and narrative implications when those theoretical assumptions are called into question.

In a similar exploratory vein, these insular romances are also important barometers for perceptions of music's value among their primary readership. They contemplate different systems by which music's worth might be assessed. In the kingship quest romances, music is valued, at least in part, for its social utility in restoring a rightful ruler to a kingdom and in healing societal discord; in the romances concerned with magic, its utility lies, at least to some extent, in its mystical ability to assuage an individual's emotional distress. The Tristan romances seem to take a more jaded view, and evaluate music less in terms of cultural or affective uses than through a financial lens in which it is valued as a commodity. The *Romance of Silence* values music not just in aesthetic or affective terms, but in commercial terms too: musical skill is a professional asset (at least as the murderous minstrels think of things) that can be stolen, and a talent, such as wealth, that can be multiplied. In the Tristan tradition, not least in *Sir Tristrem* itself, there are hints that the protagonist's remarkableness lies in his instruments – in the physical and visible, rather than the ideal or aural. Tristrem's instruments are valued as 'rike' (precious, expensive), as if the musical profession as a commodity were more important than the power of music, and as if the once ineffable discipline and effects of music have been reduced to visible trappings. Where other romances celebrate music's affective powers or the musician's wondrous skills, this romance finds as much (perhaps more) appeal in the spectacle of the musician and his instruments.

The re-evaluation of music in these romances, the consideration of what music and musicians might represent when they feature in secular literary genres, continues beyond the time-frame covered by my thesis. The romances' fondness for treating music in terms of its affective effects on listeners is echoed later in native literary engagements with music. Robert Henryson's fifteenth-century *Orpheus and Eurydice*, a work steeped in the conventions of the romance tradition and a text based in part on Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, boasts a much more advanced vocabulary indebted to harmonic theory than is found in the music romances themselves.<sup>11</sup> Henryson's poem features a catalogue parading his knowledge of Platonic and Boethian musical precepts (the 'tonis proportionat' of 'hevinly melody', ll. 220–226)

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<sup>11</sup> Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages*, pp. 195–6.

and his familiarity with Pythagorean and Macrobian intervallic theory ('duplare, triplare, and emetricus' and other such vocabulary 'rycht hard and curius', ll. 227–239).<sup>12</sup> Shortly after this list of technical terms, he retreats into a humble apology for his own ignorance and lack of musical expertise: 'For in my lyfe I cowth nevir sing a noit' (l. 242). The usual gustatory terminology ('sweit and delicious', 'full sweit', ll. 230, 233) appears as expected when the poet tries to describe the effect of hearing these pleasurable harmonies, but more interesting here is Henryson's continuation of a tradition reaching back at least as far as *Sir Orfeo* or Nicholas Trevet's commentary on Boethius, in which the underlying narrative is understood in affective terms. For Henryson, whether his *moralitas* to the *narratio* is meant with full sincerity or not, Orpheus can be read as 'the pairte intellective' of the soul whereas 'Euridices is oure effectioun', the affective part that is by 'fantesy oft movit up and doun' (ll. 428, 431, 432). On this evidence, the technicalities of music theory paraded by Henryson might still be understood in terms of their material effects on the moveable affect.

A similar set of interests is shared by Gavin Douglas' allegorical Older Scots dream poem *The Palis of Honoure* (c. 1500–1501), his earliest work and one belonging to a long tradition of courtly verse. This poem features a short musical catalogue of various extemporized, notated, or polyphonic songs ('Faburdoun, priksang, discant, conturyng, / Cant organe, figuration, and gemmell', ll. 500–501) which the narrator hears performed on a variety of wind, string, and percussion instruments (ll. 502–505). A few lines later, in an expected show of modesty like Henryson's, he confesses his lack of expertise in musical technicalities and terminology:

Na mare I understude thir noumeris fine  
 Be God than dois a gekgo or a swine,  
 Save that me think swete soundis gude to heir.  
 Na mair heiron my labour will I tyne.  
 Na mair I wyl thir verbillys swete diffyne,  
 How that thair musik tones war mair cleir  
 And dulcer than the movyng of the speir  
 Or Orpheus' harp of Trace with sound divyne.  
 Glaskeryane maid na noyes compeer.  
 (ll. 517–525)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Robert Henryson, 'Orpheus and Eurydice', in *Complete Works*, ed. D.J. Parkinson (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Gavin Douglas, *The Palis of Honoure*, ed. D.J. Parkinson (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992).

Lacking (or so he professes) the terminology to ‘diffyne’ the sounds heard, Douglas’ narrator resorts to the familiar sensory lexis of sweetness (‘swete’, ‘swete’, ‘dulcer’) and the commonplace hyperbolic comparisons with famous musical exemplars from the bardic tradition (Orpheus and the legendary tenth-century Welsh bard Glasgerion). These features are broadly unremarkable. However, it is striking that, despite this admission of ignorance about harmonic proportions (the celestial mathematics of ‘noumeris fine’) and despite his sense of remove from a world of humanist learning just beyond his reach that would equip him with the knowledge to have ‘understude’ this music, Douglas is sufficiently bold in his adjudication. The narrator confidently, even outrageously, judges this heard music to be superior, ‘dulcer’ than the music of the spheres itself, an audacious inversion of the expected hierarchy – promoted by the speculative theory of Boethius and the Neoplatonic John of Garland– that privileged *musica mundana* over *musica instrumentalis*. It is my contention in this thesis that the insular romances discussed in Part II were instrumental in recuperating and celebrating the effects of heard music over the abstract or theoretical music of the spheres, whether or not – an enduring subject of enquiry – these romances were themselves ever performed as song or accompanied by music.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> On the question of romance’s ‘musicality’, ‘performability’, and ‘metaperformance’, see Linda Marie Zaerr, *Performance and the Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 19, 26.

## Appendix A

### Key tropes in music romances

I have used square brackets to cross-reference my tropes with Stith Thompson's tropes, where applicable. See also Appendix C.

#### Identity of protagonist

- Protagonist or his / her love interest in disguise as a professional musician [K311.11; K521.4.2; K1817.3; K2357.1]
- Protagonist as a composer of music or verse
- Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist's true identity / knightly prowess / kingship [H12; H35.1.1]
- Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait

#### Musical performance

- Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice [D1210ff; D1231; D1275.1; D1781; D2173; F262; F262.3.1; F386.1.1; F402.4]
- Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music
- An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together
- A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist) [J1626]

#### Musical effects

- A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience [H503; F679.9; J1626]
- Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener [B767; D1275; D1275.1; D1355.1.1; D1364.23; D1733.6; D1781; D1962.4.1; D2072; D2173; F156.1; T56.1]
- Music's ability to enchant, or to conjure illusions [B767; D786; D1733.6; D1781; D2173; D1275; D1275.1]

#### Musical skills

- Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music [A.1461]
- Protagonist's musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest) [H503; H503.1; F679.9]
- Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent [A1461]

Physical artefacts

- Musical instrument noted for its rarity or value [D1210ff; D1231]
- Protagonist's unique affinity for a particular musical instrument [D1210ff]

Role of minstrels

- A helpful minstrel assists the protagonist in some way [T55.9]
- Positive and sympathetic depiction of minstrels and their loyalty (usually compared to other servants) [T55.9]
- Generous rewards for minstrels [J1551.3]
- Minstrel is permitted to enter a restricted area by virtue of his / her profession
- Minstrel is free to advise or criticise a social superior

Narrative and structural features

- Exile of musician (often in a wilderness), which usually leads to improved musical skill
- Singing during a journey [D1384.5]
- Musical skill as a practical means to achieving a particular end (whether earning money, earning a meal, finding shelter, finding allies, or securing a post)
- A character falls in love with the protagonist after being impressed by their musical skill [D1355.1.1; K1546.2]
- Abandonment of music as a sign of a character's despair
- Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)

Metanarrative features

- Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance
- Reference to earlier minstrels or kings composing and singing songs of noteworthy heroes and deeds
- Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution [A661.0.2; A659.1]

## Appendix B

### A taxonomy of music romances

Romance	Manuscript	Musical tropes
<i>Amis and Amiloun</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Egerton 2862 (olim Trentham-Sutherland) (late fourteenth century)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Harley 2386, a fragment, (c. 1500)</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 326 (c. 1500)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• Abandonment of music as a sign of a character's despair</li> </ul>
<i>Bevis of Hampton</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38 (1420–1450)</li> <li>• Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 175/96 (1450–1475)</li> <li>• Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS O.2.13, fragment, (mid to late fifteenth century)</li> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Egerton 2862 (olim Trentham-Sutherland) (late fourteenth century)</li> <li>• Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS 8009 (late fifteenth century)</li> <li>• Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29 (1450–1460)</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce Fragm. E.13, fragment</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. D. 208, fragment (mid to late fifteenth century)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest in disguise as a professional musician</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance</li> <li>• Singing during a journey</li> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Musical skill as a practical means to achieving a particular end (whether earning money, earning a meal, finding shelter, finding allies, or securing a post)</li> <li>• Exile of musician (often in a wilderness), which usually leads to improved musical skill</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> </ul>
<i>Emaré</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London, British</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage,</li> </ul>

	Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii (1446–1460)	<p>attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singing during a journey</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance</li> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> </ul>
<i>'Stanzaic' Guy of Warwick</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>• A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> </ul>
<i>Haveloc fragment (in Estoire des Engleis)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Durham, Durham Cathedral Library c. IV.27 (early thirteenth century)</li> <li>• Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library 104 (A.4.12) (late thirteenth century)</li> <li>• London, British Library, Royal 13.A.xxi (late thirteenth century)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist's true identity / knightly prowess / kingship</li> <li>• Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice</li> <li>• Musical instrument noted for its rarity or value</li> <li>• Protagonist's unique affinity for a particular musical instrument</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>• Protagonist's musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest)</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance</li> </ul> <p><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / rather than magical inspiration or innate talent – the absence of skills noted by Haveloc</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music – the absence of skills noted by Haveloc</li> </ul>
<i>Havelok the Dane</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Additional 4407, art.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution</li> </ul>

	<p>19 (Fragments) (late fourteenth century)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108 (c. 1300–1325)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Reference to earlier minstrels or kings composing and singing songs of noteworthy heroes and deeds</li> <li>• Music’s ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> </ul> <p><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent – the absence of skills noted by Havelok</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music – the absence of skills noted by Havelok</li> <li>• Protagonist’s musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest) – the absence of skills noted by Havelok</li> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist’s true identity / knightly prowess / kingship – notably absent, unlike in the Anglo-Norman text and the fragments</li> <li>• Musical instrument noted for its rarity or value –notably absent, unlike in the Anglo-Norman text and the fragments</li> <li>• Protagonist’s unique affinity for a particular musical instrument – notably absent, unlike in the Anglo-Norman text and the fragments</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience – Havelok is invited to dine at Ubbe’s hall, but he does not play music, his identity remains hidden, and the narrator explains that he won’t dwell on the feast as nothing significant happens.</li> </ul>
<i>Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist’s true identity / knightly prowess / kingship</li> <li>• Protagonist’s musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest)</li> <li>• Musical instrument noted for its rarity or value</li> <li>• Music’s ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> </ul>
<i>Ipomadon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manchester, Chetham’s Library, MS 8009 (late fifteenth century)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> </ul>
<i>King Horn</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.4.27.2. (c. 1300 )</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Harley 2253 (c. 1330–1340)</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108 (c. 1300–1325)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest in disguise as a professional musician</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Protagonist’s musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest)</li> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Minstrel is permitted to enter a restricted area by virtue of his / her profession</li> <li>• Musical skill as a practical means to achieving a particular end (whether earning money, earning a meal, finding shelter, finding allies, or securing a post)</li> <li>• Exile of musician (often in a wilderness), which usually leads to improved musical skill</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance</li> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist’s true identity / knightly prowess / kingship</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• Singing during a journey</li> <li>• Music’s ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• Protagonist as a composer of music or verse</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>• A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance’s own narrative concord or resolution</li> </ul>
<i>Lai d’Haveloc</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London, College of Arms Arundel XIV, Manuscript H (fourteenth century)</li> <li>• Cologne-Genève, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Codex Bodmer 82, Manuscript P (late thirteenth or early fourteenth century)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist’s true identity / knightly prowess / kingship</li> <li>• Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice</li> <li>• Musical instrument noted for its rarity or value</li> <li>• Protagonist’s unique affinity for a particular musical instrument</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>• Protagonist’s musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest)</li> </ul>

		<p><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent – the absence of skills noted by Haveloc</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music – the absence of skills noted by Haveloc</li> </ul>
<i>Lay Le Freine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to earlier minstrels or kings composing and singing songs of noteworthy heroes and deeds</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> </ul>
<i>Le Bone Florence of Rome</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38 (1420–1450)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Singing during a journey</li> </ul> <p><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast) – the absence of minstrels during another feasting scene (as there is no space for them), is remarked upon</li> </ul>
<i>Lybeaus Desconus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii (1446–1460)</li> <li>• London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 306 (second half of the fifteenth century)</li> <li>• London, Lincoln's Inn Library, MS 150 (late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries)</li> <li>• Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29 (1450–1460)</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61 (late fifteenth century)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Additional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together</li> <li>• Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice</li> <li>• Music's ability to enchant, or to conjure illusions</li> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>• A helpful minstrel assists the protagonist in</li> </ul>

	27879 (Percy Folio) (c. 1650)	<p>some way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive and sympathetic depiction of minstrels and their loyalty (usually compared to other servants)</li> <li>• A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution</li> <li>• Singing during a journey</li> </ul> <p><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution – musical power is used to create dischord when deployed maliciously by the clerics and the Dame L'Amour</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience – inside the clerics' enchanted palace, Lybeaus encounters minstrels who perform in an eerily empty hall, without an audience</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast) – inside the clerics' enchanted palace, Lybeaus encounters minstrels who perform in an eerily empty hall, without an audience</li> </ul>
<i>Octavian</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38 (1420–1450)</li> <li>• Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91 (Thornton Manuscript) (c. 1440)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii (1446–1460)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance</li> <li>• An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together</li> </ul>
<i>Reinbrun</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Abandonment of music as a sign of a character's despair</li> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> </ul>
<i>Richard Coeur de Lion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 228 (late fifteenth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Minstrel is free to advise or criticise a social superior</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• century)</li> <li>• London, College of Arms, Arundel 58 (c. 1448)</li> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</li> <li>• Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 175/96 (1450–1475)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Harley 4690 (fifteenth century)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Egerton 2862 (olim Trentham-Sutherland) (late fourteenth century)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Additional 31042 (London Thornton) (mid fifteenth century)</li> <li>• Badminton, Duke of Beaufort MS 704.1.16 (c. 1400–1425)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• Minstrel is permitted to enter a restricted area by virtue of his / her profession</li> </ul> <p><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A helpful minstrel assists the protagonist in some way – King Richard offends a minstrel and, as a result, the minstrel is unhelpful and chooses to aid the king’s enemy, who treats the minstrel well</li> <li>• Positive and sympathetic depiction of minstrels and their loyalty (usually compared to other servants) – in this case, offending a minstrel brings about the opposite effect when the king suffers for his rudeness, while his enemy, who was generous to the minstrel, benefits from the minstrel’s loyalty</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast) – undermined twice: once, when Richard dismisses a minstrel who offers to entertain him during dinner and, again, when he enters an eerie city where no minstrels can be heard, leading the king to guess that the occupants had all been killed</li> </ul>
<i>Romance of Silence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nottingham, Wollaton Library Collection, MS WLC/LM/6 (c. 1200–1250)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest in disguise as a professional musician</li> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist’s true identity / knightly prowess / kingship</li> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>• Music’s ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Protagonist’s musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest)</li> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Minstrel is permitted to enter a restricted area by virtue of his / her profession</li> <li>• Exile of musician (often in a wilderness), which usually leads to improved musical skill</li> <li>• Musical skill as a practical means to achieving a particular end (whether earning money, earning a meal, finding shelter, finding allies, or securing a post)</li> <li>• A character falls in love with the protagonist after being impressed by their musical skill</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution</li> <li>• A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice</li> <li>• Music's ability to enchant, or to conjure illusions</li> <li>• Minstrel is free to advise or criticise a social superior</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A helpful minstrel assists the protagonist in some way – the minstrels to whom Silence is apprenticed grow jealous and plot to murder her</li> <li>• Positive and sympathetic depiction of minstrels and their loyalty (usually compared to other servants) – the romance explores the competitive and petty side of the minstrel profession, culminating in the minstrels plotting murder</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance – the poet begins instead with a diatribe condemning greedy and disloyal patrons and the difficult lot of minstrels</li> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener – undermined by the jealousy and hostility of the other minstrels</li> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution – undermined by the jealousy and hostility of the other minstrels</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast) – when Silence returns to her father's lands still disguised as a minstrel, she is almost executed for performing music</li> </ul>
<i>Sir Cleges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.1.11 (second half of the fifteenth century)</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61 (late fifteenth century)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution</li> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Minstrel is free to advise or criticise a social</li> </ul>

		<p>superior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A helpful minstrel assists the protagonist in some way</li> <li>• Positive and sympathetic depiction of minstrels and their loyalty (usually compared to other servants)</li> <li>• An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together</li> <li>• Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance</li> </ul> <p><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music – Sir Cleges and his wife are not depicted as musicians and are saved by minstrels instead of relying on their own musical skills</li> <li>• Protagonist’s musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest) – Sir Cleges and his wife are not depicted as musicians and are saved by minstrels instead of relying on their own musical skills</li> <li>• Musical skill as a practical means to achieving a particular end (whether earning money, earning a meal, finding shelter, finding allies, or securing a post) – instead of relying on musical skill, Sir Cleges acquires allies and help due to his generosity towards minstrels</li> </ul>
<i>Sir Degaré</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38 (1420–1450)</li> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Additional 27879 (Percy Folio) (c. 1650)</li> <li>• London, British Library, MS Egerton 2862 (olim Trentham-Sutherland) (late fourteenth century)</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 261, Transcript of an early print (1564)</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson F.34 (late fifteenth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>• A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> <li>• Music’s ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• Music’s ability to enchant, or to conjure illusions</li> <li>• Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice</li> <li>• Musical skill as a practical means to achieving a particular end (whether earning money, earning a meal, finding shelter, finding allies, or securing a post)</li> </ul>

	century)	
<i>Sir Degrevant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.1.6 (Findern) (c. 1446–1550)</li> <li>Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91 (Thornton Manuscript) (c. 1440)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>Protagonist's musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest)</li> <li>Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist's true identity / knightly prowess / kingship</li> <li>Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> <li>Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>A helpful minstrel assists the protagonist in some way</li> <li>Positive and sympathetic depiction of minstrels and their loyalty (usually compared to other servants)</li> </ul>
<i>Sir Gawain and the Carle of Carlisle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn MS ii.1 (formerly Porkington 10) (1453–1500)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> <li>Musical instrument noted for its rarity or value</li> <li>Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together</li> <li>Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>Generous rewards for minstrels</li> </ul>
<i>Sir Launfal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii (1446–1460)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> </ul>
<i>Sir Orfeo</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edinburgh, National</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference to earlier minstrels or kings</li> </ul>

	<p>Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck) (c. 1330)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London, British Library, MS Harley 3810 (early fifteenth century)</li> <li>• Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61 (late fifteenth century)</li> </ul>	<p>composing and singing songs of noteworthy heroes and deeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest in disguise as a professional musician</li> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist's true identity / knightly prowess / kingship</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Protagonist's musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest)</li> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Exile of musician (often in a wilderness), which usually leads to improved musical skill</li> <li>• Minstrel is permitted to enter a restricted area by virtue of his / her profession</li> <li>• Minstrel is free to advise or criticise a social superior</li> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Protagonist's unique affinity for a particular musical instrument</li> <li>• Romance introduction / conclusion mentions minstrels composing or singing a song about the events of the romance</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>• Musical skill as a practical means to achieving a particular end (whether earning money, earning a meal, finding shelter, finding allies, or securing a post)</li> <li>• A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> <li>• An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together</li> <li>• Music's ability to enchant, or to conjure illusions</li> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution</li> <li>• Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice</li> <li>• Protagonist as a composer of music or verse</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Musical instrument noted for its rarity or value</li> </ul>
<i>Sir Tristrem</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest in disguise as a professional musician</li> <li>• Protagonist as a composer of music or verse</li> </ul>

	(Auchinleck) (c. 1330)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• Protagonist's musical skill is prodigious and far surpasses professional minstrels (sometimes recognised in the form of a contest)</li> <li>• Music as a learnt skill / craft rather than magical inspiration or innate talent</li> <li>• Protagonist's unique affinity for a particular musical instrument</li> <li>• Minstrel is permitted to enter a restricted area by virtue of his / her profession</li> <li>• Exile of musician (often in a wilderness), which usually leads to improved musical skill</li> <li>• Singing during a journey</li> <li>• Musical skill as a practical means to achieving a particular end (whether earning money, earning a meal, finding shelter, finding allies, or securing a post)</li> <li>• A character falls in love with the protagonist after being impressed by their musical skill</li> <li>• Abandonment of music as a sign of a character's despair</li> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist's true identity / knightly prowess / kingship</li> <li>• A passage of elaborate description focusing on a particular musical performance (usually that of a protagonist)</li> <li>• Positive and sympathetic depiction of minstrels and their loyalty (usually compared to other servants)</li> <li>• Minstrel is free to advise or criticise a social superior</li> <li>• Generous rewards for minstrels</li> <li>• Music, minstrel, or valuable musical instrument as supernatural / a marvel / connected to the Fairy Otherworld or earthly magical practice</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• A notable musical performance (usually taking place in a hall) which awes the audience</li> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• Music's ability to enchant, or to conjure illusions</li> <li>• Musical instrument noted for its rarity or value</li> <li>• Generosity to, patronage of, and appreciation of minstrels, as an aristocratic / chivalric trait</li> </ul> <p><u>Undermined tropes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music as a marker of heavenly harmony and / or of the romance's own narrative concord or resolution – undermined during Queen</li> </ul>
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		<p>Ysonde's final performance on the harp and Tristrem's performance in front of Ysonde of the White Hands. Both performances create chaos instead of harmony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical instrument / musical skill as a marker of the protagonist's true identity / knightly prowess / kingship – this undermined trope pertains not to Tristrem's identity, but to the object of his affections. When he sings about his feelings for Queen Ysonde but Ysonde of the White Hands assumes the song is for her. Music creates confusion instead of restoring a character's true identity</li> </ul>
<i>Squire of Low Degree</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London, British Library, MS Additional 27879 (Percy Folio) (c. 1650)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music's ability to conjure sleep, courage, rage, attraction, harmony, pleasure, love, or joy in the listener</li> <li>• Abandonment of music as a sign of a character's despair</li> <li>• Scene (often the concluding scene) of collective festivity, accompanied by music (usually involving minstrels serving at the feast)</li> <li>• Music of the hunt / battlefield music / tournament music / processional music</li> <li>• Protagonist or his / her love interest has been trained in music</li> <li>• An unrealistic combination / number of instruments performing together</li> </ul>

## Appendix C

### Comparable tropes compiled by Stith Thompson<sup>15</sup>

Acquisition of music A1461

Animals attracted by music B767

Contest in song H503.1

Disenchantment by music D786

Disguise as harper K1817.3

Disguise as musician to enter enemy's camp K2357.1

Disguise as musician to escape K521.4.2

Ethereal music F402.4

Fairy harp F262.3.1 (enclosed in yew tree ) F386.1.1

Fairies make music F262

Harper as love messenger T55.9

Love-producing song D1355.1.1

Lulling to sleep by 'sleepy' song D1962.4.1

Magic harp D1231

Magic music D1275.1

Magic musical instruments D1210ff

Magic power from song D1733.6

Magic results from singing D1781

Magic singing D2173

Magic song D1275 (causes paralysis) D2072.6

Music attracts bride T56.1

Music of heaven A661.0.2

Music of the spheres A659.1

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<sup>15</sup> See Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folk-Tales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*, 6 Vols. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989).

Paramour encouraged by song K1546.2

Recognition by music / song H12

Recognition through harp playing H35.1.1

Singer repaid with promise of reward; words for words J1551.3

Skillful musician F679.9

Sleep-bringing music in otherworld F156.1

Song as protection on a journey D1384.5

Song causes magic sleep D1364.23

Song duel H503.1

Sound of harp J1626

Test of musical ability H503

Thieves disguised musicians K311.11

## **Appendix D**

### **Distribution of music romances in manuscripts**





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