His Credo by Laurent Chaumonot takes bits and pieces from Machaut's Messe de Nostre Dame. The plainsong is similar to Credo I in Pothier's Editio Vaticana but is not identical. It's from a 14th-century manuscript: [Comparing the 14th century manuscript to the Liber Usualis version can demonstrate the limitations of the Solesmes “rhythm dots.”]

About the Mass: The date of composition for Canon Machaut's Messe de Nostre Dame is not known. Willi Apel believes it was “one of his earliest works” based on certain notations used (cf. Notation of Polyphonic Music, page 345). Anne Robertson disagrees, thinking Machaut was close to sixty when he wrote it, and has put together evidence suggesting this Mass was composed for a special reason. It was to be performed each week at a Reims Cathedral side altar—Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin—for the intentions of Machaut and his brother Jean (also a Canon at Reims) while they were alive; and was to continue after they died. It seems Machaut left an endowment to pay the priest's stipend, and also payment for the singers. Records indicate it continued at least into the beginning of the 15th century. The Kyrie for Messe de Nostre Dame uses the mathematical techniques of isorhythm (“talea” and “color”), but the musical result does not sound mathematical at all; it's really beautiful. Indeed, the admirable restraint of the entire Mass seems consistent with “Docta Sanctorum Patrum,” issued by Pope John XXII circa 1324AD.

Father Machaut's use of parallel octaves seemingly contradicts the rules of counterpoint as described by theorists in that century; but the truth is more complicated. For more, see page 86 of Machaut's Music: New Interpretations (Boydell & Brewer, 2003). In a nutshell, not all the voices were considered to be “contrapuntal”—but only in relationship to the tenor.

Avignon Papacy (popes living in Southern France) = 1309AD to 1377AD

Western Schism (confusion over true pope) = 1378AD to 1417AD

Fr. Guillaume de Machaut = Born approx. 1300AD and died 1377AD

Credo I • With 14th-Century Harmonies by Machaut

A sixth-century legend claiming that each Apostle wrote different sections of the Creed is reflected in this 14th-century manuscript:

Saint Peter

Priest

Tenor

3

L S F S S

M F S S S F L S S M F S S S

omnipotentem factorem celi et terre visibilium

Saint Andrew

Soprano

6

S F M R R L Te L S F S L S S

SFM RM SL L TL L L SSF SSL S

dominum Jhesum Christum filium dei unigenitum

8
et ex pàtre nà-tum án-te ó-mnìa sè-cu-la dé-um de

et ex pàtre nà-tum án-te ó-mnìa sè-cu-la dé-um de

et ex pàtre nà-tum án-te ó-mnìa sè-cu-la dé-um de

dé-o lú-men de lú-mi-ne dé-um vé-rum de dé-o vé-ro
dé-o lú-men de lú-mi-ne dé-um vé-rum de dé-o vé-ro
dé-o lú-men de lú-mi-ne dé-um vé-rum de dé-o vé-ro

gé-ni-tum non fác-tum con-sub-stan-ti-á-lem pá-tri per quêm

onomìa fàcta sunt

et própter nó-stram sa-lú-tem de-scén-dit de cé-lis
Saint James the Greater

Rehearsal videos: CCWATERSHED.ORG/5984

\[ \text{\textit{Tenor}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Soprano}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Saint John}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{Saint Thomas}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{et in-car-ná-tus est de spi-ri-tu sáncto ex}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{et in-car-ná-tus est de spi-ri-tu sáncto ex}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{et in-car-ná-tus est de spi-ri-tu sáncto ex}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{ma-rí-a vir-gi-ne et hó-mo fáctus est}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{marí-a vir-gi-ne et hó-mo fáctus est}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{marí-a vir-gi-ne et hó-mo fáctus est}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{cruci-fi-xus é-ti-am pro nó-bis sub pón-ci-o py-lá-to}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{pás-sus et se-púl-tus est}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{et re-sur-ré-xit tér-ti-a di-e se-cún-dum scri-ptú-ras}} \]
Saint James the Lesser

\( \text{\textit{et ascén-dit in cé-lum sé-det ad déx-ter-am pá-tris}} \)

Saint Philip

\( \text{\textit{j = 80}} \)

\( \text{vi-vos et mórtu-os cú-jus ré-gni non é-rit fi-nis} \)

Saint Bartholomew

\( \text{\textit{et in spí-ritum sánctum dó-mi-num et}} \)

\( \text{\textit{vi-vi-fi-cán-tem qui ex pá-tre fi-li-ó-que pro-cé-dit}} \)
Saint Matthew

\[ J = 80 \]

Saint Simon

\[ J = 85 \]

et unam sanctam catholicae et apostolicae ecclesiae

et unam sanctam catholicae et apostolicae ecclesiae

- am confi- te- or unum bap- ti- sma in re- mis- si- ó- nem pec- cata- ri- or

- am confi- te- or unum bap- ti- sma in re- mis- si- ó- nem pec- cata- ri- or
Practical Note: It is good to employ ancient manuscripts—even when they don't match the Edition Vaticana version—because doing so reminds singers of the antiquity of our Faith. But this should be done infrequently, as learning multiple versions of the same chant can frustrate those who struggle with reading music. The first version learned will stick in one's mind, even after decades. When polyphonic sections are added, do not have the entire choir sing the plainsong sections, because the polyphony will sound weak by comparison. Soloists, cantors, or individual sections should sing the plainsong sections.

The chants used in Messe de Nostre Dame are interesting. Machaut’s Kyrie uses Kyrie IV. His Gloria (according to some) is based on Gloria IV. His Credo (according to some) is based on Credo I. The Sanctus and Agnus both use Mass XVII, while the Ite Missa Est uses Sanctus VIII. When composers wrote Masses honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary, a variety of chants were regularly chosen. [Masses by Guerrero in honor of our Lady are apropos.] Plainchant melodies were “flexible” in the days of Machaut. For example, the Ite Missa Est uses Sanctus VIII (as mentioned) but Sanctus VIII took its melody from “O Christi Pietas” (or perhaps “O Quam Suavis Est”). Examples like these are not welcomed by those who insist upon a superficial relationship between plainsong text and melody—but they’re incontrovertible. Indeed, Machaut’s polyphonic setting of certain accent patterns (such as “et con glorificátur”) is instructive, and not at all atypical for that period of composition.