MUH 101

Fall 2014

**Isorhythmic Motet Assignment**

**Due Monday, December 1**

Guess what! You’re going to write an *Ars Nova* isorhythmic motet.

Step 1—Select your *color:* Return to your original chant (the non-troped version). Recopy a portion of it—somewhere between 8 and 16 pitches. You can pick your color from any place in your chant.

Step 2—Create your *talea*: Write out a series of rhythms of your choice. Model it after those from nos. 28 and 30 in your Anthology. You’ll want long-ish rhythmic values, and you should have fewer units in your talea than in your color. Your life will be easier if the number of units are a multiple of the number of units in your color, i.e. 8 units in color and 4 units in talea, or 16 units in color and 8 units in talea, or something like that. Remember—Music is Math that you can hear.

Step 3—Write out your *tenor*: Combine your color and your talea to create your isorhythmic tenor. Leave enough space in your measures to accommodate what will become much more rhythmically active motetus and triplum. For your motet, you’ll need to cycle through your completed isorhythm at least twice. As you write out your tenor, also act as your Modern Editor and mark the beginning of each color with A, B, C, etc. and the beginning of each talea with I, II, III, etc. Also be sure to write the appropriate *Ars Nova* meter signature at the beginning of your score. (Do this for all three lines.)

Step 4—Write motetus and triplum lines above your tenor. Be sure and model them after the various *Ars Nova* selections in your anthology. The music in your upper lines should be rhythmically active and complex, and you now have access to duple/simple time as well as triple/compound. Two requirements for these upper lines: 1. At least one line must include an instance of rhythmic palindrome (you can use palindrome in your talea if you’d rather). 2. At some point the two upper lines must engage in hocket. Again, act as your own Modern Editor and mark and label your hocket and palindrome for me. Finally, write words for both of your upper lines. Again, follow the trends found in the *Ars Nova* examples in your Anthology. Appropriate topics include politics and corruption in the church and/or state, possibly portrayed in allegory, other current events, etc. As with all Medieval music, remember that your consonances are P1, 4, 5, and 8, and that tritones will send you straight to hell.

At the end, you will need to turn in to me a clean copy of your color, your talea, a cycle of your isorhythm, and your completed isorhythmic motet. All of your composing should be done in modern notation. De Vitry’s *Garrit Gallus…* is your best model here, though all of the works from Chapters 11, 12, and 13 might provide you with inspiration. If you’d like to work out your isorhythm before the due date and show it to me to make sure you did it correctly, I’d be happy to check it over.

I cannot stress enough how thoroughly and frequently you should read the directions above as your write out your Motet. I should also stress that you need to use your very best writing skills.