

Ave Maris Stella

Hail Star of the Ocean

Étienne de Vaulclerc c. 1368 – 1421

nr. Chartres

Poco adagio

Soprano *mp*

A - ve Ma - ris stel - la, De - i Mat - er al - ma,
Su - mens il - lud A - ve Ga - bri - e - lis o - re,

Alto *mp*

A - ve Ma - ris stel - la, De - i Mat - er al - ma,
Su - mens il - lud A - ve Ga - bri - e - lis o - re,

Tenor *mp*

A - ve Ma - ris stel - la, De - i Mat - er al - ma,
Su - mens il - lud A - ve Ga - bri - e - lis o - re,

Bass *mp*

A - ve Ma - ris stel - la, De - i Mat - er al - ma,
Su - mens il - lud A - ve Ga - bri - e - lis o - re,

6

S.

at - que sem per Vir go,
fun - da - nos in pa - ce,

A.

at - que sem per Vir go,
fun - da - nos in pa - ce,

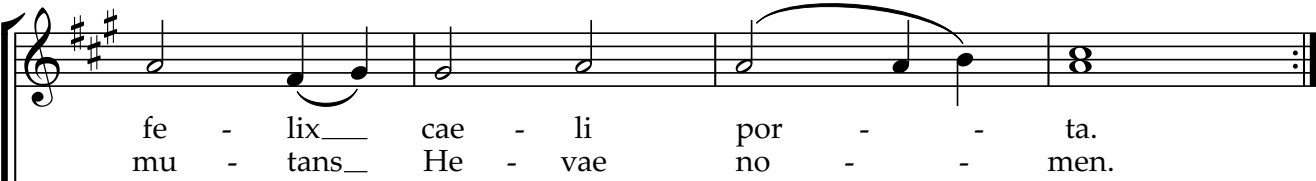
T.

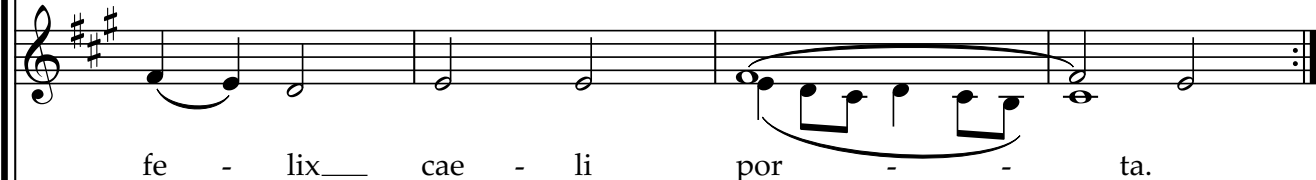
at - que sem per Vir go,
fun - da - nos in pa - ce,

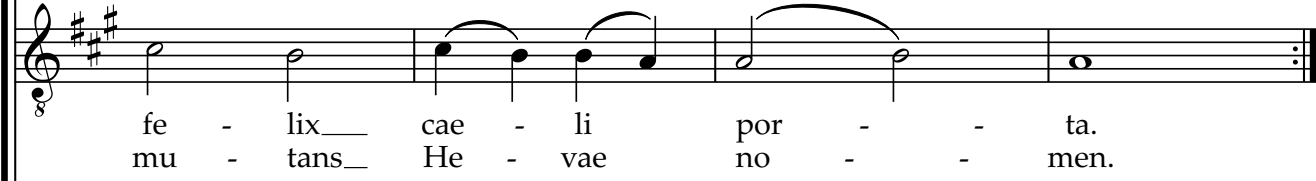
B.

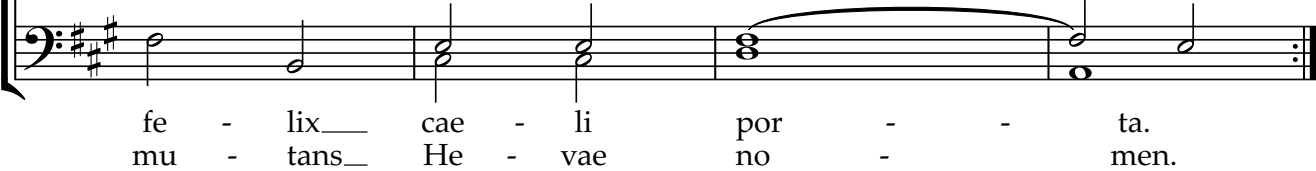
at - que sem per Vir go,
fun - da - nos in pa - ce,

9

S. 

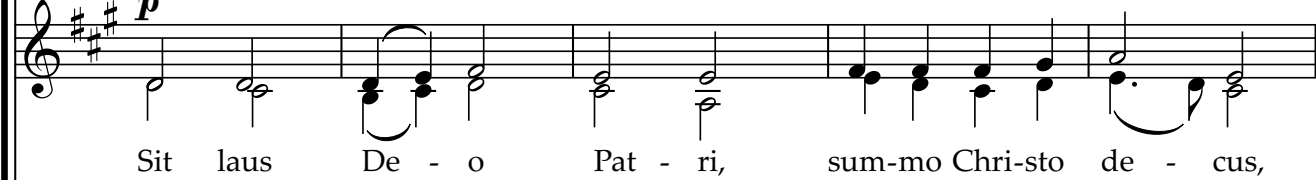
A. 

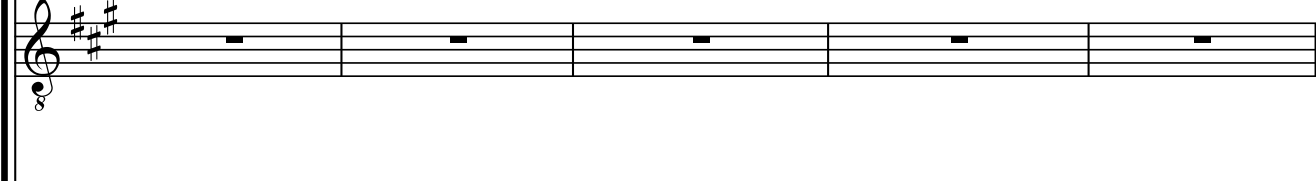
T. 

B. 

13

S. 

A. 

T. 

B. 

18

S. Tri - bus___ ho - nor u - - nus.

A. Tri - bus___ ho - nor u - - nus.

T. Tri - bus___ ho - nor u - - nus.

B. Tri - bus___ ho - nor u - - nus.

22

molto rall.

S. A - - men, A - - men,

A. A - - men, A - - men,

T. A - - men,

B. A - - men,

Étienne de Vaclerc c. 1368 – 1421

Background Étienne de Vaclerc was born the illegitimate son of a minor cleric attached to Chartres Cathedral and a wool merchant's daughter. His early life was split between the disciplined, echoing halls of the cathedral school and the noisy, practical world of the textile trade. He showed an unusual sensitivity to sound as a child—reportedly able to identify individual bell tones across miles of countryside. At age ten, he was taken in as a choirboy at Chartres, where he received formal musical training rooted in the **Ars Nova** tradition.

Turning Point In 1389, a fire damaged part of the cathedral's roof. During the repairs, Étienne became obsessed with the altered acoustics inside the nave. He began experimenting—subtly at first—with spacing singers differently, staggering entrances, and even composing lines meant to “chase” each other through the reverberation.

This led to whispers among clergy that his music was *unnatural*—too concerned with sensory effect rather than divine order.

Exile and Reinvention Around 1395, after a dispute with a senior canon (possibly over unauthorized alterations to liturgical music), Étienne left Chartres. He settled in a small village called **Saint-Lubin-des-Bois**, where he worked intermittently as a copyist and teacher. Here, away from strict oversight, he developed his most unusual ideas:

- Compositions designed for **specific spaces** (barns, chapels, courtyards)
- Early forms of **antiphonal layering**, where melodies overlap unpredictably
- Pieces incorporating **non-musical rhythms**—like loom patterns or horse gaits

Local peasants reportedly found his music haunting but compelling; some claimed it could “change the feeling of a place.”

The “Green Manuscript” His most famous (and likely fictional) work is the *Codex Viridis* (“Green Manuscript”), so named for the oxidized copper pigments used in its notation.

Legends about it include:

- Certain pieces only “work” at dusk
- Marginal notes describing wind direction and humidity
- Instructions like “*let the silence sing before the third voice enters*”

The manuscript allegedly disappeared after his death—possibly taken by a traveling scholar or hidden by suspicious clergy.

Personality & Reputation Étienne was described as:

- Quiet but intensely observant
- More interested in **how music behaves** than in strict theory
- Slightly eccentric—he would hum into wells, walls, and even hollow trees to test echoes

To some, he was a visionary ahead of his time. To others, a meddler who blurred the line between sacred music and sensory experiment.

Death

He died in 1421 during a harsh winter, likely of illness. A local account claims villagers sang one of his pieces at his burial—but “no two voices agreed on when it ended.”