# Chromatic Beauty in the Late Medieval Chanson

Chromaticism, the use of chromatic notes, was a defining characteristic of the late medieval chanson. This article explores the chromatic beauty of these songs, examining their use of dissonance, suspensions, and other chromatic techniques. It also discusses the historical and cultural context of chromaticism in the late Middle Ages.

### Chromatic Beauty in the Late Medieval Chanson: An Interpretation of Manuscript Accidentals by Hal Leonard

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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## The Use of Chromaticism in the Late Medieval Chanson

Chromaticism was first used in European music in the late 13th century. It became increasingly common in the 14th and 15th centuries, particularly in the late medieval chanson. Composers of chansons used chromaticism to create a variety of effects, including dissonance, suspensions, and melodic ornamentation.

Dissonance is the simultaneous sounding of two or more notes that are not in harmony with each other. Chromaticism can be used to create dissonance by introducing chromatic notes into a chord. This can create a sense of tension and excitement, and can be used to heighten the emotional impact of a piece of music.

Suspensions are a type of dissonance that occurs when a note is held over from a previous chord. Chromaticism can be used to create suspensions by suspending chromatic notes. This can create a sense of instability and can be used to build tension and anticipation.

Melodic ornamentation is the addition of non-essential notes to a melody. Chromaticism can be used to create melodic ornamentation by adding chromatic notes to a melody. This can create a sense of richness and variety, and can be used to highlight certain notes or phrases.

## The Historical and Cultural Context of Chromaticism in the Late Middle Ages

The use of chromaticism in the late medieval chanson was influenced by a number of factors, including the rise of polyphony, the development of new musical instruments, and the changing tastes of listeners. Polyphony, the simultaneous sounding of two or more independent melodies, became increasingly common in the late Middle Ages. This led to a greater need for dissonance, as dissonance could be used to create contrast between the different melodies.

The development of new musical instruments, such as the lute and the organ, also contributed to the rise of chromaticism. These instruments were

capable of producing a wider range of notes than earlier instruments, which made it possible for composers to use chromatic notes more freely.

The changing tastes of listeners also played a role in the rise of chromaticism. In the late Middle Ages, there was a growing demand for music that was more expressive and emotionally engaging. Chromaticism could be used to create a sense of tension and excitement, and it could be used to heighten the emotional impact of a piece of music.

## The Chromatic Beauty of the Late Medieval Chanson

The chromatic beauty of the late medieval chanson is a testament to the skill and creativity of the composers who wrote it. These composers used chromaticism to create a wide range of effects, from dissonance to suspensions to melodic ornamentation. Their use of chromaticism helped to shape the sound of the late medieval chanson and to make it one of the most distinctive and beautiful genres of music from that era.

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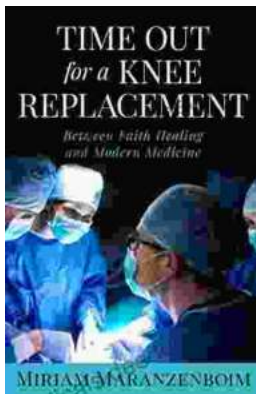
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