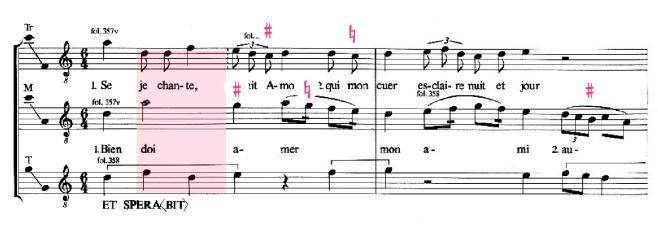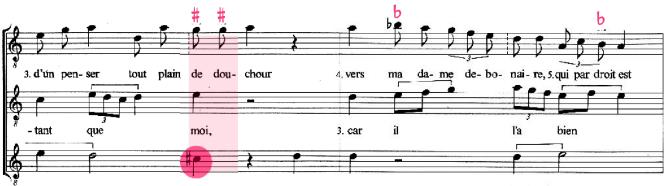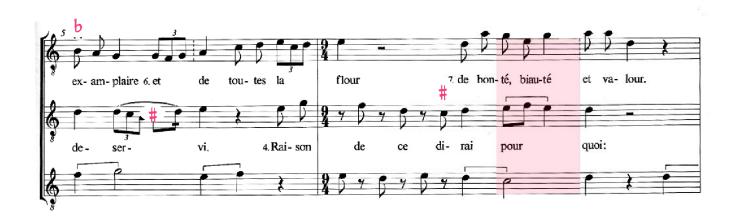# Se je chante /Bien doi amer / ET SPERABIT
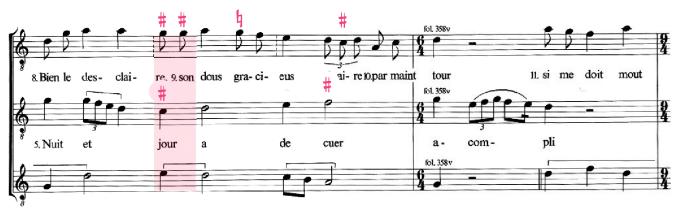
an. motet from the Montpellier manuscript, fasc. 8 (*c*.1290–1310)

plai-re 12.sans re- trai- re, 13.que s'a-mor si me va en- tour.

14. J'en ou-bli- e tou-te dou- lour

6. mes vo- len- tés sans mal ne des-

15.et m'en pai- ne mieus de bien fai- re, 16.car de ser-vir da- me, de tel a- fai- re 17 vient hou-

7. puis- qu'il m'a- ma et je li. 8. Riens en

-nour. 18. Quant on le sert bien sanz fo- lour, 19.on en a-tent dous sa-laire;20.et s'en est tou-te la vi- e meil-

li a blas-mer ne voi: 9.Jo- lis est, biaus et de

-lour. 21.⁴⁾Or veulle A-mour,que sans mes-fai- re22.puis-se main-te-nir ce dous la- bour

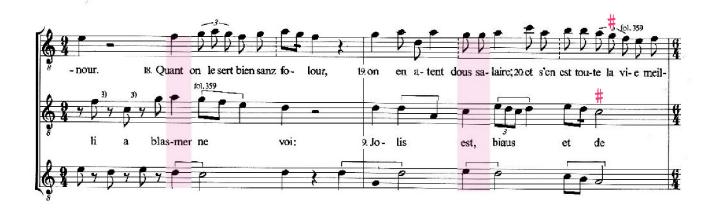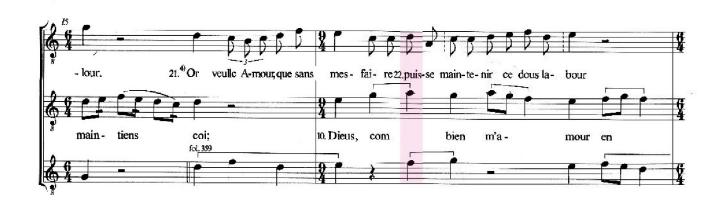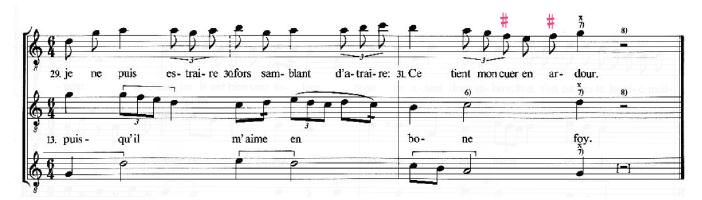main- tiens coi; 10. Dieus, com bien m'a- mour en

What this motet has in common with other three-part motets dating from the period *c*. 1200–1350 is the rigorous avoidance of triadic sonorities. You can hear this from the sound because the preferred perfect 1–5–8 sonorities, (or, when two voices sing the same pitch, 1–5 and 1–8), give no scope for flats and sharps. You need triads and sixths for this, because these come in two varieties, major and minor. Their avoidance keeps the music diatonic.

To turn a minor third of sixth into its major counterpart, there are two things you can do: do: either place a flat before the lower pitch, or a sharp before the upper. Although triadic sonorities in *Se je chante/Bien doit/*ET SPERABIT are few and far between (they're marked here by pink shading ▪), there are enough of them to be able to season the music with a rich sprinkling of sharps (♯). This gives the motet a distinctly fourteenth-century feel.

For this handout I have made use of the edition by Hans Tischler, *The Montpellier Codex*, 4 vols. (Madison: A-R Editions, 1978–1985).

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1. Se je chante, ce fait Amour,   Tr
2. qui mon cuer esclaire nuit et jour
3. d'un penser tout plain de douchour
4. vers ma dame debonaire,
5. qui par droit est examplaire
6. et de toutes la flour
7. de bonté, biauté et valour.
8. Bien le desclaire,
9. son dous gracieus viaire
10. par maint tour
11. si me doit mout plaire
12. sans retraire,
13. que s'amor si me va entour.
14. J'en oublie toute doulour
15. et m'en paine mieus de bien faire,
16. car de servir dame, de tel afaire
17. vient hounour.
18. Quant on le sert bien sanz folour,
19. on en atent dous salaire;
20. et s'en est toute la vie meillour.
21. Or veulle Amour, que sans mesfaire
22. puisse maintenir ce dous labour
23. sans nule pensee d'aillours,
24. car riens ne m'est contraire
25. en ma dame, en cui tous biens s'aaire
26. et toute hounour
27. par grant savour;
28. ne de sa fresce colour
29. je ne puis estraire
30. fors samblant d'atraire:
31. Ce tient mon cuer en ardour.

(If I sing, it is Love's doing—he lights up my heart night and day with thoughts full of tenderness for my gracious lady, who is rightfully the finest example, the flower of goodness, beauty, and worth. I declaim it aloud—her sweet face, full of grace, in myriad ways infinitely and unceasingly pleases me, for love of her envelops me so much. I forget all sorrow and take greater pains to do better, for honor comes from serving ladies of such quality. When one serves them well, without folly, one expects sweet reward; then is one's whole life better. May love grant that I be able to continue without wrong-doing this sweet labor, with never a wayward thought, for nothing in my lady displeases me—all goodness resides in her and all honor in the most pleasing way. Nor can I conclude from her fresh complexion any more than the appearance of wishing to attract me: it keeps the flame burning in my heart.)

1. Bien doi amer mon ami   M
2. autant que moi,
3. car il l'a bien deservi.
4. Raison de ce dirai pour quoi:
5. Nuit et jour a de cuer acompli
6. mes volentés sans mal ne desroy,
7. puisqu'il m'ama et je li.
8. Riens en li a blasmer ne voi:
9. Jolis est, biaus et de maintiens coi;
10. Dieus, com bien m'amour en li emploi!
11. Si n'en puis mais, se j'en di,
12. qu'autant que moi amer le doi,
13. puisqu'il m'aime en bone foy.

(I surely ought to love my sweetheart as much as myself, for he has indeed deserved it. I will tell you the reason for this: night and day he has willingly fulfilled my wishes, without harm or pride, since he fell in love with me and I with him. I see nothing in him to criticize: joyful he is, and handsome and proper of bearing. God, I use my love well in giving it to him! I cannot but say that I should love him as much as myself, because he loves me in good faith.)

ET SPERA⟨BIT⟩   T

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