

Modern Arranging and Composing

MODERN MELODIC TECHNIQUE

An examination of melody for the contemporary composer and arranger, including a survey of psychological considerations, technical considerations, structural considerations, and the song form.

by Gordon Delamont

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An examination of melody for the contemporary composer and arranger, including a survey of psychological considerations, technical considerations, structural considerations, and the song form.

"To my father, to Gordon Edwards, and to Dr. Maury Deutsch, without whose early guidance this book, or any of my others, would not likely have been written. Particularly though, to Vina, my wife, without whose unfailing support and understanding the books would certainly not have been written."

by Gordon Delamont

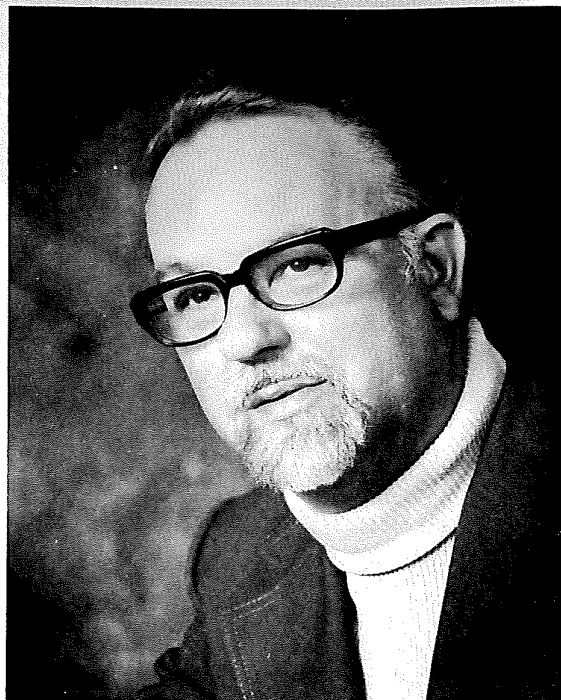
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

GORDON DELAMONT was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada, and received his first musical training in Vancouver, British Columbia. While in his early teens he was trumpet soloist with the world famous Vancouver Kitsilano Boys Band. This band, conducted by Mr. Delamont's father, has won major contests the world over, starting with the 1933 Chicago World's Fair and culminating in four consecutive first place ratings at the World Music Festival in Kerkrade, Holland, in 1958, 1962, 1966 and 1970 respectively.



Mr. Delamont's career as a professional trumpet player began in 1939 in Toronto, and in the following twenty years he played with virtually all of Canada's leading dance and studio orchestras. During this time he also formed and directed his own band which enjoyed great success in Canada until he started his present career as a teacher of harmony, arranging and related subjects. He opened his own studio in 1950, and since then has spent full time in teaching and writing, his two primary interests. His students have come from the United States and Europe, as well as Canada, and may now be found in successful musical positions the world over.

Along with teaching, Mr. Delamont has pursued his own writing in the field of jazz composition and arranging. He has had works commissioned and performed on CBC, CTV, and on many concerts and concert series. He has also written a number of articles for such magazines as Canadian Music Journal, Music Across Canada, Crescendo, and Jazz Monthly.

His rich musical heritage and experience, combined with his scholarly approach in teaching and writing, make Mr. Delamont an eminently qualified author of this text on modern harmony, composing, and arranging. It is our opinion that his works will stand for many years as the most comprehensive and definitive approach to serious study of these subjects.

The Publisher

FOLLOWING IS THE COMPLETE LIST OF BOOKS ON MODERN ARRANGING & COMPOSING BY GORDON DELAMONT:

- MODERN HARMONIC TECHNIQUE (Volume I) *The Elements of Harmony*
- MODERN HARMONIC TECHNIQUE (Volume II) *The Advanced Materials of Harmony*
- MODERN ARRANGING TECHNIQUE *A comprehensive approach to arranging and orchestration for the contemporary stage band, dance band, and studio orchestra*
- MODERN CONTRAPUNTAL TECHNIQUE *An examination of non-chordal counterpoint for the contemporary composer and arranger, including pan-diatonicism, quartal harmony and poly-tonal technique*
- MODERN TWELVE-TONE TECHNIQUE *An examination of serial writing for the contemporary composer and arranger*
- MODERN MELODIC TECHNIQUE *An examination of melody for the contemporary composer and arranger, including a survey of psychological, technical, and structural considerations, and the song form*

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTORY

Melody may be defined as a succession of musical tones which have been organized into some kind of coherent shape or pattern.

[The rhythm of the melody (that is, the kinds of note values it uses, and its tempo) is of paramount concern.] In many idioms and styles, the relationship between the melody and the underlying harmonic progression demands an equal amount of attention. While melodies can exist without being related to harmony (for instance: melodies based on *tone-rows*, melodies from a period of history that predated the use of harmony, melodies worked out from principles of modern linear counterpoint, etc.), most melodies which are *songs*, or are related to the song form, show a kinship to harmonic progression. In fact, one of the things which this book will demonstrate is that [the quality and nature of a melody is often a result of its relation to the harmony.]

Despite considerations of rhythm and harmony, melody enjoys more freedom than any other ingredient in music. In fact, in theory at least, any tone can be followed by any other tone, so that [restrictions that are placed on melody are never *laws*, but are *stylistic principles*,] which are quite a different consideration. The stylistic principles will differ with the style and idiom of the melody, and they will be concerned only with helping the composer retain the style and idiom within which he is interested in writing. Clearly then, any attempt to lay down standards for an acceptable melody *must take into account the function that the melody is intended to perform*. For an example, it would be useless to try to apply identical standards to:

1. a melody aimed at accompanying lyrics in a popular song style.
2. a melody intended as the theme for a motion picture or television drama.
3. a melody intended to be the basis of an instrumental contrapuntal work.
4. a melody constructed for a specific psychological purpose, such as the portrayal of anger.
5. a melody intended as a jazz *head* (i.e. *theme*).
6. a melody intended as the basic theme of an extended composition.

[While there may be some considerations common to all of the above situations, their different purposes will require different technical approaches. For instance, though the use of sequences and imitation is usually desirable in popular songs, it could be undesirable in a contrapuntal melody or in a melody portraying anger. Similarly, where awkward leaps or serial (twelve-tone) melodic techniques would probably be avoided in the popular song, they might be the main material of the line illustrating anger.]

A melodic line introduced as the basic *theme* of a composition would require characteristics not necessarily needed in the other examples. For instance, it should be quite [simple so that it can be readily fixed in the listener's mind, so that it offers possibility for elaboration.]

Furthermore, the sound medium which is being used to produce the melody must be taken into account. It is true that [a well-constructed melody will remain so no matter what instrument plays it or what the pitch level is, and it is true that a poorly-constructed melody will not improve at a different pitch level or with a different tone color.] However, a melodic line may be more suited to one instrument than to another because of range and technique considerations. For instance, a violinist can handle lines that might be impossible for a trumpet player, and a good popular singer may have difficulty with a line that might present no problems to a good trumpet player.

Therefore, this book will not attempt an all-embracing survey of melody and melodic construction. A study of counterpoint will establish those considerations which are specifically applicable to that area of music (see "Modern Contrapuntal Technique", pub. Kendor) and the manipulation of *rows* can be gained from a study of the *serial* idiom (see "Modern Twelve-Tone Technique", pub. Kendor). What this book *will* attempt to do is make an investigation of:

1. Some Psychological Considerations - an examination of some of the devices that determine the emotional quality of a melody.
2. Some Technical Considerations - an examination of some of the traditional concerns of melodic shape and rhythm.
3. Some Formal Considerations - an examination of *motifs*, *phrases*, *sentences*, and the full *song form*.

Chapter 2

SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTORY

It seems to me that music is an inexact art. As an illustration of this, we can note that most musicians have been involved in or have heard situations where the same group of players (or singers), performing the same notes at the same tempo, can produce meaningful music one night and little more than organized sound the next night. Further, I am convinced that psychology is an inexact science. Therefore, coupling psychology and music is not likely to lead to any solid conclusions.

[I have heard that Stravinsky remarked that "music, by its very nature, is powerless to express anything whatsoever." If indeed he said that, he presumably meant that the meaning of music is in music itself.] Certainly there is no musical way to depict, for instance, rain on a summer afternoon. It is within the realm of possibility, however, to summon the general association desired. The rain on the summer afternoon could, in the context, represent an occasion for great joy, or a minor frustration, or even a tragedy. It is possible that these feelings can, in a non-specific way, be portrayed musically.

Therefore, I believe that an acquaintance with some of the factors that contribute to the *meaning* of a melody can do no harm. The reader is requested, however, to approach this chapter with skepticism, and to be continuously aware that my intention is only to make a few observations, and in no way to present immutable laws.

I. SCALES

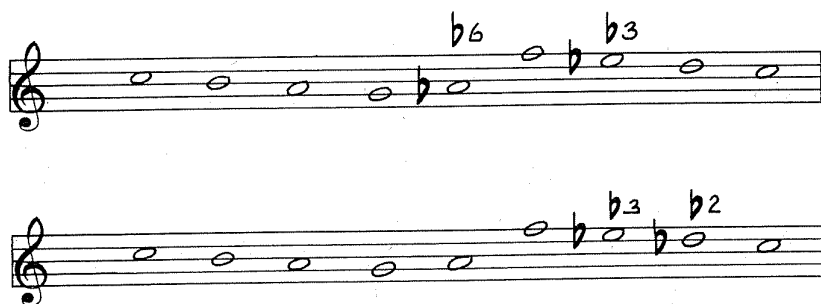
[The type of scale chosen to hold the melody together is probably the most significant factor in the psychology of the melody. North American popular music still uses the major (*Ionian*) as the standard scale, probably because it is the most *stable* of the modes.] Writing in one of the other modes can, however, be a rewarding experience, and the general psychology of the five main modes (discounting Mode 4, the *Lydian*, and Mode 7, the *Locrian*) can be represented as follows:

Mode 1:	<i>Ionian</i>	Bright
Mode 5:	<i>Mixo-Lydian</i> (b7)	↓
Mode 2:	<i>Dorian</i> (b3, b7)	to
Mode 6:	<i>Aeolian</i> (b3, b6, b7)	↓
Mode 3:	<i>Phrygian</i> (b2, b3, b6, b7)	Dark

Compare the emotional quality of the following melody as the mode is changed:

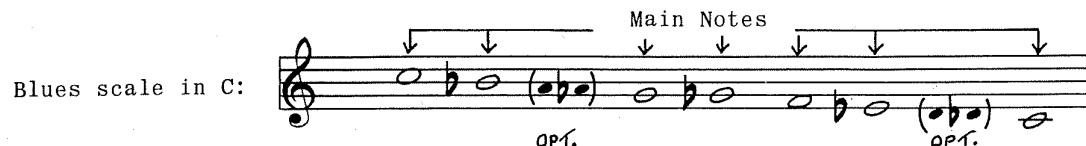
C Ionian (Mode 1)		Bright
C Mixo-lydian (Mode 5)		
C Dorian (Mode 2)		
C Aeolian (Mode 6)		
C Phrygian (Mode 3)		

The application of what is called a *mixed mode* technique to major (Ionian) is useful, and results in an increase of passion and romanticism. The mixed mode technique is a procedure which allows the occasional use of $b2$ instead of 2, and/or $b3$ instead of 3, and/or $b6$ instead of 6, and/or $b7$ instead of 7. The $b2$, $b3$, $b6$, and $b7$ applied to major are called modal variants. To illustrate:

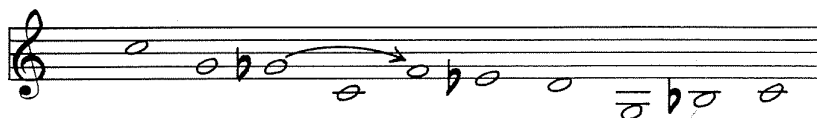


Both of the above melodies are basically in C major, but the use of the modal variants produces a darker, *minor* suggestion. While primarily in major, neither of these melodies is in one specific mode, and they can be regarded as mixed mode melodies.

The so-called *blues scale* is essentially a mixed mode type of scale. The primary *blues notes* are $b7$ and $b3$, but over the years the $b5$ has also become incorporated into the idiom. It is usually represented in descending form and reads:



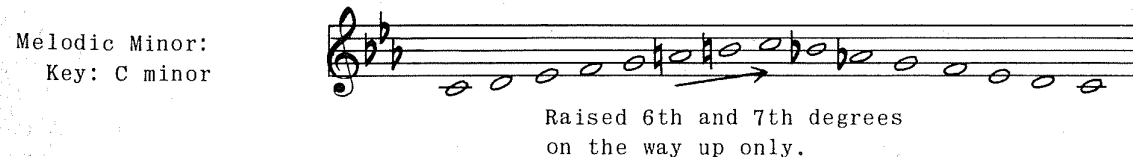
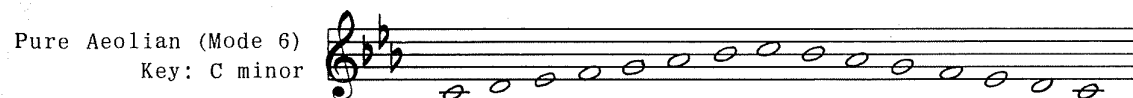
Here is an example of a blues type melody:



Although the modes are certainly available, and offer interesting avenues of melodic thinking, the *modal system* has, over the last couple of hundred years, been supplanted with a system of tonality based on the opposing poles of *major* and *minor*. The major tonality is basically Ionian and the minor tonality is primarily Aeolian (Mode 6), as:



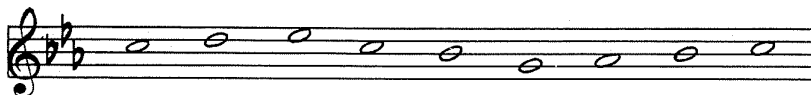
In minor, the use of a process called *Musica Ficta* is common. This is a matter of raising, by *accidental*, the 6th and 7th degrees of the scale to produce a stronger *key sense* by providing *leading-tones* up to the tonic (1st degree of the scale). The *Musica Ficta* process produces two *artificial* modes from the *natural* Aeolian, as follows:



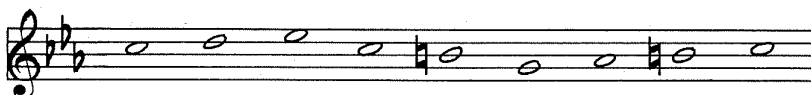
The three scales above form what is known as the *minor tonality*. Of these three scales, the *Melodic minor* is the most commonly used. That is, the 7th degree is raised when it is moving *up*, directly

or indirectly, to the tonic, and the 6th degree is raised when it is moving *up*, directly or indirectly, to the *raised 7th* degree. Personal taste plays a large role in the use of *Musica Ficta*, however, and its use or non-use will depend largely on the particular psychological result desired by the composer. To illustrate:

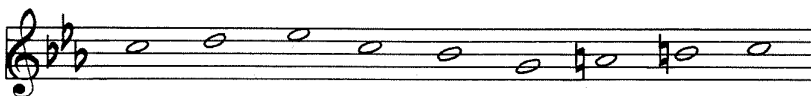
C Aeolian
Passive, dignified.



C Harmonic Minor
"Eastern" flavor and exotic. [The tonic is more *stable* than it is in pure Aeolian.]



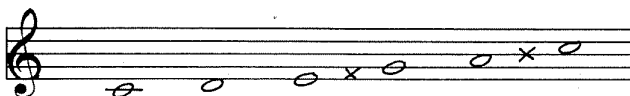
C Melodic Minor
Stable and more consistent with Western culture.



It can be observed then, that the line of demarcation between major and minor is not always clearly felt, nor need it be. [The application of modal variants to major is really the use of *minor* material, and the use of *Musica Ficta* in minor has a *major* suggestion.]

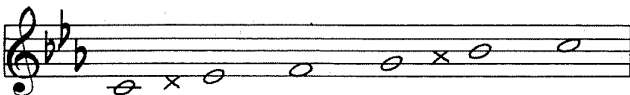
The *Pentatonic* scales are valuable resources, particularly where a clear, easy-flowing quality is desirable. [In its *major* form, the Pentatonic scale is the same as the major Ionian, but without the presence of the mystical *tritone* (the augmented 4th interval between the 4th and 7th degrees of the major scale).] To illustrate:

C Major Pentatonic:



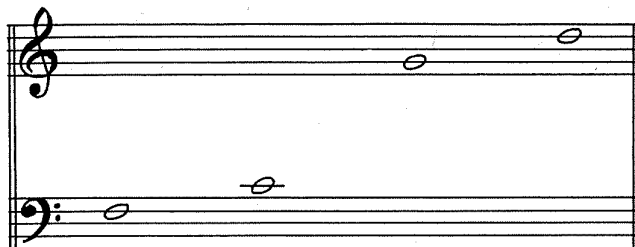
This is a scale well-suited to *Western music*, in the prairie or mountain sense, and is also widely used in music of a *folk* style, probably because it contains no awkward intervals, and melodies based on it are generally easy to sing. A melody may be entirely Pentatonic (e.g. *Auld Lang Syne*), or mainly so, with the 4th and/or 7th degrees being used only occasionally or transitionally (e.g. *Old Man River*, *Loch Lomond*). The Pentatonic scale also comes in a *minor* form, as:

C Minor Pentatonic:

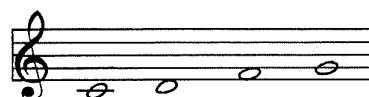


[In its minor form it is the same as the Aeolian (Mode 6), but without the tritone formed by the absent 2nd and 6th degrees.]

The basic modes are derived from the first seven notes of the *Cycle of Fifths*. The Pentatonic scales are derived from the first five notes. A more primitive four-note scale can be derived from the first four notes of the Cycle of Fifths, as:



becoming, usually:

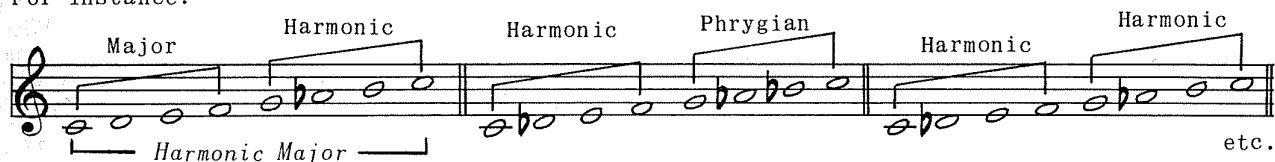


This scale can be useful in devising a primitive *chant*.

Scales of differing emotional quality may be constructed by rearranging [the four basic *tetrachord* types,] which are:



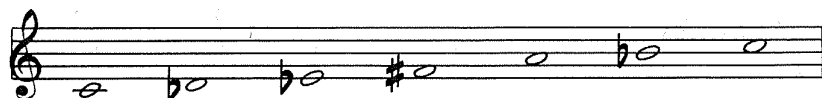
For instance:



or a basic mode may be *bent* for a different effect, as:



or a scale may be devised for a specific psychological purpose, as:



The above scale contains a number of unusual interval relationships between its various notes, such as tritones, and augmented and diminished intervals. A melody drawn from this scale will probably have a somewhat mystical quality, which could be valuable where an uncertain, unstable and mysterious theme is required.

As noted earlier, the twelve-tone scale and the rows derived from it will not be considered in this text. For further material on the modes, the reader may find it profitable to examine Chapter I, Volume I, of "Modern Harmonic Technique" (pub. Kendor), where scales are quite thoroughly examined.

II. ALTERED NOTES

Most simple and direct melodies tend to be mainly diatonic, that is, they use only the unaltered notes of the scale, and the scale will most often be the major Ionian. However, a variety of psychological and *coloristic* effects can be achieved through the use of notes which contradict the the diatonic scale. We have already seen that [the use of the mixed mode idea applied to major (i.e. the use of $b2$, $b3$, $b6$, $b7$) darkens the major tonality, and we have noted that the use of Musica Ficta in minor (i.e. the use of the raised 6th and 7th degrees) brightens the minor tonality.] Further, there are other methods through which *altered* notes may appear.

A. Temporary Modulation (Tonicization)

The use of modulation of a more permanent nature is a factor in the overall larger design, but the use of one or two temporary modulations inside of a *sentence* of melody is not uncommon. Such temporary modulations are usually to closely related keys. The more *common tones* between the keys, the closer the relationship. The degree of psychological expectancy on the part of the listener is in direct relation to the number of common tones between the keys. For instance:

C - - - - D Minor - - - - C

is likely to be less emphatic and disturbing than

C - - - - D Major - - - - C

Of great importance is the care taken in approaching and leaving the temporary modulation. The smoother the approach to and the release from the new scale, the greater the psychological expectancy. Compare the following two examples, both which move from C major to E major, and back to C major:



In the above example, E major is taken and left rather abruptly - rather ineptly, in fact. The overall result is somewhat startling and a bit disturbing.

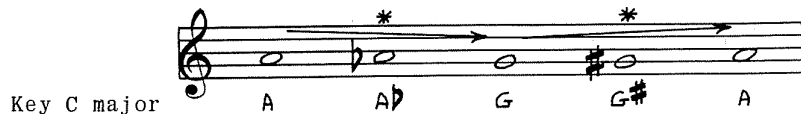
In the following example, E major is approached from a use of the notes of C major as if they were mixed mode notes in E major. Note that the last four bars, which consummate a return to C major, are similarly modally related to E major. The end result is relatively smooth and undisturbing, even though the two keys are not closely related:

C: 1 2 1 7 1 7 6
E: $b6$ $b7$ $b6$ 5 $b6$ 5 4 3

E: 5 $b7$ $b6$
C: 7 2 1 7 6 4 etc.

B. Chromaticism

Chromaticism occurs when a note changes form through the use of an *accidental*, without changing letter. For instance, this is chromatic:



The chromatic tones are drawn, of course, from the chromatic form of the particular diatonic scale being used.

Chromaticism in melody produces a *softening* effect which, if overdone, may lead to a maudlin, overly-sentimental result. I think this is the case in the following example:

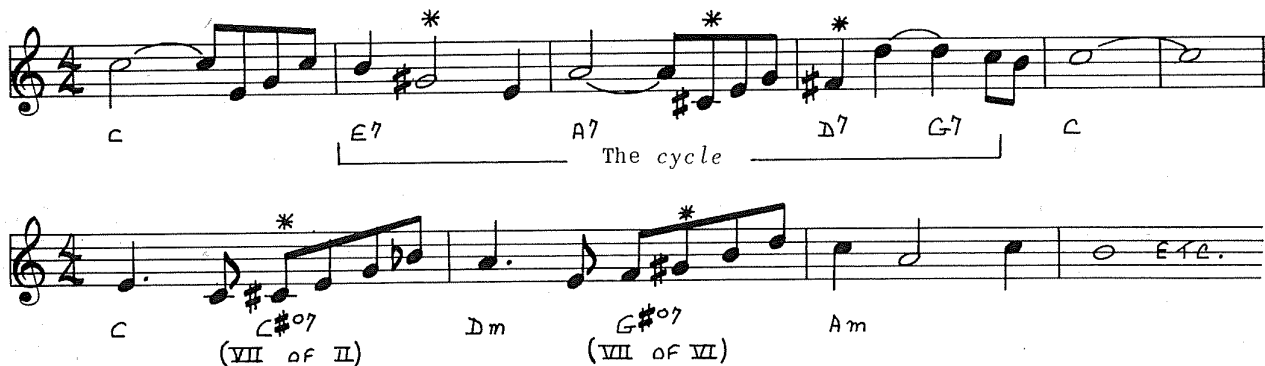


Obviously, then, chromaticism is useful when the intended psychological association of the melody requires excessive sentiment. While the above example is intentionally overdone, there is no doubt that chromaticism, used occasionally and tastefully, can add a romantic touch without necessarily becoming mawkish. For instance:



C. Altered Notes From The Chord Pattern

Occasionally a melody can be constructed from a progression of chords that contain *altered* notes, such as the dominant 7th Cycle of Fifths, or from an obvious chromatic progression. Such a melody can sometimes outline the chord progression through arpeggios or semi-arpeggios. The altered notes resulting from these arpeggios may not be either modal variants, modulatory notes, or chromatic movements. To illustrate:



Lines such as the two above are not really melodies as much as they are arpeggiated harmonies, and the psychological effect of such lines depends on the psychological expectancy,

or lack of it, in the harmonic progression itself. Over the years I have noted that most melodies of this style tend to follow comfortable, logical, and familiar harmonic progressions.

III. NON-CHORDAL TONES

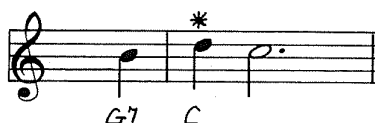
The relationship of melody to harmony will be discussed at various points in this text. It is sufficient to mention here that, in the idioms with which this book is primarily concerned, there will be some relationship between the harmony and the melody. Melodies which restrict themselves to the basic notes of the chords (which, for present purposes, can be regarded as the root, 3rds, 5ths, and occasionally the 7ths) will tend to be stilted and lack a feeling of movement. Consequently, non-chordal tones, sometimes called *unessential notes*, are usually essential to any sort of melodic expressiveness. A full examination of the terminology and use of non-chordal tones will be found in "Modern Harmonic Technique", Volume II (pub. Kendor), so that this text will confine itself only to a few remarks about the general psychological effect of the various non-chordal tones.

Non-chordal tones (or *inharmonics*) fall into two main categories: *accented* and *unaccented*. These terms do not refer to the literal use of accents in the dynamic sense, but only to the position the non-chordal tone occupies in the established rhythm of the music. If the non-chordal tone occurs at a *strong* beat and resolves to a weaker beat, it is called *accented*. If it occurs at a *weak* beat or a fraction of a beat, and resolves to a stronger beat, it is called *unaccented*. In general, the accented non-chordal tones are more expressive and romantic than the unaccented. On the other hand, the unaccented non-chordal tones provide movement, flow, and activity, creating a smooth connection between chordal tones. Here are some brief comments about the psychological results.

A. Accented Non-chordal Tones

1. THE APPOGGIATURA

An appoggiatura is a non-chordal tone struck at a strong beat. It is, by far, the most expressive of the non-chordal tones. Generally the upper appoggiatura is the scale tone above the chordal tone, as:



and the lower appoggiatura is a *half-tone* below the chordal tone, as:



Exception: The appoggiatura below the leading tone of the scale (which will be the 7th degree in major and the raised Musica Ficta 7th degree in minor) is usually a full step below, as:



This is to avoid weakening the upward tendency of the leading tone itself.

Furthermore, full step lower appoggiaturas are *occasionally* effective in other situations, as:



but these are less common.

2. THE SUSPENSION

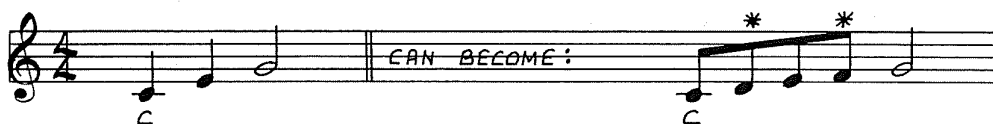
The suspension is a non-chordal tone *tied* from the previous note. Like the appoggiatura, suspensions occur at strong beats and they are expressive. However, they are considerably less emphatic than the appoggiatura because they are not actually struck. Like the appoggiatura, the suspension is usually the scale tone above the chordal tone, or a half-tone below it (exception again - the suspension below the leading tone is usually a full step). Examples:



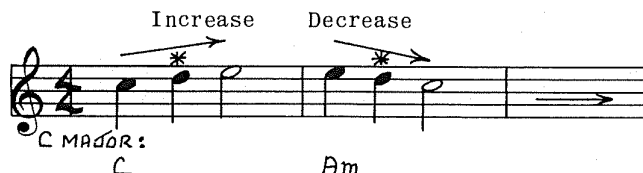
B. Unaccented Non-chordal Tones

1. THE PASSING TONE

The passing tone may very well be the most frequently used of the non-chordal tones, because it replaces leaps with steps, as:



The passing tone is a relatively passive increase of energy on the way up and a similarly passive decrease of energy on the way down, as:

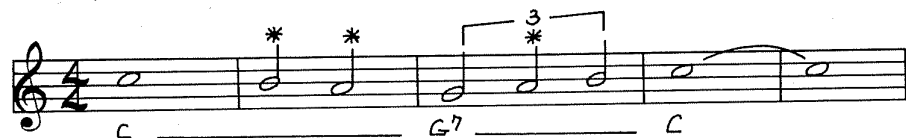


The clash between the passing tone and the underlying chord depends on the duration of the

passing tone. If it is of short duration, as:



the clash will be minimal, but if the passing tone is of longer duration, its dissonance will be more evident, as:



While passing tones are usually at weak beats, or fractions thereof, the so-called *accented* passing tone is available, as:



Chromatic passing tones will produce, as earlier remarked, a *softening* effect, with a tendency to weaken the tonal relationships of the diatonic scale. A melody with an excess of chromatic passing tones may well lose strength and become unduly sentimental, as:



2. THE AUXILIARY TONE

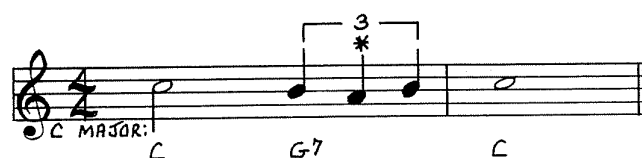
The auxiliary is a decoration of a fundamentally stationary tone. The upper auxiliary is usually the scale tone above the basic note, as:



and the lower auxiliary is generally one half step below the basic note, as:



except, again, below the leading tone, where the auxiliary is usually a full step below, as:



At a slow tempo, or with longer notes, auxiliaries are relatively passive. At faster tempos or with short note values, they tend to be light and playful, as:



(Also consider the *double auxiliary* and the *unprepared auxiliary*).

3. THE ANTICIPATION

As its name indicates, this is a note which *anticipates* a note of the next chord, before the next chord has arrived. To illustrate:

anticipated passing tone



The anticipation is usually of short duration and is a non-chordal tone which is understood by the listener in retrospect.

4. RESOLUTIONS

Finally, delayed and decorative resolutions of the non-chordal tones are available. These include the *cambiata*, the *échappée*, *subsidiary chordal tones*, and similar notes which are interpolated between the non-chordal tone and its resolution. To illustrate:




Such decorative resolutions add subtleties to the psychological effects of the non-chordal tones, and provide resources for greater mobility, fluidity, and floridity.

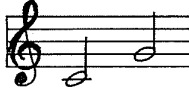
IV. THE INTERVALS

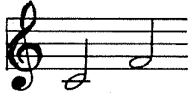
Those familiar with the degrees of *harmonic strength* of the intervals (see "Modern Harmonic Technique", Vol. I, pub. Kendor) will find a close, although not necessarily identical, relationship between the harmonic strength of an interval and its melodic *meaning*. Certainly the harmonically strong intervals (perfect octave, perfect 5th, perfect 4th, major 3rd, major 6th) have a clear and *masculine* melodic quality. The others are either more passive or more tense.

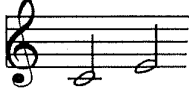
The following listing must be taken in a general sense only. The effect of any melodic interval will differ in degree with the conditioning of the listener and the established environment of the music at the point where the interval is heard. The conclusions I have drawn with regard to the effects of the intervals are, of course, my own conclusions, but I have found that most of my students have agreed (at least in general) with them. Nevertheless, the reader is requested to try these intervals at the keyboard, and to form his own opinions.

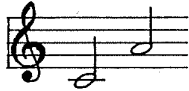
A. Ascending Intervals



Perfect octave:  Strong, clear, pure. Indicative of normalcy and certainty.

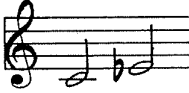
Perfect 5th:  Strong, but not conclusive. The *tonic to dominant* association poses a question rather than an answer.

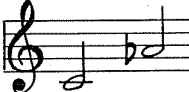


Perfect 4th:  The most decisive of the melodic intervals. Strong and firm with a pronounced *dominant to tonic* implication.

Major 3rd:  More passive than the octave, 5th, or 4th, but is strong and clear, with a suggestion of the major triad.

Major 6th:  Also strong, but with a small suggestion of the minor triad.

For example this:  instead of this: 
results in slight introspection.

Minor 3rd:  The shortest of the leaps, and therefore, quite passive. It suggests minor, with a touch of melancholy.

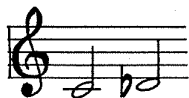
Minor 6th:  Romantic and passionate, with a dual suggestion of:
major:  minor: 
resulting in introspection.

Major 2nd:



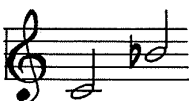
Passive and non-committal.

Minor 2nd:



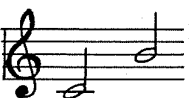
Passive and slightly confusing, probably because of its chromatic rather than diatonic suggestion. It is the weakest of the melodic intervals.

Minor 7th:



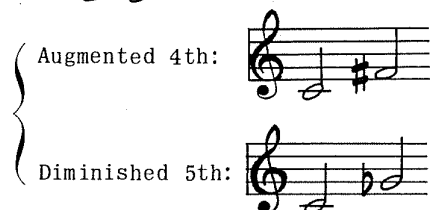
Dissonant, but not sharply so. Energetic, but somewhat somber.

Major 7th:



Dissonant, with high tension. Inconclusive and sometimes violent.

Tritone:



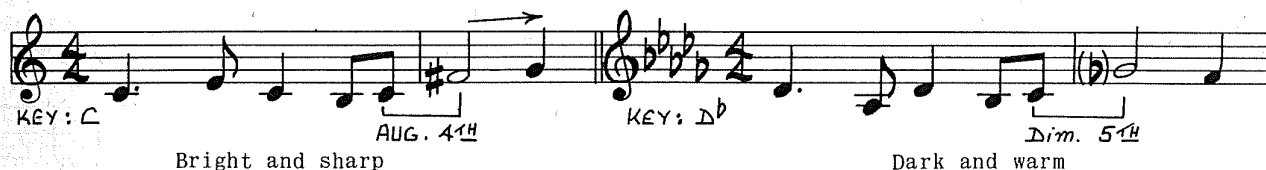
Augmented 4th:

Sharp, questioning, and sometimes violent.

Diminished 5th:

Energetic, but softer and more romantic.

Out of context, both of the above intervals sound, of course, the same, since they are enharmonic equivalents. Their differing characters would only be evident in context, as:



B. Descending Intervals

In a descending direction, all of the intervals are more passive. Perhaps the main difference is between the perfect 5th and the perfect 4th. The descending 5th is a more passive variation of the ascending 5th.

Also, consider augmented and diminished leaps. You will probably find that the augmented leaps, which tend to resolve in the same direction, as:



are more angular (and incidentally, more difficult to sing) than the diminished leaps, as:



which, because they tend to resolve in the opposite direction, exhibit a better control of energy and also seem warmer.

C. Further Comments on Intervals

Every single interval in a melody will *not* necessarily be a factor in its overall psychological association. The position the interval occupies with respect to the strong and weak beats, the stress, and the duration of the notes will all be contributing factors. For instance, each of the following fragments has more or less the feeling of the perfect 5th:



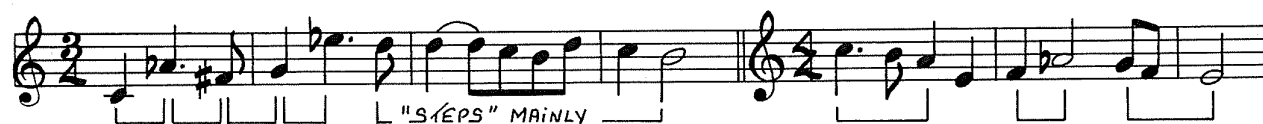
Similarly, each of these fragments has more or less the quality of the major 7th:



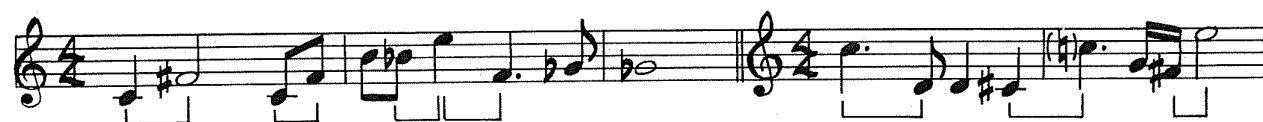
Nevertheless, a melody will take on the character of the type of interval which is most prominent in its construction. The following fragments, employing mainly strong intervals, have a masculine, almost *martial* quality:



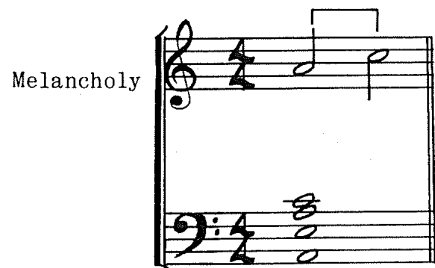
whereas each of the following is more passive, more romantic:



and each of the following is more disturbing, more dramatic, and more violent.

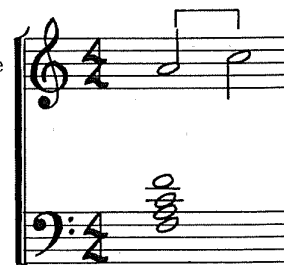


While the foregoing observations about the effect of the melodic intervals may contain some truth, it must also be noted that the position the melodic interval occupies in relation to the supporting harmony may greatly modify its basic psychological suggestion. For instance, consider the different effects of the following minor 3rds:



A Minor

Considerably less melancholy because the minor 3rd is here being used as part of a major triad.

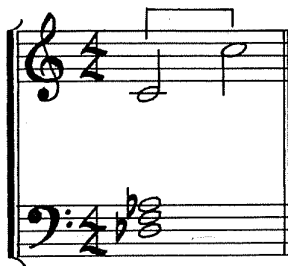


F Major

and notice the different effects of the following perfect octaves:



Probably the purest melodic and harmonic situation.



Purity in adversity?



More romantic.

Clearly then, the *meaning* of any melodic leap, step, or complete melody is greatly affected by its relationship to the harmony.

V. STARTING POINT

The use of an *anacrusis* (a "pick-up" or a "lead-in") will contribute to a brighter, more eager, beginning.

Starting on the first beat will contribute to confidence and certainty.

Starting after the first beat will indicate uncertainty and introspection. As an illustration, it is doubtful that many melodies which are concerned with patriotism, requited love, or any normal association, start after the first beat.

VI. APPROACH TO THE FINAL NOTE

The melody may approach the final note from above, as:



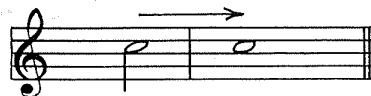
This may be the most frequently used type of ending because it represents a relaxing of energy.

The melody may approach the final note from below, as:



This represents an increase of energy leading to rest and *may* be less common.

The melody may approach the final note from the same level, as:



This produces a passive, resigned quality and appears to be the least frequently used ending.

VII. MELODIC CURVE

Melody is energy and some control of this energy is advisable. In general, an ascending line increases in energy and tension, and conversely a descending line decreases in energy. To illustrate:



A straight line can be drawn from the opening to the closing notes of a motif or sentence. This straight line can be regarded as the *axis* of the melody. To illustrate:



When the melody drops below the axis there will be a relaxation and a loss of energy. When it climbs above the axis there will be an increase of energy and tension. If the melody runs more or less parallel to the axis it will probably be unenergetic and passive - particularly if the axis is relatively horizontal. In the above example there is a nice distribution of energy, producing a controlled *melodic curve*. The reader would do well to examine a few melodies, particularly those which he considers to be well-formed, with the purpose of examining the *melodic curve*.

VIII. THE CLIMAX

The climax of a motif, phrase, or sentence, or the climax of a full song, will generally be the highest note, unless the highest note happens to be a brief, unaccented note, such as an auxiliary. The climax *may* occur anywhere during the melody, but normally it will appear in the second half of the sentence or, in a full song, in the second half of the song. Therefore, the time span after the climax will usually be less than the time taken to reach the climax. This is because the climax point can be regarded as the goal of the energy and if the goal is reached too soon, it will lack sufficient preparation and the remainder of the melody may *drift* and lack interest.

If the high point is repeated, the value of the climax is lessened. Although the reader can no doubt recall melodies where the high point is repeated, he may also find that such melodies could have been at least a bit more effective if the composer had avoided such a repetition.

Finally, a melody without any obvious climax point will lack energy. This could be conceivably desirable in some circumstances, but would not be normal practice.

IX. RHYTHM

Rhythm is the temporal aspect of the melody. If the melody consists of a number of long notes, it

will be less energetic and more passive. Conversely, if there are many repeated short note values, it will be energetic and more active. When the note values decrease, as:



there will be an increase of energy, and when the note values increase, as:



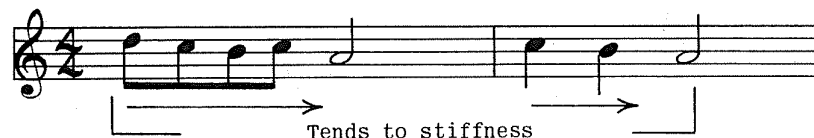
there will be a decrease of energy.

The normal disposition of rhythmic energy finds the notes of longer duration at the stronger positions in the rhythm (i.e. at the strong beats and strong bars), while the notes of shorter duration occur at weaker positions, as:



This principle can be expressed as *activated weakness*.

When the reverse situation occurs - when the notes of shorter duration are at strong beats and the longer notes at weak beats - the result is irregular, as:



Interestingly though, the use of shorter notes preceding longer ones is quite regular at a *cadence* (phrase or sentence ending). For instance:



would be irregular at the beginning or in the body of a passage, but would be quite regular at the cadence, as:



Decrease of energy leading to a close.

Finally, any rhythm, no matter how irregular, will probably be entirely logical if it is repeated in *sequential* form. In the following example, I have used a pattern which is in itself irregular (*activated strength* and *passive weakness*), but the total phrase is consistent in its irregularity, which paradoxically results in *regularity*, as:



It can be concluded that no matter how irregular, wrong, or non-stylistic a musical situation may appear to be, one or two repetitions of it will lead to a consistency which makes it acceptable to the listener.

The use of *rests* is a valuable way to separate motifs and phrases. A rest is, of course, a break in the rhythmic flow of the melody, and represents a loss of energy.

Syncopation (placing the rhythmic stress on the weak beats or fractions of beats) is widely used in jazz and rock lines. Basically, it is a matter of the use of the *rhythmic anticipation*, where a line such as:



Psychologically the use of syncopation results in an *eager* quality, with more vitality and thrust. Although the performing musician will interpret the syncopation of rock somewhat more rigidly than the syncopation of jazz, the vitality of both idioms is due, to a large extent, to the use of syncopation. In most cases, the syncopated melody requires a *rhythmic accompaniment* of some sort, usually provided by a *rhythm section*. It is in the poly-rhythmic contrast of the syncopated melody against the more or less steady pulse underneath that the process gains its effectiveness.

Less usual time signatures ($\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{7}{4}$, etc.) are less familiar and they tend to communicate greater complexity and sophistication. Similarly, passages that use shifting time signatures such as:



blur the basic pulse and are less expected and more complicated for the listener. It can be noted, however, that the use of less usual time signatures and shifting time signatures are more frequent even in popular music than they once were.

X. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Some of the foregoing observations on a few of the psychological aspects of melody also have reference in the following chapters on technical and formal considerations. In fact, the term *form*, in its broad sense, implies a concern for symmetrical balance, logic, and musical sensibility. An inept handling of the technical and structural aspects of a melody will probably lead to a confused or even chaotic expression, and it is only on rare occasions where confusion or chaos are the intended psychological associations.

Sensitive expression, to which an awareness of psychological considerations can undoubtedly contribute, is a factor in all good music. Nevertheless, *coherence* and *continuity* should be the first goal. It is probable that a coherent platitude is better than a gem of fresh wisdom expressed incoherently.

Chapter 3

SOME TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

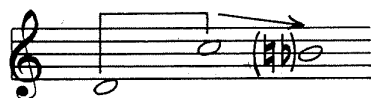
I. RANGE

A melody intended for vocal use should not, between its lowest and highest notes, cover more than approximately a perfect 12th. If the melody is intended for instrumental use, the effective range of the intended instrument or instruments must be taken into consideration.

II. DISSONANT LEAPS

The melodically dissonant intervals include the major and minor 7ths, and all augmented or diminished leaps. Whether or not the dissonant melodic leaps are required to *resolve*, in the traditional sense, is largely a matter of style. Certainly in melodies of a fairly simple, unsophisticated nature, the dissonant leaps will be at a minimum and will be traditionally resolved. Here are the traditional resolutions:

Minor 7ths ascending resolve 1 step down, as:



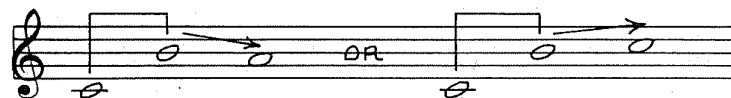
Minor 7ths descending resolve 1 step up, as:



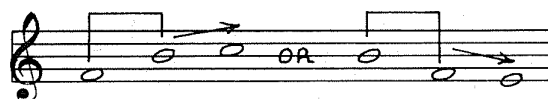
or occasionally, a 6th up (i.e. 1 step below the first note), as:



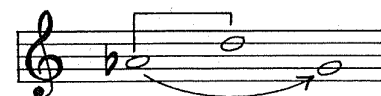
Major 7ths ascending resolve 1 step down or 1 step up, as:



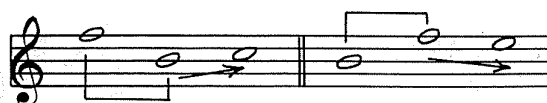
Augmented intervals generally resolve 1 step in the same direction, as:



except if the first note is a clear *tendency tone*, in which case the resolution can be 1 step down from the first note, as:



Diminished leaps generally resolve 1 step in the opposite direction, as:

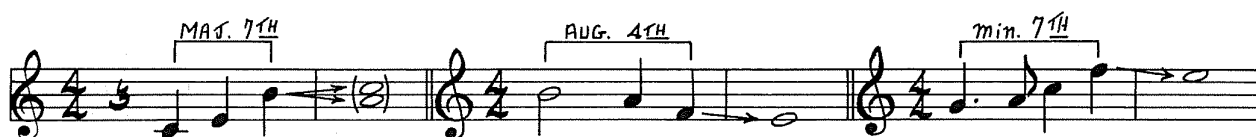


(It can be noted that diminished intervals are *softer*, more *romantic* and generally easier to sing than are augmented intervals.)

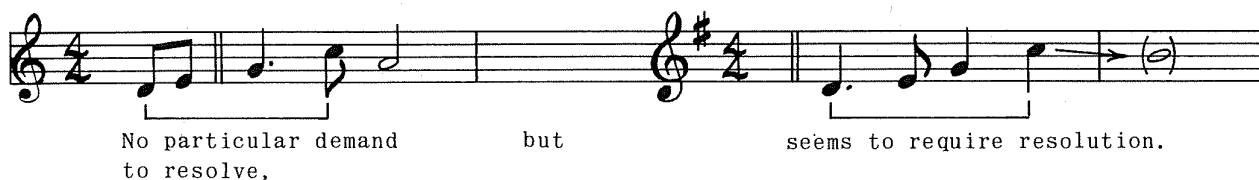
Delayed and *ornamental* resolutions are traditionally available, as:



If one or two intervals *in the same direction* add up to a dissonant interval, the demand to resolve will probably still be felt, as:



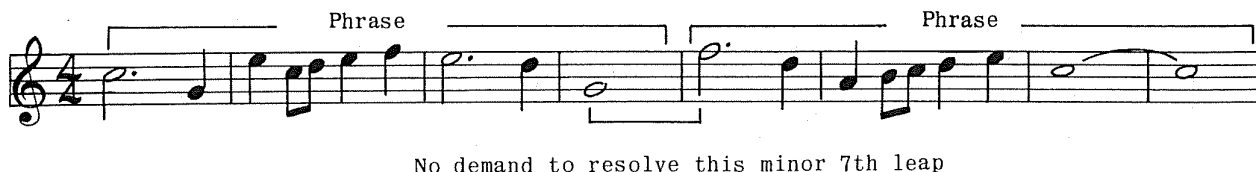
although the relation of the interval to the strong and weak beats, and to the harmony, will be a modifying factor, as:



If the dissonant leap occurs as part of an arpeggio through a dissonant chord, it will probably make no demands, as:



A dissonant leap between the end of one phrase or motif, and the beginning of the next, may not necessarily require resolution, as:



Reminder: all of the above remarks are based on traditional practice. A more complex melodic style

may make a deliberate use of unresolved leaps, as:



but lines such as the above are less satisfactory for vocal use, and may have a quality not associated with popular songs - a consideration which is valid only, of course, if your intention is to write in a popular song style. The reader is advised, in this area and in others, to listen to and to examine melodies of various styles. It is often true that the essential difference in styles centers around the use of and the treatment given to dissonant leaps. (See also item IV in Chapter 2.)

III. ACTION AND REACTION

A melody is subject, in a general way, to the proposition that every action has some sort of reaction. It is this action and reaction that produces the *melodic curve*. With respect to this consideration, here are a few points:

1. In general, avoid leaps of more than an octave, particularly in vocal music. If a leap of more than an octave is used (and the reader can probably recall some melodies which contain the leap of a 9th), it will almost certainly change direction immediately.
2. Be careful of continued motion in the same direction that covers more than an octave, as:



Such a situation is not hard to find occasionally in standard melodies, but it does run the risk of a loss of control of energy and should be used very carefully.

3. A large leap (a 6th or more) will tend to change direction, as:



4. A medium leap (4th to a 6th) may reverse direction or continue in the same direction by a smaller leap or by step, as:



5. Small leaps reverse direction or continue in the same direction.

The ear of the composer makes, of course, the final decision in matters of this kind. All that can be stated is the *tendency* generated by the notes and the intervals, and it can be argued that the artistic ear will most likely recognize the tendency without benefiting from any statements about

it. Only by continuous development of aural sensitivity can the composer hope to produce results which will satisfy both himself and the listener.

Consider the following fragment which, I think, illustrates how the action and reaction principle can be manipulated:

Unresolved minor 7th Unresolved minor 7th Unresolved minor 7th Resolved minor 7th

The short *E* in bar 5 is carrying a large responsibility. It provides both an ultimate resolution for the four *G-F* minor 7th leaps that precede it, and some necessary reaction. The fact that the resolution and the expected reaction is delayed adds suspense and piquancy to the phrase.

All of this illustrates that the principle of resolution, action, and reaction - and in fact, all principles - can be manipulated. To attempt to reduce such manipulation to a set of written directions would certainly be folly, and would probably be impossible. The examination of technical considerations with which this chapter is concerned undoubtedly has value to the composer, insofar as it may help him to control his melody lines. Ultimately however, it is his own ear, operating within the discipline of the intended style, which must make the final decision.

IV. USE OF 7THS, 9THS, AND OTHER EXTENSIONS

Melody, in tonality, gains its unity and coherence from its relationship to the scale being used. (See also item II in Chapter 2 where altered notes are discussed.) A melody which makes a free use of chordal extensions, but retains *scale integrity*, as:

9th 9th 9th 13th MA. 7th

(C) (I) Dmi (ii) G⁷ (V) (C) (I)

will be more satisfactory than one which loses the scale integrity, even if it stays on triad tones, as:

(C) (I) E⁷ (V of vi) A⁷ (V of ii) D⁷ (V of V) G⁷ (V) (C) (I)

Although the above melody doesn't use any *extensions*, it makes very little sense with regard to the key of C major.

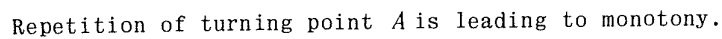
Nevertheless, the use of extensions, even though they retain scale integrity, is not commonplace in melodies which are simple. In simple melodies, the extensions will be at a minimum and will be, most often, traditionally resolved - directly or indirectly - as appoggiaturas, passing tones, etc. A more liberal treatment of extensions does offer a means of procuring a more complex melodic style with an *impressionistic* flavor.

The climax of a melody is, generally, its highest note. The climax can occur at any point in the sentence, but it is wise to avoid a later repetition of the high point.

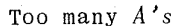
Notes that are relatively *neutral* in quality, or notes which have a pronounced downward tendency (as modally flattened notes) make the best high points. The leading tone, because of its pronounced upward tendency, is likely to make the least effective high note. (See also item VIII in Chapter 2.)

While a repeated low point in a line is not as obvious as a repeated high point, it might possibly act as a factor of monotony or as a dead weight in the sentence.

A note used as a turning point in a melody - a note at which the melody changes its direction - gains some prominence. Therefore, the overuse of the same note as a turning point can lead to monotony, as:



A line which keeps returning to one particular note will tend to be monotonous. Like repeated low and turning points, the note may begin to be a *dead weight* on the line and may result in the melody having a *caged* quality, as:

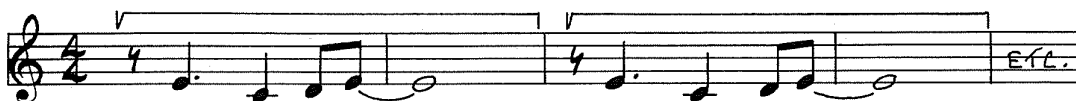


It is generally felt that a melody tends to be smoother and more flowing when the *steps* (major or minor 2nds) outnumber the *leaps*. This is particularly so when the melody is intended to be of a *vocal* character.

The composer faces continual decisions related to two opposing poles: *Unity vs. Variety*. While it is only melody which concerns us here, it can be noted that the conflict between unity and variety exists in all the ingredients of music: melody, harmony, rhythm, and orchestration. Unity is gained through *repetition*, and variety is gained through the avoidance of repetition.

The penalty for *too much* unity may very well be monotony, and conversely, the penalty for too much variety may be chaos. Ultimately, the decision between favoring either variety or unity is, as most musical decisions are, a matter of the intended style. Some areas of music that favor variety include twelve-tone writing, linear counterpoint, and certain more sophisticated styles of jazz and jazz improvisation. In the song field, and particularly in the popular song field, repetition (i.e. unity) is a standard part of the idiom. The reason for this is simply that the listener is more likely to remember a melody that contains repetition. Chief among the devices of repetition is the *sequence*, or the *sequential repetition*, which is simply the repeating of a musical phrase or pattern.

The repetition may be exact and at the same level, as:



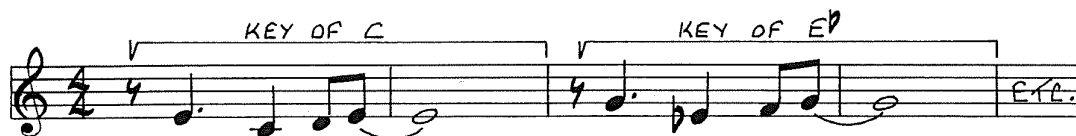
or the repetition may be modified rhythmically and/or melodically, as:



or the repetition may take place, identically or modified, at a different level in the same scale, as:



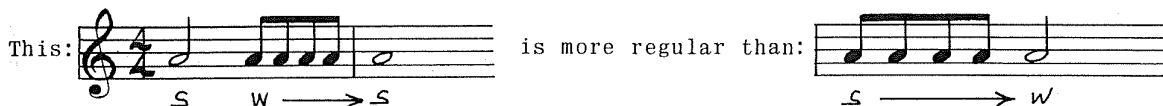
or the repetition may occur in a new key, identically or modified. In such a case it is called a *modulating sequence*, as:

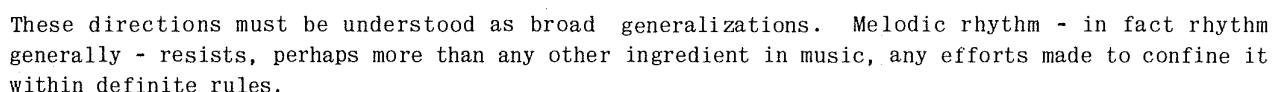
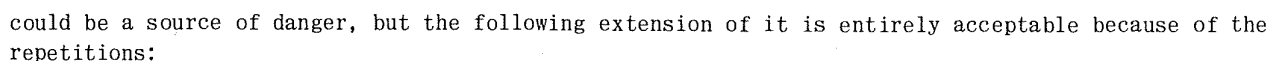
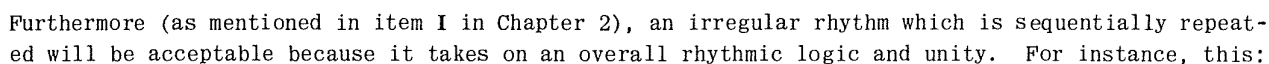
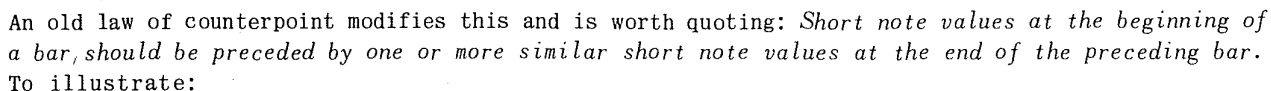


The reader is advised to examine melodies of various styles, with the aim of recognizing the use of sequences and modified sequences. (See also item II in Chapter 4.)

XI. RHYTHMIC PATTERNS

If a melody is intended to have a flowing quality, guard against awkward rhythmic patterns. I have noted that one of the most frequent errors in this respect is a result of insufficient attention to the nature of the strong and weak beats, the strong and weak parts of the bar, and the strong and weak bars. In general, the strong bars are the odd-numbered bars and the weak bars are the even-numbered bars. As a basic working principle, it is wise to avoid using short note values at the strong points leading to repose at the weak points. To illustrate:





At the risk of overstating the point, it must be remembered that all of the technical considerations in this chapter, as well as all of the psychological considerations in Chapter 2, are subject to style, idiom, the composer's taste and inventiveness, and the decisions that result from this taste and inventiveness. There *are* scientific aspects to music and it may, at some time in the future, become entirely a science. Happily however, it is still primarily an art form. Therefore, the art of music must serve, at least to some extent, the self-expression of the composer. A book such as this, or for that matter any textbook dealing with any art form, recognizes that art is subject to discipline. But nothing in this book is intended to impede or to place fences around the development of self-expression. All principles contained herein are intended to serve the composer; they are not intended to be his masters. It *is* my belief that an awareness of principles is a valuable aid to creativity, but brilliant and effective exceptions and modifications to the principles are found in all styles of music. No matter how familiar the composer is with basic tenets, his imagination, taste, and ear must make the final decisions.

Chapter 4

SOME FORMAL CONSIDERATIONS

Form, in a general sense, refers to symmetrical balance; a feeling of unity, logic, and musical sensibility...neither a note nor bar too much or too few; a balance of all component parts.

Form, in a specific sense, refers to the traditional types of form such as the *song form*, *rondo form*, *sonata form*, etc.

In its *general* sense it is doubtful whether form can be a subject of systematic study. Rather, it is a result of musical judgement, taste, and an artistic sense of the fitness of things. However, a knowledge of the *specific* forms and their structures can aid the gaining of form in its general sense. Anyone who has examined the various forms of music has noted that any one specific form differs not only from composer to composer, but also the same form may differ in the hands of the same composer. Therefore it is the accomplishment of form in its general sense which is the more important.

The overall conception of form can be compared to a work of literature. A novel, for instance, can be broken down into the following subdivisions:

Letters forming
Words forming
Phrases forming
Sentences forming
Paragraphs forming
Chapters.

Any musical structure will show subdivisions in the same general way.

Except in special cases of emphasis, a single letter has no special meaning. Similarly in melody, we need at least two notes to create something intelligible, something comparable to a word. This small grouping is usually called a *motif* and it (similar to a word) will seldom convey a complete thought. For this we need a *sentence*, and most melodies consist of more than one sentence. (There are examples sometimes in folk music, where the melody consists of one sentence only. For instance, *Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie*.)

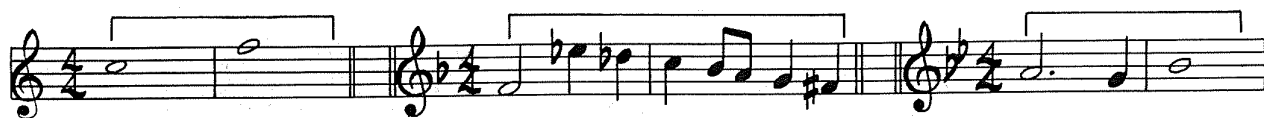
Clearly then, an investigation of form must start with the motif, proceed through the phrases into the sentences, and then into the larger groupings.

I. THE MOTIF

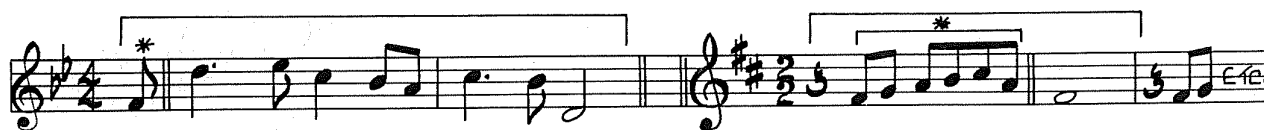
Once a motif has been conceived, it is possible to construct a well-ordered sentence by the application of certain developmental and contrasting devices to the motif - but there are, as far as I know, no handy directions that will guarantee the conception of a good motif. This is unfortunate because the initial motif - which songwriters sometimes call the *hook* - is the primary *attention-getter*. The following observations are, however, pertinent:

1. The motif will consist of at least two notes.
2. It may or may not start with an anacrusis (pick-up),

Examples without anacrusis:



Examples with anacrusis:



or the motif may start after the first beat, either in a syncopated style, as:



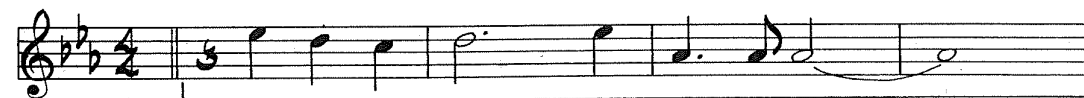
or after the first beat, but with a feeling of anacrusis, as:



3. Most often, the motif seems to be a two-bar grouping, as in the above examples. Usually the motif is based on a strong bar to a weak bar, but if the anacrusis is long enough and significant enough, the motif may be based on a weak to strong bar, as:



The motifs may be 4 bars in length, which as will later be demonstrated, often leads to a longer sentence:

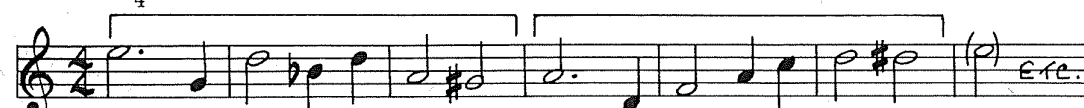


Aside: Note that waltz $\left(\frac{3}{4}\right)$ motifs are often 4 bars long.

While 2 or 4-bar motifs are by far in the majority, 3-bar motifs are certainly not impossible, as:



Above in $\frac{4}{4}$:



[illegible]

A musical staff in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of two measures. The first measure contains a quarter note B-flat, a quarter note C, a quarter note D, and a half note E. The second measure contains a quarter note F, a quarter note G, a quarter note A, and a half note B-flat. Above the staff, a bracket labeled 'SUB' spans the first measure, and another bracket labeled 'SUB' spans the second measure. Below the staff, a bracket labeled 'MOTIF' spans both measures. To the right of the staff, the text '(Sequential)' is written.

*similar to *and* or *but* in written English.

6. The harmonic framework of the motif is entirely a matter of choice, but in most cases it will be fairly simple, for example:

I		I	V	I	2vii
---	--	---	---	---	------

and is seldom composed of *lush* or *busy* harmony in its original form. More elaborate harmony is

used, if at all, for the purpose of orchestral arranging color or for development. To illustrate this:

I — ii_{of} V_{of} ii_{b5} bvi + 6 V_{7sus} V_{7b5}

is a re-harmonization of a simple motif aimed at a lush and romantic effect. The original harmonization would likely be only:

F: I V

7. Which comes first: the harmony or the melody? There is no clear answer to this question, and it will differ from composer to composer, and any one composer may find himself attracted one day by the germ of a melodic idea and another day by a harmonic progression.

Certainly there is no objection whatsoever in establishing a harmony or a harmonic progression first, and then conceiving the melodic motif from this harmony. An unlimited number of motifs may be drawn from one harmony or harmonic progression, and since harmonic progression is governed by somewhat more rigid principles than is melodic progression, it can sometimes be an advantage to set the *basic* harmonic progression first.

In any case, it is probably advisable to be aware of at least the outline of the harmonic progression when conceiving the melody. In the medium of expression here being considered, the harmony and melody are often interdependent and the psychological quality of the melody is often determined by its relationship to the harmony. The importance of this relationship can be shown. The following motif:

has an entirely different quality when accompanied with these two differing chord progressions:

Harmonization A:

C: ii (Dm⁷) V (G⁷) I (CMA⁷)

Harmonization B:

C: I (C) V (G⁷)

In harmonization A the use of the accented non-chordal tones gives a dissonant and passionate character to the melody. It suggests a slower tempo and a romantic mood. Harmonization B creates a stronger melody, less expressive but more stable.

Further, some melodies are very little more than arpeggiated chord progressions, as:



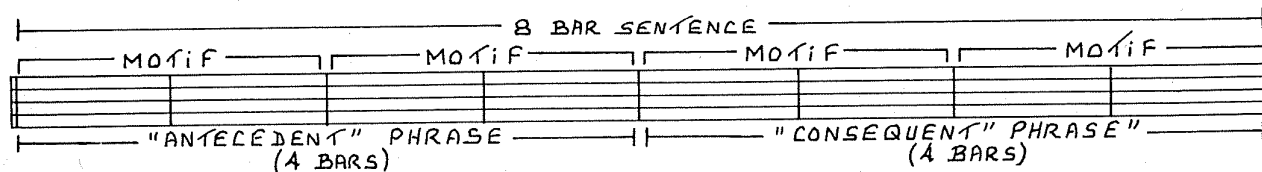
Therefore, while it isn't essential that the harmonic support to the melodic line be determined first, nor is it essential that the melody and harmony be conceived simultaneously, it is clear that the harmonic support will play a significant part in the character and the meaning of the melody.

8. A motif or a whole sentence of a more complex rhythmic nature may be created by the use (as earlier mentioned) of a less usual time signature or by shifting time signatures. Furthermore, more complexity may be achieved through the use of a rhythm in the melody which opposes the basic pulse. Among the possibilities are the use of $\frac{3}{4}$ against $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$ against $\frac{3}{4}$, etc. This produces what can be called a *poly-rhythmic* effect. To illustrate:



II. MOTIF TRANSFORMATION

The motif is the primary and basic unit of the *sentence*. The intermediate division is the *phrase*. Using an 8-bar sentence framework (still the most frequent) as an example, the fundamental divisions are as follows:



In the particular example above, there are two motifs to a phrase for a total of four motifs. It would be most unusual to find a sentence in which there were four appearances of exactly the same

motif. Therefore, before proceeding into an examination of musical sentences, it seems wise to consider some *transformations* to which a motif may be subjected.

Familiarity with these transformations can be a valuable asset because through the use of them, it is possible to devise further motifs of a similar *or* contrasting nature.

Of course the composer is under no obligation to use or even to consider any of these transformation devices, but they do offer resources which aid creativity - not only in the composition of melody but in the devising of accompaniments, introductions, backgrounds, and other areas of composition and arranging.

Here are some of the most common *motif transformations*:

1. *Repetition*

a. *Exact*

b. *At a different level*

c. *With variation* - either at the same or different level.

The variation may be melodic and/or rhythmic.

2. *Retrograde*

3. *Inversion*

4. *Interval expansion*

5. *Interval contraction*

6. *Rhythmic augmentation*

7. *Rhythmic diminution*

8. *Rhythmic imitation*

9. *Dismemberment (or Fragmentation)*

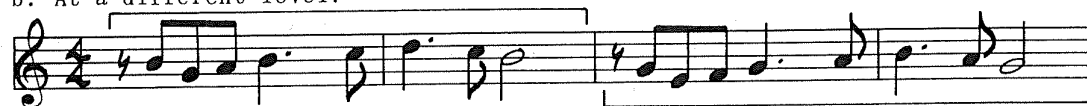
Here are some examples of the application of these devices:

1. *Repetition*

a. *Exact:*



b. *At a different level:*



New level in same scale



In new key (the related minor)

c. With variation:

Rhythmic and melodic variation
at same level.

Rhythmic and melodic variation
at a new level.

Most melodies offer possibilities for variation through the addition of decoration using non-chordal tones, subsidiary chordal tones, etc., but in some cases the variation may be accomplished with a *pruning* process, eliminating some of the decoration from the original motif, as:

Pruned

The variation may lead the original motif into a new avenue, as:

New material emerging

The variation may be a necessary result of a pre-determined harmonic progression, as:

2nd bar of original motif
altered to agree with dif-
ferent harmony.

C: I (C) IV+6 (F7) I (C) ii of ii (Em7b5) V of ii (A7)

or if the melody is being written to a pre-determined set of lyrics, these may demand variation in the motif, as:

Our fine af-fair has end-ed Your laugh un-real Your Love Pre-tend-ed

Extra notes required to
accommodate extra syllables.

At this point it is appropriate to mention *melisma* or *melismatic melody*. This refers to the use of more than one note for a syllable. Historically it dates back to Gregorian Chant (6th century) but, in the so-called *standard* American popular songs which come from the first half of the twentieth century, it was rarely used except by some jazz singers. Interestingly though, rock melodies and rock singers often make use of melisma.

To sum up, the composer is free to use variation in any manner he desires. Repetition is a device that ensures *unity*. The addition of variation to repetition helps to avoid the monotony which can sometimes result from too much unity.

2. Retrograde

Retrograde is a process where the original motif is written backwards, as:

Backwards

Retrograde at the same level

Retrograde at a new level

etc.

A very important point must be made at this time. Retrograde, or any other of the devices of motif transformation, are to be regarded as general ideas and *not* as rigid procedures. It doesn't matter in the slightest if the retrograde or any other device is exact or precise in either its rhythm or in its melodic shape. For instance, none of the following is an exact retrograde but each is, I think, an obvious use of the general idea:

Use of retrograde

Use of retrograde

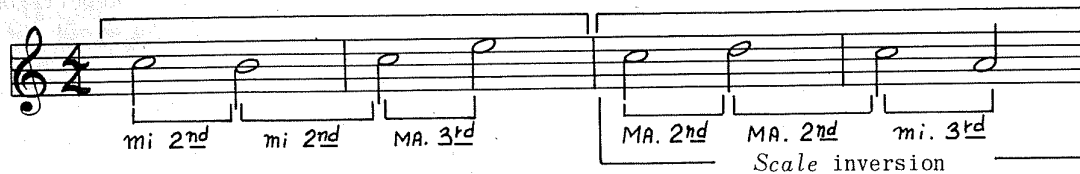
BRIGHTLY

Use of retrograde

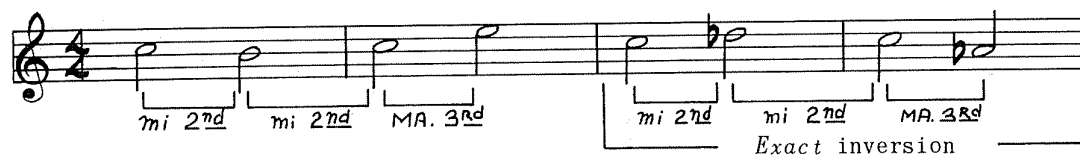
3. Inversion

Procedure: where the original motif moves *up* a 2nd, the inversion will move *down* a 2nd; where the original motif moves *up* a 3rd, the inversion will move *down* a 3rd, etc.

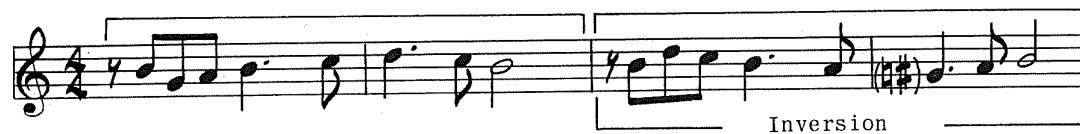
The inversion may remain in the key. In this case, 2nds will be *scale* 2nds, 3rds will be *scale* 3rds, etc., as:



or the inversion can be *exact*, in which case a major 2nd up will become a major 2nd down; a major 3rd up will become a major 3rd down, as:



Of the two procedures, the scale inversion is the more usual. Example:



4. Interval Expansion

Procedure: The intervals or some of them in the original motif are made larger, as:



5. Interval Contraction

Procedure: The intervals or some of them in the original motif are made shorter, as:



6. Rhythmic Augmentation

Procedure: The note values, or some of them, in the original motif are lengthened. In most cases (not all) they are doubled in length, as:



(See also *dismemberment*)

7. Rhythmic Diminution

Procedure: The note values or some of them in the original motif are shortened. In most cases (not all) their length is halved, as:



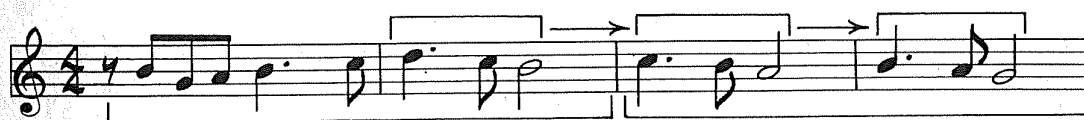
8. Rhythmic Imitation

Procedure: The rhythm of the original motif is repeated as a unifying device. There may not be any purely melodic relationship, as:



9. Dismemberment (or Fragmentation)

Procedure: The original motif may be subdivided and the *dismembered* fragment used to continue as:



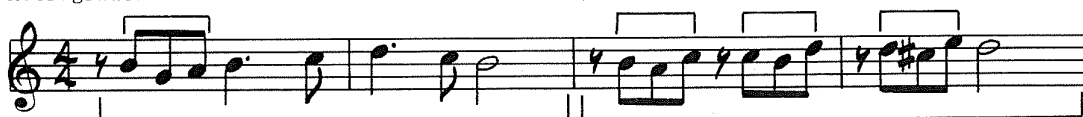


The dismembered fragment itself may be subjected to:

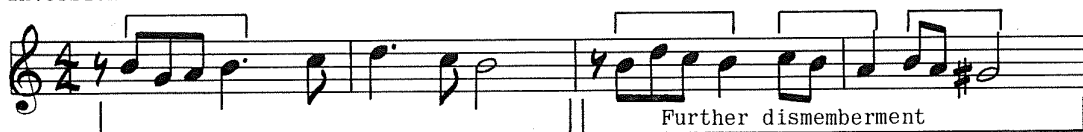
Variation:



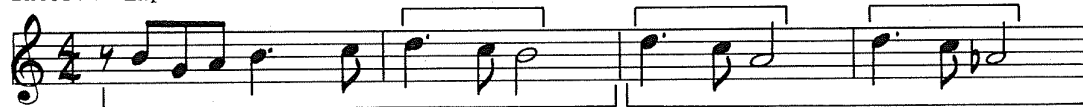
Retrograde:



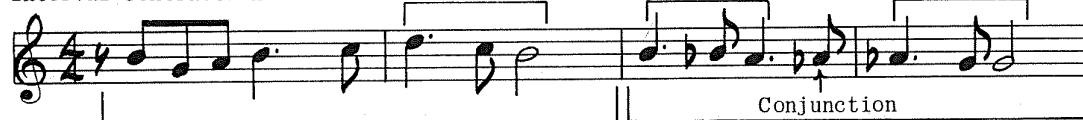
Inversion:



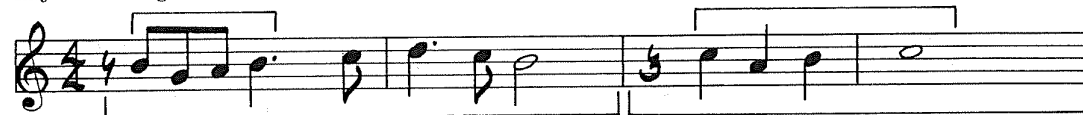
Interval Expansion:



Interval Contraction:



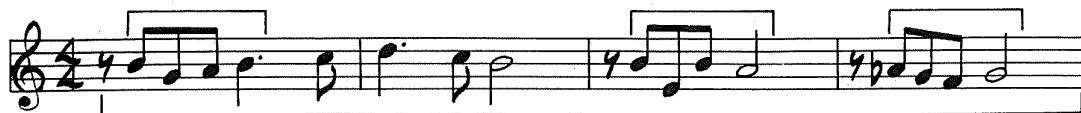
Rhythmic Augmentation:



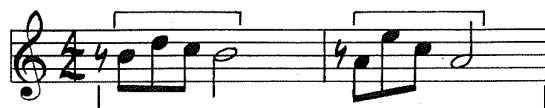
Rhythmic Diminution:



Rhythmic Imitation:



It has been mentioned that the motif itself may sometimes be composed of *sub-motifs*. For instance, when a two-bar motif is composed of two one-bar sub-motifs, the second will likely be related to the first through repetition or transformation, as:



ASSIGNMENT I

Some motifs are given. Apply various motif transformations to each. As you will quickly discover, any one motif may not be suited to all of the transformations, so simply apply a few to each which do work. Nevertheless, the sum total of the assignment should show at least one example for each of the transformations listed on page 33.


When a transformation is composed for a motif it should, when preceded by the original motif, form a complete phrase, which will either be 4 or 8 bars in length depending on the length of the original motif.


While the primary purpose of this assignment is to gain a familiarity with the transformation devices, the results should also be musically expressive.

Motifs:




Medium ballad

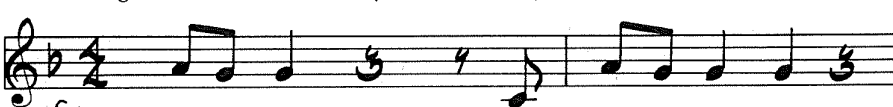
D. 

F. 

Medium swing

E. 

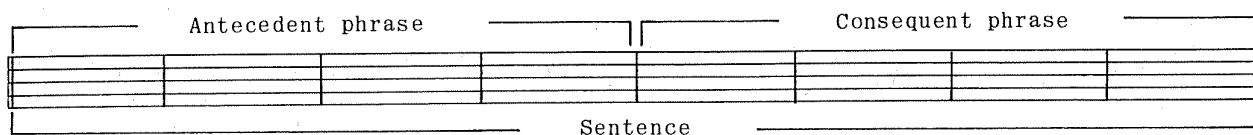
Light Bossa Nova rock (medium tempo)

G. 

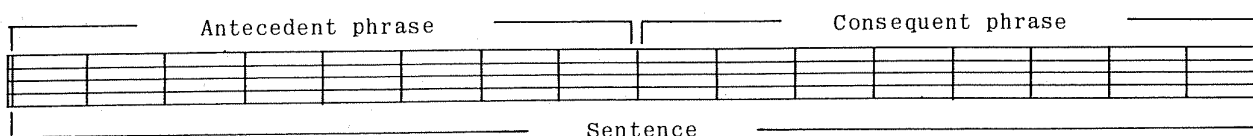
III. PHRASES AND SENTENCES

A sentence of melody may be constructed in a number of ways and does not have to contain a specific number of bars. As illustrations of the variety of possibilities we can note that the first sentence of *America* is 6 bars, the Beatles' *Yesterday* is 7 bars, many Country tunes use a 9-bar sentence, Richard Rodgers' *Where or When* starts with a 10-bar sentence, the Blues is a 12-bar sentence, etc. A full investigation of all the possibilities would be impractical and unnecessary so this survey will be confined mainly to what have been, over the years, the most common lengths. It is hoped that an understanding of the *regular* procedures will also lead to an understanding of the less regular.

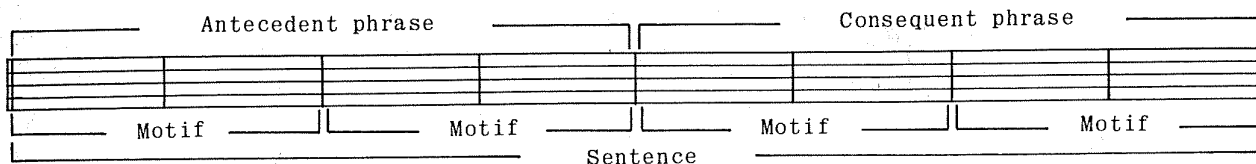
Sentences are most often 8 bars or 16 bars in length, and each sentence will generally consist of two *phrases* called the *antecedent* phrase and the *consequent* phrase. In an 8-bar sentence (probably the most common length) the phrases will each be 4 bars long, as:



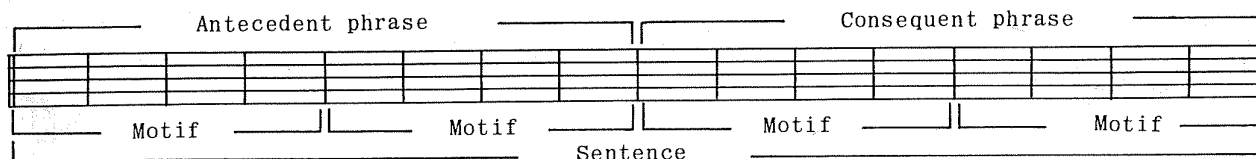
and in a 16-bar sentence, the phrases will be 8 bars each, as:



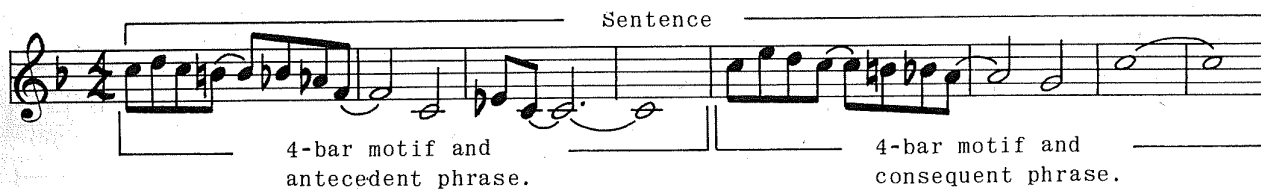
The phrases will subdivide into motifs. In an 8-bar sentence then, the following basic arrangement is possible:



and in a 16-bar sentence, the subdivisions will be basically:



The foregoing examples illustrate the fundamental divisions of the sentence. It is absolutely essential however, for the reader to remember that any *form* is always a general concept and not a rigid procedure. There can be many modifications of these basic sentence structures. For instance, while 4-bar motifs usually lead to 16-bar sentences, it is entirely possible for an 8-bar sentence to consist of only 2 motifs, in which case of course, the *motif* and the *phrase* become synonymous. To illustrate:



A very extensively used modification is the use of an *elongated* third motif in the form of a sustained note instead of two separate motifs in the consequent phrase, as:



For the purposes of this examination, the sentences will be placed in one or the other of two structural forms which, again for the purposes of this examination, will be labelled *period* or *non-period* form.

A. Period form

Period construction shows a similarity between the antecedent and consequent phrases. Sometimes the two phrases may be identical (differing perhaps in harmony and cadences) and at other times the resemblance may be only a similarity between the opening notes of each phrase.

Here are a few examples of period sentences:

The first example is in 2/4 time, showing a melodic line with 'ANTE.' and 'CON.' sections. The 'ANTE.' section contains two motifs, 'A' and 'B', and the 'CON.' section contains two motifs, 'A' and 'B'. The second example is in 3/4 time, showing a similar structure with 'ANTE.' and 'CON.' sections and motifs 'A' and 'B'. The third example is in 4/4 time, showing a melodic line with 'ANTE.' and 'CON.' sections. The 'ANTE.' section contains two motifs, 'A' and 'A', and the 'CON.' section contains two motifs, 'A' and 'A'. The fourth example is in 4/4 time, showing a melodic line with 'ANTE.' and 'CON.' sections and motifs 'A' and 'B'.

A 16-bar sentence of period structure will show a similar analysis to the 8-bar period, except that the motifs are 4 bars in length instead of 2 bars:

The example is in 3/2 time, showing a melodic line with 'ANTE.' and 'CON.' sections. The 'ANTE.' section contains two motifs, 'A' and 'A', and the 'CON.' section contains two motifs, 'A' and 'A'.

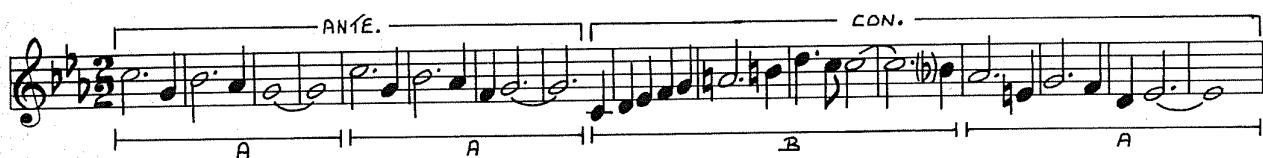
B. Non-period form

A sentence of non-period construction will show a less clear resemblance between the beginnings of the phrases or, very often, no resemblance at all. Here are a few examples of non-period sentences:

The first example is in 4/4 time, showing a melodic line with 'ANTE.' and 'CON.' sections. The 'ANTE.' section contains two motifs, 'A' and 'A', and the 'CON.' section contains two motifs, 'B' and 'C'. The second example is in 4/4 time, showing a melodic line with 'ANTE.' and 'CON.' sections. The 'ANTE.' section contains two motifs, 'A' and 'A', and the 'CON.' section contains two motifs, 'B' and 'A'.

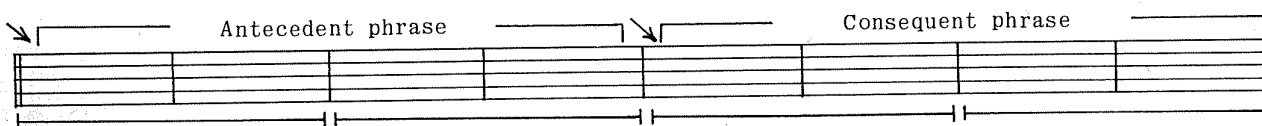


A 16-bar sentence of non-period structure will show a similar analysis to the 8-bar non-period except that the motifs are four bars in length instead of two bars:



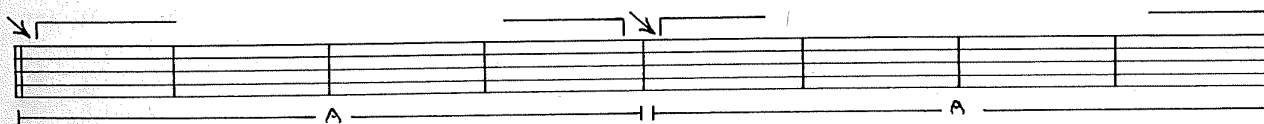
When we take both the period and non-period sentence structures into account, we find that the following fundamental sentence structures are available:

Period structure (for 16-bar sentences, substitute 4-bar motifs):



A	A	A	A
A	A	A	elongated
A	B	A	A
A	B	A	elongated
A	B	A	B
A	B	A	C

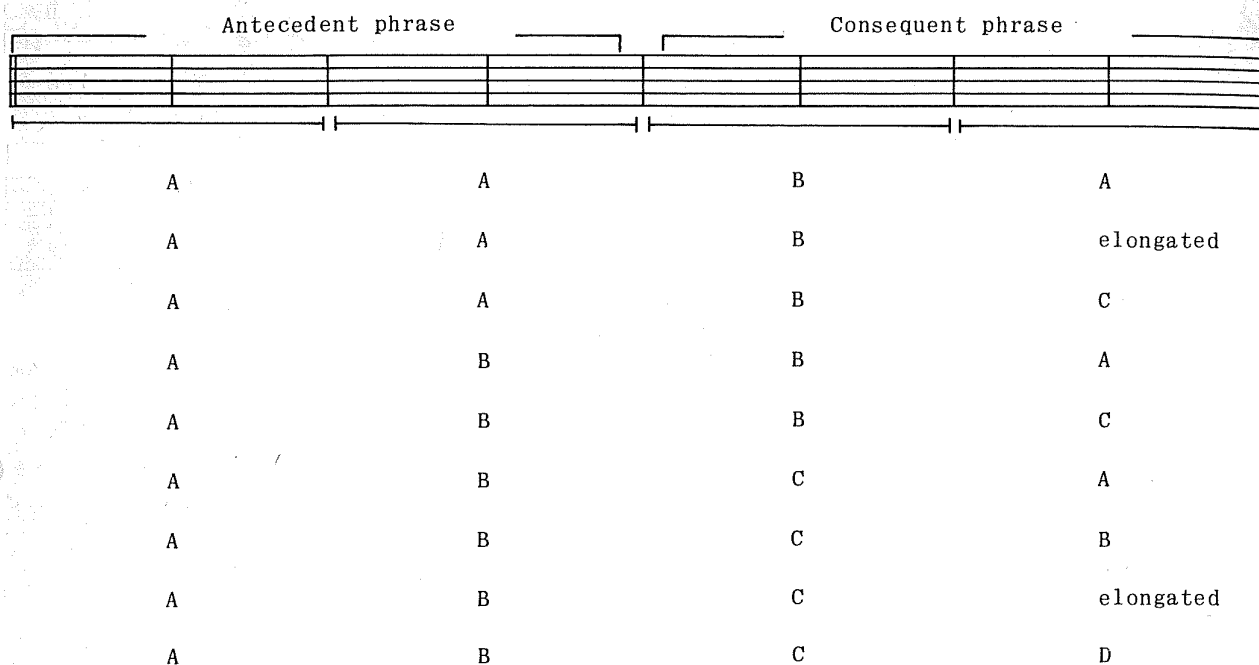
or (less often):



(phrase and motif synonymous)

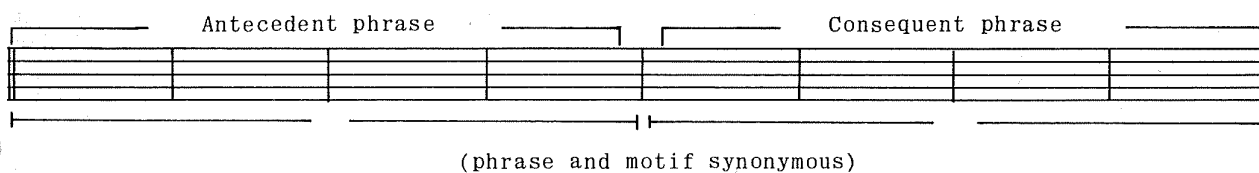
The operative principle of the period sentence is, then, the fact that both phrases start with A.

Non-period structure (for 16-bar sentences, substitute 4-bar motifs):



(The last two of the above arrangements are relatively uncommon because of the lack of repetition - a lack which could be a threat to the unity of the sentence.)

or less often:



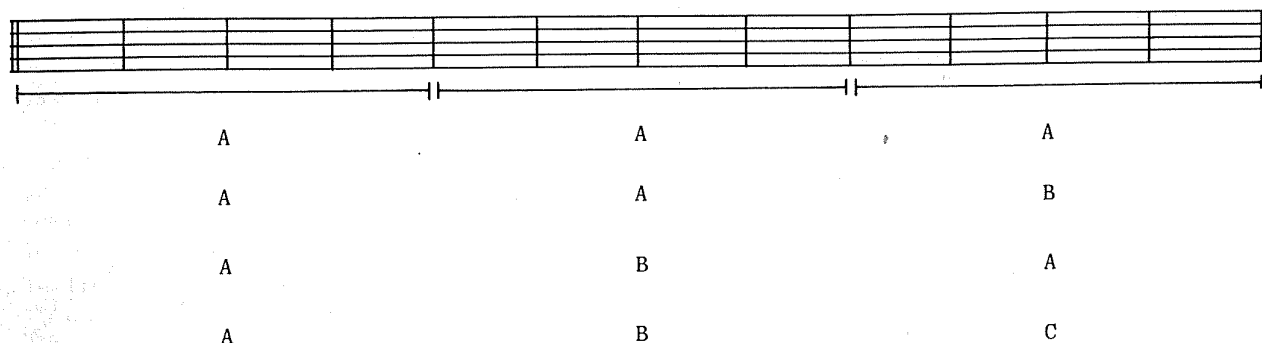
The operative principle in the non-period sentence is, then, the fact that the second phrase doesn't start with A.

C. 12-Bar Sentences

Specific mention should be made of the 12-bar sentence. While not all 12-bar sentences are in the *blues* form, the majority are (particularly in the popular, jazz, or rock idioms). In any case, there will be three phrases in the 12-bar sentence, each 4 bars long, as:



The motifs and the phrases seem most often to be synonymous, and the structures will probably be one of the following:



(The last of the above arrangements would be the least likely because of the lack of repetition.)

D. Abbreviated and Elongated Sentences

Sentences of less than 8 bars are less usual and will most likely be shortened versions of the 8-bar sentence, as:

6-bar Sentence

A A B

Abbreviated consequent phrase.

7-bar Sentence

A A B

Begins like another A but
turns out to be an anacrusis
into B.

Sentences of a length lying between 8 bars and 16 bars are likely to be elongated versions of the 8-bar sentence. It was remarked earlier that Country music often uses a 9-bar sentence, which appears to be simply an addition of an extra bar to what is really an 8-bar sentence. Furthermore, sequential repetitions are occasionally used to elongate a basic 8-bar sentence, such as:

10-bar Sentence

A B A B

Antecedent phrase

Consequent phrase

Enlarged by repetition
(slightly varied) of the
2-bar "A" motif.

We can note that when the melody is being written to pre-determined lyrics, the sentence length may depend on and be influenced by the lyrics. While I have noted that the 8-bar sentence is the most common it should also be noted that recent years have seen more freedom in the matter of sentence length. Not all, but certainly most, of the American popular songs of the first half of the twentieth century used the 8-bar or 16-bar sentence. This tradition has been somewhat eroded because of the greater freedom in the poetry accompanying the music. The song form is, after all, a combination of melody and lyrics and it seems to me that the lyrics have just as much right to determine the length of the sentence as the music itself does. An examination of sentences and songs which do not fit into the traditional lengths will often reveal that the rhythm of the lyrics may be the underlying reason for this. Also, the more free, less structured form of dancing presently popular allows a greater freedom of rhythm and length in the melodies. For instance, a $\frac{5}{4}$ bar in the middle of a Glen Miller arrangement would have caused at least mild havoc on the dance floor.

So, while I have used the 8 and 16-bar sentences for most of the examples in this section of the text, the first sentence of this section must not be forgotten. It read: *A sentence of melody may be constructed in a number of ways and does not have to contain a specific number of bars.* In matters of musical structure there are no divine laws. Use whatever appears to be the best answer for the situation you are working with.

IV. CADENCES

Cadences in music are similar, if not identical, to punctuation in written English. That is to say, they are the *periods*, *commas*, etc. of music, and they help to divide the rhythm and the phraseology. While cadences are primarily rhythmic happenings, certain harmonic formulas have become associated with the cadential points. The main cadences are:

1. The *Authentic Cadence*, which is *V* (or some other *dominant function* chord) leading to *I*. This is the most frequently used of the *final* cadences, and is similar to a period in written English.
2. The *Plagal Cadence*, which is *IV* (or some form thereof) leading to *I*. This is also a final cadence but is more passive and less energetic than *V-I*, with a suggestion of "Amen".
3. The *Deceptive Cadence*, which is the movement of *V* at a cadential point to a chord other than *I*. Structurally, its purpose is *prolongation* since it arrests the expected ending and keeps the music moving ahead. Psychologically it has, because it is unexpected, a surprise effect.
4. The *Half Cadence* occurs when a phrase or a sentence ends on a *tendency chord* (very often *V*). So, even though the particular rhythmic grouping (phrase or sentence) may be concluded, the music is clearly not over. Compared to written English it is like a comma. First (or antecedent) phrases often end with half cadences and another example is the final chord of a 1st ending, which will likely be a tendency chord leading back to the initial chord of the sentence.

Some sort of cadence will occur at the end of each phrase. Here are a few illustrations and comments.

A. The Antecedent Phrase

The antecedent phrase appears to enjoy a wide latitude in the matter of its ending cadence.

Most often though, it ends on a half cadence leading chord (like a comma) in either the tonic key or a related key. To illustrate:

I IV⁺6 I V (I)

Half cadence in tonic key

V (I)

Half cadence in tonic key

V of vi (E7) (vi)

Half cadence in key of related minor

V of ii (A7) (ii)

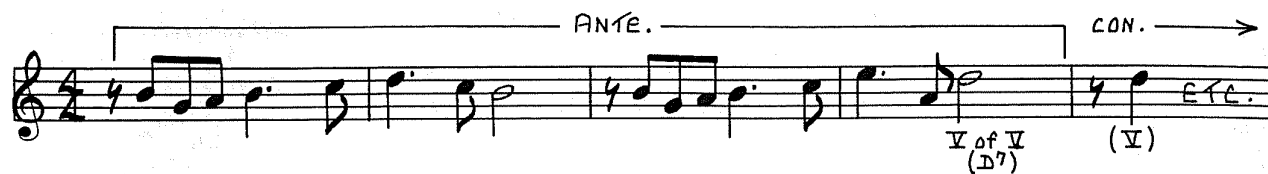
Half cadence in key of supertonic

V of iii (B7) (iii)

Half cadence in key of mediant

V of IV (C7) (IV)

Half cadence in key of subdominant



Half cadence in key of dominant



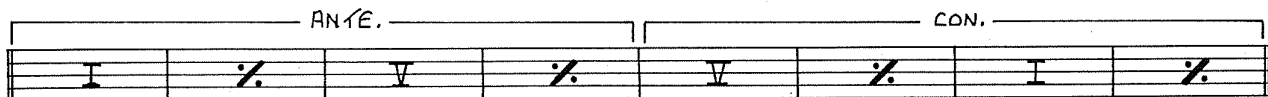
Altered Plagal half cadence

Half cadences on *chromatic* leading chords are available, as:

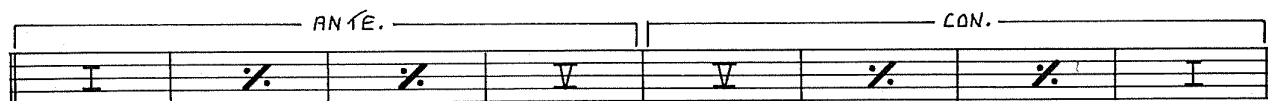


Half cadence on chromatic chord

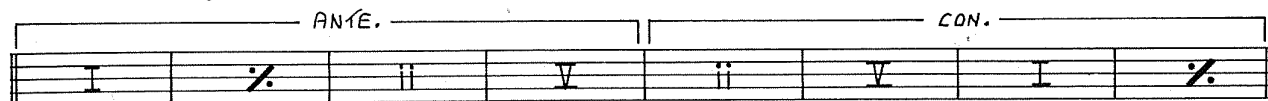
With respect to half cadences in the tonic key - that is, half cadences on V - a particular harmonic scheme is worth noting. It usually covers 8 bars and reads basically as:



As can be seen it is a *retrograde* (backwards) harmonic progression since the harmonic progression of the second phrase is the retrograde of the harmonic progression of the first phrase. It can be subjected to some modifications, as:

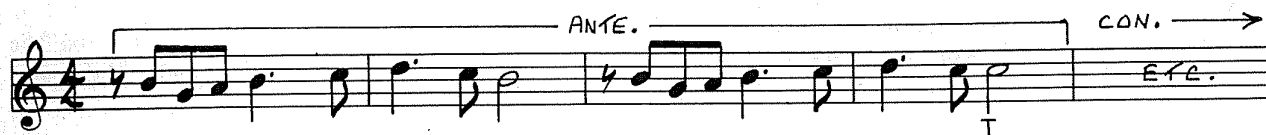


and occasionally:

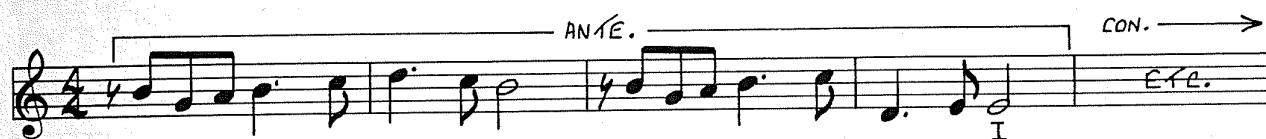


Clearly this harmonic pattern is basic, fundamental, and economical. For those interested in harmonic color it may leave something to be desired, but it has been the harmonic basis for literally scores - perhaps hundreds - of sentences in popular melodies over the years. It also shows up in folk music, Latin-American music, T.V. themes, T.V. commercials and in fact, in any area where simplicity of harmony is desirable. The melodies accompanying this harmonic scheme are also usually simple with sequential repetitions. The reader might be interested in locating examples of this progression in familiar melodies.

Antecedent phrases that end on the tonic chord, in either *perfect* form where the melody ends on the tonic of the scale, or *imperfect* form where the melody ends on the mediant or dominant (3rd or 5th of the tonic chord), are available. To illustrate:



Perfect cadence in tonic key

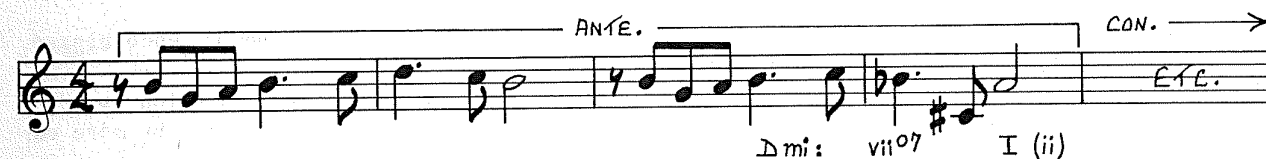


Imperfect cadence in tonic key

or the antecedent phrase may end on a perfect cadence in a related key, as:



Perfect cadence in related minor



Imperfect cadence in key of supertonic

Finally, the cadence of the antecedent phrase may be mainly a melodic and rhythmic happening with no real cadential flavor in the harmony, as:



Clearly then, there is a wide latitude in the choice of cadence for the end of the antecedent phrase. The conclusion would seem to be that the chord found at the end of the antecedent phrase depends mainly upon what chord is to be used at the beginning of the consequent phrase.

B. The Consequent Phrase

The consequent phrase shows less cadential variety than does the antecedent.

1. It may form a completely self-sufficient sentence, ending on a perfect cadence on the tonic chord. This is almost always the case with the *final* sentence of a song. Here are examples of self-sufficient sentences ending with perfect cadences:



2. The consequent phrase may end on an imperfect cadence in the tonic key. This is sometimes used at the end of the first sentence to avoid a conclusive ending. To illustrate:



An imperfect cadence at the end of the final sentence is only occasionally encountered.

3. The consequent phrase may end on the dominant chord (half cadence), in which case the sentence can be called a *dependent* sentence and will necessarily be followed by more material. First sentences often use this half cadence ending; final sentences virtually never will.

Examples of *dependent* sentences:



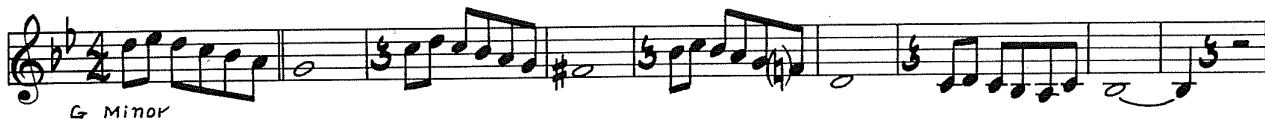
4. Occasionally a sentence will end on a dominant chord (or dominant substitute) leading into a new key. This half cadence in a new key will create, of course, a dependent sentence and will lead into new material, as:



D⁷ (V of iii)

(half cadence in key of mediant)

5. Finally, it is possible for a sentence to end on a perfect or imperfect cadence in a different key, as:



Ending in the related major (Bb)

ASSIGNMENT 2

1. Motifs are given. Carry each to a complete sentence with a perfect cadence.

a. Complete to 8 bars using a non-period form (e.g. AABA, AABC, AAB elongated).



b. Complete to 8 bars using period form (e.g. ABAB, ABAA, ABAC, ABA elongated).



c. Complete to 16 bars using period form.

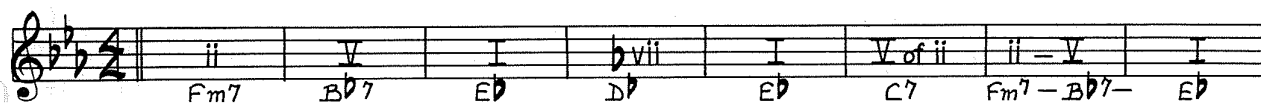


d. Complete to 16 bars using either a period or non-period form.

Medium tempo - jazz or rock



2. Harmonic framework for 8-bar sentence is given. Write two melodies - one period, one non-period - to fit the harmony. Style: warm ballad.



Basic symbols:

3. Harmonic framework for 8-bar sentence is given. Write a period sentence to fit it. Try for a light, catchy melody suitable for commercial purposes or perhaps a light Latin-American style melody, such as a calypso. Use a repetitive (sequential) technique.

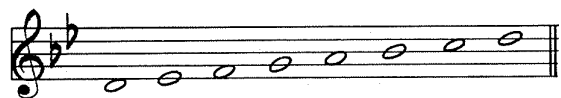
Either:



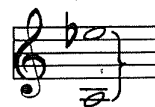
or:



4. Write a complete 16-bar sentence with 4-bar motifs, in either period or non-period form, for soft unison trumpets in buckets (quasi French horn). Use the Phrygian Mode of D:



and do not exceed
the following range:



Use a quiet, somberly romantic, and slow-moving style with few, if any, eighth notes. Remain entirely diatonic in the scale (i.e. use *only* the notes of the D Phrygian mode) and end with a perfect cadence (i.e. end on D). The passage may be regarded as a complete theme.

V. THE SONG FORM

An attempt to track down the *song form* - an attempt to find out *exactly* what the song form is - leads only to the discovery that it is a very elusive quarry. There are songs which consist of one 8-bar sentence only and there is at least one (Cole Porter's *Begin the Beguine*) that is 108 bars long. These numbers represent the two extremes that I personally have observed in the idioms with which this book is concerned. The reader who cares to research the matter of length will find songs that are constructed of even and odd numbers of bars, covering a wide range of bars. One is inclined to state only that the song should end when the composer thinks it should.

Some songs (very often those found in musical shows) have a *verse* preceding the main body of the song called the *chorus*. The purpose of the verse is, primarily, to introduce the subject matter of the lyrics of the chorus and is quite often nondescript musically. (Although, if I may be permitted to quote an old standard, the verse of Hoagy Carmichael's *Stardust* is one example of a verse which is far from nondescript.)

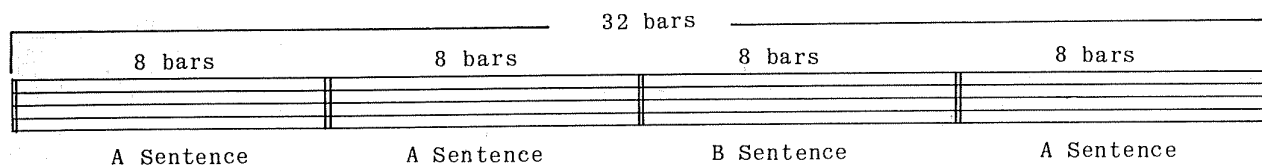
The composer writing to pre-determined lyrics, or the composer who is also the lyricist, will often find that the length of the song will be dictated by the length of the poetry. Furthermore, the mood of the melody, the rhythm of the melody, the climax point of the melody, the stressed and unstressed notes in the melody, and other like considerations will be closely related to the lyrics. In fact many people will insist, often with much justification, that the words are more important than the tune. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the really good songs show a close and sympathetic kinship between the words and the music.

Having noted that songs can be any desired length, it can also be seen that a great many songs of the last fifty years or so have been predicated on a basic 4-sentence structure, lasting about 32 bars. I will therefore confine myself primarily to an examination of this basic structure and hope again that an understanding of the more regular procedures will lead to an understanding of the less regular.

The basic 32-bar song form falls into the same two categories that the basic sentence structure falls into and will, for our purposes, be labelled the same way: *period* and *non-period*. Here are the details.

A. Non-period Song Form

Perhaps the more common of the two is the non-period form:



Here is an example of a non-period song form:





Examples of the non-period AABA set-up are found extensively in standard song repertoire. It is actually derived from the *ternary* (3 part) form:

A	B	C
Statement	Contrast	Recapitulation

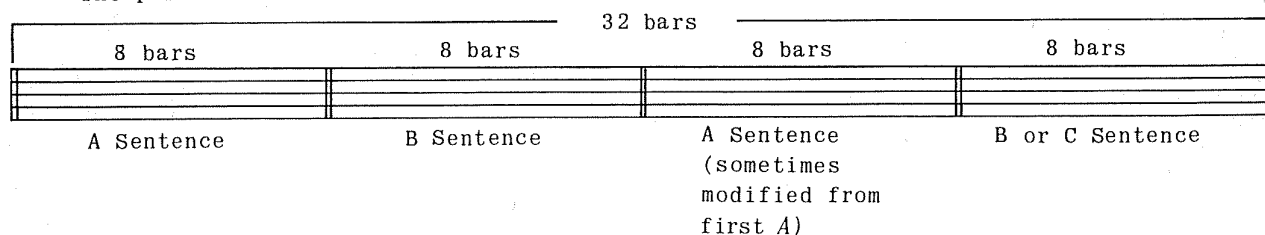
and the *B* section provides a contrast in melodic material (although it is *relevant contrast*) and quite often a contrast in key. When there is a change of key in the *B* section it will usually be a change to a closely related key. The above example moves to G minor from Eb major, but more drastic changes of key are surely available.

Melodies which use only the basic 3-sentence ABA form seem to be rare, but certainly could happen. Here for instance, is a reduction of the foregoing 32-bar example to a 24-bar ABA:



B. Period Song Form

The period form reads:



Here is an example of a period song form:

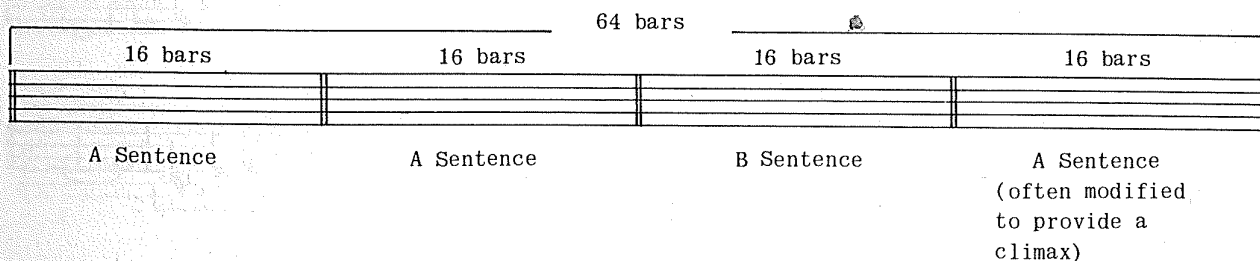


The final sentence of a period form often shows, in the hands of skilled writers, some remarkable twists. While most often it is related to *B* (i.e. ABAB) and is occasionally a duplication of it, it is more likely to be a variation of *B* or may be sufficiently fresh to be termed *C*. Even if it is a *C* however, it will likely show relationships to *B* and perhaps relationships to *A*. In fact, in the above example the final sentence starts out as *B* modified to provide a climax, but ends up clearly related to *A*.

With regard to the climax (i.e. the high point) of the song, it is preferable if it occurs towards the end, certainly in the second half of the song. We can recall all good songs that do not have an obvious climax but, speaking personally, I have always thought that they would be a little better if they *did* have a clear high point.

C. Modified Song Forms

Melodies with a 16-bar sentence often (but not always) lead to basic 64-bar song forms. These seem most often to be in the non-period AABA form or a modification of it, as:

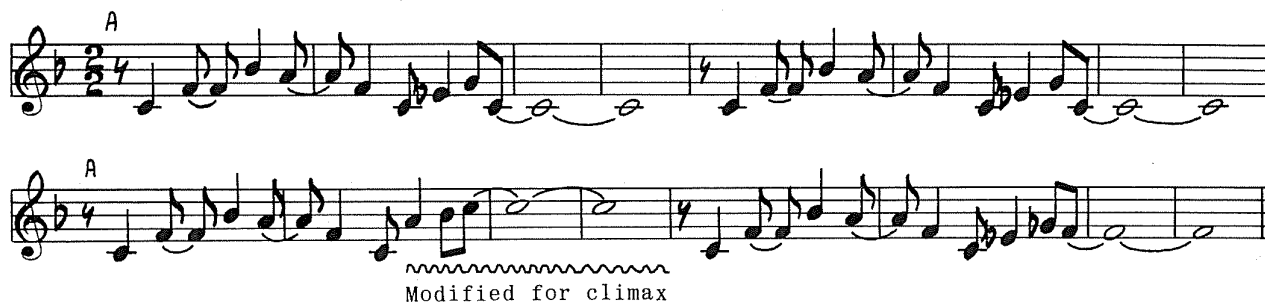


Modifications of the basic period and non-period forms are certainly available, as:

1. The forms are sometimes *abbreviated* or *abridged*, as:



2. 16-bar melodies consisting of only two A sentences are sometimes found, as:



3. The forms are occasionally *elongated*:

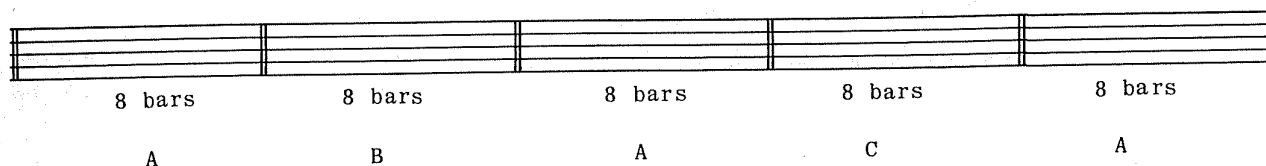
- a. With short *codettas* - that is, a short *tail* is added at the end of the song, as:



- b. The final sentence can be elongated through the use of an added sequential repetition or repetitions, as:



c. With added material in the main body of the song, as:



(similarly, songs built from 16-bar sentences can be extended with devices similar to those listed above.)

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

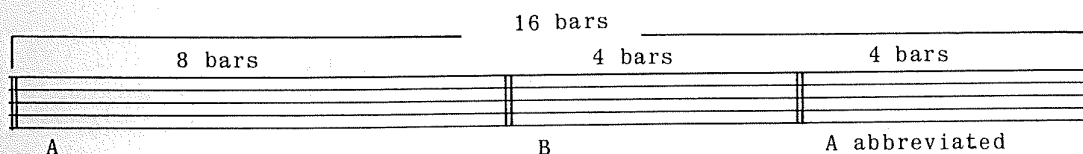
This formal investigation of the song form could be carried to greater lengths; the possibilities have by no means been exhausted. I think, though, that further exploration and analysis may be left to the reader who, no matter what his ultimate aim, can profit by a survey of the song form. The reader who has come this far can certainly learn more by the examination of published and recorded songs, and the best place to start such an examination is with songs he personally finds appealing. In such a survey, the use of key changes, rhythms, variation, digressions from the basic forms, and the relationship between the words and the music should be given particularly close observation. Another interesting project could be a comparison (structurally, rhythmically, psychologically, sociologically) between the songs of the decades since 1920. Styles are continuously changing in music, not only in so-called *serious* music, but also in popular songs. A well-crafted song that could have been a *hit* in, say, 1939 would not necessarily be so in 1999.

Nevertheless, there will be certain considerations which are common to all songs and it is hoped that some of these considerations have been exposed in these pages.

ASSIGNMENT 3

1. Compose a song to fit words of your own or words written by an acquaintance who has some talent in that direction, or words from any song - old or new - with which you are not familiar. Alternately, simply compose a song or two with the idea that lyrics could be applied later.

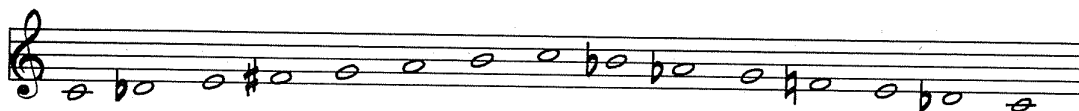
2. Write a melody to accompany a scene of children at play. Strive for a light and playful quality, perhaps using $\frac{6}{8}$ time. Employ either the major scale, the major Pentatonic scale, or perhaps the Lydian mode. Use the following form:



3. Write a melody to accompany a scene of death under natural circumstances that is somber and passive, using either 8 or 16 bars.

4. Write a melody to accompany a mountain scene - for instance, a background theme for a motion picture set in the Rockies. It should convey a feeling of serenity and majesty, and should not be busy. Choose your own form but use at least 16 bars. Consider the pentatonic scale.

5. Write a melody for oboe to be suitable for the theme of a T.V. mystery drama. Use a *manufactured* scale of your own, or use the following:



The form and the length are your options, but in order to gain a mystical feeling, here are two suggestions:

- Avoid too rigid a form.
- Perhaps use shifting time signatures, which will contribute to uncertainty and mystery.

Good oboe solo range:



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