

Melody and Musical Texture

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What This Book Is About

* * Once-over-lightly * *

II 9

Romanze
Andante

The musical score is written for a string quartet and consists of four systems of staves. The first system is marked 'p' (piano). The second system is marked 'f' (forte). The third system starts at measure 10 and includes 'cresc.' (crescendo) markings. The fourth system is marked 'fp' (fortissimo piano).

Mozart: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525, II

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The example on the facing page is a typical page of ensemble score, the beginning of the second movement of Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, for string orchestra.

♩ ♪ **EXAMPLE** ♪ ♩ Mozart: K. 525, II

The familiar *melody* is in the first violin part. The other parts are *accompaniment*; they are also melodic (try singing them!), but their melodies are subsidiary to the principal melody in the first violin, and the bass is perhaps the least melodic part here. All together, these components form a *texture*, a *polyphonic* texture of several different parts (often called *voices* even though they are played by instruments).

Melody exists one note at a time. That is the nature of melody; most kinds of musical instruments, and all human voices, can normally produce only one note at a time. Most of our best-known music involves polyphony: an ensemble of singers or instruments or both; this ensemble can be a teamwork of musicians, or a community of fingers on a keyboard or on the neck of a guitar. Individual notes, when combined in the same instant, form intervals and harmony; notes ordered *in* time, one after the other, form melody. When melodies are combined during the same stretch of time, they form counterpoint. All of these different kinds of combining are aspects of texture.

A melody always has:

Identity: we can perceive it not only as a melody but as a particular melody

Continuity: one note follows another naturally, or one note leads to the next, in a coherent manner

Conjunct motion (steps): tones that are adjacent in the scale; or **disjunct motion (skips);** and usually both of these

Length: short, medium, or long, with beginning and ending and in-between

Shape: including contour, which is the pattern of up and down, of high points and low points, and where these occur with respect to the melody as a whole; and articulation, which is the pattern of pauses, changes, or natural differences in the line

Constituents: tones, intervals, rhythm, which are usually distinctive; usually patterns or motives that may recur; tones that are stressed, or are more or less important than others in context

and a melody very often also has:

Focus: tonality, centricity, melodic goal, progressivity

Style: vocal, instrumental, historical, even personal

Form: in the larger context as a whole (e.g., song form)

Thematic function: melodic use of the smaller context within the larger (e.g., statement, repetition, development, recurrence, transposition, fragmentation, liquidation, transformation)

This book is an amplification and explication of all these basic ideas. It is not a book about harmony or counterpoint per se, still less an academic theory of these elements, but rather a study of melody itself, of what it is and how it works, in all its ramifications and richness through ten centuries of musical art.

Because melody is a primary ingredient of all kinds of music, and because melody exists in every conceivable variety, it will inevitably enter the discussion no matter what music is being analyzed. Accordingly, the author's most difficult task has been the best arrangement and organization of the manifold material of this book — a task in which he is sure he has not fully succeeded. Inevitably, much of this book will repeat itself at different times and in different ways. Readers are therefore urged to read the chapters in order whenever they wish — and to jump in at any later point whenever they feel like it.

Musical examples by the hundreds are found all through this book, and mostly these examples will be melodies. Often these will be correlated to the text, even if not necessarily on the adjacent page. Some examples are included without explanation or commentary; readers are encouraged to discuss any example in relation to whatever may be in the text. But first of all, this advice to the reader: *sing or play the example yourself* so as to have it in mind — in your ear, as they say — when you have an idea about it.

This book presumes a prior knowledge of one or two semesters of college-level music theory, such as harmony or strict counterpoint; but this is not necessary for ready understanding of most of the book.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Beginning With Melody

Melody Is...
The Melodic Instinct: Singing
Melody Above All
A Short Look at a Melody
How It Goes
A Good Tune
Carrying the Tune
The Togetherness of Tones
The Musical Idea
Distinctive Melody
Melody Is Memory
Change: The Same Thing, Only Different
Repetition
Melody and Form
The Melody of the Moment
How Many Melodies!
Melody and What Else?

Melody Is...

Melody is the wellspring of the human musical mind and feeling. All musicality proceeds from melody, from the most elementary and unformed to the most cultivated and sophisticated. Melody organizes musical sound, and the musical idea behind the sound, as speech organizes thought and statement. Melody is the completeness of song; beyond that, it is the Ariadne's thread that traces musical time and makes it real, from the smallest musical thought to the largest, from the one-second motive or the five-second phrase to the seventy-minute symphony. Melody is the spontaneous and prime manifestation of the composer's imagination, and it remains the essence of musical substance when all technique and artifice are cleared away. Melody is the first thing we think about when we think of any piece of music; we can identify virtually any familiar piece of music from just a fragment of its melody; in following through the melodic line mentally in real time, we can recreate the entire musical superstructure in our own mind, even without uttering a sound. Every composer begins the compositional process with melody, renewing it every day.

The Melodic Instinct: Singing

Melody is one of the most fundamental expressive instincts of man. It comes from within, and is spontaneously realized in singing. Singing goes on everywhere, at home, in school, in church, on

A Short Look at a Melody

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡

The melody of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" is known all over Europe as well, in England with the text of "God save our gracious Queen" (or King), and in Austria and Germany with "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz." In America we find it much easier to sing than "The Star-Spangled Banner." A short look at the notes will tell us something about the structure of the melody itself. Nearly all the notes are close together, in a narrow range (a seventh). Overall, the melody seems to fall into two sections of six and eight measures, respectively, both ending on the same note, the longest duration. There is one obvious rhythmic motive, shared by mm. 2, 4, 8, 10, and 12, in each case with a stepwise succession of tones that go up or down. Perhaps mm. 3-4 are like an answer to mm. 1-2, but after m. 6 we don't feel that the melody as a whole has moved very far, within just the range of a diminished fifth. Part II of the melody, if we want to call it that, already seems more directed: it starts on D, higher than at any earlier point, and mm. 9-10 are like a copy of mm. 7-8 picked up and set down again a step lower (a melodic *sequence*). The last four measures are the most different of all, with more eighth-note activity and a high point on E. We might also perceive that there is a downward trend: with the D emphasized in mm. 7-8 and moving to an emphasized C in mm. 9-10, it's logical that the next tone, B, should appear at the beginning of m. 11; here the downward motion is temporarily suspended, and then in mm. 13-14 resumed and completed, B-A-G. (There is a succession B-A-G in m. 11, too, but it doesn't sound as final. As a way of concluding the melody, m. 11 would be premature.)

A Good Tune

The very idea of "a good tune" implies judgment, or even informed opinion. Yet everyone seems to know instinctively what a good tune is. A good tune is what one remembers, recreates spontaneously, even improvises upon; and inevitably a good tune is what one comes back to, a tune that stands out from others.

(Even though some of the worst tend to persist maddeningly in the memory; in German there is even a word for this — *Ohrwurm*, a worm in the ear.)

We will spend a lot of time talking about objective values in music, and these will help us to better understanding; but we should not be surprised to find that we rely more on feeling and subjective opinion when we wonder what a good tune is. With experience we develop personal preferences and tastes; at every stage, intuition is important, too. (See "The Musical Idea," below.)

Carrying the Tune

Not all of us sing a lot, even if we are musicians; but the singing instinct, "carrying the tune," is what brings our own internal music to life. Alone, we may hum or whistle to ourselves, assured that nobody else is listening; the music belongs to us, and never mind whoever would criticize! When we listen to a piece of music that particularly attracts us, we can be so caught up in the experience that we react physically, with increased heart and breathing rate and sympathetic bodily motion. We may tap our feet in plain sight, because pulse and rhythm are perhaps more basic and sympathetic; but if we could, we would sing too — at a "singalong" we do sing when invited. Some of us who are good at instruments may always prefer to play, but much of our playing seeks a particularly singing quality, the kind of playing we strive for as though actually singing through the instrument.

For many of us, melody in song is the sum total of music. Singing a well-known song in the company of friends, we don't need an opera house, an orchestra, nor even any accompaniment at all. We may listen to a record of a song, but what we concentrate on is the melody, and what we recreate first is the melody, which we can usually remember even when we can't remember all (or any) of the words. The melody remains the thing, even when another artist records it with completely changed harmony or with elaborate solo improvisation.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLES** ‡ ‡ Rosas: Vals: Sobre las Olas (Over the Waves)

Old King Cole was a merry old soul
I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines
Schubert: Die Krähe
Ora labora
Bach: B minor Mass 1st Kyrie
Stravinsky: Octet: finale
Berlioz: *Symphonie fantastique* II
What shall we do with a drunken sailor
Barber: Adagio for strings
Chopin: E major Etude op. 10 no. 3
Mendelssohn: *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture 2nd theme
Mozart: *Figaro* no. 2 duet B♭
Bizet: *Carmen*, castanet song
Verdi: *Traviata*, Libiamo, libiamo (Brindisi)
Oh Henry leads the candy bar parade
The girl I left behind me
Fauré: Le secret
Schubert: Wohin?

Juventino Rosas: Vals: Sobre las olas (1888)



Old King Cole, children's song

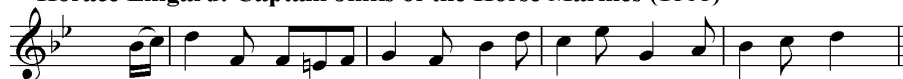


Old King Cole was a mer-ry old soul, and a mer-ry old soul was he; he called for his pipe and he called for his bowl and he



called for his fidd-lers three.

Horace Lingard: Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines (1868)



I'm Cap-tain Jinks of the Horse Ma-rines, I give my horse good corn and beans,

Schubert: Winterreise, D 911, no. 15, "Die Krähe"



Ei-ne Krä-he war mit mir, aus der Stadt ge - zo - gen.

The Blue-tail Fly, folksong



Jim-my crack corn, and I don't care, jim-my crack corn, and I don't care,

T. Tertius Noble: Ora labora, hymn (1918)



Come, la-bor on. Who dares stand i - dle on the har-vest plain, While all a - round him



waves the gol-den grain?

Bach: Mass in B minor, Kyrie I



Ky-ri-e e-lei - - - - - i - son, Ky - ri-e e - le - i - son,

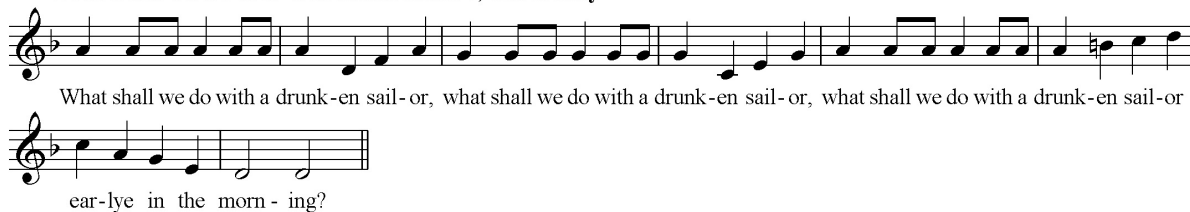
Stravinsky: Octet for wind instruments



Berlioz: *Symphonie fantastique*: II, "A Ball"



What shall we do with a drunken sailor?, sea chanty



Barber: Adagio for strings



Chopin: Etude in E major, op. 10, no. 3



Mendelssohn: Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



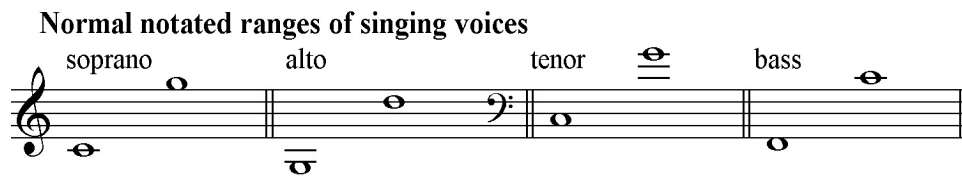
Mozart: *Le nozze di Figaro*, no. 2, duet



Bizet: *Carmen*, Act II, castanet song



As a tool for producing music, the human voice lacks the range of most musical instruments. It compensates for this lack with rich human expressivity; but the basic limitation of range is probably about a twelfth for most voices without training:



No single key nor any transposition is perfectly comfortable for all melodies and all voices. Nevertheless this small compass, for any single voice, has been sufficient in music history to recreate nearly all of the melodies that have ever been invented.

The Togetherness of Tones

Melody is coherence, the belonging-together of tones. That is the definition of melody: notes that follow one another in an organized, comprehended succession are melodic. The succession of tones — we call it a melodic *line* — subtends musical time: melody is bounded, is articulated, has shapes and joints and beginnings and ends, and these are all ways of measuring musical time and progress. Melody is the first ingredient of musical form; at the very least, melody is continuity, but beyond that, in most music melody recurs and thus becomes a theme, which is a structural device, for organizing time, and therefore for the form as heard in time.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡ Beethoven: Symphony no. 5, II

Melody combines with *harmony*, usually becoming an integral part of it; or a melody combines with another at the same time, forming *counterpoint*, in which harmony also participates. The total of all these ingredients is a *texture*, the other nominal subject of this book; texture subsumes melody, but in nearly all music, melody is the supreme component of texture.


Melody occurs alone in all cultures, but in Western music melody has evolved for ten centuries in *polyphony*. A melody by itself is an individual, but polyphony is a family, and the different kinds of polyphony, different textures, are a whole society of music in which the melody is always the most important component.

Verdi: *La Traviata*, Act I, Brindisi




Li - bia - mo, li - bia - mo ne' lie - ti ca - li - ci, che la__ bel - lez - za in - fio__ ra;

"Oh Henry," singing commercial, early 1950s



Oh Hen ry, Oh Hen - ry, Oh Hen - ry leads the can - dy bar pa - rade;__ Cho - co - late, car - a - mel, pea - nuts, fudge,
no bet - ter can - dy made.

The Girl I Left Behind Me, folksong



I__ seek for one as fair and gay But find none to__ re__ mind me How sweet the hours I passed a - way With the
girl I left be - hind me.

Fauré: song, op. 23, no. 3, "Le secret"



Je veux que le ma - tin l'i - gno - re Le nom que j'ai dit à la nuit, Et qu'au vent de l'au - be sans bruit, Comme u - ne
larme il s'é - va po - re.

Schubert: *Die schöne Müllerin*, D 795, no. 2, "Wohin?"



Ich - hört' ein Bäch - lein rau - schen wohl an dem Fel - sen - quell,

Gabrieli: *Canzona per sonar a quattro no. 2*



We will spend plenty of time probing melodies individually, and we will give much attention to their interactions, and their families, and the whole community.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡ Gabrieli: Canzona per sonar a quattro

The Musical Idea

It is not that the musical idea is too vague to be put into words; on the contrary, it is too precise to be put into words.

Mendelssohn, letter to Souchay

Any piece of music contains one or more *musical ideas*, which are consciously employed as part of the whole. In other words, musical ideas are structural. A motive is one kind of idea, like the dotted octave motive that dominates the Scherzo movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡

A theme is also a musical idea, an idea that repeats or recurs but is larger than a motive. Another kind of idea is something that appears only once — a melodic gesture, a particular cadence, a cymbal crash, or almost anything else that may or may not be particularly striking or even noticeable, but that belongs where it is and would be out of place anywhere else.

There are any number of conceivable melodic ideas, rhythmic ideas, harmonic ideas, musical "things" that we can point to on hearing a piece or looking at a score. Thematic and stylistic ideas are especially familiar, and often so important that we may categorize them, identify them as mannerisms, and devise names for them — "parallel-thirds motive", "that dotted figure for trumpet", "Scotch snap", "oompah bass", "Corelli clash," "horn fifths", "upbeat triplets", "Alberti bass," "Mannheim rocket," "polonaise rhythm".

Other musical ideas are ideas *of* something, ideas that are formally descriptive. Such ideas are the beginning of analysis: ideas that we try to describe, to put into words. "Chopin's Étude in A minor, Op. 10, no. 2, features running sixteenths, almost entirely in chromatic scales and played only by the upper three fingers of the right hand" — whether accurately or not, this description fits the *idea of the piece*.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡

Beethoven: Symphony no. 9, II

Vn. I, II

Musical score for Beethoven's Symphony no. 9, II, featuring Vn. I, II and Timpani. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two staves. The first staff is for Vn. I, II, and the second staff is for Timpani. The first staff begins with a *ff* dynamic marking, followed by a *sf* dynamic marking. The second staff begins with a *sf* dynamic marking, followed by a *ff* dynamic marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Chopin: Etude in A minor, op. 10, no. 2

(right hand only)

Musical score for Chopin's Etude in A minor, op. 10, no. 2 (right hand only). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of a single staff. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Stravinsky: *Petrushka*, Tableau IV

Musical score for Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, Tableau IV. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of a single staff. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Tchaikovsky: *Humoresque*, op. 10, no. 2

Musical score for Tchaikovsky's *Humoresque*, op. 10, no. 2. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two staves. The first staff is for the right hand and the second staff is for the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Maurice Ravel once said, modestly, about *Boléro*, his most famous work, "Once *the idea of using only a single theme* was in mind, any conservatory student could have done as well." (Emphasis added.) Satie's *Gymnopédies* have melodies that recur, but the *Gymnopédie* idea is a slow dance in 3/4 with sarabande-like stress on the accompaniment, one-two, one-two, and an upper melody in unchanging quarters, like a dripping faucet, varied occasionally by a cadential dotted half. The *idea* relating Leonore's and Florestan's big arias in *Fidelio* is that both are closely similar in form: orchestral introduction, slow aria, fast aria, with big instrumental obbligati. The beginning of the fourth tableau of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* is two oscillating layers of adjacent triads, breathing in and out like an enormous harmonica; the same *idea* ("garmushka", it is called) was used, much less extravagantly, in Tchaikovsky's Second Orchestral Suite, and even more simply in his *Humoresque* for piano.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡

An idea may be for the unique moment, or it may develop and affect everything that comes later. The composer is always hoping for the sudden appearance of ideas, ideas that may be big or little, short or long, richly suggestive or feeble and scanty, trivial or profound — he will not know until it actually appears and he can *do something* with it. (Ravel also said, "Inspiration consists of sitting down at the same place every day at the same time.")

For much music, the idea and the melody are the same.

Distinctive Melody

What makes a piece of music attractive? Or, said somewhat differently, what makes music interesting? First, there is the musical idea, as we just spoke about it above. There are pieces of music whose single dominating idea is a rhythm or sound quality, like some twentieth-century pieces for percussion or electronic music; but most music, especially Western art music, is identified above all by the distinctiveness of its melody. There are countless pieces that feature a single melody, a self-contained, unitary theme, such as in a strophic song. There are others, like Strauss waltzes, in which there is a succession of melodies one after the other, from one sixteen-bar waltz to the next until the final cadence when it's time to sit down for a few minutes; these ideas are like successive numbers, all essentially of the same character (they may even be numbered — "Take it again from Number 4."). Still another kind of music is represented by the piece that begins with a basic idea, such as a melody, and proceeds by working with the melody, changing it as the piece progresses while keeping it recognizable, in some way, as the same melody. And yet another kind: a piece that deals with two or three essential ideas (or occasionally more), contrasting them one with another, and returning to one or the other in various ways, so that there is a community of interacting ideas, a dialogue of ideas. And there are pieces which are interesting especially for details — striking moments, brilliant passagework, unusual timbres, propulsive rhythms, haunting melodies, and whatever other adjectives we may find to describe them. And yet there are pieces which are interesting for no reason that we can

readily describe. The recognition of ideas is subjective: one's man's enthusiasm is another's boredom, and yet there is always something for everyone.

Melody Is Memory

Mathematicians speak of such objects as a point set, in which each point has a specific relationship to all the other points in the set. The notes in a melody are points in time; they constitute a point set. For as much as we can remember of a melody, each note implies the memory of all the others. At any point — for any note — we can remember the notes in the melody that came before it (hindhearing) over the short term, which is usually by the phrase; once we know it well — by the learning process, committing it to long-term memory — we can also remember what is to come (forehearing). If we are trained musicians, we can probably remember longer stretches, larger quantities of melody — two phrases or even much more. But many people can also do this by experience without special training. The remembered melody thus becomes an object: an object to be retained, used, used again, or transformed in time.

Change: The Same Thing, Only Different

Within the structure of almost any musical work, melody is dynamic; it changes, stated one way at one moment and altered at the next moment, by varied repetition, decoration, or development. These characteristics demand our attention and understanding.

"Association and contrast" — "unity and variety" — "the same thing, only different." These are various ways of stating the most important aspects of musical interest. "Association" — aided by memory, we relate something we hear to another thing we heard before, a melody, a harmony, an orchestral gesture, almost any kind of musical idea. "Contrast" implies *the awareness of non-association* — we don't know that such-and-such musical idea *contrasts* with something until we know what it contrasts with.

You cannot step twice into the same river, for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you.

Heraclitus (ca. 6th century BCE)

Existence is change.

Herman Wouk (b. 1915)

What is "the same"? It isn't just a question for philosophers of music. It is normally not worth saying that things are different unless they are related in some way, that is, they have something about them that is in some way the same. A chair and a hamburger are different; so what? A

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sailboat and a jeep are different; but both are vehicles. A sailboat and a kayak are different; but both are boats; and now we are getting closer to an appreciation of what can be compared — what is worth comparing or contrasting. "You're comparing apples and oranges!" shrills the editorial writer; but whatever there may be, whether apple-like or orange-like, one assumes that, in ordinary experience, there is some basis for useful comparison, good or bad. And yet we all know that there are different varieties of the same kind of thing: tomatoes, whether yellow or red or purple or green, beefsteak tomatoes or pear tomatoes or cherry tomatoes, served in sandwiches or salads or on pizza or pickled or as juice in a glass or any of dozens of other ways, are all different kinds of *Lycopersicon* and thank goodness for that. (Horticulturists say that over 3000 tomato cultivars are known, which ought to be enough for anybody for one lifetime.)

In music, "the same thing" can be very freely defined. Note-for-note identity is one kind of "same," literal sameness. If "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" appears in the songbook in G major, is it "the same" when we hear it in F major, or E-flat major?



Clearly not, in one sense; it's not the same notes, nor the same key; but it isn't "not-the-same" in the way that "The Star-Spangled Banner" isn't the same as "My Country, 'Tis of Thee."

Haydn: Symphony no. 94, II ("Surprise")

Andante



Stephen Foster: "Oh, Susanna!"



It rained all night the day I left, the weath-er it was dry; So hot last night I froze to death, Su



san-na, don't you cry.

Mozart: Piano Sonata, K. 310, I

Allegro maestoso



When we say "it's the same thing, only different" in referring to something in music, we aren't trying to create a logical paradox. We mean that such-and-such musical idea differs in some way from what we heard before, but it is still the same idea in the important ways; the difference or differences are noticeable, but the similarities are more important. In this book, we will use "the same" as flexibly as possible; if we mean literally, note-for-note the same, then we will usually say "identical."

Repetition

Repetition can be absolutely literal ("the same"), or not ("only different"). We have already seen some elementary kinds of repetition in which we can identify the things that are the same and the things that are different — for instance "My Country, 'tis of Thee," just cited, the same melody in two different keys.

Repetition is a fundamental element of all music, from Western art music to the native music of every culture around the world. There are probably no exceptions to this. Repetition exists at every level and in every variable, from notes repeated in immediate succession to repetition of motives and patterns, from repeated measures to entire repeated sections.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡ Haydn: Symphony no. 94, II

In this familiar example the successive pitches of the melody are repeated — the most obvious repetition. Almost as obvious is the repetition of rhythm: the rhythm of bars 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6 is the same. Beyond that, bars 1-2 and 5-6 are melodically identical: the melody itself is repeated. This is an elementary illustration of how different things — notes, rhythm, melody — can be repeated in the same stretch of music.

Repetition of a tone emphasizes a particular pitch in a melody; more important, the repetition is part of the individual shape. (Try to imagine the main theme of the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with its repeated notes merged into longer note-values.)

Varied repetition is the embodiment of "the same, only different." We encounter it everywhere in Western music. You can find countless melodies in which successive phrases are identical except for their endings. Here is one:

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡ Oh! Susanna

Here is an example of *variation in immediate succession* (VIS), another kind of repetition that is extremely common:

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡ Mozart: Sonata in A minor K. 310 mm. 1-4

Melody and Form

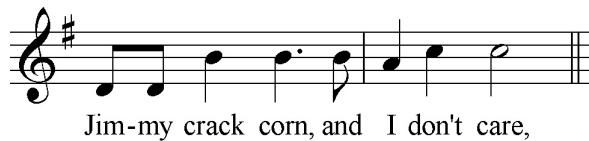
Identifying the same and the different is the beginning of analysis. So we will begin our adventure in melodic analysis with some examples that will help us to grasp these terms better.

♩ ♩ **EXAMPLE** ♩ ♩ "Jimmy crack corn, and I don't care" 3 times

This is the refrain from a folksong, "The Blue-tail Fly," made famous by Burl Ives and many others.

What's the same in the first two phrases? The text; the rhythm; the overall shape; even the first notes. Is there that much that is different? Yes, the notes after the first two are all different. So the two phrases aren't exactly the same; but they are certainly similar enough to say that they are related, even "almost the same." Do they belong together? That depends on the context, and from the context we know that of course the phrases belong together. One wouldn't take one of these phrases out of context to say that it really belonged in some other context.

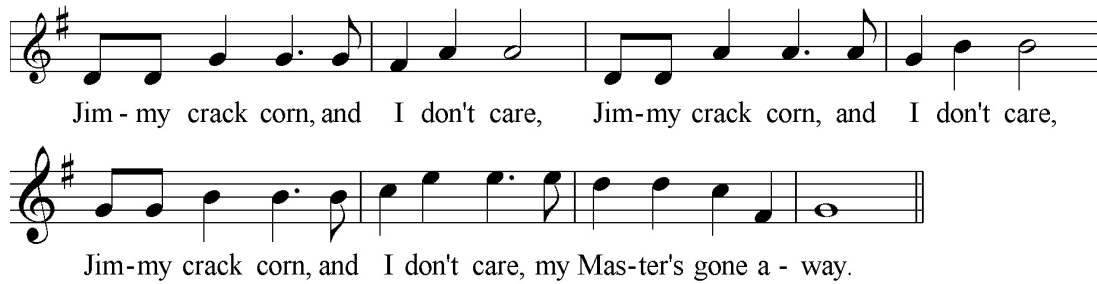
Now examine the third phrase. It is *more different* from the first two because it starts on G rather than D, and its curve is changed: "I don't care" starts above the second measure rather than below as before. This is a welcome change in the melody; it would have been too easy — thus uninventive and uninteresting — to have the third phrase thus:



By the time of the fourth phrase, of course, we are ready for something entirely different as well as something that will wrap up the song conclusively ("My master's gone away"). These four phrases of two bars each amount to a complete refrain — three related and similar phrases and a conclusion.

Here is another example, this one from Viennese classicism but completely amenable to the same kind of approach we just used.


"The Blue-tail Fly," folksong



Jim - my crack corn, and I don't care, Jim-my crack corn, and I don't care,
Jim-my crack corn, and I don't care, my Mas-ter's gone a - way.

Mozart: Symphony no. 41, I ("Jupiter")

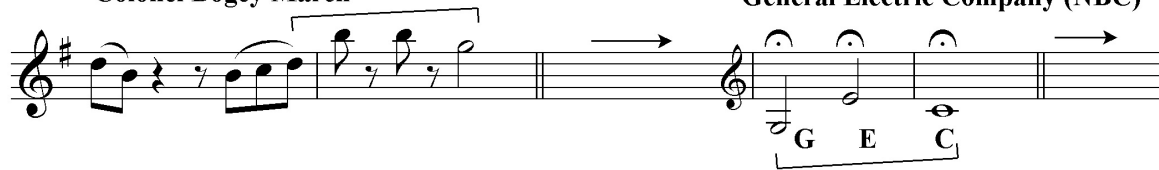
Allegro vivace



First staff: *f* *p*
Second staff: *f* *p*

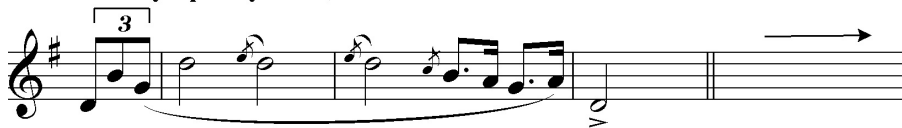
Colonel Bogey March

General Electric Company (NBC)



Chords: G E C

Mahler: Symphony no. 4, IV



Beethoven: Bagatelle, op. 33, no 1



‡ ‡ **EXAMPLE** ‡ ‡ Mozart: Symphony no. 41, K. 551 I beginning

What's the same here? Bars 5-6 are exactly like bars 1-2 but a fifth higher; the rhythm of bars 3-4 and 7-8 is identical. The contour (intervallic shape) of bars 7-8 is different from that of 3-4 but only slightly. It is plain that the second group of four bars answers the first; they are paired phrases of an extremely common type, tonic-dominant answered by dominant-tonic. This is a statement of an initial theme, and therefore is a structural unit of form. Coming at very beginning of Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony, the pair of phrases is a formal assertion. It makes its mark instantly on the ear; even though nothing yet has happened to tell the ear what lies ahead, it will be remembered.

In either of these simple examples, from a folksong and from Mozart, one could debate all night about how much these different segments are "the same," and how much they are "different." The important thing is to recognize that both are true; nor need they be the only possibilities. Can you imagine other possibilities? How might Mozart's melody have been different, for instance, if bars 5-6 emphasized D instead of G?

Later we will discuss development and thematic transformation, in which "the same" and "different" are put into play on a much larger formal scale, even over the course of an entire symphony.

The Melody of the Moment

Most of us from time to time engage in spontaneous, solitary music-making, such as occupational whistling, singing in the shower, etc. This pleasant activity is solitary because it depends on no participation, no shared awareness or ideation — rather the reverse, indeed, because we don't whistle in order to perform for anyone. Nor is it quite the same as thinking-out-loud — or is it? Thinking-out-loud has a goal in mind, but that goal may be no more complex than trying to remember something half forgotten.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLES** ‡ ‡

Normally we whistle something that we know. But memory is often faulty, and what we don't remember we try to supply by the handiest other means, which is spontaneous invention, or on-the-spot improvisation. What we improvise may be no more than a couple of notes, but these may be enough to completely alter the shape and character of the melody as someone else knows it. If we commit the improvised form to memory, we now have a different melody.

How Many Melodies!

There are as many different kinds of melodies as there are different kinds of friends that you and I may have — as many as we want, with individualities as striking as red hair or baldness or a mustache or yellow sunglasses or a preference for pumpkin pie or a taste for sci-fi movies. Like our friends, different melodies do different things, serve different purposes in order to stay alive, to answer to different psychological needs in us.

Melodies have characteristics that can sometimes be described by one or two adjectives, or that require a paragraph or a page of explanation that may be inadequate. Melodies have particular functions, as the principal focus of a song, as thematic ingredients in a symphonic form, as secondary or supporting elements in combination with other melodies, as formulaic elements in ritual, in every kind of musical situation. "Form follows function" in music as well as architecture, but in music the function guides the melody. We will take a thorough look at these different functions and uses, and we will try to identify as many melodic types as possible. Different kinds of melodies have different names that are merely conveniences, and the names never do catch up with even essential characteristics, let alone the individualities that unmistakably distinguish one melody from another even within the first few notes.

There must be, for instance, uncounted thousands of melodies that begin with the dominant degree (^5) followed by the tonic degree (^1) above it. The distinctiveness is not in these notes, any more than the names Abbott, Abdelrahman, Abecassis, Abelson, Abercrombie, Aborn, Abramovitz or many others that we can find in the phone book are distinctive for beginning with the first two letters of the alphabet. Yet these names, or those melodies, do have that much individuality; and then we look for more.

‡ ‡ **EXAMPLES** ‡ ‡

Muffat: Toccata sexta
Bach: Brandenburg 4 III fugue subject
Haydn: Military Symphony
Mozart: C major middle sonata, 2nd mvt.
Hymn, *Leoni*
Weber: Hunters' chorus from *Freischütz*
Schubert: *Rosamunde* shepherds' chorus
Schubert: Sonata op. 164, D 537, slow movt.
Schumann: *Träumerei*; Happy Farmer
Chopin: F major Nocturne, F# major Impromptu
Wagner: *Lohengrin* Wedding March
Brahms: Piano Concerto no. 1, finale; 1st movt. 3rd theme
Brahms: D minor Violin Sonata
Strauss: *Till Eulenspiegel*
Rejoice! The Lord is King
G & S: When I was a lad I served a term
Weber: Introduction and Rondo for bassoon and orch.
Mexican Hat Dance
Kiddush: blessing over wine
Prokofiev: Piano Concerto no. 3, II
Bartók: Concerto for orchestra, I
Shostakovich: Symphony no. 5, IV

Brahms: Violin Sonata, op. 108, I



Mahler: Symphony no. 3, I



Mahler: Lob des hohen Verstandes (Praise of intellect)



Einst-mal in ei-nem tie-fen Tal Kuk-kuk und Nachti-gall tä-ten ein Wett'an- schla-gen.

Richard Strauss: Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche (Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks)



"The Boll Weevil," folksong



Oh, de boll wee-vil am a lit-tle black bug, come from Mex-i-co, dey say,

Hymn, Jubilate (Horatio Parker, 1894)



Re-joice, the Lord is King! your Lord and King a-dore!

Hymn, Dark Valley (by Ira D. Sankey, 1896)



Oh, there'll be no dark val-ley when

**Gilbert & Sullivan, H.M.S. Pinafore,
Sir Joseph's song**



Je-sus comes, there'll be no dark val-ley when Je-sus comes, When I was a lad I served a term as

"Do you know the muffin man?," folksong



of-fice boy to an at-tor-ney's firm, Do you know the muf-fin man, the muf-fin man, the muf-fin man?

Weber: Introduction and Rondo for bassoon and orchestra



"The eensy weensy spider," children's song

The een-sy ween-sy spi-der went up the wa-ter

Mexican Hat Dance



spout,

Hebrew blessing over wine

Ba-ruch a-ta a-do



mai, el-o-key-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, bo-rey p'ri ha-go-fen.

Prokofiev: Piano Concerto no. 3, II

Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra, I

Shostakovich: Symphony no. 5, IV

A further refinement of this game begins with four ascending notes: $\wedge 5 - \wedge 1 - \wedge 2 - \wedge 3$. The reader can find those indicated with (*) below in the foregoing example, but is urged to hunt up the others without assistance, and even add to the list.

The Gift of Love ("The water is wide")
 How Dry I Am
 Beethoven: Symphony no. 2, II
 Beethoven: Sonata Op. 78 (*)
 Weber: *Der Freischütz*, Aennchen's polonaise (*)
 Chopin: Scherzo no. 3
 Brahms: Piano Concerto no. 1, I (*)
 Strauss: *Tod und Verklärung*
 There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes (*)
 Do you know the muffin man (*)
 Mahler: *Lob des hohen Verstandes* (*)
 Mahler: Symphony no. 2, II
 Eensy weensy spider (*)

Melody and What Else?

Even while we consider melody in isolation, it is only relatively seldom that we actually hear a melody all by itself, one note at a time, without support or texture. A singer is usually heard with an *accompaniment*, with an instrument or a group of instruments, or with other voices. In close-order drill we may hear a call and response led by a master sergeant; in worship, one singer (a priest or a cantor) is answered by a group, such as the choir or congregation. But mostly we hear accompanied singing, or a solo instrument ("melody instrument") supported by other instruments — or a piano or a guitar playing a melody with harmony added in the same instrument by other fingers.

The history of Western music is primarily concerned with polyphony — that is, melody combined with something else. The simplest kind of something-else is a *drone*: one note sustained while a melody sings or is played at the same time. It is not known when this idea first appeared but it is obviously very old. The medieval French word *bourdon* ("buzzing") refers to a drone, which in

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the tenth century or earlier might have been played on an organ during the singing of chant. Instruments with drone strings, like the *Drehleier* or hurdy-gurdy, go back to Ars Nova times but can still be found today, and bagpipes are popular everywhere in Europe and America.

When a melody is combined with another melody at the same time, the result is called *counterpoint*, the subject of the next chapter. Counterpoint in all of its forms is what distinguishes Western music from all other musics, for at least the last thousand years.

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