

Motives

"Ceora" by Lee Morgan

CEORA

73.
- LEE MORGAN

(Bossa) **A** Abmaj7 Bb-7 Eb7 Abmaj7 Eb-7 Ab7

Dbmaj7 D-7 G7 C-7 F7

Bb-7 Eb7 C-7 F7

D-7 G7 C-7 F7 Bb-7 Eb7

Abmaj7 Bb-7 Eb7 Abmaj7 Eb-7 D+7

Dbmaj7 D-7 G7 C-7 F7

Bb-7 Eb7 C-7b5 F7

Bb-7 Eb7 Abmaj7 1. Bb-7 Eb7

ENDING Bb-7 Eb7 Abmaj7

In "Ceora", Lee Morgan does an amazing job of creating both cohesion and diversity. This song is through composed (quite rare for a jazz piece), yet nevertheless holds together quite well.

Today it might be good for us to get into the specifics about what makes a motive what it is, what makes it work, and how it helps pieces.

Introduction

In music, we are always trying to walk a tightrope of providing a continuously evolving experience, and creating a sense of cohesion.

Too many ideas can lead to sensory overload. Too few ideas with too much repetition can be monotonous. In this class we will be looking at a number of ways in which a composer can create interest in a piece, while nevertheless generating some sort of cohesion and unity.

The best way to do this is with motives.

Motives can take place within any musical parameter.

- Harmonic motives
- Rhythmic motives
- Motivic usage of timbre
- Melodic Motives

Today we'll talk about the final example: Melodic Motives.

Characteristics of a Motive

In an appendix to *The Complete Musician* Laitz lists a number of characteristics a motive should have.

- *Motives need to be audible.*

It should be prominent enough that the listener is able to recognize it when it returns.

- *Motives need to be short.*

Listeners are only able to retain a few seconds worth of material in their short-term memory. It's best to keep motives concise.

- *Motives should consist of characteristic pitch contours or rhythms.*

The motive is going to undergo transformation's throughout the piece, so it should be able to be transformed without losing it's identity.

- *The original placement of the motive is important.*

The motive should be placed in a prominent position, preferably toward the beginning of the piece. Pretty much every piece will contain multiple motives.


Types of Motives


There are two types of motives that we can discuss:


- Motives that are a part of a larger theme.
- Motives that are generally independent ideas.

An excellent example of a motive that fits within a larger theme can be found in Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, *Allegro ma non troppo*

A. 

B. 

C. 

The main theme of the movement (actually the main tune of the entire symphony) can be seen in Example A.

The theme can be divided even further into three motives. While each of these motives are unique, they contain a number of similar qualities. The X Motive rises by a fourth, and one of the more salient aspects of Y is the descent by a fourth in the first half of the measure.

"Figures"

EXAMPLE 3.3 Bach, Prelude in C major, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I



Is this a motive?

Laitz points out that the opening of Bach's Prelude in C Major, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, is probably not a motive. Why not?

- It doesn't really undergo any sort of transformation. The pitch and rhythm both stay the same, and it holds its place as a texture in the background.

Question: How about the D-E, E-F motive in Debussy's "Des pas sur la neige"? Might we think of this as a motive?

Triste et lent (♩=44)

pp *p* *expressif et douloureux*

più pp

Ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé.

m. d.

pp

expressif

Debussy's "Des pas sur la neige", from the first book of Preludes

This brings us to our first type of motivic repetition: strict motivic repetition (specifically through the use of reharmonization).

Reharmonization

Using reharmonization allows for the use of strict repetition. The motive remains unchanged, but its context is changing. See the above excerpt from "Des pas sur la neige."

Motivic Repetition

There are three main types of motivic repetition:

- Strict Motivic Repetition
- Modified Motivic Repetition
- Developmental Repetitions

Strict Repetition

Strict repetition introduces stasis, so can really only exist briefly (unless repetition is intended for effect). It occurs when the composer is introducing the theme to the listener, but is usually followed by some sort of modified or developmental repetition.

In your handout you have an example from Loeillet's Sonata for Oboe in A minor. It is placed at the very beginning of the piece, and is a strict repetition in every sense of the word. The melody, rhythm, and harmony are all unchanged.

Loeillet, Sonata for Oboe in A minor, op. 5, no. 2

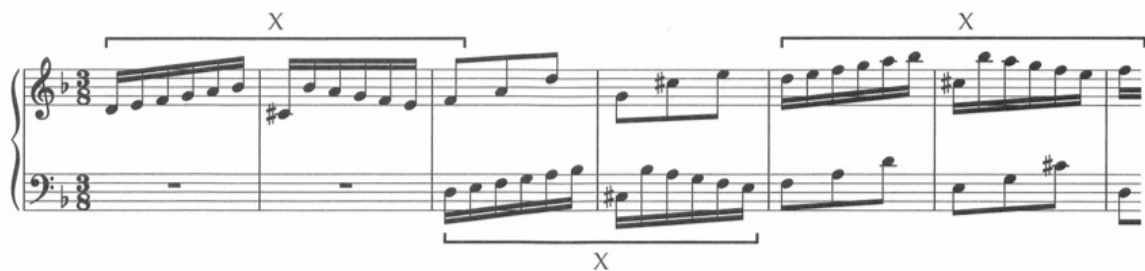


Imitation

Imitation allows for the use of strict repetition.

In order to do use imitation, one should try to use distinct registers.

A. Bach, Invention in D minor, BWV 775



Modified Repetition

Modified repetition (an extremely vague term) can fall into many categories.

- Embellishment
- Transposition (tonal or real)
- Sequence
- Diminution
- Augmentation
- Inversion
- Retrograde
- Retrograde Inversion

Embellishment

Embellishment is quite self-explanatory. It is simply the adding of pitches to a motive. Grieg's "Erotikon" from his *Lyrical Pieces* is an obvious example of this, using grace notes.

A. Grieg, "Erotikon," from *Lyric Pieces*, op. 43, no. 5



Transposition (tonal or real)

- Tonal transposition maintains the generic size of the intervals, but alters the quality so that they remain in the key.
- Real transposition maintains the specific interval size between each note in the motive (minor 3rds remain minor thirds, etc.).

Beethoven uses a real transposition of the theme in "Eroica."



mozart40.png

scale: 150 %

The "hero" theme in the bass clef is transposed (by real transposition) in the bottom example.

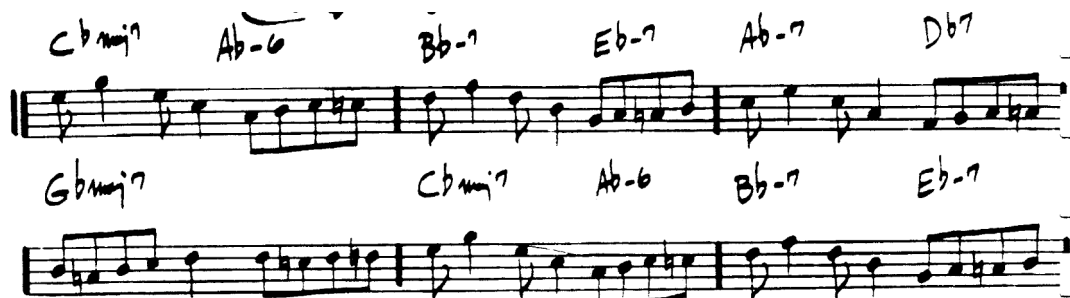
B. Mozart, Symphony no. 40 in G minor, Trio



An example of tonal transposition in Mozart's Symphony No.40

Sequence

This might be defined as when a repetition is transposed more than once at a consistent interval.



The "B" section of "Take Five" by Paul Desmond and Dave Brubeck.

Augmentation and Diminution



Example of Augmentation and Diminution (Laitz, pg. 782)

Inversion

Inversion is a transformation that projects the interval between pitches in the opposite direction. For example, if an interval between two pitches is an ascending major third, the inversion would be a descending major third.

Retrograde

Retrograde reverses the order of the motive's pitches: what was the first pitch becomes the last, and vice versa. As you can imagine, recognizing that a melodic line has been played backwards is not easy, since contour, rhythm, and pitches are significantly altered between the original presentation and that of the retrograde.

The image displays a musical score for Haydn's Piano Sonata in A Major, illustrating retrograde usage. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows the original material. The second system, starting at measure 7, shows the 'retrograde of first half' with a 'midpoint' indicated. The third system, starting at measure 14, continues the retrograde process. Arrows and labels clearly identify the retrograde transformation.

Example of Retrograde usage in Haydn's Piano Sonata in A Major.

Retrograde Inversion

Retrograde inversion combines both inversion and retrograde. Thus, one performs the motive backwards, but in inverted form.

Exercise

Perform a motivic analysis on the following Brahms piece (the opening to "Mein wundes Herz", op.59, no.7)

Bewegt

X (imitated)

X

5 X (transposed)

Mein wun-des Herz ver-langt nach mil - - der Ruh, o hau - - che

poco f

X (transposed and diminished)

X (transposed)

10 X (inverted)

sie ihm ein! X (fragmented) X (transposed and diminished) Es fliegt dir wei

X (diminished)

X (imitated)

X

X (inverted and diminished)

Assignment

For **Next Tuesday**: take two of the following melodies and elaborate them into a small 8-measure "piece." Avoid parallel fifths and octaves. You can write for SATB or Piano.

For **Next Thursday**: Perform a motivic analysis of the first movement (Adagio) of Mozart, Sonata no.4 in E-flat, K.282. Simply identify the the primary themes, and transformations that they might undergo. Provide a photocopy of an annotated score, or a document with your own (Finale, Sibelius, etc.) demonstrations.