

Technique 4

Writing from Commission

Example 2: Sundial

It would be nice to get paid to create music. Not many of us have people beating down our doors to write checks for the tunes we create. But all of us have occasions for which a unique piece of music would be a special gift. Weddings, births, anniversaries, birthdays, funerals, all kinds of events call for music. Now you have a tool kit that prepares you to answer these creative calls.

The skill set is:

- Motive as the origin of melody

- Contour Waves as the origin of melody

- Words as the origin of melody

- Harmonic Movement as the origin of melody

Let's take on a commission and apply what we've learned.

The Commission

Friends own the store Sundial Books. The business originally spanned two tiny, historic buildings. They recently consolidated the business into a single store in another historic building. The move into one, larger building was a major event in their personal and business lives. Both are tied to music. The wife of the duo is a hammer dulcimer player. The husband of the duo has a radio show and is deeply knowledgeable about American popular music. He also owned one of the first CD stores in the Washington, D.C. area.

A tune was in order to celebrate their business success. So, *Sundial* was born.

Goal

Celebrate the separate and united heritages of the owners of Sundial Books. The wife's roots go back to Ireland. The husband's roots go back to ancestors who were Germany Jews. So the tune has to somehow acknowledge and ultimately unite the Celtic and the Jewish traditions. The tune should be danceable, overall bright, and yet hint at the ups and downs of business.

Essential Components of the Tune

- Part A focuses on the Celtic tradition. This is a modern fiddle tune.
- Part B introduces a minor feeling and ends with a harmonic minor scale to celebrate the Jewish musical tradition.

Design

- The 1st motive of part A should be a simple bowl shaped contour that falls or sequences down to a low point at which a bright rise to the dominate chord marks the turn around.
- Part A repeats the first motive three times against harmonic movement that is essentially a walking bass line D, C#, B.

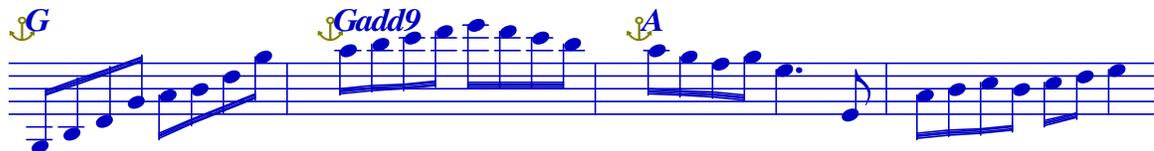


1st motive is bowl shaped and repeated three times against a walking bass set of chords all of which are versions of the tonic chord D

- The 1st motive repeats in an altered form with the chords moving through Bm and F#m (vim to iim)



- The 2nd motive of part A should be an arpeggio on the IV chord that rises to the A chord at the mid point. This is important because the first five measures are a downward movement. The arpeggio will lift the feeling of the tune. The contrast is vital.



- The harmonic movement of part A is: D Dma7 D6 Bm7 F#m G Gadd9 and A. This is a coloration of the use I IV V movement of a fiddle tune.
- Part A is symmetrical so the harmonic movement is the same in the first and second halves.
- Part B opens in a IV minor to establish tension. Two motives are used and repeated.
- Part B moves forward by altering the 1st motive, repeating it and restating the downward and final motive of the first half. The first two lines of part B are falling lines of quarter notes to emphasis the downward motion.
- Part B ends with a half measure statement of the harmonic minor using movement from an A chord to an E major chord through C# dim and back to the tonal center of the piece, D.