

Piece 9 'Berceuse' or about antecedents and consequents

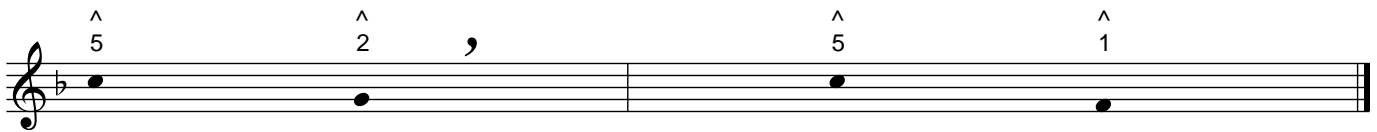
When studying the use of antecedents and consequents in Piece no. 9 Berceuse (Lullaby, Wiegeliedje), from 'Fantasia' of Oscar van Hemel (1892–1981) we get an idea of the relation between form and melody.

Step 1: the sixteen–bar period

Within the key F major, the main triad F–A–C, with its tonic and dominant, is an important one. Many melodies are built around these main tones within the structure of antecedent and consequent. As an example: from this point of view the eight–bar period has two four–bar phrases, where the first one (the antecedent) has an open ending (the 'question') and the second (the consequent) a definitive close (the 'answer'). the sixteen–bar period has two eight–bar phrases, where the first one is the antecedent and the second one the consequent.

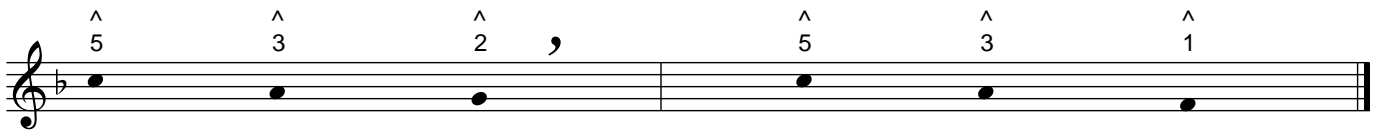
The central melodic question here is how to make a question and an answer. Investigating many melodies we can formulate a universal law about key tones: the question by the active non–triad tones (2, 4, 6 and 7) and the answer by the more or less stable, main triad tones (1, 3 and 5 with the tonic the most stable one). Let's have a look at an easy example, while recomposing Van Hemel's first period.

Example 1a: basic structure period 1

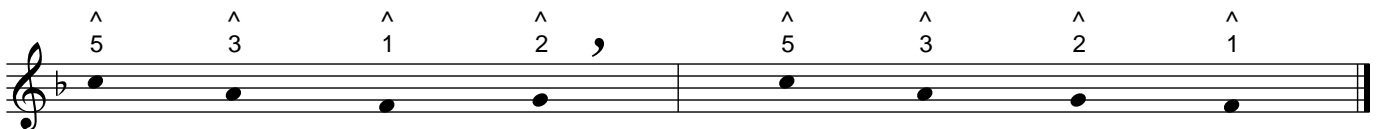


The second tone of the F major key i.e. tone G has the effect of the interpunction of a questionmark. The last tone, the tonic, ends the melody in a definitive way. This idea will be the same when adding some tones to this structure.

Example 1b: elaboration I of the basic structure with the third

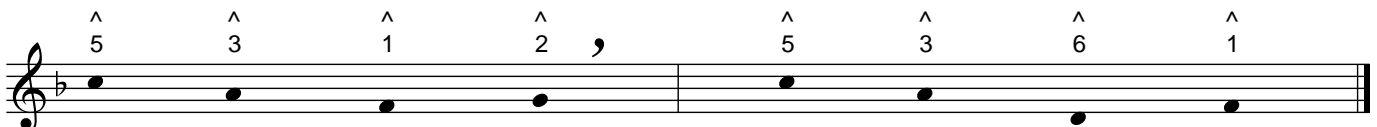


Example 1c: elaboration II of the basic structure



This last version is not convincing at all. With a small change, Van Hemel made a musically more interesting melodic line.

Example 1d: elaboration III of the basic structure by Van Hemel



Note: the tone D at the end makes the difference!

When put into a triple meter, we can create a sixteen-bar period (8+8):

Example 1e: basic structure of period 1

Musical notation for Example 1e. It consists of two staves in 3/4 time. The first staff is labeled 'PERIOD 1' and 'Phrase 1'. It contains a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Bar numbers 4 and 8 are indicated. The second staff is labeled 'Phrase 2' and continues the melody from bar 9: D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3. Bar numbers 12 and 16 are indicated.

The main tones of this basic structure can be embellished by neighbour tones (N) and passing tones (P), organized by the interval second, giving the melody a smooth and wave-like character.

Step 2: elaboration of the basic structure by neighbour tones (N) and passing tones (P).

Example 2a

Musical notation for Example 2a. It follows the same structure as Example 1e but includes embellishments. In the first staff, bar 2 has a neighbour tone (N) on A4, bar 3 has a passing tone (P) on Bb4, bar 4 has a neighbour tone (N) on C5, bar 6 has a neighbour tone (N) on Bb4, and bar 7 has a neighbour tone (N) on A4. Bar numbers 4 and 8 are indicated. The second staff continues the melody with a neighbour tone (N) on G3 in bar 14 and a passing tone (P) on F3 in bar 15. Bar numbers 12 and 16 are indicated.

The connection between bar 6 and 7 could be made smooth. And bar 7 could have more drive, making the question 'more question'. Hence, bar 14 could be modified by association. Van Hemel's solution:

Example 2b

Musical notation for Example 2b. It follows the same structure as Example 1e but with a smoother connection between bars 6 and 7. In the first staff, bar 6 has a neighbour tone (N) on Bb4 and bar 7 has a neighbour tone (N) on C5. Bar numbers 4 and 8 are indicated. The second staff continues the melody as in Example 1e. Bar numbers 12 and 16 are indicated.

Step 3: basic structure period 2

Period 1 forms the melodic structure of section A of the ternary form A–B–A. In section B, Van Hemel makes a new period, period 2, which is clearly related to period 1:

- Period 2 has also sixteen bars, with an antecedent and a consequent.
- The melody of period 2 plays also with the main tones tonic and dominant.

However, the differences between the melodies of period 2 and period 1 are quite interesting:

- The melodic direction is upward in the first part of antecedent and consequent.
- The melodic direction is downward in the second part of antecedent and consequent.
- The melody has more drive, due to a higher 'melodic rhythm', i.e. more different main tones per bar. If we define the 'melodic rhythm' of the first four bars of period 1 as 2 (2 main tones in four bars), in period this measure will be 4. It means: melodic velocity.
- The main tones of period 2 are 'elaborated' with tone repetition as a new feature.
- A new, dotted rhythmical figure, introduced in the antecedent, becomes more important in the consequent. It means: a more lively character.
- But more important: the predictable character of antecedent–consequent becomes unregular by the consequent.

Example 3a: basic structure of period 2

PERIOD 2

Phrase 1

Phrase 2

Example 3b: elaboration I of the basic structure of period 2 (tone repetition)

PERIOD 2

Phrase 1

Phrase 2

Example 3c: elaboration II of the basic structure of period 2 (dotted rhythmical figure)

PERIOD 2

Phrase 1

Phrase 2

Note that within a new key (A major, mediant of F major) the last note is a C# and not a A. So, it seems an unexpected, open end that will be made stronger by Van Hemel when he redefines C# from the third tone of A major to the fifth tone of F# minor, as we will see later.

Step 4: from melody to three part composition (section A, antecedent)

We are aware of the fact that Van Hemel's harmonic approach can be analyzed in several ways. In this text we choose for a horizontal, melodic way of thinking. The vertical organization is defined by intervals. First of all, the melodic framework can be described as an medieval organum, based on the interval fifth.

Example 4a: two part antecedent of section A

Phrase 1

5

5

5

5

5

Passing tones make the lower voice more independent. This results in a typical 5-6 intervallic progression.

Example 4b: two part antecedent of section A; lower voice elaborated by passing tones

Phrase 1

5

6

5

6

5

6

5

5

To create more harmony, we add a second melody to the lower voice in parallel thirds.

Example 4c: three part antecedent of section A: lower voices in parallel motion

Van Hemel's last version will given later. The melodic framework of the consequent is based on the same organum principle. It's application however shows interesting irregularities. It means that the harmonies less predictable.

Example 4d: two part consequent of section A

Again, parallel thirds (Van Hemel's last version will given later).

Example 4e: three part consequent of section A

Step 5: from melody to three part composition (section B, antecedent)

In section B, the melody is in the lower voice. The interval fifth, key of the melodic framework in section A, can also be applied to the accompanying upper voices. Van Hemel's basic choice is melodic motion in section A, i.e. a line in the lower voices towards a goal. In Van Hemel's section B, the upper voices are melodically spoken, less active (while as already stated above, the lower voice has more activity). The technique of the medieval organum is applied in a free way: fifth–octave or fourth–octave harmonies, rhythmically elaborated as we will see later.

Example 5a: three part antecedent of period 2 (basic, not embellished form)

Phrase 1

Example 5b: three part consequent of period 2 (basic, not embellished form)

Phrase 2

IV=VI

F# minor: V

As already mentioned, phrase 2 modulates from A major to F# minor (via pivot IV in A major = VI in F# minor), although the complete phrase could be composed in A major. In other words, such modulation at the end of section B has intentionally a surprising effect in relation to the repetition of section A in F major. Note that the phrase ends on V in F# minor.

Step 6: the final version

Below the version of Van Hemel, with some elaborating additions to the examples above. Note the following bars:

- bar 8, lower voice: quarter notes for smooth connection towards bars 9
- bar 12, middle voice: quarter notes for smooth connection towards bars 13
- bar 13–14, chromaticism (contrast in harmony)
- bar 15, lowest voice: Bb as an appoggiatura to A
- bar 16: quarter rest, which creates expectation.
- bar 17 – 32: contre temps in upper voices (making the lower voice important)
- bar 22, 30, 31 and 32: quasi four part
- bar 32: fermata (for some undefined metrical modification which creates some expectation)

Example 6a: final version (without character, phrasing, articulation and dynamic indications)

The musical score is presented in six systems, each consisting of a treble and bass staff. The first system (measures 1-8) is in B-flat major (one flat) and 3/4 time. The second system (measures 9-16) is in D major (two sharps). The third system (measures 17-24) is in D major. The fourth system (measures 25-32) is in D major. The fifth system (measures 33-40) is in B-flat major. The sixth system (measures 41-48) is in B-flat major. Measure numbers are indicated above the staves: 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 44, and 48. The notation includes various note values, rests, and chord symbols.

Below the complete version of Van Hemel. Note the sensitive way of articulating!

Example 6b: final version

con espressivo

Measures 1-8. Treble clef, 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. Dynamics: *p*. Performance markings: slurs, hairpins.

Measures 9-16. Treble clef, 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. Dynamics: *p*. Performance markings: slurs, hairpins.

Measures 17-24. Treble clef, 3/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *mf*. Performance markings: slurs, hairpins.

Measures 25-32. Treble clef, 3/4 time, key of D major. Performance markings: slurs, hairpins.

Measures 33-40. Treble clef, 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. Dynamics: *p*. Performance markings: slurs, hairpins.

Measures 41-48. Treble clef, 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. Performance markings: slurs, hairpins.

About the author:

Reinier Maliepaard, psychologist, software engineer, organist and teacher at the ArtEZ Conservatorium Netherlands (music writing, music theory and music history). Maliepaard is the developer and maintainer of www.bestmusicteacher.com, that has three objectives education – information – inspiration
This article has been typeset with his free/open source music notation program MC Musiceditor 8.1.1, that can be downloaded at www.mcmusiceditor.com.
