

table of contents

Author's Preface	6
Introduction	7
Preparatory Considerations	9
CHAPTER 1 - Composing Tunes	11
Melodically-Generated Harmony, or Harmonically-Generated Melody	12
Fashionable Chord Types	23
Composing Melodies	30
CHAPTER 2 - Arranging for the Small Jazz Ensemble	39
CHAPTER 3 - Arranging for the Large Jazz Ensemble	51
Preparatory Activities	53
Harmonizations	59
A Summary of Textural Options	66
Determining the Length of an Arrangement	69
Planing the Details of an Arrangement	70
Items for Arrangement Plans	71
The Score	72
Guidelines for Preparing Scores and Parts	73
Conductor's Guide	75
A Closing Word to the Novice Arranger	76

A Word About “Old” Progressions

In a *Downbeat* magazine interview about twenty years ago, Frank Zappa stated that he hated the II-V-I progression and hoped he'd never hear another one. While it is true that the progression is unparalleled in its commonness, forming the backbone of thousands of tunes, past and present, we can't dismiss its *continuing* importance simply because we lack the imagination to provide new and exciting twists to that chord cell. In culinary circles, one might venture to say that he/she hates fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy products, and all meats, because they've been consumed for so long that we've grown tired of them. But the real problem, in such a case, is a lack of imagination, with regard to finding new ways to prepare those staples. And we'd be as hard-pressed to replace those food groups with 4-5 new groups as Zappa would be to find a chord cell that would replace the II-V-I progression, especially with regard to tradition, popularity, harmonic function, and flexibility. One might as well tire of oxygen or water!

Nearly all of our perceptions and evaluations of things and events, whether objective or subjective, depend upon the need for contrasts, which provide a foundation for relative comparisons. Usually such contrasts are polar opposites, like hot-cold, lightness-darkness, sweet-bitter, up-down, joy-sadness, exciting-dull, new-old, and so on. The distribution between two opposites may be relatively equal or unequal. Night and day are close to being equal in duration. On the other hand, we might describe a friend with statements like “He's almost always optimistic, but sometimes he suffers short, but deep, spells of depression.” In other words, we can't really know “up” without knowing “down,” as we need opposites for comparison. One of the two opposites is often the norm, the standard, or the constant, against which something may truly be perceived as unusual, different, or unique. The II-V-I progression, without the enhancements that will be described later, forms the standard in the overall progressions of many tunes, providing a relatively constant element. However, it is generally *not* the II-V-I cells that cause us to notice, appreciate, or select a particular tune for performance or for an arrangement. Instead, it is *precisely* those moments when the progression briefly departs from the II-V-I mold that the tune gains distinction and perhaps preference. Yet it is the II-V-I cells that provide the basis for contrast, at least in the vast majority of the jazzman's repertoire, without which the progression would either make no impression, or the impression that it lacks a sense of foundational solidity and contrasts. This explains, in part, why it is so difficult to write great con-

temporary jazz progressions like those written by composers Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, or Ron Miller. In searching for *new* constants and contrasts, there is a strong likelihood that we may amass more than a few tunes that are relative failures. The use of a simple, unadorned II-V-I (and modulations to other keys of II-V-I) is relatively easy to acquire. The following examples of *enhanced* II-V-I's, however, should be helpful and interesting. They should be performed at the keyboard, in order to assess their true value.

Enhancing the II-V-I Progression

The simplest way to enhance the II-V-I cell in a major key is to change one or more of the chord-types usually found on each. For example, II is most often a minor seventh chord, but the composer could change it to a dominant seventh or a half-diminished chord (minor seventh with a lowered fifth) with virtually no loss of function. The V chord, usually a dominant seventh, could become an altered dominant (dominant seventh with a augmented fifth and an augmented or flatted ninth) or a diminished scale dominant (dominant seventh with an altered ninth and a thirteenth). The I chord, which is usually a major seventh chord, could have an augmented fifth. Often the given melody will dictate which of these options exists. If the primary melody note over the I chord is the fifth, for example, then perhaps an augmented fifth in the chord would be inappropriate.

Mixtures of minor and major mode II-V-I progressions are often used for dramatic surprise, especially the use of a half-diminished chord on II and an altered dominant on V, which prepare the listener to expect a I minor chord, only to be surprised by the major form of the chord. This pleasant deception happens in “A Time For Love” (Johnny Mandel), “All The Things You Are” (Jerome Kern), and in “Everything Happens To Me” (Tom Adair/Matt Dennis). Curiously, in all three tunes the trait occurs in the last four measures of the bridge.

HEARIN' THE CHANGES, one of the books listed earlier in this chapter, presents a wide variety of ways to enhance the II-V-I progression (see Chapters 1 and 2) by way of extensions and substitute chords.

In Miller's MODAL JAZZ COMPOSITION, also cited earlier, the author presents progressions which sound and function much like the II-V-I cells, but aren't, which he calls parody cadences and cryptic cadences (see p.60 and pp.97-98).

The chord durations in contemporary tunes are generally longer than those found in the quickly-moving bebop and standard tune progressions, often lasting 2-8 measures each. Furthermore, since they tend to dwell on parallel motion of like chord-types, striking and dramatic chord connections are especially desirable. The effect is much like that of viewing time-lapse photography of the blossoming of flowers of different and vivid colors. Selecting the appropriate 'keys' of consecutive chords, under these circumstances, is especially critical, if the effect is to rival that of the blossoming flowers. For example, a C7sus chord that moves down a whole-step to a B \flat 7sus, or up a perfect fourth to an F7sus won't have the same impact as moving from a C7sus to an F \sharp 7sus, or to an E \flat 7sus. In other words, the *exact* nature of the shift from one chord to another is a factor. It's not simply a matter of moving to any other place, but to a *particular*, well-chosen place, at least at those times when one is searching for a stunning, dramatic contrast. C7sus to B \flat or F7sus would create a subtle, milder contrast, and

could be used at times when *that* is the desired effect. All this and more should be heard at the keyboard for careful evaluation, adding other intervallic relationships between successive chords, and experimenting with other chord-types and mixtures of chord-types.

It will be found that other factors have an effect on the sounds created by certain consecutive chords, to include: (1) the chosen register (low, medium, or high); (2) the exact pitch on which each chord is built (i.e., chords built on B, C, or D \flat , though in the same proximity, can sound very differently from one another, in terms of weight, brightness/darkness, etc.); (3) the spacing of the notes of the chords (i.e., thirds, fourths, clusters, poly-chords, and the range width or tessitura of the entire voicing); and, most especially (4) the function (i.e., the 5th, or ninth, or thirteenth, etc.) of the top note of the chord, or the emphasized melody note. In Figures 1-N and 1-O, chord symbols are provided, along with the emphasized melody notes, as samples of choice chord-sequencing.

FIGURE 1-N
 "MEN IN WHITE," RON MILLER



FIGURE 1-O
 "JC ON THE LAND," RON MILLER



Figures 1-N and 1-O are mere sketches to illustrate, primarily, chord sequences and emphasized melody notes. They do not show the many subtle aspects of the melody contained in the complete versions. Both pieces are contained in a collection entitled *THE RON MILLER SONG BOOK*, available by contacting RonJam Music, 645 S.E. 4th Ct., Dania, Florida, 33004. Nevertheless, the figures shown here reveal a number of interesting aspects of the pieces.

Men In White

- 56-measure length, subdivided into 5 major segments (ABCDE) of 16, 12, 8, 12, and 8 measures, respectively.
- Though the entire melody is not shown here, there are only two melodic themes for the total length, the second of which occurs only in the two 8-measure segments (rehearsal letters C and E). Letter E is identical to C, but a semi-tone lower.
- Preponderance of 7sus chords.
- Quickened pace of harmonic rhythm at B and D (mostly 2-bar durations), offering contrast to the much longer durations found everywhere else.
- Emphasized melody notes are nearly always functioning as upper extensions of the chord (9th, 11th/4th, or 13th).
- Sequencing of 7sus chords reveal root motions of minor third up or down (3 times), major third up (2 times), and half-step down (3 times).
- Chords having the longest durations (8-12 measures) are the three minor seventh chords, which are placed at the beginning, the halfway point, and the end.
- The minor seventh chords that appear at letters C and E both follow a 7sus chord having the same root.
- Retention of the melody note, D (meas.5-9 of letter D), as the 9th of the C7sus, then as the 7th of E7sus (*common-tone* principle).

JC On The Land

- Also a 56-measure length, but subdivided into 20, 20, 8, and 8-measure segments, producing an AAB or AABB form, depending upon your personal view (Miller calls it AAB).
- Quickened harmonic rhythm at B provides contrast.
- Preponderance of 7sus chords, though not quite to the degree found in “Men In White.” The B section here reveals a wider variety of chord-types, even containing a traditional II-V cell (E– A7). The first chord of the B section (C minor-major seventh over a G bass) provides a distinctive sound that is also in sharp contrast to the 7sus chords.
- Like “Men In White,” nearly all emphasized melody notes function as extensions of the chord or a highly-significant note of the chord, such as the augmented fourth of the A♭ chord in measure 14.
- Root motions of the preponderant 7sus chords are tritone, minor third, major second, and minor second. Interestingly, all of the chord roots of the A section belong to a single *diminished cycle* (A♭, B, D, and F).
- Retention of melody note, B♭ (meas.9-16 of letter A), as 4th (or 11th) of the F chord, then as the 9th of the A♭ chord (*common-tone*).

Ostinati/Vamps

An *ostinato* or *vamp* (alternate terms) is a repetitious accompanimental cell, usually in 2-4 measure increments. It can be as simple as an unvarying chord cell, but most often an ostinato involves specific rhythmic figures, bass melodies, and chord voicings in its cellular structure. An ostinato might only serve as a mood-setting introduction and/or ending (especially *fade-out* endings), but it often continues for part or all of the melody chorus. Because of the number of structural elements (rhythm, bass melody, and voicings), it is often adapted, without loss of its characteristic sound or 'feel', to successive changes of chord that occur in the unfolding of the melody chorus. Hancock's "Maiden Voyage" and "Cantaloupe Island," Miles Davis' "So What" and "All Blues," Horace Silver's "Senor Blues," and Steve Swallow's "Como En Vietnam" are but a representative handful of tunes which make use of ostinati. Examine pp.54-56 of JAZZ KEYBOARD, pp.58-59 of MODAL JAZZ COMPOSITION, and THE RON MILLER SONG BOOK, for more examples.

The chief advantage of creating a good ostinato is that it sets the stage so completely for a composition that sometimes the presentation of the tune's melody becomes somewhat incidental (or at least flexible). The melody to "Maiden Voyage," for example, moves very slowly, contains only a handful of notes, and is relatively uneventful. Its ostinato is so distinctive and powerful as to become the primary definition of its musical character. In fact, this and many other ostinati are so descriptive of the tune that, if one were to hear *only* the ostinato, the tune's identity becomes obvious. Composers often *begin* their compositions by creating a strong ostinato. Initiates can learn much by emulating this procedure. The obvious dangers, of course, are that: (1) a weak ostinato will do little to propel the composition; and (2) ostinati generally invite a high degree of repetition, even needless repetition. The composer must look for opportunities to change chords/keys or even abandon the ostinato at times for the sake of contrast. A study of the examples mentioned earlier will reveal that good writers are aware of the dangers and take steps to avoid them.

A Summary of Harmonic Considerations

- In general, adopt the process of harmonically-generated melody.
- Study and learn *many* great tunes.
- Write contrafacts, *at least* for practice.
- Examine the recommended book list.
- Hone your keyboard skills for better voicings and progressions.
- Learn to enhance traditional harmonic practices.
- Listen to recordings of the composers mentioned here.
- Play and study all examples (Figures I-A to I-O).
- Re-read the segments on Fashionable Chord-types, Modulations, and Chord Connections.
- Experiment with creating ostinati as a procedure for composing new tunes.

FIGURE 1-R
 “WOOD DANCE,” RON MILLER, MEAS. 1-5 AND 9-13



The first two measures of “Lush Life” (Fig. 1-P) is comprised of two similar phrases, each beginning on Ab, each harmonized with the same chords, and have the same rhythmic structure and contour. But the pitches of the quarter-note triplets and the notes to which they resolve are very different, revealing Strayhorn’s ingenuity and attention to detail. Also, all three “A” sections (AABA form) begin in like manner, but are melodically and harmonically tailored to end up in three very different places. Then there is the bridge, which begins with two identical 1-measure phrases, melodically, but which are harmonized differently on beats 3 and 4 of those measures. There are many aspects of “Lush Life” which cause it to be regarded as one of the best tunes ever written. Even the verse section is so strong that most jazz performers won’t consider playing the tune without including it, which is rare among other tunes having verses. “Lush Life” is in the key of Db. Strayhorn enters that tonic chord from no less than four different chords,

to include Ab7 (V7), D7 (bII7, the tri-tone substitute for V7), A7(#9), and G7sus! Not only are the last two chords considered unlikely substitutes for the first two, but the use of a 7sus chord pre-dates its use in “Maiden Voyage” by about 45 years!

In Fischer’s “Tahlia” (Fig. 1-S), each ‘A’ section begins with a different series of melody notes against essentially the same harmonies, and with the same melodic rhythms. Yet because each section is sixteen measures long (an interest-filled sixteen measures at that!), the listener is led to believe that each section begins with the same melody notes.

Miller’s “Wood Dance” (Fig. 1-T) is a fine example of repeating a melody without using the same rhythms, which causes it to sound more spontaneous and less-predictable. Its also a good example of repeating a phrase, but resolving to a different place (note *and* chord) at the end.

Melodic Climaxes

There are various ways to achieve a musical climax, to include volume, harmonic intensity, modulations, and rhythmic intensity. An *arrangement* of a tune could also push a tune to its maximum peak, as well as the solo performer (instrumentalist or singer). But by far the most common way to effect a musical climax in the tune itself, as opposed to an arrangement or performance of it, is through the use of a range climax, in terms of the placement of the highest note of the entire melody. Strategically, a *range climax*, when it is used, is best placed somewhere near the end of the tune. Some tunes, even very successful ones, don't incorporate a climax of this sort. Other tunes use one, but place it near the center of the tune's length, as in "I Love You" and "Stella By Starlight," where the highest note appears at the bridge, approximately sixteen measures before the end. Still others will duplicate the highest pitch in two or more separate places within the tune. Nonetheless, a high percentage of tunes utilize a range climax near the end of their length. Often the highest note is accompanied by a dramatic harmonic event as well, such as a modulation, or a colorful chord-type (i.e., a half-diminished or an altered dominant). Usually, the climax is followed (to the very end) by a downward taper in range and volume, letting the 'dust settle', and bringing the tune to a more gentle or melancholy close. If the highest note has been withheld until a point near to the end, a melodic climax is more common in ABAB' or ABAC forms, where there is an easier option to craft a rise in range in the last eight measures without disturbing the expected recurrence of an earlier section that occurs in AABA forms, for example. However, some AABA tunes *will* be found to have a slightly tailored last 'A' section, in order to accommodate a melodic climax. An examination of the following list of tunes will reveal a high percentage of ABAB' and ABAC forms. Most, though not all, of the tunes are the usual 32 measures in length. The measure containing the highest note of the melody (range climax) is also given in the list, numbered from the end of each entry.

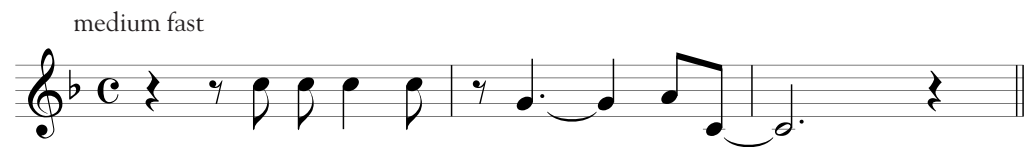
TUNE	NUMBER OF MEASURES FROM END
<i>Blue In Green</i>	1
<i>Come Rain Or Come Shine</i>	2
<i>E.S.P.</i>	2
<i>Flamingo</i>	2
<i>Four</i>	2
<i>Giant Steps</i>	2
<i>All Of Me</i>	3
<i>All The Things You Are</i>	3
<i>Embraceable You</i>	3
<i>Forest Flower</i>	3
<i>I Can't Get Started</i>	3
<i>My Ideal</i>	3
<i>Alone Together</i>	4
<i>Dolphin Dance</i>	4
<i>Have You Met Miss Jones</i>	4
<i>Isn't It Romantic</i>	4
<i>Taking A Chance On Love</i>	4
<i>The Touch Of Your Lips</i>	4
<i>Five Hundred Miles High</i>	5
<i>I Should Care</i>	5
<i>Serenata</i>	5
<i>When Your Lover Has Gone</i>	5
<i>You Stepped Out Of A Dream</i>	5
<i>But Beautiful</i>	6
<i>But Not For Me</i>	6
<i>Days Of Wine And Roses</i>	6
<i>Fools Rush In</i>	6
<i>How About You</i>	6
<i>I Thought About You</i>	6
<i>Lament</i>	6
<i>My Funny Valentine</i>	6
<i>My Romance</i>	6
<i>Out Of Nowhere</i>	6
<i>The Best Thing For You Is Me</i>	6
<i>Long Ago And Far Away</i>	7
<i>On Green Dolphin Street</i>	7
<i>Someday My Prince Will Come</i>	7
<i>Soon</i>	7
<i>Strollin'</i>	7
<i>What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life</i>	7
<i>A Foggy Day</i>	8
<i>Autumn In New York</i>	8
<i>Gone With The Wind</i>	8
<i>Here's That Rainy Day</i>	8
<i>I'm Old-Fashioned</i>	8
<i>It's You Or No One</i>	8
<i>Make Someone Happy</i>	8
<i>Meaning Of The Blues</i>	8
<i>Poor Butterfly</i>	8
<i>Quiet Nights</i>	8
<i>The Lieb</i>	8
<i>Time After Time</i>	8
<i>Wood Dance</i>	8

The foregoing sample list of tunes should suffice to convince the reader that melodic climaxes are an important aspect of songwriting. With regard to placement of the highest melody note within the tune's overall length, even eight measures before the end would place it at the 75% point, if the tune is 32 measures long. The subject of musical climaxes will be taken up again later in the book, under the topic of planning an *arrangement*.

Melodic Rhythms

The rhythms we select for expressing a melody, whether composed on paper or spontaneously performed by an instrumentalist or singer, are extremely important to the relative success of that melody. Yet when we view the lead sheets for the thousands of standard tunes of the past, we usually see rhythmic impotency; that is, the pitches are rendered in an unimaginative, staid fashion, like the following:

FIGURE 1-S



Though this standard tune was, and is, arranged and/or performed often, the rhythms in Figure 1-S are very likely to be revised by the arranger/performer in favor of a version that would sound more interesting, livelier, spontaneous, and stylized. Though only one of almost infinite possibilities, the rhythms shown in Figure 1-S might become:

FIGURE 1-T

