

## Music 238 "Mainly" Melody Assignment

**Short description:** compose two different sections (like an "A" & "B" or "verse" & "chorus") that are each centered around melody – the melody should be the most prominent element. Each section should be based on its own melodic idea (i.e. *motif*), such that the sections sound different from one and other, although it could be possible that they share a small amount of material. The melodies could be sung, or instrumental. Each section does not need to be too long (2-4 phrases each), but something longer is fine.

**Long description:** The intent of this assignment is to focus on melody and motif-development, but also to do this with two *different* melodic ideas such that they compliment each other to create a larger sense of variety. Hopefully, though, the two sections will sound like they belong together (as opposed to non-sequitur ideas merely slapped together).

Developing a motif means taking a small (like a few beats), recognizable idea (something with "personality") and reusing it multiple times in varied ways. For example, imagine the "Happy Birthday" song:

Happy birthday to you  
Happy birthday to you  
Happy birthday dear whoever  
Happy birthday to you

The initial "Happy birthday..." is the motif, and the subsequent iterations develop (modify) the motif. Each "Happy birthday" iteration follows the same rhythmic pattern, but the pitches are a little different. This maintains some sense of the motif's personality, but at the same time allows it to change. By the end, the final/4th iteration (which descends, rather than rises) feels like it resolves the tune, whereas trying to stop after any of the three prior iterations (try it!) does not feel like the song has ended in a settled-down manner.

The idea of this assignment is to do something like the above, but twice (once for each section) so that each section features its own motif/melodic ideas. Moreover, the two sections together should feel like they make a more complete "whole".

Your work does NOT just have to be melodies. Backing tracks of whatever else you want is ok, but the melodic material should **very much** stand out and have a strong **melodic profile**, meaning that the melodic material should be able to hold its own if it were a capella (without accompaniment) – something humable (possibly something one could even whistle!). That said, there are many successful songs that do not have a high-profile melody.

If you are going to use words/lyrics/text that are not your own, please make sure to include a clear citation as to where/who they came from. And be advised that without proper permission, it is illegal to use non-public-domain material for commercial purposes.

For each section (which should be 2-4 phrases long at the least), you might consider how the final phrase ends: open or closed (unresolved, or resolved). One typical verse/chorus format has the verse (A) ending in a more open/unresolved/transitional manner so that the subsequent chorus (B) can end in a more closed/resolved/definitive manner. This helps to unite the two different sections. (but that's an approach, not necessarily the best).

When submitting your material, please email an .mp3 file to allow for easy playback and fast downloading. Also include the lyrics, if any. During your presentation, be prepared to talk about your composing process, particularly obstacles you encountered.

*\*\*If you want to collaborate with one other person, that's fine, but please notify me in advance so I can plan presentations accordingly\*\**