Motivic-Harmonic Implications in Musical Theater Songs

by

Blaire Ziegenhagel

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submitted by Blaire Noah Shin Yuki Ziegenhagel in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Music, Emphasis Theory

Examinining Committee:
Dr. John Roeder, Chair of Music Theory Division, Professor, School of Music, UBC

Supervisor

Dr. Leigh VanHandel, Associate Professor, School of Music, UBC

Supervisory Committee Member
Abstract

This thesis extends the research done by (among others) David Temperley (2007) and Drew Nobile (2015) on the "melodic-harmonic divorce" by attributing the individual harmonies conveyed only in the melody to the use of motives. Motives affirm these harmonies through a melodic-harmonic stasis in which salient pitches are heard as though they preserve the harmonic implications suggested by an earlier motivic iteration. I show that they can appear in various alterations (retrograde, inversion, and transposition) and that they have the ability to transform a traditional dissonant pitch into a non-triad consonance over a given bass note because of the motive's tendency to repeat.

These non-triad consonances are explored in a system of "salient motivic tones" (SMTs) and "motivic chord tones" (MCTs). The former describes a tone that sounds as though it is operating independently to the rest of the harmony on the basis that it is part of a repeated motive. The latter is a subset of an SMT, describing a non-chord tone against the bass that still sounds consonant or "appropriate" because of its motivic link. MCTs also, despite preserving an independent melodic harmony, sound as though they are additive to the harmony in the rest of the ensemble, forming what is traditionally known as a chord extension. A system of graphically representing these MCTs and their associated motivic tones is outlined in Chapter 2.

Critically, I discuss the ways in which the theory and its graphical representation can be used to augment narrative analyses of songs of musical theater. Musical theater, being derived from popular music styles, tends to make great use of MCTs and melodic-harmonic independence to reflect the conflict being portrayed in a song. I also remain cognizant of the
emotional weight of MCTs and detail possible reasons a performer might place emphasis on them in addition to the standard text-painting considerations.
Lay Summary

For much of Western music history, certain notes of a melody have been described as being "consonant" with the harmony that it is used with. However, compositional techniques in popular music and their dissemination to musical theater have challenged this notion. In this thesis, I propose a system that permits certain dissonant notes to be heard as assimilated into the harmony of a song on the basis of it being part of a "motive," a portion of the melody that is given weight because its repetition. Despite its original property of being dissonant, this process of motivic repetition causes that pitch to become consonant. I argue that composers of musical theater use this technique to heighten the narrative goals of their songs as they relate to the plot of the scene in question.
Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, B. Ziegenhagel.
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Finally, I would like to thank my parents for supporting me during a period of great change. I hope that this thesis acts, at least currently, as a culmination of their assistance and encouragement.
for my father
Example 1.1: Lawrence, *High School Musical 2*, "Gotta Go My Own Way," chorus
Example 1.1 shows an excerpt from *High School Musical 2*, from the chorus of a song called "Gotta Go My Own Way." It's fairly emotional, performed as Gabriella leaves the rest of the cast at Lava Springs due to Sharpay's jealous meddling. Her departure also separates her from Troy, her primary love interest, who is devastated until her climactic return at the end of the movie. As she is the lead vocalist of the sung, not Troy, there is a sense that perhaps she still is torn between wanting to move on and fighting for a happy ending.

Her uncertainty is most evident in the G♯s that occur on the downbeats of mm. 1-6 as well as the third beats of mm. 1 and 3. Traditional tonal theory might label most of these G♯s as some sort of accented incomplete neighbor, from which stepwise motion to A is ready to resolve the dissonance. There is also a prominent major ninth (an E over a D in the bass) that is emphasized in the second-to-last bar, which starts what seems to be what a Schenkerian reading might regard as a cadential linear descent from scale degree 5 to the A major tonic. However, the scale degree 5, a member of the tonic triad, is not supported consonantly as in the Schenkerian ideal.

Perhaps this is not such a problem. Michael Buchler, a prominent theorist of musical theater, does not shy away from revising the Schenkerian framework to uncover new insights into songs within the genre. His article "'Laura' and the Essential Ninth: Were They Only a Dream?" adapts Kirnberger's discussion of "incidental" and "essential" dissonances and chordal ninths, paying particular attention to if or when a ninth requires resolving.\(^1\) Classifying ninths as "essential" for the purposes of his hypothetical analysis, Buchler regards them (on Schenker's authority) as extensions of dominant seventh harmonies, and proceeds to label them as

\(^1\) Michael Buchler, “‘Laura’ and the Essential Ninth: Were They Only a Dream?” *Em Pauta* 17 (2007): 5-25.
structurally salient in the first Schenkerian graph he produces of "Laura." Example 1.2 shows his representation of the middleground from the end of the verse to the beginning of the refrain. He argues that the B in m. 21 can be heard as an essential ninth because it is reintroduced after

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Example 1.2: "Laura," foreground sketch of end of verse and refrain with essential ninths

Example 1.3: "Laura," foreground sketch of the refrain, depicting a linear intervallic pattern including structural ninths

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2 Buchler, 10.
the interruption in m. 20, having been elaborated by an enharmonically spelled A♯ just prior. On that basis, he entertains the possibility that the ending of the graph is comprised of structural parallel ninths over a functional bass progression. In addition, in an earlier example that analyzes the entire refrain, Buchler identifies a linear intervallic pattern with ninths as harmonically salient, starting from m. 21, suggesting that the ninths could have more structural significance than in the more conservative Schenkerian reading he first entertains. This is depicted in Example 1.3.

![Example 1.3: "Gotta Go My Own Way," Schenkerian middleground with essential ninths](image)

Applying a similar approach to the dissonances in "Gotta Go My Own Way" might result in a reduction like the one shown in Example 1.4. Two dominant-harmony scale degrees, 7 and 5, are supported respectively by a tonic and a subdominant harmony (perhaps substituting for V). The resulting ninths in mm. 1 and 3 are heard as essential, and the resolution to A every time is read as having lower hierarchical value. The retention of an essential ninth, now E over D, when the bass moves a major third lower, confirms its structural priority.

However, why should we limit ourselves to hearing these structural ninths as a part of a tonic-elaborating process? If we were to interpret them on their own, no longer would they only belong to locally insignificant sonorities in and of themselves. Other more local features of the
music would not have to be glossed over in an effort to justify their existence in relation to a
global tonic.

For example, all of these G♯s come as a result of repeating a primary motive, the <E, G♯, A> that includes the anacrusis to each strong beat. I will refer to it as Motive "A." It occurs seven times throughout the chorus, with the G♯ seemingly changing harmonic function in relation to the different bass tones. Each subsequent G♯ forms a dissonant interval (major seventh, major ninth, or augmented fourth) until m. 4, where one makes a relatively consonant major third with the bass despite still being grouped horizontally in Motive "A," hinting that its relation to the bass is secondary to its melodic/motivic function. While the reduction in Example 1.4 shows a parallelism between the ninths in mm. 1 and 8, it omits an important foreground relationship: the ninth in the D∆9 chord is a result of a purely melodic process that considers the salient tones in Motive "A." Even though both the bass and the melody seem to arrive on the same beat in what sounds like a cohesive manner (via the aggregated vertical sonority, D∆9), the way in which they do so are, at least in part, distinct. This separation mitigates the dissonance the melodic process has with the harmonic process — Gabriella's frustration in finding her place is reflected not necessarily in the continued use of repeated dissonances, but the insistence of a motive that serves to distance the melody from the rest of the orchestration.

This reading of "Gotta Go My Own Way" suggests that it will be productive to analyze how melodic pitches can take expressive and dramatic functions in musical theater when one considers them as members of motives in a polyphonic texture where melody is somewhat independent of the other layers. Adapting theories of related popular music, this thesis first reviews the work of other theorists who have noticed these patterns in other music then develops
these ideas into a system that accommodates these different contrapuntal streams as experienced in the genre of musical theater.
Chapter 2: Motivic-Harmonic Implications

2.1 - The Genre of Musical Theater

Musical theater has always drawn from the popular styles with which it coexists. Having distinguished itself from the operettas that were being slowly phased out from larger American culture in the late 1920s, it focused more on exploring the short-form vernacular styles. Through Bernstein, Sondheim, and Lloyd Webber, the aesthetics of classical music were reintroduced to the genre, intermixing with these popular idioms. This resulted in an American musical theater that would, while blurring generic dividing lines, firmly root itself in contemporary styles.

Because of these diverse roots, musical theater may be understood as what David Metzer calls a "chameleon genre," a generic category that can accommodate different styles or instrumentations to suit the lyrical or dramatic context. Metzer uses the term in the context of ballads to show that while ballads include such generic markers as themes of love and loss, generally slower tempi, richer harmonies, and longer melodic lines, a song can include other musical conventions that are characteristic of diverse sonic subgenres, but still be heard as a ballad.

Analogously, works such as Rent (1994) and Hamilton (2015) both fall under the same broad category of musical theater while borrowing from very different genres of popular music, respectively, rock and rap. This information regarding the genres from which a specific musical theater production is borrowing is required to distinguish between the traits of musical theater that may be characteristics of the popular and classical genres it draws upon. Because popular


music follows its own set of conventions, it is important to identify which of those carry over to musical theater, as well as the extent to which those conventions are applicable to the genre. To facilitate this, I will first review what other theorists claim is occurring in these popular music genres and find the commonalities between their theories and my own.

2.2 - The Analysis of Popular Music

In the *High School Musical 2* example, it's easy to understand the dissonances the G♯ and the E create above their respective harmonies as extensions of those harmonies, a common practical technique in jazz. This may be expressed in the chord symbol, such as the DΔ9. Like much American vernacular music, musical theater is derivative of jazz and its predecessors, so it is appropriate to use the language of jazz harmonic theory as an analytic method. Alternatively, the dissonance may be thought of as a standard non-harmonic tone, such as the G♯ functioning as a neighbor to A. The intersection of theories of tonality and extensions in jazz are concisely summarized in James McGowan's article "Riemann's Functional Framework for Extended Jazz Harmony" (2010). He notes that while some theorists consider the term "tonic" in jazz to refer to "any number of chord-member configurations in the context of chords of any function," it is difficult to reconcile this definition with the characterization of the tonic as "consonant." For example, a C7(#9) chord may have internal dissonance (between the #9 and the major third), but still function as tonic. Similarly, in the *High School Musical 2* example, we may comfortably hear the G♯ on the F♯ minor chord as a 9th, without having to sacrifice the function of the F♯ as a tonic chord.⁵

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McGowan sources this association of consonance and tonic function to Rameau's distinction between tonic and non-tonic chords: non-tonic chords must include or imply some sort of 7th to differentiate them as less consonant than the tonic chord. On this account, Rameau would likely bemoan the explanation for the F♯m9 chord acting as tonic in the first measure of the "Gotta Go My Own Way" excerpt. I find this perspective too conservative, as the repetition of the motive and the rhythmic coincidence of the G# against the F♯ in the bass allow for that vertical dissonance to be heard as a principal sonority over time, overriding its traditional need to resolve.

Against Rameau, McGowan contrasts the theories of George Russell, noting their pragmatic effect on others' theoretical work. For example, he considers Mark Levine and János Gonda's assertion that "functional movement" is more determinative of function than the construction of the chord. When McGowan later applies Riemann's theories to jazz the differences between the two approaches becomes evident. He presents yet another definition of a "home-based" tonic; rather than the tonic, subdominant, and dominant functions being applied to the "three primary triads," those same harmonic functions instead became abstractly manifested by certain chord constructions and other tones that belong to them. He applies this by introducing the concept of chords as "having" their functional interpretation changed from one structural level to another. McGowan notes that this theory was generated in response to disagreement on the purpose of a chord, and I believe it is important to retain Russell's idea of a

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6 Rameau, 62.
7 McGowan, 118.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 127.
chord maintaining its harmonic function while the notes that embellish or alter its primary structure *contribute to* its functional property as opposed to *detracting from* it.

These discussions of the conditions for harmonic consonance and dissonance are pertinent, as they serve as a starting point for further examining implicit chord tones. Indeed, many competing theories explore the extent to which non-triadic consonances are still interpretable as tonic-functioning. Since the principles of harmonic progression also apply to the implied harmonic structures of the melody in vernacular song, the concept of implicitly consonant chord tones in the harmony can be extended to the melody as well. Two examples of theories that discuss this concept are by Steven Strunk and, later, Keith Waters, who analyzed the compositions of Chick Corea circa 1960 through a "layered" approach of expanded functional equivalence, transformational systems via interval cycles, and a nuanced system of chord substitutions.

Strunk opens his tonal (what he calls "experimental") approach to Chick Corea's "Windows" (1967) with a discussion on harmonic ambiguity that is driven by melodic tones being recontextualized in different harmonic areas, often forcing rehearings of previous harmonies. For example, he hears the A5 in the opening Bm7 chord as a basis to recontextualize our hearing of the chord, not as the tonic, but as ii7 of A. Similarly, a B4 over an EΔ chord is, at the time, easily heard as a chordal factor of a new cadential tonic, but the A♯ two hyperbeats later suggests that EΔ was a subdominant IV all along.¹⁰ Strunk's analysis shows how melodic choices influence and are influenced by past or future harmonies throughout a phrase or piece. In addition to establishing the concept of non-triadic consonances, this is an important step in

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removing the harmony's role as the sole arbiter of harmonic function and allowing for the melody to gain some autonomy.

Keith Waters, in "Chick Corea and Postbop Harmony" (2016), expands Strunk's listening strategies by focusing on melodic cycles and the role of chord substitutions in accommodating them. This approach analyzes the melody as its own process, while showing how the underlying harmony adapts to fulfill its own functional progression, albeit in ways that conform to the melody. To illustrate this, he presents a reduction of "Inner Space" (1973) where, while the melody moves through a D♯ augmented triad (what he calls an "ic4 melodic pathway"), the harmony adapts to it via a series of chord substitutions that maintain a sense of standard chordal function. Thus, motivic processes in the melody inform harmonic choices, adding to the sense of Strunk's melodic autonomy. Applying this to "Gotta Go My Own Way," for example, a listener might hear the G♯ over the E major chord in m. 4 as being "more consonant" by virtue of it being a member of a triadic harmony, but independent of the accompanying harmony it can be heard as stable because it results from the process of motivic repetition. The aforementioned pattern of structural ninths could be interpreted as being driven by the obstinace of Motive A.

In a more popular-music context, this concept of melodic sovereignty plays a passing role in analyses of form and rhythmic structure by Brad Osborn and Naphtali Wagner in articles discussing "terminally climactic forms" and "auxiliary cadences," respectively. Osborn explores how an E-flat in Save the Day's song "Rocks, Tonic, Juice, Magic" (1999) can be heard as a

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reciting tone elaborating a central A-flat major motivic figure over various harmonies. The choruses thereafter shy away from E-flat as central, but the terminal climax of the piece reintroduces it in a new way: on a hypermetrically weak 4th unit, over an F minor chord, before the harmonic resolution to E-flat major. Osborn notes that the F minor chord is, in subsequent repetitions, a simple A-flat major tonic chord instead. We are left with a question about the nature of the E-flat in two primary local contexts (within the "terminal climax"). The melody seems to be operating under its own process on a pitch that is carried over into the other sections. Its presence as consonant over F minor is affirmed by its subsequent use on A-flat major, suggesting that repetition is what permits the audience to reinterpret the E-flat as a non-triadic consonance. In the same way that the E-flat over the F minor chord is retroactively explained by the A-flat major chord, the dissonant G♯s in "Gotta Go My Own Way" feel justified when a later motive features G♯ over a harmony with which it forms a consonance.

Naphtali Wagner's article treats other contexts in which melodic processes start from recontextualized harmonic areas. According to his analysis of the Beatles' "She Loves You" (1964), the auxiliary phrase delays a motivic melodic descent, which makes the descent's arrival at the cadential point sound more final. The particular harmonies that delay it allow strong points in the melody to be heard as chord tones — except the delayed tone, which calls into question the span of the motivic descent. Here, then, we have a melodic process that can be summarized as a motive, a more specific version of the repetition found in the Osborn article. As the melody and harmony proceed in their own ways, they become increasingly independent,

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since the harmony is continuing its auxiliary progression, ignoring the melodic process all the while. Despite this, Wagner claims that the listener still perceives the total vertical harmony, even if the processes themselves are separated.14

This leads us to two important sources in making explicit the divide between melody and harmony, articles by David Temperley and Drew Nobile regarding the "Melodic-Harmonic Divorce." Temperley provides a hierarchical framework for attributing chord tone membership, starting with the chromatic scale, then a more specific pitch collection, then a specific harmony within which the appropriate chord tones are contained, in a scheme taken from Lerdahl's "Tonal Pitch Space."15 The chromatic layer will likely remain constant within a given work, while the harmonic layer shifts relatively often.16 Temperley's thesis is that "the pitch organization is stratified: there are different frameworks for the melody and accompaniment" (Temperley, 328). He illustrates this with a figure narrowing the scope of the chromatic plane to two more specific pitch collections (Example 2.1), still vertically interconnected (this sonic moniker is important as both collections still maintain their planar autonomy). Temperley says that (at least in rock

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music) listeners usually refer pitches to chords in a pentatonic scale, and in situations where they do not, they attribute them to a diatonic version of the same hierarchical layer.\textsuperscript{17}

Temperley argues that the melody's relationship to the harmony is "temporarily suspended," resulting in a slightly more independent melodic stream. In a varied corpus of rock songs, he notes that verses tend to be more "divorced" than the choruses and attributes the strength of these choruses to the "tight" link of melody and harmony. For example, in the verse of the Beatles' "Drive My Car" (1965) the lower vocal line matches the harmonies, but the upper vocal line (more easily heard as primary) stays on one note. I believe this criteria can be extended to motives as well, since the harmonic consistency demonstrated in Temperley's article is a large-scale version of motivic harmony. Thus, in "Gotta Go My Own Way," the \(<E, G\# , A>\) motive in the melodic stream can be interpreted independently as a consistent fragment in a plane divorced from the rest of the vertical harmonies, a third-level derivation from the chromatic and diatonic layers.

Nobile's article places this divorce into more contrapuntal terms, focusing on the "voice leading" within each plane. This is certainly one step closer to the phenomenon that I aim to elucidate; the divorced notes in the melody are understood to have specific contrapuntal purposes instead of simply abstractly existing in a different tonal stream. Nobile distinguishes three types of divorce: a "hierarchy divorce," a "loop divorce," and a "syntax divorce."

The first type obtains in situations where the implied harmony of the melody may be heard on a structurally different level than the harmony (while retaining the same key). He uses the chorus from The Steve Miller Band's "Rock'n Me" (1976) as an example: in the second

\textsuperscript{17} Temperley, 334.
hypermetric unit in B major, the vocals arpeggiate an E major triad (IV) overtop an A5 chord (flat VII) in the accompaniment. In the third measure of his excerpt, a salient G♯ is attacked at the same time as the bass, allowing it to be heard as somewhat stable, despite the separate melodic and harmonic processes.18

A loop divorce is somewhat simpler: in certain situations, a repeated series of four chords (the "loop") does not constitute a progression; rather, they comprise a singular unit that, upon repetition, becomes a kind of extended pedal harmony. Over it, then, the melody is free to elaborate with other tones in the middle or foreground (Nobile adopts Schenkerian conceptions of melodic hierarchy) that may or may not correspond to the triadic tones implied by the bass.19

Syntax divorces largely appear at cadences in which the *Urlinie*'s structural descent is "incorrectly" harmonized in the bass. In his analysis of Alanis Morrissette's "You Learn" (1995), scale degrees 3 and 2 are both harmonized by a single IV, an "improper" bass tone for both structural melodic pitches.20 Recognizing this divorce allows us to hear the melody's own linear process as separate from the functional harmonic one.

Nobile's elaborations of the ideas behind the melodic-harmonic divorce provide the most flexible explanations for non-harmonic tones in the melody. They all entail a conception of pop music texture as an interaction of distinct, independent contrapuntal strata.

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19 Nobile, 193-197.

20 Ibid., 197-198.
2.3 - A Motive-Based System

The theories I have reviewed all provide analytically productive ways to hear such extraneous melodic pitches, but what might be missing from the current understanding of contrapuntal streams? For one, as previously discussed, the specific genre of musical theater has been thus far largely neglected, and a similar yet nuanced system applied to musical theater may elucidate the chameleon genre's transferrable traits. Secondarily, though, Nobile's updated systemization of the melodic-harmonic divorce can neglect specific moments where issues of chord membership arise. Hearing an *Urlinie* as unfolding a single harmony through various subservient harmonic areas can overlook the specific elements that create individual moments of melodic-harmonic tension and resolution, moments that can have dramatic or narrative function.

For that reason, I propose to develop a "motivic-harmonic" reading of musical theater melodies that aims to accomplish several things:

1. Nuance the ideas of chordal consonance and dissonance as theorized by McGowan by applying the theory to the relevant genres. A motive in a song must exist in some sort of temporal space as well as a pitch space, and should be analyzed accordingly.

2. Expand on the ideas presented by Strunk, Waters, and Nobile by further specifying which of the textural layers are interacting at any given point in a piece. It is worth preserving these authors' sensitivity to vertical harmonic alteration that arises as a result of the melodic process, but I hope to examine it on a more local scale.

3. Separate the texture of a given song into three streams — the bass, the "orchestra," and the melody, each with its own harmonic process. The purpose of such a separation is to remove the assumption that one stream relies on another in terms of process, while still
recognizing that these processes occur simultaneously. More specifically, notes that may be traditionally dissonant above a certain bass note may in fact be stable, if set up as such by the motivic context. For example, an G♯ may perhaps be stable over an F♯ chord, if there is a strong enough motivic reason to claim it as such.

4. Narrate analyses of musical theater songs based on several dimensions of harmony and gestural nuance, as do Buchler and others. These analyses may examine the affective power of motivic transformation and other forms of gestural alteration, as do the analyses of the songs of Rebecca Clarke,21 the leitmotifs of Wagner,22 and many others. Rather than treat large-scale storylines, however, I concentrate on shorter or specific timespans when the interaction of the streams has significant emotional and dramatic impact.

How might we begin to codify such a hearing? The rest of this section will present a series of definitions and conditions we can use to express stable and unstable relationships among the three independent textural layers and their respective harmonies and establish the circumstances in which those layers interact and for how long. Each definition will be illustrated by an example from musical theater, and some of the examples will illustrate later definitions as well. To express the quality and function of motivic events, a set of graphical representations (GR's) will be introduced and named as the definition presents itself, or when context is needed before the next set of definitions.

The first relationships we will consider are global, that is, they do not depend on a note's membership in a motive.

GR 1: Use Roman numerals and figured bass below each score system to describe the relationship between the orchestra + bass, and lead-sheet chord symbols above the score to represent the relation between the melody + bass. A chord symbol should reflect the simplest possible relationship between the streams in each pair.

Definition 1: A "standard chord tone" (CT) is a note in a higher textural layer (i.e., the orchestration or the melody) that has a root, third, or fifth relationship with the root of the chord.

GR 2: CTs should be represented as open, round (standard) noteheads. The first six melodic events in Example 2.2 are CTs.

Definition 2: A "non-chord tone" (NCT) is a note in a higher textural layer that is not a member of the triad implied by the root; in other words, any note that is not a root, third, or fifth chord factor.

Example 2.2: Lopez & Marx, *Avenue Q*, "It Sucks to Be Me" — chord symbols/figured bass (GR1), CTs/NCTs (GR2, 3), anticipations (GR7)

Example 2.3: Sondheim, *Sweeney Todd*, "Johanna" — slurs/ties (GR4, 5), motives and transformations (GR5a, 5b), stems (GR6), MCTs (GR10)
GR 3: NCTs should be represented as filled, round (standard) noteheads. The second F♯ in Example 2.2 is an NCT: it forms a ninth over the bass, which is signaling a root-position chord. The D on "you" in Example 2.3 is also an NCT: it forms a major seventh over the bass, the root of an E-flat major chord.

The remaining definitions concern a note's function within a motive, independent of its relation to the chordal root.

Definition 3: A "motive" is any sequence of two or more pitches that is heard as salient or structural. Pitches in the motive may recur, but for pitches that immediately repeat, only the first is considered.

GR 4: Put a slur below a motive to indicate all notes that belong to it. Use slurs above notes to connect specifically the first note to the last. Slurs can curve from below to above notes and vice versa to avoid or include certain melodic notes that do or do not belong to the motive, respectively.

GR 5a: Mark each statement of a distinct motive with a letter and, if applicable, a transformation that specifies its relation to the first statement of the motive. Transformations may be retrogrades, transpositions, and inversions (motives are inverted around the axis of the first or last note). The order of operations is retrograde first, then inversion, then transposition.

GR 5b: Use prime markings (i.e., A') to show motives that are similar to that letter's motive but not exact repetitions. It is usually unnecessary to denote that a note has been chromatically altered by a transformation.

GR 6: Motives occur within text-grammatical units I will call "lyrical phrases." Put an upwards stems on the note that starts a lyrical phrase and a downwards stem on the note that ends it.

The main motive in Example 2.3 is comprised of a diatonic step, labeled as Motive A. Its first iteration involves an E-flat and D ("feel you"), and they are slurred together to group them under the appropriate motivic label. But its textural unit also includes the anacrusis (on "I") to the first tonic chord, so that is given an upwards stem, while an additional downwards stem is added on the D to show the end of the short verbal phrase. Two additional versions of Motive A, Motive
RT-3A and Motive RT-5A follow; both receive the same slurring and lyrical markings as the original Motive A.

Example 2.4: Sondheim, *Sweeney Todd*, "Johanna" — resolution (DEF 7), orchestra's stream (GR 11), motivic resolution (GR12)

Definition 4: A "salient motivic tone" (SMT) is a note or notes that belong to a motive and meet one of the following conditions:

1a. The note is attacked simultaneously with, or in anticipation of, a bass note. In Example 2.4, the SMTs are the notes attacked simultaneously with bass notes (the square noteheads have a more specific meaning explained below).

GR 7: Anticipations should be marked with one or two slashes next to the notehead or through its stem (if available). If the change of bass note causes the note to change from CT → NCT or from NCT → CT, add one slash; if the note remains a CT or NCT at the change of bass, then add two slashes. In Example 2.2, the final E4 is a CT with both the preceding E and forthcoming A in the bass, and therefore has two slashes underneath it.

1b. If no note in a motive meets Condition 1a, the SMT is the longest note in the motive.

GR 8: The immediate repetition of a note need not be shown in graphs unless it changes function (such as moving from CT → NCT). Repetitions can be inferred from the lyrics as well.

GR 9: Notes that are prolonged in the motivic or melodic harmony can be shown as such with a dotted slur or tie. In Example 2.3, the B-flat is elaborated by a changing tone figure created by the C and A-flat and feels as though it has been retained throughout the excerpt. In addition, the B-flat that ends the excerpt is
salient due to its position at the end of the motive. This implies that the Bb is being “prolonged” from the A-flat in the bass to its return on “you.”

1c. If no note in a motive meets Conditions 1a or 1b, the SMT is the highest or lowest note in the motive.

1d. If no note in a motive meets Conditions 1a, 1b, or 1c, the SMT is the first or last note of the motive.

2. Another note in a motive can be a "subsidiary SMT" if the corresponding note in another version of the same motive is an SMT under Conditions 1a-1d.

Definition 5: A "motivic chord tone" (MCT) is a motivic note that would normally be heard as an NCT, but is a SMT so is heard as stable despite not being an CT with respect to the root. To be an MCT, the SMT must participate in some sort of melodic motion since a single or repeated note cannot itself be a motive.

Definition 6: A note is heard as "appropriate" to the bass if it is a CT, an MCT, or is parallel to an SMT or MCT in a similar motive (SMT Condition 2).

GR 10: MCTs should be marked with open, square noteheads and indicated by adding extensions (7, 9, sus, etc.) to the lead sheet chord symbol above the staff. In Example 2.3, the B-flat on "-ha-" (from "Johanna") is analyzed as an MCT because it coincides rhythmically with the bass (making it a SMT) but forms an otherwise dissonant ninth with the root.

GR 11: Include any MCTs in the harmony of the orchestra's layer with upward stems on the bottom staff.

Definition 7: A note is "resolved" if it is not appropriate and subsequently moves (via step or leap) to an appropriate note.

1. Resolution need not occur immediately. The dissonant note may be elaborated by chord tone associates, etc.
2. The note of resolution need not be a CT if it is an SMT under Condition 2.

GR 12: Occasionally, "motivic resolution" may occur to a tone that has the same pitch and function as a previous MCT. In these cases, the point of resolution should be marked with a filled in, square notehead, connected by a dotted slur to the previous MCT.

Consider the two Fs in Example 2.4. They are both SMTs: the dissonant F on "waken" is salient due to its coincidence with the bass of E-flat, and the final F on "you" is salient because it resolves motivically from the G-flat and feels as though the F has been prolonged throughout Motives B, A, and IB. The second F is shown as solid, and slurred back to the first F to show that its resolution is "motivic" in that it creates a transformation of Motive B.

Example 2.5: Richmond, Mean Girls, "Apex Predator" — justification (GR14/15)

Definition 8a: Should motion occur to an CT from an SMT or MCT, the SMT/MCT is considered the appropriate tone, unless the CT is an SMT.
Definition 8b: A "nominal resolution" is a type of resolution that satisfies Definition 8a of "resolution." It is a resolution "in name only," as it would be considered a resolution in standard harmonic practice. While it does not function this way in the motivic-harmonic system since the preceding SMT is considered to be stable, there is still an audible sense of returning a triadic structure of the harmony.

GR 13: Points of nominal resolution are marked with parentheses around the notehead. In Example 2.4, the MCT of F (special NCTs by definition) moves to the CT of G. The G, however, is motivically weaker than the F and functions only as a nominal resolution, marked as such with parentheses.

Definition 9: An MCT undergoes "justification" if its pitch is revealed to satisfy the second condition of an SMT through an event that has the same pitch class or provides a motivic link.

Definition 10: The "referent" of an MCT or motive is the CT or motive that justifies it. A full justification requires both the MCT and its referent. An MCT can be "prereferentially justified" or "postreferentially justified" in that the MCT comes either before or after the referent, respectively.

GR 14: Notes that are justified are marked with an asterisk. In Example 2.5, the D4 in the second gesture ("she does not") is an MCT that is postreferentially justified by a CT from the beginning of the passage. The referent returns at the beginning of the fourth gesture ("Janis can't do that"). Similarly, the referents of A4 and F4 in the second system postreferentially justify the A4 and F4 in the seventh gesture ("...as I follow...").

GR 15: Referents that justify a later SMT or motive are marked with a question mark. In Example 2.5, the F on "cower" in Motive A'? seems to alter Motive A with no motivic referent. The high A in Motive B? also seems, at first, arbitrary. However, Motive B is prereferentially motivically justified at the onset of the next system with a salient descending third. The F4 is also justified here, revealed as the new nadir of the phrase within Motive B. Notes that "answer" questions by motivic link are labeled with "!". Should a second referent of a postreferential MCT reappear later, the pair of the first referent and MCT is given priority.
Critically, the use of either term refers to the *arrival of the MCT* relative to the referent, which may or may not have been introduced. For example, situations in which the referent has not been presented before the arrival of an MCT are prerreferential justifications, despite the process of justification concluding at the point of the referent's arrival.

Definition 11: "Delay" is the time that elapses from the referent of an MCT to the MCT or from the introduction of an MCT to its prerreferential justification.

Definition 12: "Melodic-harmonic stasis" refers to a listener's tendency to attribute, purely within the melodic stream, the same horizontal harmony to a motive when it is repeated. Crucially, this definition assumes that the listener is able to simultaneously intuit not only the melodic harmony but also the vertical-harmonies prompted by the bass and the orchestra, experiencing the two streams together. It also relies on the listener being able to identify the SMT or motivic resolution in a given motive and to hear it and its associated harmony to be prolonged through repetition, even if the bass and orchestral layers change.

GR 16: For immediately repeated motives in the melody that may be heard as prolonging a single harmony, bracket all the notes of that harmony in the melody and label the harmony with a Roman numeral (with extensions as necessary). In

Example 2.6: Menken, *The Little Mermaid*, "Part of Your World" — melodic-harmonic stasis (DEF12, GR16), flags (GR17)
Example 2.6, Motive A, an unfolded diatonic third, feels as though it prolongs I in its own textural stream, despite the underlying F7 chord's own implications of tonicizing IV. The C5 on "explore," in its status as an MCT, feels as though it prolongs the same harmony implied by the previous Motive As. As such, the entire first half of the melody of the excerpt is bracketed under "I."

GR 17: To denote a prolongation of harmony within the melodic stream, attach flags to stemmed notes (only once within each bracketed melodic-harmonic prolongation) and add an extra corner line to the melodic-harmonic bracket. In Example 2.6, the first A4 and high C5 are flagged because they arpeggiate the tonic triad.

Let us now briefly re-examine "Gotta Go My Own Way" with this new framework to demonstrate the concepts and show how a simple motive and its transformations can contribute to a larger narrative purpose. Example 2.7 is a motivic-harmonic graph of the song's chorus. At the beginning of the excerpt we hear the motive that I labeled as Motive A, comprised of the <E,
G♯, A> that will remain ubiquitous throughout the excerpt. Within this motive, the G♯ MCTs occur simultaneously with the bass locking it in the audience's ear as motivically important. These MCTs often nominally resolve to A, a CT with many of the bass notes, all of which suggest root-position chords until the end of the section. Motive A' appears soon after as a diatonic extension to Motive A, adding B4 to the established motive. In the second phrase, the G♯ on the word "hope" is finally prreferentially justified after being an appropriate NCT for so long; we feel as though it is stable, despite its NCT status, in a more tonal context. The G♯s up to this point, in addition to the apex of B4 and the motivic nadir of E4, push me to hear a melodic-harmonic stasis on V as the orchestra and bass harmony continues independently. Following that Motive A on "hope," there is an exact retrograde of it before the arrival on C♯. This C♯, which anticipates the orchestra's change to i, is more easily interpreted as belonging to the vertical harmony as it is outside the melodic-harmonic stasis of V that the melody has been prolonging.

Next, the expanded version of the initial motive, Motive A', is heard again followed by its exact retrograde, Motive RA', briefly interrupted by an NCT on A4. To clarify the motive, the slur starts below the first few notes in the motive, then curves over the A4 to show that is not contained within Motive RA'. A pair of new and brief Motive Bs precedes the MCT of E that begins another version of Motive RA'. This is postreferentially justified by the E4 referent on the words "someday" that come before it. Since the motive is transposed down by a perfect fifth this time, it is labeled as Motive RT-7A. These last two phrases make a fitting end to describe Gabriella's dubious choice to leave Lava Springs by changing the melodic harmony to I, and creating stasis on it. After the long V, this change symbolizes Gabriella's attempt to convince herself that she is making the right decision, cutting herself off from Troy and the rest of the cast.
Chapter 3: Analysis of Excerpts with Brief Commentary

3.1 - *Matilda,* "When I Grow Up," Verse 1, two readings

Example 3.1: Minchin, *Matilda,* "When I Grow Up," Verse 1, two readings
Identifying motives and their transformations is central to the analytical method I have outlined. This may be difficult when a passage affords several different interpretations. Some of this ambiguity, though, can be resolved by examining the extramusical elements that contribute to a phrase's narrative momentum, along with the music. Lyrics and musical content should be understood thoroughly. This can be hindered, however, when a song is relatively isolated from the overall narrative, just as a standard pop song may be. For instance, "When I Grow Up" from Matilda seems somewhat disconnected from the actual plot of the musical when it appears. The lyrics seem to convey a general sense of hope amidst the children's suffering under Miss Trunchbull. However, if the lyrics are considered together with their musical underscoring, a strong dramatic irony becomes evident that communicates a less optimistic affect.

This interaction of lyrics and music manifests already in the song's first verse. Two potential melodic-harmonic readings of it are outlined in Example 3.1, each with a different narrative implication depending on how the musical elements are heard to interact. Before the music shown in the excerpts, Tommy imagines growing tall enough to climb trees more easily. The dramatic irony is truly conveyed, however, in the subsequent lyrics: whereas Tommy predicts something that is actually quite possible, Reginald sings that he will be "smart enough to answer all the questions that you need to know the answers to before you're grown up." Adults in the audience will recognize this as wishful thinking. Later lyrics include such fantasies as "and when I grow up, I will eat sweets everyday" to emphasize further that children's dreams will not pan out the way they expect it to; thus, despite being an ostensibly "happy" song (or as close to "happy" as the collective would imagine it to be), the actual connotation behind it is rather sad.
This connotational dissonance is reflected in the musical underscoring in several different ways, as shown in the first analysis in Example 3.1. We hear Motive A, an embellished arpeggiation of F major, above a harmonically appropriate F major chord in the orchestra. Associated with Motive A is Motive A', the interval of a 6th that spans its extremities. The V chord that follows occurs without the melody making any concessions to accommodate it. The A4 is thus perfectly functional in the melodic-harmonic stream, but the orchestra immediately moves away from their prior harmonic union. Motive A is repeated directly after, but the harmonic implications are already complicated: Motive A prolongs the tonic of F major, but its repetition is sung over a C major harmony. Even more puzzling is that the ending A4 of the second Motive A occurs over a B-flat major harmony, forming a major seventh interval with the root.

A great deal of tension is introduced by these dissonances between the melodic and harmonic streams. Even though the melodic stream has not yet changed harmonies, we are still inclined to hear the A4 as functional in the vertical-harmonic stream. To express this, I have marked an asterisk on top of that A4 as well as a dotted slur from the previous Motive A, signaling that the pitch that entered as an SMT is no longer being heard as a CT due to both pitch and motivic postreferential justification. Since it is one of the main pitches in Motive A, the second A4 is also marked as an MCT with a square notehead. This MCT also carries potential narrative connotations. As the children present specific examples of their naive goals for the future, the MCT on A4, the result of a rising Motive A, is initially heard as "not belonging" to the vertical harmony, despite being a CT in melodic-harmonic stream.
In the first interpretation, the start a new of Motive B is elided with the end of Motive A, and spans the embellished unfolded interval of a major third. As the first nominal resolution to B-flat simply extends the motive by an extra neighbor motion, the slur that defines Motive B arches over the first couple of notes before including the essential pitch content. To show that the melody is repeated over both the IV and iv chords, a Motive C has been added to show the motion from A4 to G4, a sort of motivic resolution that resolves to an inappropriate pitch, but a motivically recognizable one.

The second interpretation diverges from the first. It also treats the A4 over IV as an MCT from Motive A, but then identifies a different version of Motive B in which B-flat4 and G4 are the most important notes. Motive C has also changed to show the changing function of A4 to be a mere stepwise embellishment to the G4. This difference in motivic definition opens the possibility of hearing the melodic-harmonic stasis as being broken, instead following the orchestra's move to the subdominant.

At the end of the verse, the use of Motive A' subtly alludes to Motive A, thus strengthening the sense of the tonic chord in the melody. Both interpretations also show some form of transformation of Motive B finishing the section. For the first interpretation, we hear Motive RIT4B and in the second interpretation we hear Motive T-1B. Despite the differing transformational details, both agree that the tonic chord is being prolonged in the melody.

Considering that both analyses begin and end with tonic in the melody, I prefer the Motive B posited in the first analysis. I include the second interpretation to present other possible

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23 I caution the reader from dismissing a motivic reading simply due to its relative complexity. The specificity to which my system defines transformations is useful insofar as they contribute a harmonically relevant change.
hearings of the song, as the reader may notice that this analytical method seems rather flexible. I could certainly construct a narrative regarding the melodic-harmonic ii chord; for example, the melody's brief foray into the predominant area could signal to the audience that the childrens' desires are in fact unsupported by the truth, represented as the tonic chord.

However, I find myself more convinced by the first interpretation, primarily due to more technical considerations. The performative emphasis on the word "smart" is driven by the conditions it meets for it to heard as an SMT and MCT, namely rhythmic coincidence with the changing vertical harmony. The trochaic rhythm and prosodic emphasis cements the A4 as motivically significant in this instance. It also seems more consistent to hear Motive B as having the same motivic-harmonic functions when it repeats. I also feel like the narrative of the first interpretation is simpler. Preserving the motivic-harmonic stasis on the tonic chord is emblematic of the dramatic irony of the song: the children imagine that adult life will preserve and value their childish desires. In truth, the world will change around them and they will be eventually be forced to adapt to their new lives.

3.2 - Little Shop of Horrors, "Suppertime," Chorus

Seymour Krelborn, the meek employee of the florist Mr. Mushnik, has found himself in a sticky situation: up until now, he has been cultivating Audrey II, an alien carnivorous plant (which he named after his coworker and love interest), as a means to win Audrey over and prove that he can be popular. This requires him to feed people to Audrey II, which causes it to grow to massive size and learn how to speak. What's worse, Mushnik has caught onto the mysterious disappearances and is now confronting Seymour about it. As he does, Audrey II, unbeknownst to Mushnik, is coaxing Seymour to feed him to it in order to avoid capture and retain his newfound
fame. The excerpt is the second iteration of the song's main section before Seymour disposes of Mushnik; it follows a first version that is similar but has less clearly defined harmony. This

Example 3.2: Menken, *Little Shop of Horrors*, "Suppertime," Chorus
formal repetition confirms that this song makes use of a twelve-bar blues form, a genre which often makes use of clearly defined motives and melodic stasis over harmonic changes.

The first and second lyrical phrases are identical in terms of motivic content. Motive A is introduced as a commonplace 5 - 7 - 1 scale degree walkup that establishes the tonic asynchronously with the bass via anticipation, and Motive B spans the interval of a diatonic third shown by the overarching slur, also confirming that tonic with its second note. The qualities of both of these motives begin a melodic-harmonic stasis on i that persists until the second system.

It is possible to hear the filled-in version of Motive B as a version of Motive A on the basis of a shared (025) trichord. It might also be tempting to simply label Motive A + Motive B as one larger motive due to the exact repetition of the lyrical phrase. However, the music after these two phrases discourages both of these hearings. Motive T5A opens the third lyrical phrase, this time starting on the tonic, followed by a version of Motive B that neither ends on the same tonic as Motive T5A, as it did in the first two lyrical phrases, nor follows the contour of that potential "filled-in" Motive B. As the two motives are transposed at different levels, it would be more beneficial to simply continue to label them separately, despite the motives still appearing in succession. In addition, because the intervallic span of a third is preserved between all of the iterations of Motive B thus far, but not the entire pitch content, it should be labeled as though that interval is the essential element of the motive.

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24 Though we might be able to suspect the use of an CT → CT type anticipation due to the final chord from the previous section, I am hesitant to label it as such as the harmony is not elaborated by the orchestra and the D3 in the melody could perhaps suggest some sort of dominant harmonic area.
Motive C is also introduced here, but only in part. As the melodic-harmonic stasis continues into this passage (with the C4s acting as neighbors in the melodic stream), the C4 at the end of Motive C? feels incomplete, despite it acting as a CT with the orchestral harmony. The fourth lyrical phrase is close to being a repetition of the third lyrical phrase, much like the first two lyrical phrases were identical, with the exception that Motive C is completed this time. When it is fully realized, it is revealed to actually adhere to the melodic-harmonic stasis, recontextualizing the first C4 from the third lyrical phrase, despite it being an MCT in the vertical harmony.

The melody in the final system is motivically constructed in a similar way as the previous system. Motive T5A begins the lyrical phrase, followed by the same version of Motive B, Motive T4B. However, not only is Motive T4B rhythmically lengthened to focus on the vertical dominant, it is repeated as Motive T-8B directly afterward to accommodate the proper transposition of Motive C to end the excerpt. Additionally, the D4 that Motive T4B holds is a prereferential justification for hearing the previous D4 as an MCT, cementing it as part of the prolonged melodic-harmonic stasis. As Motive C inverts the sequence of Motive A + Motive B established in the first lyrical phrases, it sounds as if the excerpt ends opposite to how it began.

In this way, motives that undergo transformations can have their connotations similarly transformed. As Motive A's rising contour is an essential element of its construction, I ascribe a certain "questioning" character to it. This, in combination with the Motive RT-7A at the end of the excerpt makes it sound as though this section is representative of Audrey II making a sort of formal argument, complete with an opening statement, evidence, implications, and a closing statement to gradually break Seymour's psyche. As the Motive A + Motive B pairing is so ever-
present in this passage, it echoes the constancy of Audrey II's coercion, insidiously growing in persuasive power by combining and transforming a few well-defined motives until Seymour eventually gives in.

This suggests that melodic-harmonic stasis can be as much a narrative technique as a compositional one. In addition to the tonic's ubiquity being justified by being a relevant pitch class in the i and iv chords in the twelve-bar blues form, the idea that pitches can change function in similar motives despite being heard as preserving melodic harmony reinforces the fiendishness of Audrey II's request. In order to maintain his new popularity (the G tonic), Seymour must endlessly surrender aspects of his normal life, as we hear the dissonance between melodic-harmonic stasis and the orchestrational harmony warp the function of certain pitches in the melody.

3.3 - Carousel, "If I Loved You," Chorus

Carousel has a somewhat different musical style and draws from popular musical styles that far predate any example we've examined thus far. First performed in 1945, it retains much of the stylistic conventions from the earlier days of musical theater, complementing the setting of the musical quite well. Despite the generic differences, though, it still makes tight use of motives, and the following analysis elucidates how the layers of the music interact with each other and provide the performer ample opportunities to add emotional weight to certain notes through simple repetition.

This example has a narrative arc similar to that of "Suppertime." Billy and Julie have both recently lost their jobs at the eponymous carousel and are conversing about their mutual attraction. Their lyrics remain coy for the entire song (of course, the two kiss at the end to ease
If I loved you words wouldn't come in an easy way.

Round in circles I'd go. Longin' to tell you but afraid...

I'd let my golden chances pass me by.

Example 3.3: Rodgers, *Carousel*, "If I Loved You," Chorus
the audience into the time skip that directly follows the song, where it shows that they are married), and while there is no coercion taking place like in *Little Shop of Horrors*, there is certainly a truth to be acted upon that grows stronger over time with a comparatively desirable end goal. This graph represents the second A and B sections of the 32-bar AABA' form. Section A2 largely repeats Section A1, and while A' may have the apex of the song, I think that the arc presented in the change between the A and B sections has the most dramatic and interesting use of motivic transformation.

This excerpt is unique in how the melodic motives interact with the vertical harmonies. For example, Motive A is introduced as a rising arpeggio starting on the tonic pitch class, but ends up outlining the relative minor in first inversion. The A4 that Motive A ends on might result in hearing the melodic harmony as outlining the vi chord, but the performative weight of starting on the tonic at the beginning of the phrase overpowers such a hearing. Instead, the A4 is relegated to being heard as the added major sixth to the tonic triad. Despite proceeding in a separate textural stream, the orchestral harmonies seem to encourage this interpretation as well: the passage starts on the tonic triad and almost seems to accommodate the errant A with a non-functional common-tone diminished seventh chord to prolong the tonic.

The next two motives serve to extend this prolongation. Two iterations of Motive B are introduced in succession, defined by a descending unfolded interval of a diatonic third. Both Motive B and Motive T-5B are embedded within an inverted version of Motive A, which has also been transposed up by an octave. This interaction between these motives confirms that C, E, G, and A are vital parts of the melodic-harmonic stasis and are better interpreted as I\textsuperscript{add6} rather than
vi\(^7\), as Motive IT12A defines the span of the lyrical phrase, with Motive B and Motive T-5B beginning and ending on the important pitches.

Motive C, which only spans a diatonic step, immediately demands that its first note be heard as an MCT to justify its powerful coincidence with the bass. The nominal resolution to the C, which is a CT of the augmented triad in the orchestra, provides immediate relief to the MCT that has had no established referent up to this point. Despite this, it has immediate significance to the vertical harmony at large, carrying with it the sound of an incomplete neighbor that transcends the harmonic function of an NCT.

The second system opens with a transposed version of Motive A, this one outlining the notes in a dominant chord without the root. Unlike at first, however, I opt to hear the melody and orchestra as properly separated. In particular, the motive begins on the root of the vertical harmony which is then prolonged though another common-tone diminished seventh chord. However, the inversion of the harmony as well as my predisposition to hear I - V - I in the melodic-harmonic stream instead of I - ii\(^6\) - I leads me to hear a weakening of the relationship between the motive and the harmony. In addition, the final note of Motive T2A is not a chord tone of the ct\(^9\) this time, but instead belongs to an inverted and transposed version of Motive C. It also similarly starts on an MCT, elided from the previous Motive T2A, and nominally resolves to the following tonic chord.

The next two lyrical phrases are the most interesting in the excerpt. In the first ("longin' to tell you..."), a statement of Motive B is followed by two versions of Motive C that reiterate their MCT → nominal resolution on a local level. This leaves us with a B4 at the end of the phrase that could possibly be a version of Motive B elided from the previous two notes, Motive
RT-2B. However, I am inclined to hear two successive and performatively poignant Motive Cs and to understand that B4 as part of a large-scale Motive T10C that spans the entire lyrical phrase. A topside slur has been used to connect the two notes of Motive T10C’s, bypassing the notes under it. The final lyrical phrase preserves much of the third phrase's structure with the exception that the overarching Motive C has been inverted, forming Motive IT10C, motivically justifying the motivic resolution to B4 from before.

Interestingly, these motives seem to affect the orchestral-harmonic stream as well, as there are other surprising chords that emerge from the excerpt's texture. Specifically, the bass of the vertical harmony borrows from the motivic transformations of the melodic stream to justify some otherwise peculiar chord choices. At the end of the second system, for example, a C♯7 chord follows the ii chord, which can be explained by a chromatic alteration of Motive C in the bass — its stepwise motion allows the C♯7 to be heard as being built upon a motivic bass pitch. Similarly, the bass in the B-flat and D/A chords at the end of excerpt can be heard as motivically linked via Motive T-26B, the descending unfolded interval of a minor third. In other words, this process ends on the "proper" vertical harmony of G major, embellished via Motive T-26B to delay the dominant.

This interplay of motivic transformations between different contrapuntal streams can be ascribed a narrative meaning as well. Billy and Julie lyrically claim independence from one another, constantly finding harmonies to accommodate the pitch that is being sung. This also applies the initial statements of Motive A and Motive T2A. While one harmony is being implied by the melody, the orchestral harmony attempts to accommodate the motives therein, though sometimes it fails to do so.
3.4 - *Wicked*, "Defying Gravity," Bridge

The musical syntax of Stephen Schwartz's *Wicked* is typical of much of modern musical theater. A fan-favorite song from the show, "Defying Gravity" relies heavily on the bass's power to create a sense of harmonic function even in the presence of orchestral-harmonic dissonance, to the extent that the bass evokes an otherwise "proper" harmonic function itself. The distinction between melodic harmony and orchestral harmony becomes crucial in analyzing this excerpt. MCTs may sound as though they are corroborated by a pitch in the orchestra; however, it is important to remember that the interaction between the bass and the sung melody constitutes its own musical process independent of the orchestra. As such, dissonances that appear in multiple contrapuntal streams in a given vertical-harmonic slice should be treated with extra caution.

Up to this point in the show, the narrative arc has been relatively well-defined. Elphaba has been maturing throughout the first act from an awkward student to a recognized witch, as has been expressed through songs like "Popular" and "One Short Day." At the same time, though, a repression of animal life has been steadily growing more prominent, and at the end of Act I the fraudulent Wizard of Oz has been revealed as the cause of this atrocity. Elphaba, now armed with a newfound sense of purpose, defies the order of the Wizard and flees the Emerald Palace in order to escape persecution. Before she flies away, however, she confers with her best friend, Glinda, who has decided to stay behind to receive the city's favors. The two acknowledge their strained but continued friendship, both having made their different choices.

This conflict, driven by the heavy costs of freedom, is reflected in the ways that the melodic-harmonic stream interacts with the rest of the orchestra. Motive A comprises a strong diatonic step from E-flat to D-flat and opens several conflicting SMTs for the listener to
Example 3.4: Schwartz, *Wicked*, "Defying Gravity," Bridge

So, if you care to find me, look to the western sky! As someone told me late-ly, everyone deserves a chance to fly! And if I'm flying solo, at least I'm flying free.

To those who'd ground me, take a lesson back from me...
reconcile in a short period of time. For example, the bass encourages us to hear G-flat as the root of the chord there, with a suspended ninth from the previous chord. The melody's nominal resolution of the E-flat to D-flat, a prolongation of the D-flat from the tonic chord, reinforces this interpretation. However, the strong MCT status and relative pitch height of the E-flat may be taken to suggest Elphaba's desire to "escape"; the word "find" that it sets implies a sort of distancing. A performer might place extra weight on that E-flat both to highlight the motive as well as acknowledge the attempted escape from the prolongation. Such a reading might also change the perceived harmonic gravity, so to speak, of the bass: the melody's E-flat might be heard as the root of an E-flat minor harmony if that hearing is powerful enough. Either way, the E-flat clearly suggests that Elphaba wants to be independent from the orchestral harmony in some way.

Motive B is then introduced as a descent by diatonic third followed by a step in the same direction.\textsuperscript{25} Within this instance of Motive B is Motive T-5A. Another version of Motive B can be inferred from the repetition of Motive T-5A directly after the first iteration. This requires a slur above the first Motive T-5A to incorporate the second iteration of itself. I hear these transformations of Motive A within the Motive B because the second Motive T-5A's relative isolation from the first permits it to be heard on its own, which in turn allows the first Motive T-5A to be heard similarly. At the same time, the construction of Motive B also permits the second Motive T-5A to be heard as part of a second Motive B. This motivic overlapping

\textsuperscript{25} Idina Menzel, the original vocalist for the song, sings a very colorful F5 that is heard in the original cast recording on the word "look," and is often included in fan arrangements of the song. However, that F5 does not appear in the September 3rd, 2003 version of the sheet music. I opted to work with that score for the sake of this analysis.
contributes to a sense of repression and containment, a consistent theme for the rest of the excerpt as she attempts to make her escape.

The end of the system presents a short prolongation in both the harmonic and melodic streams. The Motive IT-12A that follows is an inversion of the Motive A from the beginning. Despite the C4 being a CT with the accompanying chord, I hear that chord as a passing V6/4 within a prolonged tonic, so I hear the C4 as able to retain the MCT status it had from its first iteration.

Motive C, introduced in the second system, comprises a descending perfect fifth followed by a perfect fourth, outlining a D-flat sonority with an MCT on A-flat, maintaining the melodic-harmonic stasis. The first A-flat of Motive C is marked with a "?" as it requires some sort of motivic justification as it is not a CT and currently has no referent. Dramatically, it is not justified until the very end of the bridge (as we shall see). Another motive is embedded within Motive C, Motive RIT-7B. The diatonic step, now at the forefront of every motive, becomes particularly distinct, then followed by a diatonic third. As only transformations of this version of the motive will be used from here on out, Motive RIT-7B is renamed Motive D for the sake of convenience.

The rest of the system similarly involves many embedded motives. It successively presents two versions of a new Motive E, the second being a transposition of the first by perfect fourth. Within each of these motives are some version of Motive A. While the second (on "deserves") preserves the MCT → nominal resolution pattern of its initial iteration, the first makes use of a CT on E-flat, motivically resolving to D-flat. Some version of Motive D also bypasses the lowest note within each Motive E. Despite the huge ascending leap that initiates
these cascading Motive Es, Elphaba's attempts to escape are being pulled down both in pitch and
by a motivic web that hinders her independence. Even the high E-flat, instead of being a strident
MCT like before, is forced into complying with the orchestral stream by being a CT.

The third and fourth system features several repetitions of a Motive D + Motive A amalgam with many harmonic recontextualizations. The first Motive T-9A initiates a I\textsubscript{sus} melodic-harmonic stasis that persists throughout the rest of the excerpt. This postreferentially justifies the G-flat in the following Motive T5D + Motive T-9A combination due to the G-flat in the first Motive T-9A's status as a chord tone over the C-flat chord. The second G-flat thus forms an MCT over the D-flat because of the motivic repetition.

Iterations of Motive T5D + Motive T-9A continue on into the fourth system, but end with true motivic freedom. G-flat continues to alternate between a CT and an MCT, but the lyrical emphasis on the words "ground me" and "lesson" makes me hear the transposition of Motive A as belonging to the latter two notes of the amalgamation; thus, the E-flats are also given MCT status over their relevant chords. The final motive in this section is Motive RC, which finally justifies the A-flat from the beginning of the second system after a significant amount of delay. Not only does it separate itself from the confinements of Motive D, it also is retrograded and now has an ascending contour. The effect of this final motive is heightened by the quick justification of the A-flat from its lower octave, moving from an MCT to a justified CT and sounding more appropriate as a result. All of these transformational processes contribute to a true sense of freedom before Elphaba launches into the iconically poignant final chorus.
Chapter 4: Analysis of Longer Excerpts and Full Songs

4.1 - *Frozen*, "Let It Go," verse + prechorus + chorus

Example 4.1.1: Anderson-Lopez & Lopez, *Frozen*, "Let It Go," verse 1
Example 4.1.2: Anderson-Lopez & Lopez, *Frozen*, "Let It Go," prechorus + chorus 1
One of the most popular musical theater songs of the past decade is "Let It Go," from Frozen (2013) by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez. It is still prominent in much of American culture; Elsa is a recognizable figure with children, and the introductory piano notes will likely provoke a familiar response from audiences of that generation.

Up to this point in the story, Elsa has distanced herself from her sister Anna to protect both Anna and the kingdom from her mysterious powers of manipulating ice, which once led to a near-fatal accident while Anna and Elsa were playing as children. The distance between the sisters, the pressures of her coronation, and her futile efforts to repress what she views as a curse culminate in Elsa accidentally revealing her powers to the kingdom, appearing to threaten her sister. Elsa flees the kingdom in self-exile in search of a happier isolation. While alone in the frozen mountains, she sings this song, happy to finally be able to unleash her powers freely and content to live in the giant castle of ice that she magically constructs during the number. Unaware that her sister still cares for her, Elsa takes stoic satisfaction in her new life — "the cold never bothered [her] anyway."

Despite being a powerful musical ballad with a soaring orchestration and a standard internal narrative progression, the entirety of this song is saturated in irony. The plot eventually reveals that Elsa is mistaken; as the villain Hans is defeated, she discovers that the primary way to control her powers is not by pushing people away, but allowing them in with what the movie calls "true love." In a sort of antithesis of "Defying Gravity," the motives within the first few sections of "Let it Go" hint at this situational irony by transforming in ways that question the freedom that her words are celebrating, contained within conflicting melodic harmonies that clash with the vertical harmonies.
Example 4.1.1 analyzes her first verse. The initial iterations of Motives A, B, and C prolong a tonic minor seventh chord in the melodic stream. Motive A spans a descending diatonic third from the fifth to the third, while Motive B spans a descending diatonic fourth, ending on the tonic. Motives A and B together outline the tonic triad with a melodic NCT on B-flat, the first note of Motive B. Motive C, an ascending step followed by an ascending skip, is immediately followed by its retrograde, embellished with an extra A-flat. The "?" MCT of E-flat as well as the postreferentially justified C4 contribute to the ongoing melodic-harmonic stasis of i7.

This stasis is broken briefly at the beginning of the second system. The focal pitch of Motive D is B-flat, elaborated by a set of changing tones, implying a change in the melodic harmony. That harmony could be iv, as the B-flats independently suggests, or VII, which reinterprets B-flat as the fifth of the orchestral chord. To retain independence from the vertical harmony, the motivic harmony is analyzed as iv. A second question mark is added on the final note of Motive D to indicate that it will later be altered to suit a different harmony, while remaining recognizable as a variant of the same motive.

The next phrase ("the wind is howling...") returns to the melodic harmony of i7 in a surprising but effective move. It reprises the Motive C + Motive RC pair which had been associated with iv in the previous phrase, but transposes them up by a whole tone. As indicated by the "!," the peak of this motive F4 is now a CT, and this justifies the last Motive C's MCT E-flat. C4 is also retained as an MCT over the root of D-flat in the bass, postreferentially justified by the earlier referent of C4.
Following these two motives are two overlapping versions of Motive T3A. The transposition cements the melodic stasis on i7, because it moves the C and A-flat of Motive A to E-flat and C.

The last phrase of the verse presents us with a motivic-harmonic dispute. Motive A is heard again at its original transpositional level followed by the aforementioned alteration of Motive D, marked Motive D'. Unlike Motive D, the last note of Motive D' does not return to B-flat after the changing tones, instead leaping down to the tonic, F3. As such, I hear the B-flat of Motive D' to be a melodic neighbor tone to the prolonged tonic harmony in the melodic stream. This answers the "?" in the previous iteration of the motive in that both B-flat and F, the last notes of each motive, are pitch classes in the iv chord that was promoted by the original Motive D. However, I hear the entire last phrase as a single process that outlines the tonic triad. The endpoints of Motive A's unfolded third match the orchestral harmony's tonic chord, allowing for the F3 that comes after to be heard as the conclusion of a descending arpeggiation of the prolonged tonic. This is similar to the idea presented by Motive A + Motive B at the beginning of the excerpt, only with extra embellishment.

The motivic-harmonic action of the verse also creates some expressive text-painting. Thus far, the lyrics of the song have been rather despondent, showing Elsa in "isolation," having fled from the kingdom into snowy mountains that lack the trace of any other living being. The mostly consistent melodic-harmonic stasis may be taken to represent the state of repression that she wishes to escape. A break in this stasis occurs on the phrase, "...looks like I'm the queen," her first foray into independence and an acknowledgment of her responsibilities, which she abandons by running away. Interestingly, none of the other lyrics in this section suggest a similar sense of
autonomy and are thus relegated to the melodic-harmonic stasis on the tonic. Additionally, while the word "isolation" is expressed by its relative height compared to other notes in the phrase, the uncertainty of Elsa's feelings about it are expressed by two MCTs that require motivic justification.

The prechorus changes the musical tone of the song to one that is far more confident and aspiring. As analyzed in Example 4.1.2, this is primarily marked by a modulation to E-flat major and the introduction of new motives. Motives E and F span leaps of an ascending perfect fourth and a perfect fifth, respectively. While both notes of Motive E contribute to the melodic-harmonic stasis of I (or V in the upcoming A-flat major), the last note of Motive F, F4, does not; it is a CT with the bass instead. However, the inclusion of it and the subsequent Fs and A-flats in the repeated instances of Motive G make them sound as though they are NCTs in the melodic-harmonic stasis. An additional overarching Motive G suggests hearing F5 also as a passing tone from the previous E-flat in Motive E to the final G of the antecedent. The consequent phrase is similar: Motive E is followed by Motive F, except this time an inversion of Motive B is used to transition into the chorus, creating the conditions for Elsa to accept "letting it go." However, it is important to remember that despite this change in tone, it accompanies a set of ironic lyrics that, in truth, suggest the opposite of what is being said.

The chorus is the culmination of the dramatic irony the song attempts to convey. In the first phrase, Motive A and its transformations return in inversion, implying a freedom from the downwards contour of its original iterations. Again, they establish a melodic harmony that is independent of the orchestra. This time, however, that harmony is different from the tonic of the section. The orchestral harmony clearly points towards A-flat major, but if we continue to hear
the harmony-establishing function of Motive A, the melodic harmony seems to imply F minor, the key first established in the verse. Along with A-flat and C, it is F, not E-flat, that stands out in her line.

However, the melody expresses some additional conflict. The Motive Fs that intercede seem to align more with the vertical harmonies that coincide with them, recalling their dramatic function from the prechorus. For example, the endpoints E-flat and B-flat of Motive T5F (that continue from the second to the third system of Example 4.1.2) are both appropriate to the V chord, cementing them more as SMTs relative to the high C5. Finally, despite the D-flat MCT in Motive T3B's lack of adherence to the melodic harmony, cementing it as independent, it is also subservient to the gravitational pull of the stasis. This is due to the downwards contour of the motive pulling the D-flat both down in height and back to the original melodic harmony.

The second phrase of the chorus, starting with "I don't care," presents yet another narrative conundrum. In the melodic harmony, the orchestra's A-flat major seems to finally displace the F minor harmony from the first phrase, but all the melody's motives are altered from their original forms. For example, Motives RT12E and Motive RT10F return at the beginning of the second phrase, but they are inverted so their intervals are now descents instead of ascents. Despite being higher pitches, this inversion deflates the energy-driving original Motive E and Motive F heard at the beginning of the prechorus. Contained within both of these motives is a new Motive H that suggests we hear each fragment as part of an arpeggiation of an A-flat major triad. The first of these two motives also reiterates Motive C in the form of Motive RT12C. Its usage fully fleshes out the relationship Motive E has with Motive C by reminding us of its
intervallic span and establishing Motive C as a motivic referent before the concluding music and its motivic material.

The ending section expands on the descending contours in the previous music. It begins with two versions of Motive C, Motive IT-2C and Motive IT-9C. Both the endpoints of Motive IT-2C can be understood as SMTs because of their adherence to the melodic-harmonic stasis. To preserve the tonic stasis in Motive IT-9C, it would seem as though the D-flat would need to be excluded thus disrupting the functional congruity between the two versions of Motive C. However, as the nadir and the final note of Motive IT-9C is the tonic, one can shift their hearing of the motivic pair to accommodate this new information. As such, the D-flat can be heard as a recurring passing tone from the prior E-flat that embellishes the adherent C4. Now descending due to the inversion, both of these motives lose the affect of narrative freedom that they originally had in the verse. Even though they now conform to the tonic's melodic harmony, every motive that ends the section has a completely downwards contour, representative of the additional narrative friction between Elsa's words and the plot's intended trajectory.

4.2 - Company, "Marry Me A Little"

As we have seen in Wicked and Frozen, themes such as freedom from some sort of repression are omnipresent in much of musical theater, as the songs often advance the plot through some sort of conflict. All of the songs analyzed in this thesis thus far have also featured some sort of oppressive force which the characters overcome. That force in "Marry Me A Little" from Stephen Sondheim's Company is the main character himself. Robert has been pressured to find a partner to settle down with, by friends who have gone so far as to offer him dates to facilitate this. However, Robert has staunchly resisted his friends' antics. After his acquaintances'
Example 4.2.1: Sondheim, Company, "Marry Me A Little"
We'll go through a fight or two. No harm, no harm. We'll
look not too deep. We'll go not too far. We won't have to
give up a thing. We'll stay who we are, right? Okay, then. I'm rea-dy.

Example 4.2.2: Sondheim, Company, "Marry Me A Little"
botched wedding, he gazes upon a birthday cake, unable to blow out the candles, and hopes that there is someone out there who can "marry [him] a little." The title and lyrics suggest his fear of commitment, the unknown, and the implications of partnership.

"Marry Me A Little" is built of short gestures rather than long melodic lines, allowing for certain motives to subtly transform, often overlapping in such a way where changing a single note alters the motivic amalgam. In addition, because Sondheim's harmonic style is rather expansive, making use of extended harmony in the vertical-harmonic stream, these motives are able to freely support a different harmony than the orchestral stream might suggest. In Robert's lyrics, we easily perceive the irony that he says that he's ready to commit to something that is ultimately not commitment. However, the ways that certain motives rely on each other while supporting the vertical harmony in consistent ways signals that perhaps Robert's cautious psyche dissipates slowly just before the second act begins, but not fully.

The first melodic gesture establishes the motivically cooperative nature of the number. Motive A, a stepwise descending third, will be revealed to be the most important motive in the song, but it would not seem this way by its introduction. Instead, it is embedded within a much more recognizable Motive B, which comprises the first four notes of the gesture. The end of the gesture can be heard as the result of an overarching Motive IA' that spans from the first note of the gesture to the last. It is notated as A' because the middle note of the unfolded third is not present; instead, Motive A' simply outlines the intervallic span of the original Motive A.

The second gesture presents a transposed variant of Motive B, T2B', in which the last interval descends by a whole step instead of leaping down a third. Motive A in its original form is left out of this second gesture, but an interval of a sixth, the inversion of the third, takes form
in Motive T2A', preserving the coupling of Motives A and B from the first gesture. In
consideration of both Motive T2B' and Motive T2A', G3 becomes a motivically linked MCT
over the root of B-flat in the bass. The G3 is an NCT with the bass B-flat, but since it is parallel
to the opening F3, it is a motivically justified MCT.

The third gesture is largely the same as the second (with a C3 extension). The B-flat at
the end of Motive T-4A is heard as appropriate to the F in the bass despite no longer being a
chord tone, as it was earlier on "enough." The fourth gesture sees Motive A returning as Motive
T-4A, coupled again with T-4B. Despite this similarity, the overarching motive has been
diminished. We may expect the return of Motive IT-4A' to complete the gesture, but the interval
size is reduced, possibly to avoid the end of the phrase feeling like a point of rest. A "−" sign has
been added to depict this reduction. Similarly, the next gesture, which begins the second phrase
of the verse on "Keep," also evades proper resolution, but with a fourth instead of a second. A
"+" sign has been used to depict this. Although the G3 at the end of the gesture distorts the
motive, it serves as further pitch justification for the G3 MCTs in the prior gestures.

The next gesture sets the oxymoronic "so we'll both be free." It embeds two instances of
the original Motive A with another iteration of Motive B. Arguably, I could have placed Motive
A' in this gesture as well, but because Motive A exists in its entirety, no such motive is necessary.
The F4 that begins the gesture is heard as an MCT because of its motivic and pitch link to the
beginning of the song, allowing for it to be heard as a minor seventh above the orchestral
harmony, despite being in a different contrapuntal stream. Similarly, the next gesture, at the
beginning of the third system, contains two transposed versions of Motive A and one instance of
Motive B. Interestingly, because of the primacy of the first Motive T-7A, it sounds as though it is
"taking over" the established symbiosis of the Motive A and Motive B. The final C3 of the phrase seems to operate as an agent in the vertical harmonic stream of V, as opposed to functioning in the melodic stream.

The music in the remainder of the verse (spanning the end of the third system) consists of two transpositions of Motive A and a single note at the modulation. While both starting notes need to be heard as MCTs, the extended harmony in the orchestra allows them to be heard as more appropriate with the bass than they otherwise would have with just motivic relevance. Specifically, the orchestral harmony is a "IV over V" chord, what Mark Spicer would deem a "soul dominant."26 Both the B-flat and the E-flat are appropriate with the orchestral stream, but the dominant harmony implied by the root-position F in the bass forces them into an extended harmony in the vertical stream. As such, when Robert sings that he's ready to be committed, he is truly isolated from the intended vertical harmony, repeating a motive that is no longer coupled with any previously established motive. The final A3 at the phrase modulation forces the melody back into the vertical harmony, acting as leading tone in the previous key and tonic in the new key. This reflects the self-deceptiveness of Robert's assertion that he's ready by cutting off his train of thought motivically, harmonically, and contrapuntally.

The next section starts with a tonic prolongation in both the melodic and harmonic streams. Motive D comprises the fourth leaps that hit the fifth and root of the tonic triad of A major. However, a curious B3 ends the system as a sort of stepwise extension of the repeated fourths. It is marked here as Motive E? as it will be motivically justified by CT appropriateness later on in the song. As such, the B3 is marked as a preliminary MCT, raising a question about

26 Mark Spicer, “Fragile, Emergent, and Absent Tonics in Pop and Rock Songs.” *Music Theory Online* 23, no. 2 (June 2017).
how it can be heard as an appropriate major ninth against the root in the bass. Both the narrative and harmonic function of Motive E? will be explored later.

The consequent phrase (the fifth system) introduces a new repeated Motive F, allowing for a new melodic-harmonic stasis. Motive F is a descent by a third followed by an ascending leap by a fourth. (A shorthand note shows that Motive T7A is contained within Motive F.) The first note of each of these Motive Fs seek justification. In their current state, we assume they must be heard as the minor seventh over the D in the bass. This will also happen later on in the song. Motive A, binding neither Motive B nor Motive F, is heard at the end of the phrase. It confirms the melodic-harmonic stasis of the consequent, which has shifted from A major to A minor, i. Both endpoints of Motive T7A must be regarded as MCTs, but because of their prior embedding in Motive F, we are able to accommodate this hearing rather easily.

The next phrase modulates but the key is somewhat ambiguous. I choose to label the first tonal area as a prolongation of a secondary dominant in the key of the original B-flat major. I consider the return of Motive A and Motive B in their original overlapped state to support my hearing. However, despite the motives being used at their transpositional level, both of their second notes have been changed to E-natural instead of E-flat to better suit the orchestral harmony. I indicate the alterations with a double-prime marking. This process repeats before moving to Motive T4A and T4B, finishing the iii melodic-harmonic stasis. The emphasis on F, D, and A, creates a melodic harmonic-stasis on D minor, which I label as iii in relation to the upcoming confirmation of B-flat major. Although D minor is not supported by the C major orchestral harmony and the bass, it still feels natural because of the motivic link and the consistency of the melodic harmony.
Several manipulations of Motive F finish off the consequent phrase. Motive RIT-9F is used first and then repeated. Because the last note of each motive is a CT with the bass, we can also hear the first notes, which are accented from their coincidences with the bass, as MCTs. Another motive, Motive T-2F, is used during the completion of the second Motive RIT-9F. Its final note is C4, which satisfies the same conditions that the Motive RIT-9Fs had, but also is the point of prereferential justification for the C4s from the original Motive F from the fifth system. With the clear motivic link, that note is finally justified through a simple transformative process. Recall that Motive F necessarily includes some version of Motive A. This, in combination with the motivic elision of Motive T-2F, is the ultimate version of motivic embedding established by the song's opening, with the rhythmic dissonance making the process explicit. It is apt text painting for the lyrics "we'll stay who we are, right?" (and "you promise whatever you like / I'll never collect, right?" in the repeat), as the subtext of that line clearly signals his inability to accept change. This maximizes the connotation of repression established from the previous embedded motives, and the elision serves to rhythmically extend this feeling.

The end of the song ("okay then, I'm ready...") starts as a repetition of the similar material from the first half ("I'm ready...," third system). Whereas the first notes of every Motive A in the last iteration of this passage stopped at E-flat, this section extends the ascent to an F4. This is the transposed justification for the seemingly errant B3 from the dubiously established Motive E. The B3 was heard as some sort of SMT but we were unable to parse a motivic reason as to why. The answer is here: the F4 that ends the final Motive T6E is a CT with the root of B-flat in the bass, and we can retroactively determine the B3 in Motive E to be appropriate over its A. In addition, the ultimate irony of the song is that Motive T6E sets up the introduction to the song's
apex, but in doing so, it is now attached to a previous motive and thus becomes less "free" than the related material from the first half of the song. The B-flat and E-flat can no longer be read as simple starting pitches for some "free" versions of Motive A, finally separated from Motive B. They were part of an unfinished process that always intended to have Motive A be subservient to another overarching motive, in this case, Motive T6E. As such, when we hear the parallel material again on the repeat, it feels even more unsatisfying, now that we know to where the freedom is intended to go.

This irony is heightened by the repetition of the music. On the first pass at the ending, the song sets up an octave transposition of Motive A, possibly having it be free from either Motive T12B or Motive T6E, as only the F and E-flat are heard before the music repeats. However, in the same way that Motive T6E justifies Motive E? and represses the Motive As in the third system, when we hear the high F and E-flat again, it is revealed that Motive A's freedom is, in fact, shackled by Motive T12B, as this motive is embedded as the beginning and end of Motive T12A. Perhaps Robert is now more open to change, but he is certainly nowhere close to accepting it.

4.3 - *Big Fish*, "How It Ends"

"How It Ends" follows the formal conventions of much of common practice music, which develops through slight alterations of established musical material. However, the central emotional construct of this song is that its process (like "Gotta Go My Own Way") involves the exact repetition of motives in different vertical harmonies, causing certain pitches to be heard in immediately different ways. This technique is ubiquitous in much of the popular music and it is apt that it has been carried over to the American musical theater tradition.
Here is the setting for the song: at the time of his death, Edward Bloom has unintentionally alienated his son, Will. Will has been concerned that he will be unable to learn who his father really was, since he regards all the stories that he has been told as totally fabricated. In truth, Edward intends the stories to be the legacy for Will to pass down to his own son, not necessarily the bits of truth that Will eventually finds out the stories contain. Therefore, as Edward is on his deathbed, reflecting on his life, he has no regrets about the stories that he told, because they constitute a narrative about his life from which the truth can be derived. The myth that Edward has created is, in essence, his actual life, or at least the way he wants his life to be remembered, so this song immortalizes his choices as he passes away.

The solemnity of the song is supported by its relative simplicity, both motivically and formally. Motive A, an unfolded diatonic third, functions at first to confirm the tonic harmony, like the similar motive in "Marry Me A Little," outlining the third to the fifth of the B major tonality. I understand the B2 that confirms the tonic of the passage to be generated by an inversional Motive IA'. Encompassing these motives is a stepwise Motive B that corresponds to the span of the basic idea, but also is a process that changes harmony in the melodic stream, at least locally. Motive B consistently has the property of being less of a local motive that connects consecutive notes and more of one that connects discrete harmonic processes.

The continuation segment of the period (the first ending) introduces a new prolongational process. After repeating the Motive A + Motive IA', it moves on to an embellishment of G♯3 through two embedded versions of Motive T5A. G♯ is rather easily heard as a motivic MCT over the dominant harmony implied by the F♯ in the bass, but it is an NCT in relation to the tonic harmony persisting in the melodic-harmonic stream. Because it seems to be the essential element
I've seen this all before, when I was just a child. I met a witch who

took... and showed... it ended. With disbelief implausibly suspended. And in my imagination I remember you. Though I didn't know if we were foes or friends.

But now... standing here I see the

vision coming clear. I know exactly how this ends. It ends with

Example 4.3.1: Lippa, Big Fish, "How it Ends"
you. It ends with me. It ends the way a story's ending is supposed to be. A bit insane, a touch of pain. Adeptly told, yet uncontrolled. It ends with... —cere, and standing here. I

D.S.: sons. It ends with wives. It ends with knowing when the pavement bends...

find our lives. So let it come and let me go. I

Example 4.3.2: Lippa, *Big Fish*, "How it Ends"
...know I was... perfect, I know... life was small. I know that I pre... ded... I knew it all. And

when... story and I hope some... does, re... me as something bi... gger than I was. It ends with

...show me the waves and let them flow. It all ends

well. This much I know.

Example 4.3.3: Lippa, Big Fish, "How it Ends"
of that portion of the continuation, I hear it as an incomplete neighbor to the following $F\#$ that begins Motive C. Motive C is an intervallic inversion of Motive A, a rising diatonic sixth instead of a third. However, I hear this leap as less related to the construction of the phrase than the inversions in "Marry Me A Little," and I prefer to give it its own motivic label.

The second ending ends the phrase with the vertical and melodic streams agreeing on a harmony. It combines two versions of Motive RA at different levels to outline the tonic triad above the $ii - V - I$ progression in the bass and orchestra. The $D\#$ may be heard as a motivically recognizable MCT within a given melodic-harmonic stasis. A new Motive D ends the cadential segment of the period, which is simply an embellishment of a single tone through a neighbor NCT.

The prechorus begins with two iterations of Motive T7A. Both $A\#$s are CTs with their respective bass notes, both of which are chordal roots, meaning that they seem to agree with the harmonies that accompany them. While this is true, it is also true that the stasis invites a hearing of a prolonged dominant harmony in the melody. The final $C\#$ of the second Motive T7A can also be heard as an appropriate seventh over the $D\#$ due to the motivic link. In contrast, the $C\#$ that begins the third system is heard as an NCT in the melodic-harmonic stream, despite being a motivic chord tone with the orchestral harmony because of its role in Motive T10B.

The second half of the phrase ("though I didn't know") involves MCTs that refer to the resolution to a melodic-harmonic tonic harmony in "I remember you." For example, the very next $B3$ ("though") can be heard as the seventh in the vertical harmonic stream because it was postreferentially justified from the previous $B3$, while also serving as confirming the melodic harmony through motivic repetition of Motive RT5A. Motive E is introduced after these motives
as a rising stepwise motion, then a descending leap by diatonic third. Also implied through
Motive E is the function-changing Motive T5B that pulls the NCT of G♯ in both the melodic-
harmonic and orchestra-harmonic streams to an appropriate CT at the end of the phrase.

The next phrase behaves similarly. At the beginning, the A♯3 must be heard this time as
an MCT over the IV chord. Not only can we accommodate this from the parallel phrase
beforehand, but the A♯ is prereferentially justified immediately with the following Motive T7A's
A#. The melodic NCT returns from the earlier phrase as well, but with more embellishment. As
such, the first half of the phrase ends and the melodic harmony comfortably ends on a tonic,
despite the E minor chord being used in the orchestral stream. To assist this, an elided Motive
T14D is used to decorate the Motive T5E, which is again, in tandem with Motive T10B pulling
an NCT to another melodic harmony.

The second half of the phrase ("I know exactly...") opens with another set of consecutive
Motive RAs, this time seeming to outline a G♯ minor triad. However, the direct repetition of the
motive encourages us to hear the G♯ as an added sixth to the tonic harmony, especially since the
orchestral stream and the melodic stream seem to otherwise agree on the key despite the different
chordal functions. The Motive B that ends the period seems only to connect two consecutive
notes, but the dotted slur indicates that I hear it extended back to the D♯4. As always, it ends
changing of the function of the melodic harmony from I to V, which extends into the anacrusis to
the chorus.

Certain motivic embeddings have been hinted at in the previous music, such as the
multiprocess motives at the beginning of the song. In the chorus, ("It ends with you...") it is
revealed that such motivic hybrids are essential to the song's narrative. Motive A and B outline
fundamentally different harmonic processes and this tension is exploited to the fullest extent throughout the rest of the song. This is the moment where Edward comes to terms with the choices he's made throughout his life — he reflects on the tribulations he has experienced and how he has decided to pass those experiences onward.

The juxtaposition in motivic function can be seen immediately. All instances of Motive A, of which this section is primarily comprised, maintain the tonic chord in some way. However, Motive B keeps appearing, each time disrupting the melodic-harmonic stasis by pushing it into the dominant-harmonic area. For example, the first stasis on I seems completely natural until the basic idea is disrupted by a C♯4 ("me"). This suggests that we hear the next Motive A as prolonging V, despite the fact that it internally supports the tonic. In other words, the second F♯3 of the chorus can be heard as functional in both a local tonic melodic harmony and a global dominant melodic harmony. Embedded stasis brackets have been used to show this coincidence.

The melodic harmony reverts to the tonic once again as the B3 is first embellished by two iterations of Motive T12D. Motive C then returns to outline F♯3 and D♯4, finishing off the phrase having completed the tonic triad.

The next phrase ("a bit insane") uses the immediate repetition of a motive to set up a short-term justification process. It starts with two identical motive amalgams, Motive IT12A + Motive T12B. The first time they are sung, both the D♯ and the C♯ that encompass the amalgam are heard as CTs with the bass, respectively forming a root-position I chord and a first-inversion V6/V chord. The second time, however, sees both notes being treated as postreferentially justified MCTs with their given bass notes: atop the C♯7/E chord, the D♯ is heard as the chordal ninth and the melodic C♯ is heard as major ninth above the B/D♯ chord. All the while, the global melodic-
.harmonic stasis is prolonging V as a result of Motive T12B from the prior iteration, which does not correspond to either of the orchestral harmonies. In addition, the local melodic harmony of I is also dissonant against the bass notes, but all of these SMTs still sound appropriate in the passage's construction. This sudden instance of extreme contrapuntal dissonance perfectly serves the lyrics "a touch of pain," "part fire sale," and "and let me go." In particular, the second time this music is played, "part epic tale" is the lyric in the first of the two motivic amalgams, which is then contrasted by "part fire sale," a further recognition of Edward's approaching death.

The music that completes the period starts with another rising Motive A, confirming a locally tonic melodic harmony despite the MCT D♯3, an augmented octave over the bass note D2. However, the G♯ that follows defies the pattern set up by the rest of the chorus in that the following note seems to resist being part of melodic harmony instead of contributing to either layer of the prolongation. Rather than hearing the G♯ as related to Motive B, I connect it to the following A♯ which then fulfills the melodic tonic vs. dominant conundrum that pervades the chorus: the A♯ belongs to the global V while the preceding three notes still allude to the tonic.

The second ending, however, reverses the role of Motive A and forgoes the use of Motive B, likely to signal the change into the bridge. Motive T7A instead changes functions outlining the third and fifth of the dominant harmony. In addition, the Motive T5A that spans the length of the second ending seems to take over the role that Motive B held before by changing the melodic-harmonic function both locally and globally back to the tonic, finally matching back up with the orchestral harmony.

The bridge of this song, shown on the first two systems of p. 64, is a quintessential example of the types of phenomena discussed in this thesis. The entire section is dominated by
one new Motive F and its transformations. When we first hear the motive, an unfolded
descending diatonic fourth, we intuitively get the sense that F♯4 is the most important note in the
motive because of its coincidence with the bass, it being the result of a leap, and its prosodic
weight. However, as a referent has not yet been established, a "?" has been placed on top of the
first Motive F as a signal that it will be justified via pitch relationship. In traditional theory, the
F♯ might be heard as an appoggiatura to the E that follows it, but the idea of a nominal resolution
suits the situation much better, as the F♯'s status as an SMT is so potent. Additionally, the V
sonority in the melodic harmony emerges due to the exact restatements of Motive F throughout
the bridge.

These F♯s not only confirm the preservation of the stasis, but seem to be intentionally
placed as dissonances to exaggerate the drama of the passage. As such, the first F♯ expands the
vertical harmony of IV into a major ninth chord, the second F♯ forces C♯ minor into an 11th
sonority, and the third F♯ adds a major sixth to the A major triad, the flat VII chord. Interceding
between these motives are B3s that seem to be motivically related to Motive F by way of an
anacrustic leap. However, the instance of Motive RIT12A following the third Motive F expands
that B3 into what it had the potential to be throughout the passage: yet another reference to the
introductory motivic material.

The weighty F♯s persist into the next passage. As the next Motive Fs continue into
second system of p. 64 ("when... hope...") , they create another vertical major ninth and a major
seventh with the bass, respectively. The second of these accommodates a D natural, a change
dictated by the orchestra's use of G major (flat VI). This change also removes the need for E to
be heard as a nominal resolution — it is marked with an asterisk to show that it is simply an NCT
in this instance. The low F♯3 that follows these iterations of Motive F are followed by two gradually ascending Motive IT-12Fs. Taken as a single process, these two inverted Motive Fs make a dramatic ascent from F♯3 to C♯4, outlining the root and fifth of F♯ major, the dominant melodic harmony.

An overarching Motive RF is elided from the C♯ that ends Motive T4(IT-12F). However, it initially is missing the F♯ that would complete it. This increases the tension in the music, as the listener desires the eventual fulfillment of the motive. After this, a full version of Motive RF completes the period before the return to the D.S. al Coda. The last note of Motive RF finally justifies the high F♯4s in the previous Motive Fs both motivically and by pitch, as it is heard as a standard CT with the bass and orchestral harmony. In addition, the first unfinished Motive RF feels as though it has finally been completed, adding another layer of satisfaction and drama to the end of the phrase. The amount of delay that has occurred from that first F♯4 to this final one finally justifying it is what contributes to the extraordinary intensity of the bridge.

The music from the segno to the coda is the same, so I will resume my analysis from the coda. It begins with repeated music from the second half of the verse as way to escalate the music, supported by the accelerando. After this, Motive A recurs, signaling a return to a tonic melodic harmony. However, the orchestra does not support the tonic, so all of the D♯s are heard as MCTs. This dissonance both in pitch and melodic harmony is relished through an extreme agogic accent as the orchestral harmony's own dissonance increases, before Motive IT12A finally unites the melodic and harmonic streams, as Edward achieves peace at last.
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Cross-Genre Applications

In this thesis, I have demonstrated how the repetition and transformation of motives in musical theater encourages the listener to hear songs as contrapuntally stratified, yet still with a sense of salient harmonic totality. Repetition invites audiences to "re-examine musical material" in such a way that a motive can take on multiple meanings simply by virtue of its harmonic fungibility. I have also shown how motivic transformations and melodic-harmonic stases augment standard narrative text painting by adding an extra interpretive dimension of tension and release to the musical content. Musical theater numbers commonly contribute to or are related to an overarching plot, so the ability to identify motives and their harmonic relationships they have only with themselves is important in understanding the individual compositional styles from which musical theater derives.

Accordingly, I see no reason for such a system to not be applicable to the forms of music that musical theater stems from. Popular music is well known for the repetition of riffs and motives in much of its repertoire, and the concept of melodic-harmonic stasis, salient and motivic chord tones, and embedded motivic transformation could very well be useful in characterizing the compositional formulas that much of the music is based upon.

I have also attempted to use this method to explain why vocalists may be inclined to place weight on certain notes in a melody, especially if they are not standard chord tones. Performers face many choices and questions when examining and practicing a musical work, and having an analytical method available to justify certain interpretive decisions may offer

explanations as to why certain pitches are given more strength than others, even if such decisions are unconscious. For example, I would be willing to assume that most, if not all, portrayers of Edward Bloom would be more comfortable placing performative emphasis on the high F♯s in the bridge as opposed to treating them as tonal obstructions to the standard chord tone of E. This system of motivic chord tones gives a reason to do so, more than simply to create "dissonance" or "rhythmic emphasis."

Despite this, I make no attempt to be prescriptive with the concepts presented in this thesis. My intent is to be explanatory and descriptive, to venture new terminology to explain the compositional and performative choices musicians may make in the service of affective entertainment. My personal captivation with the medium comes from far more than just the music. There are so many elements of the genre that I must admit ignorance to, from lighting to dance to set design, etc., but I hope I have successfully explicated my fascination for least one component of it in a way that may be considered meaningful to future audiences and practitioners.
References


