SECOND ARRANGEMENT: Two Horns + Rhythm Section

The second major assignment is to write an arrangement of a standard tune with two melodic lines, or two horns and rhythm section. There are several ways to combine two horns. One horn can play the primary line while the other plays a counter line. The two can play in unison or octaves as in the first assignment. The two can play together either in melodic coupling or two-part harmony. The focus of this assignment is to find creative combinations. The first tendency for a beginning arranger and for many authors of arranging books is to focus on two-part harmony. Two-part harmony can be very effective. Two-part linear writing focuses on the independence of the separate voices. Two independent lines that come together can be dramatic.

Countermelodies

You must first understand your primary line in order to write a secondary counter line. Follow the process discussed earlier for developing a paraphrased version of the melody. Examine the primary melody and determine:

- Where is the melody rhythmically active?
- What is the range and register of the melody?
- What are the primary pitches in the melody and how do they relate to the harmony?
- What is the character of the theme? Is it active and angular? Is it smooth and passive?

Understanding these characteristics will help you develop some lines that compliment and contrast with the primary line. Be careful not to bury your primary line with the supporting cast.

Find the rests or longer notes where the primary line is not active. This is where your secondary line lives. Be careful not to have your secondary line overpower the primary by either being too active or interesting, or by competing with the line in a register that is too high. After identifying the primary pitches in the melody, try using other pitches that will provide the listener with more harmonic information. Avoid duplicating the harmonic implications of the primary line or the bass line. In many cases, there is an interesting relationship between the given bass notes in a tune and the melody. The arranger’s job may be to supply some other color without duplicating what is already there.

Second Line Characteristics:

- Should be independent. (There is a difference between melodic coupling and counterpoint)
- May occur at different rhythmic points
- Be active when primary is passive, passive when primary is active
- Have contrasting character
- Deal with different harmonic/melodic voices
- Should make musical sense alone
- May take over primary role or join forces with the primary role at some point.

Here are some basic examples to get the process started. This is the bare bones of *When the Saints go Marchin' In*. The melody lends itself to nice melodic coupling or two-part harmony, but wait on that for a moment. It also shows great possibilities in the negative space between the primary lines. The passive points in the melody are begging for dialog. The dialog could be a line, and the line could be played with the rhythm section. It could contrast with the original melody by being less or more rhythmic. Keep this in mind when writing a paraphrase of an original line like this one. It begs to be made more interesting. When you know you will add a counter or secondary line, leave some room and some things for the secondary line—don’t fill every space with the most interesting paraphrase. The original line ascends—the secondary might descend. The primary ends on D in m.1. The secondary line should not emphasize D if contrast is desired. The harmonic setting is quite static. The secondary line could suggest other harmonic implications in partnership with the rhythm section (primarily the bass).
LINES

The primary melody starts with one and moves up to 5 in the first part of the melody. The bass still suggests the root. The root and 5 are given, the third is left for the secondary line. I chose to have it descend with some other angles to contrast with the primary line. In m.4 below, the secondary is smoother. The chord is in inversion with the B in the bass, the D in the melody. Here was a chance to suggest more than just the missing root. But playing A, G and $F^\#$, I have suggested a Gmaj9 chord. The bass moves C to D and then E. The secondary line provided the 3rd for those chords, but landed on the 7th of the E maj7. The primary melody resumes in the last measure on a G, the 3rd of E, had the melody and the secondary line both been on G, a voice would have been lost.

Harmonizing the two-parts like mm1-2 below is more like melodic coupling than counterpoint. The second phrase has more contrast in that the parts move in contrary motion with a little independence, but they still are active and passive at the same moments. Hopefully the rhythm section will be assigned parts in the spaces to make the phrase more contrapuntally interesting.

Here is a combination using independent lines. The secondary line provides bluesy contrast with the primary, but they end up following the shape rhythmic ascending pattern at the end of the phrase,
The second phrase of the tune suggests a thumb line to the arranger. Use these gifts of voice leading that are suggested by the tune. Basic melody and implied line.

This shows how the two lines (the melody and the suggested guide-tone line) may occur in an arrangement. Note that at the end, the secondary line breaks out of its role and commands attention at the end.

Before writing a secondary line, evaluate the primary line and its relationship to the suggested bass line. In the example below, the melody aims for the 3rd of every chord and leaves space in every other measure. It would be a pointless to write a secondary line based on the 3rd and occupies the same rhythmic spot. Fill in the spaces and do not duplicate what is there. This is the Sudoku part of arranging. The 3rd is given. The 5th adds little to the equation. The 7th is the pitch that creates motion—it is dissonant and wants to resolve to the 3rd of the next chord. There is enough distance between the two lines (intervals and rhythm space) for the listener to hear the independence.
This is exactly the same framework, but the secondary melody is more active. This may be better suited for a second time through the section or at the recapitulation.

This could be orchestrated in many ways. A trumpet could play the top line; a saxophone could play the secondary line. The top line could be played by a section of violins; the secondary line by violas and cellos. The top line could be played by trumpets and duplicated an octave below by trombones; the secondary line could be played by the saxophone section in unison.
Keep the primary chord tones in mind even when there are suspensions. The melody below is based on pointing to the same guide tone lines as the example above, but each resolution involves a 4-3 suspension. The suspension is echoed in the counterline.

Look for linear implications in the chord symbols. The inner line is suggested by the chord symbols and compliments the melody in this ballad.
A descending chromatic line is suggested by these chord changes. This would be a good basis for a “B” line against the “A” line.

![Chord progressions](image)

**GUIDE TONES in ARRANGING and COUNTERPOINT**

Finding the basic, simplest underlying linear structure to a piece using the implied guide tones. The three independent lines below supply all the harmonic vocabulary. Each voice leads smoothly to the next. The bottom line follows the roots. The middle line begins with the 3rd and moves to the 7th. The top line does the opposite – beginning with the 7th that moves to the 3rd. The two upper lines are active and passive and opposite moments. This is an important factor to observe. There is no style elements present, no rhythmic character. It is really just a map of destination points. Any style can be added to this to create music. Any number of instruments or combinations of instruments in many different registers could flesh out this framework.

**Three-part guide tone framework without “style”**

![Chord progressions](image)

**Three-part guide tone framework in light swing jazz style.**

It can be realized as a swing piece by connecting the roots in a walking bass style and embellishing the other lines with swinging rhythms that includes anticipation. Since the upper lines are active and passive at different moments, the embellished lines are not taking place at the same moments, but through dialog more the piece forward.

![Chord progressions](image)
Three-part guide tone framework in bossa style.

The same framework could be set in a bossa style by using the appropriate bass lines and melodic rhythms. This version includes some rhythmic delays creating 4-3 suspensions.

Three-part guide tone framework without “style”

This harmonic framework does not follow the circle of 5ths pattern and root position chords like the previous example. Still, guide tone lines can be found that create a clear linear structure from which to create any style of music.
Three-part guide tone framework in light swing jazz style.

\[ \text{Bb} \quad \text{F/A} \quad \text{Gm7} \quad \text{Dm/F} \]

\[ \text{Ebmaj7} \quad \text{G7} \quad \text{Cm} \]
Embellishment of Static Harmony

Static harmony can be embellished with chromatic or diatonic contrapuntal lines. A rising chromatic line from the 5th can be used over major or minor chords. This line can be found in major in tunes like *Brazil*, and is often thought of as the “secret agent” line in minor.

The ascending line can be used in mm.1-5 of a blues progression. The basic voice leading is shown on the top line with a linear version below.

Here are some other moving lines over static harmony.

Several voice leading lines are used to create the secondary line in this blues line below.
You may remember these chord changes. The following secondary line is created using some contrapuntal ideas shown above.

**BASS V. MELODY**

When working a melody and counterpoint, consider the relationship of the melody to the bass line. The chords on a lead sheet may be fine, and work well for soloing, but be weak in support of the melody. In the first example, the melody and bass note arrive on the root of the chord creating parallel octaves. Using inversions creates a more interesting setting as shown in the second phrase.
This is an excerpt from one of the high points in the piece *Two Altos*, just before the solos start. Big voicings are usually the device used at this point in a big band chart. I decided to hold off the voicings and use independent lines first. The shout part with big voicings comes after this section. The trumpets in octaves have the melody which follows the 3rd down a simple step line. The trombones cover the 5th of the chords and moves in parallel sixths with the trumpets. Four saxes in unison play a line that moves the 7th to the 3rd. All parts of the chords are accounted for with the sections playing unison and octave lines. The section that follows uses some combinations of voicings for all the sections and will be illustrated later.

**Beginning of Shout send off from Two Altos**

![Musical notation image]

**EXAMPLES of DIALOG**

Secondary lines supply the harmonic framework while moving the piece forward in linear motion

Ligon: *Passenger*, Lab '88

**A theme:**

![Musical notation image]
Arranging for Jazz Ensembles 101

Saxes secondary line in augmented form as background to trumpet solo:

Am9

B♭9sus4

Gm9

Cm7

Dm9

Am9
Learn from Masters

Johann Sebastian Bach
Menuet II, Suite No. 1, for cello

Bare Structure:

As three lines:

As Written for Cello solo:
Guide Tone lines by Starlight:

The barest suggestion of the melody is shown on the top staff. The active secondary voice (the voice that propels the harmony – 7th – 3rd) is on the second staff. The roots are shown on the third staff. The bottom three staves show a possible elaboration of the bare structure.

The melody is stated with no accompaniment, then as dialog the bottom lines reply. The secondary line is very active in m.4.

The primary and secondary come together for a brief moment and then bank off of each other for the second phrase.
The two parts are very independent in this third phrase. The secondary line makes sense even if played by itself.
The expected dialog appears at the beginning of this phrase and could be sequenced to the end. Instead the four 8th note pattern is rhythmically displaced in the secondary line over chromatic ii7 – V7 substitutions and handed back to the primary line.

The independence carries to the end, where they finally sing together as two non-harmonic tones that resolve.