Title:	Young People's Concerts Scripts: What is a Melody? [pencil on yellow legal pad paper; [Inserts]]
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p. 3. - Insert (A)

But in symphonic music, which is what we're mostly concerned with here, tunes aren't exactly in order, because being complete in themselves, tunes don't cry out for further development. And, as you'll remember from our former programs, ~~any~~ development is the main thing in symphonic music — the growing and changing of a melodic seed into a whole symphonic tree. So that seed is usually not a complete tune, but what is called a Theme, a melody that leaves something still to be said, to be developed.

Well, that's already a disadvantage to those ~~some~~ people who are always expecting music to have full-blown tunes, and so they'll naturally find these incomplete themes less melodic. I suppose, then, that they should complain about the famous opening 4-note theme of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony:

Play

which is hardly melodic at all. Or about this theme of his 7th symphony

Play

which is all practically one note. ~~What they're looking for is a big~~ But both of those themes are kinds of melodies, you must remember, even though they're not tunes. (to OKE)

Of course, there are themes that are much more tuneful than those. Only think of Chaikovsky's

A-2

Sixth Symphony:
ORK.
Why, that's practically a whole tune in itself.
Or the ~~famous~~ favorite theme from Schubert's Unfinished Symphony:
ORK.
Now what is it about those big, tuneful themes that makes them so attractive & beloved — besides the fact that Chaikovsky & Schubert were both melodic geniuses? The answer is repetition — either exact repetition, or slightly altered repetition, within the theme itself. It's that repetition that makes the melody stick in your mind; & it's the melodies that stick in your mind that are ~~most~~ likely to please you the most. For instance, let's just see how Schubert went about building up that ~~great~~ lovely theme by simply repeating ~~himself~~ his ideas in a certain arranged order, like making a design out of ___?___s.

(continue, p. 10 — "He starts with a simple..." (note changes + cuts) thru pp. 11, 12, + 13 down to last line. Then to Insert (B))

Insert (C) (p. 8)

So the next time someone tells you that there's no melody in music made out of motives, I hope you'll know what to answer. Motives are as much a part of melody as anything else. But then the next complaint you'll hear is about counterpoint. "Oh, those dry, difficult Bach fugues! How can I hear the melody when there are so many things going on at once?" Well, your answer to that is: "Just open your ears and listen". You see, people ~~usually~~ normally expect a melody always to be on top of the music, with an accompaniment underneath, like a Chopin Nocturne (play). But why does it have to be? It can be on the bottom, or in the middle as well, as in any Bach fugue; but that doesn't make it any the less melodic. It may be a little harder, to have to look for the melody, instead of having it served to you on a silver platter, but think how much greater the satisfaction is when you find it! Now here's the start of a Bach fugue — a very short theme, or subject, as it's called in a fugue, but perfectly melodic.

Play.

Now it gets developed, as new voices join in the discussion, stating the same subject, while other voices go on to other melodic statements at the same time.

Play

You see how the main subject ~~appears first~~ keeps turning

C - 2

up in different voices – way down in the bass, or up on top, or in the middle? While the other voices go on singing other melodies. So it's certainly not an absence of melody, ~~by~~ not by a long shot; in fact, it's an overabundance of melody: the whole fugue is one long outpouring of melody, just like the Tristan Prelude; only you have to know how to listen for the melody, & where to find it. So don't let anyone scare you with that terrible word <u>counterpoint</u>. Counterpoint doesn't erase melody; on the contrary, it multiplies it.

So it all adds up to what I said in the beginning: melody can be many kinds of things, and you mustn't expect it to be always the same thing – namely, just a tune. It can be a short <u>theme</u>, or an even shorter <u>motive</u>; or it can ~~to~~ appear in company with other themes, as in counterpoint, on top, or at the bottom, or in the middle. But it's always melody, ~~and the main thing~~ no matter how involved it gets in symphonic development.

Now that's a lot of hard stuff we've been discussing so far; and so to make it clearer, we're going to play you a whole movement from a Mozart symphony, which will illustrate ~~every~~ everything we've been talking about. I'm sure you all know the beautiful, famous theme that opens this movement: (Play).

The 1st movement of his great G-minor symphony

C-3

Now that divine melody is a perfect example of the 1-2-3 method we learned about before: first, a phrase (play); then repeat it, slightly altered (play); and, third, the conclusion (play). Now certainly nobody will quarrel with that as being unmelodic; it has such a beautiful shape, and arch (sing). But in the course of the movement, as the theme is being developed, there are places that might be called unmelodic, or less melodic. But you're ready now to understand that even those places are melodic, as much as the opening theme — if you just listen to them correctly. For instance, you'll notice that the very first two notes of the main theme (play) form a little motive by themselves, a motive that is used all through the movement.

(continue, p. 14 — "Do you remember"

(p.13)

Insert (B.)

And so on. There are millions of them, examples of the 1-2-3 design; and don't forget that the heart of the matter is repetition: 2 is always a repeat of 1.

Now that we know a few of the secrets that make ~~melodies that people call~~ music sound melodic, let's start looking for some of the reasons why people find certain kinds of music unmelodic. We've already discovered that what appeals to people most as melody is a fully spun-out tune, and that when they get instead an incomplete tune, or a theme, they begin to have trouble. So you can imagine that when they hear music made out of melodies that are even shorter than themes, they have even more trouble. For example, to return to that famous 4-note opening of Beethoven's 5th (Play) — that's so short it's not really even a theme, but what is called a motive: Now a motive can be as little as 2 notes, or 3 or 4, — a bare melodic seed — too short to be called a melody. And yet it is melody, because it's a series of notes, like Mendelssohn's Wedding March — only, it's the raw material out of which longer melodic lines are made. You remember I said that certain people find Wagner's operas unmelodic? This is why: because Wagner usually constructed his huge operas out of tiny little motives, instead of writing regular tunes such as the Italian opera composers used.

B-2

But how wrong they are to say that Wagner doesn't write melody! He writes nothing but melody, only it's made out of motives. Let me show you how.

(continue, p. 7, top, to p. 8, down thru "everybody does it, even me." Then to Insert ©)

Pt. II

~~I suppose that what I've been getting at all this time~~

(Beginning to ... tiny motives)

But the really important reason — and I guess this is what I've been coming to all this time — is ~~personal taste. Tastes change as times change and~~ the question of what our ears expect — in other words, taste. And that, in turn, is based on what our ears are used to hearing. For instance, we've seen today how important repetition is in making a melody easy to latch on to. We're used to that technique ~~Well, what happens to melodies that don't repeat? Does it~~ it's the technique used by popular songwriters: They drum their phrases into your head. (Sing Mack the Knife). OK — So what happens when we hear melodies that don't repeat at all, that just weave on + on, always new? Well, it's true that we usually like them less — ~~But~~ at first. But that doesn't mean they're any less melodic; in fact, the farther away

— Every melody had to be a tune (p. 8)

because that's what my brief musical experience ~~at that point~~ had taught my ears to expect.

In exactly the same way that our tastes change

with growing up, and hearing all kinds of music, so people's tastes change from one period of history to another. The melodies people loved in Beethoven's time ~~they found~~ would have shocked and started ~~Beethoven's~~ the people of Bach's time, 100 years earlier; and I'm equally sure that some of today's modern ~~melodic writing~~ music, which people complain about as ugly and unmelodic, will be perfectly lovely, charming every-day stuff ~~to~~ to the people of tomorrow. Let us play you a perfect example — another long, non-repeating melodic line by the great modern German composer Paul Hindemith. Hindemith wrote this melody over 30 years ago, in a piece called Concert Music for Strings & Brass; ~~and I consider it one of the most moving and beautifully shaped melodies not only of modern music, but of all music. Good any one who says this melody is unmelodic is not judging Hindemith's melody; he's only judging his own limited ears. Just listen to it.~~

and I suppose there are still people who will ~~still~~ call this unmelodic, even after 30 years. But I ~~have a sneaky feeling that you young people will agree with me~~ consider it one of the most moving and beautifully shaped melodies, not only of modern music, but of all music; and I have a feeling that you'll agree with me, after all you've learned about melody today. Let's see.

ORK —

3

~~I gather~~

Now that is a melodic line, 4 minutes of beautiful curves, arches, peaks and valleys. And if there are any of you who did not like it, who found it unmelodic, awkward, or graceless, let me comfort you by saying that those were just the words used 80 years ago about another German composer named Brahms. Now these days, when we think of melody, we almost immediately think of Brahms; but there was a time when people complained bitterly about his music as totally lacking in melody. And so, to wind up our program on melody, and to show you how careful you have to be in judging melody, we are going to play for you ~~one of~~ the last movement of Brahms' 4th symphony — an extraordinary movement for many reasons, but chiefly for the reason that its main theme isn't a melody at all. It's nothing but a scale of six notes (play) plus two notes to finish it off; ~~and the whole mo~~ 8 notes in all, one to a bar (Play with harmony). And out of those ~~not very promising~~ 8 bars comes ~~a whole movement, of such glowing, fiery melody as to leave you gasping~~. a series of 30 variations, each one exactly 8 bars long, and each one containing those same 8 simple notes, always in the same key. That's the whole movement. ~~either in the bass on top, or in the middle, or in the bass, or~~ Now that doesn't sound

(4)

very promising in terms of melody, does it? And yet, what Brahms gives us in this movement is a work of such glowing, fiery melodic invention as to leave us gasping. ~~And he does it by using motives, counterpoint, symmetrical phrases, & all the rest. But I don't think I even have to explain it to you.~~ You're ready now to ~~see~~ listen to this ~~good~~ so-called unmelodic work of Brahms, ~~and~~ hear it for the magnificent outpouring of melody that it really is. And if you're still wondering what a melody is,

How does he do it? By inventing new melodies in counterpoint to that main theme, by a brilliant use of motives — but I'm sure you'll hear all that without my telling you.

Just listen to this Brahms movement, and you'll have the answer: melody is exactly what a great composer wants it to be.