

Melody creation method by Vincent-Olivier Gagnon (alias Dunaël).

Here is a procedure that I've made in order to compose melodies in a few 'easy' steps. Of course, it's not perfect but I hope it can give some tools to some of you. At first, make sure you take enough time to think at each step. When you'll have used it a few times, then you'll should be able to go around the 'requierments'. I'm completely aware that this contains very personnal composer's fetichismes, but then again... who doesn't have some ?!

1. On your prefered music paper, note a starting note ('S') for your 'to-be-born motive'.
2. Determine an ending note ('E') that will finish your motive. This ending note is important if you want to connect together and transpose your motives.
3. Characterize your starting note with a melodic interval following it ('s'). This interval shall make the starting character to your melody. For example, starting with a descending fifth gives a very different personnality to your melody than beginning with an ascending minor second.
4. Characterize the ending note with a melodic interval preceding it ('e'). Once again, these two last notes give their share of the mood you want to finish on : will the last to notes be very conclusive, or are they unstable and ready to lead somewhere else... etc.
5. Now find a middle note ('M') which will connect the starting interval with the ending interval so that you get a small 5 notes melody ('SsMeE' melody). Make sure that the middle note isn't over expressive for its utility is to lead from the start to the end.
6. To write a seven notes motive, let's now create either a low or high small peak ('P'). To do so, choose a note that is either higher or lower than the starting, ending or middle notes. When the note is choosen, let's replace for now the middle note ('M') by this small peak note ('P') and find one note ('<p') before the 'P' note to connect it with the starting notes ('Ss') and find one note ('p>') that goes after the 'P' note to connect it with the ending notes ('eE') in order to have a new motive of seven notes that can be named as 'Ss<pPp>eE'.
7. To write an eleven notes motive, you need to now find a real climax ('C') that is either the highest or lowest of all the notes. This climax should also be preceded by a note ('<c') and followed by another one ('c>'). Then we assemble all the notes we have up to now in such a way to compose an eleven notes motive ('Ss<pPp>M<cCc>eE').
8. And to finish with a thirteen notes motive you simply need to add a note before and after the middle note written as '<m' and 'm>' respectively so to have a melody that could be composed like this : 'Ss<pPp><mMm><cCc>eE'.
9. Now that you've composed all this familly of motives, you can start with writting three other versions of the motives simply by the means of retrogradation, mirror and mirror of the retrogradation technics. To do so, you have to write the every motive by starting from the last note up to the first note in order to get
'Eec>C<cm>M<mp>P<psS' for the thirteen notes motives for example. For the mirror, you need to take a note of reference that will act as an axis of vertical reflection and from there you count the number of steps in semi-tones you have from the axis and place the reflected note at exactly the same number of semi-tones on the other side of the axis so that if your climax was the highest note it becomes the lowest note in it's reflection.
10. With these 16 melodies all related you can now begin to compose ! Put rythme under it, harmonize them or not... use them as you wish... alter them... play with them... but more than anything else : just have fun !