

Form 2: Motives

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Repetition in music is important. Without it, music would not have feeling or meaning. It also makes music memorable. In this lesson, you will find repetition in the form of motives and sequences. Other aspects of repetition will be considered in later lessons.

Motives and Sequences

A motive is a short melodic or rhythmic pattern that is repeated in the music. If a motive is repeated on different pitch levels, the repetition is called a sequence.

Motives and sequences give coherence to music. When you start listening for them, you will be surprised at how often you hear the same pattern. They also make it much easier to remember the music. There will often be more than one motive in a piece of music.

In the music below, the first motive is marked m1 and the second motive is marked m2.

Stike Up The Band

George Gershwin

Oboe

6

12

18

24

30

M1

M2

Stike Up The Band

George Gershwin

Musical staff 1: Bass clef, C major, 4/4 time. Measures 1-5. A red bracket labeled "M1" spans measures 1-3.

Musical staff 2: Bass clef, C major, 4/4 time. Measures 6-11.

Musical staff 3: Bass clef, C major, 4/4 time. Measures 12-17. A red bracket labeled "M2" spans measures 14-17.

Musical staff 4: Bass clef, C major, 4/4 time. Measures 18-23. A red bracket spans measures 18-20.

Musical staff 5: Bass clef, C major, 4/4 time. Measures 24-29.

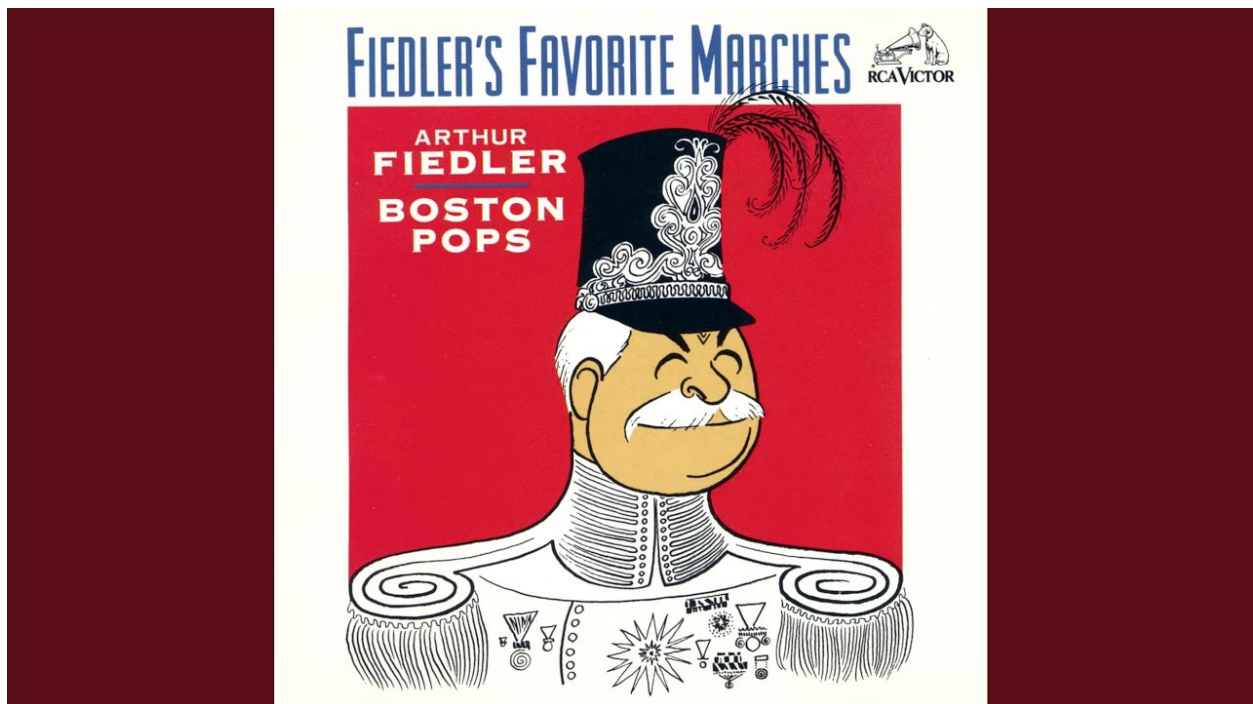
Musical staff 6: Bass clef, C major, 4/4 time. Measures 30-34.

Assignment

How many times is the m1 motive (rhythm pattern) repeated in “Strike Up The Band?”

How many times is the m2 repeated?

Go to YouTube and listen to a recording of Strike Up the Band by the Boston Pops. Click the link below.



There is a middle section to Strike Up the Band not shown above that is also based on motives. Listen for and notice

the descending sequences in this middle section. This middle section is often not included in short performances.

Look for motives in two or more pieces that you are playing and mark them to see how often they are repeated. When you have done that, you have completed this lesson.