10 Any time at all: the Beatles' free phrase rhythms

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A number of those interested in the music of the Beatles have singled out for discussion its rhythmic inventiveness. Most discussions of the Beatles' rhythmic devices start and end with an appreciation of their remarkably wide-ranging approaches to the metric surface, paying particular attention to asymmetrical meters (those representing measures containing numbers of beats not divisible by two or three, as in the 5/4 meter appearing in "Within You Without You" [*SP*])[1] or the many examples of freely mixed meter (as with the repeated alternation of 4/4 and 3/4 bars in "All You Need is Love" [*MMT*]). Another interesting development in the Beatles' rhythmic invention is their flexibility with strongly accented patterns of syncopation, which arises when normally weak beats or weak parts of beats (such as the second and fourth beats in 4/4 meter, or the second eighth within a quarter-note beat) are accented by strong melodic events (as with a sudden high note), rhythmically unexpected chord changes (normally changing on downbeats but subject to expressive versatility), or obtrusive dynamics (as with the normal rock drumbeat pattern, which loudly accents the snare on beats two and four). Because these and other related effects are manifest for the most part at the beat level (between the barlines), they are all relatively superficial and may be accounted for chiefly in the musical foreground (as opposed to groupings of measures and of phrases, which may be thought to occupy progressively deeper middle-ground and background orientations).[2] But perhaps of even greater significance for the individual character and expressive potential of many of their hundreds of songs is the group's free treatment of phrase rhythm. In this domain, we must recognize a larger-scale manifestation of regular or irregular accent patterns, measured in phrase lengths rather than within measures. These patterns derive from both (1) the manner in which successive downbeats (often made plain by motivic repetition and harmonic changes) relate to one another – some will be stronger than others; and (2) the manner in which multi-measure groupings (often adhering to the scanning of the poetic text) cohere in larger units such as phrases and periodic groupings of phrases. The purpose of this chapter will be to examine the rhythmic nature of the music of the Beatles from a large-scale, hypermetric[3] and phrase-based perspective, making reference to a large number of Beatles

Table 10.1 *The Beatles' canon on compact disc*

(Designation)	Full title	(Recording dates)
(*PPM*)	*Please Please Me*	(1962–3)
(*PM*)	*Past Masters*	(1962–9)
(*WtB*)	*With the Beatles*	(1963)
(*HDN*)	*A Hard Day's Night*	(1964)
(*BfS*)	*Beatles for Sale*	(1964)
(*H!*)	*Help!*	(1965)
(*RS*)	*Rubber Soul*	(1965)
(*Rev*)	*Revolver*	(1966)
(*SP*)	*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*	(1966–7)
(*MMT*)	*Magical Mystery Tour*	(1966–7)
(*YS*)	*Yellow Submarine*	(1967–8)
(WA)	*The Beatles* (the "White Album")	(1968)
(*LIB*)	*Let It Be*	(1969–70)
(*AR*)	*Abbey Road*	(1969)

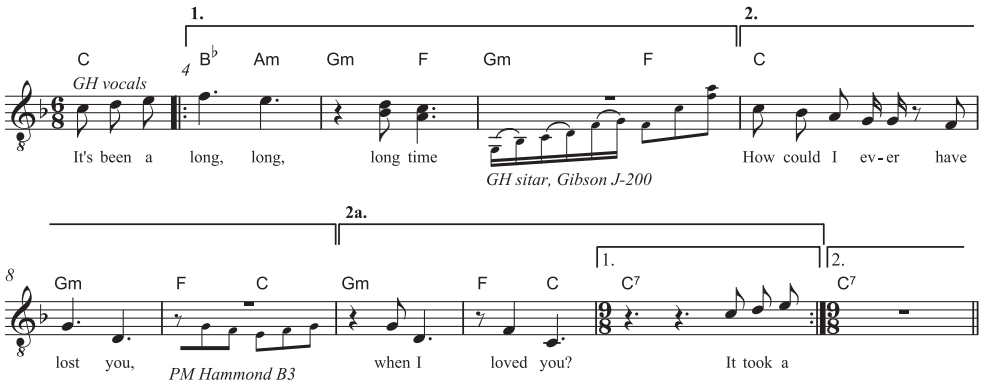
compositions from throughout their career as recording artists (1962–9). A handful of illustrations will be examined in somewhat closer detail.

The Beatles' phrase rhythms are foursquare often enough to permit the establishment of regular norms (that is, repeated lengths of four bars plus four bars) against which abnormal lengths can be measured. A large number of their songs, however, feature in one section or another various irregularities that will be scrutinized according to the following characteristics, each of which will be defined and exemplified below:

(1) contrasting unit lengths
(2) expanded prototypes
(3) reinterpretations of accent at the hypermetric level
(4) tonicization-related stretching and elision
(5) adjustments required by changes in harmonic rhythm
(6) thoroughly asymmetrical patterns

Because these various approaches to the plasticity of phrase are interwoven with one another in the Beatles' music, they will not necessarily be introduced in turn, but will rather be referred to as they are found to influence our chosen illustrations.

In many cases, irregularities in phrase length are closely tied to the given phrase's formal function within the song as a whole. Because of the presence in each case of a lyric text, some devices have compelling poetic connotations as well. While all three of the composing Beatles (John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison) experimented with free phrase rhythms, Lennon was adventurous most often – though the far less prolific Harrison most consistently – in this regard.



Example 1 "Long Long Long" (verse)

Before we investigate properties of contrasting unit lengths, we should note that metric groupings comprising odd numbers of measures sometimes appear exclusively, without direct comparison to others of the much more "normal" duple-measured lengths. The Beatles often embrace asymmetrical three-bar lengths as their unit of measure, as in "Long Long Long" (WA). The Renaissance-era mensuration system may help us understand the nesting of metric levels in this song: the hypermeasure divided into three bars may be referred to as a "perfection," as opposed to an "imperfection," which would group pairs of measures into hypermeasures. This song's triple division of a hypermeasure into three-bar groups, its normally duple groupings of beats into two-beat measures, and its triple division of a beat into three equal eighths, might be conceived, respectively, as illustrating an example in "perfect modus," "imperfect tempus," and "perfect prolatio." (This metric structure might be notated with beats represented as dotted quarters – perfect prolatio; with two beats per 6/8 measure – imperfect tempus; and with three measures per phrase – perfect modus. In nearly all tonal music, the "imperfect modus" pattern governs most phrase-level ratios that are typically duple in nature, but this was not so much the case in the Renaissance, hence our inspiration to refer to Beatles patterns in somewhat archaic, though unusually appropriate, terms.) The vocal melody and chord patterns for the verse (0:08–0:41)[4] of "Long Long Long," along with a simple analysis of phrase rhythm, are given in Example 1. In this and all following examples, horizontal brackets above the staff demarcate the extent of hypermeasures rather than phrase and subphrase groupings, although there is usually significant overlap between the meter and the phrase articulation. Here, the lyric's reference to an extreme length of time is portrayed through verses divided as three three-bar units (perfections), all in a slow 6/8 meter but for a final, stretched-out bar in 9/8.[5] In each of

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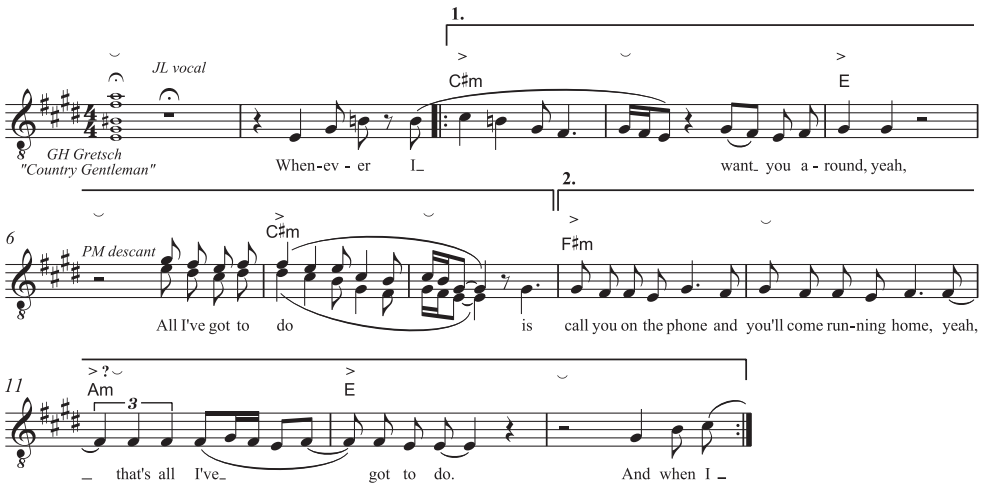
the three hypermetric units, two bars of vocal melody are appended by a measure-long instrumental tag. Note that the last unit (the hypermeasure labelled "2a" above its bracket [0:30–0:41]) is an extended revision of the melodic-harmonic pattern set forth in the second and third bars of unit 2 (0:23–0:29), and thus an unambiguous representation of a "long, long, long time." A similar example, the song "Wait" (*RS*), had been composed three years earlier by John Lennon, notably on a similar poetic idea, even using the same opening lyric ("it's been a long time . . . "). Here, verses are built as three bars (0:00–0:06) plus three bars (0:06–0:12). Lennon's hypermetric perfection is not unlike the "Ritmo di tre battute" of the Scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and even more like the last movement of Brahms's Opus 25 Piano Quartet. Lennon's uptempo rhythm is more readily comprehensible than that in the ambiguously slow "Long Long Long," but I find Harrison's moody and meditative example more evocative.

Contrasting unit lengths

Often, contrasts are presented between duple and triple units. In McCartney's "You Never Give Me Your Money" (*AR*), square 4 + 4 verses initially in a strict descending-fifth sequence (I^7 – IV^7 – VII^7 – III – VI^7 – II^7 – V^7 – I [0:23–0:46]) are followed by a repeated three-bar double-plagal codetta (1:31–1:39). (I use the term "double plagal" to characterize the descending-fourth progression ♭VII – IV – I, which nests one neighboring plagal relationship within another.) The three-bar double-plagal cadence in "You Never Give Me Your Money" (one measure per chord) conveys a timeless quality that exemplifies the lyric's reference to a "magic feeling," hovering gently on Harrison's Leslie-tremolo Telecaster (suddenly switched to the lead pick-up for the slow arpeggiations) as if an aural escape from the standard duple, business-oriented, "money"-preoccupied verse.[6] Contrast in the form of strong internal disagreement is suggested in McCartney's verses of "We Can Work It Out" (*PM*), the first of which (0:00–0:18) begins with the words "Try to see it my way." This is an entire song devoted to the theme of disaccord and hoped-for resolution. Here, eight-bar phrases divide unequally as 3 + 3 + 2. Underlining the thoughts expressed in the lyrics, the hypermetric conflicts pit a stubborn wrong against a declared right. Lennon's ensuing bridge passage ("Life is very short . . . " [0:37–1:03]) paints "fussing and fighting" with the three-against-two metric motive at the beat level, through the use of triplet quarters; the tension is also expressed contrapuntally, with 4–3 suspensions above each V/VI in Lennon's harmonium part (0:44–0:46). As if completing a puzzle, the song's two-bar codetta (2:05–2:13) revisits the triplets on the tonic, which is there ornamented with



Example 2 "All I've Got to Do" (verse/refrain)

a 4–3 neighboring line reminiscent of the bridge's suspensions. One imagines that the codetta's harmonious resolution of the three-two combination bodes well for the bickering parties portrayed in the poetic text.

Expanded prototypes

Related to the triple-unit perfection is the concept of what I call the "floater," usually a two-bar unit that attaches itself to the front or back end of a hypothetical host four-bar phrase and thus an example of our second type, the expanded prototype. The four-bar phrase will serve as our hypothetical normal length against which all actual phrases are measured, particularly when they are expanded beyond that prototypical length into asymmetrical phrases of, for instance, five or seven bars. The technique of the expanded prototype is heard in the verses of John Lennon's "All I've Got to Do" (*WtB*), the first of which (0:00–0:25) is abstracted in Example 2. Here and henceforth, the beginning of the two-bar floater is marked with an italic "*f*" above the bracket, in this case beginning in measure 7. Note the long anacrusis (the inhalatory upbeat) preceding the double bar that puts the phrase grouping slightly out of phase with the indicated hypermetric divisions. The harmonically ambiguous opening two-bar anacrusis (0:00–0:03) leads to the phrase proper, which seems like it could have been metrically closed after four bars (note the strong/weak accentuation suggested beneath the bracket in measures 3–6). This is followed by the varied repetition of measures 3–4 (0:03–0:07) in measures 7–8 (0:11–0:15), as if a four-bar antecedent (measures 3–6) is to be answered by a parallel four-bar consequent.[7] As it

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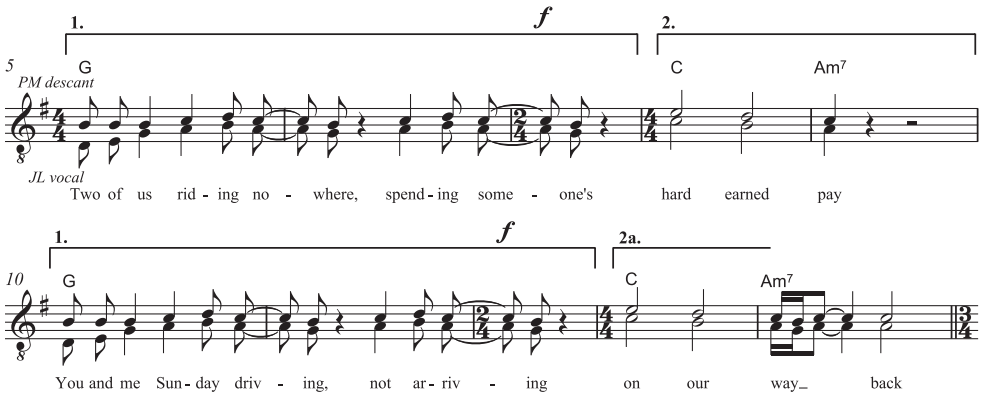
turns out, a contrasting consequent phrase begins only in measure 9, and so the fragment of measures 7–8 is metrically a conclusion of the antecedent phrase, now made up of three two-bar sub-units (and thus analogous to perfections in three-bar units). Grammatically, the passage functions at the same time as a transition to the consequent phrase, which aligns fairly closely with a hypermeasure (measures 9–13 [0:15–0:25]) of an odd five-bar length. This odd length is permitted by a retrospective reinterpretation of measure 11 (where a poignant descending passing tone is introduced with C♮) as weak rather than its initially perceived strong function – thus the notation above measure 11 shows a questioned strong accent replaced by a weak one.

In "All I've Got to Do," we've seen that the floater (measures 7–8) would likely first be perceived as the beginning of an antecedent phrase, as its motivic material is parallel with the opening of the consequent phrase; however, because its idea is abandoned halfway through, the measures are likely reinterpreted as a continuation of the antecedent. Commonly, the correct metric interpretation of the floater, and its motivic and harmonic interdependence with other units, are perceived only upon the completion of the entire passage. This same problem arises along with an emotional outburst in the bridge of John Lennon's "Yes It Is" (*PM*) (the contrasting section that begins with the words "I could be happy . . . " [1:00–1:18]).[8] The section's third 12/8 bar ("if I could forget her . . . " [1:08–1:11]) is at first interpreted as the beginning of a consequent phrase, but in retrospect, because of textural, motivic, and poetico-grammatical contrast in the next bar, it floats back to join the antecedent; the original consequent idea has been abandoned and the bridge is left with a phrase rhythm of 3 + 2 bars. In the first vocal phrase of George Harrison's "Something" (*AR*) (0:05–0:26), a two-bar floater (measures 6–7 [0:20–0:26]) impetuously transposes the material of measures 4–5 (0:12–0:19) in harmonic sequence, as if the singer is reaching ever higher to uncover the inscrutable nature of the "something" he tries to describe, resulting in a six-bar opening phrase. In McCartney's "Two of Us" (*LIB*), reduced in Example 3, an unusual half-bar floater (0:23) invades the verse/refrain (0:18–0:49). The irregularity of the floater – especially when followed by two bars (measures 4–5 [0:24–0:28]) sung in a remarkably slowed rhythm – conveys the sense of "riding nowhere, not arriving."

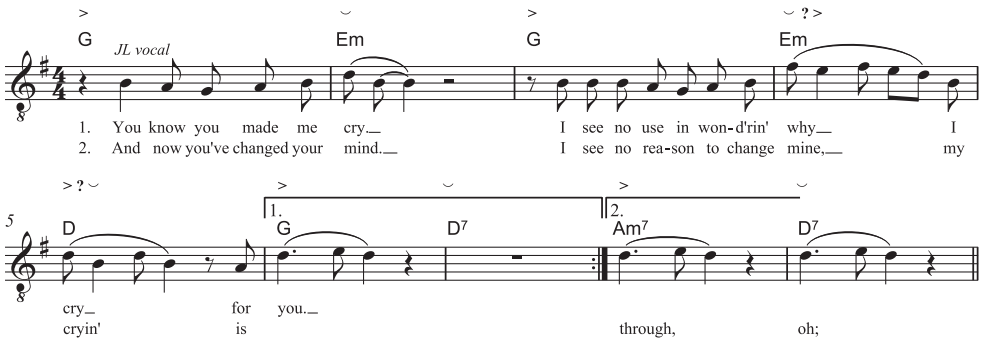
At about the time that McCartney was writing "Two of Us," over the second half of 1968, the same half-bar floater was being used to good effect by Lennon in "Revolution" (*PM* [0:12–0:13] and WA [0:21–0:22]) and by McCartney himself in "Martha My Dear" (WA [0:22]). A list of representative floaters – most often of two bars – appearing throughout the Beatles' career is given in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2 *Representative "floaters" in the Beatles' music*

Lennon's refrain to "Not a Second Time" (*WtB*) [4 + 4 + 2] [0:26–0:45]
McCartney's verses to "Every Little Thing" (*BfS*) [4 + 2, 4 + 2] [0:03–0:14, 0:15–0:26]
McCartney's verses to "Michelle" (*RS*) [2 + 4, 2 + 4] [0:08–0:20, 0:21–0:32]
Lennon's bridge to "We Can Work it Out" (*PM*) [4 + 2, 4 + 2] [0:37–0:50, 0:51–1:03]
Lennon's verse to "A Day in the Life" (*SP*) [4 + 4 + 2] [0:12–0:43]
Lennon's verse to "Revolution" (WA) [2.5 + 4 + 2.5 + 4 + 5.5] [0:16–1:1:02] (cf. *PM*)
McCartney's verse to "Martha My Dear" (WA) [1.25 + 2.5 + 2.5 + 1] [0:19–0:38]
McCartney's bridge to "Two of Us" (*LIB*) [2 + 4] [1:31–1:44]
Lennon's verse to "Because" (*AR*) [4 + 4 + 2] [0:30–1:00]

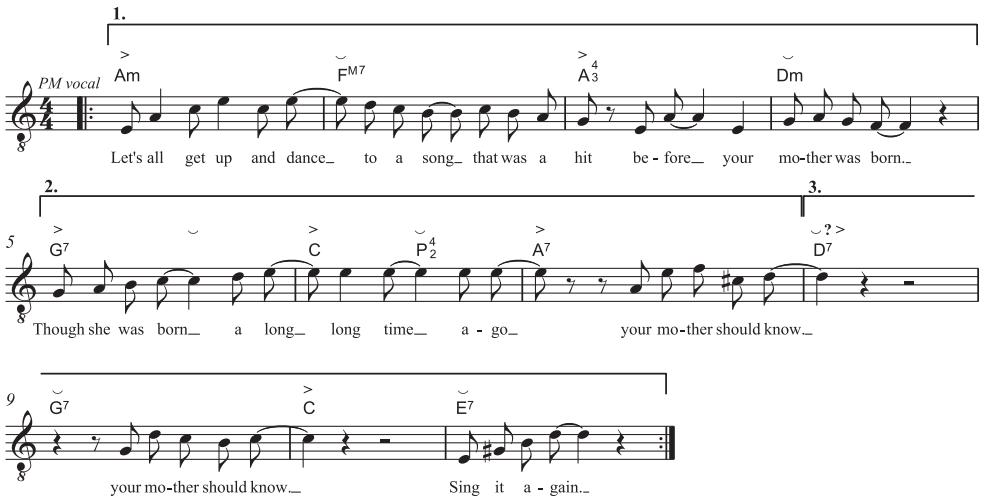


Example 3 "Two of Us" (verse)



Example 4 "Not a Second Time" (verse)

The floater is an example of how the Beatles expand their basic prototypical phrases; other devices appear as well. One method combines triple and duple units within the phrase, but elides the connection so that a weak measure will have to be reinterpreted, in hindsight, as strong; this creates seven-bar verses in Lennon's "Not a Second Time" (*WtB* [0:00–0:13]) and McCartney's "Yesterday" (*H!* [0:05–0:22]). The first of these is shown in Example 4. The suggested accent pattern of strong and weak measures is



Example 5 "Your Mother Should Know" (verse)

based on harmonic and motivic construction. As the example is heard in real time, the listener must retrospectively reinterpret the hypermetric accent in measures 4 and 5, based on the unequivocal accents heard subsequently in measures 6 and 7. The unusual delayed entrance of the drums in measure 5, however, works against the suggested accent pattern, further complexifying the issue. To my ear, all of this metric confusion portrays exquisitely the emotional uncertainty of the sensitive singer, John Lennon.

Reinterpretations of accent at the hypermetric level

In the verse of McCartney's "Your Mother Should Know" (*MMT*), shown in Example 5, the first hypermeasure (0:04–0:12) is of a simple four bars. In the second unit (measures 5–7 [0:12–0:18]), the vocal phrasing works against the hypermeter, which momentarily ventures into an irregularly doubled harmonic rhythm, confusing the listener who would normally wish to hear its fourth bar as a weak conclusion to the hypermeasure. Instead, the continuing motivic pattern forces a reinterpretation of measure 8 as a strong beginning to the third metric unit (measures 8–11 [0:18–0:26]), thus amputating the second hypermeasure so as to result in a 4 + 3 + 4-bar passage. The metric irregularity coincides with a brief tonicization of the minor key's mediant.

Other expansions are less involved, as in the measured, composed-out fermata that may create an extended anacrusis or cadence. This method of extending the cadence, William Rothstein points out, has been discussed

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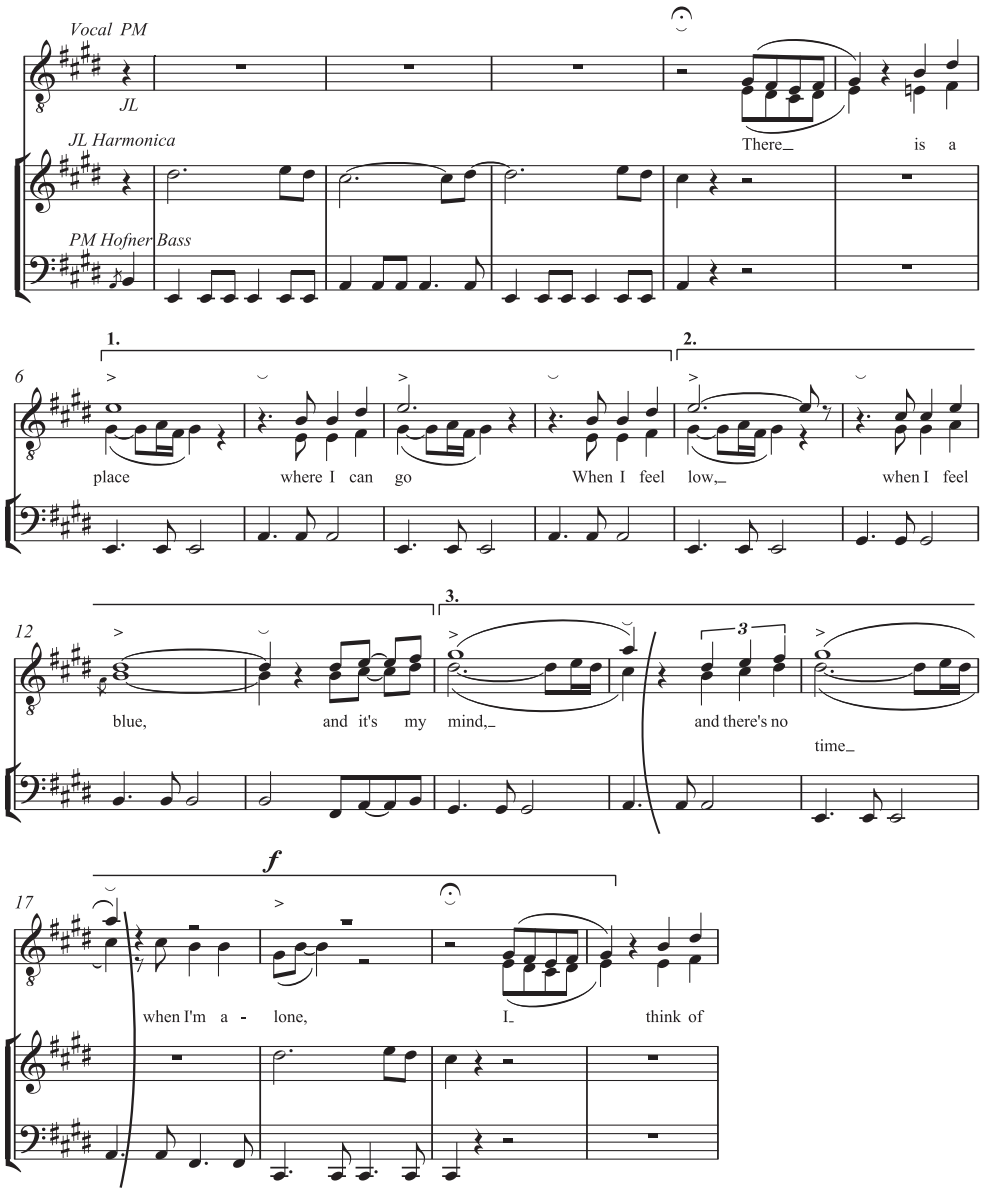
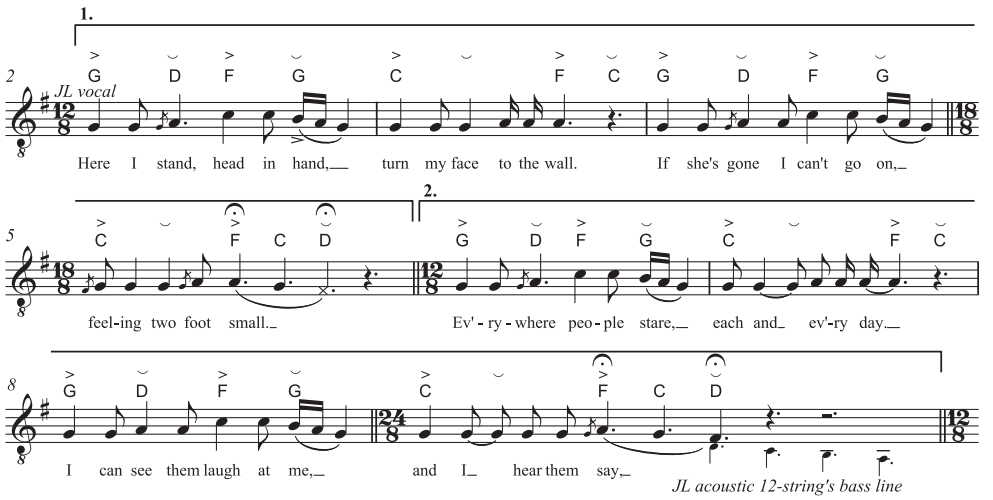


Example 6 "There's a Place" (verse)

since Kirnberger and Reicha.[9] The extended anacrusis is first heard in John Lennon's "There's a Place" (*PPM*), the first verse of which is shown in Example 6. Here, the first vocal phrase is extended to six bars (measures 4–9 [0:06–0:15]), opening with a two-bar anacrusis (measures 4–5 [0:06–0:08]). The third hypermeasure (measures 14–20 [0:22–0:33]) is expanded further when the same long anacrusis is preceded by a parenthetical repetition ("[and it's my] mind and there's no time"). A similar measured

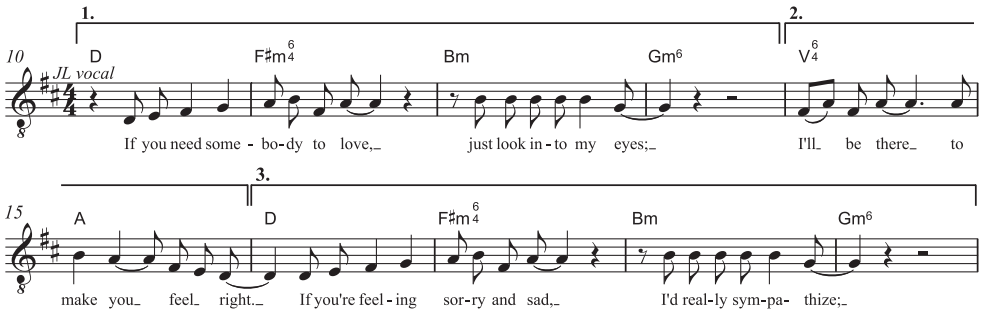


Example 7 "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" (verse)

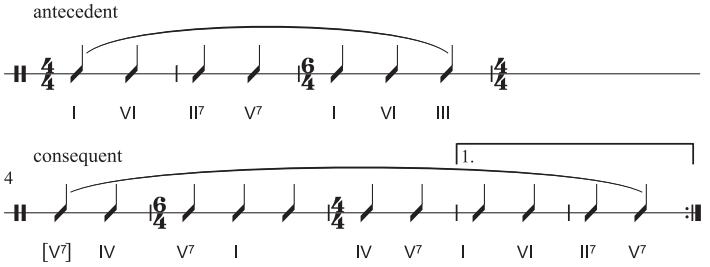
fermata (0:10–0:14) opens the chorus of Lennon's textually related "Strawberry Fields Forever" (*MMT*) four years later. The composed-out cadential fermata is heard in the verse of Lennon's "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" (*H!*), shown in Example 7. In the first phrase (0:02–0:19), I hear the elongation of each of the prototypical third and fourth beats of measure 5, each marked with a fermata, stretched into two beats each. The prototypical fourth beat is expanded even further at the conclusion of the second phrase (0:20–0:38), leading to a passage of twenty-four eighths that functions as a single measure. Other measured cadential fermatas appear in the verses of "The Continuing Story of Bungalow Bill" (WA [0:33–0:37]), "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" (*SP* [0:27–0:31]), and – expanded through the orchestral "glissando" – "A Day in the Life" (*SP* [1:33–2:16]), all, significantly, Lennon compositions.

Tonicization-related stretching and elision

Phrase rhythm must adapt to harmonic and formal requirements in several songs. In both Lennon's "Yes It Is" (*PM* [2:20–2:40]) and McCartney's "I Will" (WA [1:07–1:33]), and in their jointly composed "I Want to Hold Your Hand" (*PM* [2:08–2:23]), phrases are expanded in the codas to permit final Mozartean deceptive harmonic developments.[10] Extra bars are required for tonicizations in "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." In Lennon's "You're Going to Lose That Girl" (*H!*), a two-bar floater (0:52–0:55) permits a rhythmically fluid transition from I to ♭III for the bridge, but an abrupt retransition to the verse through a tritone-substitute for V (1:06–1:08) cuts



Example 8 "Any Time at All" (verse)

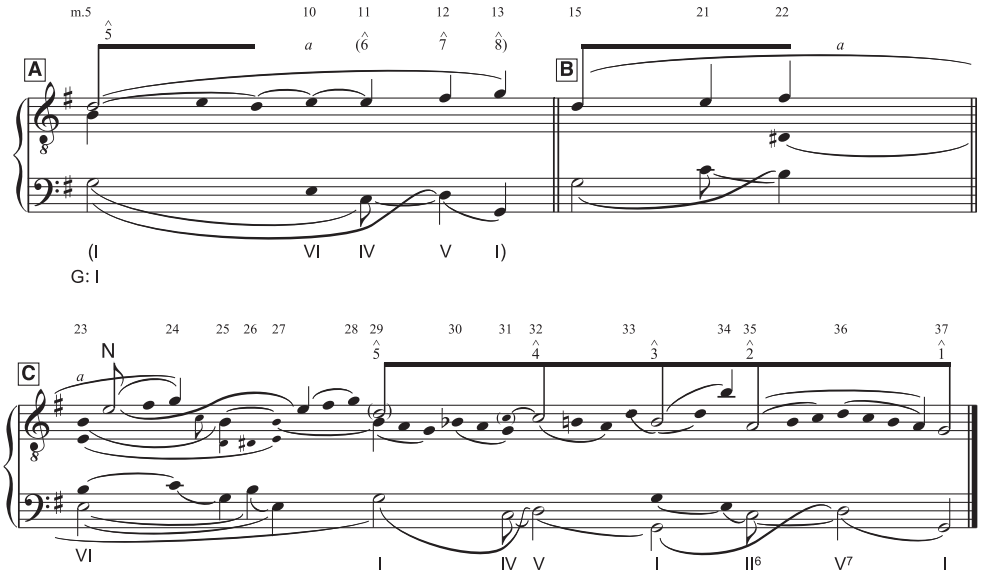


Example 9 "I Will" (verse)

the bridge's second phrase one bar short. The harmonic surprise takes the breath out of the phrase, cutting the last metric unit to three bars.

Enjambments (measures that enjoy simultaneously beginning and ending functions) and elisions (functioning but absent measures) appear often.[11] Both techniques work together in the verse of Lennon's "Any Time at All" (*HDN*), reduced in Example 8. Here, a harmonically static four-bar subphrase (0:15–0:21) is followed by a harmonically active consequent (0:21–0:24) that misses its third and fourth bars, displaced by the metrically enjambed opening of the second period with unit three (0:24–0:31). The second antecedent subphrase (marked as unit 3) is answered by a normal four-bar consequent (0:31–0:38). Lennon repeats the same fluid enjambment in "Julia" (0:14) four years later. Hurried phrases result from elisions in the same composer's "Cry Baby Cry" (WA [2:08]); the elision here of measures within phrases represents a large-scale version of the Beatles' penchant for eliding beats within measures of mixed meter. In Lennon's "It Won't Be Long" (*WtB*), as in "Any Time at All," the regulation of time itself is the song's subject. Here, a prototypical fourth bar is elided because an impatient Lennon apparently decides that the third bar (0:19–0:20) has already served this function; he rarely likes to tread water.

As shown in Example 9, the opening phrase of McCartney's "I Will" (WA) comes to an abrupt halt when the roadblock of a non-functional mediant harmony (0:08), with attendant ambiguity of hypermetric accent,



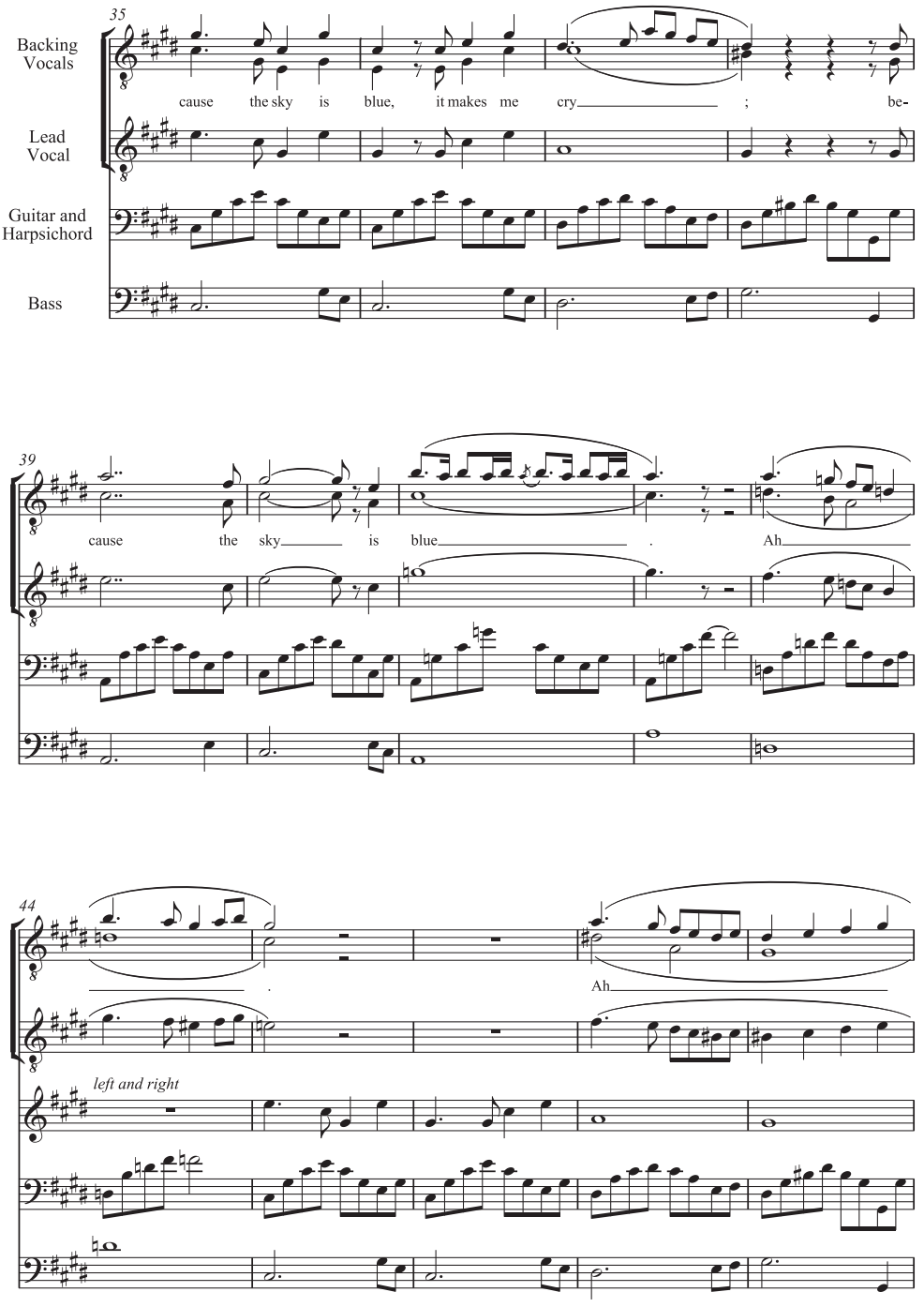
Example 10 Voice-leading analysis of "I Should Have Known Better"

appears in an extended measure 3 (two bars of 4/4 conclude with a single bar of 6/4). Because the phrase dangles on the weak III chord, there is a strong sense of elision. The consequent phrase has two different lengths, both longer than the antecedent, depending upon whether it returns to another verse (with one bar of 4/4, one of 6/4, and three bars of 4/4 [0:09–0:21]) or moves on, through the second ending (totaling one bar of 4/4, one of 6/4, and another single bar of 4/4 [0:30–0:40]), to the bridge. Other examples of enjambments or elisions can be found in the retransitions of both McCartney's "She's Leaving Home" (*SP*), where the only bar containing a tonally and hypermetrically expected V (following 1:17) is entirely removed and thus exists only hypothetically, and Lennon's "Sexy Sadie" (WA), the bridge of which returns abruptly to its verse via an elision (1:10). Also see the verse (0:21) of "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite!" (*SP*) and the chorus (0:07) of "The Continuing Story of Bungalow Bill" (WA), both songs by Lennon.

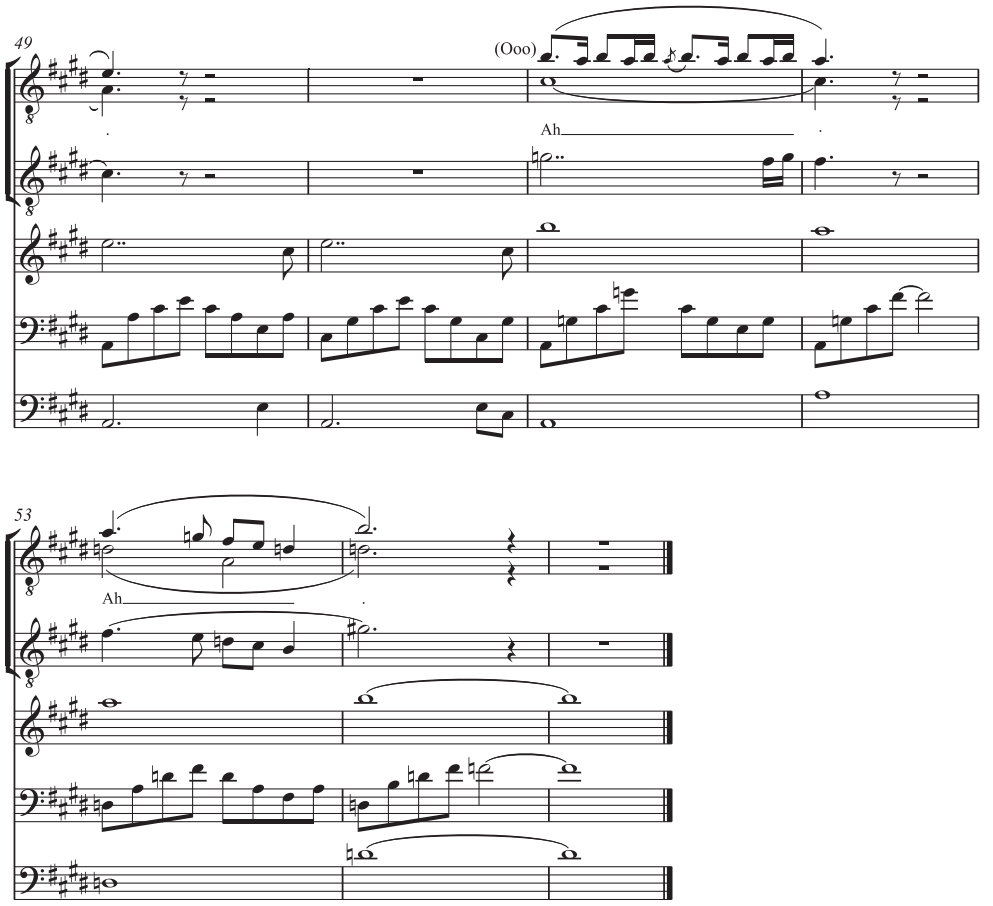
In Lennon's "I Should Have Known Better" (*HDN*), the Beatles join an aborted second verse and a bridge with the "linkage" technique, which Oswald Jonas defined as "a new phrase [taking] its initial idea [from] the end of the immediately preceding one."[12] The second verse has a length of 6 + 2 (0:25–0:40) as opposed to the initial verse's length of 6 + 4 (0:07–0:25). This complex example warrants closer inspection. The voice-leading sketch given in Example 10, which for convenience reduces the entire song to its basic tonal structure, elucidates the interrelated parts of the melodic

design. The growth of the sixth scale degree, **E**, from neighboring motion through passing motion at **A** and through roothood to tonicized status at **C** is the tonal focus in these sections, which are joined by an enlarged motivic overlap, the "linkage," that has a profound effect upon phrase rhythm. The second verse (**B**) is cut short to eight bars because of the unexpected appearance of V^7/VI in support of the melodic leading tone F sharp at measure 22 (0:38). This initiates a transition to the lyrical and expansive E-minor melody of the bridge (**C**). (The applied chord is amplified in importance by the entrance in measure 22 of Harrison's electric twelve-string guitar, which chimes with the bridge's changes as if accompanying a measured recitative.) The melodic drop to an inner-voice b^1 at measure 23 (a pitch class highlighted later in the bridge with a dramatic register shift to b^2) only briefly interrupts the rise to the eighth scale degree, g^2, that would have marked the conclusion of the *second* verse had it continued as did the *first*. In the graph, this rise at letters **A** and **B** from the ornamented initial tone d^2 through passing sixth and seventh scale degrees to the eighth is marked with a slur and the italic lower-case *a*.[13] From the end of the second verse, the rise is completed at measure 24 (0:42), effecting a motivic overlap of the verse, transition, and bridge that expresses the singer's great determination to communicate ("can't you see, when I tell you . . . and when I ask you . . . "). With the boost to scale degree 8 from the inner realm of b^1, Lennon reaches a new depth of understanding not heard in the previously blithe neighboring and passing treatment of the sixth scale degree, portrayed in a new setting of the tonic scale degree with VI of the tonicized VI. It is as if this area, the submediant, is where Lennon was headed all along, but even he could not have known so; the tonal evolution of the sixth scale degree can thus be heard as a portrayal of the deep hindsight that inspires the song. So my sense is that some level of phrase continues beyond the metric and harmonic closure at the double bar following measure 22.

The Beatles achieve their most original phrase rhythm effects in Lennon's "Sexy Sadie" (WA) and "Because" (*AR*). In each, the strong and weak accentual characteristics of phrases within verses are reinterpreted in codas by virtue of appearances there of new superimposed melodic parts. "Because," the last verse and coda of which are given in full score in Example 11, will illustrate. Preceding verses had each ended with an unusual half cadence in instruments only, halting on a fully diminished seventh chord (0:58–1:00). The function of this chord is clarified as VII of IV only after the second verse, by the beginning of the bridge (1:30). In the analogous place following the verse that begins in measure 35 (1:42), shown in Example 11, the diminished-seventh harmony (falling in measure 44 [2:09–2:11]) carries on as it had instrumentally. That is, the instruments behave as if the half cadence has been reached in bar 44, and restart in measure 45 (2:12)

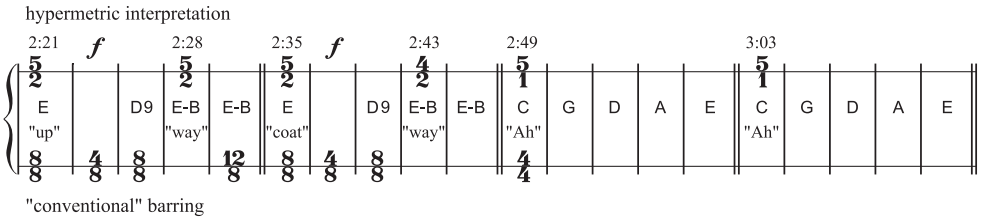


Example 11 "Because" (last verse and coda)

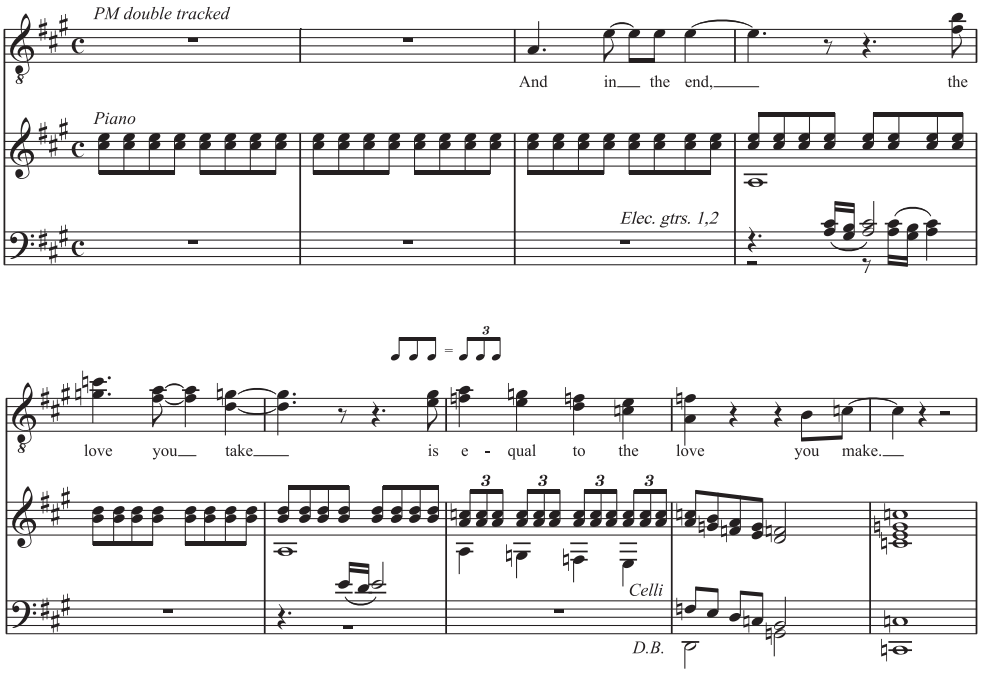


Example 11 (*cont.*)

with a complete verse structure, beginning with the Moog's statement of the C-sharp minor arpeggio.[14] The singers' newly added wordless parts, however, are dreamily out of phase with the instrumental backing: whereas the instruments believe they are beginning anew in bar 45, the singers had gotten a head start and actually cadence authentically at this point; whereas the instruments attempt a half cadence as before in measure 48 (2:21–2:23), the singers continue, insisting that the phrase cadence deceptively in bar 49 (2:24). Thus the song's first two verses group phrases into 4 + 4 + 2 (0:30–1:00) and 4 + 4 + 2 (1:00–1:30) bars, but the third and final verses rearrange the accentuation so as to group them as 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 (1:42–2:44). The phrase grouping and hypermeter are far more acutely out of phase than in examples provided by Lerdahl and Jackendoff and by Rothstein.[15] The same effect had been achieved a year earlier in "Sexy Sadie," where scant new vocal phrases in the coda (2:13–3:12) work against the instrumental hypermeter; the sly, lasciviously slithery harmonic ambiguities of "Sadie" enable the metric playfulness.



Example 12 "A Day in the Life" (bridge)



Example 13 "The End" (concluding couplet)

Adjustments required by changes in harmonic rhythm

But perhaps most interesting are the free phrase rhythms that result from the Beatles' play with tempo. In some cases, such as in "I Want to Hold Your Hand" (0:22) and "Your Mother Should Know" (0:18), a doubled harmonic rhythm doubles the density so that phrase lengths may be halved.[16] A more majestic such relationship empowers McCartney's bridge of "A Day in the Life" (*SP* [2:16–3:17]). This passage opens with the piano-led rhythm section pounding out frenetic eighths, grouped conventionally as shown in the lower single-line staff of Example 12; the first word of each phrase, timings, and all chord changes are given for the reader's reference. Four phrases appear, each of the first three comprising a total of 2.5 bars of 8/8

(barred either 8/8 + 4/8 + 8/8 or 8/8 + 12/8). The fourth phrase, in contrast, is shortened to a more regular two bars of 8/8. With this new regularity as its only preparation, the tempo slows (at 2:49) to exactly one half of its value, as regularly recurring 4/4 bars lead to the end of the bridge in a dreamy retransition in falling fourths (C – G – D . . .). But these regular bars are grouped into asymmetrical hypermeasures, five 4/4 measures in each of the last two phrases (indicated in the upper staff as two hyperbars of 5/1). In retrospect, it can be determined that the first three phrases of the bridge, asymmetrical on the surface with their changing meter, can also be heard in hypermetric groupings of five. But because of the faster tempo in relation to the retransition, these earlier phrases occupy hypermeasures of 5/2. So it seems that despite the fact that the rhythmic and melodic-harmonic materials of the 5/2 and the 5/1 sections are unrelated, McCartney develops his phrase rhythms in a motivic way, emphasizing five-bar units.

Finally, the Beatles create their own examples of metric modulation in both Lennon's "Lucy in the Sky" (0:48) and McCartney's "The End" (*AR* [1:40]), both of which coincide with tonal modulations.[17] In the latter, excerpted in Example 13, subtle shifts in both phrase rhythm and tonal relations reflect the construction of Paul McCartney's equation of "the love you take" and "the love you make," uncovering the key to the ideas in the second half of *Abbey Road* with a seven-bar phrase whose prototype's duration is altered not with a halving of tempo or a composed-out fermata, but with a composed-out ritard.

I hope that, in this limited space, this chapter has been able to suggest something of the astounding variety of large-scale rhythmic effects in Beatles songs. The constant flexibility of these composers in juggling irregular hypermetric lengths (occasionally the result of large-scale perfections but much more often the product of expansions of hypothetical prototypes) and structural changes in tempo and harmonic rhythm, and their manifold demands that the listener reinterpret phrase-level accent patterns to align with changing tonal, formal, and instrumentational relationships, all make this music constantly fresh and dynamic. Combined with the Beatles' poetic interests in the portrayal of emotional conflicts, contrasts, parenthetical embellishments, or changing perspectives of time itself, all phrase-rhythm techniques work together with the multi-leveled meanings of their lyrics to create one of several dimensions in which this group produced some of the most compellingly expressive music of its era.

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