

Diatonic Phrygian Tetrachord

for Violin and Chamber Orchestra



Bill Robinson

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July 20—August 6, orchestrated Oct. 2-10, 2014

Duration: about 7 minutes 50 seconds

for Jim Waddelow and the Meredith Sinfonietta

On July 6, 2014, WNYC broadcast “The World’s Most-Used Musical Sequence”, which was an hour-long compilation of musical excerpts demonstrating the use of the Diatonic Phrygian Tetrachord. NPR followed up with five minutes on *Weekend Edition* on July 20. Despite the forbidding academic name, this series of four notes, with many modifications, has been used for centuries by musicians all over the world.

The basic sequence is four descending notes with the pattern whole step, whole step, half step. On a piano keyboard, one example would be the four white notes going down starting from E. Retrograde, it would be B C D E; inverted it would be E F# G# A. Another type of

modification is increasing the intervals, such as to major third, major third, minor third. When harmonized in the manner frequently found in flamenco music, it is known as the Andalusian Cadence. Other kind of modifications are altering the order (such as the opening notes of Beethoven’s Fifth), or interposing notes while the sequence remains relatively stressed.

This composition uses the Diatonic Phrygian Tetrachord both unmodified and highly modified in pretty much every way I could think of, frequently with several modifications simultaneously, in a reasonably contemporary idiom. I will leave it to musicologists yet unborn to deal with the analytical details, as I have some pride in not having opened a music theory book since 1975, and I don’t want to have to look things up.

The composition started as the middle movement of *Three Pieces for Violin and Piano*, written for Eric Pritchard. This orchestration for solo violin and chamber orchestra fits the instrumentation of the Meredith Sinfonietta, a student ensemble at Meredith College conducted by Jim Waddelow.

Accidentals hold through the measure and not beyond, and do not refer to other octaves.

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Adagio andalusia (♩=74)

1 (dble. Picc.)
Flute
2
1
Oboe
2
1
Horn in F
2
Adagio andalusia (♩=74)
Solo Violin
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

p, *mf*, *f*, *p*, *cresc.*, *mp*, *solo*, *Picc.*

14 17

Fl. 1 *f* *mp*

Fl. 2 *f* *mp*

Ob. 1 *f* *mp*

Ob. 2 *mp* *f* *mp*

Hn. 1 *f* *mp*

Hn. 2 *mp*

Solo *f* *mp*

Vln. I *f* *mp*

Vln. II *f* *mp*

Vla. *f* *mp*

Vc. *mp*

D.B. 14 *mp*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a symphony orchestra. The score is arranged in systems for various instruments. The top system includes Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2. The middle system includes Horn 1 and 2, and a Solo part. The bottom system includes Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (D.B.). The music is in 2/4 time and features dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). Rehearsal marks 14 and 17 are present. The Solo part has a melodic line with slurs and ties. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment with some melodic movement in the lower parts.

DPT

29

Musical score for DPT, measures 25-30. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Horn (Hn.), Solo, Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (D.B.).

Measures 25-28: Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, and Solo parts are active. Flute 1 and 2 play a melodic line with slurs and accents. Oboe 1 and 2 play a supporting line. Solo part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. Horns 1 and 2 play a rhythmic pattern. Violin I and II play a rhythmic pattern. Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass play a rhythmic pattern.

Measures 29-30: Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, and Solo parts are active. Flute 1 and 2 play a melodic line with slurs and accents. Oboe 1 and 2 play a supporting line. Solo part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. Horns 1 and 2 play a rhythmic pattern. Violin I and II play a rhythmic pattern. Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass play a rhythmic pattern.

Dynamic markings: *mp* (mezzo-piano) is used throughout the score.

37

Musical score for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Horn (Hn.), Solo, Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (D.B.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, Horn 1 and 2, and Solo. The second system includes parts for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The music is written in various time signatures (3/4, 4/4, 2/4) and includes dynamic markings such as *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The Solo part features a prominent melodic line with many slurs and ties. The strings provide a rhythmic and harmonic foundation.

37

37

37

mf

84 86 96

Fl. 1 *ff* *p*

Fl. 2 *ff*

Ob. 1 *ff*

Ob. 2

Hn. 1 *dolce* *p* *f* *f+* *ff* *ff* *mf*

Hn. 2 *ff* *mf*

Solo *dolce* *p* *f* *ff* *ff* *mf* *pp* *p*

Vln. I *dolce* *p* *f+* *ff* *ff* *mf* *p*

Vln. II *dolce* *p* *f* *ff* *ff* *mf* *p*

Vla. *dolce* *p* *f* *ff* *ff* *mp* *pp*

Vc. *dolce* *p* *f* *ff* *ff* *mf* *pp* *p*

D.B. *dolce* *p* *f* *ff* *f* *mf* *pp*

Picc. *p*

102

Fl. 1

Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2

Hn. 1
Hn. 2

102

Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Musical score for measures 109-113. The score includes parts for Flutes (Fl.), Oboes (Ob.), Horns (Hn.), Solo, Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (D.B.).

Measures 109-113 are marked with a box containing the number 113. The Solo part begins at measure 109 with a dynamic marking of *p*. The Violin I and II parts begin at measure 109 with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The Viola part begins at measure 109 with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The Violoncello part begins at measure 109 with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The Double Bass part begins at measure 109 with a dynamic marking of *p*.

The Solo part features a melodic line with various dynamics, including *p* and *pp*. The Violin I and II parts feature melodic lines with various dynamics, including *pp* and *p*. The Viola part features a melodic line with various dynamics, including *pp* and *p*. The Violoncello part features a melodic line with various dynamics, including *pp* and *p*. The Double Bass part features a melodic line with various dynamics, including *p* and *pp*.

120 Picc.

Fl. 1 *pp*

Fl. 2 *pp*

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Hn. 1 *pp*

Hn. 2 *p* *pp*

Solo *pp*

Vln. I 120 *pp*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *p* *pp* *pp*

Vc. *p* *pp*

D.B. 120 *p* *pp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score, numbered 12, is titled 'DPT'. It features nine staves for various instruments. The Flute (Fl.) and Oboe (Ob.) parts are in treble clef, while the Horn (Hn.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (D.B.) parts are in bass clef. The Solo part is in treble clef. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano), and a 'Picc.' (piccato) instruction for the Flute 1 part. A tempo marking of 120 is present at the beginning of the Flute 1 staff. The music is written in 4/4 time and includes various melodic lines, rests, and articulation marks.