BECKY'S FRENCH

BECKY'S PAPER

Comments (from my log)
Block 1. Sounds like a middle piece; it is short.
Block 2. Unsure--sounds different; too long.
Block 3. Sounds like an ending; goes high to low.
Block 4. Sounds like a beginning.
Block 5. Similar to 1; sounds like a middle piece; it is short.

Building the tune
a. Started with 4 (it was the only one that sounded like a beginning).
b. 4 1_1 (used 1 twice because it was 1/2 as long as 4).
c. 4 1_1 4 3 (used 4 to repeat and 3 to end phrase--varied repetition!)
<END OF PHRASE 1>
d. 4 5_5 4 3 (repeated phrase using 5 instead of 1, since they are similar.
<END OF PHRASE 2>
e. 2_5 2_1 2_5 3 (needed to use block 2 - it's longer so I combined it with either 1 or 5 to
get the right timing)

[My comment: *Actually, it's the same as 1 or 5--more notes makes it sound longer--i.e.,
more happens.*]

f. change e to 2_1 2_5 2_1 3 (now matches previous ordering using 1
    then 5)
<END OF PHRASE 3)

ANALYSIS: Looking back on my tune and listening to it, I can see that it is very structured (as everyone in class commented).

[*This can mean many things. What do you mean?*]

It has 3 main parts of equal length (as measured by tapping my foot). The structure is:
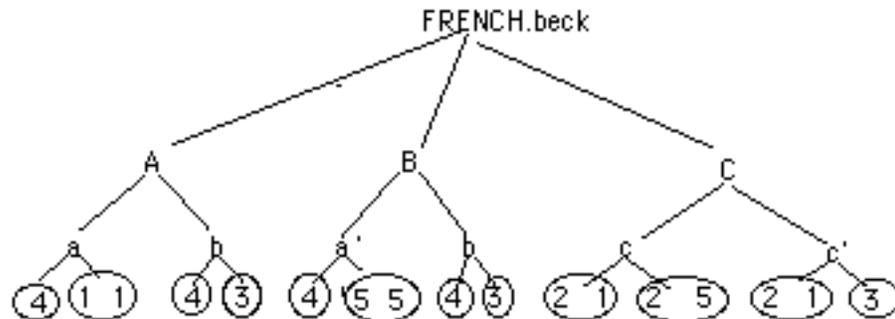
Each of the circles on the bottom represents equal length (2 taps), therefore A, B, and C are 3 phrases of length 8 each. Although this is true, I notice that C seems faster--it speeds up to form the end (development). In addition, the use of 5-5 in B instead of 1-1 in A represents a break from the expectation of the listener, who might expect to hear A repeated exactly again in B. This break seems to give the tune a more ending sound, since 1->5 is high->low. I used that concept again in c.

To play this tune on the keyboard, the easiest way was to figure out the notes by their letter names using the magnifying glass on the blocks. For example, I learned that Block 1 was FDD, while 2 was EDEFG...(Remember I have no real formal music training). Once I got started, it was easier to figure the rest of it out.

CONCLUSIONS:
I can see that I like structure in music. In all three of my tunes there is evidence of some type of structure. In creating all of the tunes I attempted (whether consciously or subconsciously) to create sub-tunes of equal lengths and then putting them together to form a whole tune. In addition, I use a lot of repetition, whether varied or literal, to add continuity to the tunes. When I hear other people's tunes, I tend not to see (*hear?)* the structure immediately, therefore causing the tunes to sound "wrong" to me. |

Comment: A big question in my mind: what makes a certain sequence of notes, blocks--sound like an ending? We see that most people agree on what things have ending sounds, so what makes it that way?

My comments on Becky's paper:
    Or is it that "structure " can be generated in many different ways, depending on which aspects one selects to focus on? You have mentioned several: equal phrase lengths, repetition of pitch contour (sequence), literal repetition, varied pairings, etc.

GLENN'S AMBROSIAN
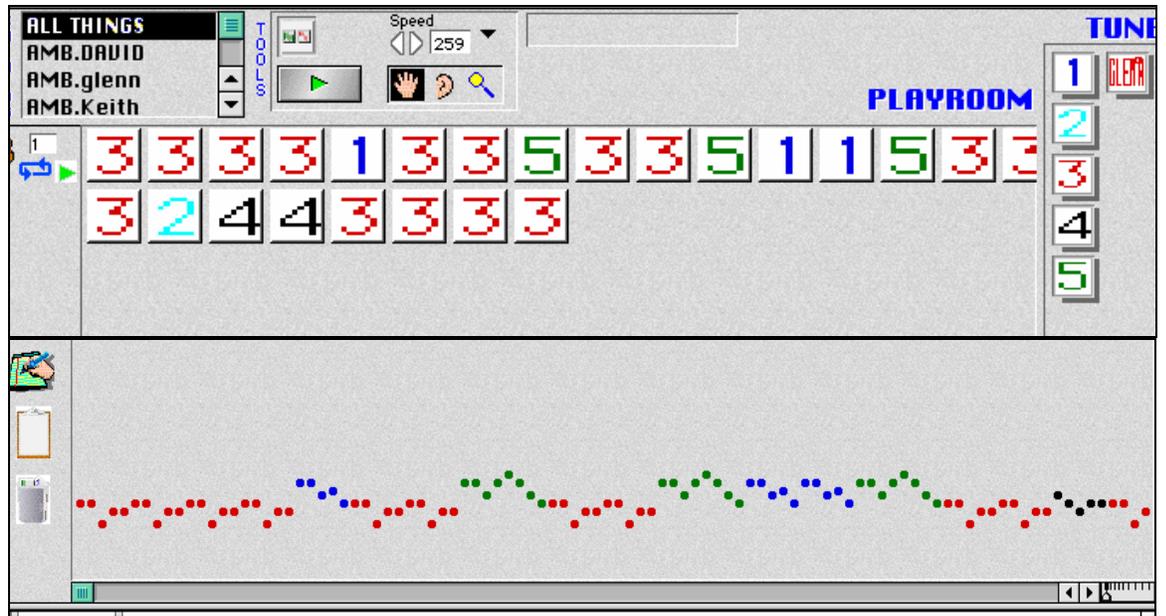
<u>Glenn's paper</u>

Finding features was tough--there was not any rhythmic pattern, no pitch shape to speak of, no harmonic structure. Each block as perhaps one note. Attempts to latch onto features other than this seemed fruitless. So I made my own!

Repeating a good moving block, 3, four times, introduced a regularity and served to motivate the piece <u>by virtue of skipping a beat each time.</u> The result was an African drum motif which continues as an undercurrent to the whole piece.

Any change from this "beat" is very noticeable so it must be very delicately handled at first--one block at a time, always restating the beat on both sides.

I tried to force on these blocks the feeling that more than one sequential line of music was happening at once.

3 3 3 3   1   3 3   5   3 3   5-1-1-5   3 3   4   3 3   2-4-4   3 3 3 3 ......

Block 3 sets the stage. 1 is an attempt to break out of the "beat."   It is frustrated by the return of 3-3. The 5, a longer version of 1, with the same result, setting 3 up as a very strong force.

Finally 1 breaks out of the mold, 5-1-1-5, very assertive because of the adjacent 1's and the break of the beat twice by 5.

But then the beat returns, played off against the similar block, 4. Somehow this section, 2-4-4, does not require a concluding 2. perhaps because 3 has lost some of its strength through repeated intervening of other blocks. These two groups are seen as definite tonal assertions within a sea of droning rhythm.

The ending, simply a further reaffirmation of 3, is sort of a fade-out which can be heard to continue on, perhaps repeating the whole as it started.

LINZ'S AMBROSIAN
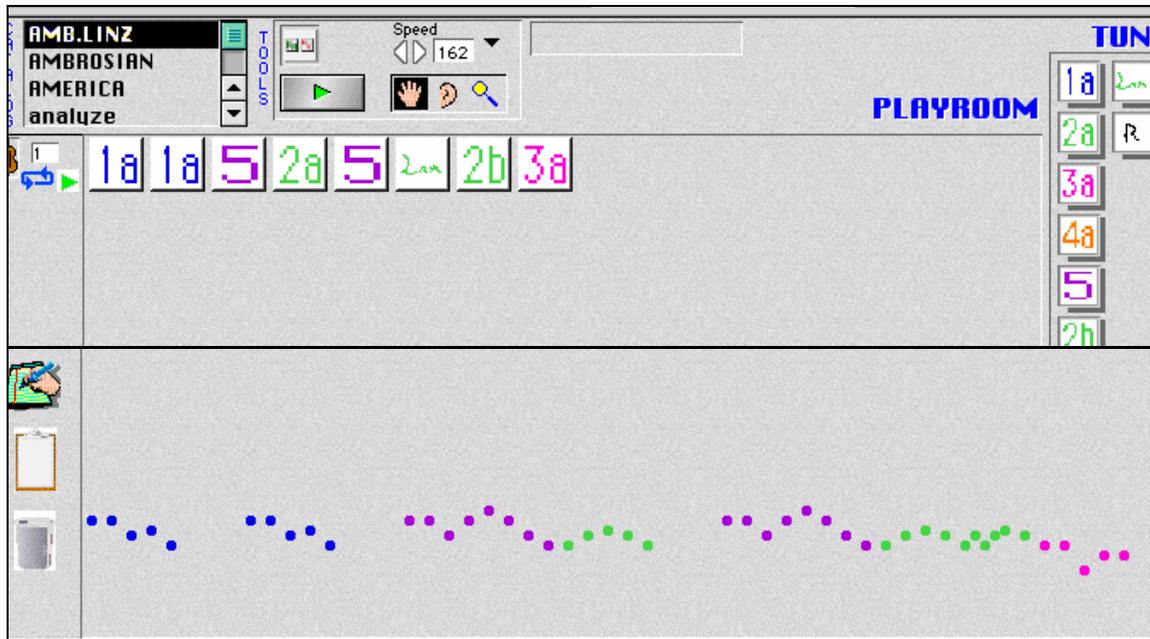
LINZ'S PAPER

The final composition was made using the tuneblocks named Ambrosian. I started by listening to each of the blocks once and then going through each of them a second time. During this second run-through, I analyzed possible positions and combinations that each block could fill. I noticed how blocks 1 and 5 began with the same three notes. I thought perhaps that they could make a combination together. I also noticed that, of the five blocks, only block 3 seemed to make a suitable ending. Therefore, I tentatively called block 3 my ending block. I thought that both blocks 2 and 4 would probably be middle blocks and that block 5 seemed to make a good beginning. After listening to the blocks, I noticed how they all shared the same tempo.

[*Do you mean same set of durations or same "rhythm"?*]

 By this I mean, the duration between each of the notes was equal for all the notes in every tuneblock [*Yes.*] This actually made the song seem very monotonous and boring.

This feeling of monotony was probably strengthened by my observations that after looking at the pitch contour, I saw that none of the blocks seemed to have any large jumps down or up. This gave the feeling that the tune sort of hovered around one note and the constant stepwise movement was actually too boring for my ears. Continual stepwise movement (or something close to it) left my ears wanting some excitement and actually needing to hear jumps to widely spaced apart pitches. In contrast to the previous pieces I constructed, where I actually looked for stepwise movement to calm down a song, the constant stepwise movement of these tuneblocks had just become too boring.

(Really very clear and close observations and good comparisons.   You have grabbed onto features that you "need" for a tune that you like.)

I decided to start with the combination of block 5 going to block 1. I liked the sound of block 5 as a beginning because it had a wide range which I seem to lean towards when choosing a beginning. I guess to my ears, the sense of starting something is best portrayed with a block which seems to go in different directions--up and down. However, I also noticed that block 1 was a sort of incomplete block. It sounded like it wanted to go somewhere but was stopped abruptly halfway there.   I considered this block to be a sort of question that needed an answer.

So to utilize this potential call and answer format, I placed block 1 before block 5. I decided to repeat block 1 because the repetition seemed to give it more of a sense of a half finished idea. At this point I wanted to break up the monotony of the tempo, so I decided to modify block 1 so that the fifth note was held for the same amount of time as the first four notes combined.

Original contents of Block 1

Block 1

Last duration = 4X4

Block 1a

Immediately, this changed the character of the piece and placed an emphasis on the first note and fifth note of the block. The long holding of the note also added to the anticipation I had of hearing something else. In my ears, I felt that there should be something that answered the call of the repeated blocks. Block 5 was a very good start to the answer because it began the same as block 1 but instead of stopping halfway through, it continued forward and seemed to finally get somewhere.

(See comment, above--you got it.. Also, your new 1 is equal in total time to Block 5! (8 beats)
.
The next thing I did was try and find the continuation of the answer. I tried both blocks 2 and 4 and they both sounded correct after block 5. I didn't like the way block 3 sounded because it felt too much like the ending of the piece and I didn't feel that my song could finish there because there had been no development yet. I decided to keep block 2 after block 5. Block 5 seemed to naturally divide into groups of 4 notes with the strong beat being on the 1st and 5th notes as it had in block 1. (*Thus, you now feel regular meter--you have* <u>generated </u>*meter.)*

Block 1a   **Block 1a**   **Block 5**

 To keep with this trend, I modified block 2 so that the final note would be the same duration as the first four notes combined.

I then repeated block 5 so that I could form an antecedent consequent phrase. I was starting to get an idea of how I wanted the form of my piece to be. Block 1 is introduced as the start of something that we haven't figured out yet. It gets repeated again but it doesn't really get any further. Finally, with the addition of block 5, we get the movement of the piece into an actual idea. However, we throw in a second

block which doesn't quite finish off the idea (block 2). If we play block 5 again, we can see that we have an antecedent consequent phrase that needs to be completed.

The final thing to do was complete the antecedent consequent phrase using the final two blocks. I still heard block 3 as the only block which seemed to conclude as an ending so I placed it at the end and put block 4 before it. The order of the song was now 1 1 5 2 5 2 3. I decided that I didn't like having the note that is shared between blocks 4 & 3 being repeated four times because it was almost like a stop in the motion of the piece. I switched blocks 2 and 4 (again modifying block 4 so that the final note was the same duration as the four previous notes combined) but still had the problem of that same note being played 3 times. To get rid of this problem, I tried repeating block 2 so that it would have more motion preceding the repeated note but this made that part of the song seem boring.   Next, I deleted the fifth note of the block so that there would a constant upward and then downward stepwise progression of notes without any repetition in the middle. This was my first modification of block 2. My next song looked like this: 1a 1a 5 4a 5 2aa 2aa 3.


After hearing this, I was faced with an additional problem. I didn't like how each notes of the last part of the song (5 2aa 2aa 3) were played with exactly the same duration. It seemed rather boring and dull. I experimented with changing the duration of the notes and found that in order to keep the music going forward, I would have to "quicken" the tempo in that region. To quicken, I mean to make the duration of time, before the next not is played, shorter.

I kept the repetition of block 2aa but decided to change the block so that the first two notes get played twice and "twice" as quick (block 2b).

Although, adding the extra notes helped keep the piece moving, I suffered from the same problem that the repetition of the blocks in that manner was rather unexciting. I decided that I would play block 2aa once and follow that with block 2b. In addition, I extended the last note of block 3 so that it would make a more convincing ending and I was left with the final song looking like this: 1a 1a 5 4a 5 2aa (first modification) 2b (second modification) 3a. The letter 'a' denotes where I changed the rhythm so that the duration of the last note was longer. By using 2aa (1st) 2b (2nd), I had the sense that just as I was about to get bored with the rhythm, there was a sudden quickening of the tempo that pushes the song forward to the end.
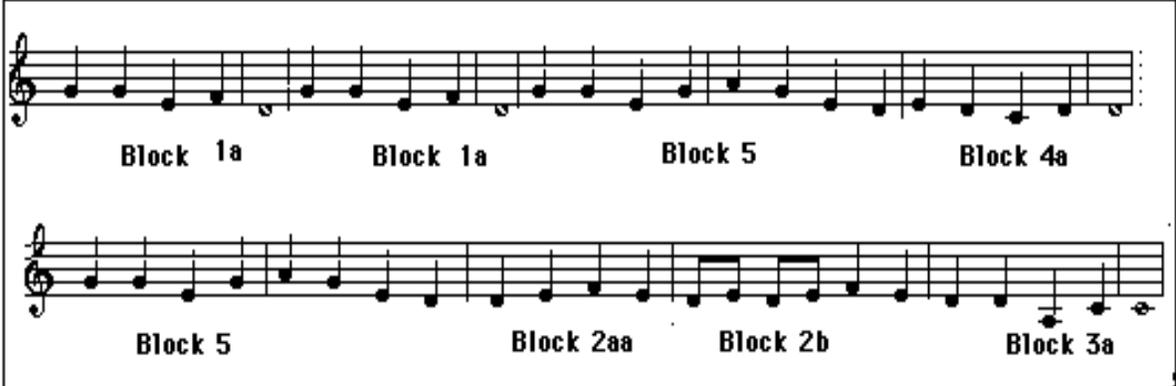
The structural hierarchy of this song was similar to what I made with the Vienna blocks. There is a brief introduction followed by the antecedent phrase and a consequent phrase. In this case, the consequent phrase is longer than the antecedent phrase and made up of more blocks.

(This is a quite fantastic paper. You have really traced your whole composition process, made clear what triggered your decisions and your specific changes . Your accounting for why also goes very far into depth , but there is still more to discuss in class.)