

Nanopublication — Rhythm Changes in Bb Major as Harmonic Source

by Arnaud Quercy [2] · Bb Major - Research on Harmony - Variation 2 · 2024

Claim 2: Rhythm Changes in Bb Major as Harmonic Source

This work draws inspiration from rhythm changes in Bb Major [1] — the foundational harmonic progression of jazz — exploring the tension between swing energy and the beauty of the underlying cadential movement through the AABA form. The painting translates not only the tonic triad but the harmonic gravity of a progression that has shaped decades of jazz performance and composition.

CONTEXT

Rhythm changes — the chord progression derived from George Gershwin [3]'s "I Got Rhythm" — constitute one of the most fundamental harmonic frameworks in jazz. In the key of Bb Major, this progression underpins countless jazz standards and serves as a primary vehicle for improvisation. The A section follows the cadential movement Bb Maj – G min – C min – F7 – D min – G7 – C min – F7 – Bb Maj, a cycle of tension and resolution that keeps returning to the tonic.

My engagement with this progression comes through piano practice — working voicings, feeling the cadential pull, navigating the balance between rhythmic drive and harmonic beauty. There is a particular tension in rhythm changes between the forward momentum of swing at tempo and the elegance of the chord movement underneath. This painting emerges from that tension: the large color fields carry the broad harmonic sweep while the geometric forms in the central corridor capture the articulated movement between chords.

The AABA form itself structures the harmonic experience. The A sections establish and reinforce Bb Major as tonal center, while the bridge departs into a cycle of dominant sevenths that creates both contrast and anticipation of return. This work captures the A section's character — the warmth and familiarity of home key, the gentle gravitational pull of the cadence cycling through related chords and resolving back to Bb.

REFERENCES

- [1] Quercy, A. (2024). Bb Major - Research on Harmony - Variation 2 (AQC0694). Synesthetic Explorations collection. <https://arnaudquercy.art/media/2024/01/bb-major-research-on-harmony-variation-2-acrylic-by-arnaud-quercy-aqc0694-7py.webp>
- [2] Quercy, A. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2662-7790>
- [3] Gershwin, G. (1930). "I Got Rhythm." *Girl Crazy* (musical).

EPISTEMIC PROFILE

Claim type	artistic statement
Voice	first person
Epistemic status	first person testimony
Methodology	piano practice translation
Certainty	high

CHECKSUM (SHA-256)

ca2cf8147029e4381e943e1553151e7e64a0156d2b90c21399278a618d69d838

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