EVERYDAY TONALITY
—Towards a tonal theory of what most people hear—

by

Philip Tagg
(Faculté de musique, Université de Montréal)

New York & Montréal, 2009
The Mass Media Music Scholars’ Press

Keywords: music, popular music, musicology, music theory, tonality, modality, melody, harmony, polyphony, chords, harmony
# Table of Contents

**Preface 1**
- Why this book? 1; Who’s it for? 2. Title caveat 3
- Structure and contents 4; Rationale and reservations 4;
- Summary of chapters 6; About appendices 9; Addenda 9; Glossary 10; References 10; Index 11; Cross-referencing and order of topics 11;
- Musical source references 12; Accessing musical sources 12;
- Chords and notes 13; Timings Footnotes 15; Acknowledgements 15

1. *Note, pitch, tone* 17
- Note 17; Pitch 19; Tonal note names 21;
- Tone, tonal, tonality 22; Timbre and tone 26

2. *Tuning, octave, interval* 29
- General systems 29; Extra-octave tuning 29; Intra-octave tuning 31;
- Octave 31; Intervals and intra-octave tuning 34; Equal-tone tuning 37; Instrument-specific tuning 40

3. *Modes and modality* 45
- Scales and tonal vocabulary 45; Modality 48; Pentatonicism 48;
- Diatonic ‘church’ modes 50; ‘Hypo’ modes 52;
- Non-diatonic modes 54; Perceived characteristics of modality 54

4. *Melody* 57
- Defining parameters and general characteristics of melody 57;
- Metaphorical nomenclature 59; Typologies of melody 60;
- Structural typologies 60; Pitch contour 60; Tonal vocabulary 64;
- Dynamics and mode of articulation 65; Rhythmic profile 65;
- Culturally specific melodic formulae 67; Patterns of recurrence 70;
- Connotative typologies 73; Melisma 76

5. *Polyphony* 81
- Three meanings 81; Drone 82; Heterophony 84; Homophony 86;
- Counterpoint 88

6. ‘*Classical*’ harmony 91
- Intro: History and definitions 91; Classical harmony 93;
- Triads and tertial harmony 94; Syntax, narrative, and linear ‘function’ 96;
- Voice leading, the ionian mode, modulation and directionality 96;
- The circle of fifths 98; Cadential mini-excursion 102; The key clock 104;
- Circle-of-fifths progressions 105; Dissolution of classical harmony? 108;
- Classical harmony in popular music 110; Brief summary 114

7. ‘*Non-classical*’ harmony 115
- Tertial modal harmony 115; Ionian mode and barré 116;
- Modal major triads 117; Quartal harmony 125; History and usage 127;
- Droned ‘folk’ harmonisation 130; Quartal: past or future? 134
8. **Chords** 137  
- Structure and terminology of tertial chords and triads 137  
- Tertial chord symbols 139; Roman numerals 139; Inversions 140  
- Recognition of tertial chords 141; Lead sheet chord shorthand 45  
- Chord shorthand table: explanations 146; Basic rationale 150;  
- Symbol components 150; Root note name 151; Tertial triad type 151;  
- Sevenths 152; Ninths, elevenths, thirteenths 153; Altered fifths 154;  
- Additional symbols 154; Omitted notes 154; Added ninths and sixths 155;  
- Suspended fourths and ninths 155; Inversions 155;  
- Anomalies 156; Enharmonic spelling 157; Non-tertial chords 157

9. **One-chord changes** 159  
- Harmonic impoverishment? 159; Extensional and intensional 161;  
- The wonders of one chord 162; G: Which G? 164

10. **Chord shuttles** 173  
- About the material 173; Supertonic shuttles (I↔II) 176;  
- Plagal shuttles 177; Quintal shuttles (I↔V) 182;  
- Submediant shuttles (I↔VI) 185; Subtonic shuttles (I↔bVII) 189;  
- Shuttle or counterpoise sandwich? 195

11. **Chord loops** 199  
- Circular motion 199; Vamps 202; Loops and turnarounds 202;  
- Vamp, blues and rock 209

12. **Modal loops and bimodality** 217  
- Ionian or mixolydian? 217; Spot the key 221; Aeolian and phrygian 227;  
- Mediantal loops 235; Rock dorian and I-III 236; Double shuttles 237;  
- Ionian mediantal ‘narrative’ and ‘folk’ dorian 238

13. **The ‘Yes We Can’ chords** 241  
- The four chords 242; Late renaissance and Andean bimodality 243  
- Four chords, four changes 245; First impressions: from zero to I 246  
- Harmonic departure: from I to III 248; I - iii - vi - IV 257  
- I - V - vi - IV 258; IOCM in combination 261

**Addenda** 265  
- Accompaniment 265; Antiphony 269; Enharmonics 270;  
- Hocket 272; Interval counting 273; Mixolydian tune examples 274  
- Present-time experience 275; Roman numeral triad designation 275

**Glossary** 279

**Bibliography** 291

**Musical references** 297

**Index** 319  
- Chord sequence index 334