

Society for Music Theory 2023 Annual Conference

“Recombinant Teleology in Improvised Popular Music”

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Figure 1: The Telos Principle (based on Nobile, 2022)

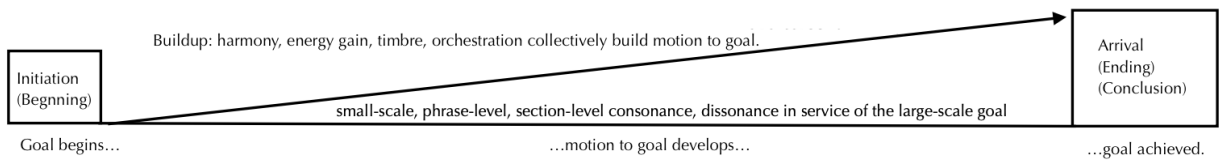


Figure 2: Recombinant Teleology (based on Fink, 2005)

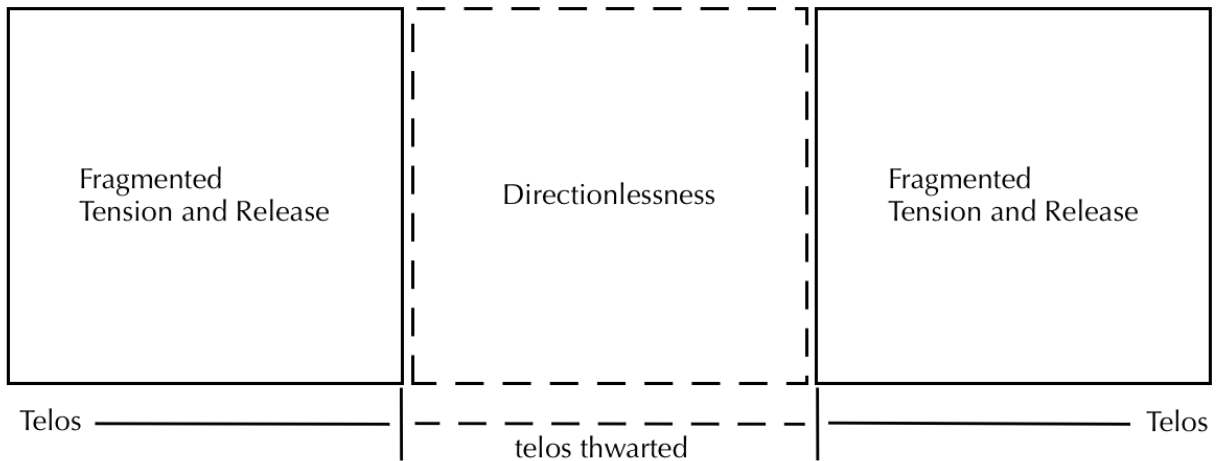
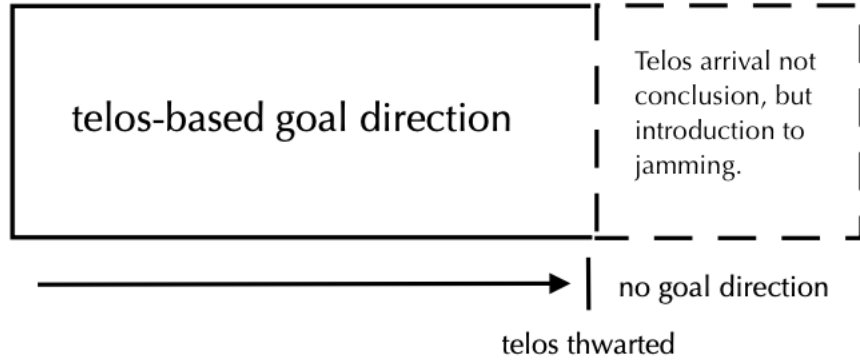
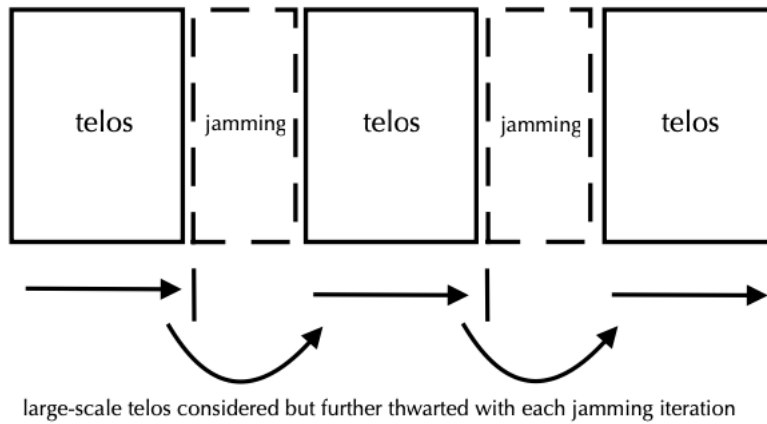


Figure 3: Three Recombinant Teleology Subsets

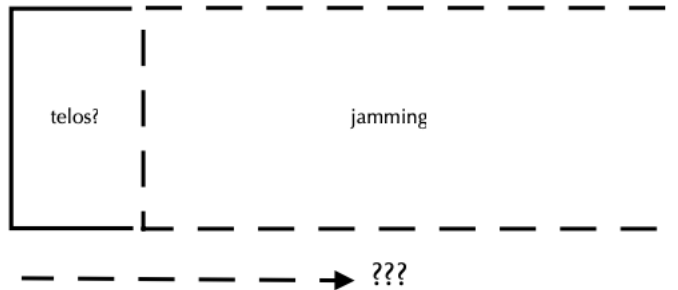
The Recombinant Pause



The Sectional Telos



The Anti-Telos Process



large-scale goal direction never established, or the jam overtakes the perception of it.

Table 1: Form Chart, Dave Matthews Band, “Stay (Wasting Time)”
<https://youtu.be/3SslGeEyIGs?si=du3syWTq7PerSkt7>

Section	When	Measures	Tempo (bpm)	
Intro	0:00	8	109	two-chord riff, solo guitar
Verse	0:25/0:44	8+8	109	paired 8-bar strophes
Chorus	1:01	8	109	energy loss, change of beat, reduced harmonic rhythm
Intro	1:22	4	106	similar groove as first intro
Verse	1:30/1:48	8+8	109	Similar structure to the first verse
Chorus	2:06	8	103	similar to first chorus
Bridge	2:27		113	First Sol-Do motion at any time (sax/trumpet line), using the intro/verse riff
Chorus	2:44	7	103	similar to previous
Bridge	3:00	10	110	new groove with chromatic motion 2-bar sections with band hits
Chorus	3:22	8	103	the song’s climactic moment concludes the section, on a high F, arpeggiating the tonic triad (down to Bb)
Outro	3:42	8	106	groove based on intro/verse riff
Jam	4:00	64	106 (1 st cycle) 109 (5 th cycle) 112 (final cycle)	8+8 (trumpet hits) 8 (same) 8 (Bb7 as riff) 8 (Dave scat) 8+8+8 (sax/trumpet improv added)

Figure 4: The Recombinant Pause, Dave Matthews Band, “Stay (wasting Time)” 2007, 6:55
<https://youtu.be/3SslGeEyIGs?si=du3syWTq7PerSkt7>

The expectation of goal-directed arrival, the song’s formal and structural ending
 Instead, the recombinant pause! The thwarting of the large-scale goal, even though the previous sections confirm goal-directed motion.

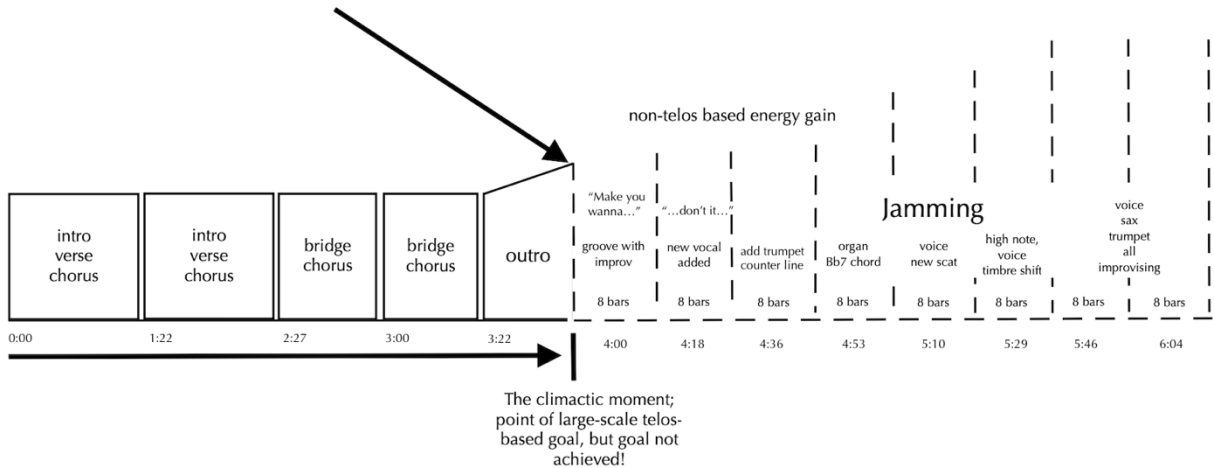


Figure 5: String Cheese Incident, "Hey Pocky Way," *Carnival '99* (8:22)
https://youtu.be/L85lwXkZmWE?si=0QARG4y_Vp-UvxY

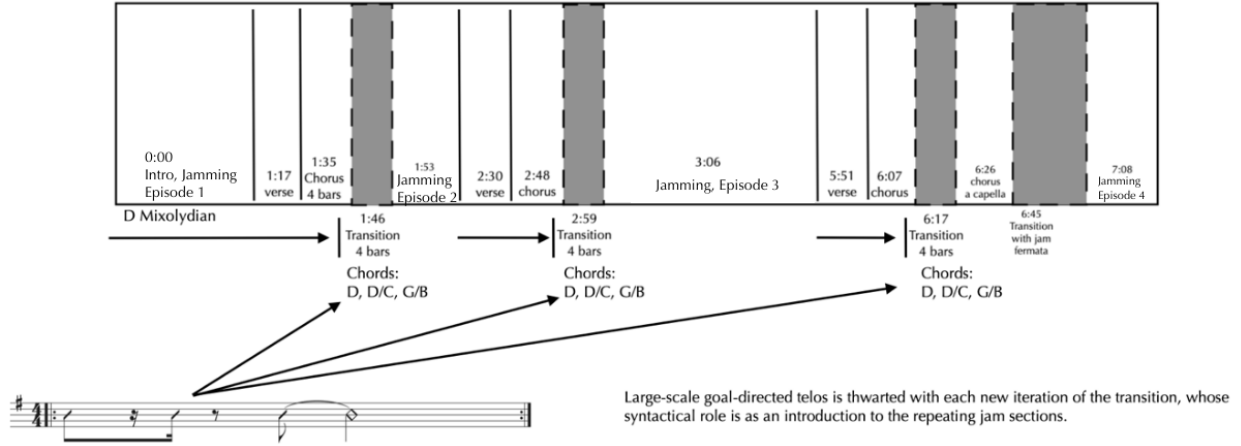
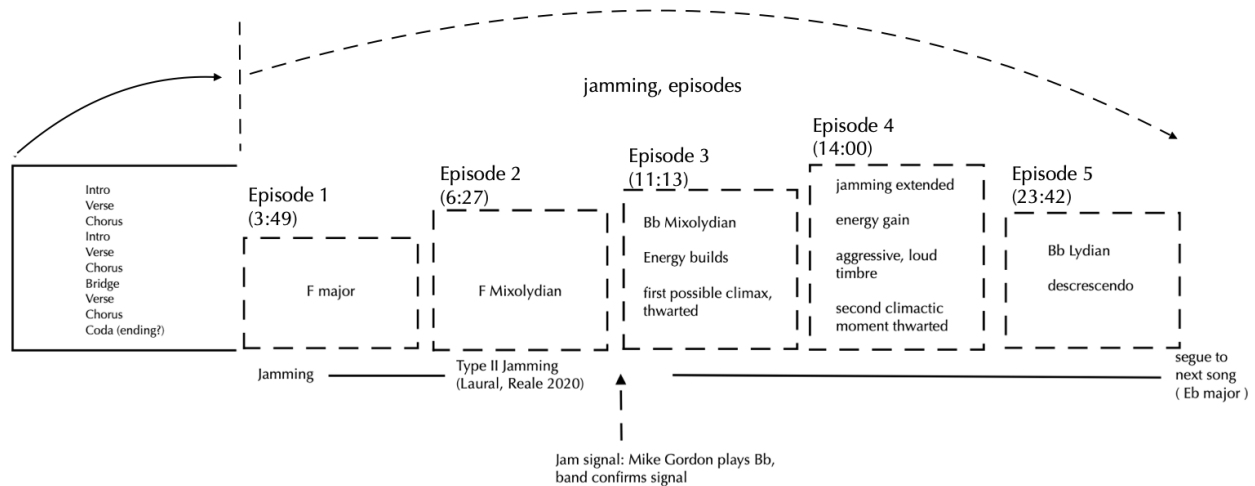


Table 2: Form Chart: Phish, “Simple” August 6, 2017 (25:36)
<https://youtu.be/QPnoAA0Uy8E?si=Ln19m7ladCpbGiQX>

Time	Section (Jam Episode)	Description
0:00	Intro	F Major, main groove established
0:22	Verse 1	F major, expected text, clear English (cymbal)
0:56	Chorus 1	^b VII/V/IV tag, “What is a band?” first asked
1:11	Intro	
1:20	Verse 2	F major, next text, still in English, three-part M7 harmony on “Saxophone”
1:52	Chorus 2	Like Chorus 1, “saxophone” replaces “cymbal”
2:12	Bridge	“Cymbals” and “Saxophones” combined into one word
2:34	Verse 3	F major, double length, new text (“bebop, skyscrapers”)
3:07	Chorus 3	Similar to previous, “skyscraper” replaces “saxophone”
3:25	Coda	“cy-bop” and “bebo-phone, sky-balls and sax-scrappers”
3:49	Jam Episode 1	F major, uses verse 8-bar I-IV chords for the groove, drum syncopation to build energy gain
6:27	Jam Episode 2	Groove harmony changed; McConnell proposes F Mixolydian...
8:50		...Anastasio proposes F minor pentatonic
11:13	Jam Episode 3	McConnell synth tone wheel and Theremin, tempo acceleration, Anastasio not improvising, now accompanying
14:00	Jam Episode 4	Gordon introduces note Bb on bass, groove shifts to ambient and Bb Mixolydian
18:00		...prominent SOL-DO motive as improvised gesture First climactic moment (large energy gain)
19:52		Second climactic moment (more energy gain), timbre now loud and aggressive
22:40		Third climactic moment, Anastasio bends to octaves
23:42	Jam Episode 5 Conclusion/segue	Prominent decrescendo marks energy loss with shift to Bb Lydian Theremin (McConnell), highlights the Lydian tritone (Bb – E)

Figure 6: Phish “Simple” 8/16/17 (23:56)
<https://youtu.be/QPnoAA0Uy8E?si=Ln19m7ladCpbGiQX>



Anti-telos process retrospectively confirms the song proper's conclusion as an introduction to jamming.

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