

**“Detour or Bridge?  
Contrasting Sections and Storytelling in Musical  
Theater”**

***SMT-V 6.2 (March 2020)***  
***Society for Music Theory: Videocast Journal***

**Brian Edward Jarvis (University of Texas at El Paso)**  
**John Peterson (James Madison University)**

ISSN 2689-5471    DOI: <http://doi.org/10.30535/smtv.6.2>

This file includes the abstract, and extensive keyword list, acknowledgements, and bibliography for the video essay, “Detour or Bridge? Contrasting Sections and Storytelling in Musical Theater” by Brian Jarvis and John Peterson. This essay may be found at <https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/videocast6-2JarvisPeterson>

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**Abstract for  
“Detour or Bridge? Contrasting Sections and Storytelling in  
Musical Theater”**

**by Brian Edward Jarvis and John Peterson, *SMT-V* 6.2.**

Two standard large-scale forms in musical theater are verse-chorus and AABA, sometimes called “quaternary.” Both forms typically contain a bridge. Steve Larson (2003) describes a bridge as a contrasting section that provides “a path to traverse that connects two more stable sections.” Occasionally, a number in dialogue with these standard forms features an added, highly contrasting section that we call a “detour.” In this video, we introduce the concept of the detour in musical theater, we describe its relationship to bridges using Larson’s (2003) framework, and we show how detours sometimes substitute for or become a bridge. We provide examples of detours in selections from *Wicked*, *Everyday Rapture*, and *Legally Blonde*, discussing how the detours relate to the story the musical tells.

**Extensive Keyword List**

Musical Theater, *Wicked*, *Everyday Rapture*, *Legally Blonde*, Serious, Defying Gravity, The Wizard and I, Up the Ladder to the Roof, Alternative Path, Expansion, Phrase Expansion, Formal Expansion, Form, Detour, Bridge, Verse-chorus form, AABA form, Contrast, Contrasting Section, Broadway Musical, Stephen Schwartz, Sherie Rene Scott, Laurence O’Keefe, Nell Benjamin, Steve Larson, Janet Schmalfeldt, The Process of Becoming, Formenlehre

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