

ABSTRACT

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ ARRANGING TECHNIQUES:
A STUDY IN TIME, ORCHESTRATION, AND STYLE

By

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Just as the pace of the post-millennial world has quickened, modern mainstream jazz musicians augment, combine, and introduce musical elements regularly. Many of these techniques developed in the process have not yet been elucidated by arranging texts. In this study some of these developments will be delineated, capturing a snapshot of how musicians and arrangers such as Michael Brecker, Chris Potter, Dave Holland, Seamus Blake, and Joshua Redman have implemented these techniques in the pursuit of the next great movement in jazz repertory during the first decade of the twenty first century. Specific regard is given to developments in compound or additive meter, complex rhythmic figures, unorthodox orchestration, and the increased influence of varied traditional ethnic musics.

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ ARRANGING TECHNIQUES:
A STUDY IN TIME, ORCHESTRATION, AND STYLE

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PREFACE

Jazz is a musical style characterized by improvisation. As a result, it reinforced a shift in public attention from composers to performers after the turn of the twentieth century; however, as performers labored to create innovative sounds in order to gain public attention the importance of involving compositions and arranging techniques was amplified. Scholars since have noted that the evolution of jazz is analogous to that of a condensed history of western classical music, and the consequent rapid pace of developments have generated an ever expanding breadth of possibilities for the modern jazz arranger. This pace of development additionally intimates that published texts on jazz arranging often are unable to keep up with revisions to cover new performance practices. This study endeavors to investigate mainstream arranging techniques instilled or refined since approximately the year 2000 with particular consideration to utilization of time, structure, orchestration, and style within the small to medium jazz ensembles of artists such as Michael Brecker, Chris Potter, Dave Holland, Seamus Blake, Eric Alexander, and Joshua Redman.

Many of these techniques have been developed or implemented to a degree by a few adventurous, lesser known musicians in the past, but have only recently been combined and developed in such an organic manner by mainstream musicians. George Russell and, subsequently, Miles Davis laid the harmonic foundation that

underpins much of the work of many modern giants such as Michael Brecker, Herbie Hancock, Dave Holland, and Chris Potter. The work of Gil Evans, Don Ellis, and John McLaughlin form the point of departure for recent developments in orchestration, style and rhythm. Interviews conducted by the author reveal the opinions of artist such as Chris Potter and Seamus Blake reflect that most progressive, and many traditional, jazz musicians of today is searching to organically integrate these rhythmic innovations with popular and ethnic music styles in a package that is innovative and intellectually sound. In the process, lesser used instruments, voicings, and experimental formal structures have been explored as well.

Historical methodologies will be used sparingly to set a foundation on which theoretical and analytical methodologies will expound. Reference to published works such as educational texts, scholarly journal articles, and dissertations will be implemented to discuss how certain arranging tools function, were developed, and why they are important. Transcription and analysis of pieces by Michael Brecker, Chris Potter, Dave Holland, and Seamus Blake will be used to better understand how these techniques are implemented by some significant progressive jazz musicians. Their contributions to the jazz canon exemplify the direction of mainstream modern jazz as well as the evolution of the techniques discussed within this paper. E-mail correspondence with composers, arrangers, and orchestrators such as Gil Goldstein, Chris Potter, and Seamus Blake will be employed to gain perspective on the practical

use of arranging techniques as well as the direction these major performers are heading with their music.

Many educational texts on arranging techniques were consulted, though the majority were found lacking in regard to implementation of techniques discussed in this study. Gary Lindsay's *Jazz Arranging Techniques* is a respected text, though only covers basics such as harmonization, transposition, and notation¹. Fredrick Pease's *Jazz Theory and Composition* is much more useful in regard to modern rhythmic and harmonic structure.² Additionally, Gil Goldstein's *Jazz Composer's Companion* provides a more mathematical, graphical view of composition to encourage writers to conceive music in new and unfamiliar ways in order to explore new sounds.³ *The Oxford Companion to Jazz* contained several articles of use for establishing the background of jazz history and arranging, and *The Future of Jazz* will inform discussion through various perspectives on the direction current musicians seem to be gravitating toward.⁴ Selected pieces from Michael Brecker's Grammy Award winning

¹ Gary Lindsay, *Jazz Arranging Techniques from Quartet to Big Band*, (Miami, FL: Staff Art Publishing, 2005).

² Fredrick Pease, *Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice*, ed. Rick Mattingly (Boston: Berklee Press, 2003).

³ Gil Goldstein, *Jazz Compser's Companion*, (New York: Consolidated Music Publishers, 1981).

⁴ Bill Kirchner, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Yuval Taylor, ed., *The Future of Jazz* (Chicago: Acapella, 2002).

album *Wide Angles*⁵ will be analyzed in depth for discussion of form, orchestration, and voicing with specific regard to the medium ensemble. Analysis of works by Chris Potter and Dave Holland will also be heavily utilized for discussion of rhythm, form, and style.

The first chapter will establish the value of arranging as well as the importance of research into recent developments due to the absence of scholarly work in this area. This will be followed by a brief chapter overviewing the techniques that have been developed or implemented in new ways by current musicians. The bulk of this work is dedicated to analysis of recent recordings that display implementation of these techniques. This chapter will look into the implementation and fusion of many elements outlined in the second chapter. A concluding chapter will recap significant topics as well as discuss areas that may require further research.

⁵ Michael Brecker, *Wide Angles*, Verve VRV B000028502 (CD), 2003.

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CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF ARRANGING

An Exposition of Current Trends and the Disparity Between Scholarship and Performance Practice

This chapter covers the current state of jazz scholarship relative to new performance practices of the early twenty first century. The origins and adaptations of modern rhythmic, harmonic, form, and orchestration techniques and trends are explored as well. Jazz originated as a form of musical fusion. The popular Ken Burns documentary *Jazz* begins with Wynton Marsalis referring to early jazz music as gumbo, a soup made of various available ingredients.¹ William Youngren states in his article “European Roots of Jazz” that “jazz is obviously a hybrid, containing both European and non-European elements, and it is only in this country that all of these elements could be found.”² Use of the term non-European seems a bit curious at first, though Youngren goes on to state that, while African roots provide enormous influence, it would be folly to reduce the foundation of such a complex form to two progenitors.

¹ Ken Burns, *Jazz*, (United States: PBS Home Video, 2000), episode one.

² Bill Kirchner, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

“Jelly Roll” Morton, for example, often expressed the significance of the “habañera rhythm” in producing an authentic swing rhythm during the fledgling years of jazz. This sentiment that jazz, especially its history, should not be overgeneralized is the basis of Jeff Taylor’s article on the early origins of jazz.³ The history of this uniquely American music is analogous to the ideal of America as a cultural melting pot first highlighted by J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur just after the founding of our nation, and perpetuated by writers such as Emerson for hundreds of years after.⁴

As technology develops it has become easier to access information from across the globe, enabled composers to write and hear music faster, and allowed the public to hear and give feedback on music instantly. Just as the pace of modern life has accelerated, the pace of musical development has accelerated and outpaced the current wave of scholarly efforts. In addition to this, jazz scholarship is frequently mired in preservation of past styles to the detriment of further study of modern developments.

Modern jazz arranging and composing texts frequently omit cutting edge techniques. Gary Lindsay’s *Jazz Arranging Techniques* is a commonly utilized text, primarily dealing with transposition, instrument ranges, and harmonization techniques. Most texts similarly lean towards harmonization or reharmonization as well as how to ornament a preexisting melody. Only a few passing paragraphs of *Jazz Arranging*

³ Bill Kirchner, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 41.

⁴ J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer*, 1782, Letter III.

Techniques mention formal, stylistic, or temporal considerations.⁵ *Jazz Arranging and Performance Practice: a Guide for Small Ensembles* by Paul Rinzler outlines many basic techniques, but does contain information on some modal practices, as well as some stylistic considerations, and a fairly extensive study of form.⁶ Any focused explication of rhythmic and metric practices is mostly absent, however. Fredrick Pease's *Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice* has the most detailed exposition of modal harmony.⁷ There are also somewhat thorough elaborations on fusion, metric modulation, ostinato utilization, extended works, and form. One book that takes a very different approach is Gil Goldstein's *Jazz Composer's Companion*.⁸ Goldstein often utilizes graphs to display pitch or temporal relationships between notes. In the process Goldstein frequently urges the reader to experiment with new intervals, note values, rhythms, and time signatures in order to help writers expand their talents and pursue new sounds.

While many texts focus on recasting preexisting compositions, the role of the jazz arranger neither necessitates nor precludes composition or orchestration. The specific duties assumed by the arranger are to properly notate a composed theme for a

⁵ Gary Lindsay, *Jazz Arranging Techniques from Quartet to Big Band*, (Miami, FL: Staff Art Publishing, 2005), 112.

⁶ Paul Rinzler, *Jazz Arranging and Performance Practice: a Guide for Small Ensembles*, (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989).

⁷ Fredrick Pease, *Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice*, ed. Rick Mattingly (Boston: Berklee Press, 2003).

⁸ Gil Goldstein, *Jazz Composer's Companion*, (New York: Consolidated Music Publishers, 1981).

given ensemble, often dictating tempo, meter, style, form, and harmonies. Though jazz is a form known for improvisation, the influence of an arranger is responsible for establishing a wide range of styles and bestows a unique sound that differentiates one ensemble from another. In the process, the arranger may additionally provide a new take on an old standard to make it fresh for an audience that would otherwise be hearing an echo of what they have heard countless times before.

As discussed previously, were one to browse the table of contents of many arranging texts he or she would primarily find material on notation, transposition, orchestration, harmony, style, form, and time, whereas this study will focus extensively on time, with secondary emphases on style, and orchestration. Notation and transposition need no discussion as they are framework, and function primarily as outlined in educational texts for some time. Harmony and form are areas that have been researched in scholarship more than most, so this study will only highlight a few current topics that are either essential or have not been covered too extensively elsewhere.

In conducting interviews with Chris Potter and Seamus Blake, prominent composers and saxophonists in New York, it was revealed to the author that complex rhythms, polyrhythms, and additive or compound meters are a hallmark of recent mainstream musical trends, along with infusions of new styles.⁹ While Dave Brubeck's album *Time Out* features possibly the world's most prominent compound

⁹ Chris Potter, email message to author, July 23, 2010; Seamus Blake, email message to author, August 16, 2010.

meter composition in “Take Five,” most compositions in compound meters have either not caught on, been marginalized, or been part of underground trends that rarely reach the ears of the public-at-large.¹⁰ Artists and arrangers such as John McLaughlin and Don Ellis, regarded as forefathers of metric and stylistic experimentation, are unknown commodities among the casual or average jazz fan, and rarely is their work aired on jazz radio stations or promoted. The work of McLaughlin’s Mahavishnu Orchestra is epitomized by compositions such as “The Dance of Maya,” which is in a fusion style and features several instruments in different additive meters and tempos at the same time. Ellis was well known for incorporating many ethnic music influences, another trend that would not gain significant traction until much later, and often composed works in additive meters such as “Bulgarian Bulge,” a reworked Bulgarian folk tune in 33/16.

While the intricacies of McLaughlin and Ellis’s work have not been equaled in mainstream jazz yet, Potter notes that the use of compound meter has become more common, and, more importantly, an organic element not integrated simply as a special effect or intellectual experiment. Drummers have developed a concept of time not unlike the non-metered, arhythmic style found in free jazz. Rather than perceive a measure of 5/4 as a group of five beats, a beat tacked onto a measure of four, or a strict grouping of 2+3 or 3+2, a drummer may alternate subdivisions of 2 and 3 to fit over one or more measures so that the return to one in an unfamiliar place is not quite as

¹⁰ Dave Brubeck, *Time Out*, Columbia CK 65122 (CD), 1959.

startling for the listener, or comes across as less of a “hook.” The result is a constant timeline focused on the overall pulse, occasionally non-metric or in a different meter, over which the melody can work more freely without firm ties to strong beats in perhaps as yet unnatural positions.

Another result of this across-the-bar-line form of timeline concept is the increased tendency to purposefully mislead the listener’s perception of when the next strong or accented beat will occur. Traditionally this has been done by writing orchestrated “hit points,” or extending a melodic phrase by increasing note values and adding an extra measure. Recently metric displacement is often brought about by the arranger positioning a single measure of contrasting meter at a strategic point to alter the flow of steady accented beats, or turn the beat around. This technique could be realized using a single 2/4, 3/4, or 5/4 measure following a few measures of predictable 4/4, or it could be a measure or two of 4/4 following a few measures of steady or arhythmic 5/4 or 7/4. This is especially effective when pairing two different types of possible meters: duple, triple, or additive.

As the frequency of meter shifts increases, it may serve as a way for the arranger to dictate the subdivision of beats in a given melody as well as imply strong or accented beats. This could simply be a different way to notate hemiola so that the accents are more intuitively placed where the arranger desires.

Increased use of complex subdivisions has gone hand in hand with increased use of polyrhythm. Overlaying multiple rhythms to form polyrhythms has been

common practice for drummers since Afro-Cuban jazz was first thrust into the limelight in the 1940s. In modern implementation, polyrhythm is written into instrumental parts of the small ensemble more frequently. Perhaps the modern mainstream artist to most closely follow in Ellis's and McLaughlin's footsteps, bassist Dave Holland frequently layers contrasting, rhythmically charged, contrapuntal melodies over soloistic, arhythmic, or rubato drum and bass parts. These characteristics can be observed in pieces such as "How's Never," "Pathways," "Ebb and Flow," and "Wind Dance," all from Holland's octet album *Pathways*.¹¹ Artist like Holland have augmented the conventions of rubato and arhythmic figures from introduction or ballad material into entire compositions in various styles, which often results in a timeline or multiple melodies that do not appear to line up precisely in a form of orchestrated heterophony. This occasionally produces an effect somewhat similar to the that of the Mahavishnu Orchestra's "Dance of Maya."

While both Potter and Blake agree on advancements in concepts of time as a primary current jazz trend, they also mentioned developments in style as well.¹² Blake points to inclusion of electronic sounds and computer manipulations, whereas Potter notes an increase in eclecticism. Jazz has always been a fusion of musical elements, and all jazz fans are familiar with latin jazz, Afro-Cuban jazz, jazz-rock fusion, and funk-jazz fusion. There are several forms of jazz fusion that have yet to be fully

¹¹ Dave Holland, *Pathways*, Dare2 DR2-004 (CD), 2010.

¹² Chris Potter, email message to author, July 23, 2010; Seamus Blake, email message to author, August 16, 2010.

explored as well. Ellis was eager to include many more ethnic influences he was exposed to while studying ethnomusicology at UCLA. He organized Indian jazz ensembles, and loved the complex, additive meters found in Hungarian folk music. Modern musicians such as Joshua Redman have shown an increased interest in Middle Eastern and other non-Western melodic scales and styles, as in Redman's "Last Rites of Rock and Roll" from *Beyond* and Holland's "Secret Garden" from *Critical Mass*.¹³ In addition to the expansion of ethnic-jazz fusion concepts, it is more common to mix and match elements of these fusions.

Just as polyrhythm is not utilized exclusively in its original capacity, many other elements of traditional ethnic musics are mixed and matched in original ways. Quartal harmonies and modal concepts in various styles, and Middle Eastern scales with pop harmonies are examples of recent eclectic jazz pairings. Besides pairing stylistic elements, it is also common to use instruments indicative of certain styles in other styles, such as synthesized sounds in a through-composed blues, or latin percussion in funk or rock fusion.

The utilization of unorthodox orchestration is a practice that Gil Evans popularized. The sound of the Claude Thornhill Orchestra inspired Evans throughout his career, and culminated in collaborations with Miles Davis such as the *Birth of the*

¹³ Joshua Redman, *Beyond*, Warner Bros WASE 47465 (CD), 2000; Dave Holland, *Critical Mass*, Sunnyside SUNY 3058 (CD), 2006.

Cool and Sketches of Spain.¹⁴ Michael Brecker's *Wide Angles* and Chris Potter's *Song for Anyone* feature medium-large ensembles featuring unique instrumentation in the vein of the work of Evans.¹⁵ This expansion of the timbral palette has been developed concurrently with electronic music. Blake disclosed that he is working earnestly with the EWI (Electronic Wind Instrument) for future projects, and Roy Hargrove has been working with microphone patches and pedal effects on his trumpet.

As new orchestration, more complex rhythmic concepts, and eclectic ethnic influences have become a more influential part of the mainstream jazz scene and the progress of music has accelerated it has become ineluctable to analyze the music rather than search for information in educational texts, scholarly articles, and historical studies. For the purpose of better understanding implementation of these techniques, analysis of pieces by many prominent mainstream jazz artists will be utilized.

¹⁴ Miles Davis, *Birth of the Cool*, Capitol 7243 5 30117 2 7 (CD), 1957; Miles Davis, *Sketches of Spain*, Columbia ck65142 (CD), 1960.

¹⁵ Michael Brecker, *Wide Angles*, Verve VRV B000028502 (CD), 2003; Chris Potter, *Song for Anyone*, Sunnyside SUNY 3074 (CD), 2007.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF UTILIZATION OF MODERN TECHNIQUES WITH REGARD TO RHYTHM, FORM, ORCHESTRATION, AND HARMONY

This chapter functions to investigate implementation of modern techniques in the recordings of Michael Brecker, Chris Potter, Dave Holland, Seamus Blake, and Joshua Redman. As when analyzing a piece of any jazz literature, it is important to take into account that many characteristics present in a recent, mainstream jazz composition may not have been consciously chosen, but rather formed as a byproduct of other conceived material. That is, the composer or arranger may have begun with a specific sound or concept in mind, and through an organic method of realizing that concept one or more other characteristics may be incorporated. Even when specifically attempting to include particular elements the arranger must be careful not to overwrite a piece. With this in mind, pieces chosen for analysis are representative of the mildly progressive side of mainstream modern jazz, and feature qualities that are indicative of the direction modern jazz musicians are currently gravitating towards. Several pieces will be discussed briefly so as to better understand how these techniques are implemented, and how widespread the use of certain techniques are. This study will give greater emphasis to how a given piece may be perceived from a listener's standpoint and from how the music may be analyzed from the sheet music.

Michael Brecker's *Wide Angles* - "Cool Day in Hell"

Michael Brecker's music was characterized by dexterity, and chromaticism. His main contributions to the modern jazz scene were a fusion and refinement of pop, modal, and bebop harmony, his virtuosic solo vocabulary, and an original conception of melodic content. His album *Wide Angles* departed from the typical jazz combo instrumentation by featuring a quintet.¹ So called for featuring up to fifteen different voices, the pieces on this album make regular use of tenor saxophone lead with electric guitar, bass, and drums making up the rhythm section most of the time, with piano on selected tracks. An ensemble comprised of a trumpet, trombone, french horn, flute/alto flute/soprano saxophone, oboe/english horn, bass clarinet/baritone saxophone, and string quartet provides contrapuntal, melodic, and harmonic elements. The unique sound of this orchestra, coupled with brilliant writing and performance garnered the album *Wide Angles* three Grammy award nominations, capturing the vote for two. While Michael Brecker composed all the pieces for this album, he employed Gil Goldstein as orchestrator and co-arranger. Goldstein makes clear that Brecker had well formed ideas, and clear expectations when he first approached Goldstein. As orchestrator, it was Goldstein's task to collaborate with Brecker to decide instrumentation, as well as when those instruments played, and what voicing would be chosen for a given chord. Brecker would likely have taken primary responsibility for the melody as well as the form, and structure of the pieces. It would be his decision

¹ Michael Brecker, *Wide Angles*, Verve VRV B000028502 (CD), 2003.

when to extend, omit, or repeat a phrase, as well as his choice of chords and overall structure. Thus, elements of pieces from this album corresponding to these roles should be attributed accordingly.

A strong example from of implementation of modal harmonies, unique form, and unorthodox orchestration within the medium to large sized ensemble, “Cool Day in Hell” is a driving, slightly funk-oriented piece in 4/4. A six measure introduction establishes tonal color with some quartal harmonies and emphasis on chord extensions as well as establishing heavy use of triplet figures. The eight measure A section is comprised of two near identical four measure phrases featuring syncopated quarter note triplet figures beginning on beat four of the first measure. This phrase rides over an ostinato played by the bass that features a somewhat similar syncopated triplet figure. As the melody and ostinato tend to drive the timeline with the ride cymbal, bass and snare drums are utilized alternately to set up ensemble figures and play freely with soloistic accents. The hit on beat four of the fourth measure of the A section phrase is a significant facet of this piece. It serves as an unexpected punctuation that slightly obscures the beginning of the next four measure phrase. While acting as a simple hit in the initial statement, it serves as a harmonic anticipation when leading into the B section. In both instances it may be perceived as an anticipation of a protracted beat one following a three beat measure.

Harmonically, the A section is firmly in concert F dorian, with what seems to be a functional iv-V-i, but the functionality is obscured by quartal harmony and the

absence of a root for the V chord. Goldstein notated the voicing for all accompaniment in all pieces for this album, so this omission is both intentional and integral to the desired aural quality. This makes the harmonic function A section primarily modal, with a small amount of tension and release. Implementation of quartal harmony and the resulting weakened harmonic function is a characteristic by Bill Evans based on George Russell's *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization* (2001).² Miles Davis and Evans implemented these concepts first in the seminal modal jazz album *Kind of Blue*.³ Since then, the use of quartal harmony has been a hallmark of modal jazz as well as many succeeding implementations of non-functional harmonic progressions. Quartal harmony has become such a significant aspect of modern jazz, that in many ways it is the quintessential voicing for the modern jazz ensemble. As previously noted, Goldstein wrote out all the rhythm section voicings, in this instance to ensure that specific quartal voicings of the notated chords implied the desired aural quality.

The B section of "Cool Day in Hell" is sixteen measures that essentially boil down to an oscillation between concert Bb and Eb over a few different quartal harmonic colorations of Ab dorian. The first two measures form an antecedent phrase anticipated by a beat four hit. The next two measures repeat the phrase with the alteration of quarter note triplets in the second measure. The third two measure phrase

² George Russell, *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*, 4th edition, (Brookline, MA: Concept Publishing, 2001).

³ Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue*, Columbia CL-1355 (CD), 1959.

is similar again, but unexpectedly delayed an eighth note, while the final phrase is essentially a harmonic suspension. The delay in the third phrase, paired with the triplets preceding and the fourth phrase's quarter note anticipation on beat four, create a startling affect on the listener where the last phrase might seem to be comprised of a measure of 4/4 and a measure of 5/4. After the B section, another A and B section follow. The only changes are that the orchestra becomes more active and the suspension in the last few measures of the B section is delayed a measure, though the illusion of a 5/4 bar is still somewhat present.

The tenor saxophone rests for the C section, and the orchestra provides a form of interlude. This eight measure phrase builds in density, intensity, and complexity from beginning to end, and is the first segment of the song where the tonal palette is able to be explored. After leading off with two measures of guitar and alto flute on triplet figures supported by longer notes from the bass clarinet and strings, there is a single measure of syncopated quarter notes and half notes in quartal voicing employing all but the tenor saxophone and trumpet. The trumpet joins the ensemble as it ascends and descends in staggered triplet figures before entering a three against two (3:2) hemiola. This 3:2 hemiola is comprised of twelve pulses divided into groups of four: one rest plus three notes, one note plus three notes, one note plus three notes. For most instruments the three grouped notes are played on one pitch with the first pitch sounding lower. As a result of these groups of four, there is a hemiola of four over three layered on top of a 3:2 hemiola. Since the first four pulses start with a rest

and the first of each group of three repeated notes has an accent, it also creates a sense that the four over three hemiola is displaced by one beat: one beat rest, three notes plus one, three notes plus one, three notes. To make the rhythmic effect more intricate, it comes to a close with a 2/4 measure truncating the phrase after beginning in the middle of a measure and returns dramatically to another statement of the A and B section by the tenor saxophone after leaving the last four over three incomplete.



The ensuing statement of A and B are melodically and harmonically identical to the second statement of A and B with slightly increased activity from the orchestra leading into the solo section. The first segment of the solo section is entirely new material, and would be labeled as a D section. It is comprised of thirty two measures of increasingly discordant modal D minor with a major seventh. Each eight measure segment of this section adds another voice or rhythm as well as increasing overall intensity with volume, dissonance, and reassigning active parts into the higher voices. Starting in the second eight measures a three over four hemiola begins that will grow more prominent and dissonant as it continues through the end of the D section.

As the D section closes on a cacophonous climax the orchestra drops out as the solo section continues through four choruses alternating the chords of the A and B sections. The first and third times through the B section are similar to the initial statement of the B section with the suspension extended an additional measure to make the second half a five measure phrase. Guitar bass and drums are the sole accompaniment through the first two choruses, and quartal guitar voicings are still being dictated by Goldstein. Orchestral backgrounds feature quarter note triplet figures and staggered entrances for the third and fourth times through the A and B sections.

Once all four choruses of A and B section material finish the orchestral C section returns before a final statement of the melody over the A and B sections, and a solo vamp of the D section draws the piece to a close. An interesting feature of the D section is that Goldstein essentially wrote out a vamp. During the initial statement it is dictated how long it will continue, and the pace it will progress towards dissolution. The notion that this section is a precomposed vamp is reinforced by the fact that the tenor saxophone part only shows one eight bar phrase with repeats, whereas the other parts contain four more increasingly cacophonous eight bar phrases before reaching a section with repeats. This final repeated section then states that the accompaniment should gradually vary their parts, increasing the discord. So the second time through the D section the pace at which the accompaniment progresses towards discord is controlled, but it is up to the soloist in a live performance, or the producer in a studio

performance to decide how long the section will continue, and how close to free jazz the ensemble will get.

The form for this piece is depicted in detail by Table 1 on the page to follow. While not quite through-composed, there is enough variance in ensemble texture between statements of phrases as well as a lack of recognizable traditional form to come into the gray area. While most jazz will usually include some type of repetitious form due to the traditional convention of soloist spontaneously composing a new melody over the harmonic content of a piece, it has become more common to alter the form during solos rather than simply retread the form from the melody verbatim.

Michael Brecker's *Wide Angles* - "Never Alone"

A revised arrangement of "Never Alone" from *Wide Angles* features very close to a completely through-composed form.⁴ While "Never Alone" was originally composed for *Now You See It (Now You Don't)*, the form for the 2003 recording has been slightly altered, and features vastly different accompaniment.⁵ The subtly reworked harmonic texture of the piece and the lush tonal color from the orchestra provide precisely what a successful arrangement should - a fresh landscape for the melody and solo.

After a rubato oboe solo over sustained strings and guitar. The tonality is quite blurred as the strings and guitar are voiced from low to high in fourths and fifths: Eb,

⁴ Michael Brecker, *Wide Angles*, Verve VRV B000028502 (CD), 2003.

⁵ Michael Brecker, *Now You See It (Now You Don't)*, GRP GRD 9622, 1990.

TABLE 1. Form Outline of *Cool Day in Hell*

Section	Number of Measures	Key Area	Synopsis
Introduction	6	Bb minor	Establish bass figure, and mood
A	8	F minor	Melody
B	8	Eb	
A	8	F minor	
B'	8	Eb	
C	7 + 2 beats	Multiple	Chromatic Orchestral Interlude
A	8	F minor	Melody
B'	8	Eb	
D	32	C minor	Solo over a vamp building intensity
A	8	F minor	Orchestra drops out suddenly, and solo continues.
B''	9	Eb	
A	8	F minor	
B'	8	Eb	
A	8	F minor	Backgrounds enter for second chorus of AB''AB' solo form
B''	9	Eb	
A	8	F minor	
B'	8	Eb	
C	7 + 2 beats	Multiple	Chromatic Orchestral Interlude
A	8	F minor	Melody
B'	8	Eb	
D'	40+	C minor	Open ended solo over vamp. Orchestra builds in texture and rhythmic complexity until fade out or cued ending.

Ab, Eb, Bb. This corresponds to an obscured and ambiguous Ab centered tonality, which is a primary characteristic of the harmony for this piece. The oboe solo connects two Bbs an octave apart with a scale that corresponds to Ab dorian minor, though is perceived as phrygian of Gb due to the ambiguity of the supporting chord. Four more measures of introduction serve to establish tempo, an ostinato that will return frequently during the piece, and continue the vague sense of tonality. This is done by emphasizing the open fifth of Ab and Eb while omitting any form of third and including the sixth and minor seventh at different times, implying both major and minor or dominant respectively, as well as alternating emphasis of the raised and natural eleventh, implying dominant and minor respectively.

The only full statement of melody follows with two somewhat similar four measure phrases that form what can loosely be referred to as the A section. The melody typically features an emphasis on beats one and three, but is played slightly rubato and continues to alternate between Ab major, minor, and dominant, though the major third is used more frequently than the minor third. The B section is five measures with the third and fifth measures in 5/4 due to a prolongation of beat four. The tonicized chords essentially move through the chord tones of Bb major: D minor, F minor with a major seventh, A minor, F major, and B dominant, which is a substitute for F dominant leading back to Bb. A seven measure C section follows that is melodically similar to the A section, though the tonality is somewhat more minor and

the last few measures return to introduction material and serve as the beginning of a solo section.

The chords from the A section are repeated verbatim for the beginning of the solo, followed by twelve measures of chords that are essentially two altered statements of the B section, the last two measures of which return to the written B section melody. The C section is repeated afterward, though it is followed by twelve more measures of obscured Ab material similar to the introduction. During this solo section there is some collective improvisation between the tenor saxophone and bass clarinet while the rest of the ensemble supports with material similar to the oboe introduction. One final unique written statement of four measures follows that involves two 5/4 measures with fermatas, and the song ends with an open section of collective improvisation between tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, and oboe over both themes from the introduction. Only small portions of melodic content is ever repeated, harmonic content is also rarely repeated, and, when material is repeated, it usually is altered in phrase length, harmony, texture, or instrumentation. As a result, it would not be too much of a stretch to say the piece is through-composed.

The rubato melody is intended to be interpreted by the soloist. This characteristic, along with the occasional measure of 5/4, serves to push and pull the timeline. The drums also tend to play sparingly until the C section and drop out again when the C section returns. The slightly rubato melodic figure played by the cello and viola contributes to this as well. While there are two quarter notes followed by a

sixteenth note and dotted eighth note on beat three, the absence of a firm timeline from the drums for the majority of the piece allow this figure to possibly be misinterpreted by the listener as one quarter note, two heavily swung eighth notes and a half note.



This makes an interesting effect toward the end of the song when the material based on the oboe introduction returns and the drums are playing a feel somewhat reminiscent of slow New Orleans second-line drumming. In another nod toward New Orleans, the inclusion of collective improvisation is notable as well. While this is not a new technique, it represents an increasingly popular trend in modern jazz.

Michael Brecker's "Delta City Blues" and Extended Techniques

Another contemporary trend is the more frequent use of extended techniques for the saxophone. Eddie Harris and Ornette Coleman were some of the first to utilize experimental sounds as part of a composition, and Brecker solidified this concept with his original recording of "Delta City Blues" from the album *Two Blocks from the Edge*.⁶ With a cadenza introduction utilizing finger bends, as opposed to pitch bends initiated by manipulation of the embouchure, and alternate, overtone emphasizing fingerings and a melody designed around overtone manipulation and incredible angularity, this piece is based on a gimmick soloing technique. While the piece is performed on fairly standard instrumentation and is formally just a blues with chromatic substitutions and several altered extensions, it is the exploration of the outer

⁶ Michael Brecker, *Two Blocks from the Edge*, Impulse IMPD-260 (CD), 1998.

ranges of the saxophone coupled with calculated implementation of experimental techniques that is worth mention.

Just as bends and growls are primarily secondary techniques that are used more in solos than precomposed melodies, overtone manipulation and multiphonics are tools that are implemented primarily by a soloist, though traditionally to a lesser degree than bends and growls. John Coltrane was one of the first popular soloists to experiment with these techniques, and Brecker picked up where he left off, learning to use the techniques with greater control and in a less obscure and grating fashion. Since the first recording in 1998, Brecker has performed the piece multiple times in live settings, frequently entirely without accompaniment with great success. When he plays in this manner the form is less concrete. There are usually a few themes that are present without exception, but he may choose to solo to a varying extent between themes, and the “solo” section of the piece is not likely to follow a strict blues form.

Modern musicians such as Roy Hargrove and Joshua Redman are contemporary artists and arrangers who have continued this exploration of extended techniques. Both occasionally utilize a microphone with electronic effects activated by a pedal in the same manner as a guitar. Michael Brecker also was one of the first jazz musicians to make extensive use of the Electronic Wind Instrument (EWI), which Seamus Blake is currently working with. Blake has expressed interest in further exploring the boundaries that this versatile instrument has not nearly begun to

encroach upon. Blake feels that this instrument will prove to be an important one as jazz continues to evolve.⁷

Chris Potter's *Traveling Mercies* - "Migrations"

Increased exploration of instrumentation is also seen in the work of Chris Potter who released an album featuring a tentet titled *Song for Anyone*, which prominently employs strings, flute, and bass clarinet, which Potter has become well known for playing on as well.⁸ Potter is part of a new crowd of tenor saxophonists to rise to the forefront since Michael Brecker's passing in 2007. While performing and recording a great deal since his initial album *Presenting Chris Potter*, he has received more attention as the modern jazz fan searches for the next great saxophonist, similar to when jazz fans searched for the next great after Charlie Parker's passing.⁹ The hallmarks of his recent music are frequent inclusion of pop harmonies and grooves as well as the heavy exploration of advanced temporal concepts.

"Migrations" from *Traveling Mercies* is a prime example of Potter's metric exploration and funk influence.¹⁰ The piece begins in 7/4 with a tenor saxophone and guitar in unison with piano, bass, and drums accompanying. During the four measure introduction the rhythm section plays a strong beat quarter note on beat one of the first and third measure in a stop time style. The second and fourth measures involve

⁷ Seamus Blake, email message to author, August 16, 2010.

⁸ Chris Potter, *Song for Anyone*, Sunnyside SUNY 3074 (CD), 2007.

⁹ Chris Potter, *Presenting Chris Potter*, Criss Cross CRC 1067 (CD), 1992

¹⁰ Chris Potter, *Traveling Mercies*, Verve VRV 4400182432 (CD), 2002.

ascending arpeggiated figures of fifths and fourths grouped two eighth notes and a quarter note, two eighth notes and a quarter note, three eighth notes, and a dotted quarter note. So the general subdivision of the seven beats in the introductory measures is two, two, three.

This is followed by a short vamp that will set a mood for the majority of the song to follow. The drums start out with a funk groove while the bass and piano continue to divide the first measure into groups of two beats, two beats, and three beats. The F7#9 is arpeggiated up from root to fifth to root for the first two beats, similar to the introduction, followed by two beats of rest, two eighth notes from b7 to root, and a syncopated arpeggiation down to the fifth, and enharmonic sharp nine to return to the ascending broken chord. The syncopation and resulting metric tension and release smooth the lurching return to beat one that is common in additive or compound meters. The second measure appears to break the previous pattern of beat division with the first three beats grouped together and a whole note on beat four. This results in a feeling of an anticipatory hit on the fourth beat and a suspension of the timeline until jarred back into motion with the first beat of the measure afterward. When this technique, similar to the beat four anticipations in “Cool Day in Hell,” is coupled with an unfamiliar meter such as 7/4 the downbeat of the next measure is difficult to anticipate.

The bass and piano continue this figure through the A section, where the tenor saxophone melody is harmonized by the guitar in fifths and sixths below, with both



parts frequently utilizing altered extensions. The first measure is comprised of mostly quarter notes and continues the hard grinding groove that the rhythm section has established. The second measure has a quarter rest on beat one and continues to place accents on unexpected beats. Rather than continuing to emphasize beats one, three, and five in alignment with a two beat plus two beat plus three beat subdivision of the measure, the second measure of the A section has accents on beats two, four, and six, the strongest of which lines up with the whole note in the bass line on beat four. This results a metric displacement by one beat that is broken by a quarter note anticipation of the downbeat of the following measure. This anticipation continues to suspend until a quarter note on beat three realigns the melody with the subdivision of the bass and piano ostinato. The third and fourth measures of the A section share all major metric characteristics with the first two measures. The same four measures of melodic material is repeated verbatim with the bass and piano transposed down a minor third. It is the combination of various elements such as additive meter, metric displacement, and suspended anticipations obscuring the first beat of a measure that are characteristic of modern jazz developments. The techniques may already be present,

but they are being combined in new ways. This is part of the eclecticism that Potter sees as characteristic of current jazz trends.

As strong beats tend to occur every two or four beats, it could be argued that this forms a fourteen-beat melodic phrase could function in a duple meter such as 14/4. This is supported by the fact that each two measure phrase features two different subdivisions, however the bass and piano are undoubtedly in 7/4, hinting at the possible presence of two concurrent timelines. The B section that follows reinforces the notion that the melody could be performed in a different time signature than the rhythm section. The bridge is built of three separate three bar groups of two 4/4 measures and a single measure of 6/4 with one 4/4 measure to end the section. This makes a total of ten measures comprised of forty-six total beats roughly grouped fourteen, fourteen, fourteen, four. The rhythm section begins a new figure that fits fairly well into the time signature with a group of eight beats that spans the bar line between 4/4 bars, and a group of six beats. The melody, however, is comprised of a sixteen-beat phrase that begins on beat three and repeated nearly three full times before being abruptly cut short. This melody is essentially in 4/4, but is written over a fourteen-beat timeline. As a result of the differing phrase length, the melody is displaced, and starts and ends on a different segment of the rhythm section figure each time.

This is possible because of the modal nature of the section of a whole. While there are four separate chords employed, they are nonfunctional, and all imply

different modes of the F# major scale, not far removed from the heavily altered F and D dominant chords of the A section. This is an alternative to quartal voicing for expressing modal harmony. Usage of triads for three of the chords is indicative of current trends as well. They are paired with an ostinato, as seen in this instance, with a pedal note, as a slash chord, or over another triad as a polychord. The ambiguity as to which seventh is implied allows for soloist as well as composer to be creative with the melody, but demands more restraint and discernment from chordal accompaniment as one must react to the harmony implied by soloist or composer rather than dictate it. The consonant ambiguity is also appropriate as a contrast to the grating dissonance and tension of the heavily altered A section harmony.

All four measures of introductory material are revisited as a send off into the solo section. The form of the solo section follows the form of the A and B sections with one slight augmentation. The B section is based on the rhythm section figure over two measures of 4/4 and one measure of 6/4. This three measure phrase is repeated for a total of four iterations before returning to the A section for another chorus. Accompaniment during the A section of solos initially follows the ostinato, with more variation as the solos progress. The B section, however, nearly always features at least the accents from the ostinato figure, which correspond to when the chords change.

After solos the A section is omitted. Even though the solos form ends after four statements of B section material the melody reenters at the B section.

Introduction material is played once more, followed by a climactic, frenzied fermata that dissolves into a mellow piano cadenza. This solo cadenza eventually slows to roughly half-time and evolves into a new two measure ostinato in 4/4 that is doubled by the bass. The cymbals and drums are played very sparsely and with progressively less regard for the timeline of the piano and bass ostinato. At their discretion the tenor saxophone and guitar play the melodic figure from the B section in double time so that it is in sync with the two measure piano and bass ostinato but at roughly the same overall cadence as previous statements of the B section. This melody is then harmonized and deconstructed into floating fragments by the tenor saxophone and guitar until the piece either fades out or devolves into a final fermata.

Only five of the ten pieces on *Traveling Mercies* have are written in or contain sections that can be perceived as in 4/4, and most of these are disguised with rubato, complex ostinatos, arhythmic drumming, or melodies that frequently extend across the bar lines.¹¹ This increased frequency of complex meter is not uncommon in Potter's albums, and his affinity for additive meters is shared by frequent collaborator Dave Holland. Potter's extensive experimentation and experience soloing in compound meters has made him one of Holland's most frequently utilized saxophonist. While both have written extensively in 5/4, and several more complex meters and combinations of meters, 7/4 seems to have been a significant point of emphasis for each during the last few years. Both have written many pieces in an

¹¹ Chris Potter, *Traveling Mercies*, Verve VRV 4400182432 (CD), 2002.

attempt to find a more organic conception of melody in 7/4 as well as pursue intellectually stimulating combinations of various techniques that have been developed in more traditional meters.

Dave Holland's *Critical Mass* - "Vicissitudes"

"Vicissitudes" was written by Potter and recorded on Holland's album *Critical Mass*.¹² It features a driving, four measure A section in 7/4 and a four measure afro-cuban B section in 6/4 with straight sixteenth notes throughout. The absence of both piano and guitar is an interesting characteristic of this quintet comprised of bass, drums, vibraphone, trombone, and tenor saxophone. The mellow tone of the vibraphone, trombone, and tenor saxophone produces a very unique timbre for this ensemble. The low registers represented by the trombone and tenor saxophone also add weight to the funk influenced A section, which is in unison, while the B section is harmonized primarily in parallel minor thirds, with a small portion in inverted minor thirds, or major sixths. The first A section of the melody is played three times before proceeding on to the B section, one more statement of the A section, and a final statement of the B section before solos. Phrase lengths are primarily four measures, though there are occasionally one or two measures added in to establish the change in feel or augment the phrase length. This occurs in transition between the A or B sections: between the first A and B section, before the return to A for solos, and at the end of each solo for example. Solos maintain the basic four measure A and B section

¹² Dave Holland, *Critical Mass*, Sunnyside SUNY 3058 (CD), 2006.

form per chorus, followed by an open drum solo in 6/4 develops out of a two measure, vamped ensemble ostinato. The ostinato continues through a statement of the B section before returning via Da Capo to three statements of the A section and one final statement of the B section in the coda.

Dave Holland's *Prime Directive* - "Looking Up"

Critical Mass does not contain one piece overtly composed in 4/4.¹³ In addition, it runs the stylistic gamut from free jazz "Amator Silenti," to hip-hop inspired "The Leak," to Middle Eastern tinged "Secret Garden" and various styles in between. Dave Holland is well known for this, as the majority of his work is in complex meter or rhythmically complex simple meters, and he tends to favor fusions of pop or ethnic styles. His album *Prime Directive* similarly features various styles, but has slightly more material in 4/4.¹⁴ "Down Time" is in 4/4, and "Looking Up" features a section in 4/4. It can be difficult to identify whether a Dave Holland composition is actually in 4/4. It is common for the drums to accent a stream of quarter notes, obscuring when metric subdivisions or even beat one is occurring.

The B section of "Looking Up" is one such 4/4 example. Trombone and tenor saxophone are paired once again, and their separate melodic lines alternate between lining up and accenting different beats. During the 7/4 A section the two have somewhat similar harmonized lines with the exception of either trombone or tenor

¹³ Dave Holland, *Critical Mass*, Sunnyside SUNY 3058 (CD), 2006.

¹⁴ Dave Holland, *Prime Directive*, Ecm Records ECM 547950 (CD), 2000.

saxophone ornamenting at different times. In the B section the lines are more divergent, yet still return to accent certain beats. While the trombone accents beats one and three fairly regularly the tenor saxophone at times floats freely. A quarter note triplet beginning on beat two contributes greatly to this effect. The brevity of two three measure phrases in the B section and the divergent melodies contribute to the sense that the section is either arhythmic or that the trombone and tenor saxophone are in different meters, thus obscuring the sense of 4/4. One other interesting characteristic of this afro-cuban multi-metric composition is the inclusion of collective improvisation in 7/4 during the second half of the melodic form.



Seamus Blake's *Bellwether* - "Bellwether"

Reemergence of characteristics such as collective improvisation reinforces Potter's notion that eclecticism is a significant part of modern jazz. Blake was of the opinion that very little is truly a new development.¹⁵ There is nothing new under the sun, after all. He preferred to discuss current trends in modern jazz rather than developments. Regardless, the increased exploration of time and musical fusions are major current trends. Blake's 2009, *Bellwether*, features a tranquil arrangement of Debussy's "String Quartet in G Minor, Opus 10" alongside 265 beat per minute, bop

¹⁵ Seamus Blake, email message to author, August 16, 2010.

inspired “Minor Celebrity” in seven, and the ballad-like title track, “Bellwether,” in brisk, modal 5/4.¹⁶

The seemingly counterintuitive swift ballad effect is achieved through a swift tempo of 200 beats per minute and a floating melody utilizing long note values. While the drums establish a three beat plus two beat subdivision, they also tend to obscure the meter with soloistic cymbals. Meanwhile, the melody frequently utilizes dotted quarter notes and dotted half notes, and the third and fourth measure of most four measure phrases are comprised of one ten beat, tied note. The result is a buoyant melody supported by the excitement from the activity of the drums. Harmonically, the melody is primarily in Ab natural minor, with occasional shifts to Ab major, and one short section of G minor. The notes of the melody are a strong indication of the key center emphasized as the chords tend to imply modes of the scale reflected by the simple melody, though the melody and many chords utilize enharmonic spellings for ease of reading.



The form of the piece is sixty measures. The introduction establishes the tonality of Ab minor through inference rather than direct statement. In a similar manner to the B section of “Migrations,” the harmony of “Bellwether” is modal through chords that present different colors of Ab minor. The A section is the

¹⁶ Seamus Blake, *Bellwether*, Criss Cross CRC 1317 (CD), 2009.

introductory material as well as part of the solo form, and the B section is where the melody enters with the tenor saxophone and guitar, still in Ab minor. The first four measures of the C section shift to Ab major before returning to Ab minor for the second four measure phrase. C' could possibly be labeled as a different section. The melody is based on the C section, with the first four measures transposed up a half step and the second four measures transposed down a half step. The chords are more closely related to the B section, though, with the tonal center transposed up a half step to G minor. This is the only section of the piece that deviates from the key area of Ab minor. The temporary key center one half step lower provides a sense of tension that breaks up the monotony that would result had the key center of this modal piece been static on Ab minor for the entire song. The twelve measure D section presents a progressive transition back to Ab natural minor via four measure phrases in Ab lydian major and Ab dorian minor. The C'' section is essentially two slightly altered statements of the second four measure phrase from the C section.

TABLE 2. Form Outline of *Bellwether*

Form	A	B	C	B	C'	D	C''
Key areas	Ab minor	Ab minor	Ab Major and minor	Ab minor	G minor	Ab lydian, dominant, and minor	Ab minor
Meas.	8	8	4 - 4	8	8	≈ 4 - 4 - 4	8

While modal harmony is not a new convention, the prevalence of implementation has spread to the point where quartal harmony is in some ways a hallmark of the modern sound. Other conventions of implementation such as the,

what may initially be perceived as non-functional, parallel triadic harmony seen in the B section of “Migrations,” and ii-V-i patterns in various keys that function to color an overall key area, as seen in “Bellwether,” have become quite common as well. Extended sections of one chord and overall use of just a few chords, as seen in “So What,” are still utilized today as well.

Joshua Redman’s *Beyond* - “Last Rites of Rock and Roll”

Joshua Redman’s “Last Rites of Rock and Roll” from his album *Beyond* is one such example.¹⁷ Redman burst onto the scene the same time as Potter and Eric Alexander when they were all part of the Thelonious Monk International Saxophone Competition in 1991. Redman finished first with Alexander and Potter behind, and all have recorded extensively as leaders and sidemen since. While Potter has ventured more into rhythmic exploration, Redman has utilized more commercial music elements, and Alexander ventured primarily into hard bop. Like Potter, Redman also frequently adopts funk grooves, and pop influenced harmony.

“Last Rites of Rock and Roll” employs only two chords, Ab7 and E6, and begins with a solo, rubato, Middle Eastern influenced cadenza on the tenor saxophone. The extended saxophone technique of multiphonics are utilized as a low Bb (concert Ab) is fingered on the saxophone and the second and third overtones are emphasized simultaneously. Since neither overtone is given dominance, the overtone series from fundamental up to the third overtone sound simultaneously, though the third and fourth

¹⁷ Joshua Redman, *Beyond*, Warner Bros WASE 47465 (CD), 2000.

Notes used in the introduction by Redman - notes used sparingly shown in parentheses

Persian

Ab Major

Phrygian Dominant

E Major

35

bass and drums enter as well. The drums play a prominent accent on two and four on the ride cymbal throughout the majority of the melody and the piano plays the ostinato theme or a slight variant throughout the entire sixty-four measure, AABA form. The melody features eight measure phrases and note values often over twelve beats. This creates an effect similar to that of “Bellwether,” where the tempo does not appear to be as fast as it really is. In the A section the first eight measure phrase is in concert Ab7 followed by four measures of E6 and four more measures of Ab7. The B section is comprised of two eight measure phrases featuring four measures of E6 followed by four measures of Ab7.

The melody is clearly blues scale inspired, with the usage of the major four and the minor third over the Ab7 chord. While the two tonalities may overlap, especially with implementing the blues scale or the synthetic phrygian scale, the oscillation between the two key areas presents a powerful movement when each has been prolonged. During soloing, Redman utilizes pentatonic scale patterns to emphasize the subtle but powerful half step shifts between the notes of the two chords. After the solos the form is played from the B section out and implements a standard tag of three iterations of the last eight measure phrase, which works especially well as the second four measures of this phrase are devoid of melodic material and represent a perfect vehicle for building to a climactic ending through improvisation.

Modern mainstream jazz musicians still utilize elements of past conventions in ways such as these. While traditional ethnic styles, compound meters, and non-

functional harmonies are becoming more common, there is still a foundation on which the new techniques are laid. Duke Ellington's maxim and song title "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing" is still true to an extent today. While modern pioneers may opt for the word groove rather than swing, many elements championed by Ellington, Basie, Armstrong, and many more are still fundamental. Ellington also preached the tenet "if it sounds right, it is right." This is still a fundamental principle guiding the ears of these progressive, modern, mainstream jazz musicians today.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION

This study has covered perspectives on jazz given by various fields of scholarship, highlighting discrepancies with modern performance practice. New techniques and adaptations have been explicated upon and the implementation of these rhythmic, harmonic, formal, and orchestrational techniques have been elaborated on through the study of the work of several different modern mainstream jazz artists.

While idiosyncrasies are more frequently drawn from more divergent material in contemporary jazz the conventions of bebop, hard bop, blues, and swing are still indispensable. Pieces previously analyzed may feature new techniques and inspirations such as the Arabic scale influence, overtone manipulation, slap tonguing, sixty-four measure form in “Last Rites of Rock and Roll,” but they also feature established conventions such as standard quartet instrumentation, an AABA form, and a classic tag ending, as seen in the same piece. Eric Alexander is a conservative modern tenor saxophonist who plays much more traditional, hard bop inspired jazz. As far as manipulation of the timeline is concerned, Alexander is less likely to play songs in compound or additive meters as he is to rewrite a song originally in 4/4 into 3/4 or vice versa, or to utilize metric displacement, over the bar line writing, or some other technique within a more standard time signature. Alexander, for example, has

performed “Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered” in 3/4 rather than 4/4 and only piano and drums as accompaniment, uncharacteristically omitting the bass.¹

While Alexander’s playing is mature and extremely well executed, it is perhaps his adherence to older conventions that has kept his superb talents from becoming more widely recognized. After placing ahead of Potter, and just behind Redman at the Thelonious Monk International Saxophone Competition in 1991, Alexander has not become nearly as widely acclaimed as Redman or Potter. Alexander is highly regarded by those who play with or know of him, but lacking cache or distinctive style in a world flooded with recordings of past jazz greats for the public to choose from. It is difficult to compete with so many years of history, which is a secondary reason for development of new approaches, but a reason that is present all the same.

It is also important to keep in mind that while some artists such as Dave Holland may produce an entire album without any material in 4/4, this is not the norm. Just as the increasing prevalence of new ethnic fusions is a current trend, so, too, is the increased occurrence of additive meters. Not every arranger or ensemble will utilize any specific tool available to them as often as another arranger or ensemble might, but the overall frequency with which these techniques are implemented has trended upwards during the last decade. Pioneers such as Don Ellis, Miles Davis, John McLaughlin, George Russell, Gil Evans, and John Coltrane may have “paved the trails,” but it is up to current arrangers and composers to decide which trail to follow,

¹ Eric Alexander, *Up, Over & Out*, Delmark DLMK 476 (CD), 1993.

and how closely. Emergence of past trends through conventions of eclecticism have garnered new facets for this musical fusion known as jazz. Mainstream arrangers have incorporated more components from the fringes and are constantly experimenting with new trends.

It may be difficult for scholars to accurately predict which current trend will bear significance for tomorrow, but it is important to document the journey, to take a snapshot of what seems significant today even if it turns out to be of minor importance in the future. Bass clarinet may become a primary solo instrument in the future, or perhaps it will be the electronic wind instrument, but both have increased in popularity regardless and should be documented. Arabic and Indian jazz have many merits, especially since both Arabic and Indian music traditionally implement a fair degree of improvisation as well. Balkan and Irish folk music tend to feature intricate weavings of complex additive meters. Ellis still remains one of few to experiment with this concept, perhaps due to the complexity, but this could be another possible frontier. While jazz is a music of rich tradition that should always and will always be an essential part of the jazz repertory, it is crucial to appreciate where the music is progressing and where it might lead. Wherever the music does lead, the arranger will continue to have more tools at his or her disposal.

Perhaps it is important to understand why there is a lack of scholarly material on recent developments. Historians might be hesitant to invest time researching styles that will not bear significance in the future. Some scholars may feel the new trends

are illegitimate or not worthy of study. Educators or authors may not understand enough about how the techniques are developed, implemented, or constructed to accurately describe them in texts. Quite likely there is a combination of these factors across all disciplines of scholarship. Regardless, there are significant developments that deserve adequate study. Pianist Marcus Roberts said, “Fifty years from now, who’s going to care what you played? I mean if we don’t protect Monk, how are we going to protect the modern guys? Who draws the line in terms of establishing at one point what’s being called ‘new’ right now has value seven years from now?”²

Roberts touches on the heart of the problem. Preservation is obviously crucial, because failure to protect the icons of jazz bodes poorly for the prospects of protecting the greats of today. At the same time, it is difficult to predict whether what is being called new will bear any significance on history or future developments even a few years from today. It is the author’s desire that this work would inspire others to more closely observe the trends of jazz as they exist in his or her present time period and field.

² Yuval Taylor, ed., *The Future of Jazz* (Chicago: Acapella, 2002), 94.

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