

**Analysis and observations of pre-learnt and idiosyncratic
elements in improvisation: a reflective study in jazz
performance**

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**Exegesis and recordings submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree:**

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Music Performance



MONASH University

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This PhD is comprised of a folio of recordings of mostly original compositions by the Robert Burke Quartet and a duet with Tony Gould, from two commercially released CDs and a supporting exegesis that analyses aspects of selected improvised performances.

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Abstract

This exegesis examines influences, processes and idiosyncrasies in musical improvisation in a jazz context, identified through analysis and observation of selected, recorded performances by the author. It is a practice-based research project with two objectives, the first to uncover degrees to which pre-learnt skills and idiosyncratic creations occur and interact in music-making, and the second to contribute to the body of knowledge in spontaneous improvised music research: an area of the art which at this time is beginning to invite intense enquiry.

It is argued that deep investigation into one's own playing, complemented by critical contemplation, offers insights into improvised performance that can add a significant dimension to the analysis and observations made by other people.

Notwithstanding the limitations of traditional musical notation, transcriptions examined in this study show clearly influences both from past learning and from musicians who continue to have a powerful influence - consciously and sub-consciously - on the author's playing and thought processes in music. While formal study with influential figures (players and teachers) is important, underpinning the whole learning process is the aural comprehension of sounds; the end musical product being recorded performances submitted here as the primary source.

The insights gained through this reflective self-examination suggests that not only is it a practice of great worth from a personal perspective, but also offers a model for others who wish to remain alert to the quality of their own musical output, and the measure, as far as it is possible, of their creativity.

Statement of Originality

I declare that this exegesis contains no material that has previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this exegesis contains no material that has previously been published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the exegesis.

Signed:

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Date:

11 Sept 2013

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“The innovative and critical potential of practice-based research lies in its capacity to generate personally situated knowledge and new ways of modelling and externalising such knowledge while at the same time, revealing philosophical, social and cultural contexts for the critical intervention and application of knowledge outcomes.” Bolt, E (2007 p.2)

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This exegesis aims to provide analytical insight into one individual's approach to improvising and asks the question: how does practice-based research lead to a greater understanding and development of the art of musical improvisation in a jazz context? While it is impossible to agree on the criteria by which to evaluate the success or otherwise of a spontaneous musical performance, the analysis of transcriptions of selected recorded performances provide a substantial body of both quantitative and qualitative evidence about the inner workings of a jazz musician's spontaneous music-making.

Qualitative research underpins the analytical findings and includes relevant biographical/autobiographical data about the author as well as matters to do with aesthetics and 'informed intuition' necessary in the scholarly evaluation of music.¹ In the case of improvisers, as distinct from players of fully pre-composed works, it is especially pertinent because of the intensely personal nature of the music. Further, references to style commonly used in analysis and comparisons of classical music repertoire are less important, especially at this time when jazz music has become so diversified as to render the term obsolete.

The study of one's own improvised performances via transcriptions has been for decades part of the teaching and learning process in a number of major music institutions in Australia that offer jazz/improvisation programs. It is an approach more appropriate to improvisers than to players of repertoire in that it serves to inform in a direct way a musician's musical language at a particular stage in the creative process. Through transcriptions, one can see (and hear) individual

¹ It is interesting to ponder the reaction of say Bach or Beethoven if they were able to comment on some of the analysis of their works that have occurred since their death. It is likely that the perception of their own compositions would differ (perhaps significantly) from those who have analysed and evaluated their works since. Both are valid, but the primary source (composers/and or performers) can make observations that only they have insight into.

characteristics in phrasing, rhythm, dynamics, and approaches to form. In a self-critical process, perceived flaws in any of these aspects can be reflected upon, and thus are important in the creative and learning process. These include the overuse of cliché - type material or rhythmic motives, or overuse of pre-learnt patterns/formulae that belong more appropriately in the practice room.

An awareness of 'well-worn' material especially is critical for creative musicians in their constant search for the 'new'. Transcriptions of one's own playing allows an improviser to reflect on both the positive and negative elements in performance that emerge in the spontaneous process.

This is not purposeless navel-gazing but a way of gaining deep insight into one's own music making; important in keeping a reasonable perspective on, and maintaining artistic integrity within, the improvisatory arena. In all performing arts reflective practice allows performers to examine their own artistic processes and connect them to their unique experience in life generally and strategies to reconceptualise their creative ambitions.

This research is practice based; that is, spontaneous improvisations are examined through analysis and observations after the event. And while there was no adoption of any consciously pre-conceived notions of what might occur in performance, elements of research-based practice are inevitable. Also, these are dealt with in Chapter 3 and relate to years of general musical preparation, development of technical facility and knowledge of and ability to play repertoire common in the improvisatory world of jazz, all of which require research in the broad sense.

The pursuit of a personal voice in performance and composition compels preparation, understanding and aural comprehension of the vehicles for improvisation, including their melodic, harmonic and rhythmic possibilities and the development of technique/facility to be able to deal with the challenges present in spontaneous music-making.

Although imitation is an integral part of the learning process, jazz musicians do not wish to imitate verbatim the musical language of another player. Rather, the challenge is to produce music that is acknowledged more for its distinctive, individualistic character than anything that resembles too closely the language or style of another player. It is a challenge not to be underestimated, as it requires a careful balance between pre-learned, pre-heard material, and the desire to produce music that, at least to the educated ear appears to be created in the moment. It is the degree to which pre-learned material, (although spontaneous in the act of performance) is played in performance against material that cannot be identified as such. It is the latter that is at the centre of the research project, and one that ultimately serves to identify an improviser's musical character.

Research Question

In summary then, the underpinning research question asks, "How does practice-based research lead to a greater understanding and development of the art of musical improvisation in a jazz context?"

Limitations and challenges

It is acknowledged that within a jazz ensemble (in this case, a quartet of saxophone, double bass, drums and piano, and a duo of saxophone and piano) the music produced is informed to varying degrees by the surrounding input of associate players. However, due to the limitations of this exegesis the focus here is primarily on the saxophone performance only, and outcomes should be seen in this light.

A major challenge in any discussion on music will always be the problems inherent in the intangible aspects of the art. They are in part philosophical and connect well with Bertrand Russell's (1912) view that:

"Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our

intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance that closes the mind against speculation.” (p.100)

These questions are primary considerations for the creative musician, for research into creative performance is intended to enlarge the possibilities, enrich the imagination, and in turn diminish the chance of closed-minded dogmas being adopted about how music is made.

As the practiced-based research here is self-reflective, that is, it makes ‘observations from within’, it offers a unique perspective into one person’s musical identity.

Primary Sources: Selected Recorded Performances

Two commercially released recordings are submitted as ‘recorded publications’: *Here and Live at Bennetts Lane* (See Appendix A for recording details, and Appendix B for a complete list of recordings on which the author appears).

Improvisations on three pieces from *Live at Bennetts Lane* have been selected for analysis: *Tahdon* (Jukka Perko), *Charukeshi* (Mishra Basant Mukari ²) and *Its Easy to Remember* (Richard Rogers). They were chosen because of their contrasting nature, and consequently demonstrate substantial differences in approach to performance in tempo, musical language, melodic development, phrasing, rhythm and form. Improvised excerpts from the three pieces that appear in the body of the exegesis are identified as either material from learnt sources or are seen as less predictable, and thus more spontaneous, while acknowledging that the notion of spontaneity is itself problematic and virtually impossible to measure specifically. In any case, improvised music - or any music for that matter - transcribed to notation, will never give up the full ‘story.’

² After this CD was released, it was clarified by Indian classical guitarist Debasis Chakroborty that the raga’s actual name is Mishra Basant Mukari but will be referred to as Charukeshi here. (Debasis Chakroborty is an A grade artist on All-India Radio and Television)

HERE: Rob Burke/ Tony Gould Duo (Jazzhead 2009). Rob Burke (saxophone) and Tony Gould (piano).

The duo format is comprised of improvisations on pre-composed pieces for piano and tenor saxophone and bass clarinet. Tony Gould and I have performed in the duet format since the early 1990s, resulting in three commercially released CDs, *Here* being the latest (See discography for a comprehensive list of recordings on which the author appears).

Live At Bennetts Lane: Rob Burke Quartet (Jazzhead 2011). Rob Burke (tenor and soprano saxophone), Tony Gould (piano), Nick Haywood (double bass) and Tony Floyd (drum-kit).

The Quartet

The quartet's inaugural performance was given at Bennetts Lane Jazz Club in 1998, presented through the Melbourne Jazz Co-operative (MJC).³ Since then the group has performed at many jazz clubs and festivals, including Wangaratta International Jazz Festival, Melbourne International Jazz Festival, Castlemaine Arts Festival, Adelaide Arts Festival and on tour in New Caledonia. In 2003, with the support of a Victorian Arts grant, the quartet recorded the CD 'Wide Eyed' (Jazzhead Records).

The group does not regularly rehearse or pre-arrange performances. Most 'planning' involves creating compositions for improvisation, and researching new music. The spontaneous (that is, unrehearsed) approach to composition/improvisation is a principal that has historical precedence, notably the seminal jazz ensembles of the 1960's: John Coltrane's quartet, and Miles Davis Quintet. The same approach to performance can be heard in the more recent trios and quartets of Keith Jarrett. The performances on both the Burke Duo and Quartet

³ The Melbourne Jazz Co-operative was formed in 1983. The MJC supports Australian Jazz by presenting approximately 150 concerts a year (mostly premier performances) of Australian jazz and improvised music. The question of ongoing government support for this important organization remains uncertain.

recordings have always adopted similar principals. In this sense it does not fit comfortably within the traditional, common approach to modern jazz performance where rehearsals are the norm.

The Burke Quartet - saxophone, piano, bass and drum-kit - is unusual for a number of reasons. First, bassist Nick Haywood has an uncommonly free approach to playing 'structured' improvisations-whether standards other more contemporary vehicles. It can be best described as playing which might in some instances consciously defy the harmonic flow of a piece by interrupting it with a pedal note that may or may not be the root or dominant note of a chord. Depending on the moment, the other players might choose to 'go along' through complimentary note choices or harmonies and at other times increase levels of tension by adhering to the original harmonic structure. The success of such an approach depends not so much on the choices made 'moment to moment' but rather how resolution is achieved logically and musically in the context of the phrase and/or piece as a whole. Haywood's approach can be traced in part to his training at the tertiary level (at the Victorian College of the Arts) where the 'correct way' of playing the double bass over chord progressions from one chord to the next was presented alongside a contradictory pathway that focused more on the overall structure of a piece and idea that resolution of musical ideas was the crucial factor. The other part of his approach is related more to personality; his humour and approach to life generally. It connects also with characteristics of the culture, in which he lives, where, while the art of improvised music is treated seriously, musicians seem never to lose sight of the fact that art must be free to roam rather than be restricted by a set of rules or a style within a genre.

Second, pianist Tony Gould has in retrospect, realised that his way of playing has never been clearly identifiable with a particular jazz style such as bebop, which many of the players who have followed the chronological pathway through jazz embraced. Rather, Gould suggests this 'neglect' of bebop (he did not connect musically with it) has resulted in playing that at times looks more to his classical music training than to the traditional (modern) jazz language, from which he also

draws. This can emerge (at times covertly and at other times more obviously) in his approach to melody, harmony and rhythm; melodic influences from Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov, harmony from Mahler, Richard Strauss, Ravel, Debussy and Shostakovich, and rhythm from Stravinsky and Messiaen. He also asserts that concern for form and musical logic comes from his classical training.⁴

Drummer Tony Floyd has also had an eclectic training and professional life in music. He is likely also to take unexpected turns in performance, much the same way as Haywood. Further, one might hear Floyd and Gould embark on Stravinsky-type rhythms, from *The Rite of Spring* for example. Floyd has played at the highest level in many types of music including jazz, 20th century classical, pop and rock music, the latter at times with the author. Floyd has played with pop/rock groups including *Men at Work*, *The Black Sorrows*, *Things of Stone and Wood*, and pop singers including Missy Higgins; her style including blues, world and funk-type music. All these influences have had an impact on the 'open-minded' approach to improvisation that he brings to the ensemble.

Consequently as the saxophonist in the quartet, I am constantly challenged by the unexpected. This makes for spontaneity in music making that sometimes, admittedly, does not quite work. However, because of the vast experience of the players both separately as individuals and together in the quartet, 'successes' outweigh 'failures'. Add this to the influences of other players and music cited in the following chapters, it makes for a performance environment that demands constant development in aural comprehension and an acute alertness to what might happen at any given moment.

Live Recording

Recording live in a 'concert' situation has many benefits and can often produce a different musical result than a studio recording; arguably, live performances often produce more exciting and adventurous results. The aim in the Quartet's live

⁴ Members of the quartet have for years engaged in conversations about music, music making and indeed life generally.

recording was to reproduce the sound of the group in the identifiable acoustic space of Bennetts Lane Jazz Club (with its low ceilings and carpeted floors), with minimal mixing and editing. The club's space and size is ideal for intimate music making, with a policy of 'silence' in the audience during performances.

Live recordings need little if any post -production.⁵ As a consequence the sound of the saxophone - its particular quality - the individual approach to breathing, deliberate moments of distortion, harmonics, and the sounds of keypads on the instrument were not manipulated in the 'tidying up' process common in a studio. It will be shown that variation in tone colour has an important bearing on many other factors in my performances.

⁵ Limited editing is possible when 'spill' of sound into various microphones occurs.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Research in music has historically been the domain of musicologists and ethnomusicologists who write on social, historical, ethnographic issues, and analysis and observation on pre-composed material. Self-reflective, practice-based research, especially in the art of jazz and improvisation is relatively new and consequently, literature on the topic is comparatively sparse. However, this area of research is legitimised by Bolton (2001) when she argues that reflective practice in performance is most revealing when one becomes immersed in the action of performance as against reading or writing about it (p.xiv).

Reflective Practice

While the literature on reflective practice in jazz performance is to date limited, there is much interest in this mode of research in the other creative arts. Smith and Dean address its importance in their text 'Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts' (2009), believing that over the last two decades, there have been significant developments in research into creative practice in academia, and interest is growing rapidly. Practice-based research (practice-led) is helping facilitate further understanding of the performance process and in turn is promoting scholarly research in the field⁶.

Smith and Dean state also that the conventional definition of research is "... a process that generates knowledge..." (p.3). Barrett and Bolt (2010) argue that

⁶ There are a number of interrelated terms being currently proffered: practice-based research, performance-based research, practice-led research, research-based practice, research-led performance, performative research. The decision to use the term 'practice-based' was made as it best suits the intent and content of this exegesis. It is supported by Candlin (2000) who argues that practice-based doctorates not only advanced knowledge by means of practice but also make a contribution to the field which demonstrates characteristics of originality, mastery and scholarly analysis as a form of research and practice.

research in the creative arts is informed by subjective, emergent and interdisciplinary factors. These, along with the statement below are the foundation upon which this exegesis is based.

“Creative arts research is often motivated by emotional, personal and subjective concerns, it operates not only on the basis of explicit and exact knowledge, but also that of tacit knowledge.” (p.4)

Donald Schön (1983) adds another dimension, suggesting that the (potential) dilemma for research in this area lies in the notion that practitioners regard their “kind of knowledge” as “indescribable”. He argues that such attitudes “... have contributed to a widening rift between the universities and the profession, research and practice, thought and action,” and that they “... feed into the university’s familiar dichotomy between the ‘hard’ knowledge of science and scholarship and the ‘soft’ knowledge of artistry and unvarnished opinion.” Schön then asks the question that is the predicament of most performance based academics working in institutions: “How is professional knowing like and unlike the kinds of knowledge presented in academic textbooks, scientific papers and learned journals?” (p.viii)

The findings in this research help to answer this important question in which the knowledge gained by self-enquiry into the art of improvisation, which by nature is subjective and ‘in the moment’, is not knowledge acquired from the written word, but by the act itself.

Practice-based Research

While projects in practice-based research in jazz/improvisation and composition have been comparatively few, one notable example is the Australian musician Peter Knight’s auto-ethnographic research (Doctor of Musical Arts in 2010, Queensland Conservatorium - Griffith University) in which he examines his original compositions, performance and processes. While informative, my research differs significantly as its focus is on the act of spontaneous performance and less on placing the music in an auto-ethnographical context.

Other examples in Australia of performance-based research in jazz include Christopher Martin's PhD exegesis: *A radical reconsideration of serialism and chord stranding, applied to a personal jazz style* (2008). The fundamental direction of his research relates to serialism as applied to pre-learned and stylistically identifiable jazz language. While Martin examines his own playing and the degrees of tradition as distinct from innovation, he is investigating and applying specifically a compositional technique that originated in the second Viennese school associated with Schönberg. In the performances examined in this exegesis no specific system or method of playing was consciously adopted. Rather, the research reveals not one 'system', but numerous musical influences, both conscious and sub-conscious - inevitable in the aural experience - which in the process served to highlight perceived idiosyncratic elements.

Analysis

Since the mid 1970's, there has been an abundance of pedagogical books written on jazz performance/improvisation, including those by American jazz educators Jamey Aebersold, David Baker, Jerry Coker, Jerry Bergonzi, Mark Levine and Marc Boling. All offer various systematic approaches for gaining skills in arranging, harmony, melody, rhythm, analysis and transcription as they relate to jazz. Some analytical methods (Baker 1988) are limited to specific areas of music; chord/scale relationships, modal playing, formulas and patterns for jazz. Some methods of jazz analysis are more 'general' in approach (Gridley 2009) or focus on formulaic material, with the notion of jazz playing being confined to a 'style of the times' (Coker, Baker, Bergonzi, Aebersold).

Barry Kenny (1999) situates comprehensively the historical development of jazz analysis and observes "Jazz analytic theory is a comparatively recent phenomenon, with its roots in early analytical texts by Sargeant (1938), Hodeir (1956) and Schuller (1958)" (1999: p.57). Other methods of analysis were developed by Smith (1983), Berliner (1994), Westendorf (1994), Birkett (1995), and Duke (1996). Overviews of analytical literature have been written by Potter (1992) and Martin (1996).

Kenny (1999) identifies four areas of jazz analysis: history, criticism, pedagogy and performance analysis. He contends that jazz is largely “... a form of spontaneous composition, and notions of performance practice (i.e. pedagogy) cannot be easily separated from the theory that assists with its creation” (p.56). He asserts that jazz history, criticism and pedagogy have on the whole neglected the process of jazz performance and the “... perceptual experience of jazz” (p.56). It is a view that reinforces the importance of practice-based research.

Within the context of performance analysis specific to jazz improvisation, Kenny identifies five areas under what he labels “theoretical analysis” (p.58), citing leaders of research in these areas:

- Chord-scale Theory – Mehegan (1959), Birkett (1995)
- Formulaic Analysis – Owens (1997), Sarath (1996), Kernfeld (1983), Monson (1997)
- Motivic Analysis - Schuller (1958), Jost (1975), Cogswell (1998)
- Pitch Class Set Analysis – Block (1997)
- Schenkerian Analysis – Stewart (1973), Gilbert (1997), Larson (1998)

Steve Larson⁷ (2009) developed a method of analysing jazz composition and transcriptions adopting the principles of Heinrich Schenker but modifying them to embrace rhythm and harmony as they relate specifically to jazz. Martin (2001) uses some of the principals of Schenkerian Analysis to identify tonal style harmonic function. Martin’s hierarchical approach identifies dissonance and consonance in relation to underlying harmonic changes. However, the Schenkerian method has particular limitations when dealing with postmodern approaches that move from clear tonality and rhythmic stability to less ‘stable’ musical languages. A modification of the Schenkerian method is used briefly in this exegesis in the deconstruction of one complex solo improvisation in order to make clear the essence of a melodic statement.

⁷ Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach (Harmonologia: Studies in Music Theory) - Steve Larson

Berliner's (1994) approach to analysis reflects his understanding of improvisation by identifying key elements that "...contribute to formulating ideas logically, cogently and expressively" (p.492). It is a broad, holistic investigation of many elements of jazz – historical, composition, arranging, improvisatory concepts, and ensemble interaction. The final chapter of the book contains 251 pages of analysis that gives a broad overview of jazz language played up until the 1960s. Berliner's approach is informative in its articulation of examples, annotations and explanations. However, while all these texts have their relevance in the study of jazz, practice-based research demands a more personal approach.

Discography

In addition to literature on musical improvisation another important conduit to gaining knowledge and practical skills is a personal network of connectivity to the field that includes a library of live and recorded performances. In this exegesis both surface and deep influences are identified and discussed, as well as what is argued to be idiosyncratic elements in my performances. Ultimately however, it is the aural experience that is the primary source of this research, under-pinned by the written word and musical notation.

Chapter 2

Methodology

The principle methodology used in this exegesis is a modification of Jan La Rue's *Guidelines for Style Analysis* (1992). Although the focus in his text is on classical music repertoire, it was felt that his 'three level' approach taken towards analysis was highly suitable for examining in detail the transcribed, improvised performances presented here, and the 'levels' allowing for a macro (large), medium and micro (small) view of the music.

While La Rue's approach is comprehensive a number of other methods are also referred to as they relate specifically to jazz. They include Berliner's broad stylistic approach, Martin's principals of identifying formula's and motives and Larson's (Schenkerian) approach to identify tonal, style, and harmonic function.

Both quantitative and qualitative aspects are important in this study. Brewster (2009) argues that these are the two models that "dominate scholarly research" (p.126), describing quantitative research as a source for measuring data, whilst qualitative research "...emphasises 'written outcomes' and disseminates research results in a 'discursive prose'" (Hasemen, 2006: p.99 in Brewster p.126). Qualitative research is what Felps, Ferrara and Goolsby (1993) describe as having it's "...roots in the ethnographic research designs developed by anthropologists and sociologists" (p.148) adding that "...qualitative research is known by many names, including ethnographic, naturalistic, subjective and post-positivistic." In a research setting, these observations are sourced by "...participant observation and interview...which are then studied critically in order to uncover patterns or themes that are congruent to the actual living context from which extrapolated" (p.148).

While this research does not involve interviews, 'participant observation' is at the centre of this inquiry. The approach to the qualitative aspect is summed up succinctly and appropriately by the following:

"Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials-case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives." K. Denzin, Y. Lincoln (1998 p.3)

More recently, a new model of practice-based research has emerged, called 'performative research'. It is described as:

"... documentation of the process of preparing and developing skills for the performance which ... sees the material outcomes of practice as all-important representations of research findings in their own right." Haseman (2006 p.80)

Fundamentally then, performative research methodology constitutes the preparation and the act of performance, described further as:

"... a radical and bold innovation, as it not only affirms the primacy of practice in the research process, but it proclaims that the techniques and tools used by the practitioner can stand as research methods in their own right. This places considerable power to the practice-led researcher." (Haseman p.151, Chapter 11 in *Practice as research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. Barret/Bolt 2010)

While performative research is mentioned here as acknowledgment to a third 'stream', in scholarly investigation, it is felt that in view of the inclusion in this project of background autobiographical material directly relevant to current performance practice, the examination of transcribed improvisations, the 'primacy

of practice' to which Haseman refers is adequately (comprehensively) covered under the heading of 'qualitative.'

Analytical Methodology

The adoption of La Rue's methodology for analysis, although modified to accommodate the limitations in size of this exegesis, is ideal here for a number of reasons. First, it suits the critical evaluation of the good and not so good aspects of performance. Second, it is useful in planning effective practice regimes. Third, it foregrounds the importance of self-reflective research.

Within the three overriding parameters of the methodology: background, observation and evaluation, there are a number of components that have been modified to suit this study:

- **Background:** establishes a frame of reference and the reasons for choice of analytical material.
- **Observation:** based on three levels of analysis: Large, Medium and Small (components.) All three embrace the elements of sound, harmony, melody, rhythm, growth and style
- **Evaluation:** examines the balance between pre learnt and new material. (This relates to La Rue's "balance of unity and variety" and "richness of originality and imagination." (La Rue, 1980: p.3)

Key Terms

Spontaneity (Moment to Moment)

The notion of spontaneity is a complex issue and central to the jazz improvisational aesthetic. It requires qualification in terms of the context in which it is used in this research.

Broad definitions include: '...a natural impulse or tendency; without effort or premeditation; natural and unconstrained; unplanned or given to acting upon sudden impulses.' - Oxford Dictionaries Online.

Nachmanovitch (1990) describes the act of improvisation, as "spontaneous creativity" and "moment to moment creativity" (p.5). Monson (1996) cites bassist Cecil McBee, as saying, "You're not going to play what you practiced... something else is going to happen" (p.84). However, to assert rather simplistically, that an improviser is not going to play what has been practiced needs qualification. It is clear from personal experience and the analysis of improvisations herein that, inevitably, there is a degree of influence coming from practiced materials. This is related in part to motor memory, in part to what has been heard and assimilated over time - consciously and subconsciously - and in part to one's musical background generally.

In this study, the word spontaneous will apply to what is perceived to be genuinely 'in the moment' as distinct from pre-conceived material that inevitably includes identifiable melodic formulas, assimilated melodic and rhythmic clichés and learnt scales and patterns.

Employing learnt formulas is considered a substantially different act to spontaneous improvisation, even though in the act they both can be either 'conscious' or 'sub-conscious'. Nonetheless, as Martin (2001) asserts, learnt formulas are an inherent element of music performance as they:

“... can be traced from soloist to soloist and effectively positions the player within sub-styles and genres of the jazz tradition ... it is in this sense that a player’s formulas are a library created as an artistic statement, a personal signature within a chosen stylistic tradition.” (p.116)

Although this remains a legitimate view, the diversification of styles in improvisation – including jazz – suggests that the idea of playing “within a chosen stylistic tradition” is becoming increasingly less relevant for many improvisers. As can be seen in the following comment, the question of ‘conscious’ and ‘subconscious’ adds another dimension to the complexity of this issue.

“During a performance, musicians move along a continuum between two poles: at one extreme, they consciously direct the solo, and at the other, they play at a ‘heightened state of consciousness’ in which the conscious mind seems removed from the process, and the solo seems to come from a deeper place.” (Sawyer 2002: p.256)

To varying degrees these complementary views continue to inform my current practice strategies and ways of thinking, teaching and playing music. In more practical terms, analysis and observations of performance is undertaken predominantly in order for improvisers to develop and build a vocabulary and to study, listen and learn from the primary source – the music itself.

It is a view supported by Sawyer (1992) and Pressing (1988) who agree that most analysis for the improvising musician is done after the performance in the form of listening to recordings of one’s own performance and adopting a systematic and pedagogical approach to analysis. Sawyer uses the term ‘conscious reflection’ (p.254); in other words, a personal approach to practiced-based research. He also uses the term ideation to describe the “... subconscious process during which ideas are generated.” (1992 p.257) This is particularly relevant to spontaneous improvisation.

The duality of balancing creativity with known and learnt knowledge in improvisation is an inherent aim of jazz improvisers. Sawyer (1992) believes that there is an important link between the learning of a formulaic approach of patterns and structures, and the intersection with the creative process in the improvisational process (p.261). The development of these skill-sets is what Pressing describes as cognitive formulation (Pressing, 1987 p.66). The basis of cognitive formulation is developed by a pedagogical approach where craft is learnt incorporating analysis and analytical theory (Martin 1996a p.2). Analytical theory can occur after the act of performance and findings can be adopted to further develop skills; an important part of a reflective practice model.

These ‘theories’ on spontaneity (and there are others) serve to highlight the complexity of the issue, but for the purposes of this research identifying learnt as distinct from what is perceived to be ‘new’ and ‘in the moment’ material connects directly with the research question: How does practice-based research lead to a greater understanding and development of the art of musical improvisation in a jazz context?

Tension and Release

Tension and release in the music can be created through dynamics, variations in sound quality (including distortion of tone), manipulations in rhythm and melodic contour, and through harmony. Tension and release are fundamental to the internal structure and direction of performances that are cadence driven. Variation in tone colour and sound generally play an important part in identifying individualistic characteristics of all performers, and it will be shown that both can play a part in the degree and placement of tension and release in spontaneous improvisation.

Gesture

There are multiple definitions of the term, musical and non-musical; physical and non-physical. Whiteoak (1999) defines gesture in the context of improvisation as being encoded in “improvisatory behavior” that differs according to time, place and social context (p.xix). Musical gestures are particularly important in improvisatory

music, as non-verbal communications between players and between player and listeners are often reinforced by bodily performance gestures. However in this research the term 'gesture' is confined to a specific aspect of improvisatory performance, namely that of spontaneously creating expressive and communicative musical gestures, such as very distinctively contoured and accented phases that are momentarily freed from the underlying polyrhythmic structure occurring in a jazz ensemble.

Idiosyncrasy

In music, the antithesis to idiosyncratic performance is the adoption of a style of playing what is clearly an imitation of someone else's performance. That is, elements which are peculiar (if not unique) to an individual. The term 'idiosyncratic' is used in this research as the commonly understood sense of behaviour - in this case, creative improvisatory performance behaviour - that is seemingly unique to or markedly a characteristic of a particular individual, as opposed to common behaviour, such as the widely adopted practice of improvising in ways that simply seek to reproduce the styles and sounds of particular artists of repute. This research seeks to identify these performance traits.

The following chapter discusses past experiences, musical and otherwise that have led to my current performance practices and approaches to the art of improvisation. These experiences, directly and indirectly were active agents in the definition of my musical identity.

Chapter 3

Early Influences and Experiences

Various and diverse past experiences continue to influence my current performance practice and what I continue to strive for. I have been influenced also by a wide cross section of musicians, collaborators, colleagues in performance, and others in the teaching profession, who offer more than musical advice; those who put the art and especially the art of improvisation into a life perspective. For artists, particularly improvisers, conversations and contemplation are as important as the formal learning process.

Listening to music - consciously and sub-consciously - is and has been the most important factor in learning to play music. Historically, my practice has embraced the development of skills in instrumental sound production, rhythm and how it has aligned with jazz based music, harmony, and other techniques specific to improvised musics. Training in classical music gave me an awareness of refinement in tone quality, and a sense for musical phrasing that enhances expressive and gestural aspects of performance. Training in both genres provided a broad, comprehensive education, aspects of which filter through, inevitably, to performance practice. All these factors provide a background and context for the analyses, observations, and performance outcomes discussed in chapters that follow.

In the early years of my musical tuition, teachers documented one to one lessons, and from the information therein I established effective practice schedules. As a consequence, in later years I documented elements of my own practice routines, which helped to develop strategies for achieving progress, and allowed regular self-reflection and evaluation in performance. Since then I have adopted this approach in my own teaching of others.

The practice of documenting lessons, and most public performances through recordings has continued since the early 1990s. Journal entries are mainly data-based with the focus on specific detail: warm-up regimes, technical work and repertoire.

This is not to suggest practice was purely technical without any consideration for musicality, but the principle aim while practicing ‘in the moment’, was to focus on specific pre-determined elements. I have always believed in the affirmation ‘love every note’; meaning that, whether in practice or performance the aim is to be alert to each musical utterance. Despite a background of jazz playing (albeit one amongst a number of musical genre’s in my learning and training) creative freedom has always been more important than reproducing what Peter Knight describes as “... the sounds of idiomatic American jazz” (2010 p53). I developed as a musician who played and loved the jazz idiom not because it was an American tradition but for its enticing improvisatory and rhythmic ingredients. And although I regard myself first and foremost as a jazz musician, embracing music from different cultures is now part of most creative musicians’ philosophy and is evidenced in my recorded works, specifically in the piece *Charakeshi*, analysed in chapter 23.

By way of national context it should be acknowledged that anecdotally at least, in the first half of the twentieth century, Australian jazz musicians were open to influences from overseas, imitating the masters when first exposed to jazz music. However since the 1950’s jazz musicians in Australia began gradually developing their own identity - personally, culturally and artistically. It is within the latter tradition that my own development occurred.

Early Musical Education

Musical, cultural and social influences, past and present, continue to inform my performances. A number of the most memorable experiences from the past are worth mentioning.

First memories of music were of my grandmother's operatic voice and her teaching my older sister to sing. Being the matriarch of the family, she encouraged her grandchildren to play a musical instrument or sing. My father, a statistician/actuary, was passionate about music, and a disciplinarian. He was a major influence with regard to my practice regime and in my development as a musician.

The discipline in practice started at an early stage, beginning on clarinet at age eight, saxophone at eleven, and flute at thirteen. There was the constant sound of music in our house, with my four sisters playing piano and several different woodwind instruments: clarinet, saxophone, oboe and flute, be it someone practicing, or music permeating from the record player. It was an environment where subconscious aural training was ever-present. From age 9 to 17, I was woken at 5.30am to practice for at least 1 hour before school. I also practiced regularly during lunchtime and after school for 2 – 3 hours a day.

Influences – Classical Training

My musical schooling was mostly classically based, in the process undertaking AMEB examinations and competitions.⁸ The discipline of developing musical skills and setting goals started at this early age and to the present day, careful planning, time management and goal setting remains important.

Classical training involved learning a considerable amount of solo repertoire, learning to sight-read music, developing technical expertise and concepts of sound production, and setting goals. The clarinet repertoire included the music of Mozart, Weber, Brahms, and 20th century composers Stravinsky, Poulenc and Copeland.⁹

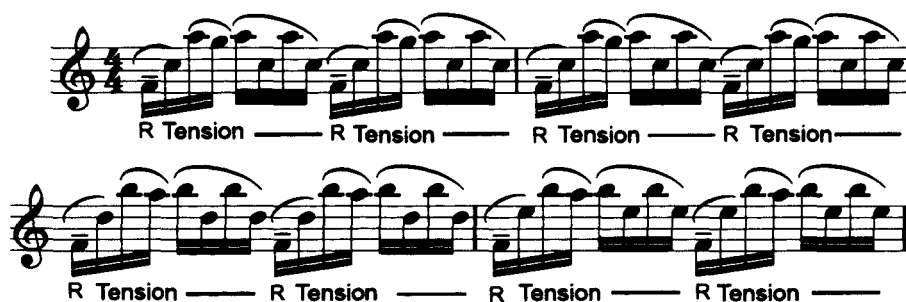
⁸ Australian Music Examinations Board was (and remains) the major organisation in Australia where music students can sit graded music examinations.

⁹ I cannot recall playing any Australian compositions, and jazz or improvised music was not part of the AMEB curriculum or part of the music competition circuit generally. There was little cultural diversity in repertoire prescribed in AMEB syllabuses. Since that time there has been minimal inclusion of Australian music.

In the mid 1970s I undertook lessons with distinguished clarinet teacher Mark Caldwell. Caldwell's main focus was sound quality and production. As a result, long notes were practiced for over one hour per day for the first six months of lessons. This disciplined time spent on sound production and breathing techniques was one of the most productive periods of my early training. To this day I regard the (arguably) distinctive quality of sound as an identifying feature in my playing.

By age fifteen, I was performing concertos for alto saxophone by Ibert and Glazunov, works by Hindemith, Debussy, Ravel, and on tenor and soprano saxophones the cello suites of J. S. Bach. All this helped set strong foundations in tone production; in developing a sense for musical dynamics, the shaping and structure of melodic lines and the overall formal structure of pieces. A noticeable improvement in technical finesse came through practicing cello suites by J. S. Bach. This was important in helping to negotiate large intervals smoothly, and developing the ability to phrase logically and musically. They were also helpful in judging the finer detail of dynamics and note lengths in places of tension and release within both short and longer musical statements. (Figure 3.1)

Figure 3. 1 J.S. Bach's *Cello Suites* in A minor (First 4 bars)



In 1978 at the age of 16, I was accepted into the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (a specialist music school) as a clarinet student, learning from renowned classical clarinet teacher Isabel Carter. She taught me the fundamentals of classical phrasing, the importance of sound and how to use it to shape phrases; in a sense, to create tension and release through sound. Repertoire included Mozart's

Clarinet Concerto (A major K.622). Much time in lessons focused on the shaping of phrases, specifically in the 1st movement, essentially to give each phrase momentum, and then release at the appropriate time. Her emphasis on the lyrical and aesthetic beauty of *each* note remains a strong memory. For example in the opening bar of the 1st movement, Carter focused on achieving clarity in producing a beautiful first note (Fig 3.3). The second important element was the shaping of phrases through dynamics. The 1st note (G) had a slight crescendo to the E, which had to be very lightly tongued. The crescendo continued to the A in bar 2. From the A descending to the E was a decrescendo – the final E in the bar decrescendo to silence, within the exact timing of 1 quarter note. This was ‘finishing a phrase’, the beauty of the phrase ending depending on how tension and release within the phrase was judged. Carter insisted that to play Mozart one had to be exact with phrasing, sound, intonation, time (subdivision) and articulation; a disciplinary approach that serves creative music-making well.

Figure 3.3 Mozart *Clarinet Concerto*. Bars 1 - 8



Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet* (1918) was also important in broadening my knowledge and performance capabilities. The work presented new challenges in its angular, non-diatonic linear movements and unbarred melodies of tonal and rhythmic tension. Interestingly, this work was Stravinsky's 'interpretation' of a jazz style composition; an interpretation that only appears to be valid in terms of its rhythmic syncopation.

The unbarred 'free time' element was a musical revelation, as, up until this point I had played only works with time signatures and a constant pulse. Playing this style of music opened my ears to 20th century classical repertoire, and so to new concepts and pathways.

The opening phrase of the second movement (Fig 3.2) starts with a flurry of notes that does not have a set pulse. The 2nd phrase is the release point, again with no adherence to the underlying pulse, but with a shape and gestural quality that suggests spontaneity. (Fig 3.2) The unbarred phrasing was helpful in appreciating the possibilities in jazz improvisation for malleability in time feel.

Figure 3.2 *Three pieces for Clarinet*, Opening phrase (Mov2)



Hearing the sound of modes in Debussy, and the odd time signatures and dissonances of Hindemith and Stravinsky at an early age was a factor in my acceptance of the modern jazz sound - especially to 'free' music of the 1960s and beyond. These influences continue to have an impact on my performance.

Although discussed only briefly here, the skill-sets vital to classical repertoire are relevant to much contemporary art music¹⁰. They invite a mind-set where detail is paramount. In bringing these skills to improvised music, style is not necessary an

¹⁰ In the context of this research the term 'art music' is meant to embrace both classical and jazz (improvised) music, as distinct from pop (commercial) music and folk music. Robert Hughes in his *Shock of the New* (1980 p325) might have been referring to music and not the visual arts when he argues that, unlike works of mass production, (read commercial music) works of art " ...do not force meanings on their audience; meaning emerges, adds up, unfold from their imagine centres, ..." takes one through the process of discovering meaning.

issue, nor are note choices, rather, they offer ideas for phrasing, dynamics and expression, all of which cross musical and cultural boundaries.

Influences – Jazz

As with all musicians, influences from the past are inevitable. Much has been written about the artists singled out below, but their playing is discussed here only as it relates directly to the transcribed performances and recordings submitted as source material in this exegesis.

My first formal education in jazz was at age 15 (1977), when I attended improvisation classes at Melbourne University under the tutorage of legendary Australian jazz pianist Tony Gould. It was the beginning of conscious practice of skill-sets directly associated with jazz improvisation; skill-sets comprising of two factors: first, conscious ideas that promote sub-conscious creativity and second, development of a distinctive voice. The classes with Gould inspired ongoing enquiry into the jazz tradition and in doing so, prompted an appreciation of renowned saxophonist Charlie Parker.

In the mid 1970s, I discovered the ABC¹¹ radio jazz program ‘Music to Midnight’; one of the few broadcasters in Australia to play jazz at the time. Announcer Ralph Rickman programmed a diversity of styles, but importantly the jazz classics were played and placed into historical context. It was an important part of my learning as it provided an historical and stylistic understanding of the genre. It was also regular ‘training’ in aural comprehension.

In 1980, I began studying at the Victorian College of the Arts – tertiary Music school (VCA). It was the inaugural year of what was to become one of the leading institutions in Australia for improvisers. The philosophy of the VCA improvisation

¹¹ ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) is Australia’s national public broadcaster.

department (known initially as a jazz department) was to develop 'ones own voice'. Brian Brown¹² was the head of the improvisation department with staff including pianists Bob Sedergreen¹³ and Tony Gould.

Most classes were based on the 'creative process' with a focus on free improvisation. It has had a lasting impact on my approach to performance, when the notion of creating and developing 'new' ideas is a constant pursuit; the musical antithesis of playing learnt 'licks' and formulaic patterns. In retrospect however, I believe I needed a more focused musical education that included the fundamentals of jazz improvisation: voice leading concepts, structured rhythmic strategies, greater understanding of the tradition of jazz and a broader knowledge of improvisational techniques in the jazz genre. Brown insisted that the course was an improvisation course and not specifically a jazz program, hence the focus on developing a 'personal voice'. It was a conceptual way of learning rather than a study of history and styles. In that sense it related more to developments in Europe than traditions in America, with musicians in the former leading in experimental jazz. They included saxophonists Steve Lacey¹⁴ and Evan Parker¹⁵, who were moving away from the American notions of jazz.

The creation of the record label ECM in Europe was a catalyst in its promotion of new, creative music that crossed/blurred the boundaries defined by genre labels. It has had a major impact on the output of creative musicians around the world. As is

¹² Brian Brown (saxophone – flutes) was central to the Avant Garde movement in jazz in Melbourne Australia from the 1960's – 1990's. In 1980 Brown became the inaugural director of the jazz studies program at the Victorian College of the Arts. (Johnston, 1987 p.119-120)

¹³ Bob Sedegreen (piano) was part of the Brian Brown Quintet in the 1970's – '80's. He was a member of the leading Australian Jazz ensemble Onaje and played with international artists: Phil Woods, Richie Cole, Dizzy Gillespie, Milt Jackson, Bobby Shew, David Baker and Mel Lewis. (Johnston, 1987 p.251 -152)

¹⁴ American born saxophonist, Lacey was a member of the avant-garde movement in New York playing with Cecil Taylor and Don Cherry before moving to live in Europe in 1967 and focusing on a solo career. (Kernfeld, 1988 Vol 2, p2)

¹⁵ Evan Parker (English) "...is one of the most innovative and virtuoso saxophonists in Europe". (Kernfeld, 1988 Vol 2, p 291)

the case elsewhere, the gradual expansion of knowledge and freedom of expression fostered in Europe is still evident in Australia.

Notwithstanding the 'freedom' encouraged in my (VCA) education in the 1980s, (for the first time in my musical life) I was encouraged by teacher John Barrett to transcribe jazz solos as part of my practice schedule. Using this information I embraced the jazz tradition in my improvisations. My first transcription was of Charlie Parker's solo on *Now's the Time*: memorising it and subsequently quoting from it in performance classes. I was told that this was not 'my voice' and to think about my direction as an improvising musician. Still, I continued to transcribe but without a definite strategy of what it would give to my playing. I would learn this later whilst studying with distinguished American saxophonist and jazz educator, Dave Liebman.

The idea in transcribing was not to learn melodic lines of great jazz musicians and replicate them verbatim in my improvisations but rather to learn new 'sounds' and manipulate them in the spontaneous process.

Influential Figures

In studying jazz a number of artists were prominent in my learning. This came through transcribing solos and listening intently to their recorded improvised solos. The following players have been influential in musical instruction/advice and inspiration.

Charlie Parker (1920 - 1955)

Charlie Parker has been highly influential through the display of an astonishing virtuosity, brightness and fullness of sound, minimal use of vibrato, and overall intensity. I would sing and play along with Parker's solos, enthralled and immersed in the intensity of his playing.

Through analysis I discovered how Parker created tension and release in long

phrases: typically, ascending ½ step (H) to chord tones, descending whole-step (W) to chord tones, Maj 3rd to b9 resolving to the tonic, and the use triplets to create momentum¹⁶ (Figure 3.4). This melodic/harmonic and rhythmic approach is useful as a concept, rather than ‘borrowing’ precisely what seems to be, on the surface of a transcribed notated score, a patternistic, formulaic approach. Further, it helped make connections between tension and release, voice leading and the shaping and resolution of phrases.

Figure 3.4 *Moose the Mooche*, 1946 Charlie Parker’s improvisation. Bars 1 – 8

The musical notation shows Charlie Parker's improvisation for bars 1-8 of 'Moose the Mooche'. The staff is in treble clef. Above the staff, a 'Tension' bar with an arrow points right. Below the staff, a 'Release' bar with an arrow points right. Chords are indicated above the staff: C, D-7, G7, E-7, A7, D-, G7, C, F, F-7, C. Below the staff, note positions are indicated with letters (H for half-step, W for whole-step) and numbers (1-9). A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' over the notes. The final chord is labeled 'Major Pentonic'.

John Coltrane (1926 – 1967)

I discovered the music of John Coltrane at age fifteen, and was inspired by his passion, spirituality and intensity. At that time I had limited understanding of what he was playing harmonically or how he interacted with his colleagues - McCoy Tyner (Piano), Jimmy Garrison (Bass) and Elvin Jones (Drums), or how he developed what George Lewis (2008) describes as an understanding of “their cultural and aesthetic formation” (p.x). Influences of Coltrane’s playing (see figures below) are identified clearly in transcriptions of performances cited in Chapter 4, most notably the use of motivic cells and their development. Further, similarities in tone quality can be heard in recordings submitted in this research, a consequence of listening extensively and regularly to Coltrane’s performances.

¹⁶ (Fig 3.4) The numbers represent the note position within the chord name.

Coltrane's early and middle career favoured a motivic approach to improvisation. His composition *Giant Steps* is a case in point and a useful 'tool' in understanding (and incorporating into performance) his ways of outlining functional chord structures through melodic invention. The following extract of his spontaneous improvisation is an excellent example.

Figure 3.5 - First 8 bars of John Coltrane's solo *Giant Steps* (Take 5)

Figure 3.5 illustrates the first 8 bars of John Coltrane's solo in *Giant Steps*. The notation shows two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains the first four bars, and the second staff contains the last four bars. Chord symbols are written above the notes: $Ebm7$, $Ab7$, $Db7$, $E7$, $A\text{maj}7$, $C7$, $F\text{maj}7$ in the first staff, and $Bm7$, $E7$, $A\text{maj}7$, $C7$, $F\text{maj}7$, $Ab7$, $Db\text{maj}7$ in the second staff. Brackets below the notes group them into specific improvisational concepts: Eb -7 Chord-tones, Db Maj Triad, E - Pentatonic, A Maj Triad, G - Pentatonic, F Major Scale for the first staff; and B -7 Chord-tones, Motive (Parker), A Maj Triad, E - Pentatonic, F Maj Pentatonic for the second staff.

Figure 3.5 illustrates the simple outlining of motives played over a ii V I chord sequence. Interesting too is the internal make up - the note choices - within the motives. Part of my practice regime was to select these short motivic statements and play them in all twelve keys; the purpose being to consolidate a basis for playing successfully through chord progressions common in jazz repertoire (Figures 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9). The chord progression of *Giant Steps* was also a catalyst in learning how to utilise chord substitutions in improvisation. Note the variation between the use of chord-tone in the triads, the added 9ths and in figure 3.9 the use of a pentatonic mode.

Figure 3.6 - *Giant Steps* - Motive 1

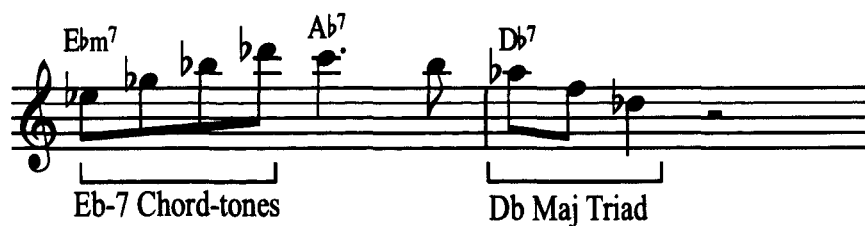


Figure 3.7 - *Giant Steps* - Motive 2

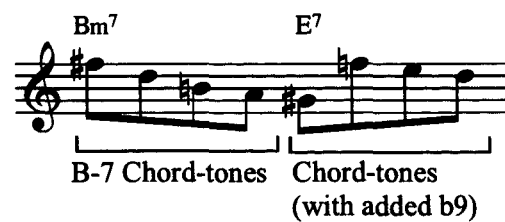


Figure 3.8 - *Giant Steps* - Motive 3

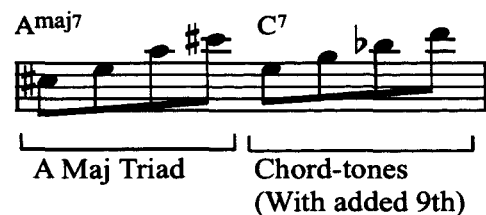
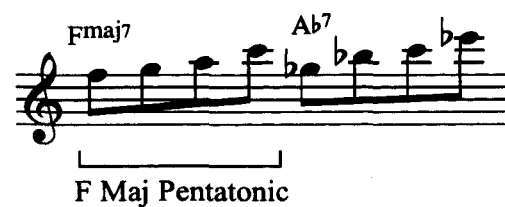


Figure 3.9 - *Giant Steps* - Motive 4



Over time, these 'formulas' became a 'jumping off' point that led me to a more organic and personal approach to improvisation.

In addition to the use of pentatonic scales and motives in Giant Steps, Coltrane used what is known as 'sheets of sound' that can be described as variations to the main melodic material, and the development rather than repetition of motivic cells.

(Figure 3.10)

Figure 3.10– John Coltrane – *Acknowledgement* – from the CD: *A Love Supreme*

The musical score for John Coltrane's 'Acknowledgement' from the album 'A Love Supreme' is presented in four staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The score is divided into five sections, each labeled with a bracket and a title:

- Motive 1:** The first staff shows the initial motive, starting with a whole rest followed by a half note B-flat, then a quarter note A, and a half note G. The motive is then repeated with various ornaments and grace notes.
- Motive 1 Variation 1:** The second staff shows the first variation, which is a more complex, flowing line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- Motive 1 Variation 2:** The third staff shows the second variation, which is a more complex, flowing line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- Motive 1 Variation 3:** The fourth staff shows the third variation, which is a more complex, flowing line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- Motive 1 Variation 4:** The fifth staff shows the fourth variation, which is a more complex, flowing line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- Motive 1 Variation 5:** The sixth staff shows the fifth variation, which is a more complex, flowing line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

The score is written in treble clef and includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and accidentals. The variations are marked with '3' below the staff, indicating triplet rhythms.

In retrospect, listening and playing along to the albums *Crescent* (1964) and *A Love Supreme* (1964) were most influential.

Miles Davis (1926 – 1991)

Miles Davis's eloquent and understated phrasing, and use of space remains a powerful influence, as does his innovatory drive for change in his musical concepts generally; apparent from the 1950's to the 1980s. The seminal recording *Kind of Blue* was a starting point to what became for me an education in composition and

improvisation. Performances over ballads, for example *Summertime*¹⁷ and *Old Folks*,¹⁸ and CDs such as *Live at the Plugged Nichol* and *Bitches Brew* have made a lasting impression.

To grasp Davis' inventive genius it is necessary at times to put aside the idea of musical rules, of patterns and stylistic practices. It is not individual notes so much as the shape and length of phrases, the space (silence) between them, and their resolution that makes his music memorable, and inspiring. Fundamentally then, it is Miles Davis's conceptual approach to improvisation as much as his technique that continues to be influential.

Sonny Stitt (1924 -1982)

Sonny Stitt's performance on the Dizzy Gillespie composition, *Eternal Triangle* (from the CD – *Sonny Side of the Street*) is an example of a finely executed improvisation over 'rhythm changes'.¹⁹ The melodic ideas are concise, harmonically logical and yet characteristic of the player. A significant feature of Stitt's performance (and an influence on my playing) is the evenness of the 8th note time feel. Stitt plays without excessive (triplet) swing feel and more of a 'straight' 8th note approach that connects with rest of the ensemble, especially with the drummer's time feel on ride cymbal. The playing is formulaic (cell-like) but without excessive repetition.

Stitt's idiosyncratic (bebop) style consists of 3 main elements: Figure 3.11

1. Melodic formulas outlining the chord-tones within the bebop language (Bars 17,18, 28, 30 and 31.
2. Chord-scale approach based on the dominant Bebop scale and mixolydian mode (Bars 18 and 28)
3. Bebop language resembling Charlie Parker's approach: Semitone resolving up to a chord-tone, whole- tone resolving down to a chord-tone, and the use of b9's and #9s (Bars 17, 18, 19, 25,27, 28 and 31.)

¹⁷ From the record *Porgy and Bess* – Track 5

¹⁸ From the record *Some Day My Prince Will Come* – Track 2

¹⁹ 32 bar form – AABA and harmonically based on the cycle of 4ths - " ... Rhythm changes has been a persuasive vehicle for jazz improvisation for more than 50 years". Martin. H (2001 p.41) They are a common feature in jazz repertoire based on chord movements around the cycle of 4ths – for example vi – ii – V – I.

Figure 3.11 - Sonny Stitt solo, *Eternal Triangle*. Bars 17 – 32

The musical score for Sonny Stitt's solo in *Eternal Triangle* (bars 17-32) is presented in four systems. The first system (bars 17-20) includes the C# minor scale, F# Dominant scale, and two Formula - Motive sections. The second system (bars 21-24) shows the development of the motive with tension notes to the E7, including Bm7, Eb7, Am7, and D7. The third system (bars 25-28) features the G Dominant Bebop scale, Amin (Relative), and Formula - Motive - G7. The fourth system (bars 29-32) includes the G Dominant scale, Formula - Motive, and Formula - Motive. The score is annotated with various musical notations, including scales, motives, and chord changes.

These traits in Stitt's playing differ from Parker in that Stitt focuses more on 8th note-style playing and thus, arguably, did not display the rhythmic complexity or intensity of Parker, despite being a disciple. The 8th note style foreshadows what was to come when the idea of swing in the jazz sense began heading, albeit it slowly, towards a new concept in rhythmic feel; one that saw the rise of more open, expansive playing (including modal concepts) and then to jazz fusion. Bebop was rapidly being confined to an historic style.

The influence of Stitt and his contemporaries was through the gradual stylistic shift away from original concepts of bebop to ways of playing not so easily labelled. Like Parker, his playing was virtuosic, but with a 'new voice' characterised through more idiosyncratic melodic statements, hence adding to improvisatory possibilities for those who followed.

Sonny Rollins (1930 -)

Motivic development is a major feature of Sonny Rollins' playing and is exemplified in the opening 9 bars of his improvisation on *St Thomas*. (Fig 3.12) The simplicity and logic of the improvised melody is an excellent example of what Martin (2001 p.43) describes as 'motivic thrust'; a form of building gradual tension, and in this case, resolution, (release) by playing formulaic lines not associated with the opening motive (bar 10). The strength of this motive is emphasised through repetition. The following bars (Bars 10, 11 and 12) are examples of beautifully constructed voice-leading. (These were transcribed and played in all keys as part of my practice regime.) Significant, too, in Rollins improvisations is the use of extensions of triadic harmony, (9ths, 11ths, 13ths) and tension notes, (b9, #9, #5) in this case over the dominant chords B7 (bar 10) and A7 (bar 12); an indication of a further expansion of bebop language.

Figure 3.12 - Sonny Rollins, *St Thomas*. Bars 1 - 12

1 Opening Motive Development of Motive

5 Development of Motive

9 Development of Motive Formulaic - Motives

9 11 #5 3 5 b9 b7 H 5 3 1 11 9 11 5 b7 13 9 11 #5 #9 b9 7

Rollins' sound is highly idiosyncratic, identifiable in his manipulation of attack on notes by 'scooping,' sliding to pitches, varying his use of articulation (tonguing), space, and utilising these within his unique rhythmic time feel. His use of space is another example of the move away from the rapid and continuous lines in bebop.

Hints of this approach to sound, articulation, and approaches to space and rhythm can be heard in the playing of many jazz musicians who followed. His influence was profound.

Ornette Coleman (1930 -)

Compared to what I had heard previously, on hearing Coleman's playing for the first time (late 1970s) it was difficult to comprehend his musical language and approach generally. The sound of his alto saxophone seemed 'out of tune', and had a 'wildness' in phrasing that, to my ears, seemed undisciplined. After many years of further listening and analysis I began to understand the lyricism and uniqueness of his playing. I also discovered that he had an excellent understanding of harmony and the jazz tradition but pushed the boundaries of performance by manipulating tuning and phrasing, creating his own highly individual way of dealing with tension and release. Further, I learnt from listening to Coleman that he played with uncommon flexibility of time and note choices and the exploration of the extremes of range on the instrument. His flexibility in sound, dynamics, distortion, freedom of phrasing in melody and high level of originality have been major influences. He expanded the notion of spontaneity in improvisation in most facets, leading ultimately to the 'free jazz' movement. He was a leader in the transition from bebop to free jazz notable for its conceptual approach, form and musical language that, for many, including this author, broadened radically the concept of African-American based improvisation.

Jan Garbarek (1947 -)

In the late 1970s I discovered the music of Jan Garbarek. Garbarek was a sideman on many records at that time including those of Keith Jarrett and Brazilian musician Egberto Gismonti²⁰, a number of which have become seminal recordings for the record label ECM²¹. Garbarek studied with George Russell who developed a

²⁰ These records included: *My Song* (1978), *Nude Ants* (1980) and *Folk Songs* (1979).

²¹ ECM (Edition of Contemporary Music) founded in Germany in 1969 is best known for its release of a broad range of genres (jazz and world music) with excellent sound.

harmonic method of improvisation based on a lydian chromatic concept²².

However, Garbarek's influence on my playing is related mainly to sound (tone) and phrasing. Whilst he played tenor and soprano saxophone with jazz players, (notably Jarrett and bassist Charlie Haden) his style was influenced more by Eastern traditions; playing on modes with minimal reference to jazz swing or the bebop tradition. Further, the sound quality of the North Indian oboe (shehnai) is apparent, especially in his use of long, sustained notes, the bending of notes at the top of the (soprano saxophone), range, ornamentation of notes, and his centred, 'sharp' sound. Generally, these characteristics can be heard on the recording *Folk Songs* (1979 -ECM) .

Stan Getz (1927 – 1991)

Getz brought a 'warmth' to the sound quality of (jazz) tenor saxophone that was uncommon in earlier players, and indeed in his contemporaries²³. He had an approach to improvisation that can best be described as 'understatement', where clarity of ideas was rarely obscured by excessive notes. This was an important lesson in the art of structuring an improvisation, where the avoidance of redundancy in note playing - on an instrument that can easily invite excesses - requires control over note choices and the harnessing of ideas. Stating only what is important to the 'compositional' idea is the antithesis of playing streams of notes simply to fill the space.

The one to one learning experience

My learning experience included one-to-one lessons with a number of jazz masters. Being able to converse directly with international leaders in the field provided opportunities for mentorship and detailed analysis of specific elements of my playing. In many cases they provided practice regimes that addressed specific areas for development.

²² George Russell developed a method exploring the vertical relationship between chord and scales - *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organisation*. (1956)

²³ Saxophonist Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young were also noted for their warmth of tone, although different in sound quality.

George Coleman (1935 -)

In 1996 I had several lessons with legendary saxophonist George Coleman²⁴ in New York. Coleman's main focus was to find out how well I could hear connections between melodies and their underlying harmony. He assessed this by playing chords (on piano) and asking me to outline (on saxophone) the notes in the chords, with careful attention to the relative importance of each note. This reinforced practice needed to develop an ability to hear clearly what is played in the moment, and as importantly to work on the ability to pre-hear musical ideas before sounding them. He was helpful also in developing further the ability to voice-lead in logical and musical ways. While Coleman did suggest practicing sets of patterns associated with the jazz language (that he wrote out) the most worthwhile aspect of my time with him focused on the art of hearing.²⁵

Dave Liebman (1946 -)

In 1997, I attended Dave Liebman's weeklong saxophone master-classes held at East Stroudsburg University, Pennsylvania. Outcomes from the week's education were significant, changing my understanding of some of the fundamentals of playing the instrument. Liebman, having learnt from legendary saxophone teacher Joe Viola²⁶, suggested a change in the shape of my embouchure²⁷ to what he called the 'V-shape'.²⁸ While not changing immediately, over time it was a contributing factor to my sound. I began to develop further a manipulation of harmonics, and greater flexibility of tone colour. As well, the change of embouchure allowed me to discover and control specific harmonics (mainly in the higher pitch range); a

²⁴ George Coleman is renowned for his work on seminal recordings with trumpeter Miles Davis and pianist Herbie Hancock in the 1960s, notably on *Seven Steps to Heaven* (1961) and *Four and More* (1966).

²⁵ The many texts by jazz educators that offer streams of patterns and scales to be practiced have value, but do not offer significant ways to help melodic invention.

²⁶ Joe Viola was one of best known saxophone teachers in the USA during the 1950s – 1990s, having taught the leading saxophonists of that time including: George Garzone, Dave Liebman, Joe Lovano and Charlie Mariano.

²⁷ Prior to the introduction of jazz programs in Australia, many saxophonists were taught by clarinetists or musicians who 'double' on clarinet.

²⁸ Liebman writes on this concept in his book: *Developing a Personal Saxophone Sound*, 1989.

significant factor in the recordings presented here for analysis. Aligned to this was development of an ability to control subtle levels of distortion.

Liebman also made me more aware of the importance of swing 8th notes²⁹ and 'groove'; two of the most important elements in American style jazz before the 'free jazz' era. I realised there was a need to strengthen my time feel; an issue that requires ongoing attention. It remains one of the priorities of my practice, involving particularly regular practice of 8th notes (with metronome) and variations within a jazz context. Liebman also promoted transcription as an important rudiment of learning/hearing the jazz language. His method was to learn accurately to sing transcribed solos and then play them on the instrument; yet another process in developing aural comprehension.

Chris Potter (1971 -)

American saxophonist Chris Potter was a featured artist in the Melbourne Jazz Festival in 1999. Earlier, I had seen Potter play many times in New York with the Mingus Big Band and other ensembles. At that time he was establishing his career internationally, but within the New York jazz scene was known as one of the leading young jazz artists, having been a finalist in the prestigious Thelonious Monk Prize³⁰ and having performed as a sideman to legendary jazz artists Paul Motian, Ray Brown, Jim Hall and James Moody.

In a lesson with Potter, it was apparent that he did not have a pedagogical plan. Rather, he simply played duets with me, improvising over the Gershwin song 'But not for Me', with a metronome backing,³¹ and answered questions that were relevant to my observations of his playing. Potter's playing was inspirational as his technical, harmonic and rhythmic knowledge was highly developed. One

²⁹ 8th note jazz feel was fundamental in swing, bebop and pre free styled music. The feel mimicked the rhythm of the drums.

³⁰ In 1991, when Potter competed as a finalist in the Thelonious Monk Competition, he was placed third behind two equally outstanding saxophonists, Joshua Redman and Eric Alexander.

³¹ The metronome marking was minim = 70, emphasis on 2 and 4 of the bar.

fundamental approach in his practice regime was to focus on one melodic, harmonic or rhythmic idea and then place it in an improvisational context.

He then demonstrated how he would practice a scale or a melodic cell by:

- playing it in 12 keys
- improvising on it in 12 keys
- improvising on it within the harmonic structure of a song in 12 keys.

Up to this time I had practiced scales and harmonic concepts but had not placed them in an improvisatory context. It has been useful also (as one component of a practice regime) to improvise over tunes using the metronome (as did Potter) instead of play-along tracks; better in grounding my sense of time through a greater focus on this issue rather than being distracted by other elements of musical performance.

George Garzone (1950 -)

In 1998, I travelled to New York and was advised by respected Australian Jazz pianist Barney Mcall³² to take a number of lessons with legendary saxophonist and teacher George Garzone. At that time Garzone was developing his *Chromatic Triad Method*. He introduced me to two concepts; first, his triadic method, and second his rhythm time 'feel' method. The information gained in this lesson made me realise that to achieve greater creative freedom, and to understand and utilise Garzone's *Chromatic Triad Method* I needed to develop further my understanding of harmonic and rhythmic fundamentals.

George Garzone is a devout believer in John Coltrane's approach to jazz improvisation, part of which is the concept of 'sheets of sound', a term coined by the writer Ira Gitler³³ used to describe elements of Coltrane's style and content in a particular period of his life. As mentioned earlier this was the 'filling in' of melodic

³² Australian pianist Barney Mcall has lived and performed in New York for over 20 years.

³³ Ira Gitler description of Coltrane's improvisations on the liner notes for the record *Soultrane* (1958).

material with myriads (sheets) of notes, giving the music high energy and momentum.

Garzone has developed a strategy to achieve this 'sound'. Lorentz (2008) comments that Garzone has:

“...synthesized and expanded on Coltrane’s frequent use of triadic structures for tonal and polytonal applications. Through his own creative applications of triadic material, Garzone has contributed to the progression of applications for chord superimposition in jazz improvisation.” (p.87)

Garzone’s two interrelated concepts for practice purposes - one melodic, the other rhythmic - are summarised below.

Melodic: Part 1. Triadic Method: Practice/playing 3 note triads - major, minor, augmented and diminished, or a combination, followed by a semitone ascending or descending in a non-repetitive inversion.

Melodic: Part 2. Chromatic Method: Practice/playing a continuous stream of $\frac{1}{4}$ notes using intervals from semitones to minor 3rds.

Rhythmic: In combination with the above melodic concepts each note is played on every beat, using a metronome. The exercise is intervallic, at the same time securing and consolidating the basic inner pulse.

The following figures (3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18 and 3.19) are examples of the various permutations that I composed using Garzone’s method.

Figure 3.13 - (Garzone’s Chromatic Triadic Method) Major Triads

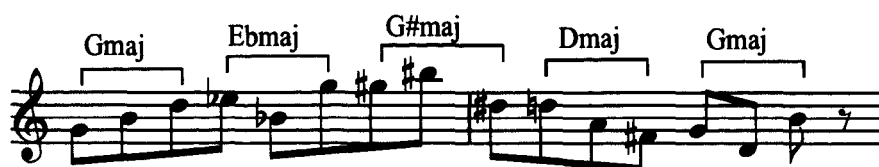


Figure 3.14 - (Garzone's Chromatic Triadic Method) Minor Triads



Figure 3.15 - (Garzone's Chromatic Triad Method) Diminished Triads



Figure 3.16 - (Garzone's Chromatic Triad method) Augmented Triads



Figure 3.17 - (Garzone's Chromatic Triad Method) Combination Triads

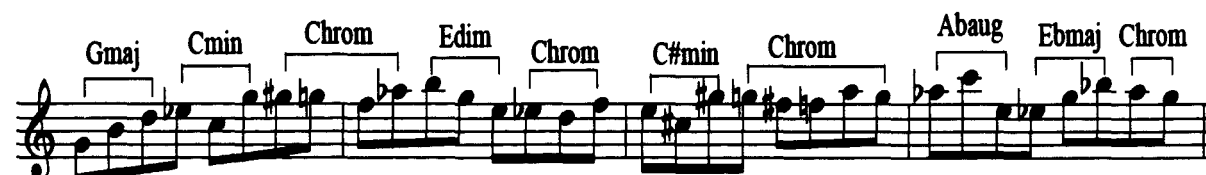


Figure 3.18 - (Garzone's Chromatic Triad method) Chromatic Method

(whole Tone = W, half one = H, minor 3rd = -3)



Figure 3.19 - (Garzone's Chromatic Triad method) combination of Triadic and Chromatic Methods.



In the early stages of practice, incorporating the triadic method into a jazz standard is challenging because of the accuracy required in the 'method', while at the same

time maintaining rhythmic stability. However, once these exercises are achieved to a 'comfortable' level they can be integrated into spontaneous improvisations. The outcome gives flexibility to chromatic melodic inventions and extends further the ideas of tension and release in improvisation that ultimately give shape to improvisations.

In summary, these ways of playing, the various sounds, concepts and methods developed by the artists and teachers above, have, as will be shown in the following chapters, been embraced to varying degrees. However, the main purpose of studying these approaches has not been to adopt any of them as a model for developing a particular style. Rather, they have helped build and develop further a vocabulary of sounds, melodic, harmonic and rhythmic ideas and concepts that increase the scope and wealth of material upon which to draw in the creative, improvisatory process.

The following chapters set out to identify through analysis and observations of selected transcriptions, influences and idiosyncrasies, and the degrees of each, which ultimately determine one's personal voice.

Chapter 4

Composition: *Tahdon*. (Jukka Perko), Track 2

Live at Bennetts Lane

Analyses and Observations

This chapter analyses three choruses of an improvised solo on saxophone. Elements are identified that clearly are assimilations of what has been learnt, and others perceived to be more idiosyncratic.

In addition to transcribed, notated scores, performances are examined through graphs and a wav file, helpful in seeing the 'big picture' of an improvisation. Transcriptions are written in the Western music tradition of notation - annotated where relevant - and consequently observations made are done so within limitations of musical notes on a page. This is especially pertinent with improvised performances where approximations only can be scored, particularly in relation to rhythm. Berliner makes the point:

"...all transcriptions, no matter how detailed comprise reductive representations of the original recordings. Especially elusive are essential rhythmic and timbral features of jazz performance..." (1994 p.510)

Consequently, subtleties and variations in sound quality, tone and rhythmic placement are made more from an aural perspective than the notated score.

Berliner makes one other pertinent comment and it applies to those who transcribe performances other than their own, and those who, as in this research, transcribe their own work:

"Even when transcribers work with the same recorded examples and the same playback system their relative sensitivity to different features of music – harmony, or rhythm or melody distinguishes interpretations."

Details that some players hear in the music simply allude other players.”

(p.508)

As mentioned in Chapter 2 the methodology underpinning all analyses in this research is taken from La Rue’s comprehensive approach to analysis, but with modifications to suit improvised music and the limitations of this exegesis.

Analytical comment is made under the following headings:

- Composition and Style (Large Dimension)
- Harmony (Large Dimension)
- Sound (Tone, Dynamics) Large, Medium, Small dimensions
- Melodic and Motivic Material (Large, Medium, Small dimensions)
- Rhythm (Large, Medium/Small dimensions)

As this exegesis deals primarily with improvisations on saxophone, harmony is discussed in large dimension only rather than examined in detail. (In two of the three pieces the *basic* harmonic progression remains fixed throughout.) The contrasting nature of three works examined, all fit comfortably under the umbrella (style) of jazz, notwithstanding the problems associated with musical labels - especially jazz - which now encompasses widely diversified forms of music-making. In any case stylistic issues are not the focus of this research and consequently referred to only briefly in describing the origin and general nature of the compositions.

In various ways and to varying degrees these aspects as in the readings above are relevant to ‘growth’ in a musical work. (La Rue’s term) As all three compositions fall into the category of ‘short’ forms, (as distinct for example from sonata form where ‘growth’ is measured over longer sections and periods of time). La Rue describes growth as the “combining element” because of its “dual existence ... as movement and shape” (1992a: p.11). In this research the term ‘growth’ is used to describe the organic development of materials (melody and rhythm) in the unfolding of

improvisations.

The question of form does not invite detailed examination, as two of the three pieces are 'enclosed' in a 'theme and variations' format that remains structurally fixed. The third is also theme and variations but evolves as a free improvisation, and thus without enclosure. However, a map (transcription) of the whole improvisation on saxophone of the third piece (*Charakeshi*) is included in order to show points of tension and release, dynamic design, and rhythmic and melodic invention that occur despite the absence of a structured design.

Melodic and rhythmic elements undergo both macro and micro examination. Again, the idea of 'growth' is useful as growing musical ideas from one chorus or section to another, and seeing the overall picture, is an important issue in examining the improvisatory process.

Arguably, improvisers who consciously or subconsciously consider the notion of 'growth' and the elements that drive it as critical in performance have a compositional intent when they play spontaneously. An alternative approach, to which this author does not subscribe, is a series of notes that might satisfy the melodic/harmonic connections between melody and underlying harmony, and the rhythmic demands of a 'style,' but are less concerned with structure or growth and overall design, beyond perhaps becoming 'louder', or somewhat faster in the heat of the performance as the music unfolds.

One of the primary intentions of this research is to ensure that in the act of improvisation, end products have a musical and structural logic that meets an aesthetic associated most commonly with art music, that being, for the purposes of this research is an underlying desire for structure and design in some form, and other characteristics of works of art so eloquently described by Robert Hughes (see p.27, footnote 10). It is an approach that has continued to be an inspiration in my playing since studying and performing classical repertoire.

Composition and Style

Large Dimension

Tahdon ('I do'), written by Finnish composer/improviser Jukka Perko was chosen because in this performance, comparisons can be made between three solo improvised choruses played consecutively over the fixed form³⁴. Further, the composition has a mainly diatonic chordal construct, enabling reflection on earlier influences outlined in the previous chapter.

This piece could be described as a classically influenced jazz composition, or at least one which does not fit comfortably into the traditional African American jazz genre; harmonically, rhythmically, or melodically. The melody is more akin to a folk song from the European, Scandinavian region than one originating in blues-based jazz music (part of the American Songbook era). Despite the use of the flattened seventh in chords there is no hint of jazz or blues in the composition, or in the performance by the composer. (See discography)

Notwithstanding the freedom allowed in playing composed melodies in the improvisatory world, *Tahdon* suggests adherence to the composer's notation, that is, the melody announced in a 'straight' rather than jazz swing feel, much like how one would play a piece of classical music of similar notation, but without the use of vibrato; an imperative in classical saxophone.³⁵

However, the character of the solo improvisations examined here fits well within the modern jazz genre: in melodic/harmonic language, rhythmic malleability, groove, and freedom of expression. Considering the number of influences cited

³⁴ To enable comparisons to be made between improvisatory choruses over the same form and material, notated, transcribed solos have been aligned one under the other, with the original composition at the top. This way, manipulation and development of material can be viewed on the one page.

³⁵ Differences in sound and vibrato between classical saxophone and jazz saxophone are major factors in distinguishing between the two styles.

earlier, and the intent and the style heard in these improvisations, the playing could be described as a mix of assimilation of past influences and individuality, neither of which can be measured with absolute accuracy. Nevertheless, the following analyses and observations will shed light on both; providing insight into past influences, and acting as a catalyst in the pursuit of greater originality.

It is important to mention that some of these influences can best be described as having been absorbed, but may not be immediately apparent, or indeed clearly reflected in these improvisations. On the other hand, further detailed analysis in the future may identify as yet undiscovered links.

For improvisers, it is often a matter of subconscious adoption of material with which one connects on repeated listening to artists admired; inevitable to varying degrees for all who make music that emanates from an aural tradition rather than a written one. In the improvisation in question, a motivic cell common in John Coltrane's playing is identified clearly, both visually and aurally. It is the subliminal aspect of aural comprehension that informs and builds one's musical language and vocabulary, far beyond what can be gained from the written word or musical notes on a page. Arguably, insightful comments about 'ways of playing' can come more from performers than outside observers. It presents a strong case for periodic self-reflective, self-critical examination of one's own playing, as articulated in the following pages.

Tahdon is 20 bars in length, with an 11 bar coda, and falls outside the traditional, more common jazz standard in terms of structure and harmony. This is attributable in part to it being written for an instrumental ensemble, and partly because the composer is European and one of many from that part of the world who are relying less on African-America jazz influences and repertoire and more on their own compositional voice and culture. (See Appendix C for full score)

Harmony

Large Dimension

The form of *Tahdon* is in two sections, A B: the A section in D minor the B section in D major. The most noticeable aspects of its design are (1) the 'release' at Bar 11 from minor to major tonality, (2) the solitary 2/4 bar at the end of the form, and (3) a coda that begins with one bar of 6/4, then 4/4 until the penultimate bar of 2/4, with a final bar of 4/4 in G Flat major. (See Appendix C for full score)

The piece is not innovative in terms of chord structures or vocabulary. The score does not indicate extensions beyond 7ths, leaving it to the players to add their own creative input.³⁶ In this quartet there is no expectation (or desire) that a piece be played exactly as written, or as played by the composer.³⁷

Harmonically, the piece moves between parallel chord movements (Bars 1 and the repeat at bar 3) and progressions that are tonally functional (Bars 2-3, 4-5, 9-10, 30-31- final two bars.). Harmonic rhythm is most commonly three or four chords per bar. The most unusual aspect of the piece harmonically occurs in the coda (over which improvisations are *not* played) where the tonality moves to F sharp minor (Bar 23), with the piece ending on G Flat Major (as notated by the composer). The soloist is required to traverse two different types of harmonic movement: parallel and cadential; not especially challenging for experienced players.

While the harmony fits comfortably into the two bar phrase structure the 'extra' two bars at the end of each section, and the shortening of the B section by two beats at the end of it (Bar 20) takes it a little out of the ordinary. The analysis of melodic and rhythm material that follows shows how these 'little surprises' add to the creative design, especially in terms of the flow of ideas.

³⁶ This is one of the biggest differences between the jazz and classical music genres. In the former, the performer is the most important 'player,' and in the second it is the composer. The license one can take in each is very different; how much license depends on the music and the background and culture of the performer.

³⁷ On hearing the Burke Quartet while researching jazz performance in Australia Professor Madura-Ward Steinman (Indiana University) asked the question "Is Australia's jazz different from that in the US? What accounts for the "freshness" in this music? And why is this musical experience so gripping, both aurally and visually?" pp82/3 *In Dialogue Philosophy of Music Education Review Vol20, Number 1, Spring 2012.*

Sound – Tone/Dynamics

Large Dimension

Dynamics across the three improvisatory choruses are illustrated in Fig 4.1 (Screen shot of wave file). Note the gradual crescendo in volume and the consequent growth in tension; not fully released until the final bars of the last solo chorus. Note also at the approximate centre of the graph the dynamic has reached the highest point, and wave shapes are increasingly compacted. Intensity has increased in phrasing (through number of notes played, and contour), tessitura, and in volume.³⁸

Figure 4.1 Wave file illustrating dynamics over 3 improvisatory choruses



The tone quality in the opening statement of the melody can be described as *clean* and *warm* with limited sound distortion through focus on middle harmonics.

In the three choruses of improvisation and the final performance of the melody a focus is on upper harmonics - with varied distortion - resulting in a brighter sound overall. The prominence of upper harmonics creates presence or *cut*³⁹, increased as the intensity of the improvisation develops. Manipulation of timbre, with consequent, subtle, variance in dynamics is one factor in the creation of tension and release. Influences of John Coltrane, and to a lesser extent Jan Garbarek are evident.

In summary, approach to tone and manipulation of sound in this performance can

³⁸ To appreciate fully the changes that occur in musical performances, it is useful to both listen and look at visual images of music simultaneously.

³⁹ 'Cut' is a term used to describe when the soloist (saxophone) is able to be heard over the rest of the band by using volume, distortion and brighter quality sound (upper harmonics).

be traced to my background in both classical and jazz music, some aspects being learnt skill-sets and others to formal and informal listening to players that have made a lasting impression.

Sound

Medium/Small Dimension

The first performance of the composed melody (Melody A 2:44 Mins – Figure 4.3) and the melody played after improvisatory choruses (Melody B 12:04 Mins - Figure 4.4) represent two different approaches to sound, dynamics and phrasing. Melody A (Fig 4.2) is played with a classical approach and Melody B (Fig 4.3) is jazz influenced. This ‘order of performance’ can be explained in part by the impetus of the quartet during the improvisations. Distinctive in Melody A is the clean attack and decay on each note. Most notes and phrases incorporate what could be called ‘micro’ dynamics (Fig 4.3). Tension and release is achieved through the use of crescendos and diminuendos within phrases; an assimilation of earlier classical training into jazz. As mentioned earlier performance of repertoire such as Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto and Stravinsky’s *Three Pieces for Clarinet* demand this attention to detail. It is an approach that has had a lasting effect on my playing, albeit limited and understated in a jazz context. Vehicles for improvisation now extend well beyond the traditional jazz repertoire, and the opportunity and demand for great attention to this kind of detail is warranted.

Figure 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate the similarities in the shaping of phrases using dynamics (crescendo and decrescendo) between my phrasing in the Mozart concerto and the performance of the opening melody of *Tahdon*.

Figure 4.2 Mozart *Clarinet Concerto* (A major K.622). Opening 4 bars



Figure 4.3 *Tahdon* (Melody A), classical style phrasing. Opening 4 bars.



Figure 4.4 *Tahdon* (Melody B), jazz style phrasing. Opening 4 bars.



In Melody B (Fig 4.4), influences of John Coltrane's sound are apparent and dynamic variation is minimal, as can be heard on Coltrane's recordings *Ballads*, *A Love Supreme* and *Crescent* (See Discography). While momentum in classical phrasing can be achieved with dynamics, a similar effect occurs in jazz through 'grooving' or 'locking in' to a time feel as an ensemble (In some instances this can cause the tempo to increase slightly without affecting the performance negatively). Further, dynamic variance in jazz is employed more often over large phrases and sections than within a phrase.

The phrasing in Melody A (Fig 4.2), is played more delicately (lighter) than Melody B (Fig 4.3), and through much of improvisation. Specifically, in Melody A, the attack of the opening note of each phrase is either lightly tongued or not tongued at all, with little variation in tone colour.

Variations in articulation and phrasing are demonstrated in the attack of individual notes: tongued, slurred, and scoops⁴⁰ (finger and lip). These can be heard at: 4:52, 5:22, 5:34, 5:45, 6:07, 6:17, 6:31 and 6:33 minutes. Also, throughout the recording vibrato is employed subtly for the purpose of colour, distinct from an approach that is inherent in sound production and less flexible in the learning regimes

⁴⁰ Lip slurs are a form of scooping up to the centre of the notes; a method used to 'colour' the sound and phrasing more common in jazz than classical music.

common to flute, oboe, and classical saxophone players.

In summary, the interlinked elements of sound, tone colour and dynamics in performances of *Tahdon* show influences from both classical and jazz genres. From classical training comes a concern for evenness of tone and shaping of phrases in precise detail within each phrase. From jazz comes a shift in priorities to a more personal, individualistic way-influenced inevitably by other jazz players - but which is an inevitable result of an experienced player of jazz improvising spontaneously.

Melody

Large Dimension

Beyond the general style and inflections in sound and tone common in contemporary jazz, the overall shape of the solo on these three choruses of improvisation suggests a compositional approach. They unfold through increased activity in notes and extension of pitch range. While there is some fluctuation in forward movement between the second and third chorus the highest pitches are reached in the third, final chorus (Bars 1, 12 and 13).

There is too an increasing number of melodic 'gestures' that sit outside the rhythmic foundations set by the bar line and pulse. It is a type of playing that at times helps to create layers of 'conflicting' activity between the soloist and rhythm section, ultimately successful when the underlying pulse remains constant, and arrival at main cadential areas are satisfactorily resolved. Examples of these melodic flourishes can be seen in Bars 3, 4 and 5 (Chorus 3).

The variation in melodic material across the three solo choruses is encouraging personally as it indicates a process of melodic, lyrical invention rather than an excessive chord/scale approach that can lead to patternistic playing. Identifiable quotes and 'licks'⁴¹ from external sources are not discernable.

⁴¹ A 'lick' is a pre-learned formula or pattern that is performed as part of an improvisation.

However, while melody is the main focus in the improvisation, a chord-scale approach is also present. Together these create a balance between 'inside' and 'outside' notes in melodic/harmonic relationships. Viewed in broad perspective, this is important in the overall structure of solos based on tonal functional harmony, regardless of the number and length of solos. Balancing these forces is a critical factor in the creation of tension and release, and in shaping the overall structure and content of an improvisation.

As these ways of playing come intuitively from moment to moment, self-reflective, self-critical analysis after the event is always helpful in correcting any perceived flaws not realised in the act of spontaneous music-making. These might be overuse of clichés, being unaware of the overall shape of a solo, of rhythmic inconsistencies in terms of pulse, and other more detailed aspects of a performance examined below.

Melody

Medium/Small Dimension

To begin, a detailed examination of the improvisations on *Tahdon*, Figure 4.5 shows on the top stave the solo on Chorus 2 (Bars 1 – 7) and directly below what is regarded as the melodic essence of the solo, not visually obscured by scalar and other gestural passages.⁴²

⁴² There are some similarities here to the analytical method of Heinrich Schenker and Henry Martin; a 'stripping away' of layers of notes to reveal the bare structural bones of a melodic line.

Figure 4.5 *Tahdon*, solo chorus 2. Bars 1 -7

The musical score consists of three systems, each with two staves. The first system (bars 1-2) shows a 'Scalic/gestural passage' in the upper staff. The second system (bars 3-4) also shows a 'Scalic/gestural passage' in the upper staff, with a '5' marking under a group of notes. The third system (bars 5-6) shows a 'Scalic/gestural passage' in the upper staff, with '3' markings under groups of notes. The lower staff in each system provides a harmonic accompaniment.

Periodic bursts of activity (Bars 2 - 7) create momentum over a fixed pulse; an approach not dissimilar to that used in the baroque period where through an increase in the number of notes played in a phrase the music appears to be not only gaining momentum, but increasing in volume.⁴³

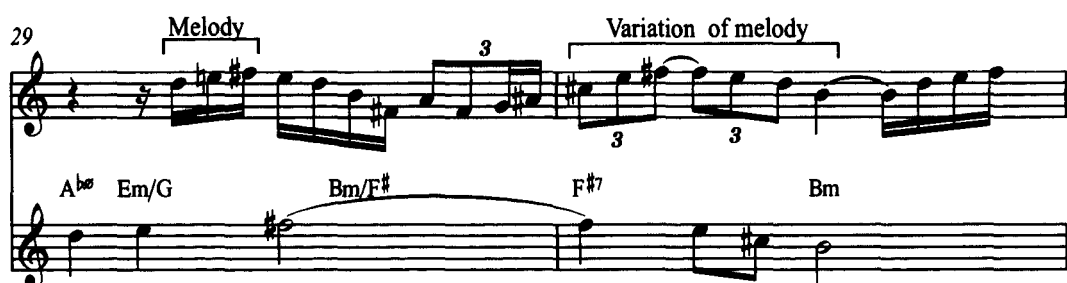
Following a simple melodic statement in bar 1 (Figure 4.5) a 16th note gesture in bar 2 ends on the first beat of bar 3. (Rhythmic factors will be discussed later.) Note that this flourish begins with the motive C, A, B flat and ends in Bar 3 on A, indicating that despite the preceding rapid-fire 16th notes, the continuity of thought is melodically driven. That is, the line flows logically despite the stream of notes

⁴³ The effect of a rise in dynamic through increasing the number of notes played as a phrase unfolds was a technique used to compensate for the restricted dynamic range of the harpsichord. It is a performance technique that creates the illusion of an increase in dynamic momentum.

that drives the music forward. The same approach is evident in bar 4, where five 16th notes anticipate the rise to A natural (Fig 4.5).

While there is a flurry of notes in bars 29 – 30 (Figure 4.6), the melody is still prominent, perhaps more obvious when listening than looking. From bars 39 to 41 (Figure 4.7) there is closer adherence to the composed melody in a gradual release of tension, resolving into the piano solo.

Figure 4.6 *Tahdon*, solo and melody. Bars 29 - 30



Viewed as a whole, these examples are more melodically driven than formulaic, with a persistent re-visiting of notes and phrases fundamental to the identity of the original composition, and thus compositional in intent.

Turning now to the main focus of this section (Fig 4.7, Bars 13 – 20) (see Appendix D for full transcription), a triple-tiered transcription of the three solo choruses shows a stacking of choruses over repeats of the form, allowing the melodic material on each repeat to be seen at the one time. While the underlying intent over all three choruses was to achieve organic flow, themes, motives and cells are examined at the micro level in order to identify degrees of repetition, appropriation, and perceived idiosyncrasies.

While the first solo chorus is melodic, with gradual embellishment of the pre-composed tune, the 3rd chorus is a development of the 2nd, through increased momentum, only 'slowing' with the use of quarter and eighth notes starting at bar 13 in preparation for the final resolution of the solo (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7 *Tahdon*, choruses 1, 2 and 3 stacked. Bars 13 – 20

The musical score for 'Tahdon' choruses 1, 2, and 3, bars 13–20, is presented in four systems. Each system contains three staves labeled Chorus 1, Chorus 2, and Chorus 3. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

System 1 (Bars 13–14):

- Chorus 1: D Δ , Em⁷, F \sharp m⁷, G, Asus⁷, A⁷
- Chorus 2: D Δ (triplet), Em⁷, F \sharp m⁷, G, Asus⁷ (5), A⁷
- Chorus 3: D Δ , Em⁷, F \sharp m⁷, G (5), Asus⁷ (3), A⁷

System 2 (Bars 15–16):

- Chorus 1: D Δ , Em⁷, F \sharp m⁷, G, Asus⁷, A⁷
- Chorus 2: D Δ , Em⁷, F \sharp m⁷, G, Asus⁷, A⁷
- Chorus 3: D Δ , Em⁷, F \sharp m⁷ (6), G (6), Asus⁷ (5), A⁷

System 3 (Bars 17–18):

- Chorus 1: A Δ , Em/G (6), Bm/F \sharp (5), F \sharp 7, G
- Chorus 2: A Δ , Em/G, Bm/F \sharp , F \sharp 7, G (3), A⁷ (3)
- Chorus 3: A Δ , Em/G, Bm/F \sharp , F \sharp 7, G (3)

System 4 (Bars 19–20):

- Chorus 1: Bm, C/B \flat , D/A, Asus⁷, A⁷
- Chorus 2: Bm, C/B \flat , D/A, Asus⁷, A⁷
- Chorus 3: Bm, C/B \flat , D/A, Asus⁷, A⁷

Structure and Variety of Phrases

In terms of increased activity - melodically and rhythmically - the second bar of each phrase is a development of the first (chorus 1. Bars 1 to 4, Fig 4.8). It is the internal make-up of the phrases where variety and complexity most occurs. Melodic shapes head towards G natural as a focal point (an anchor) across the four bars, suggesting the flow of the line is the primary consideration rather than complying with note/chord relationships⁴⁴. A faster note movement in the second of the two bar phrases (Bars 3 and bar 5) is evident across all three choruses, with momentum growing in the third chorus. Organic growth is apparent through broadening tessitura; note the highest pitch - F natural (chorus 3, bar 1), stronger dynamics, and a more forceful tone quality.

By bar 5, beginning with the same harmonic progression as the first two phrases, phrasing across all three choruses becomes increasingly varied. The only place that all three choruses share some common material is in bars 9 (16notes) and 10 (Triplets), rhythmically, and in melodic contour.

⁴⁴ The term flow has a multitude of meanings. In this instance it means being fully immersed in the moment rather than been contained by traditional musical parameters of the bar-line and/or pulse. (Noted psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has written extensively on the subject.)

Figure 4.8 Tahdon Choruses 1, 2, 3 stacked. Bars 1 – 10

Chorus 1

Chorus 2

Chorus 3

Chorus 1: Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

Chorus 2: Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

Chorus 3: Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

Chorus 1

Chorus 2

Chorus 3

Chorus 1: 3 Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

Chorus 2: Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

Chorus 3: Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

Chorus 1

Chorus 2

Chorus 3

Chorus 1: 5 Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

Chorus 2: Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

Chorus 3: Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

7 A[♭] Em/G Bm/F# F#7 G

Chorus 1

Chorus 2

Chorus 3

9 A[♭] Em/G Bm/F# F#7 Bm

Chorus 1

Chorus 2

Chorus 3

For the most part, phrase structures in this performance are gestural rather than ‘falling into line’ with the rhythm section and its rhythmical, foundational role. This creates a melodic layer over the top of what is occurring underneath, often complex in itself, all of which can create the tension and release fundamental to music based on tonal functional harmony.⁴⁵

Melodically, all three solo choruses, within the parameters of the form and harmony of the composition have a variety of phrasing that suggest a freedom of expression, neither tied rigidly to the bar-line or to the symmetrical nature of phrases or meter.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See Appendix E for a graph and annotated score showing variability in phrase lengths of the three solo choruses.

⁴⁶ Although a consistent, internal pulse is critical to all players of this music, each individual’s notion of time and pulse can differ depending on the circumstances. The choice then is to decide to ‘go with the flow’ or create a tension over the rhythmic pulse set by the rhythm section. Put simply, one can ‘lock in’ to the time, or defy it.

It is a gestural approach to melody and phrasing rather than a rhythmical 'vertical' compliance to the fundamental rhythm of this music (and jazz music generally). Arguably it is an approach, which by nature is idiosyncratic.

Motives/Cells

As mentioned earlier it is inevitable that one will take on some of the characteristics of those listened to and admired over many years. Theoretical methods of learning to play jazz are second to the aural experience that I argue is the principal informant, source and inspiration for improvisers.

Two motifs in these performances stand out clearly as appropriations from the playing of John Coltrane.⁴⁷ They occur in bar 1-2 (Fig 4.9) and permeate through various guises in other parts of the solo. Although played spontaneously, they are a consequence of listening rather than being consciously pre-learned. They are motives that appealed to the senses and have over time become part of my musical vocabulary. Played consecutively, the second four-note motive (motive 2) is an extension of the first: the first three notes rising and the fourth falling. Both end on G natural, a natural continuity of thought (Fig 4.10).

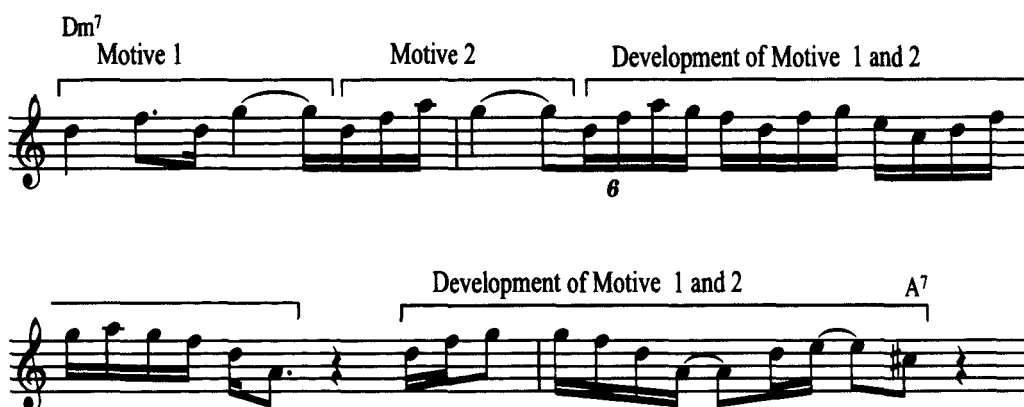
Figure 4.9 *Tahdon*, chorus 1. Bar 1 - 2



Success depends on one's musicality, and the willingness of players to accept shifts in time, in the spirit of spontaneous music-making. This quartet is always amenable to the challenge.

⁴⁷ In Chapter 3, I discussed briefly the use of motives in Coltrane's recording of *A Love Supreme*.

Figure 4.10 *Tahdon*, chorus 1. Bars 1 – 4



At times this four-note motive stands alone and at other times is part of a longer phrase or flourish of notes (Fig 4.10).

Two other figures traceable to Coltrane occurring infrequently can be seen in chorus 3 (bar 5) (the two six note figures, fig 4.11), and in the same chorus, (Bars 11/12, fig 4.12) where the rising semi-quaver figure across the bar comprises two pentatonic modes (on D then G) minus the fifth note of the mode in each case. This was a signature mark of Coltrane.

Figure 4.11 *Tahdon*, chorus 3. Bar 5.

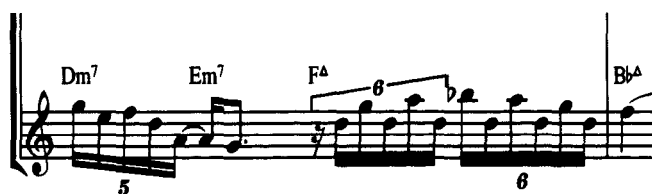


Figure 4.12 *Tahdon*, chorus 3. Bars 11 - 12



The shape of the opening phrase of the composed melody where the first three notes rise and the fourth falls, informed this motivic material (Fig 4.13).

Figure 4.13 *Tahdon*, Melody. Bars 1 - 4



The idea of connecting improvisations with the pre-composed melody, as distinct from stating the melody and then improvising on the chord progression rather than the thematic material is an instinctive choice. It accounts for note choices at the beginning of phrases, and those coming out of the more gestural ones. It is a concern for maintaining the melodic essence and identity of a piece. Further, it avoids over-dependence on non-melodic scales and patterns that although they might connect the horizontal with the vertical (chords), lessen the compositional intent.⁴⁸

At various points through all three choruses, fragments of the composed melody recur as points of reference. The challenge is to balance developmental areas with the more familiar material so that the end result is both creative and respectful to the composition (Fig 4.14).

⁴⁸ As a performer and educator I argue that, in tonally based jazz repertoire, the factor that most separates pieces from one another is the melody not the underlying harmony, the latter more prone to formula and therefore more likely to bear some (often striking) similarities across pieces. In other words, using the melody rather than the chords as a basis for improvising helps to give each improvisation a quality unique to that melody.

Figure 4.14 *Tahdon*. Bars 55 - 61

55 Sax improv 3

Melody Bar 57

Melody Bar 57

Melody Bar 57

3

D⁴ Em⁷ F[#]m⁷ G Asus⁷ A⁷ A^b Em/G Bm/F[#] F[#]7 G

Melody

Melody

59

Melody Bar 57

Melody Bar 57

Bm C/B^b D/A Asus⁷ A⁷

The primary intent in these improvisations is melodic inventiveness and flow of phrases and gestures rather than predilection for theoretical ‘correctness’. It is an approach inspired by Miles Davis. Attempts to explain (through transcriptions) the musical ‘sense’ of every note as they relate to underlying harmony in Davis’ playing can prove futile, despite solos being of the highest artistry. To grasp Davis’ inventive genius it is often necessary to put aside the idea of musical rules, of patterns and stylistic practices. It is not individual notes that make his music making so memorable, but his sound, the shape of phrases, the space (silence) between them, and resolution of phrases.⁴⁹

Note Choices and Tonality

Two aspects regarding note choices in the improvisations discussed here are illuminating. Over three choruses (totalling 60 bars over a 20 bar form – see Appendix D) there are only 11 times when note choices on the first and third beats of bars are the same. (See bars 1(beat 1), 4 (beat 3), 7 (beat 3), 8 (beat 1), 9 (beat 3),

⁴⁹ These characteristics of Davis’ unique approach to improvisation can be heard on the seminal recording *Kind of Blue* (Blue Note 1959)

10 (beat 3), 11(beat 1), 13 (beat 1), 18 (beat 3), 19 (beat 3), 20 (beat 1)). Of these eleven, where note choices are the same, only three times does this occur in all three choruses and there is not one instance when the same note falls at the same place in the bar. Given the fixed harmonic framework, it can be interpreted as evidence of a desire for variability – albeit subconsciously.

There are instances when note choices fall within the chord, but at other times (Fig 4.15) they have more to do with flow and tension than compliance with the underlying harmony; that is playing through the line rather than observing the protocol of the chords. For example note choices over the A7 (bar 2) flow from the preceding beats where notes over the Bb (inside the chord) are continued.

Figure 4.15 *Tahdon*, Chorus 1. Bars 1-2

The figure displays two staves of music in 4/4 time. The top staff, labeled 'Improvised solo', shows a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a bracketed phrase in bar 2. The bottom staff, labeled 'Original Melody', shows a simpler line with quarter notes. Chord symbols are placed above the bottom staff: Dm⁷, Em⁷, F^Δ, Bb^Δ, Asus⁷, and A⁷. A '6' is written below the solo staff in bar 2.

The idea of stating the tonality through a small motive at the beginning of pieces or sections of pieces is a compositional one, common in both jazz and classical music.⁵⁰ It is the nucleus from which organic growth occurs. Bar 1 of chorus 1 (Fig 4.15) above is a case in point, as it defines the tonality in which the piece starts, and is the basis for what follows in terms of melodic material⁵¹ (Bars 3 - 4 of chorus 1, Fig

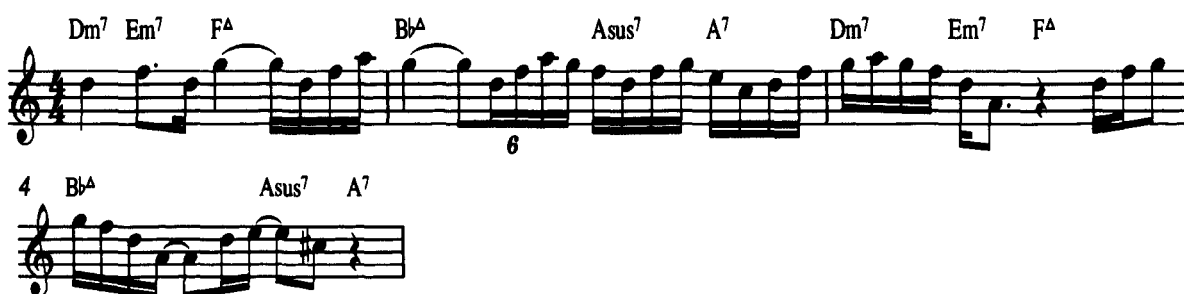
⁵⁰ The idea of organic growth on a large scale occurs in the music of Bartok - the opening to his Concerto for Orchestra being an excellent example - and in jazz the playing of Sonny Rollins ('*Softly As in a Morning Sunrise*', from the album *A night at the Village Vanguard* (track 2 – 1957)).

⁵¹ In contrast, Martin describes a different kind of improvisation as one based on a repertoire of set formulas upon which, he argues, characterises much of Charlie Parker's playing. (2001 p.35) It is mentioned here to emphasise the choices available to contemporary jazz musicians; the organic approach moving away from the identifiable genre of bebop to more idiosyncratic ways of playing that defy stylistic labels.

4.16).

Note choices in relation to tonality can extend beyond the bar, where melodic constructs heighten the level of tension between the horizontal and the vertical. An example occurs in the opening bars of chorus 1 where a four note motive - D (repeated), F and G is played over the following chord progression: Dm7, Em7, F^Δ, Bb^Δ, Asus⁷, A⁷, Dm7, Em7, F^Δ. The motive remains grounded in Dminor (with the notes of a D minor pentatonic) until beat three of bar 4 where a E and C# (major 3rd) establishes the dominant, A⁷. Until then the melodic line ignores the specific structures of each chord of the progression. Again the influence of Coltrane is evident in this approach.⁵²

Figure 4.16 *Tahdon*, Chorus 1. Bars 1 - 4



In contrast, a different approach is evident in bars 18-19 (fig 4.17) where, rather than defying the chords, note choices fall mainly within chords while maintaining the flow of the melodic line.

Figure 4.17 *Tahdon*, Chorus 1. Bars 18-19



The improvisations examined here show a diversity of approach traceable to a number of important influences, especially the playing of Miles Davis. While I do not

⁵² A way of improvising evident on Coltrane's albums *Blue Trane* and *A Love Supreme*. See discography

profess to reach the artistic heights of Davis, there are aspects of his playing that one aspires to; a freedom of expression within (and at other times without) the confines of a structured piece, and a developing sense of artistic discipline to be able to stay silent at times, allowing the music to breathe. As well, it is a compositional approach to spontaneous improvisation of which understatement and restraint are powerful factors.

Improvisations are invariably a mix of features clearly identifiable with major influences and other more idiosyncratic characteristics that have their origin entirely in the spontaneous creativity of the artist, notwithstanding that one can never be entirely sure the latter are in fact entirely original. With this in mind the following extracts are cited as examples of what might be regarded as personal utterances, occurring 'in the moment' of spontaneity as distinct from those that come from external influences and learnt musical languages (Fig 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20).

Figure 4.18 *Tahdon*, Chorus 1. Bar 6



Figure 4.19 *Tahdon*, Chorus 1. Bars 14 - 15



Figure 4.20 *Tahdon*, Chorus 1. Bars 19 - 20



Rhythm

Large Dimension

Through the improvisations on *Tahdon* there are times when soloist and rhythm section 'sit' comfortably together rhythmically, and at other times the saxophone sets up tension between them. This can be likened to the various layers of time feel that drummers are capable of creating with hands and feet. These layers can be highly complex, over both short and long statements, sometimes complementing the soloist, at other times conflicting and creating tension, ultimately resolving when the cadential areas in the piece warrant.

In all facets of performance, rhythm included, soloists, like other players in the quartet, are sometimes leaders, and sometimes followers; at other times there is a collective approach. This is never planned in the Burke Quartet and for that reason it is perhaps the most spontaneous aspect of all. And in all matters of rhythm in jazz performance, subtleties of time and pulse are more discernable through listening than observing approximations on paper. Aural awareness and comprehension is even more critical in questions of feel.

As a whole, the solo on *Tahdon* fluctuates between being 'inside' the time of the rhythm section, and 'outside,' where the effect is a heightening of rhythmic tension. Interest lies in constant interplay between soloist and rhythm section, and in this quartet, one is likely on occasions to hear rhythmic statements unexpectedly more akin to for example Stravinsky than jazz - from drums and/or piano as soloists. During a live improvisational performance it is sometimes necessary to change one's thinking quickly. Although surprise is a fundamental principal of the quartet's approach, there are at times instances that cause a few seconds of 'adjustment' before the feel settles. Despite these idiosyncrasies, the overall effect aligns comfortably with the African-American jazz genre and its European offshoots.

Rhythm

Medium/Small Dimension

In the opening 8 bars of chorus 1, oscillation between swing and straight eight feel

occurs. This is a mix of styles emanating from practical experiences in jazz, and rock music, where in the latter, rhythm is less malleable though more prominent.

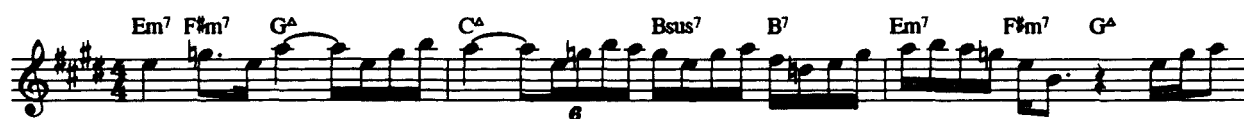
Evident is the use of 8th notes, 8th note triplets and combinations of notes performed in groups of 5's and 7's. Rhythmically, the intent ultimately, whether playing 'inside' or 'outside' the time is to connect with the time feel of the ensemble to create a unified 'groove'. This manipulation of time feel (groove) across the quartet is part of on-going improvisatory conversations, the success or otherwise dependent upon powers of aural comprehension (of one's own playing and the others) and alertness to change.

Examples of rhythmic fluctuation between swing feel and straight 8th note can be heard in chorus 1, bars 3 and 4, (3:53mins)(swing feel) and chorus 1 - bars 15, 4:25mins and bar 26 (4:55mins)(straight 8 feel).

This explains the varied make-up of phrases (including the gestural) that serve to avoid an overly formulaic approach. The momentum of phrases is aimed at release points – the resolution of harmonic cadences. In a sense, the saxophone plays freely over the pulse but at certain points complies with the rhythmic base of the 'landmark' beats; another mannerism of Miles Davis.

The opening 3 bars of chorus 1, (Fig 4.21) reflect this type of rhythmic phrasing where structured time is established, then a freer approach is employed. The release point is in bar 3, beat 4 with the next phrase outlining the time.

Figure 4.21 *Tahdon*, Chorus 1. Bars 1- 3



Rhythmically then, the playing in this performance can be summarised as a tendency to oscillate between a jazz feel and one more associated with rock/pop,

the former malleable and the later less so as well as a gestural approach that is less attached rhythmically to the feel of the rhythm section but which at critical points respects the underlying pulse of the music.

Summary

From large, medium and small perspectives, the analysis of *Tahdon* has revealed a number of significant factors in my spontaneous performance; some which clearly come from past practical and aural experiences - in jazz, rock and classical music - and others that appear to be idiosyncratic.

From the past comes a sound and tone informed by classical training, and playing repertoire that included music as diverse as Mozart and Stravinsky. It was training in this genre that also instilled a concern for detail in approach to phrasing at the micro level, that is within phrases; a concern which necessarily has been modified to suit the jazz genre, where priorities in performance do not focus on such detail.

Amidst the many influential artists I have listened to over the years, the ones with a deep sense of lyricism, and those whose intent is to play notes that fulfil a compositional purpose rather than to 'fill the space' have made the most impression. The musicality of silence – to stop playing at times – during an improvisational performance remains a challenge. It is an aspiration that for many players comes with maturity and self-reflection.

A compositional approach organic growth, placement and levels of tension and release are ongoing pursuits. It is a reason why the transcriptions analysed in this research help to see the 'big picture;' invaluable in informing one's concept of musical design and structure. It is a process that hopefully ensures an increase in (perceived) success, and recognition of shortcomings. Similarly in matters rhythmic, the 'slowing down' process of transcriptions and observing, and especially listening, have been illuminating. They point to challenges when transitioning from classical concepts of time to jazz time (feel), and from jazz to the underlying rigidity and dominance of the time feel in rock and popular music. For many musicians adjusting

one's musical priorities, depending on genre, repertoire, performance environment and associate players, has increasingly become a necessity in this 21st century where diversity is the norm.

The next chapter will confirm both approaches and idiosyncrasies articulated above, and shed light on further idiosyncratic characteristics and improvisatory possibilities through a piece that allows a freer approach to form, harmony, rhythm and melody.

Chapter 5

Composition: *Charukeshi*. Trad, (Track 3)

Live At Bennetts Lane

Analyses and Observations - Composition and Style

Melbourne tabla player Sam Evans introduced the traditional composition *Charukeshi* to the Burke Quartet in 2009. Figure 5.2 shows the score in its entirety.

The melody is a combination of two Indian Ragas: Raga Charukeshi and Raga Basant Mukhari from which the following mode was derived (Fig 5.1). In Western musical terms it can be regarded as having a tonal centre of E minor, and from which the majority of note choices throughout the improvisation are taken. The minor sound based on E is a unifying factor.

Figure 5.1 *Charukeshi*, Mode ⁵³



⁵³ The notes of this mode were confirmed in conversation with Classical North Indian recording artist Debasis Chakroborty, one of India's foremost guitarists. The melody is based on a common tala of north Indian music, tintal. Historically, tintal is cycle of sixteen matras that is subdivided into four vibhags, each of four beats duration, i.e., 4 + 4 + 4 + 4.) Refer to Appendix G for further information of the mode.

Figure 5.2 *Charukeshi*, Melody

♩ = 84



For decades, jazz musicians have been using this kind of music as a basis for improvisation, one of the earliest and most prominent innovators being guitarist John McLaughlin with his Mahavishnu Orchestra, and saxophonist Charlie Mariano (see discography). In both cases there was deep exploration and application of the complex melodic and rhythmic material found in Indian music, together with various combinations of Western and Indian instruments.

While the general principles of improvising over a purely linear piece apply, - that is, improvisations are drawn from melodic and rhythmic material in the composition (raga) - the performance here is not tied to any specific rhythmic system or form found in Indian music. However, the flavour of Indian music can be heard at times through rhythms, the sounds on percussion and double bass, and ornamentations. The quartet makes no claim to appropriation of a highly complex and deeply cultural music, but rather takes this melody from North India as an inspiration, and places it in a Western jazz context as a vehicle for free improvisation. For the purposes of this study and in high contrast to *Tahdon* (Chapter 4), it offers other insights into my performance style.

While the improvisation is influenced by the nature of the pre-conceived melody, it falls within a free, jazz-based idiom rather than any deliberate attempt to create an acculturated art form.

Although there is no underpinning harmonic structure, there are always harmonic implications in melodic lines, and in this quartet re-harmonisation and manipulation of material is a constant, whatever the vehicle.

Sixteen bars in length, and in two eight bar sections, *Charukeshi* is cyclic in form, with no cadential areas, and in this case developed freely (See appendix F for full transcription). Consequently, it requires a different mind-set to that required for playing western music based on tonal functional harmony, where tension and release is a critical factor in harmonic and formal design.⁵⁴

In this performance, the concept of group improvisation can be traced to the 1960s free jazz movement. Principal exponents included Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler and John Coltrane.

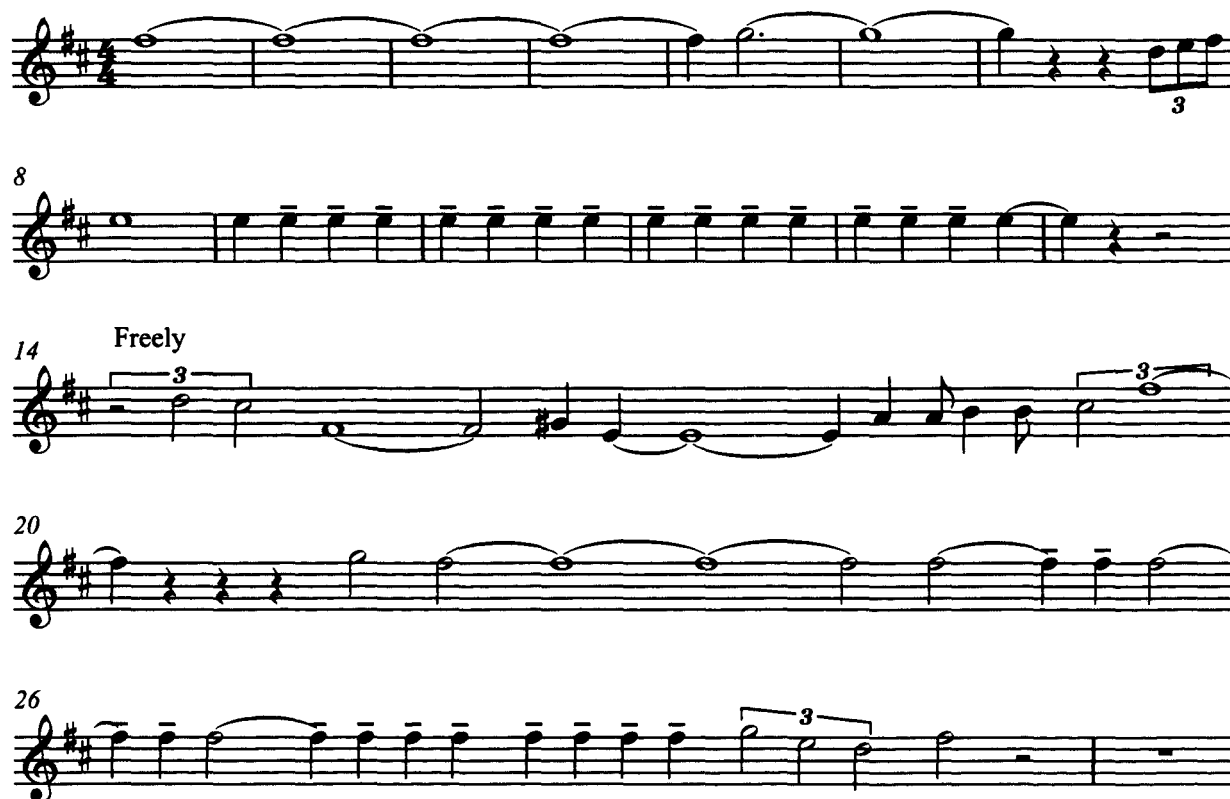
Charukeshi begins with a sparse cymbal and bass introduction. The piano enters at 0:51 with a minimalist approach, introducing an improvised melody at 1:21. Interaction within the rhythm section develops until the saxophone enters at 4:08 where all four instruments take part in melodic and rhythmic interplay; an approach typical of this ensemble, where ideas, moods and momentum unfold gradually, in some ways similar to Indian music.

It is not until over ten minutes (11:43) that the original melody is stated for the first time; twice consecutively. Previous to this point the saxophone plays both a

⁵⁴ It will be seen in the full transcription of the solo (Appendix F) there are areas where bar-lines are superfluous. Consequently, for accuracy in observing detail, marking in minutes and seconds identify particular events.

soloistic and accompanying role, beginning with a minimalist idea, slowly developing in intensity (Fig 5.3). This sets the mood and style for the entire piece.

Figure 5.3 *Charukeshi*, Saxophone entrance at 4:08. Bars 1 - 31



Harmony

Large Dimension

As stated earlier *Charukeshi* does not have a harmonic base common to western music. It is purely linear in origin. However, put as it is here in the context of a Western jazz quartet, with harmonic underpinning by piano and double bass, improvisations are driven by both melody and harmonic implications, where chord structures and movements are generated spontaneously. Further, these do not always respect traditional notions of chord-melodic relationships common to jazz, drawing at times on other musical genres, including classical music. The challenge for the soloist is to grasp aurally what is offered at any particular point, whether a follower or leader, depending on the musical circumstance.

While the essential mode and note centre of the piece is never totally discarded, the harmony sweeps broadly across both functional and non-functional chord movements, including times when chords move in parallel motion, and in triadic shapes that defy the mode.

Sound - Tone/Dynamics

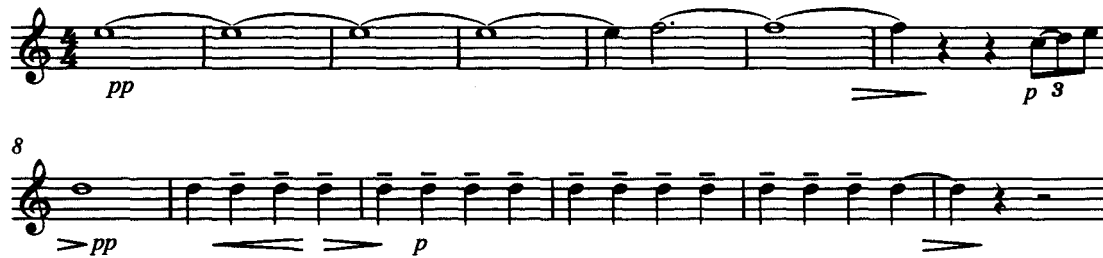
Large/Medium/Small Dimension

At macro and micro levels the tone quality in this performance covers a larger spectrum of sounds than utilised in *Tahdon*. This is attributed to the nature of the piece and its origins in Indian music, where the parameters of sound are not driven by a set of structured chords and cadences, or by the language and style of jazz. At the micro level Jan Garbarek's influence can be heard especially in the bending of notes. (6:09, 6:56, 6:59, 7:45, 7:57, 12:21, 13:02, 13:21, 13:40 mins) Other variations in tone are apparent: the level of breath in the sound, the combination of voice and instrument, the manipulation of frequencies and distortion⁵⁵ (From 13:22 mins). With the manipulation of frequencies and distortion, the intention was to complement the sound of piano and double bass, in particular the harmonics emanating from the piano. These subtle variations in tone and intonation can be heard from 4:08 to 4:48 mins.

Interaction between the piano, bass and saxophone from 4:08 mins involves the gradual fading in and out of notes and the micro rise and fall in dynamics (Fig 5.4).

⁵⁵ The use of these elements is evident in the playing of Archie Shep (*Bird* - 1981) and Pharaoh Sanders (*Journey to the One* - 1980, *Elevation* - 1973), Albert Ayler *Spiritual Unity* (1964), *Spirits Rejoice* (1965), John Coltrane (*A Love Supreme*) and Australian saxophonist Joe Camilleri, who was influenced by Junior Walker.

5.4 *Charukeshi*, Saxophone entrance at 4:08, dynamics. Bars 1 - 13



These ways of playing have emanated from many years of adhering to an ongoing practice regime that includes many hours playing long notes in order to develop flexibility of tone and breath control. Playing classical repertoire of composers such as Hindemith (for rhythmic articulation) and Ravel and Debussy (for lyrical warmth and flexible vibrato) continue to help develop and maintain refinement and consistency of tone, including the ability to play soft dynamic levels without losing quality of sound.

In summary, the sound of the saxophone in this improvisation shows influences of both jazz players and classical repertoire, and some sounds from non-western music.

The study and performance of classical music remains important in maintaining the quality of sound, notwithstanding the schism between classical and jazz saxophone in issues relating to the use of vibrato, the less personal nature of classical music, and the greater freedom of expression that spontaneous music-making allows.

Melody

Large Dimension

As noted earlier the melodic material of the improvisation (beginning 4:08 and 12:35 mins) has as its focal point the note of E and a mode that is minor in sound. This is sustained despite the harmonic shifts that occur periodically through the rhythm section. In other words the improvisation stays true to the fundamental sound of the opening notes of the mode (See fig 5.1 - page 74). The underlying harmonies-variably tonal and modal-colour what is generally modal rather than

tonal playing. Noticeable too is the tendency to repeat important notes of the mode: E's and D's. There is a periodic, magnetic pull back to the focal point of E, reinforced by the persistent anchor E in the double bass.

The overall shape of the solo in part one shows the most active melodic material being from bars 115 to 133. Bars 143 to the end of part one (bar 152) are a repetition of a high E, the long note that begins the improvisation (4:08 mins). The solo is encased in the fundamental modal centre of the piece.

As the transcription is at times bar-less, the partitioning of sections is marked by the areas of rests and changing rhythmic activity. These periods of rest occur at approximately 4:48, 6:06, 6:46, 7:17, 7:32 and 7:47. As the improvisation progresses, the times between each resting periods grow smaller increasing tension. Further, not being restricted by a set structure or bar-lines allows for a freedom of expression not possible when unrestricted within an enclosed form.

Part two of the improvisation is a [kind of] coda following directly from the melody, (11:43 – 12:07 mins) quoting fragments directly from it, stating the minor/major character of the mode (G, G#) and finally at (14:16 mins) a clear statement of the opening notes of the original melody.

Melody - Structure and Variety of Phrases

Medium/Small Dimensions

Especially in the areas without bars, phrase lengths are not easily identified in the traditional sense. What is apparent however is their variety; a consequence of the gestural nature of the playing and the free linear movement tied neither to harmonic movement or obvious cadential points. Examples of this diversity can be heard in part 1 (Appendix F) at 5:02 mins, a phrase of five quarter notes followed by two tied whole notes and the following phrase that could be interpreted as three bars of 4/4 (quarter notes) followed by a 'bar' of two quarter notes and a half note, tied to a whole note; in all, a five bar phrase. This precedes a four bar phrase (5:33 mins) played in time. Further examples of diversity occur at 6:07 mins where there

are three bars of 4/4 with the phrase concluding after another two bar, phrase played freely and in part 2 at 12:51 – 13:12 and 13:39 – 13:55.

Melody - Motives/Cells

Four distinctive motives appear regularly during the solo. Their development and recapitulation is not unlike devices used in classical sonata form. The 'exposition' (part 2) is introduced, elaborated upon, developed and then resolved. The first (motive 1) is a repetition of the same note: (Fig 5.5)

Figure 5.5 *Charukeshi*, Motive 1. Bars 1 - 2



This motive serves as a binding reference throughout both parts of the improvisation. It recurs at the following points:

Part 1 bars: 9 – 13, 24 – 30, 47, 50 – 51, 58, 72, 89 – 92, 104 – 113, 128, 136 – 152.

Part 2 bars: 5, 47 – 56, 60 – 62, 64.

The second motive (2) occurs in the second half of bar 2 of the opening melody (Figure 5.6). It is a feature of Part 2, specifically bars 64 – 74 where it is developed and rhythmically manipulated (Fig 5.7).

Figure 5.6 *Charukeshi*, Motive 1 and 2. Bars 1 - 4

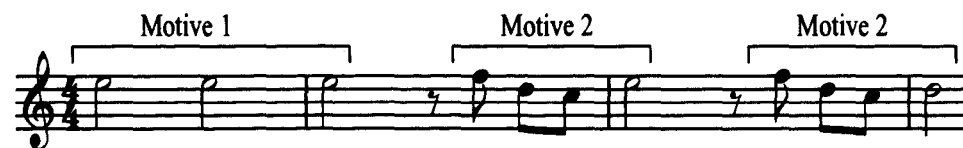


Figure 5.7 *Charukeshi*, Motives from original melody - solo. Part 2, bars 64 - 76

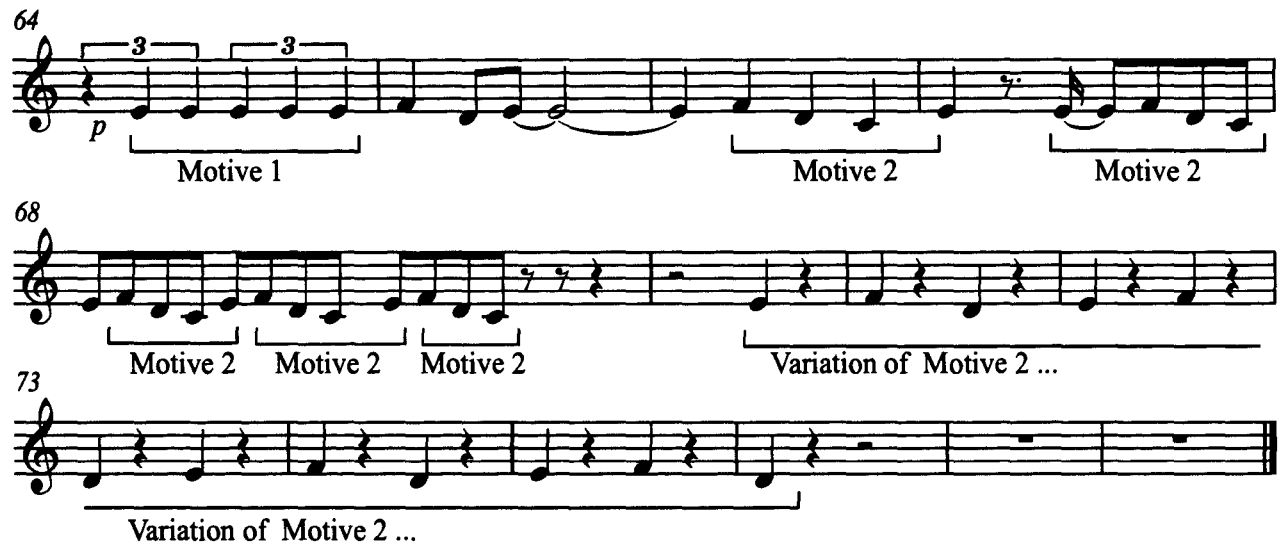


Figure 5.8 *Charukeshi*. Solo featuring both motives. Part 1, Bar 28 - 29 (free section)



The third motive (Fig 5.9), appears as the opening melody of the solo (Part 1) where a momentum increases slowly through an augmentation of the original melody (Fig 5.10).

Figure 5.9 *Charukeshi*, Solo. Part 1, Motive 3. Bars 1- 13



Figure 5.10 *Charukeshi*, from original melody. Motive 3 Bars 9 - 11



The fourth motive (Fig 5.11) is traceable to a composition by guitarist/pianist Egberto Gismonti titled *Cego Aderaldo* (Fig 5.12) played by saxophonist Jan Garbarek.⁵⁶ This is not surprising as Garbarek has had and continues to have a great of influence on many saxophonists internationally.

Figure 5.11 *Charukeshi*, motive 4.



Figure 5.12 *Cego Aderaldo*



This five-note motive first appears at bar 51 (Fig 5.13) and occurs many times and at different pitches (Figs 5.14 - 5.19).

Figure 5.13 *Charukeshi*. Bars 51 -53



Figure 5.14 *Charukeshi*. Bars 73 - 74



Figure 5.15 *Charukeshi*. Bars 81 - 82



⁵⁶ In 1979, Jan Garbarek, Egberto Gismonti and Charlie Haden recorded *Folk Songs* featuring *Cego Aderaldo*. European improvised music has had a significant influence on my direction in music.

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[illegible][illegible]

between the major 3rd G# against the minor 3rd (G) (Fig 5.20).

This chromatic approach continues until bar 127, with a particularly active passage at bars 125 – 126. The influence here stems from an approach to chromaticism developed by saxophonist George Garzone (See Chapter 3, page 22). Considering there is little chromaticism preceding these bars the effect at bars 125–126 is the creation of tension. While the chromatic line is non-formulaic it falls within the parameters of Garzone's concept, the basis of which is creating melodic fragments utilising intervals within the boundaries of minor 3rds. There is no rigid adherence

to the 'method' but rather the adoption of a principle, manipulated to suit the moment. This is apparent in figure 5.21 where resolution of the flurry of notes ends on the B, the 5th of the mode. It is a way of playing that allows for a freedom of expression in note choices within phrases, resolution of which is determined by the structure of the piece; a decision-making process guided by musical integrity and sensitivity.⁵⁷

Figure 5.21 *Charukeshi*. Bars 125 - 127

(-3 = minor 3rd, H = 1 tone, W = ½ Tone) Annotate



Rhythm

Large Dimension

The rhythmic approach in this performance was driven partly by the open-ended form and partly by the rhythmic malleability of time in the rhythm section, alternating between a freer time feel and an identifiable pulse (Figure 5.22: Bars 125 – 131) (The absence of bar lines in the transcription (Appendix F) indicates also a free approach to rhythm). Reflecting on my performances generally, and through this exegesis, it is apparent that this approach to rhythm permeates my playing generally, arguably more idiosyncratic than derived from external sources.

⁵⁷ The idea of musical gesture and resolution rather than adherence to 'correct' note/chord relationships within phrases can be heard in the post bebop playing of Miles Davis. (Example: recordings from *Live at the Plugged Nickel* - 1965)

Figure 5.22 *Charukeshi*. Bars 125 – 131



Rhythm

Medium/Small Dimension

Adherence to and clarity of pulse is most apparent when the four main motives are played (See figures 5.5, 5.6, 5.11 p.82 and 84). At other times - during the melodic continuation (development) of these motives - the rhythm is more gestural and the bar line becomes less of an issue rhythmically. This is characteristic of the quartet's playing generally, notwithstanding its strong jazz base.

With few exceptions, note values across the entire improvisation fluctuate between 16th notes and whole notes that connect with the three main motives.

Rhythmically, the lengths of phrases are diverse. At times the inner notes and fragments of phrases are not concerned with stating a pulse at all; in keeping with the gestural approach to melody. It can be likened to 'stream of consciousness' writing in the works of Jack Kerouac for example⁵⁸, where traditional punctuation is discarded and thoughts and ideas flow uninterrupted (Fig 5.23).

⁵⁸ The most celebrated of Kerouac's literary output being his 1957 work, *On The Road*.

Figure 5.23 *Charukeshi*, (Bar-less)



Such diversity can occur at both macro and micro levels, where solo lines are concerned primarily with resolution points rather than adherence to the underlying pulse (Figures 5.24, 5.25 and 5.26).

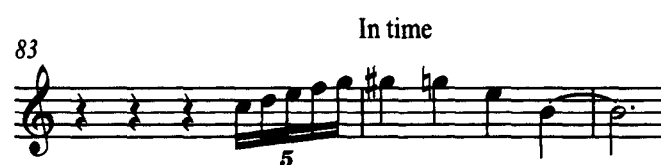
Figure 5.24 *Charukeshi*. Bars 57-58



Figure 5.25 *Charukeshi* Bars 68 - 69



Figure 5.26 *Charukeshi*. Bar 83



This type of playing, alternating between gesture and flow on the one hand and rhythmic articulation on the other is one consequence of extensive listening to the playing of Ornette Coleman in particular, of which Fig 5.27 is an example. However, what distinguishes his playing from the improvisation on *Charukeshi* is the degree to which these approaches are applied, as well as the unique sound and tone of the player.

Through analysis of *Charukeshi*, other idiosyncrasies not apparent in the solo on *Tahdon* (Chapter 4) have been identified, and invite reflection on the degree of appropriation from other players as distinct from material that appears to be more personal.

Clearly, the idiosyncrasies of Coltrane, Davis, Gabarek and Coleman are evident in this improvisation, in the shape of short identifiable motivic statements, and to some extent the flow and gestural nature of lines. And yet, taken as a whole, the improvisations here do not sound (to my ears) like any of the influential players mentioned.

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Notwithstanding the spontaneity of improvisation, ongoing pursuits are driven by a desire to ensure that what is intended in improvising actually happens: particularly in approaches to melodic invention and rhythm. This is at the heart of reflective research, where critical listening rather than learning verbatim from others is a vital factor.

The next chapter addresses an aspect of playing that focuses on melodic material at a slow tempo and more in keeping with the traditional repertoire of 'jazz standards'.

Chapter 6

It's easy to remember, Rogers/Hart (Track 4)

Live at Bennetts Lane

Analyses and Observations - Composition/Style

Large Dimension

This Chapter deals with the composition *Its Easy to Remember*, composed by Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart in 1935 for the film *Mississippi*. It belongs to the repertoire commonly known as the 'Great American Songbook'⁵⁹, from which many jazz standards have come.

Typically, it is in 'song form' of 32 bars, divided into: two eight bars sections (the second repeating the first) a middle contrasting section of eight bars, and a final eight bars that repeats the main theme. (AABA)

Rogers is recognised as one of the great songwriters of his time, his compositions admired for their melodic inventiveness and beauty, matched by the equally talented wordsmith Hart, and (later) Oscar Hammerstein.

Among Rogers' other well-known compositions (he composed over 900 songs, and over forty musicals) are *Blue Room*, *My heart Stood Still*, *My Funny Valentine* and *Bewitched Bothered and Bewildered*, all of which jazz musicians have used as vehicles for improvisation.

Its Easy to Remember is enclosed in the simple song form of the era, its character defined by the romantic nature of the lyrics: a quiet (soft) dynamic and slow in tempo, with a pronounced, singable melody. The lyrical and romantic nature of the piece was intended to be enduring, and as with many of Rogers' compositions remains a part of the jazz standard repertoire.

⁵⁹ Great American Songbook is a collection of songs from the 20th century predominantly from music theatre and musical films of Hollywood from the 1920s to the 1960s.

The original tempo as sung by Bing Crosby in 1935 was ♩ = 96 (96 Beats Per Minute).

The quartet's tempo is ♩ = 42. This radical difference in tempo is significant, for the melodic shapes and rhythmic shapes of the improvisation have a malleability of time and pulse that can only occur at this uncommonly slow tempo. It is a characteristic of the quartet that ballads such as this are often played at such slow tempos.

One identifiable characteristic in Rogers' compositions - which occurs in this piece - is a tendency to shape melodies beginning with a single note and returning to it as the melody unfolds.⁶⁰ It is a mannerism of writing that invites imitation when improvising, and, as will be discussed later, is one central to the idea of organic growth, at micro and macro levels.

In the last few decades this vast repertoire - 'Great American Songbook' - has been gradually put aside by jazz musicians, and replaced by more original, individual work. However, some of these standards retain their currency for at least four reasons. Many contemporary jazz musicians often include a number of these 'historical' pieces in their repertoire firstly as a contrast to their current work, and secondly as homage to the tradition. Thirdly, apart from their enduring aesthetic, the compositions still offer challenges to creative spontaneous improvisers. Finally, they are tools for learning the art of melodic invention, harmonic manipulation and composition within short forms.

Harmony

Large Dimension

Harmonically, the piece, in the key of C Major, presents few challenges (See Appendix H for full score, melody and chords). It falls comfortably into the style of the time. While there is manipulation (extension) of the original harmony, the

⁶⁰ The song *My Funny Valentine* is another excellent example of Rogers' compositional style.

intent in the solo examined here was to complement rather than complicate or distract from the melody, or (subconsciously) the text. The main melody is supported by a chord progression that oscillates between tonic and dominant (Bar 1-8 with repeat). The middle eight bars (the bridge: Bars 17- 24) are the most inventive harmonically. It begins on the tonic with a flattened seventh (melody note C), which serves as a dominant of the new temporary key, F Major. The second four bars moves sequentially down a tone, via the dominant of E flat Major (melody note, B Flat) to the temporary key of E flat major. The modulation back to the original key (C major) is made via a C minor chord to D major over C (the ii chord of the original key in last inversion) and then to the dominant G7 (V chord). Because of the harmonic structure of the song, the challenge when improvising in a piece such as this is to be creative within the confines of a well-worn harmonic and formal structure.

Sound (Tone/Dynamics)

Large Dimension

Throughout my musical life, the quality of sound has always been a high priority. It is no coincidence then that critics/reviewers of performances, live and on CD, have commented on the sound of the saxophone as an identifiable, idiosyncratic feature.

"...carefully crafted explorations into the melodic beauty, space, timbre and dynamic variations of reeds and piano by players whose long friendship is evident." Roger Mitchell, SHS 4th June 2010

In earlier chapters I described the sound of the saxophone in the performances examined in this exegesis as generally warm, rich (full toned) and pitch centred; qualities in part attributable to training in and performance of classical repertoire. Other characteristics such as the bending of notes, deliberate distortion and the variable use of harmonics are more common to the jazz idiom. In this particular performance the tendency is towards a sound derivative of jazz saxophonists Hank Mobley and Stan Getz.

Melody and Motivic Material

Large Dimension

After a solo piano introduction that gradually sets the time and tempo as bass and drums enter, the opening statement of the melody on saxophone is embellished freely, with one noticeable characteristic; a tendency to repeat notes. This is not compositional in approach so much as a (subconscious) desire to 'fill the space', at the same time emphasising certain melodic notes, especially when playing the main melody (9:19). Although a recognisable characteristic of John Coltrane, it is played here in a rhythmically less precise way and thus more idiosyncratic, and sporadic. By engaging an extremely slow tempo, the melody is by necessity already being manipulated extensively before the solo sections begin. In general, melodic material is a mix of compliance with chord scale relationships in terms of note choices and a freer expression that is gestural in approach and as such is more concerned with cadential release points.

Melody

Medium/Small Dimension

The opening phrase of the improvisation proper is an influence clearly traceable to Jimmy Rowles' composition *Peacocks*, (CD *Bill Evan's Trio* featuring Stan Getz.)

The melody played by Getz begins as follows: (Fig 6.2)

Figure 6.1 *Peacocks*, Opening motive. Bars 1 – 2 (As played by Stan Getz)



It is the fragment in Bar 2 – the repeated interval of a 5th – that most identifies the composition, and one unusual in the traditional vocal-based repertoire; a repertoire that had moved away from the songbook era to one where compositions were becoming less tied to lyrics and more idiomatic to instrumental styles.

This figure bears a striking resemblance to the opening motif of the improvisation under discussion (Fig 6.3 below). It is a figure that appears periodically in my improvisations (A variation of it occurs in *Tahdon* (Chapter 4) see transcription bar 4, Appendix G).

Figure 6.2 *Easy To Remember*, motive 1. Bar 1



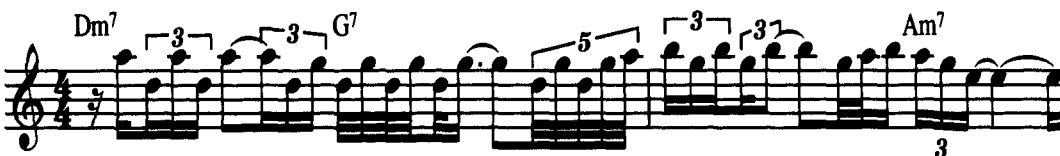
The motif is then repeated a tone lower (Fig 6.3 bar 1).

Figure 6.3 *Easy To Remember*, motive 1 developed. Bar 1



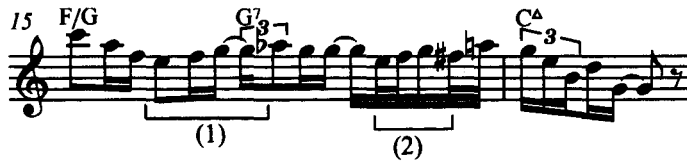
Development of this motive occurs in the bars that follow (Fig 6.4).

Figure 6.4 *Easy To Remember*, opening motive of improvisation. Bars 1 – 2



Throughout the improvisation there are examples of motives played sequentially; in different key areas and with rhythmic variation, some obvious, others less so. For example in bar 15 (Fig 6.5) a motive (i) is repeated but rhythmically altered and over two chords (From F/G – G7). (ii) It is a continuity of thought that gives improvisations a compositional logic, especially if an entire improvisation or section has connecting thematic material developed as the music unfolds.

Figure 6.5 *Easy To Remember*. Bars 15 - 16



This same Figure (above) highlights two other interconnected elements. In Bar 15 there are passing notes outside the G7 chord (b9 – Ab and M7 – F#). The effect is a note/chord tension preceding a resolution in bar 16 over the C major chord, where all notes belong inside the chord. The ‘slowing’ of note movement also plays a part in release of tension.

Some note choices and groupings can be traced to bebop, with the use of flat 9th and sharp 5, over a flat 7 chord (Fig 6.8); and notes derived from the most common altered scale (Fig 6.7).

Figure 6.6 G Altered Scale



Figure 6.7 *Easy To Remember*, Bar 18



Figure 6.8 (H= halfnote, W = wholetone, -3 = Minor 3rd) below shows a more chromatic approach to the solo line; a way playing that, although traceable to the Garzone method discussed earlier is approached in an idiosyncratic, personal way. Again the idea of gestural melodic playing rather than the more traditional melodic/rhythmic interconnection is apparent.

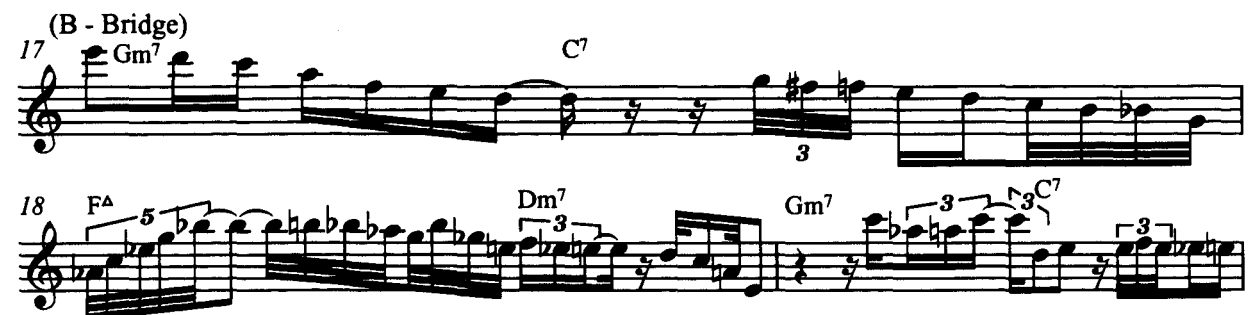
Figure 6.8 *Easy To Remember*. Bars 10 -13



The harmonic base of the first four bars of the middle section (bridge) is a C7 chord, grounded by a C pedal in the double bass. Having the chord 'in the ear' for this amount of time it is possible to move in and out of the fundamental sound, knowing that an anchor is there for reference. Note choices create various levels of tension and release, particularly noticeable in bars 18 – 19, resolved in bar 20 on an Fmajor chord (Fig 6.9).

Again, the slow tempo is significant in that the move away from note choices that comply with the underlying chords/tonality is more apparent than when playing over a faster pulse, no more obvious than in Bar 18 where and A flat major arpeggio is played over an F Major chord.

Figure 6.9 *Easy To Remember*. Bars 17 - 19





Establishing conflicting layers across the ensemble between melody, chords and tonality (and rhythm) is an identifiable characteristic of the quartet, success or otherwise depending on the skill of the players and their sense of when resolution is needed. None of these factors are pre-determined when improvising, which is why an empathetic approach within a group is crucial if the degree of 'success' is to outweigh the 'failures'.⁶¹

In summary, the melodic material in this improvisation is traceable in part to the language of bebop and the post bop method of George Garzone. It is largely through musical gesture that the playing becomes more idiosyncratic. In the following section these factors are discussed in the context of rhythm and pulse.

Rhythm

Large Dimension

Although the Burke Quartet comprises four musicians with a strong background in jazz and conscious of rhythm being at the heart of the genre, three members - Floyd, Gould and the author - were trained also in classical music. While it has not weakened the desire for a strong African-American pulse in performance, the quartet sometimes leans towards a more malleable sense of time associated with classical music. This can be explained by comparing, for example, the slow movement of a string quartet from the classical repertoire, with a quartet that plays a slow ballad-type piece in the jazz style; the work under discussion being an example.

⁶¹ Evaluating compositions and performances beyond aesthetic judgments is contentious in any musical genre but especially in the personal world of improvisation where the performer not the composer is the main creator.

In a classical quartet, when the music calls for rubato, the time shifts (slows) for all players. In a jazz quartet, the most common practice is that while the soloist might choose to play a phrase that has the effect of slowing, the traditional approach in a jazz rhythm section is to maintain a steady pulse, while the possibilities on drum kit alone can be highly complex within the pulse. The effect is that a rhythmic layer is created; a tension between soloist and rhythm section. The concept of layering has been mentioned earlier and takes many forms; across melody, harmony, texture, and rhythm.

Jazz performance is often multi-layered; it is a fundamental factor in creating (and controlling) tension and release, and consequently the shape and structure of improvisations at micro and macro levels. Although no less complex in faster tempos, the slow tempo of *It's Easy to Remember* makes observation and aural comprehension of layers of time between soloist and rhythm section comparatively easier. Malleability of rhythmic movement and pulse at slow tempos is a distinctive feature of this quartet, and takes into account space between pulses, bars and chord movements; the result is a flexibility of time individually, and for the group as a whole.

While it would be difficult to argue that the quartet is not fundamentally rhythmical, the approach in this piece to rhythm and pulse in the statement of the melody and solo in this performance (following the piano solo) is one, which, although respecting the fundamental pulse at important cadential areas, is often gestural rather than a more jazz based adherence to the rhythm section's time. This deliberate rhythmic separation (detachment) of the saxophone (and often the piano) from the accompaniment is a feature of the quartet's approach generally.

Whatever happens in terms of pulse, including occasions when the rhythmic base becomes unsettled momentarily, moments of what might be described as uncertainty are not regarded as flaws so much as idiosyncratic to the quartet. Long-term empathy in the group ensures these instances act as an impetus for spontaneous reaction rather than impeding the flow.

Rhythm

Middle/Small Dimension

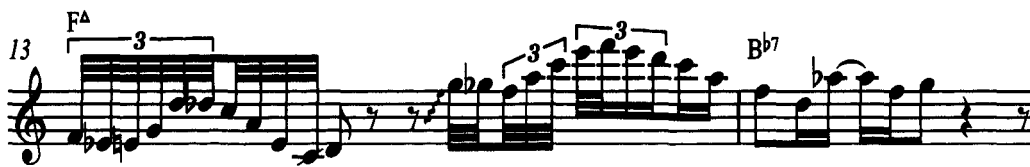
Examining in more detail the rhythmic vocabulary and placement of pulse in the saxophone solo highlights the effect an uncommonly slow tempo has on performance. Rhythmic complexity as seen in figure 6.10 (below) is a feature of the solo and indicative of an approach, even within bars, which is more gestural than compliance with the underlying beat. Every fundamental pulse of four-quarter notes is treated differently. It demonstrates how at this slow tempo rhythmic structures at the micro level can vary within extremely short periods of time, from groups of 3's, 4's, 5's, and 7's interspersed with shorter rhythmic statements.

This relates also to degrees of tension and release through rhythm, determined ultimately by cadential areas in the piece. See for example bar 10 beat 3 followed by a quarter note rest on beat 4, which is a resolution of the flourish of notes in the preceding bars (Bars 6-9). The same approach can be seen at bars 13 - 14 (Fig 6.11)

6.10 *Easy To Remember*. Bars 6 - 10

The image displays three staves of musical notation for a saxophone solo, covering bars 6 through 10. The notation is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). Above the first staff, a '6' indicates the start of bar 6, and a 'Bb7' chord symbol is placed above the first measure. The second staff begins with a '7' for bar 7, followed by 'F/G' and 'G7' chord symbols. The third staff begins with a '9 (A 2)' for bar 9, followed by 'Dm7', 'G7', 'CΔ', and 'Am7' chord symbols. The notation is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including numerous eighth and sixteenth notes, and various groupings indicated by brackets and numbers (3, 5, 7) above the notes, suggesting triplets and other non-standard rhythmic divisions. The overall feel is gestural and complex, consistent with the text's description of an uncommonly slow tempo.

Figure 6.11 *Easy To Remember*. Bar 14



In summary, the performance rhythmically throughout this solo is characterised by alternation between a style associated with the jazz idiom and its African-American approach to pulse, and gesture where there is separation of the solo from the underlying rhythm of the accompaniment. The influence of the classical idiom is most apparent when all four players are thinking in rhythmic unison.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted several characteristics that only become clear in analysing works at (very) slow tempos.

Of the three pieces examined it is the least problematic for experienced jazz players in terms of form and harmonic structure. On the other hand, it challenges one's creativity because of the simplicity of its basic harmonic structure, musical language and form. The fact that musicians such as Joe Lovano, Dave Douglas, Pat Metheny, Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett are still able to create 'new' music from this old repertoire (and especially from ballads) is testament not only to their artistry but also to the enduring nature of well crafted music based on tonal, functional harmony and melodic material that musicians continue to revisit.

What has been enlightening is observing the degree of appropriation and influence of other players, at both macro and micro level, compared to what is, arguably, original material. Further, it has reinforced to me the importance of the reflective examination of one's own playing.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The research question asked 'How does practice-based research lead to a greater understanding and development of the art of musical improvisation in a jazz context'? In this exegesis it has been addressed in an autobiographical, reflective and critical way and through analysis and observation of a varied collection of improvisations within the jazz genre.

The disclosures have led to a greater understanding of the art of improvisation from a personal perspective, but the intention also was to add to the broad body of knowledge of an art form that is by nature deeply idiosyncratic. It was an intensely positive learning experience, and more informative than I had hoped initially; both heartening in terms of my current performance practice but also alerting me to areas that as an improvising musician need attention through periodic re-visiting and re-appraisal.

Comparisons were made between degrees of pre-learnt material as distinct from what is perceived to be spontaneous. It confirmed the importance of self-examination of one's own playing at the macro and micro level, within the rigorous discipline of formal research.

Further, analysis of transcriptions brought attention to elements that do not fall comfortably into the jazz or classical genre, and consequently cited as more idiosyncratic; indicative of players whose musical history shows influences of contrasting styles. This is evident in the approach to rhythm where at times adherence to the underlying pulse was discarded in favour of flourishes of notes. It is a type of playing that defies the notion that the bar-line is always sacrosanct in accordance with the time signature and African-American (swing style) jazz.

Arguably, it is an approach to music making in a culture (and in a quartet) that respects tradition but does not always adhere to common practice within it.

While the literature on the topic helped in setting parameters, and placing it in historical context, it was aural analysis of the recorded performances, and transcriptions of my own playing that were at the heart of this research.

Underpinning the findings, autobiographical factors identified pedagogical method and musical influences that charted the progress and development of my music journey thus far.

The submitted recordings and analysis demonstrate an assimilation of identifiable influences (the principal consequence of aural based learning) and the distillation of these influences into what can be described fairly as an idiosyncratic way of playing.

Notwithstanding the difficulty in measuring the degree of spontaneity and distinctiveness in any musical improvisation, perceived success in the art is in direct proportion to the depth of musical vocabulary, salient musical ideas, technical facility, and a thought process that allows maximum freedom of expression. For improvising musicians these are imperatives in the ongoing pursuit for new pathways in the creative process.

Implicit in the reflective process is a constant surveillance of current practices and self-examination, both of which lead to informed decision-making. Ultimately the result of this research is a practice-based model for reflective practice that served well the purposes of this study. Further research will distil the analytical and reflective strategies into a model for improvisers that may be used to progress improvisatory skills and creativity.

Finally, from a personal perspective the impact of this research on my own playing has been significant. It has reminded me of the need for constant vigilance about what I produce spontaneously in performance. While the end result will always be a mixture of motor memory, of pre-learnt material and of what might fairly be called

'moment to moment' creative and idiosyncratic music-making, it has reinforced a conscious desire to ensure that the creative act is to the fore. That is, ideally, pre-learned material should always take second place to more creative music-making. This has also to do with attitude and intent, and a willingness to constantly stretch one's language and vocabulary beyond what has been instilled in years of playing jazz, but without overstepping the boundaries of what can be called improvisation in a jazz context.

Playing in this particular quartet of long-time friends and musical colleagues reinforced the importance of trust when playing with others, knowing that support is always there in attitude, and consequently musically. It has enabled a freedom of expression, which arguably, comes more readily with long musical (and social) associations. While the contribution to knowledge through my music and through this exegesis is based largely on personal experience, as a teacher as well as performer of musical improvisation, the invaluable learning experience has added an extra dimension and deeper insight into the art, which serves well one's capacity to impart the skill to others.

Ultimately, the exercise has been about listening to oneself in retrospect, examining the end product and learning from it. One of the most beneficial aspects of this research is that it has made this performer even more conscious of the need to pre-hear what is to be played, and in 'controlling the forces' make musical judgments that are more instantly compositional than those which merely regurgitate the past.

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Appendix A

Here (June 2009) Jazzhead Records (HEAD98)

Tony Gould – Piano

Robert Burke - Tenor Saxophone and Bass Clarinet.

Track Listing:

1. *Here - Introduction* - Burke/Gould
2. *Ambleside* - John Taylor
3. *If I knew/Now* - Tony Gould
4. *Song-Song* - Brad Meldhau
5. *Brand New Day* - Louisa Rankin
6. *Here - #1* - Burke/Gould
7. *Never Let Me Go* - Evans/Livingston
8. *Improvisation #77* - Burke/Gould
9. *Lullaby* - Tamara Murphy
10. *Here # 2* - Burke/Gould
11. *First Day* - Tony Gould
12. *If I knew* - Tony Gould
13. *Here - Outro* - Burke/Gould

Live At Bennetts Lane (November 2011) Jazzhead records (HEAD142)

Robert Burke: Tenor Sax

Tony Gould: Piano

Nick Haywood: Bass

Tony Floyd: Drum-kit

Track Listing:

1. *All of you* - Cole Porter
2. *Tahdon* - Jukka Perko
3. *Charukeshi* - Trad
4. *Easy to Remember* - Lorenz Hart / Richard Rodgers

5. *Pointilism* - Robert Burke

6. *Yashanmali* - Robert Burke

Appendix B

CD Releases (As Leader)

Burke, Rob and Gould, Tony. *Gateway*, Newmarket (1996) Cat# HEAD122

Burke, Rob and Gould, Tony. *A Tin Roof for the Rain*, (1998) Larrikin – (Jazzhead)

Cat# HEAD121

Burke, Rob. *Ears for Civil Engines*, (2000) Jazzhead Cat# HEAD001

Burke, Rob. *Offline*, Dodge (2000) Jazzhead Cat# HEAD011

Burke, Rob. *Wide eyed*, Rob Burke Quartet (2003) Jazzhead Cat# HEAD033

Burke, Rob. *The Edge of Today: A Mapping of the Melbourne Sound* (2005) Jazzhead

Cat# HEAD059

Selected CD Recordings - (As sideman)

Jextet

- *Jextet*, (1989) Crawdaddy Records Cat# Max003.

Kate Ceberano

- *Kate Ceberano and her Septet*, (1987) Regular Records L 38708.
- *Like Now*, (1990) Regular Records TVD 93331.
- *Brave*, (1989) Regular Records TVD 93303.
- *Think about it*, (1991) Regular Records TVD 933521.
- *Kate Ceberano and Friends*, 1994. Mushroom Records MUSH32198.2

Black Sorrows

- *Better Times*, (1992) Columbia 472149 2 / CK 90592,
- *Radio Waves*, (1996) Cat# Head106.
- *The Chosen Ones*, (1988) Cat# Head157.
- *Lucky Charm*, (1994) Columbia 478280 2.
- *The Great Black Sorrows*, (1994) Rajon 257.
- *Beat Club*, (1998) Cat# Head104.
- *The Essential Black Sorrows*, (2007) Cat# Head159.

- *One 'Mo Time*, (2004) Cat# BLUE0702
- *Roarin' Town*, (2006) Cat# Head076
- *Crooked Little Thoughts*, (2012) Cat# Head150

Revelators

- *Amazing Stories*, (2002) Head Records Cat #Head026
- *The Adventures of the Amazing Revelators*, (2000) Cat #Head015
- *The Revelators*, (2002) Cat# Head031

Icehouse

- *Code Blue*, (1992) Massive 7809442

Wendy Mathews

- *Émigré*, (1990) Rooart 9031776552

Vika and Linda Bull

- *At the Mouth of the River*, (1996) Womad Select

John Farnham

- *Then Again*, (1993) RCA 74321, BMG 74321 18441 2

Published (recorded) Compositions

Burke, Rob/Ceberano, Kate. *Call me Yours*, (1991) (Think About it) Regular

Burke, Rob/Ceberano, Kate. *See Right Through*, (1991) (Think About it) Regular

Burke, Rob/Ceberano, Kate. *Stop and Look Around*, (1996) (Single Release) Regular

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Burke, Rob. *Ashdowne*, Gateway (1996) (Newmarket)

Burke, Rob. *Turtle time*, Gateway (1996) (Newmarket)

Burke, Rob. *Gateway*, Gateway (1996) (Newmarket)

Burke, Rob. *Roadster*, Javabubbaboogaloo (1997) Head03 (Jazzhead)

Burke, Rob/ Stephens, Jon *Good Times* (1998)

Burke, Rob. *Improvisation #77*, A Tin Roof For The Rain (1998) (Larrikin)

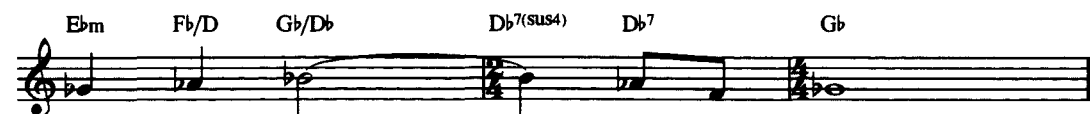
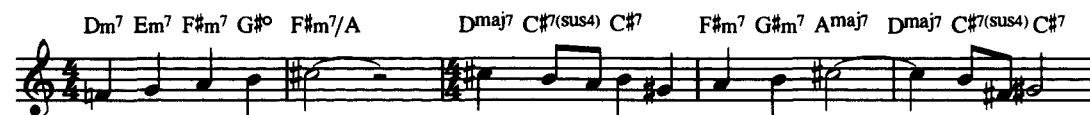
Burke, Rob. *Mobiles*, A Tin Roof For The Rain (1998) (Larrikin)
Burke, Rob. *Four Square*, Dodge (2000) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Russ*, Dodge (2000) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Scratch*, Dodge (2000) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Raga*, Dodge (2000) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Brotherhood*, Civil Engines (2002) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Edge of Today*, Edge of Today (2005) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Foolish Fun*, Edge of Today (2005) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Maybe Tomorrow*, Edge of Today (2005) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *A Place In Time*, Edge of Today (2005) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Here – Intro*, Here (2009) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Here – Outro*, Here (2009) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Yahanmali*, Live at Bennetts Lane (2011) (Jazzhead)
Burke, Rob. *Pointilism*, Live at Bennetts Lane (2011) (Jazzhead)

Appendix C

Tahdon - Score



CODA



Appendix D

Tahdon – Saxophone transcription

♩ = 81

The transcription consists of eight staves of music in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 81 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The chords and melodic lines are as follows:

- Staff 1:** Chords: Dm7, Em7, F#m7, Bbm7, Asus7, A7, Dm7, Em7, F#m7. Melody: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 2:** Chords: Bbm7, Asus7, A7, Dm7, Em7, F#m7, Bbm7, Asus7, A7. Melody: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 3:** Chords: Abm7, Em/G, Bm/F#, F#m7, G, Abm7, Em/G, Bm/F#. Melody: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 4:** Chords: F#m7, Bm, F#m7/D#m7, Em7, G, Asus7, A7. Melody: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 5:** Chords: D#m7, Em7, F#m7, G, Asus7, A7, D#m7, Em7, F#m7. Melody: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 6:** Chords: G, Asus7, A7, Abm7, Em/G, Bm/F#, F#m7, G. Melody: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 7:** Chords: Bm, C/Bb, D/A, Asus7, A7, Dm7, Em7, F#m7. Melody: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 8:** Chords: Bbm7, Asus7, A7, Dm7, Em7, F#m7, Bbm7, Asus7, A7. Melody: Quarter notes, eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes.

25 Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷ Ab^ø Em/G Bm/F^Δ

28 F^Δ G 3 3 Ab^ø Em/G Bm/F^Δ 3 3 F^Δ Bm

31 D^Δ Em⁷ F^Δm⁷ 6 G Asus⁷ A⁷ D^Δ 3 Em⁷ F^Δm⁷

34 G Asus⁷ 5 A⁷ D^Δ Em⁷ F^Δm⁷ 6 6 G Asus⁷ A⁷

37 Ab^ø Em/G Bm/F^Δ F^Δ G 3 3 Bm C/Bb D/A

40 Asus⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷

43 Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ Em⁷ F^Δ

46 Bb^Δ Asus⁷ A⁷ 3 Ab^ø Em/G Bm/F^Δ F^Δ G

49 $A^{\flat\circ}$ Em/G Bm/F# F#7 3 Bm D^A Em⁷ F#m⁷

52 G Asus⁷ A⁷ D^A Em⁷ F#m⁷ G Asus⁷ A⁷

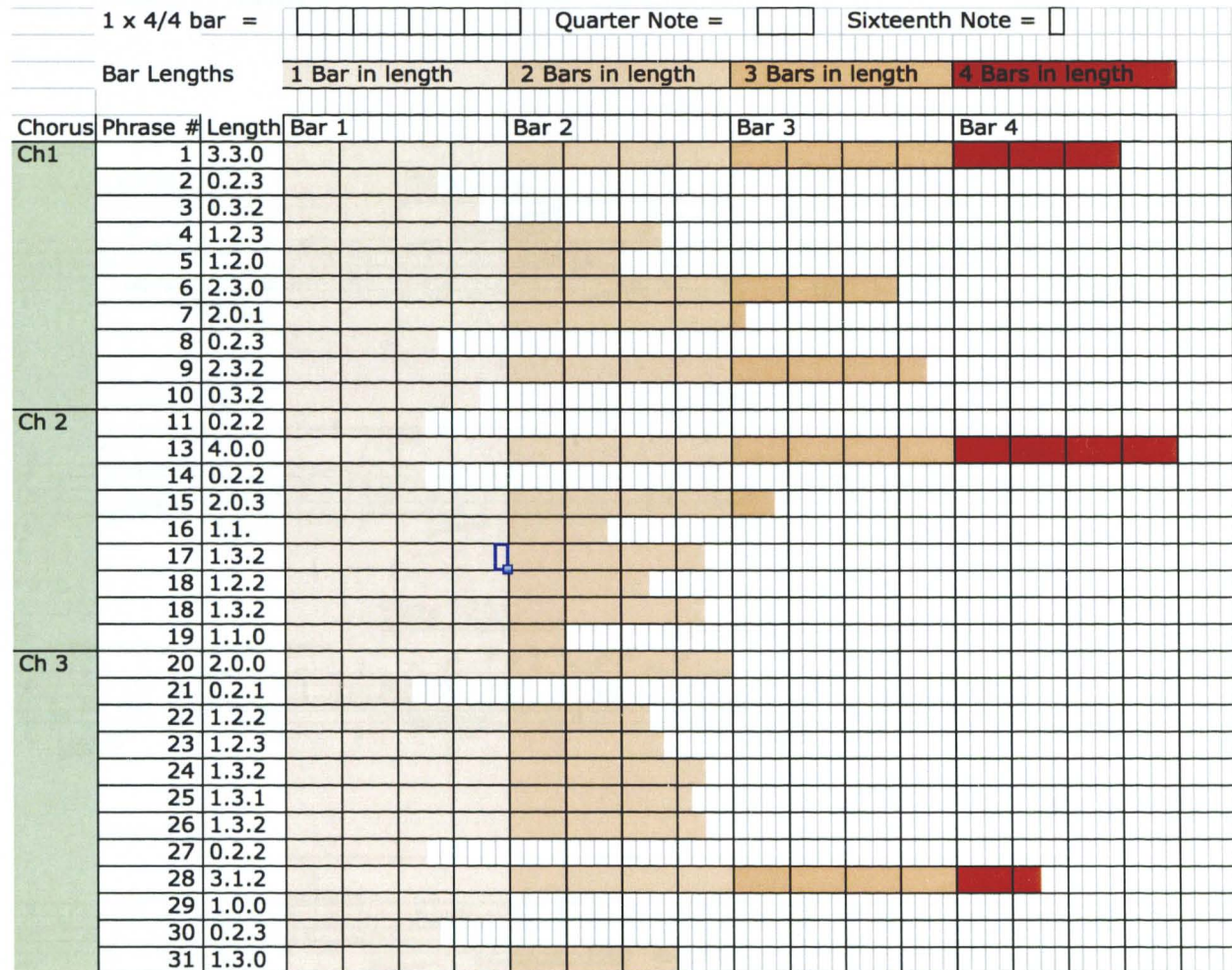
55 D^A Em⁷ F#m⁷ G Asus⁷ A⁷ $A^{\flat\circ}$ Em/G Bm/F#

58 F#7 G Bm C/B \flat D/A Asus⁷ A⁷

Appendix E

Tahdon – Saxophone Phrase Lengths

Tahdon - Graph illustrating phrase lengths



Phrase entry points

Phrase #	Entry Point	Phrase #	Entry Point	Phrase #	Entry Point	Phrase #	Entry Point
1	Beat 1.0	9	Beat 1.3	17	Beat 1.3	25	Beat 1.4
2	Beat 2.1	10	Beat 1.2	18	Beat 1.3	26	Beat 4.3
3	Beat 1.2	11	Beat 2.2	19	Beat 1.3	27	Beat 4.3
4	Beat 2.2	12	Beat 4.2	20	Beat 1.0	28	Beat 3.3
5	Beat 2.0	13	Beat 1.1	21	Beat 1.3	29	Beat 1.0
6	Beat 1.0	14	Beat 2.1	22	Beat 4.3	30	Beat 1.4
7	Beat 1.3	15	Beat 3.1	23	Beat 3.1	31	Beat 2.0
8	Beat 2.1	16	Beat 1.2	24	Beat 1.3		

Graph illustrating phrase lengths and entry and exit points



25 Phrase 13: 0.2.2

29 Phrase 14: 2.0.3 Phrase 15: 1.1.3

33 Phrase 16: 1.3.2 Phrase 17: 1.2.2

37 Phrase 18: 1.3.2 Phrase 19: 1.1.0

41 Phrase 20: 2.0.0 Phrase 21: 0.2.1 Phrase 22: 1.2.2

45 Phrase 23: 1.2.3 Phrase 24: 1.3.2

Phrase 25: 1.3.1

Phrase 26: 1.3.2

49

3

3

3

Phrase 27: 0.2.2

Phrase 28: 3.1.2

53

3

3

Phrase 29: 1.0.0

Phrase 30: 0.2.3

Phrase 31: 1.3.0

57

3

Appendix F

Charukeshi – Saxophone transcription (Part 1)

$\text{♩} = 84$ Sax enters at 4:08 mins

8

14 Freely

20

26

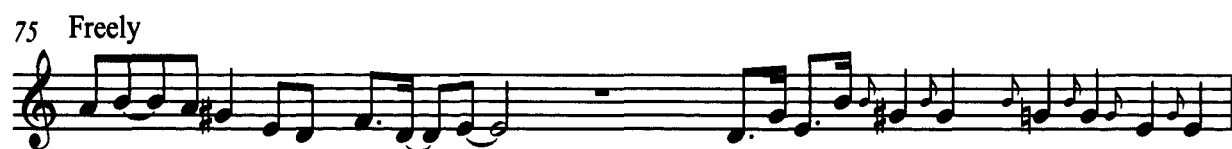
32 Freely

38 slower

44

50 In time

Detailed description: This is a musical score for saxophone, transcribed from the piece 'Charukeshi'. The score is written on a single staff in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 84 beats per minute. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical elements: eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, and full notes, often beamed together. There are several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a group of notes) at measures 1, 14, 26, and 50. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 8, 14, 20, 26, 32, 38, 44, and 50 clearly marked at the start of their respective lines. Performance instructions are placed above the staff: 'Sax enters at 4:08 mins' at the beginning, 'Freely' at measures 14 and 32, 'slower' at measure 38, and 'In time' at measure 50. The piece concludes with a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure.



103 In time

108

113

118

122

125

128 In time

132

137

143

Charukeshi – Saxophone transcription (Part 2)

$\text{♩} = 84$

5

10

16

21

25

32

37

43

47

51

55

distortion in sound

Freely

distortion in sound

swing

3

p

p

+ = Overtone ° = Squeak

Detailed description: This is a musical score for saxophone transcription of the piece 'Charukeshi' (Part 2). The score is written on ten staves of music, each beginning with a measure number (5, 10, 16, 21, 25, 32, 37, 43, 47, 51, 55). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 84. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and slurs. There are specific performance instructions: 'distortion in sound' appears twice, 'Freely' is written above the staff at measure 37, and 'swing' is written above the staff at measure 43. Dynamics include 'p' (piano) at measures 47 and 51. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' at measure 43. A '5' is written below the staff at measure 32. A '+' symbol is used as an annotation above a note at measure 55, and a '°' symbol is used above a note at measure 55. A legend at the bottom indicates that '+' represents an overtone and '°' represents a squeak.

59

64

68

73

p *pp* *pp* *nn*

Detailed description: This block contains four staves of musical notation. Staff 59 (measures 59-63) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a crescendo hairpin leading to a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. Staff 64 (measures 64-67) includes two triplet markings over eighth notes and a *p* (piano) dynamic. Staff 68 (measures 68-72) continues with eighth notes and rests, marked with *pp* dynamics. Staff 73 (measures 73-77) consists of eighth notes and rests, marked with *nn* (non-noise) dynamics. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of staff 73.

Appendix G

Charukeshi - Explanation of the mode



The notes of the raga are as follows: tonic, minor second, minor third, major 3rd, flat five, perfect fifth, minor sixth, minor seventh. These notes are referred to as sa, re (komal), ga (komal), ga (shuddha), pa (komal), pa (shuddha), dha (komal), Ni (komal), in the Indian system of sargam.⁶² (komal, meaning flat, and shuddha, meaning natural) The 8 notes in the mode are the *basis* of what constitutes a majority of the notes played in the improvisations over *Charukeshi* (*Misra Basant Mukari*)

⁶² Sargam are solfege names that refer to the names in the mode

Appendix H

It's Easy To remember – Saxophone transcription

♩ = 42

(A 1) Dm⁷ G⁷ C^Δ Am⁷

3 Dm⁷ G⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷

5 F^Δ

6 Bb⁷

7 F/G G⁷ C^Δ

9 (A 2) Dm⁷ G⁷ C^Δ Am⁷

11 Dm⁷ G⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷

13 F^Δ Bb⁷

15 F/G G⁷ C^Δ

(1) (2)

A saxophone transcription of the song 'It's Easy To remember'. The score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 42 beats per minute. It consists of nine staves of music. The first staff is labeled '(A 1)' and contains measures 1 through 4, with chords Dm7, G7, CΔ, and Am7. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8, with chords Dm7, G7, Gm7, and C7. The third staff contains measure 9, with chord FΔ. The fourth staff contains measure 10, with chord Bb7. The fifth staff contains measures 11 through 14, with chords F/G, G7, CΔ, and Am7. The sixth staff contains measures 15 through 18, with chords Dm7, G7, Gm7, and C7. The seventh staff contains measures 19 through 22, with chords FΔ and Bb7. The eighth staff contains measures 23 through 26, with chords F/G, G7, CΔ, and Am7. The ninth staff contains measures 27 through 30, with chords F/G, G7, CΔ, and Am7. There are two first endings marked (1) and (2) at the end of the piece.

(B - Bridge)

17 Gm^7 C^7 3

18 F^{Δ} 5 Dm^7 3 Gm^7 3 C^7 3

20 F^{Δ} Fm^7 5 3 Bb^7

22 E^b 3 Cm

23 Dm^7 G^7

Appendix I

Here: Selected Reviews

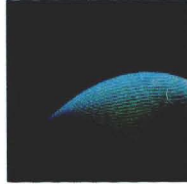


The Age Green Guide, Melbourne, April 29th 2010

Daily Planet

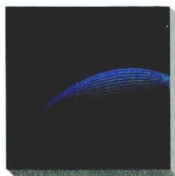
Rob Burke and Tony Gould

25 March 2010



Rob Burke and Tony Gould's new album, *Here*, is an empathetic, melodic and tender album that reflects the saxophonist's and pianist's longtime playing partnership.

Rob and Tony first recorded in the duo format in 1996 and have been performing together for 15 years. They spent much time debating technical aspects, styles and musical concepts of this new album, to the point where every note has its reason for existing. Rob is a senior lecturer and co-ordinator of Jazz/Popular Music Studies at Monash University. Tony received the Don Banks Music Award in '09 and the Order of Australia in '07. A man with a gentle touch and little desire to impress with musical bravado, he has been a big influence on the Australian Jazz community.



**Rob Burke
& Tony Gould
HERE**

Rob Burke (tenor sax, alto and bass clarinet) and pianist Tony Gould have played for the last 15 years with drummer Tony Floyd and bassist Nick Hammond, while finding time to record three albums as a duo. Disparate backgrounds – Burke with Kate Ceberano, The Black Sorrows, Gould with jazz icons Don Burrows, Clark Terry and Mark Murphy – allow for exciting interplay on this batch of originals, and jazz evergreens *Brand New Day* and *Never Let Me Go*. Variations of tempo and mood and a seemingly telepathic ability to complement each other make for stimulating listening.

JAZZHEAD/MGM

Appendix J

Live At Bennetts Lane: Selected Reviews

CD REVIEWS: JAZZ

BY ADRIAN JACKSON



**ROBERT BURKE / TONY GOULD / TONY
FLOYD / NICK HAYWOOD**
LIVE AT BENNETTS LANE
JAZZHEAD

One of the elder statesmen of the Melbourne jazz scene, pianist Tony Gould first met and played with tenor saxophonist Rob Burke when Burke was one of his students at the Victorian College of the Arts. After graduating, Burke sometimes played duets with Gould, then later added bassist Nick Haywood

and drummer Tony Floyd (also VCA graduates) to form a band that has been together for 15 years now. The wheel turns, and Gould recently started some teaching at Monash University, where Burke has headed the jazz course for several years now.

This album features their quartet, recorded live at Bennetts Lane. Instead of the usual practice of presenting an entire set from one night, they recorded several shows over a two-year period, and had the luxury of choosing the highlights from various sets, those performances where something special occurred in the moment.

The four musicians enjoy a deep rapport by now, exemplified by their ability to interact spontaneously as the music follows unexpected detours, as in the version of Cole Porter's 'All Of You', where the pianist begins improvising freely, then the other musicians join him in a free-flowing conversation that gathers momentum, and eventually turns into Porter's song. It's an inspired performance, made possible by mutual trust, as well as a shared love of melody, best exemplified by Gould and Burke's variations on the elegant 'Tahdon', by Finnish jazzman Jukka Perko.

Live at Bennetts Lane (Robert Burke, Tony Gould, Tony Floyd & Nick Haywood)

The Australian- John McBeath – December 31, 2011



From the cover of *Live at Bennetts Lane*, by Robert Burke, Tony Gould, Tony Floyd and Nick Haywood.

THIS quartet of well-established Melbourne musicians was recorded across a 12-month period from October 2009 at Bennetts Lane.

The six tracks are lengthy expositions of several standards and two of saxophonist Robert Burke's originals. Cole Porter's *All of You* is given a gauzy, out-of-tempo interpretation at first, with tenor sax gently meandering over Tony Gould's rippling piano, gradually moving into a more passionate mode as the piano plays a staccato repetitive static harmony.

Porter's theme doesn't emerge until around six minutes in and later, after Nick Haywood's bass takes up a single note reiteration, a satisfying release comes with the piano melody statement in big, extended chords.

The original piece *Pointilism* opens with jagged stopped sax notes accompanied by Tony Floyd's unified drum shots aligned with piano and bass stabs, then establishes a vague, free-style structure that continues throughout as the track develops into dreamy, tempo-less terrain.

The standard *Easy to Remember* opens with a flowingly pensive piano before the tenor sax arrives for a luscious interpretation of the ballad at an ultra-slow speed, underpinned by bass and drums as the piano segues into a more conventional backing.

Tahdon, by Finnish saxophonist Jukka Perko is a slow, Nordic, atmospheric piece of beautiful harmonies and a journeying narrative, amply revealed by the piano opening, before the tenor's sympathetic exploratory solo makes its arrival.

LIVE AT BENNETTS LANE, BUT 15 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Posted on [November 13, 2011](#) |

GIG: CD Launch at Bennetts Lane Jazz Club, Melbourne, Tuesday, November 15, 8.30pm

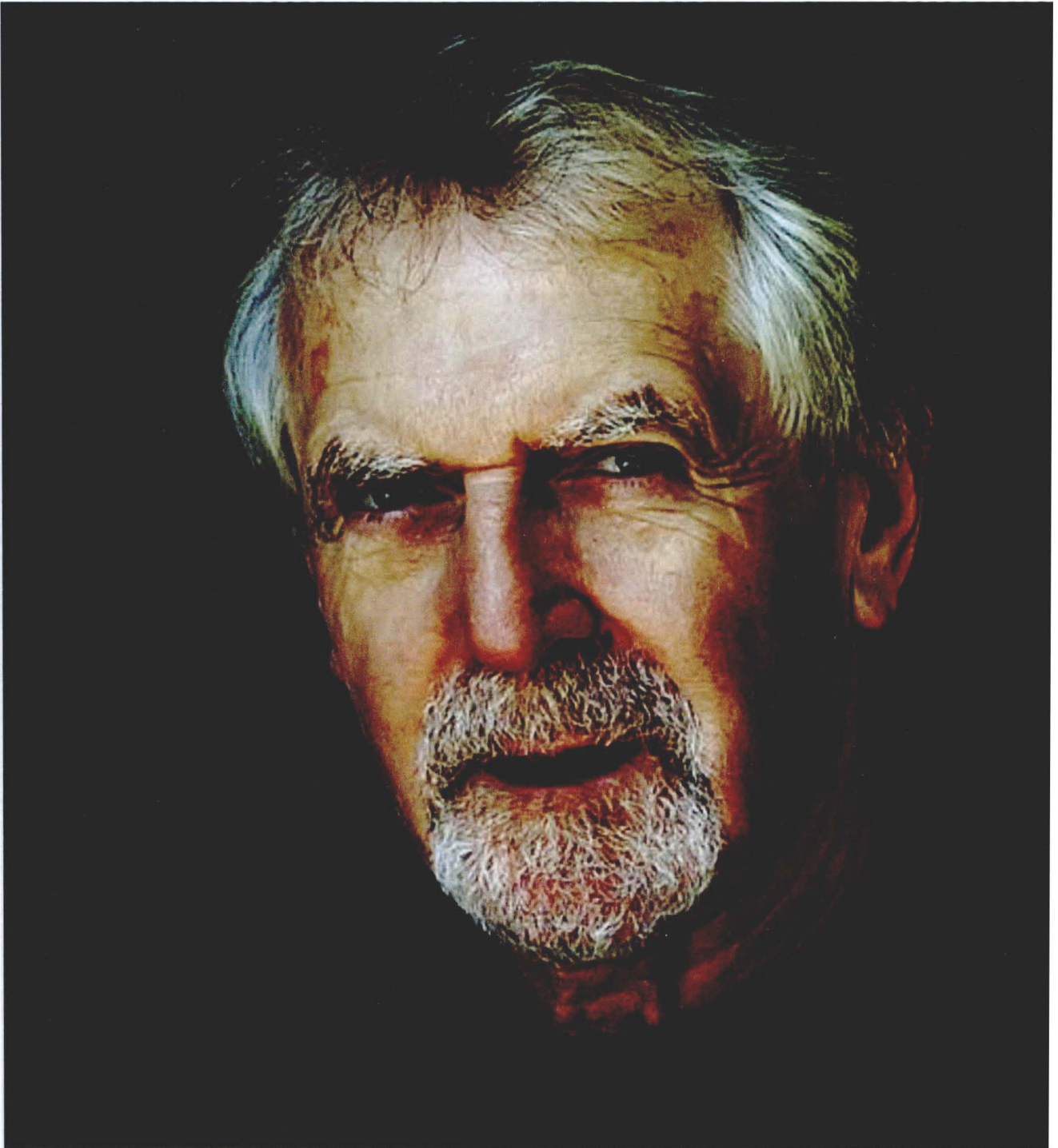


Rob Burke plays Bennetts Lane

When **Robert Burke**, **Tony Gould**, **Nick Haywood** and **Tony Floyd** launch their album *Live At Bennetts Lane* (Jazzhead) this week by playing live at Bennetts Lane, one member of the quartet will be studying their performance closely.

Bassist Haywood, who with his newly formed quartet of **Colin Hopkins** on piano, **Stephen Magnusson** on guitar and **Allan Browne** on drums recently released the album *1234*, is making a comparison of these two bands as part of his studies for a PhD.

The key difference between the two groups is time spent playing together as a band — the combo of Burke, Gould, Haywood and Floyd have had 15 years to get to know each other's work in the quartet. It will be fascinating to see what emerges from Haywood's participant-observation research.



Tony Gould (image supplied)

There is an academic flavour to the quartet that Burke says has matured over its years of playing at Bennetts Lane. Burke is Head of the School of Music and Coordinator of Jazz and Popular Studies at Monash University. Gould, who until 2005 was Head (Dean) of and Associate Professor at the School of Music, Victorian College of the Arts, will take up a teaching post at Monash University in 2012. Haywood is Head of Program and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Music at NMIT. Floyd works as a sessional teacher at the Victoria College of Arts and Monash University.

But the music for Tuesday's CD launch, culled by Burke from his recordings taken over three years of the band's live performances at Bennetts Lane, is likely to be anything but academic or formal.

Burke says quartet members do not rehearse, but arrive at the gig early to go through the tunes.

"The tunes develop. But we are improvisers. The compositions are just merely guides and in some tunes we don't get to the melody for five or six minutes. In *All of You*, the melody comes in at the eight-minute mark. It's really in the moment."



Participant observation: Nick Haywood at Wangaratta Jazz & Blues Festival 2011

On the new album the quartet plays two standards, Cole Porter's *All of You* and *Easy To Remember* (Hart/Rodgers), traditional tune *Charukeshi, Tahdon* by Finnish saxophonist **Jukka Perko** and two pieces by Burke entitled *Pointilism* and *Yashanmali* (after his three daughters).

Burke describes *Pointilism* as a straight-ahead tune. “The chords are quite diatonic, so it makes a lot of sense. Everything’s in staccato and it develops from there. It’s not crazy stuff, but it is free.”

Burke says the quartet tries to avoid taking a formulaic approach to improvisation. “It’s not that interesting to the other members of the ensemble if somebody’s playing 10 chords of their own licks which are somebody else’s. So if we’re playing a standard we’ll be playing within the harmony, but moving away from playing somebody else’s solos. It’s about the group improvisation.

“We don’t plan this. It’s the way we hear music and we’ve evolved as a group. That sort of rapport only happens over time.”

The quartet has had plenty of time to build rapport. Burke was 15 when he met Gould, who was taking classes at the University of Melbourne.

“It was a different time then, when there weren’t really jazz clubs and people weren’t really jazz musicians,” Burke says. “There was jazz in the sixties, but people’s main jobs were in television and the theatre — the Frank Smiths and Graeme Lyalls. Don Burrows would be doing a TV documentary while he was doing his gigs.”



Tony Floyd on drums at Bennetts Lane, but with a different band.

Burke met Floyd, along with **Doug de Vries** and **Jex Saarelaht**, in the 1980s when music educator **Jamie Aebersold** came to Australia. He met Nick at the VCA and quartet members had some gigs from 1983 when **Martin Jackson** formed the **Melbourne Jazz Cooperative**. But they did not start playing together as a group until 1996.

Burke says this is not traditional mainstream jazz.

"We don't play what I call eighth note jazz, which is what you have when the bassist is doing a walking bass. It's more open.

"We do have jazz tradition. We've listened to all the greats and transcribed them and we have influences from all those people, but we've moved on from that. There are influences from every type of music. If you listen to Tony Gould, he sounds like Ravel and Debussy."