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A Study of Bob Brookmeyer's Compositional Style for Large Jazz Ensemble

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A STUDY OF BOB BROOKMEYER’S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE FOR LARGE JAZZ ENSEMBLE

By

Stephen J. Guerra, Jr.

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

August 2016
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A doctoral essay submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

A STUDY OF BOB BROOKMEYER’S
COMPOSITIONAL STYLE FOR LARGE JAZZ ENSEMBLE

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A Study of Bob Brookmeyer’s Compositional Style for Large Jazz Ensemble  (August 2016)

Abstract of a doctoral essay at the University of Miami.

Doctoral essay supervised by Professor Gary Lindsay.  
No. of pages in text. (408)

This study will examine the compositional style of composer, pianist, and trombonist Bob Brookmeyer as it pertains to his works for large jazz ensemble. Brookmeyer’s writing will be presented as falling into three distinct periods; The Early Years, The Vanguard Years, and The New Art Years. Each period will be defined based upon the musical elements discovered in representative compositions and the events in Brookmeyer’s life, as well as on the jazz scene that influenced his writing. In presenting an analysis of representative musical examples from compositions within the three historical periods a clear progression of Brookmeyer’s writing style will be revealed. The author will then present six original compositions for large ensemble that reflect the compositional techniques discovered during this study.
In honor of my grandfather,

James D. Fulginiti

For my father who gave me the gift of music,

Stephen J. Guerra, Sr.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents, Steve and Donna Guerra, for their encouragement and guidance throughout my life. The values they instilled in me have contributed to my success while allowing me to make a difference in the lives of my students. I would like to thank my sister Krista and my brother Joseph for their support attending numerous rehearsals, concerts, and events growing up.

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It would be impossible to realize my artistic vision without the talents and enthusiasm of the many musicians who have performed my music. I am constantly in awe of your talents and look forward to making more music together in the future.

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Finally, to my wife, my best friend, and my inspiration Jennifer Guerra…You have encouraged and supported my dreams since the day we met. Without you none of this would have been possible. You are my strength, my support, and my reason for living. To you, my one and only love, thank you more than anyone.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Robert Edward (Bob) Brookmeyer (1929–2011) is widely considered to be one of the most influential jazz composers and arrangers.¹ Like other highly prominent composers for big band such as Thad Jones, Gil Evans, and Sammy Nestico, Bob Brookmeyer’s writing is extensively studied by aspiring jazz writers. These arrangers have been continually recognized as strong models of effective big band writing. This is evidenced by their prominent inclusion for study in university level writing courses and in the many texts used in those classes. Two common resources used in university and college jazz studies curriculums, Ray Wright’s Inside the Score and Fred Sturm’s Changes Over Time: The Evolution of Jazz Arranging, feature their writing prominently.

While the importance of the contributions that Thad Jones, Sammy Nestico, and many other composers have made to the jazz composition tradition are irrefutable, it is the belief of the author that Bob Brookmeyer’s contributions to the idiom stand out. Brookmeyer’s writing career spanned more than 60 years, having written his first compositions in the 1950’s and continuing until his death, at the age of 81, in 2011. Throughout his career Brookmeyer composed and arranged for large and small jazz ensembles, studio orchestras, classical chamber ensembles, and symphony orchestras. Brookmeyer’s compositions have been performed by major ensembles including The Terry Gibb’s Jazz Orchestra, The Claude Thornhill Orchestra, Gerry Mulligan’s Concert Jazz Band and the Thad

Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra. Brookmeyer served as the musical director of both the Village Vanguard Jazz Orchestra based in New York and his own New Art Orchestra which was based in Cologne, Germany. After rejoining the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, numerous European state-sponsored jazz ensembles such as the Stockholm Jazz Orchestra and the WDR Big Band began to feature Brookmeyer’s music extensively. It was also during this time, while studying with composer Earle Brown, that Brookmeyer wrote large scale orchestral pieces described as “spiky big-M modernist”\(^2\) orchestral works, including a *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra*\(^3\), and a *Double Concerto for Two Orchestras*\(^4\). In addition to instrumental music for large jazz ensemble, Brookmeyer wrote arrangements for vocalists such as Ray Charles\(^5\) and Fay Claassen.

Perhaps the most important facet of Brookmeyer’s career is his record of mentoring students who went on to become highly successful Jazz composers. Brookmeyer’s mentoring left a lifelong impression on his students and helped to shape many influential young musicians including Ayn Inserto, Darcy James Argue and Nicholas Urie.\(^6\) Established New York Big Band writers such as Maria Schneider and Jim McNeely spent significant time under his tutelage. Brookmeyer

\(^2\) [http://www.thomasknauersews.com/modern-or-modern/](http://www.thomasknauersews.com/modern-or-modern/)

\(^3\) for guitarist Jim Hall and the Stockholm Radio Symphony


taught numerous students during his appointments at the Manhattan School of Music in New York, NY, the New England Conservatory in Boston, MA, and the World School of Jazz in Rotterdam. Bob also co-founded the BMI Composer’s Workshop with fellow jazz composer Manny Albam.

In addition to being a prolific composer Brookmeyer was an accomplished pianist and valve trombonist. He recorded several albums as a pianist including the innovative and creative The Ivory Hunters: Double Barrel Piano featuring himself on piano alongside one of the most influential pianists in the history of jazz, Bill Evans. His proficiency on his main instrument, the valve-trombone, led Brookmeyer to many playing opportunities including work in television on the Merv Griffin Show and on movie scores such as the 1970 film Lovers and Strangers, where you can hear Brookmeyer’s valve-trombone featured performing the main theme. In the jazz world Bob appeared most often as a sideman which is a role-playing member of an ensemble as opposed to the leader. Of note are his small group collaborations with trumpeter Clark Terry, with whom he co-lead a quintet, and his place in the large ensembles led by Claude Thornhill, Gerry Mulligan, and the Original Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra.

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For the purposes of this study the author has identified three major periods in Bob Brookmeyer’s composing career; *The Early Years*, *The Vanguard Years*, and *The New Art*. These periods will be further explained and defined in this paper based on the following factors:

- The artistic vision of the band that he was writing for.
- The specific musicians (soloists) that would perform his compositions.
- The stage of his developmental progress as a composer.
- The stage of his life and the influence of his lifestyle.
- The influence of music and musicians to which he was exposed.

Musical examples from compositions deemed relevant to this study by the author will be used as models.

**Purpose of the Study**

It is the goal of this study to analyze and identify important compositional techniques commonly utilized and/or developed by Bob Brookmeyer that most contributed to his highly personal voice. Through analysis of representative works from Brookmeyer’s writing for large jazz ensemble the author will summarize the techniques Brookmeyer used throughout the evolution of his music. The study of commonly used compositional techniques by a composer as prolific and enduring as Bob Brookmeyer, can be valuable in many ways. This study has been undertaken in the spirit of long-time Professor of Jazz Composition at the University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music Rayburn Wright’s idea that students will discover how to learn “by analyzing the continually evolving musical models in the world and by extending their craft by imaginative efforts”.\(^8\) It is the

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hope of the author that this study will serve as a resource for students of jazz composition looking to examine their own musical growth as they develop an individual voice and extend their craft.

**Research Questions**

The following are research questions which guided the scope and direction of this study.

1) Who was Bob Brookmeyer and why is his music worthy of advanced study?

2) How are the specific periods of Brookmeyer's compositional career defined?

3) What are the social, musical and situational forces that drove the music that Brookmeyer wrote throughout his career?

4) How did Brookmeyer utilize compositional techniques present in the traditions of jazz and western classical music to develop his highly personal musical voice?

5) How can the author incorporate the techniques discovered through the course of this study in a series of six original compositions for large jazz ensemble?
Although there has not been a single volume publication dedicated to Bob Brookmeyer\textsuperscript{9} or his compositions there are still many sources available which were used by the author. Sources focusing on Brookmeyer’s compositions and his personal life and career were included. The most valuable of these are interviews with Bob that took place later in his life in which he reflects on the totality of his experiences and gives insight into his thought process and evolution. Interviews, books, and articles about related musicians have been valuable, especially those written about the styles and lives of Mel Lewis and Gerry Mulligan. The musical examples used in this study have been obtained either through publishers or were transcribed by the author. Liner notes from the recordings containing the included compositions were also helpful resources throughout the author’s research. Bob Brookmeyer’s personal website\textsuperscript{10} and his artistShare\textsuperscript{11} website provided helpful information regarding his biography, discography and scores. These sources also contained information about his career in his own words through available interviews. Additionally, various texts on composition were utilized as reference material.

\textsuperscript{9} There is however, a book covering Brookmeyer’s improvisational style entitled \textit{Evolution: The Improvisational Style of Bob Brookmeyer} by Rob Hudson and published by Advance Music.


\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
Interviews

There are published interviews with Bob Brookmeyer available in journals, magazines, and internet blogs. The most insightful of these interviews appears online at Marc Myers’ blog *JazzWax*\(^\text{12}\) which was first published in five parts from June 22-26, 2009. Myers questions Brookmeyer on topics spanning from his early life to his projects at the time. Brookmeyer is candid and answers many of the questions he is asked in great detail. This interview stands out from many of the others available in which Brookmeyer seems to give “stock” answers to many of the questions asked. One such interview is the 2006 interview from *Goldmine Magazine*\(^\text{13}\) in which Brookmeyer gives simple one-word answers to many questions.

Artistshouse Music\(^\text{14}\) presented two videos, that can found at youtube.com, which feature Bob Brookmeyer. The first\(^\text{15}\) is video documentation of Brookmeyer leading a more than two-hour rehearsal of the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra reading several of his new compositions from 2009. This video provides insight into

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\(^{14}\) An initiative of the Herb Alpert Foundation, Artistshouse Music provides a non-profit musicians’ Website where all musicians can receive informational support, guidance, and expert resources to help them navigate the challenges and maximize the opportunities available to them within the music industry. (http://www.artistshousemusic.org/About+Artistshouse+Music)

Brookmeyer's perception of his own music and how he relays his desires to the musicians performing. The second video entitled *A Suite for Three: A Documentary of Bob Brookmeyer’s Compositions* deals specifically with how Brookmeyer approaches composition as well as how he teaches an ensemble to perform his music in a way that effectively captures his compositional intent.⁶ Ben Ratliff’s May 12, 2006 article from the New York Times entitled *Bob Brookmeyer: Raging and Composing Against the Jazz Machine* features an interview in which Brookmeyer speaks about the reasons why he challenged the boundaries of conventional compositional techniques and more specifically about how he dealt with improvisation within the confines of large ensemble composition. The article also provides biographical information. An expanded version of this article is included in Ratliff’s 2008 book *The Jazz Ear: Conversation’s Over Music*.

**Composing and Arranging Resources**

Rayburn Wright’s *Inside the Score* is a seminal text among students and teachers of jazz composition and arranging. There is a complete section on Brookmeyer’s writing as well as the writing of Sammy Nestico and Thad Jones. Complete analysis’ of compositions by Brookmeyer include *Hello and Goodbye* (1979), *First Love Song* (1979), and *ABC Blues* (1966). This volume also includes an interview with Brookmeyer regarding these compositions and the included analysis.

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Changes Over Time: The Evolution of Jazz Arranging by Fred Sturm is a unique resource in that it examines jazz composition and arranging from a historical and chronological standpoint. Two arrangements of Fletcher Henderson’s King Porter Stomp done by Bob Brookmeyer thirty-six years apart are included in Sturm’s book as an example of how a composer’s compositional techniques develop over time.

Gary Lindsay’s Jazz Arranging Techniques from Quartet to Big Band served as a resource outlining the fundamental techniques that jazz composers and arrangers employ including vertical voicing techniques, form, melody and orchestration. Michael Abene and Richard Sussman’s Jazz Composition in the Digital Age also serves a similar purpose. Bill Dobbin’s Jazz Arranging and Composing: A Linear Approach serves as a resource focusing on melodic line writing and its implications on harmony.

Scores for much of the music researched in this study were obtained through Bob Brookmeyer’s website and through music distributor E-jazzlines. These materials were a vital starting point for all analysis and research.

Recordings

The first recording used in this study was the 1957 Emarcy release Swingin’ with the Terry Gibbs Orchestra and Quartet. Brookmeyer’s arrangement of the

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17 The first for the Zoot Sims-Bob Brookmeyer Octet from 1958 and the second, titled King Porter ’94, was commissioned specifically for Changes Over Time from 1996.
Harold Arlen’s “Happiness is a Thing Called Joe” and his original swinging composition “Just Plain Meyer” are both featured among the albums’ eleven tracks. The additional nine tracks were contributed by other jazz writers including Ernie Wilkins, Al Cohn, and Manny Albam. Brookmeyer contributed two arrangements to the 1959 Mercury release Terry Gibbs and His Orchestra – Launching a New Band. Bob’s arrangements of “Don’t Be That Way” and “Let’s Dance” are both swinging recordings that show his deep Basie influence.

In 1960 Verve Records released the first of two albums by the Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band that featured Brookmeyer’s writing. The Concert Jazz Band includes arrangements of Gerry Mulligan’s “Bweebida Bobbida” and Django Reinhardt’s “Manoir De Mes Reves”. Although the ensemble was heavily inspired by the Miles Davis Birth of the Cool sessions, most notable due to the absence of a chordal instrument in the rhythm section, the arrangements are more developed and swinging (particularly “Bweebida Bobbida”) than those found on the Gil Evans Birth of the Cool sessions. Gerry Mulligan '63 showcases Brookmeyer writing for his longtime friend and associate Clark Terry as a featured soloist with the CJB. “Big City Life” features Gerry Mulligan on piano, solo space for Clark Terry to improvise over the blues using a plunger mute, and a sparse orchestration utilizing woodwinds and sparse brass. “Big City Blues” features Terry’s trumpet and angular saxophone melodies throughout. In contrast, his arrangement of Gerry Mulligan’s composition “Ballad”, sometimes credited as “A Ballad”, feature

20 typically, piano and/or guitar
Mulligan’s baritone saxophone soaring over a beautifully colorful and rich orchestration.

_Gloomy Sunday and Other Bright Moments_ is a 1961 recording released on Verve Records. Brookmeyer spoke fondly of this album stating “I consider it my pride and joy. I took many creative risks here, most based on the heels of working with Bill Finnegan. I used woodwinds, double reeds and other instrument configurations I hadn’t used before. My attitude toward orchestration was really a big step forward in my development. Working with Bill gave that to me.”

Brookmeyer is responsible for half of the music on this album, two arrangements and two original compositions. The additional four pieces were contributed by writers Al Cohn, Gary McFarland, Eddie Sauter and Ralph Burns. Upon its release jazz critics called the album “Bob’s most successful venture as a leader” (he had previously released several small group sessions). Of note is Brookmeyer’s concern for the integration of the soloist into his writing so early in his development declaring, "With so supple and multi-colored an orchestral setting, the solos become absorbingly integrated into the total musical experience. In short, this is not simply a string of choruses over a conventional, predictable set of backgrounds.”

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21 a prominent arranger with the Claude Thornhill Orchestra


24 Ibid.
Two of Brookmeyer’s charts, an arrangement of “Willow Weep for Me” and his original GRAMMY nominated composition “ABC Blues” are featured on, *Presenting the Thad Jones and Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra* released on Solid State records in 1966. This was the first recording made by the band after its formation in 1965. Upon returning to the band as the musical director after Thad Jones left to live in Denmark in 1979, Brookmeyer’s music was featured exclusively on two albums. The 1980 release *Bob Brookmeyer – Composer & Arranger* on the Gryphon Label and 1982’s *Make Me Smile & Other New Works* by Bob Brookmeyer on Finesse Records featured twelve of Bob’s compositions and arrangements. These albums include several of Bob’s best known charts including his arrangement of Hoagy Carmichael’s “Skylark” and original compositions “Hello and Goodbye”, “Ding Dong Ding”, “First Love Song”, and “Nasty Dance”. The sheet music (scores and parts) for many of the compositions on these albums was made commercially available through Kendor Music Publishing, allowing Brookmeyer’s music to be played by professional and college bands.

Brookmeyer made five recordings with his New Art Orchestra. Three of these records, *New Works - Celebration* (1997), *Waltzing with Zoe* (2001), and *Get Well Soon* (2004), were released on Challenge Records International, an independent record label based in the Netherlands.25 *Spirit Music* (2006) and one of the last projects Bob worked on prior to his death *Standards featuring Faye*

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Claassen (2011) were both released through the ground breaking platform artistShare.26

OverTime: The Music of Bob Brookmeyer was released in 2014 by the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra on the Planet Arts record label features the last music written by Bob. The culmination of his many years of study is evident in the highly complex and innovative writing. The previously mentioned documentary produced by Artisthouse music was related to this release.

Chapter 3

METHOD

For the purpose of this study, the author has examined twenty scores for large jazz ensemble\textsuperscript{27} that span the entirety of Brookmeyer’s career. Specific attention has been paid to compositional techniques found in his writing and how the use of those techniques evolved over time. When written scores were not available, the author transcribed the music from the original recordings. Finally, the author composed six pieces inspired by the techniques present in the material studied.

Data Collection

Specific techniques were chosen as topics for discussion after the study of numerous scores and transcriptions that best represented Brookmeyer’s compositional style. Examples from compositions spanning his career will be presented to effectively demonstrate his compositional concepts. Compositional techniques investigated include those related to harmony, melody, orchestration, form, and how the soloist is integrated into the music as a whole were investigated. This last point, is explored throughout the study. It is clear that the interplay between the composer’s voice and the soloist’s voice was of utmost importance to Brookmeyer and inspired his growth as a composer to a large degree. In addition, Brookmeyer’s professional and personal life were researched and correlations between his compositional style and those factors will also be explored.

\textsuperscript{27} Commonly referred to as a big band. This ensemble most often contains at least 4 saxophones, 6 brass, and a rhythm section containing piano, bass, drums and guitar.
Compositional Process

The music composed by the author has been greatly influenced by the techniques uncovered during the analysis and research involved in this study and as a result of the natural progression of the author’s writing over a period of several years. It is the intention of the author that the writing produced will reflect an assimilation of those ideas into his compositional voice and not be perceived as a direct replication of Brookmeyer’s techniques.

The compositions contained within were recorded in the facilities operated by the Studio Jazz Writing program at the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music and The Hit Factory Criteria recording studio in Miami, FL. The University of Miami’s Frost Concert Jazz Band performed “Through It All” and “From Afar”. The students in Gary Lindsay’s Studio Jazz Writing Program assisted with the production and engineering of this project, a process that the author oversaw in every aspect. The remaining compositions, “Ten Years”, “Want a Cracker”, “Red Means Go”, and “A Promise Not Forgotten” were recorded at the Hit Factory in Miami, FL. The engineer for these sessions was Frost School alumnus Brian Gerstle. The players were students and faculty from the Frost School of Music as well as several musicians from New York and Boston who the author has known for many years. These recordings were released on the author’s first CD entitled Namesake.
Chapter 4  
CHRONOLOGY

The three stages of Brookmeyer’s evolution as a jazz writer identified in the course of this study are clearly defined by his musical associations during each period. The bandleaders that he wrote for were unique, forward-thinking, and had definite musical visions. In this chapter we will explore the historical and musical developments present during these time periods.

The Early Years

Robert Brookmeyer was born in Kansas City, Missouri on December 19, 1929. He began his musical training on clarinet at the age of eight at the urging of his father, a music lover. Upon the request of his school band director Bob took up the trombone at the age of 12. While studying trombone with “an old German teacher...who spat in my face while he taught me to tongue” Bob became enamored with composition. “He wrote marches in a lovely hand, and I saw all these wonderful pages full of handwritten music, which made me think that writing music would be a nice thing to do.” By the age of 14 Bob was writing arrangements for a local dance band that consisted of three tenor saxophones, three trumpets, and rhythm section. Bob earned $15 a chart by selling the arrangements to a band music publishing house based in Omaha, Nebraska. Eventually he saved enough money to buy a piano and taught himself to play. Bob was inspired by the music of the Count Basie Orchestra, and the music of Debussy.


and Stravinsky and eventually enrolled at the Kansas City Conservatory where he studied music composition. Bob explains his time at the conservatory by saying "By 1950 I was taking all sorts of subjects at the Conservatory, some master’s and some doctorate, and I was even teaching there, but things were getting a bit too easy, so I left to go on the road with Orrin Tucker’s Band." The time on the road with Orrin Tucker’s ensemble began Bob’s prolific and successful career as a sideman.

In December of 1951, after an unsuccessful 6-months in the United States Army, Bob became the pianist in saxophonist Tex Beneke’s big band. After leaving Tex’s band Bob spent time with drummer Ray McKinley where he was exposed to the writing of Bill Finnegan and Eddie Sauter, the latter of which whose writing was so fascinating to Bob that he described it as “like sight-reading Bartok”. During 1952 Bob became a trombonist and arranger for the Claude Thornhill Orchestra. Brookmeyer described Thornhill’s band as “alright”. Thornhill would brag that he had something special in Brookmeyer. “How about that. I got two for the price of one. He plays my theme and writes some arrangements.” Although his time in the band was short, lasting just six weeks, Brookmeyer was exposed to the writing of Gil Evans, who according to Bob, “wrote some things for the band that were pretty complex”. The exposure to highly creative jazz writers who challenged the known


32 Ibid.
boundaries of jazz writing such as Finnegan, Sauter and Evans at an early age greatly influenced Brookmeyer’s compositional voice.

During the early 1950’s, vibraphonist Terry Gibbs led Los Angeles based bands that were exclusively studio bands and did not perform in front of live audiences. In the fall of 1958, Gibbs formed his own big band with the purpose of focusing on performing live. One of Bob Brookmeyer’s most popular compositions entitled “Just Plain Meyer” along with “Happiness is a Thing Called Joe” was recorded on the 1956 release _Swingin’: Terry Gibbs and His Orchestra_. During this time period big bands in Los Angeles were not garnering much attention from the music community and the most popular bands of the time, led by arrangers Bill Holman and Med Flory were strictly rehearsal bands that did not perform in front of audiences. In January of 1959 the Terry Gibbs Dream Band started a Tuesday night residency at the Seville jazz club in Hollywood. Bassist Steve Wallace describes the Gibbs Dream Band as “incredibly thrilling and powerful. It had everything you could ask for in a big band – precision sectional playing, great soloists and charts, tremendous teamwork and spirit – it was a thundering, joyous, swinging band, considered by many one of the best ever.” The band was considered by many, including Bob Brookmeyer, to be an extremely swinging band atypical of most west-coast bands in existence at the time. In a 1995 interview Bob did with Köln Radio made available through his artistShare website he states “it

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didn’t sound like a California or West coast jazz band – it was a very hot, very swinging, and very precise."³⁵

In addition to employing the strongest players in Los Angeles including drummer Mel Lewis, trombonist Frank Rosolino, and trumpeter Conte Candoli, Gibbs hired well-known jazz writers such as Bill Holman, Shorty Rogers, Manny Albam, Marty Paich, and Bob Brookmeyer. A band with a steady gig in Los Angeles allowed composers and arrangers the opportunity to have their music played on a regular basis. Bill Holman noted “I didn’t have a band; the records I made had gotten a band together specifically for that. So I didn’t have a band of my own that I was trying to promote, so having my music performed by a band that was working was beneficial for me.”³⁶ Like Holman, Bob Brookmeyer took advantage of this situation and many of his arrangements and compositions were regulars in the band’s book during its early years. Two of these arrangements, “Let’s Dance” and “Don’t Be That Way” were included on the Dream Band’s 1959 debut recording Terry Gibbs and His Orchestra: Launching a New Sound in Music on the Mercury label. During that same year the band also re-released two versions of Brookmeyer’s composition “Just Plain Meyer”.³⁷

The Dream Band’s live run from 1959 through 1961 was one of the most successful and longest-running steady gigs for any big band after the swing era.38 It can be assumed that the Dream Band’s focus on live performance and “modern” compositions influenced Mel Lewis’ conceptualization of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra less than 10 years later. More important to this study is that the Terry Gibbs Dream Band and later the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra gave Brookmeyer working laboratories for his writing. This allowed him to experiment compositionally while having his music played on a consistent basis by some of the greatest jazz musicians of the time. This unique opportunity inspired Brookmeyer when he created educational programs in the future. He stated in a 2005 interview for the International Trombone Association Journal that “We lack “new music” orchestras. True experimental groups – for composers to stretch and try and fail and learn – do not exist. At the New England Conservatory, we have a “Jazz Composers Workshop Orchestra” which meets every Tuesday night. From what I gather, this is a rarity. It shouldn’t be: for players and writers the weekly contact is invaluable.”39

Perhaps the most important musical experience of this time period for Bob was playing in and writing for Gerry Mulligan’s Concert Jazz Band where he first became a prominent arranger.40 Brookmeyer’s role in this band, besides being the


39 Brookmeyer a look back article from ITA

CJB’s most prolific writer, in the band was an important one, for in Brookmeyer Mulligan had found his “alter ego” Due to Gerry’s desire to simply be a bandleader and not be involved with mundane issues, Bob became the band’s straw boss and de facto music director in charge of all personnel issues. Brookmeyer was integral in recruiting trumpeter Clark Terry, with whom he previously co-lead a small-group, into the CJB as the band’s main trumpet soloist. At one point, unhappy with the way the CJB was sounding, Brookmeyer stole Terry Gibbs’ strongest players and hired drummer Mel Lewis, trumpeter Conte Candoli, and bassist Buddy Clark to play in the CJB. Gary Giddins sums up the band’s musical goals, as a concert band and not as a dance band, in his book *Visions of Jazz: The First Century*.

“A concert band’s first order of business is a reevaluation of the basics. In the absence of dancers, such as fundamentals of swing, duration, and melody are open to revision. The constant foxtrot-four had become excruciatingly dull, making tempo changes, contrary meters, and rubato cadenzas increasingly attractive. New voicings, abetted by a wider span of instruments (one legacy of the Miles Davis Nonet), promised bolder colors, cluster harmonies, headier brews of every kind. Longer melody lines mirrored the linearity of improvised solos. Three-minute miniatures, suitable for 78 r.p.m records, were no longer demanded or desired…. But most staff arrangers with other orchestras could do little more than pay homage to genius and covet his independence. Mulligan gave them oxygen. He hired the best musicians in town and turned them over to the best writers in the country.”

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42 a worker who assumes the responsibilities of a boss

43 Ibid.
These ideals were in direct contrast to the sounds coming out of the most popular big band of the time. The Stan Kenton Orchestra, whose music was highlighted by its high power brass and almost symphonic arrangements that overshadowed improvisation is an example of this. The keyword in the title of Mulligan’s ensemble is the word concert, signifying that this was music for listening and not for dancing. The CJB, as it became known, was extremely influential on future big bands including the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra.\textsuperscript{44} Mulligan’s vision was to highlight the band’s soloists as if they were playing in a small group within a large ensemble setting. The music was highly contrapuntal and it explored the various orchestrational colors obtainable by combining instruments within the large jazz ensemble setting. The music was balanced in terms of improvisation and ensemble playing. Mulligan’s comments about how he conceived the new band illustrates the importance of these qualities. “I wanted the same clarity of sound and interplay of lines that I had in the smaller groups. We have a clarinet in the reed section, not primarily for a clarinet-lead effect but for a sound contributing to the ensemble in general. As for the soloists, I wanted to use just a few men for the bulk of the solo work, so that they would be heard enough for the audience to become familiar with their style.”\textsuperscript{45}

Aligned with Mulligan’s vision, Brookmeyer’s writing at the time began to emphasize melody over harmony. Brookmeyer’s best-known works from the


Concert Jazz Band library include his arrangement of the standard “You Took Advantage of Me” and Django Reinhart’s “Manoir De Mes Reves”. The latter became one of the band’s most known piece of music.

Brookmeyer’s writing during “the early years” was highly influenced by the music of the Count Basie Orchestra. Brookmeyer identified with the music of Basie’s band at an early age. He first heard Basie at the Tower Theater in Kansas City, Missouri in 1941, at a Saturday matinee between showings of western movies with his father. “I melted, it was the first time I felt good in my life. I was not a very successful child.”46 Bob was drawn in by the Kansas City style present in Basie’s music, which he described as having a “subtlety and a strength that didn’t hit you over the head.” The way that Basie’s arranger’s used ensemble passages juxtaposed to solo sections and backgrounds was of particular interest to Brookmeyer.47

**The Vanguard Years**

The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra played its first gig at the Village Vanguard in New York City on February 7, 1966 with a total repertoire of eleven compositions. From the ashes of Gerry Mulligan’s Concert Jazz Band, drummer Mel Lewis and trumpeter/arranger Thad Jones formed a band which would be based in New York and whose “level of performance would be the reason that people would listen”. From the outset the band was meant to be a performing and

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47 Ibid.
recording band and not a reading band.48 Bob Brookmeyer followed Thad and Mel from the CJB and became the lead trombonist and perhaps more importantly one of the band’s featured composers. Ten of the band’s first charts were originally written by Thad Jones for the Count Basie band, but were rejected by Basie because the “music did not mesh well with the members of Basie’s band or its existing repertoire.”49 The eleventh chart in the first book for the band was Bob Brookmeyer’s arrangement of “Willow Weep for Me” which featured Thad Jones on trumpet. In the 2014 biography of Mel Lewis entitled, The View from the Back of the Band, author Chris Smith speaks of Brookmeyer’s importance to the band saying “it cannot be stressed enough how important Brookmeyer’s compositions were to the evolving style of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. His concepts of harmony, form, and texture both contrasted and complimented Thad’s compositional style.”50

Brookmeyer contributed several arrangements to the band’s repertoire while Thad Jones served as its musical director. Both “Willow Weep for Me” and his tone-row influenced “ABC Blues” were featured on the band’s first record released in 1966 and his haunting “Willow Tree” appeared on the band’s third album recorded in 1967. On the 1968 recording Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra: Monday Night Bob contributed an arrangement of the W.C. Handy

48 a band whose sole existence is simply to sight-read music, commonly never performing in public


50 ibid. pg. 134
standard “St. Louis Blues”. Although he was not with the band at the time, Bob’s samba “Con Getchu” was included on the 1978 recording *The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra: One More Time*.

Bob Brookmeyer left the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra in 1967 and in 1968 he returned to California depressed about declining musical opportunities in New York. He continued working as a player on film scores and other commercial recordings in and around Hollywood but stayed away from any creative involvement in music.\(^{51}\) During this time he was drinking heavily and popping pills to the point that sadly, at the age of 38, he did not expect to live much longer.\(^{52}\)

In 1977, after 10 years of heavy drinking and time away from writing, he found clarity, became sober, and took steps to leave music to become a drug and alcohol counselor. Bob Brookmeyer rejoined the music world at the urging and with the support of fellow composer/arranger Bill Holman. His first jazz gig, after becoming sober, was in the spring on 1978 when he joined his longtime friend and tenor saxophonist Stan Getz on a European tour.\(^{53}\) Shortly following this engagement Bob moved back to New York and became the musical director of the band that had become to be known as the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra.


\(^{52}\) Ibid.

Brookmeyer’s compositions for the multiple iterations of the Vanguard Orchestra are highlighted by their experimental nature. Bob stated that “writing and arranging for Thad’s [and Mel’s] band had forced me into a new kind of language. In that band you were tacitly invited to be more than you could be, to try new things. And I did…I was getting the courage to try new things.”

A luxury that Brookmeyer enjoyed while writing for the Vanguard band was the opportunity to write for specific accomplished soloists, in an Ellingtonian fashion. He wrote highly personalized features for members of the band including his notable arrangement of “Skylark” for saxophonist Dick Oatts and his last work “Suite for Three”, a three-movement piece, featuring Oatts, trumpeter Scott Wendholt, and tenor-saxophonist Rich Perry. Upon his return to the Vanguard Orchestra Brookmeyer’s music become focused on balancing the role of the soloist with that of the band, giving each equal importance. This balance created compositions in which the “solos became the background to the background.”

Brookmeyer started to make use of many compositional techniques while writing for Mel Lewis’ bands. Some of these techniques, that will be explored further, include his use of cluster voicings, modifying form, polytonality, melodic development, and how he incorporated improvisatory material into his compositions through both group improvisation and background writing for

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54 ibid

55 One of the hallmarks of Duke Ellington’s band was his effectiveness writing for specific soloists, harnessing their energy and style while featuring them through his compositions.

individual soloists. It was during his time in the 1980’s with the band that Brookmeyer became more interested in more aggressive modern classical music, or as he called it, “music that makes your teeth hurt.” In many interviews he discussed his appreciation for the music of Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky, and Polish composer Witold Lutosławski.

The New Art

In 1991 Brookmeyer moved to Rotterdam, Netherlands. Ever outspoken about the support for Jazz in Europe as opposed to the United States, he chose Rotterdam as the site for a school for young musicians to learn the arts of improvisation and composition called The World School of Jazz. Although the venture proved unsuccessful, his one and only big band in his name, The New Art Orchestra, sprouted from its ideals. Originally formed as the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival Big Band, The New Art Orchestra recorded five albums under Bob’s direction. These albums featured his compositions exclusively. This band featured young musicians who were hand-picked by Bob himself. He said of the band, “they love what they do, they thrive in their friendships and they give everything to me and my music.” These qualities were paramount to the success of a Brookmeyer led ensemble. He firmly believed in the principle of creative music being performed at a high level in its improvisatory and ensemble aspects and he

57 Ibid.


pushed any band that he directed to the limits. In a 2012 documentary entitled “A Suite for Three”: A documentary on Bob Brookmeyer’s Compositions Douglas Purviance, a current trombonist and band manager of the Village Vanguard Orchestra, describes Brookmeyer’s demands on his performers. “…He knows what he wants and the sound that he wants…at the end of the rehearsal we sounded 100% better.” In the New Art Orchestra, after more than 40 years in the industry as a composer and a sideman, he finally found the “the perfect instrument” for his music.60

The compositions from this period are defined by their strong melodic material. The music is highly developed and almost exclusively through composed.61 The music written for the New Art Orchestra builds upon all the techniques he employed earlier in his career. Bob’s delay of solo sections until he was done developing melodic material is highly apparent in this music as is his use of melodic and harmonic material to keep the soloist engaged within the confines of the composition. Because of the highly developed nature of this music the soloist often assumes an understated role within the ensemble which is an evolution of this music he wrote during his second stint with the Vanguard Orchestra. When the soloist was given space Brookmeyer’s voice was never far away, guiding the soloist through the composition and keeping him/her in the moment. He also continued to challenge his audience by exploring ways to lengthen his music. For


61 Grove Music Online defines through composed music as compositions with a relatively uninterrupted continuity of musical thought and invention.
example, due to the expansive development of melodic motives the average length of the tracks on the five recordings made by the New Art Orchestra is approximately 9 minutes. By comparison, the average length of the music written for the first recording by the Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band, which is less developed melodically leading to shorter forms, is 5 minutes in length with the longest track lasting 7 minutes and 47 seconds.

The most striking departures from his writing previous to the New Art Period are his extensive use of unisons, expansive melodic development, and his inclusion of a synthesizer in the ensemble. By choosing to present melodic material in unison a sense of clarity is achieved, which is quite different than the dense harmonic presentations in his music written for the Vanguard Orchestra. Through highly developed melodic material he created compositions that sound coherent, unified, and complete. In a 1995 interview Brookmeyer said, “Where I’m getting older, or just going through my adolescence, trying to be crazy for a while – I’ve sort of calmed down.” He continues “I’m more interested in finding unity and making structure that is strong and will stand up, than I am in making crazy colors. I’m less interested in color now than I am in organic unity. That’s a word [unity] that can be talked about a lot, but for me has turned out to be an interesting and valuable concept.”

Brookmeyer’s use of the synthesizer is interesting in that it gives the music body. The synthesizer is seldom employed alone but instead doubles material

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present in other voices, creating a transparency and depth to the music that is certainly unique. Although several of his contemporaries, including Gil Evans and Clare Fischer, used synths to provide atmosphere in their big band during the 1970’s, his use of the synth as an orchestrational equal to the horn section doubling melodic and harmonic material was certainly unique and more sophisticated. Brookmeyer likens his inclusion of the synthesizer in his music to his collaboration with guitarists in the program notes for his 1991 recording *Electricity* with guitarist John Abercrombie and the WDR Big Band. “My attraction to the guitar began in the mid-1950’s, with Jimmy Raney and Jim Hall as frequent partners in my musical life. In the mid-1980’s, an equally strong fascination began with the synthesizer, and its use in conjunction with acoustic instrumentation, often as a unique sonic entity.”

Brookmeyer became an active teacher in, as he called it, the second half or sober part of his life from 1978 until his death in 2011. During the 1980’s he held a position at the Manhattan School of Music where he primarily taught graduate students. In response to “big bands seemingly going the way of the typewriter, becoming a lost art” Brookmeyer started the BMI Jazz Composers’ Workshop in 1988 along with his writing colleague from the Terry Gibb’s Dream Band Manny

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Albam. The BMI workshop served as a laboratory for jazz writers to explore their

craft and receive feedback from their mentors. This workshop remains in existence
to this day and is an important resource for aspiring jazz composers in New York

City. After his time living and teaching in Europe Bob and his wife Jan Settled in

Hanover, NH. From 1997 to 2007 Bob taught in the department of Jazz Studies

and Improvisation at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston,

Massachusetts where he was the founder and director of the aforementioned

Composers’ Workshop Orchestra. Brookmeyer also served on the faculty of the

Lake Placid Institute for the Arts and Humanities and was named the Stanley

Knowles Distinguished Visiting Professor at Brandon University in Manitoba,

Canada.66

Bob Brookmeyer died at a hospital near his New London, NH home on

December 15, 2011 as a result of cardiopulmonary arrest. At the time of his death

he was working on the music for a new project with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.

Although he did not complete all the music that was planned for the project, the

Vanguard Orchestra eventually released OverTime: The Music of Bob Brookmeyer

in 2014. The compositions “Suite for Three” and “At the Corner of Ralph and Gary”

were among the last pieces of music that Bob completed before his death. In lieu

of the unfinished music, a new recording of Bob’s arrangement of “Skylark”, as well

as “The Big Time”, “XYZ” and “Sad Song”, three previously unrecorded


compositions written in the 1980’s for the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, were included.
Composer and educator Jesse Milliner describes form as “the most important organizational element in music.” Milliner stated that the term form is usually used in two different ways, first to define the basic structure of a piece and second as the unfolding of compositional techniques and the development of ideas within smaller segments of a larger musical structure. In the classical realm form is represented by terms such as sonata, rondo, and binary. While examples of these formal structures exist in jazz composition and arranging the music is more commonly associated with forms derived from popular song, containing shorter sections of symmetrical numbers of measures. A jazz writer’s use of melodic and harmonic elements will dictate form and may lead to the expansion, detraction, or complete departure from any reference to typical formal structures. It is not uncommon to see form evolve throughout a composition or arrangement. Fluidity of form is created by the development and unification of ideas, the inclusion of improvisatory sections, and the desire to lead the listener and performers on a journey through the performance.

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68 Type of musical construction normally used in first movement of a sonata, symphony, or concerto. Regular sonata form implies 3 sections; an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation.

69 One of the fundamental forms in music, in which a repeated section alternates with at least two different episodes. At its simplest it can be represented as abaca.

70 A musical structure consisting of two mutually dependent sections of roughly equal duration. It is usually symbolized as ab, but often may be better expressed as aa′.
The formal structure present in the compositions from Brookmeyer’s early years are less complex than those found in later compositions for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra and the New Art Orchestra. Bob’s writing for Terry Gibbs and Claude Thornhill was heavily influenced by the music of the Count Basie Orchestra in that it was chiefly considered music for dancing as opposed to listening. The audience came to expect certain formal structures in the music of this era. Song form, derived from and typically found in the refrain sections of music from the Tin Pan Alley is 16 or 32 bars long and comprised of four or eight-bar phrases grouped into designs that include aaba, abac, or abcd. We do not see a major departure from song form in Brookmeyer’s early compositions with the exception of the occasional transitional section that preceded a new soloist or shout chorus. An example is the 4-bar transitional section at letter I of the 1956 composition “Just Plain Meyer”. This 4-bar phrase serves as a modulation from the original key of Ab to the tag/outro in the key of Eb.

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Table 5.1 - Outline of the form of "Just Plain Meyer"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Orchestration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Full Ensemble</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>First A</td>
<td>Saxes in unison and rhythm section with brass hits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Second A</td>
<td>Saxes in harmony with additional brass figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Saxes and brass trade melodic statements before coming together in rhythmic tutti in the 6th bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Last A with tag that serves as a send-off for the vibraphone solo</td>
<td>Saxes state melody before rhythmic tutti in bar 5 through the tag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>First A</td>
<td>Full band send-off to vibes solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Second A</td>
<td>Vibe solo continues with backgrounds in saxes and bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Vibes solo continues with brass backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Last A</td>
<td>Vibes solo continues with sax backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>First A (new key – Eb)</td>
<td>Ensemble &quot;shout chorus&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Second A</td>
<td>Shout continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Tenor Solo with band backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Last A</td>
<td>Tenor solo continues with trombone backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>16 (8 bars that repeat)</td>
<td>First A (new key – Ab)</td>
<td>Ensemble &quot;shout chorus&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Transitional Material</td>
<td>Sax background accompanying vibraphone solo fills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Last A with tag</td>
<td>Brass tutti - drum fill leads to a modified Ellington ending.\textsuperscript{72}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{72} An ending associated with the writing of Duke Ellington
Even with its small departures from traditional 32-bar song form, “Just Plain Meyer” is relatively typical of music being composed and arranged during this time period by Brookmeyer and his contemporaries. It is not until hearing Bob’s early 1960’s arrangement of “Willow Weep for Me” that we begin to see exploration of form. Bob explains, “For example, on “Willow Weep for Me”, I changed the form. The arrangement didn’t have a last eight bars. I had used the first eight bars of the next section in their place. That kind of thing. I was fooling with form.”

“ABC Blues”, written during the same period as “Willow Weep for Me”, challenges the listener to re-think the traditional 12-bar blues form. Brookmeyer uses periods of free cadenza like improvisation, phrases where dictated harmony disappear, and extensions of the blues to create a composition that challenges the ears of the listener and more importantly the musicians. Example 5.1 below illustrates free improvisation at the beginning of “ABC Blues” as notated in the original score published by Kendor Music.

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Letter B in example 5.3 features a section of free improvisation featuring the pianist inserted between two choruses of the tone-row inspired melody at rehearsal letters A and C. Improvisatory sections are separated by an extended blues chorus featuring an ensemble shout using melodic material derived from Fragment A which is originally stated in the 2 measures preceding letter B and colored purple in the full form reduction. This chorus, which happens at letter G (m. 82), features a variation of the blues form created as a result of expanding the II-V progression found in m.9 and 10 in the original blues form. The II-V progression is prolonged...
through ascending parallel chromatic chords (beginning in m.90) followed by rhythmic figures comprised of cycling II-V progressions (including tri-tone substitutions) leading to an F pedal, the dominant in the key of Bb, in m.102. This extension of the cadence creates tension by delaying the return to the key of Bb in the next chorus, Letter I.

Example 5.2 - Extension of traditional blues form in “ABC Blues”

As previously discussed in Chapter 6 regarding the 20th Century Techniques, the initial tone-row, colored green in the reduction, is presented three times, twice as introductory material (at m.2 and the 2nd measure of N) and once as a background figure for the Tenor Saxophone solo (at Letter J). Following the
solo sections, a recap of the introductory material and the first two choruses precedes the repeated rhythmic figure that signals the end of the composition. In a unifying gesture the top two pitches of the cluster voicing in the trumpets and woodwinds are E and F. These two pitches are the first two pitches of every melodic phrase in the composition.
Example 5.3 - Form Reduction of "ABC Blues"

Every melodic statement begins with ascending 2nd from E → F

A Tempo Swing \( \frac{\text{A}}{\text{B}} \) c.160
Bass voiles atonal sounding line

**Chorus 1**
Unison melody stated by clarinet, flute, tenor sax, bass clarinet, and muted bass

**Chorus 2**
Fully voiced melody stated by whole band

**Chorus 3**
Flugelhorn solo in
Alto saxophone on DS
CHORUS 4
Background figures - new melodic and rhythmic material - fully voiced

CHORUS 5
Augmentation of figure at Letter D - fully voiced

CHORUS 6 - DEVELOPMENTAL
Extended Blues Chorus based on Fragment A
Fully Voiced using Basic Style Voicings

Brasses

Saxes

Interval of m3 (derived from Tone-Row) between °3 and °1 in melody evokes the blues

Full Band

Based on Rhythmic motif at Letter E
INTRODUCTION - RECAP

Ad Lib Duet
Bass & Drums
Tone-Row Introduced in Staggered Entrances by Horn
Drum Solo
Bass Solo
Ad Lib
Ad Lib

Fragment B

A Tempo Swing \( \cdot = c.160 \)
Bass Walks Atonal Sounding Line

CHORUS 12 - RECAP

Unison melody stated by clarinet, flute, tenor sax, bass clarinet, and muted brass

Free Piano Solo
A Tempo Swing \( \cdot = c.160 \)
Free Piano Solo sets tempo for 2nd melodic statement

CHORUS 13 - RECAP

Fully voiced melody stated by whole band

Bass Solo
Drum Solo
Ad Lib
Ad Lib

Repeat 4x

\[ \text{Top pitches in voicing are E and F} \]
When the intensity of Brookmeyer’s study of traditional composition intensified he began to challenge the general assumptions of form. His approach to form began to show increased awareness regarding the balance between ensemble passages and improvised solos as well as the complete emotional arc of his compositions. He became very interested in discovering techniques to engage the audience while creating longer, more complete musical statements. In discussing the qualities of music that became most important to him he stated “How do you begin to speak with the listener? The listener doesn’t have to like the process, but he needs to be in the process, to make the trip with you. In the 1980’s I began to wonder how long I could extend my musical thought and still not break the relationship with the listener, not put the listener to sleep. When I became a teacher I realized everyone writes too short. You’ve got to finish your thought.”

As his desire for balanced compositions became a priority Bob’s music became studies in contrast. In an excerpt from an audio interview entitled “General Observations on Composition” Bob discussed form with composers Ryan Truesdell and Dave Rivello. “We become aware of shape of the piece, which becomes the form of the piece. And form is a pretty dry word, you wouldn’t use form so much with a painter, you might use shape. So I think shape and weights and balances and color, all the painterly terms work very well for a composer.”

Bob’s writing for the New Art Orchestra took the ideas of shape and weight to a

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new level. His music was getting longer, yet it wasn’t because of extended solo sections, but born out of the desire to develop his music melodically and create balance throughout the composition. Interestingly, Bob didn’t envision his music as containing intros and outros, or even including shout choruses in the traditional sense. He strongly believed that the words that we use to describe music are quite important and that the choice of words that composers use are both limiting and liberating. In the same interview with Truesdell and Rivello, Brookmeyer explains his thoughts on the importance of the words we choose to define formal structures.

“I think the words we use to talk to yourself are very important because we talk to ourselves in words. They have an awful thing at Berklee called outro and intro. An outro is the ending and the intro is the beginning. These almost sound like vitamins. There is a beginning to a piece, not an intro. An intro by the nature of the sound of the word is very small and petty and not artistic perhaps. So the beginning of the piece or start of the piece, both of those words give you a nice long look at the beginning of the piece. Then you have the chance to introduce all or parts of your main thematic material. You may decide to give the listener a part of it or all of it. And then the piece develops. If you have a solo, if you need to have a solo, jazz pieces do not require solos. Then you have a soloists or solo activity. Why not as I said before have a soloist play three bars then go back to the ensemble. The soloist doesn't have to play five minutes to be established as a soloist. After you establish the beginning and the first section then you can as in classical music have a development section, which leaves you very free to do whatever you want. Then you become truly a composer because you are taking material that you wrote and you are amplifying it and developing it and going ahead and speaking more about it...Then when you come to the penultimate or the preparation of the climactic scene normally your gestures would get broader, that is what we call the shout chorus. That's short-hand when things were always 32 bars. Short-hand for the end of the piece. So the big climax. You can have a climax then, you can have a climax in the middle of the piece, the beginning. You could fool around with form that way and move your climactic scenes around but it should be known that it is coming toward the end...So there are all these things you can do. For me what's important is to keep you aware of the possibilities and to keep you aware of the
process in making those choices. That’s going to make you a better composer and a better composer of the piece you are working on.”76

“Seesaw”, written as a feature for drummer John Hollenbeck, is an excellent example of the concepts above in practice. The form is the result of Brookmeyer’s desire to challenge Hollenbeck through irregular phraseology constructed as the result of melodic development. In the description of this composition on his website he states, “I wanted to show what John Hollenbeck was capable of, so Seesaw was conceived as a dialogue between drums and the band.”77 Example 9.3, on pg. 124, illustrates the breakdown of irregular phraseology during the interplay between the soloist and the ensemble which leads to a form which features an asymmetrical structure. Years of compositional exploration led Brookmeyer to create music, like “Seesaw and “Tah-Dum!” that is through-composed.78 “Tah-Dum!”, written for trumpeter Till Brönner, features melodic fragments derived from two distinct themes manipulated by means of intervallic and rhythmic transformation. Theme A, illustrated in example 5.4, and its derived fragments serve as the basis for all the melodic material from the beginning of the piece through m.74.

76 Ibid.
77 www.bobbrookmeyer.com
78 A composition that does not rely on repeating sections for its formal design.
The transformation of fragments derived from strong thematic material leads to a form, that while irregular, is unified and engaging. Extensive development of familiar material also makes the irregular phrases resulting from rhythmic expansion and melodic transformation sound organic and fluid. Example 5.5 illustrates Brookmeyer’s development in the 13 measure phrase beginning in m.56 created by the rhythmic augmentation of Fragment 1 (notated in red) and Fragment 4 (notated in brown).

Each of the first three variations on Theme A, labeled A, A1, and A2 in the form reduction below, precede an improvisatory section, labeled X. The form of the
The piece’s first half can be described as a modified rondo form\textsuperscript{79} and is structured as follows:

\begin{equation}
A \times A_1 \times A_2 \times A_3 \times A_4 \times A_5 \times A_6 \times A_7 \times A_8 \times A_9 \times A_{10}
\end{equation}

The melodic material present in the second section of “Tah-Dum!” beginning in m. 64 and labelled B in the form reduction below (example 5.8), is derived from a five-note cell consisting of pitches that construct the F-minor pentatonic scale. Two different fragments resulting from this cell serve as the basis for the remainder of the composition. Fragment 6 (notated in orange in the form reduction) appears in several different permutations, most notably in the same rhythmic configuration, dotted quarter-eighth-quarter-quarter, as Fragment 1. It also is used as a rhythmic figure that engages the trumpet soloist at m.193.

\textbf{Example 5.6 – Fragment 6 in "Tah-Dum!"}

\begin{quote}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example5.6.png}
\end{quote}

The six note pattern in example 5.7 (labelled Fragment 7 in pink in example 5.8) is stated in multiple transformations throughout the B section.

\textbf{Example 5.7 – Fragment 7 serving as melodic material in "Tah-Dum!"}

\begin{quote}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example5.7.png}
\end{quote}

At m.111 in example 5.8 these two fragments are used in a call and response configuration between two choruses of instruments. Using the interval of a major

\textsuperscript{79} One of the most fundamental designs in music, the rondo is a structure consisting of a series of sections, the first of which (the main section or refrain) recurs. For example, ABACADA
2nd found in fragment 6, the soprano saxophones and trumpets answer the fragment 7 based line stated by tenor saxophones and trombones. These two fragments are used again when during the climax of the piece at m.203. Derivatives of Fragment 6 are stated by the band and answered by the trumpet soloist using multiple permutations of Fragment 7. The tension created by the interplay between the band and the soloist is released with a full band statement of Fragment 6 in the two measures preceding the final chord. The use of these different motifs creates a balance between composed material and improvisatory sections while unifying the composition as a whole.
Example 5.8 - “Tah-Dum!” Form Reduction

A

Fragment 1

Fragment 2

Fragment 3

Fragment 4

Fragment 5

Fragment 2

Fragment 2

TRANPOSED

12X

Trumpet Solo

A1

Multiple Transpositions of Fragment 1

Transposition of Fragment 4

Trumpet Solo

A2

Development of material from Theme A

40X2

Trumpet Solo
Development of material derived from Fragment 3

Rhythmic Augmentation of Fragment A

Rhythmic Augmentation of Fragment 2

Melodic Cell Foreshadows material at 83

Fragment 6

Drum Fills

Fragment 7

Drum Solo
Background material created through rhythmic augmentation of 5-note melodic cell and fragment 2.
Brookmeyer was influenced by classical composers such as Witold Lutosławski (whose cello concerto Brookmeyer used often in teaching students about simple motifs\(^80\)), Igor Stravinsky, Claude Debussy, and Béla Bartók. When Bob returned to New York city in the early 1980’s he was mentored by composer Earle Brown who had a keen interest in “time notation”\(^81\), improvisation, and open-form composition.\(^82\) He was also influential to Brookmeyer as a conductor, teaching him many techniques that he used while conducting. “As far as mechanics went, he’d have good advice. He also gave me a first-hand account of classical music’s development in the 1950’s and 1960’s…working with Earle gave me confidence. Earle was incredibly supportive…”\(^83\) Bob started to explore New Music more in depth at this time as well. “I was going to a lot of new music concerts. I began to buy scores, and I wanted to find out about Berio, Boulez, Stockhausen, and Ligeti, and people that I had sort of passed on in the middle of my life. I began to re-educate myself and I began to study composition and conducting.”\(^84\) Brookmeyer

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\(^81\) A system of music notation measured by units of time as it relates to a clock as opposed to tempo as it relates to a metronomic pulse.


had delved into 20th century techniques prior to the 1980’s, most prominently in his composition “ABC Blues” which utilizes the tone row illustrated in Example 6.1.

**Example 6.1 - Tone row in “ABC Blues”**

![Tone row in “ABC Blues”](image)

The entire row is stated only twice throughout the composition. The eleven pitches that make up the row are introduced via staggered entrances one beat apart until they are all simultaneously sounding in the fourth measure of each of these sections. This 4-bar rubato section begins at m.2 of the composition and again when it is re-stated in m.167.
Example 6.2 – Tone row from “ABC Blues” voiced for full ensemble.
The melody stated at m.16 includes the first 10 pitches of the row illustrated in Example 6.1. The tendency for a melody derived from a tone-row to feel fragmented and angular is softened by Brookmeyer’s use of rhythms of longer durations and by presenting these pitches within the confines of a familiar harmonic structure, a re-harmonized 12-bar blues progression.

**Example 6.3 – Tone row employed as melody in “ABC Blues”**

Incorporating twelve-tone techniques into a big band chart was, at the time, truly experimental and daring. Brookmeyer ran the risk of losing the audience by including harmonic material that was unfamiliar to both the listener and the musicians playing this material. Ray Wright explains how Bob managed to...
successfully meld 20th century classical and jazz languages. “One of the traps in pieces which combine non-jazz and jazz elements is that, after “serious” introduction and a transition into jazz feel, charts often let down and sound ordinary going in the straight ahead jazz. The fact that “ABC Blues” does not fall in to that trap is no accident…Brookmeyer counted on his soloists and rhythm section to pick up the serial style and carry it into their solos and background comping.”85 The use of “exotic” sounding chords, specifically minor chords with the major 7th, within the confines of the familiar blues, as seen in Examples 5.2, further draws the listeners and players into the world that Brookmeyer creates in his composition.

**Polytonality**

Polytonality, in music, is the simultaneous occurrence of two or more different tonalities.86 Although examples of polytonality are found as far back as in the music of Bach and Mozart, twentieth-century composers such as Darius Milhaud, Béla Bartók, and Igor Stravinsky made more frequent use of the technique. Polytonality is used throughout Stravinsky’s ballet *Petrushka*, written in 1911, The “Petrushka Chord”, as it has come to be known, consists of the simultaneous sounding of two triads an augmented fourth apart, in this case C-major and F♯-major Triads.


Polytonality does not always result in dissonance and can be used to evoke many different moods and emotions. In this case the simultaneous presence of two tonalities, a tri-tone apart, creates a sense of agitation and powerful tension. Commonly, in the classical realm, this tension is never released, as the agitation created by the dissonance is meant to create unsettledness, leaving the listener wanting release that will never come. Brookmeyer uses polytonality to create prolonged periods of tension that maximize the feeling of release when it finally comes. In measures 13-26, Brookmeyer uses polytonality to develop melodic material introduced in the first 10 measures of the composition. After hearing similar material set in a tonal setting in the first 12 bars, the polytonal treatment creates a sense of forward motion, pulling towards the eventual resolution in bar 45, as seen in Example 6.6.
Example 6.5 – Polytonality in “The Big Time”

Example 6.6 shows the use of parallel tonalities, C and Db, in the piano. The tension created by this relationship combined with the sounding of the G, the dominant, in the bass, creates tension and pulls the listener towards the stable tonality of C in measure 45.
Polytonality is one way that Brookmeyer develops melodic material in a complex and striking manner while giving the listener something familiar to identify with. His use of complex harmonic structures does not alienate the listener because it is employed in conjunction with melodic content that has been previously presented. This creates an effective balance between periods of consonance and dissonance. In “The Big Time” Brookmeyer uses the melodic material introduced in the first 28 measures throughout the composition in several different constructions.

“Sad Song”, written for the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra in 1980, showcases “Bob’s quest for new sounds and a new approach to big band writing.”87 The folk song-like character of this composition pays homage to one of Brookmeyer's

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influences from the realm of twentieth century Classical Music, Béla Bartók. The short piano interlude at measure 69 in example 6.7 uses polytonality to create a transparent atmosphere, amplifying the somber nature of the piece. The passage consists of a melodic line in the key of G minor over an ostinato in the left hand which implies the key of A minor. The resulting interval of a minor 9th sometimes created between the voices evokes feelings of reflection, sadness, and innocence.

Example 6.7 – Polytonality in “Sad Song”

Parallel Chromatic Harmony

Re-harmonization through parallel chromaticism is another technique employed by Brookmeyer to transform familiar melodic material. The contrast between a primarily diatonic melody and parallel chromatic harmony creates the feeling of melancholy as can be seen in his treatment of the melody in his arrangement of “Skylark”. Example 6.8 demonstrates the difference between the
original chord changes and Bob’s re-harmonization using parallel chromatic harmony.

**Example 6.8 – Descending chromatic Harmony applied to melody of “Skylark”**

Brookmeyer uses descending parallel chromatic harmony to create the sensation of weight or “pushing down” while ascending parallel harmony produces lift and rise. At letter E of “Skylark” in example 6.9 Bob uses the chromatic re-harmonization he presented during the original statement of the melody as the chord changes for the beginning of Dick Oatts’ alto saxophone solo. The ascending

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and descending movement of the harmony generates ebb and flow which builds tension that is released at the Cmin7 chord in the fifth measure of letter F. This represents a return to the original non-chromatic harmony.

Example 6.9 compares the original chord changes with the re-harmonization described above. In the example, as in the printed alto saxophone part, chord changes are suggested even though the pianist is playing just the descending major thirds which continue until full the rhythm section enters in the 6th bar of the phrase. Note that the tri-tone substitutions of the II-7 chords in the original II-7 - V7 sequences that occur during the two measures before letter F results in parallel chromatic motion.
A slightly different use of chromatic parallelism can be found in “Silver Lining” from the album *Spirit Music*. In this example the linear melody, evocative of the blues, which starts in D minor and moves to its relative key of F major, is scored with combination of trumpets and saxophones doubled with synthesizer.
while the trombone section, baritone saxophone, and bass support the melody with pads that move in descending chromatic motion. This effect of having half of the band juxtaposed to one another creates an effect of "shifting sands" in which unstable support for a harmonically stable melody creates tension and excitement. The chord changes shown in Example 6.10 are based on analysis of the voicings and are not present in any written part.
Example 6.10 – Descending chromatic harmony underneath bebop style line in “Silver Lining”
As previously mentioned, tension is created by the downwards pull of descending chromatic motion while feelings of lift and rise are the result of ascending chromatic motion. In Brookmeyer’s music, as seen in Example 6.10, downwards motion achieves release at the end of the phrase where it comes to rest harmonically in the key of F Major. This is a typical use of descending chromatic motion in his music. In contrast, ascending motion is often used to lead into a new phrase, creating tension whose release is frequently located at the beginning of a new section. Example 6.11 illustrates chromatic harmony being used to transition back to the key of C from unrelated harmonic material. The melodic line played by the saxophones at m.119 is primarily within the key of Bb minor. This results in increased tension these pitches and those outside of Bb minor voiced within the ascending chromatic harmony beneath.

**Example 6.11 – Ascending chromatic harmony in “Seesaw”**
Use of Tensions

One of the defining characteristics of Brookmeyer’s music during the Vanguard Years was his extensive use of tensions to create density. His 1981 chart “Hello and Goodbye” uses several “non-traditional” voicings that create consistent density. Brookmeyer explains his use of tension as a way to “take a normal situation and find a way to disturb it.”89 The inclusion of both the 3rd and the 4th scale degree in dominant structures is a good example of “disturbing normalcy”. There are several different ways to execute having both the 3rd and 4th voiced in a dominant chord. Brookmeyer uses two different ways to include the two pitches in m.51 and m.52 of “Hello and Goodbye”. The first beat of m.51 voices the 3rd and 4th scale degrees (C and D♭ respectively) both minor 2nd and a major 7th apart. On beat three the two are adjacent to each other, similar in use to how Igor Stravinsky might have employed the technique.90

Example 6.12 – Use of tensions in cluster voicings from “Hello and Goodbye”

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89 Wright, Rayburn, Sammy Nestico, Thad Jones, and Bob Brookmeyer. *Inside the Score: A Detailed Analysis of 8 Classic Jazz Ensemble Charts by Sammy Nestico, Thad Jones and Bob Brookmeyer*. Delevan, NY: Kendor Music, 1982. Print. pg. 179

90 Ibid.
Additional density is created in the cluster on beat two due to the presence of both the natural and flat 9th scale degree, B♭ and A-natural respectively. While the voicings in the previous example result in density, it is possible to voice both the 3rd and 4th in a chord and have the result be brighter and open. One such example occurs in m.122 of “Boom Boom”. Although this example illustrates a Maj11 chord as opposed to a dominant11 the technique can be applied to both types of chords, creating a more open sound.

Example 6.13 – Presence of 3rd and 4th scale degrees in major chord from “Boom Boom”

It is generally accepted that intervals of a b9 should be avoided when voicing chords in an ensemble setting because the resulting sound is quite dissonant. Voicings that include the interval of a b9 often sound incorrect. The exception to this general rule would be dominant or suspended chords that contain the b9 scale degree as a chord alteration to create and pull, most often in a cadential progression. Modern jazz writers, including Bob Brookmeyer have made regular use of including the interval in their writing. Knowing that the resultant chord will
be tense and biting is the key to using chords that contain the b9 interval correctly. An example is the use of the b9 interval in voicings that are moving in parallel motion. The end result is a string of vertical sonorities that sound “crunchy” and create increasing tension. When resolved, the increased tension caused by the sustained presence of the b9 interval will result in a satisfying release.

Example 6.14 – Use of b9 interval to create density from “Hello and Goodbye”

Cluster Activity

A tone cluster, a term derived from the practice of placing adjacent notes on the piano with your forearm91, is a chord92 of which the constituents are a major or minor 2nd apart.93 Brookmeyer spoke about his reasons for exploring the use of cluster activity in the interview conducted by composers Dave Rivello and Ryan Truesdell.

“The cluster activity started for me probably around my increasing use of chemicals and alcohol in the early 60’s and writing for Thad and Mel and wanting to really make something thick and I wrote Willow Tree for Thad and Mel. If it is played correctly all of the close voice notes, you have a chord with 7, 8, or 9 notes in it. If

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92 Defined by the Grove Dictionary of Music as The simultaneous sounding of two or more notes.

played correctly and in tune it sounds very nice, if it’s not of course it doesn’t. Cluster Activity to me negates that often awful normal harmony, negates that normal harmony sound that you get from Glenn Miller bands.”

A common misconception about cluster voicings is that they function solely as harmonic devices, a notion that Brookmeyer was quick to refute saying, “So you don’t so much change harmony as you do little aspects of color. You change the constitution by your melody note and how you are going to construct your cluster.” Cluster voicings, as applied by Bob Brookmeyer, are effective because of the strong melody and how they interact with the underlying harmony.

Example 6.15 – “Nasty Dance” Melody line at m.69

Example 6.16 – “Nasty Dance” Melody voiced using clusters

Example 6.17 – cluster voicings from Nasty Dance m.69 (pitches only)

The diatonic melody in example 6.15 of Bob’s “Nasty Dance”, written in 1981 for the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, is transformed through the use of clusters into a line that sounds “nasty”. This is achieved through the dissonance created by the adjacent minor 2nd and minor 9th intervals illustrated in examples 6.16 and 6.17.
In “Hello and Goodbye” clusters are used at letter C to create a transparent effect. The melodic statement is compelling and familiar to the listener, because it was stated in unison earlier in the chart. The clusters’ use as a means to creating color in the line is amplified because of two factors; the length of the notes and the strength of the melody.

**Example 6.18 – Cluster voicings in “Hello and Goodbye”**

Rhythmic punches, such as those that accompany a soloist, take on a percussive feel when voiced as clusters. The short, biting stabs present in the opening of the 2010 composition “Suite for Three: Oatts” emulate the sound of a drum that is definite in rhythm but not in pitch. The lack of discernible harmony in these figures creates a stimulating canvas for the alto saxophone soloist and provides an effective contrast to the fluid lines of the improvised solo.
Example 6.19 – Piano clusters in “A Suite for Three: Oatts”
Chapter 7
ORCHESTRATION

Brookmeyer’s use of color as a function of orchestration evolved over the course of his writing career. His desire to find colors that best expressed the musical intent of his compositions led to the formation of several orchestrational tendencies. They include,

- the use of extensive unisons, both within and across sections, especially at faster tempos
- the use of the synthesizer
- the utilization of woodwind doubles, most notably soprano saxophones
- fully voiced rhythmic tutti at slower tempos

Brookmeyer’s music for the bands of Gerry Mulligan and Terry Gibbs, while not bland in their orchestrational color, does not stand out as being anything more than typical and can be easily compared to other big band music of the time. Throughout his Early and Vanguard Years, from the mid 1950’s to the mid 1980’s, Brookmeyer tended to orchestrate the band in sections consistent with techniques present in the music of other big band writers. Melodic material was often assigned to like instruments while other sections provided support through sustained pads or rhythmic punches. As seen in example 7.1 from “Just Plain Meyer” the tenor and baritone saxophones state the melody during the first A section at m.9. Brookmeyer scores the second A section using a thicker orchestration consisting of 5-way saxophone voicings. The brass section accentuates the melody by means of both rhythmic punches in m.15-16 and sustained notes in m.21 and 22.
Example 7.1 - Saxophone Writing in "Just Plain Meyer"
Shout choruses featuring rhythmic tutti were often voiced using 4-way voicings in the trombones and trumpets and 5-way voicings in the saxophones. The dense orchestration of a composition's climax was characteristic of big band music of the time.

**Example 7.2 - Full Ensemble Shout in "Just Plain Meyer"**

![Example 7.2 - Full Ensemble Shout in "Just Plain Meyer"](image)

**Unisons Scored Within a Section**

As Brookmeyer's music became more complex harmonically, melodically, and rhythmically his orchestration began to change. In a conscious effort to highlight melodic material Brookmeyer began to employ techniques that drew the listener to its importance. By scoring melodic material in unison, especially at faster tempos, the intent of the line is clear and not obscured by the sometimes angular lines present in lower voices as a result of 4 or 5-way harmony. “Boom Boom”
features extended sections of unison lines for both the trumpets and saxophones. One example of this is present at m.19 as illustrated below.

**Example 7.3 - Unison Saxophone Line in "Boom Boom"**

Similarly, doubling melodic fragments within a full band texture with like instruments provides weight to each entrance ensuring that they are not overpowered. Brookmeyer uses this technique when scoring melodic fragments whose staggered entrances produce a tapestry of a specific modality and cross-rhythmic activity\(^\text{94}\) in many of his compositions including “Seesaw”, “King Porter

Unisons Scored Across Sections

Small group jazz has long been associated with the presentation of opening melodic statements by mixed instrumentation in unison, for example Charlie Parker’s alto saxophone and Dizzy Gillespie’s trumpet. Within the idiom of big band writing this practice was most notably associated with the writing of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn who regularly combined instruments from different sections to create unique colors. The extent of and how often mixed instrumental choirs are
used throughout his compositions sets Brookmeyer’s writing apart from previous writers. Unisons are extensively used in his compositions during ensemble choruses, melodic statements, or as background material for soloists. This mult timbral technique is borrowed directly from Western Classical music where groups of instruments from unlike instrument families commonly double pitches within a texture. A chorus effect is created when multiple voices from within the ensemble sound the same pitch simultaneously. This sound was not commonly present in music for large jazz ensemble before Brookmeyer began exploring instrument doubling while writing for the Thad Jones Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra.

Brookmeyer scored unisons across sections, pairing instruments with dissimilar timbres, to further emphasize individual melodic lines. Brookmeyer commonly combined saxophones and trumpets which gave emphasis to the importance of each melodic statement. The opening eight measures of “Happy Song” is an example of this technique. The three distinct figures are scored across sections in such a way that creates a unique orchestrational color that stands out in the overall texture.

The passage in example 7.5 features the following instrumental pairings:

- Line 1 (in Red) Soprano Saxophone, 3 Trumpets in Unison
- Line 2 (in Blue) 2 Soprano Saxophones, 2 Trumpets in Unison
- Line 3 (in Green) Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, and 4 Trombones (harmonized in perfect 4ths)
Example 7.5 – Unisons scored across multiple sections
Woodwind Doubles

Brookmeyer utilized woodwind doubles within the saxophone section in very much the same way that other jazz composers have. Clarinets and flutes are used to soften the brightness of the saxophone section in specific registers and to deliver colors outside of the saxophone’s spectrum. Woodwinds are seldom used as solo instruments. Brookmeyer almost exclusively makes use of clarinet and flutes only on compositions at slower tempos. In his 1981 composition “First Love Song” Brookmeyer scores the woodwinds inside the lower brass voicings which creates a transparent texture appropriate for the poignancy of the composition. The clarinet’s ability to blend into the trombone texture more effectively than tenor saxophones in the same register also allows him to place chord extensions such as b9 and #11 on the bottom of voicings creating harmonic density that contributes to the overall mood of the composition. Brookmeyer also chose to use flugelhorns in the trumpet section and doubled the lead line with flute, adding to the transparency achieved. This type of orchestration, shown in in example 7.6, was often applied by Brookmeyer at slower tempos.
Example 7.6 - Full band tutti with Woodwind doubles in "First Love Song"
The unique sound created by Brookmeyer’s use of multiple soprano saxophones in the reed section is a unique characteristic of his orchestration style. Brookmeyer uses multiple soprano saxophones in many compositions including “Happy Song”, “Hello and Goodbye”, “Seesaw”, and “Celebration Jig” among others. In example 7.7 from “Tah-Dum!” parallel perfect 5ths scored using multiple soprano saxophones in unison with trumpets results in a powerful and distinct statement. The brightness present in each instrument’s individual sound is accentuated by the doubling of soprano saxophones and trumpets scored in their most powerful registers.

**Example 7.7 - Multiple soprano saxophones doubled with trumpets in "Tah-Dum!"**
Use of the Synthesizer

There are several moments in the music of the early years that show glimpses of what was to come in his writing. As shown in example 1.8, the pairing of electric and acoustic instruments is evident in the arrangement of "A Ballad" for the Concert Jazz Band in 1961. Although there was not a regular pianist in the band, sometimes Mulligan or Brookmeyer would play piano if necessary, there was a guitarist in the band. The role of the guitarist was much different from the typical usage in bands of the time. The Basie Band’s Freddie Green was relegated to keeping time and playing very little melodic content, unlike the guitarist in the CJB who was responsible for adding to the texture and colors of the ensemble by playing notated melodic material. In the following example the guitar doubles the melody played by the clarinet, saxophones and trumpets, creating a feeling of depth and giving the line clarity and punctuation.
Example 7.8 – Use of the Guitar as an orchestrational color in “A Ballad”
Bob would continue exploring the combination of electric and acoustic instruments upon his return to writing in the 1980’s. This eventually led to his 1991 release *Electricity*, a fusion record featuring drummer Danny Gottlieb and guitarist John Abercrombie. The album features two synthesizers integrated into the ensemble using ultra-bright DX7\textsuperscript{95}-type patches.\textsuperscript{96} On this recording Brookmeyer uses the synthesizer in various ways; as a tool for making sound effects, as a comping instrument, and as a texture within the orchestration doubling material present in the horns. In the writing during his later years for the New Art Orchestra the synth is used primarily as an orchestrational color. During this time period the patch used almost exclusively by Brookmeyer is that of an electric piano reminiscent of the iconic sound of the Yamaha Electric Grand Piano which was popular in the 1980’s.

Although the synthesizer is seldom heard as a solo instrument in Bob’s writing there are several noticeable exceptions. The opening of the second movement of “Celebration Suite: Slow Dance”, as shown in example 7.9 and written as a tribute for his longtime friend and musical partner baritone-saxophonist Gerry Mulligan begins with a short written synth solo. The passage states melodic material that is developed throughout the piece. The synthesizer is not left alone for long, for in m. 9, the passage is doubled by piano and vibraphone. In this case

\textsuperscript{95} A synthesizer manufactured from 1983 to 1989 by the Yamaha Corporation that was highly prevalent in popular music of the 1980’s.

the synthesizer is the main voice while the additional instruments color its sound, providing a pointed attack from the piano and roundness from the vibraphone.
Example 7.9 – “Celebration Suite: Slow Dance”
The most relevant use of the synthesizer to this study is its utilization in Brookmeyer’s orchestration, doubled with other instruments in the ensemble as opposed to a solo instrument as in “Slow Dance” or to produce sound effects such as the spaceship like texture produced in “Say Ah”. Due to the pure electronic nature of the sound produced by the synthesizer, the qualities of the instruments that are being doubled are accentuated. In general, adding synth to a texture, makes bass instruments sound fuller and heavier, brass instruments sound more defined and brilliant, while woodwinds sound more lyrical and reedy. The atmospheric texture of the synth doubling acoustic instruments also gives the music a sense of space and ambience that is sometimes absent in acoustic settings. The presence of reverb and chorus further enhance the way that the synthesizer colors the orchestration.

A common way that Brookmeyer used the synthesizer is to double lines played by the acoustic bass as seen in example 7.10. The octave that the bass and synth are written determines the weight of the bass groove. In the 1991 composition “Say Ah” from the aforementioned Electricity, the bass and synthesizer are doubled in the same octave, creating a menacing, driving groove that creates the canvas for the entire 7:40 composition.
This groove is the perfect support for the aggressive melodic statements, brass punctuations, and raucous guitar solo by John Abercrombie. To further intensify the building aggression, the bass trombone accentuates the pedal A on the and of beat four, producing a heavy, ominous texture that lends to the building crescendo.

Example 7.11 – Synthesizer and bass doubled at unison in “Say Ah”
Brookmeyer continues to build excitement, first created by the prominent synthesizer doubling the bass, when the whole band joins the bass trombone on the anticipation of beat one every two bars, and then eventually every bar.

Example 7.12 – Horns added to synth and bass doubled at unison in “Say Ah”
The exact opposite result is attained when scoring the synth an octave higher than the bass groove. While the intensity created by doubling the bass pitch in unison with the synth creates intensity, scoring the synthesizer an octave higher than the bass produces a lighter texture, which perfectly complements flowing contrapuntal lines. This is evident in example 7.13 from the composition “Boom-Boom” recording on the New Art Orchestra’s 1999 CD release New Works: Celebration.
Example 7.13 – Bass and Synthesizer doubled at the octave in “Boom-Boom”

The fanfare opening of Bob’s 2002 composition “Tah-Dum” is an example of how Bob uses the synthesizer to create attack, weight, and atmosphere to the brass section.
The direct doubling of the brass parts gives the fanfare clarity. Doubling the trumpets in this register amplifies the brightness inherent in the sound of trumpets written in this register, giving their line more definition and punch. In addition, the synth appears to be mixed into both the left and right channels of the recording creating an antiphonal sound. This treatment adds sonic depth in the recording, sometimes absent in recordings of solely acoustic big band recordings.

When used to double more active melodic statements the sound of the synthesizer generates a smooth flowing sound that emphasizes the lyricism of the line. The synthesizer’s natural attack, inherent to its nature as a keyboard instrument, provides emphasis to the natural accents of the line. Example 7.15 illustrates the doubling of a melodic line played in unison by a mixture of saxophones and trumpets doubled by the synthesizer. Notice the left hand of the

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97 The Oxford Dictionary of Music defines antiphonal as “the musical effects drawn from groups of singers or instrumentalists stationed apart.”
synthesizer mirrors the voicings and rhythms found in the trombone section during this passage. The doubling of these pads give the bone section a transparence that is otherwise not present.
Example 7.15 – Synthesizer doubled with melody in “Slow Dance”
Brookmeyer’s inclusion of the synthesizer in his compositions as an equal and prominent voice within the large jazz ensemble has added a new and fresh sound to the idiom. This has had a direct influence on jazz composers of the current generation. New York City based composer and bandleader Darcy James Argue, who was a student of Brookmeyer’s at the New England Conservatory of Music, regularly incorporates electric instruments in his ensemble including electric guitars, electric pianos, and instruments utilizing digital effects that transform the acoustic signals of instruments such as loop samplers, distortion, delay, and echo pedals. Composer Maria Schneider has incorporated similar digital effects in her writing, most recently in her composition “The Pretty Road” which features an extended effects-laden trumpet solo. In searching for new colors, which in essence what Brookmeyer achieved through synthesizers, Maria has also made recent use of the accordion in her writing, creating an ensemble soundscape that is uniquely personal. Other present day composers such as Miami-based trumpeter/composer John Daversa and Los Angeles-based saxophonist/composer Bob Mintzer both utilize synthesized sound through the use of the EWI as both a solo and orchestral voice.

Quarter Note Accompaniment

A compositional technique associated with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra is the use of staccato quarter-notes orchestrated using the horn section simulating the drive and repetition usually represented in the rhythm section. First used by Thad Jones in his composition “Ah - That’s Freedom” written in 1965 and

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98 Electronic Wind Instrument developed by the Kuwai Corporation most notably played by saxophonist Michael Brecker
then again, perhaps most notably, in his 1985 arrangement of the Seymour and Marks standard “All of Me”, each musical director/head composer for the Vanguard has used this technique liberally. The VJO’s most recent musical director Jim McNeely credits Brookmeyer for furthering Thad’s innovation in what he calls his “Quarter note Trilogy” made up of “Hello and Goodbye” (1979), “Make Me Smile” (1980), and “The American Express” (1980). Additional compositions that employ this technique include “Cats” written in 1984 and recorded by the Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, and “The Big Time” written in 1981 and recorded by the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.

Thad Jones’ use of this technique in “All of Me” employs a laid-back, yet curiously driving, quarter note pattern in the trombones voiced to outline the harmony. The bass trombone emulates a bass player by anticipating the beat and creating a syncopated feel against the constantly driving quarter notes being played by the upper three trombones, the ride cymbal, and the bass player. A melodic bebop-style line is played by muted trumpet, soprano saxophone, and flute, creating a light and playful statement shown in example 7.16.

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The use of repetitive quarter notes creates a definitive change in texture from the flowing theme present in the A section of “Hello and Goodbye”. The effect creates an atmosphere that is almost vaudevillian or as Ray Wright calls it in his analysis from *Inside the Score* “humorous, Old Time”. In Example 7.12, Brookmeyer uses the contrast between the staccato quarter notes that make up

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100 *Inside the Score* pg. 116
the accompaniment and the flowing nature of the ensuing melody to create tension and forward motion.

Example 7.17 - Bob Brookmeyer’s use of quarter note accompaniment in "Hello and Goodbye"
Brookmeyer occasionally utilized this technique differently than Thad by using repetitive quarter notes to set a driving rhythmic pulse, that was usually stagnant harmonically. The stagnant harmonic structure allows Brookmeyer to develop melodic material freely without regard to phrase length as would be dictated by a harmonic progression. The absence of harmony also emphasizes the sound of the intervals present in the line, primarily those of the augmented 4th. Example 7.18 demonstrates a representative use of this technique.
Example 7.18 – Quarter Note Accompaniment in “Nasty Dance”
Brookmeyer’s GRAMMY award winning arrangement of “Skylark” was written as a solo vehicle for saxophonist Dick Oatts. Brookmeyer set out to re-compose the piece and figure out a way to present the piece in an unconventional manner. He was also very sensitive to the idea that there was theatre involved in music and that this had a real-time effect on the audience when they listened. As part of this process Bob created several different atmospheres for the soloist to explore throughout the arrangement. At Letter G, in example 7.19, he makes use of the quarter note accompaniment as the texture for the bridge of Oatts' improvised solo. The accompanying figure starts at a pianissimo and crescendos to an intense and breathtaking fortissimo. The pitches indicated in Example 7.19 are the notes played by the instrument on top of the ensemble voicings. Trumpet 2 is the lead voice for the first four bars of the phrase until trumpet 1 takes over to finish off the climactic passage.
Excitement is built as a result of the ascending melodic line culminating in an abrupt pause on beat 4 of the 7th measure of letter G. This complete discontinuation of motion gives the alto soloist space and also serves as a compelling contrast to the 4 bar conclusion to the phrase that begins on the upbeat of beat 3 in the 8th measure. As seen in Example 7.19 above, the contrast between the quarter note accompaniment and the subsequent melody provides the sensation of intense release.
Chapter 8
THE ROLE OF THE RHYTHM SECTION

A significant advancement in Brookmeyer’s writing involves the way in which he utilized the rhythm section. As big band music shifted from serving strictly as music for dancing, to music for listening, many jazz writers ignored the power and abilities of the rhythm section. It is still common in a large amount of music written today to find extended choruses where the rhythm section is asked to “chop wood”, simply playing time while the horn players tackle more “important” responsibilities like playing solos or stating melodies. Drummers and bass players, were asked to solo only when featured in special situations. Compositions such as Neil Hefti’s drum feature “Cute” or Duke Ellington’s bass feature “Jack the Bear” showcased the flashier side of these soloists, pandering to the audience by featuring the musicians “in the back of the band”. Pianists, who were relegated playing intros and/or endings, eventually disappeared from many ensembles such as the Gil Evans/Miles Davis groups and the aforementioned Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band. Many notable small groups based on the West Coast abandoned the use of the piano as well, freeing up the harmonic possibilities while improvising. Similarly, the most famous guitar solo in the repertoire of the Count Basie Orchestra is one arpeggiated chord at the beginning of Neil Hefti’s “Lil’ Darlin’”. The evolution of Brookmeyer’s music reveals a conscious effort to engage the rhythm section compositionally, in part, through the techniques outlined in the chapter.
Bob Brookmeyer set out to challenge the traditional roles of the members of the rhythm section, perhaps as a result of the influence of modern Classical chamber music where very often every instrument’s role is equal to the others allowing the ensemble’s sound as a whole to be of utmost importance. As Bob’s music progressed several changes became apparent in the rhythm section. First and foremost, Bob’s piano parts become more precisely notated. The three examples below represent 8 measures of notated piano parts as originally published from three different eras of Bob’s development. For the sake of consistency, the examples are taken from the first section of each arrangement.

In the 1959 arrangement of “Don’t Be That Way” the piano is given chord symbols in the upper staff and doubles the bass line with his left hand. On the recording of this chart, the pianist does not play the left hand but simply comps throughout the section. The left hand and the chord changes function separately in this early arrangement. Notice that the bass notes imply different harmony than that suggested by the chord changes, notably in m.3 where the bass note actually makes the chord of the moment Cmaj7(#5) and not E7(#5) as notated in the chart. Other occurrences of this include beat 3 of m.4 where the bass note implies Eb7(#11#5), a chord which represents the tri-tone substitution of the notated A9(#5).
Example 8.1 - Piano part as notated in 1959 arrangement of “Don’t Be That Way”

The piano part in the 1979 composition “First Love Song’ contains both harmonic and melodic information for the pianist. During the first 8 measures of this ballad periods of comping are sandwiched between two brief solo statements allowing the pianist an opportunity to play expressively and contribute to the ensemble texture.

Example 8.2 – Piano part as notated in 1979 composition “First Love Song”
The harmonies represented in the chord symbols differ slightly than what is represented in the ensemble, for example the Db7(b9) chord in m. 6. The voicings present in the ensemble actually spell a Db7 chord with all three versions of the 9th represented, flat 9 (D), natural 9 (Eb), and sharp 9 (E). The omission of these tensions in the pianist’s chord chart makes it necessary for the pianist to be more aware of and react to the tensions present in the horn voicings. The level of detail in the piano part gives the pianist some creative input but concurrently is limited by the information given.

The piano part for “Seesaw” lies in stark contrast to the previous two examples. Example 8.3 below shows the lack of creative freedom given to the pianist. Every note desired by Brookmeyer is notated and the piano lends to the texture achieved by the ensemble. The piano part is of equal importance to any other voice in the ensemble texture during this passage. Bob’s writing in his later years, especially those compositions written for his New Art Ensemble were highly notated, even during the solo sections. This allowed Bob to dictate every gesture present in the performance of his music. This is not to say that he did not wish to allow the players in his ensemble creative freedom, he only wished that they create within the confines of the composition being performed. By providing as much information as possible Brookmeyer assures that the pianist is playing in the moment and not just regurgitating information he or she has practiced previously. This is similar to his thoughts on solo sections in his later compositions as discussed in Chapter 9.
Example 8.3 - Piano part as notated in “Seesaw” from

Notating large portions of the piano parts in his compositions certainly has an effect on the performance of Bob's compositions. This is especially evident during solo sections where the piano part is notated as opposed to the traditional convention of the composer providing chord changes as the basis for the pianist to comp. As a result, there is very little interplay between the pianist and the soloist which leads to an increase in the interplay between the soloist and the drummer who is more free to react to musical cues. The result is that excitement is created through rhythm and melody more so than through harmony.

In the large jazz ensemble, the roles of the bass player and drummer have traditionally been of timekeeper, especially at faster tempos. Brookmeyer's use of the bass player and drummer, like the pianist, changed over the years. In his early music and even in the music written for the Village Vanguard based bands the bassist and drummer were utilized more akin to their traditional roles. As demonstrated in example 8.4, the bass player outlines the harmony while providing a steady pulse with “walking” quarter notes at faster tempos. The drummer
provides pulse and groove while setting up and accentuating ensemble figures. Throughout Bob’s music it appears that he uses the middle space (C5) to provide the drummer with information regarding the rhythms present in the ensemble figures. Most modern composers notate ensemble figures on the space directly above the staff (G5) to indicate rhythmic information for the drummer. In the example below the second measure of the drum part indicates that time should continue yet the drummer should be aware of and set up the rhythmic figure eighth-quarter-eighth during the first two beats followed by a “hit” on the and of beat three.

Example 8.4 – Bass and Drum parts for Ensemble Chorus at Letter O of “Don’t Be That Way”

During the ensemble chorus at letter G of “ABC Blues”, seen in example 8.5, the drummer and the bass player are given detailed information, including articulations and dynamics, that allow them to align with the harmonic and rhythmic intent of the ensemble figures while matching their intensity. The players can use
the information provided in the part to create a powerful and well-defined ensemble statement.

Example 8.5 – Bass and drums as notated in “ABC Blues”

In Jazz writing there are several common conventions for relaying rhythmic information to the drummer yet there is no standard. Therefore, it is important for the drummer to be familiar with the way each composer notates their parts to ensure their performance is appropriate and musical. It is of equal importance that the jazz composer be consistent with their notation for drums. Note that the drum part, if read literally, would produce a performance that is in exact rhythmic tutti with the ensemble using the bass drum and snare drum only which is not Brookmeyer’s intent. Instead he notated the important information the drummer as a guide to be used as the basis for his interpretation of the line and not to be played literally. Mel Lewis plays most of the rhythms notated at letter G on the snare drum and bass drum while maintaining time with his hi-hat and ride cymbals in recorded examples of “ABC Blues” resulting in a driving musical statement that accentuates the figure played by the band.
Most likely influenced by the proficiency and artistry of his longtime musical companion Mel Lewis, Brookmeyer eventual came to greatly rely on his drummer to provide dynamic peaks and valleys in his writing. As his music became more complex the way he made use of the bassist and drummer changed dramatically. The bass player would no longer be relegated to keeping time with a steady flow of quarter notes and the drummer would be allowed to interact more organically with the rest of the ensemble. This is especially evident in his work with the New Art Orchestra, where drummer John Hollenbeck manned the drum chair. “One thing I learned, the faster the tempo the less you have 4/4 in the bass and the rhythm section. The drummer becomes the main carrier of pulse and becomes almost an extra ensemble voice. You can’t have bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum, it doesn’t work, it’s too fast. So you have the drummer join the band and the bass and the piano become like floating notes in contrast to help the movement go on.”

Example 8.6 shows a transitional section of “Happy Song” from the recording Spirit Music. It is very apparent how Bob executed what he describes in the quote above. Writing a part that perfectly complements the ensemble figures and does not simply provide chord changes for the bass player has several effects on the resultant performance. First the drummer is free to drive the ensemble without having to interface with the quarter-note pulse that would normally be performed by the bass player. Secondly, the lack of quarter-notes in the bass line

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allows the relationship between the brass and saxophones to be conspicuous. By omitting passing tones that would normally be present in the bass line Brookmeyer takes complete control of harmony, assuring that the intent and motion of the harmonic progression is as he envisioned. This is a result of the purity of sound achieved when only the root is present in the bass register. This makes all the gestures happening in the ensemble above the bass line come through with greater clarity. Third, the lack of a constant quarter-note creates a sense of flow in relation to the melodic material, especially when three is superimposed over four in m.97.
Example 8.6 – Rhythm section notation in transitional section of “Happy Song”

Additional examples of Brookmeyer’s utilization of the rhythm section can be found in the next chapter, “Incorporating Improvisation”. 
Chapter 9
INCORPORATING IMPROVISATION

Bob Brookmeyer had very strong opinions regarding the incorporation of improvisation into his compositions for jazz orchestra. In several interviews, including the extended interview shared with his supporters on artistShare, Brookmeyer boldly states that music does not have to contain improvisation to be considered jazz. While his position on improvisation might trigger arguments from musicologists, jazz critics, performers, and listeners alike, there is no doubt that he managed to write a large amount of very successful jazz music that does not feature improvisatory sections in the traditional sense. Several of Bob’s compositions feature no extended solo space including “The Big Time” (which does contain short periods of group improvisation) written for the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, “Ceremony” for the Stockholm Jazz Orchestra and “Lovely” and “The End”, both written for the New Art Orchestra. Other compositions feature very little solo space including his 2000 composition “For Maria” from the album *Waltzing with Zoe*.

**Engaging the Soloist**

Upon his return to New York City in the 1980’s Brookmeyer encountered a new wave of advanced players that were not on the scene when he left more than ten years earlier. The emergence of players, who improvised at the highest levels of proficiency such as saxophonist Joe Lovano and trumpeter Tom Harrell, forced Brookmeyer to explore ways to effectively integrate them into his compositions while allowing them to express themselves freely. Bob Brookmeyer labelled the
established language of jazz performance that he first encountered during this
time period as a 'ritual gone mad'.

“You don’t write a solo until you [the composer] have completely
exhausted what you have to say. If you give a soloist an open solo
for 30 seconds, he plays like he’s coming from the piece that you
write. Then he says, ‘What the hell was that piece that I was
playing from?’ and the next 30 seconds is, ‘Oh, I guess I’ll play
what I learned last night.’ And bang! Minute two is whoever he
likes, which is probably Coltrane.”\(^{102}\)

It was this practice of just “running through the changes” that Bob was trying
to combat when including improvisatory sections in his music. His idea was to
make the soloists “a background to the background”, harkening back to some of
the music from the Count Basie Orchestra in which the background figures or “riffs”
presented by the band behind a soloist added to the excitement, tension, and
release of the overall performance. Brookmeyer went about this in several different
ways. Most notably, he became accustomed to writing large amounts of melodic
material before any solo sections took place. By presenting large amounts of
material before giving soloists room to improvise Brookmeyer firmly established
the mood, form, attitude, and harmonic structure of his compositions. The soloist
then had no choice but to let the music that was already produced influence his
improvisation. As the table 9.1 illustrates, this technique evolved over time. Notice
that the length of time before each solo increases in Brookmeyer’s more recent
writing.

\(^{102}\) Ratliff, Ben. "Bob Brookmeyer: Raging and Composing Against the Jazz Machine." *The New
Table 9.1 - Number of measures prior to first improvisatory section in compositions over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Composed</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Measure Number of First Improvisatory Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Just Plain Meye</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Happiness Is a Thing Called Joe</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Manoir De Mes Reves</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Ho-Hum</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Hello and Goodbye</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Nasty Dance</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Celebration Suite - IV. Two And</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Boom-Boom</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Seesaw</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Happy Song</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Boom-Boom” and “SeeSaw” each include brief solo sections for Brookmeyer himself that occur earlier in the music than indicated. While these sections are in fact, improvisatory, he was most likely not concerned that he would lose sight of his own artistic intentions.

Of the pieces surveyed above, “Happy Song” is the sole outlier among his later works to the idea that a large amount of material is presented before a solo takes place. Brookmeyer uses a different technique to ensure that the soloist remains true to the composition in this instance. By composing figures around the soloist, whether through figures in the rhythm section or melodic statements in the horns, Brookmeyer makes sure that he “has his hand on the soloist, somehow, with long tones, chords, or punches.”

Example 9.2 shows how Brookmeyer influences of “keeps his hands on” the trumpet soloist both rhythmically and harmonically in the improvisatory section that begins in m.29 of “Happy Song”. The recurring figure being played by the rhythm

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103 Ibid.
section has a definite effect on the way the soloist chooses to phrase his lines. Harmonically, the melodic line played by the saxophones and synthesizer is clearly derived from the D Dorian mode, in direct conflict to the chord of the moment, E minor suspended. The polytonal texture created by this conflict will likely affect the effectiveness of the notes that the trumpet soloist chooses while improvising.
Example 9.1 - Trumpet Solo Accompaniment in "Happy Song"
In other compositions Bob applies this technique similarly but will add to the texture by voicing the pattern present in the rhythm section with members of the horn section. In example 9.2 below during the soprano saxophone solo in “Happy Song”, the rhythmic pattern highlighted by the accent on beat 4 is also present in the horns by the top two trumpets, two trombones, and two saxophones in octaves. Three trumpets play a melodic line, which strongly implies C Ionian harmonically, reminiscent of material presented earlier in the composition. Additionally, two saxophones and two trombones present a countermelody, that emphasizes both the rhythmic and harmonic intent of the texture. This dense texture compels the soloist to create while being fully aware of the harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic material presented.
Requiring a soloist to improvise over irregular phrases is another effective way that Brookmeyer engages the soloist compositionally. Combining phrases of different lengths requires a soloist to readjust their conventional thinking in regards to rhythm and melody. Traditional jazz forms are firmly set in the practice of
consisting of phrases that occur in even numbers of bars. As seen in the tables in Chapter 5 regarding form, conventional thinking does not apply to a good deal of his music. Extended and unusual forms are partially a byproduct of his desire to challenge soloists to think outside the box to successfully navigate phrases of uneven lengths. In his composition “Seesaw” Brookmeyer forces drummer John Hollenbeck into a “conversation” with the saxophone section made up of irregular phrase lengths. Additionally, Brookmeyer uses rhythmic displacement to imply 6/4 on either side of three bars of 4/4 in the space of six measures of 4/4. This additional level of rhythmic complexity increases the focus required of the soloist.
Example 9.3 - Irregular phrases during drum solo in "Seesaw"

By requiring a soloist to improvise over a figure that is displaced rhythmically, Brookmeyer ensures that he/she must play within the confines of those figures. Once again this forces the soloist to create lines that work with those backgrounds and are not just scales or patterns that they practiced out of context. An example
of this technique can be found at m.139 of “Ho Hum” behind Bob’s valve trombone solo as seen in example 9.4. The rhythmic figure played by the rhythm section is voiced in the saxophone section as well. This creates a dense, highly rhythmic texture for the soloist to navigate.
Example 9.4 - Saxophones and rhythm section accompanying valve-trombone soloist in "Ho Hum"
Upon first learning of Brookmeyer’s desire to hold his soloists’ hands it would be easy to assume that this thought-process was the product of ego and selfishness. In fact, he thought quite the opposite. In the 2011 video documentary previously cited he states “You give a musician freedom by helping him play well.” This statement suggests his handling of soloists was not about selfishness at all, but about sharing in the creation of an enjoyable and meaningful performance.

**Group Improvisation**

In trying to step outside the box of traditional big band writing Brookmeyer frequently calls upon multiple people in his ensembles to improvise at the same time and does utilizing several different techniques. Asking players to improvise together requires them to interact on a level that transcends the notes on the page, pushing them to spontaneously create in tandem within the confines of his composition. This configuration necessitates that the improvisers be focused on the intent of the music they are creating and to truly construct solos based on that intent. In doing so they create music that is artistically relevant and closely related to the composition, not simply churning out random notes and patterns. Several of Bob’s charts feature free improvisation between duos and even trios of instruments. Example 5.1, on pg. 36, from “ABC Blues” illustrates a situation in which Bob asks the bass player and drummer to freely improvise. Knowing the piece is based on a twelve-tone row and the blues gives the bass and drum soloists all the information they need to make the most creative and relevant choices while improvising together.
In his 1981 “sequel” to “ABC Blues” entitled “XYZ” Brookmeyer calls upon the whole rhythm section to freely improvise together for an extended period of time as shown in example 9.5. In both of these compositions sections of free improvisation allow the musicians to be freely creative and interject their personal voice into the music. As a result, performances of this music were completely different from night to night. The multiple recordings of “ABC Blues” reflect this, as no two are alike in length, content, mood, or attitude. Although recorded evidence of this doesn’t exist, as the second chart “XYZ” was only recorded once, the implementation of group improvisation would most certainly result in each performance of this composition being unique as well. Example 9.6 shows group improvisation in “XYZ”.
The previous example also illustrates another form of improvisation that Bob incorporated into his music known as “intuitive music”. A phrase coined by Markus Stockhausen, “intuitive music” is a type of free improvisation that is controlled and dictated by the composer. Performers “use their intuition” to improvise based on textual instructions versus traditional musical cues such as chord symbols or pitch sets. The resultant music is spontaneous and creative, yet is funneled through the
composed's vision. Bob's composition “XYZ” makes frequent use of intuitive music. In Example 9.6, you can see samples of the instructions that are given to different soloists at various points throughout the composition.

**Example 9.6 - Examples of "Intuitive Music" in "XYZ"**

![Example of score and ad lib instructions]

In the examples above, group improvisation is used in the absence of harmonic structure. In contrast, Brookmeyer frequently applied group improvisation to sections that consisted of melodic and harmonic material being present. During the return to letter C of Brookmeyer's iconic “Hello and Goodbye”, the effect created by multiple soloists competing with the existing melodic material generates a raucous atmosphere, reminiscent of the “tailgating” style of the music associated with New Orleans. The energy created by the multiple soloists serves as the perfect build into the tenor saxophone solo it precedes. Similarly, m.5-12 of “Silver Lining” seen in example 9.7, from the recording *Spirit Music*, feature Bob Brookmeyer's valve trombone, first tenor saxophone, and first alto saxophone improvising over fully voiced ensemble material. This creates a cacophonous
mood which directly contrasts the unified melody line stated by the alto saxophones, trumpets, and synthesizer in m.13. The improvised lines played by the soloists on the recording create tension as they are distinctly different from rhythmic figures present in the rest of the ensemble. This dissimilarity accentuates the sensation of release achieved upon the appearance of the melody at m.13.
Example 9.7 - Group Improvisation in "Silver Lining"
Chapter 10
CONCLUSION

Bob Brookmeyer challenged the long-standing traditions of jazz composition and created a new model where jazz writers felt comfortable testing the tolerance of musicians and audience alike. The lessons that he taught us through words and music are perhaps the most important facet of his legacy. The music of composers such as Maria Schneider, Jim McNeely, Darcy James Argue, and numerous others would not be possible without Bob’s vision and mentorship. For these reasons Brookmeyer was a worthy subject for a study of this depth and breadth. Bob Brookmeyer’s greatest contributions to jazz writing are those which are representative of his compositional voice. These contributions have been emulated and explored by composers and arrangers who have used his music as a model for their own musical exploration and growth. They include:

- The use of extensive unisons provides well-defined clarity to the counterpoint and melodic lines contained in his music.
- The expansion of form as a result of melodic development and the strong desire to organically incorporate improvisation into his compositions.
- The use of 20th century techniques and dissonance in vertical sonorities to create tension and release.
- The utilization of the rhythm section as equal contributors to the melodic and developmental intent of this compositions.

This study has also explored the impact of a composer’s lifestyle and social circumstances on his/her music. It is highly evident that the musical evolution of
Brookmeyer’s writing can be directly compared to life events. As his life became more complex and challenging as a result of drinking, drugs, or depression, so followed his music. After stepping away and gaining clarity, his music followed suit becoming more clearly defined and less dense.

**Compositions by the Author**

The six compositions included in the appendix of this study were heavily influenced by Bob Brookmeyer’s music. They are inspired by both the compositional techniques uncovered in the course of this study and Bob’s drive to deepen the connection between the composer, the performer, and most importantly, the listener. Instead of using all of the techniques presented verbatim it was the hope of the author to assimilate these techniques into his own voice therefore creating compositions that are informed by Brookmeyer’s writing yet are uniquely personal.

“Through It All” was written to feature Alto Saxophone and Guitar. Brookmeyer’s influence is apparent in two ways. First, I strived to present melodic material using unisons across instrumental sections throughout. This is seen in numerous sections including the introduction from m.1 – m.16 and again in the transitional section at m.80 between the two solo sections. Secondly, although I made a conscious decision to allow the soloists ample space to improvise over an “open” section (m.64 and m.96) I composed backgrounds that are based on previous melodic material. This ensures that their solos would maintain relevance to the music being performed.
The composition “Ten Years” was written to mark the 10th anniversary of the passing of my grandfather. I used various orchestrational techniques to capture the bittersweet emotions I was feeling at the time. The transparency of unison flugelhorns on top of fully voiced saxophones and trombones captured the feelings of loss and hope that I was feeling simultaneously. The use of trumpets and trombones in unison stating the “blues-tinged” background at m.120 allowed me to create the appropriate amount of build heading into the fully voiced ensemble section at m.128.

Written as a tribute to my two young nieces “From Afar” was inspired by the playtime habits of children, which can be at one moment innocent and peaceful (m.1 – m.127) to raucous and wild (m.128 – m.228) in the next moment. The main technique inspired by Brookmeyer in this movement is the use of the EWI as both a soloist and a member of the ensemble. It was particularly challenging to devise a way to integrate the EWI into the ensemble seamlessly. A large portion of the melodic material was derived from the opening three notes of the melody played by the trumpets in m.9 and their intervallic relations of a minor 2nd and a perfect 5th. This is evident in ostinato and melodic material used underneath the raucous material at m.128. Using the original melody as the basis for the developmental material later in the composition leads to a form which is irregular in places, as the lines did not result in phrases of symmetrical lengths.
“Want a Cracker?” was directly inspired by Brookmeyer’s composition “Boom Boom” which was the first composition from his New Art Period that I had ever heard. I was immediately drawn to the relatively simplistic melodic material which was highly developed and free flowing. When I began writing this composition I tried to not consciously incorporate any compositional conventions that I had previously used. The result is a highly developed composition which leads the listener in many different directions. Melodic material used throughout the composition as background (m.198) and accompanying material (m.238) for both soloists is based on the original theme as well as the interval of a major 2\textsuperscript{nd}. The soprano saxophonist is called upon to solo with the drummer using only the instructions “very active” and “D-minorish”. Before the drummer and the saxophone soloist distanced themselves too far from my composition musically I presented the figure that begins at m.84 and is based on previously used intervallic relationships. I used cluster voicings beginning in m.125 to challenge the soloists rhythmically instead of harmonically. Descending parallel harmonic motion is used to break up sections consisting of long stretches of harmonic stagnation as seen in m.194. As in many of Brookmeyer’s compositions the rhythm section plays a major role in the performance of this piece and their parts are highly notated as a result.

“A Promise Forgotten” was also written for my grandfather. I chose to harmonize the melody line at this slower tempo in rhythmic tutti, much like Brookmeyer does in compositions such as “First Love Song” written for the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra. The use of clarinets in the texture blending with muted
trombones and flugelhorns creates an airy texture that allows the half-steps present in some of the voicings to make the voicings “shimmer” capturing the emotion I was attempting to portray. The clusters at m.49 were used to simulate the cries of emotion one feels upon losing someone they hold close. Brookmeyer most influenced me in regards to the background writing during “Promise”. I endeavored to guarantee that the soloist also plays with the emotion that I was trying to portray in writing this piece.

The final composition, “Red Means Go”, written for Whit Sidener, Professor Emeritus at the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music, uses several of Brookmeyer’s techniques including unisons within and across sections throughout, the manipulation of a reoccurring rhythmic figure, in this case a dotted quarter followed by an eighth note first seen in m.9), and an irregular form created as a result of melodic and rhythmic development. Although the soloists are given space to improvise free of horn backgrounds for extended periods of time I attempted to “keep my hand” on them with challenging chord changes built using irregular phrase lengths and not present earlier in the composition. When the backgrounds do enter they are directly derived from pervious material.
APPENDIX A
COMPOSITIONS BY THE AUTHOR - SCORES
Through It All

Stephen Guerra, Jr.

Alto 1
Alto 2
Tenor 1
Tenor 2
Bari. Sax.
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Alto Saxophone
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Bass Trombone
Guitar
Piano
Bass Guitar
Drums

Straight Eighth

h=100

mp

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

2x Only

Straight Eighth

Straight Eighth

Straight Eighth
Through It All - Full Score

Alto 1

Alto 2

Tenor 1

Tenor 1

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Alto Sax.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

J. Gtr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

E♭11 D2/F©

E♭11 D2/F©

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

E♭11 D2/F©

E♭11 D2/F©

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

E♭11 D2/F©

E♭11 D2/F©

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp
Through It All - Full Score

Alto 1

Alto 2

Tenor 1

Tenor 1

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Alto Sax.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

J. Gtr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

mf

D^9 E2 F©‹11 E2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

D^9 E2 F©‹11 E2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

Play 3rd and 4th time

Play 3rd and 4th time

Play 3rd and 4th time

Play 3rd and 4th time

Play 3rd and 4th time

Play 3rd and 4th time

Play 3rd and 4th time

Play 3rd and 4th time
Through It All - Full Score

Through It All - Full Score

128

Alto 1

Alto 2

Tenor 1

Tenor 1

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Alto Sax.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

J. Gtr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

D^9 E2 F©‹11 E2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

D^9 E2 F©‹11 E2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

D^9 E2 F©‹11 E2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

D^9 E2 F©‹11 E2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

D^9 E2 F©‹11 E2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2

F^9 G2 A‹11 G2
Through It All - Full Score

Alto 1

Alto 2

Tenor 1

Tenor 2

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Alto Sax.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

J. Gtr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.
10 Years
For my Grandfather

Alto Saxophone 1
Alto Saxophone 2
Tenor Saxophone 1
Tenor Saxophone 2
Baritone Saxophone
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Bass Trombone
Guitar
Piano
Acoustic Bass
Drum Set

Emin9
Brushes Solo

Medium Swing =108

10 Years
For my Grandfather
Alto Sax 1
Alto Sax 2
Ten. Sax 1
Ten. Sax 2
B. Cl.
Flug 1
Flug 2
Flug 3
Flug 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Gtr.
Pno.
A. Bass
Dr.

E7sus4 E7 Am9 F#7b9 Bmaj13 C69 C69/B
Time with Mallets - Mysterious but Active (12/8ish)
From Afar
From Afar - Full Score
From Afar - Full Score
From Afar - Full Score
From Afar - Full Score
From Afar - Full Score

Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax. 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Flug.
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Pad 1
E. Gtr.
Pno.
U. Bass
Dr.
From Afar - Full Score
From Afar - Full Score
From Afar - Full Score

Alto Sax. 1
Alto Sax. 2
Ten. Sax. 1
Ten. Sax 2
Bari. Sax.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Flug.
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
Pad 1
E. Gtr.
Pno.
U. Bass.
Dr.
Want a Cracker?

Fast Swing \( \text{\=220} \)

Active time on hi-hat a la Mel Lewis
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score

Alto Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

Tbn.

E. Gtr.

Pno.

U. Bass

Dr.
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score

Solo - "Dish" with Drums

Continue Solo using line as Harmonic guide

2x Only

Very Active Time with Soprano Solo

Time while implying figure and interacting with Soloist

2x Only

Solo - "Dish" with Drums

Continue Solo using line as Harmonic guide

2x Only

Very Active Time with Soprano Solo

Time while implying figure and interacting with Soloist

2x Only
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score

Solo Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

E. Gtr.

Pno.

U. Bass

Dr.

More clicky - Hi-Hats and Rims

Solo - Start Sparse

Play 3x and 4x Slowy Slide Up and Down 1/2 step after hitting pitch

Play 3x and 4x Slowy Slide Up and Down 1/2 step after hitting pitch

Play 3x and 4x

Tacet 1x and 2x

4x only

Tacet 1x and 2x

4x only

Tacet 1x and 2x

4x only

Tacet 1x and 2x

4x only
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score
Want a Cracker? - Full Score

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn.

Tbn.

Tbn.

E. Gtr.

Pno.

U. Bass

Dr.
Want a Cracker? - Full Score

Sopr. Sax.
Alto Sax.
Ten. Sax.
Ten. Sax.
Bari. Sax.
Tpt.
Tpt.
Tpt.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Tbn.
Tbn.
E. Gtr.
Pno.
U. Bass
Dr.

Chorale played as conducted ad lib over continuing time.

[V V V V V V V V V V V V V V V V V V V V]
[œ]
[œ]
[œ]
Conductor cues rhythm section to stop time with final resolution.
A Promise Not Forgotten

```
A Promise Not Forgotten

Flute
Clarinet 1
Tenor Saxophone
Clarinet 2
Bass Clarinet in B
Flugelhorn 1
Flugelhorn 2
Flugelhorn 3
Flugelhorn 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Bass Trombone
Jazz Guitar
Piano
Upright Bass
Drum Set

Ballad 4 - 72

Bb^7/C C2 Bb^7/C C2

Solo Fills

Bb^7/C solo fills C2 Bb^7/C C2
```

The sheet music includes notation for various instruments, including flute, clarinet, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, flugelhorn, trombone, jazz guitar, piano, upright bass, and drum set. The section includes notation for a ballad tempo and chord progression with Bb7/C and C2 harmonic progressions.
A Promise Not Forgotten - Full Score
A Promise Not Forgotten - Full Score
A Promise Not Forgotten - Full Score
A Promise Not Forgotten - Full Score

Ten. Sax.
To Alto Sax.

Cl. 1
To Alto Sax.

Cl. 2
To Ten. Sax.

B. Cl.
To Alto Sax.

Flug. 1
To Bari. Sax.

Flug. 2

Flug. 3

Flug. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

J. Gtr.

Pno.

U. Bass

Dr.

F% A% Amin11 Bb7(#11) Gmin9 Ebmaj7 D7(#5) Bbmaj7 C% F% Ab7alt G7alt F#alt

F% Ab% Amin11 Bb7(#11) Gmin9 Ebmaj7 D7(#5) Bbmaj7 C% F% Ab7alt G7alt F#alt

F% A% Amin11 Bb7(#11) Gmin9 Ebmaj7 D7(#5) Bbmaj7 C% F% Ab7alt G7alt F#alt
A Promise Not Forgotten - Full Score
A Promise Not Forgotten - Full Score
Red Means Go
Red Means Go - Full Score

Alto 1

Tenor 1

Bari. Tpt.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

J. Gtr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.
Red Means Go - Full Score
Red Means Go - Full Score
Red Means Go - Full Score

Alto 1
Alto 2
Tenor 1
Tenor 1
Bari.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.
J. Gtr.
Pno.
Bass
Dr.

mf
Amin7 Bbmin7
mf
Amin7 Bbmin7
mf
Amin7 Bbmin7
Amin7 Bbmin7
Amin7 Bbmin7
Amin7 Bbmin7
Amin7 Bbmin7
Amin7 Bbmin7

& ∑ ∑ ∑
& ∑ ∑
&
&
&
&
&
&
Bite!
. . . . . ∑ ∑
Bite!
. . . . . ∑ ∑
Bite!
. . . . . ∑ ∑
Bite!
. . . . . ∑ ∑
Red Means Go - Full Score
Red Means Go - Full Score
Red Means Go - Full Score
Red Means Go - Full Score

Alto 1

Alto 2

Tenor 1

Tenor 1

Bari.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Tpt.

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

J. Gtr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.
Red Means Go - Full Score
APPENDIX B
RECORDING DETAILS

“Red Means Go”, “Promise Not Forgotten”, “Want Cracker”, “Ten Years”

Recorded by the Stephen Guerra Big Band
Hit Factory Criteria, Miami, FL
September

Saxophones: Matt Vashlishan (solos on “Want A Cracker” and “Ten Years”), Pat Seymour, Troy Roberts (solos on “Red Means Go” and “A Promise Not Forgotten”), Gary Keller, Dave Palma

Trumpets: Frank Greene, Greg Gisbert, Augie Haas, Clay Jenkins (solos on “Red Means Go” and “Want A Cracker”), Trent Austin

Trombones: Dante Luciani, Stafford Hunter, Chad Bernstein, Joe Barati

Piano: Dan Strange (solo on “Ten Years”)
Guitar: Sam Pettiti
Bass: Josh Allen
Drums: Daniel Susnjar

“Through It All” and “From A Far”
Foster Music Building room 206 at the Frost School of Music, Miami, FL

Saxophones: Matt Vashlishan (solos on “Through It All” and “From A Far”), John Palowitch, Tyler Clibbon, Pat Seymour, Dan Andrews, Tyler Burchfield

Trumpets: Augie Haas, Cisco Dimas, Mike Cordone, Scott Dickinson (Solo on “Through It All”), Chris Klaxton

Trombones: Chad Bernstein, Kendall Moore, Joanna Sabater, Jose Leon

Piano: Angelo Versace
Guitar: Tim Jago
Bass: Josh Allen
Drums: Daniel Susnjar
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