The Compositional Style of Dave Douglas: Analysis of Select Pieces from a Spectrum of the Composer's Ensembles

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THE COMPOSITIONAL STYLE OF DAVE DOUGLAS: ANALYSIS OF SELECT PIECES FROM A SPECTRUM OF THE COMPOSER’S ENSEMBLES

By

Scott Carter Dickinson

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

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of the University of Miami
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THE COMPOSITIONAL STYLE OF DAVE DOUGLAS: ANALYSIS OF SELECT PIECES FROM A SPECTRUM OF THE COMPOSER’S ENSEMBLES

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Trumpeter Dave Douglas is widely considered to be one of the most important contemporary jazz composers and performers of our time. Douglas has quickly garnered a reputation for himself as a leading voice in jazz and experimental music, and is likely to be recognized as a true visionary in jazz at the turn of the century. Douglas has been performing and composing as a leader for little more than twenty years and has, in that period, accomplished more than most jazz artists have in a lifetime. His eclectic compositional approach is informed by a respect of the jazz tradition, a firm understanding of various musical disciplines, and a desire to explore uncharted compositional territory. This essay is an examination of Douglas’ compositional style and development, specifically in relation to the many disparate ensembles Douglas has founded over the course of his career.
Acknowledgements

As this document represents the culmination of over twenty years of institutional musical study, I’d like to take the opportunity to recognize those who have been instrumental in my development as a musician and as an individual.

First I’d like to thank Mr. Douglas for sanctioning my study on his music and providing assistance when and where he could. His music has had a major impact on me for many years, and I’ll always consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to spend some time with him while he was in residence at the Frost School. In particular I’m grateful for his blessing in the use of his musical scores.

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Thank to my remaining doctoral committee members Gary Lindsay, Don Coffman, and John Olah for your expert guidance and your willingness to continue as my committee members after a five-year break in activity as if no time had passed at all.

Thank you to my parents Edson and Donna for your love and support. Of course your contribution to the development of my character and identity as an individual cannot be understated. You must have done something right for me to choose to work in the music field as you have.

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you’ve stuck by my side through it all. You’ve bared the brunt of our financial burden as I pursued an education, only to become even more busy as a mom upon the completion of my coursework. You’ve had to pick up my slack with the children and household duties over the past several months, and you’ve done so with a love and longsuffering beyond what I deserve. Thank you beautiful wife, for your unending sacrifice and love. I could never have made it this far without you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF EXAMPLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albums</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz and General Composition</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Miscellaneous Sources</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3 METHOD</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4 THE EARLY YEARS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Worlds</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiny Bell Trio</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sextet</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5 SMALL GROUPS, TRADITION, AND KLEZMER</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Portrait</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartet</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charms Of The Night Sky</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6 ELECTRIC EXPLORATIONS</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Quintet</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freak In</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keystone</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 7 GREENLEAF ................................................................. 124
  Brass Ecstasy ............................................................................. 124
  Big Band ................................................................................. 136
  Second Quintet....................................................................... 161

CHAPTER 8 COLLABORATIONS ....................................................... 175
  Riverside ................................................................................. 175
  High Risk ............................................................................... 182
  Fabliaux ............................................................................... 193

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION ............................................................ 206

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................................... 211

APPENDIX A SCORES ................................................................. 218

APPENDIX B RECORDING LINKS .................................................. 283
# LIST OF EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1. “Sehr Bewegt” part assignments</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. “Sehr Bewegt” melodic fragment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. “Parallel Worlds” P0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4. “Parallel Worlds” Violin m.1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5. “Parallel Worlds” Trumpet m.1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6. “Parallel Worlds” Cello m.1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7. “Parallel Worlds” Double Bass m.1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8. “Parallel Worlds” tetrachords</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9. “Parallel Worlds” section A tetrachords</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10. “Parallel Worlds” section B bass line</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11. “Parallel Worlds” section B melody</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12. “Parallel Worlds” section C tetrachords</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13. “Parallel Worlds” tetrachord voicings</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14. “Parallel Worlds” section D</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15. “Parallel Worlds” section E</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16. “Parallel Worlds” solo background figure</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17. “Piece For Strings” opening bass line</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.18. “Piece For Strings” melody into section A</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.19. “Piece For Strings” section B bass line</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20. “Piece For Strings” section C bass line</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.21. “Piece For Strings” section C bass/cello</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.22. “Piece For Strings” section A</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.23. “Piece For Strings” section A harmonic analysis</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.24. “Piece For Strings” section B bass line</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.25. “Piece For Strings” section C harmony</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.26. “Piece For Strings” section C cello</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.27. “Piece For Strings” section D part 1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.28. “Piece For Strings” section D part 2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.29. “Piece For Strings” section D part 3 ................................................................. 37
4.30. “Piece For Strings” section D part 4 ................................................................. 37
4.31. “Piece For Strings” section E part 1 ................................................................. 37
4.32. “Piece For Strings” section E part 2 ................................................................. 38
4.33. “Piece For Strings” trumpet/violin melody intro ............................................. 38
4.34. “Punchy” m. 1-9 ................................................................................................. 42
4.35. “Nutty” m. 1-8 .................................................................................................. 42
4.36. “Monk’s Dream” m. 7-8 ................................................................................... 42
4.37. “Trinkle Tinkle” m. 4-5 .................................................................................... 42
4.38. “Coming On The Hudson” m. 6-8 ..................................................................... 43
4.39. “Punchy” m. 1-9 ............................................................................................... 43
4.40. “Humph” m. 1-4 ............................................................................................... 43
4.41. “Think of One” m. 7 ........................................................................................ 43
4.42. “Brilliant Corners” m. 1-8 ................................................................................ 43
4.43. “Punchy” chord progression ............................................................................. 44
4.44. “Humph” chord progression ............................................................................. 44
4.45. “Epistrophy” chord progression (m.1-4 and 5-8 are switched on second A) .... 44
4.46. “Skippy” chord progression .............................................................................. 45
4.47. “Punchy” m. 5-6 melody .................................................................................. 46
4.48. “Punchy” m. 5-6 ............................................................................................... 46
4.49. “Punchy” m. 8-9 ............................................................................................... 46
4.50. “Punchy” m. 1-9 ............................................................................................... 47
4.51. “Brilliant Corners” m. 9-15 (bridge) ................................................................. 47
4.52. “Heavenly Messenger” melody ......................................................................... 50
4.53. “Heavenly Messenger” melodic rhythmic contour ........................................... 51
4.54. “Heavenly Messenger” melodic tone row ....................................................... 51
4.55. “Heavenly Messenger” pitch class arrangement in second instance of row ...... 52
4.56. “Heavenly Messenger” sampler “Among Frogs” preview .................................. 53
4.57. “In Our Lifetime” melody m. 24-26 ................................................................. 55
4.58. “In Our Lifetime” 1st three bars of trumpet improvisation ............................. 56
4.59. “In Our Lifetime” bass line at letter I ............................................................. 56
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” trumpet improvisation at approximately 0:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” A section horn voicings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” trumpet m.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m.4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>“Forward Flight” horns m. 1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>“Forward Flight” horns m. 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” bass figures m. 6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m. 8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m. 10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” bass m. 14-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m. 16-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m. 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m. 24-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” trumpet m. 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m. 33-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m. 39-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” m. 42-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” bass at “I”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” trumpet and sax letter J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>“In Our Lifetime” letter O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>“First Frost” piano introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>“First Frost” initial A sections melody and chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>“First Frost” A section melodic contour analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>“First Frost” transition to B section and first four bars of B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>“First Frost” m. 5-9 of B section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>“First Frost” last 2 bars of B section and 1st bar of A’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>“First Frost” A’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>“First Frost” A section solo changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>“First Frost” B section solo changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>“First Frost” B section solo changes – F# pedal section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>“First Frost” initial B section voicings without melody</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.15. “Just Another Murder” Letter B ................................................................. 112
6.16. “Just Another Murder” end of second A .................................................. 113
6.17. “Tree Ring Circus” 1st intro section .............................................................. 115
6.18. “Tree Ring Circus” 2nd intro section bass .................................................. 115
6.19. “Tree Ring Circus” 2nd intro keyboard “parts” .......................................... 116
6.20. “Tree Ring Circus” Letter A melody .............................................................. 117
6.22. “Tree Ring Circus” Letter B ........................................................................ 118
6.23. “Tree Ring Circus” bass at end of letter B, leading to 2nd intro section ....... 119
6.24. “Tree Ring Circus” letter C rhythm hits and chords .................................. 120
6.25. “Tree Ring Circus” letter C melodic contour graphed ................................ 120
6.26. “Tree Ring Circus” letter C melodic harmonization .................................... 121
6.27. “Tree Ring Circus” letter F ........................................................................ 122
6.28. “Tree Ring Circus” letter G m.1-2 ................................................................ 123
7.1. “Unchained Melody” original guitar part .................................................... 125
7.2. “Unchained Melody” trumpet/tuba orchestration of guitar material ........... 126
7.3. “Mr. Pitiful” tuba bass line ......................................................................... 126
7.4. “Bowie” tuba intro into letter A .................................................................... 128
7.5. “Bowie” drums at letter A ............................................................................ 129
7.6. “Bowie” brass letters A and B ...................................................................... 129
7.7. “Bowie” letter D ......................................................................................... 130
7.8. “Bowie” letter E ......................................................................................... 131
7.9. “Bowie” letter E drum pattern ................................................................... 132
7.10. “Bowie” letter F ......................................................................................... 132
7.11. “Bowie” letter G notated brass .................................................................. 134
7.13. “Blockbuster” initial bass figure .................................................................. 139
7.15. “Blockbuster” Letter A melody and bass .................................................. 141
7.16. “Blockbuster” Letter B melody, countermelody, and bass ....................... 142
7.17. “Blockbuster” m.1-9 of B melody and countermelody rhythmic combination .... 143
7.18. “Blockbuster” winds and bass at letter C ................................................................. 144
7.19. “Blockbuster” end of letter C ............................................................................... 144
7.20. “Blockbuster” letter D bass line ........................................................................... 145
7.21. “Blockbuster” letter D melody and bass ................................................................. 146
7.22. “Blockbuster” letter D melody and harmonization ................................................. 146
7.23. “Blockbuster” letter D melody, harmonization, and bass ...................................... 147
7.24. “Blockbuster” m.9-16 of letter D. Bass and harmonized melody ......................... 147
7.25. “Blockbuster” voice leading into letter E ............................................................... 148
7.26. “Blockbuster” m.1-8 of letter D ............................................................................ 150
7.27. “Blockbuster” m.9-16 of letter D ........................................................................... 152
7.28. “Blockbuster” letter D and J bass comparison ....................................................... 154
7.29. “Blockbuster” melody and bass, first four bars of J ............................................. 155
7.30. “Blockbuster” melody and bass, second four bars of J ......................................... 155
7.31. “Blockbuster” simplified voicings , m.1-4 of J ....................................................... 156
7.32. “Blockbuster” voicing pairs at m.5 of J ................................................................. 156
7.33. “Blockbuster” 6th bar of J, voicings and bass ....................................................... 157
7.34. “Blockbuster” 7th bar of J, voicings and bass ....................................................... 157
7.35. “Blockbuster” final bar voicings and bass ............................................................ 158
7.36. “Blockbuster” saxes (minus bari) and trumpets at J ............................................. 159
7.37. “Blockbuster” letter J line divergence ................................................................. 160
7.38. “Miracle Gro” introduction bass line ................................................................. 164
7.39. “Miracle Gro” first four bars of letter A ............................................................... 164
7.40. “Miracle Gro” last four bars of letter A ............................................................... 166
7.41. “Miracle Gro” first three-bar phrase at letter B .................................................... 167
7.42. “Miracle Gro” second three-bar phrase at letter B ............................................... 167
7.43. “Miracle Gro” first three-bar phrase at letter C .................................................... 168
7.44. “Miracle Gro” second three-bar phrase at letter C ............................................... 168
7.45. “Miracle Gro” last four bars at letter C ............................................................... 169
7.46. “Miracle Gro” comparison of bass lines at letter A and E .................................. 170
7.47. “Miracle Gro” sax melody at letter E comparison with 1st bar of letter A ......... 170
7.48. “Miracle Gro” sax and trumpet counterpoint at letter E ...................................... 171
7.49. “Miracle Gro” trumpet and bass at 1st bar of letter E ........................................ 172
7.50. “Miracle Gro” trumpet and bass at 2nd bar of letter E ........................................ 172
7.51. “Miracle Gro” harmonic analysis at first two bars of letter E .............................. 173
7.52. “Miracle Gro” trumpet melody and bass in second half of letter E .................... 174
8.1. “No Good Without You” melody m. 1-2 ......................................................... 176
8.2. “No Good Without You” m. 3-4 with bass pick-up ........................................... 177
8.3. “All Of Me” source material for bass m.2 in “No Good Without You” ............. 177
8.4. “No Good Without You” m. 5-6 ................................................................. 177
8.5. “No Good Without You” m. 7-8 ................................................................. 178
8.6. “No Good Without You” m. 9-12 ................................................................ 179
8.7. “No Good Without You” m. 13-15 ................................................................. 179
8.8. “No Good Without You” m. 15-18 ................................................................. 179
8.9. “No Good Without You” m. 25-27 ................................................................. 180
8.10. “No Good Without You” m. 27-30 ................................................................. 180
8.11. “No Good Without You” m. 31-32 ................................................................. 181
8.12. “No Good Without You” m. 32-34 ................................................................. 181
8.13. “No Good Without You” beginning of trumpet solo ...................................... 182
8.14. “Etiquette” bass figure .............................................................................. 184
8.15. “Etiquette” written harmonies with Roman numeral analysis ..................... 185
8.16. “Etiquette” guitar loop ................................................................................ 185
8.17. “Etiquette” written and performed melody m.1-16 of blues form ............. 187
8.18. “Etiquette” m. 17-20 of blues form ............................................................... 188
8.19. “Loom Large” bass figure .......................................................................... 189
8.20. “Loom Large” first phrase pairing at letter A ............................................. 190
8.21. “Loom Large” second phrase pairing at letter A ......................................... 190
8.22. “Loom Large” third phrase pairing at letter A ............................................. 190
8.23. “Loom Large” last four bars of letter A .................................................... 191
8.24. “Loom Large” first phrase pairing at letter B ............................................. 192
8.25. “Loom Large” second phrase pairing at letter B ......................................... 192
8.26. “Loom Large” third phrase pairing at letter B ............................................. 192
8.27. “Loom Large” fourth phrase pairing at letter B ......................................... 193
8.28. “Legions” five-note “pick-up” into letter A ................................................................. 195
8.29. “Legions” P0 row ........................................................................................................ 195
8.30. “Legions” melody m.1-3 .......................................................................................... 195
8.31. “Legions” relationship between melody and countermelody at letter A ........... 196
8.32. “Legions” second tone row ..................................................................................... 196
8.33. “Legions” full retrograde of initial row ................................................................. 197
8.34. “Legions” I5 melodic fragment at m.5 of letter A compared with initial row ...... 198
8.35. “Legions” initial tone row and I6 phrase at ninth bar of letter A ....................... 198
8.36. “Legions” I0 for initial tone row and additional pitches at m.6-11 of letter A ...... 199
8.37. “Legions” primary and secondary melody m.10 – 13 of letter A ....................... 199
8.38. “Legions” primary melody at m.13-15 of letter A .............................................. 199
8.39. “Legions” letter A bass line ................................................................................... 200
8.40. “Legions” chordal part at letter A .......................................................................... 200
8.41. “Legions” Harmonic analysis of m. 7-10 of letter A ............................................ 201
8.42. “Legions” letter B bass line ................................................................................... 201
8.43. “Legions” harmonic analysis of m.1-4 of letter B ................................................ 202
8.44. “Legions” voicing at m.5 of letter B ...................................................................... 202
8.45. “Legions” m.5-8 of letter B .................................................................................... 203
8.46. “Legions” form analysis ......................................................................................... 204
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1. “Parallel Worlds” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2. “Piece For Strings” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3. “Punchy” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3. “Punchy” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5. “In Our Lifetime” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1. “First Frost” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.2. “Charms Of The Night Sky” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.1. “Earmarks” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.2. “Black Rock Park” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.3. “Just Another Murder” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.4. “Tree Ring Circus” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.4. “Bowie” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.1. “Blockbuster” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.3. “Miracle Gro” Musical Event Graph</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Trumpeter Dave Douglas is widely considered to be one of the most important contemporary jazz composers and performers of our time. Douglas has quickly garnered a reputation for himself as a leading voice in jazz and experimental music, and is likely to be recognized as a true visionary in jazz at the turn of the century. Douglas has been performing and composing for barely more than twenty years and has, in that period, accomplished more than most jazz artists have in a lifetime.

The sheer magnitude of Douglas’ musical output is staggering. Since 1988 he has appeared on almost 100 records, and as a leader on 45 of those. ¹ Compare this to fellow trumpeters Nicholas Payton, Roy Hargrove and Tom Harrell, none of whom have exceeded 15 albums as a leader in approximately the same amount of time. Also, almost all the material on Douglas’ recordings are original compositions, which puts the number of his pieces he has recorded in the 400 plus range. Jazz author Lloyd Peterson said of Douglas, “the breadth and scope of his work is extraordinary.” ²

Douglas is certainly prolific, but mere volume of work is not the only measure by which a composer is judged. The compositional content is a more important criterion. Peterson continues and describes Douglas as, “A visionary, his world of composition and improvisation is leading the way in an era that is one of the most dynamically creative

² Lloyd Peterson, Music and the Creative Spirit (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006), 75
and diverse in the history of music.” Obviously Peterson holds Douglas in high regard, but his accomplishments speak for themselves.

Apart from being nominated twice for a Grammy, Douglas’ talents have been recognized in many other ways. He has been awarded prizes from organizations such the New York Jazz Awards, Down Beat, Jazz Times, Jazziz, and the Italian Jazz Critics Society. In 2005 he was honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship. Douglas was the artistic director of the Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music at The Banff Centre in Canada and the co-founder and is currently the director of the Festival of New Trumpet Music. He has also been commissioned by the Trisha Brown Dance Company, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Essen Philharmonie, the U.S. Library of Congress, Stanford University, Walker Arts Center, and Turning Point Ensemble.

Douglas has a compositional style that spans many styles and cultures. He has had over ten working bands at any given time, with equally as many different instrumentations. Douglas has written for non-traditional jazz ensembles such as a string group, a quartet with accordion and violin, and he employs the use of turntables and other instruments not typically found in jazz ensembles. He has written music that draws from many world cultures. For example, one of his earliest groups, the Tiny Bell Trio which consists of trumpet, electric guitar and percussion, recorded almost exclusively Balkan influenced jazz. Often Douglas’ music is so creative and experimental that it defies the listener to label it as jazz. It may be better defined as contemporary instrumental

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3 Ibid
5 “Dave Douglas Bio” (Dave Douglas Website).
improvised music. Perhaps Douglas’ compositional prowess is best summated by jazz critic Chris Kelsey who wrote that, “Dave Douglas has arguably become the most original trumpeter/composer of his generation.”

It’s quite clear that Dave Douglas is a musician worthy of our attention, but has the value of his music alone merited its analysis? Many other jazz composers have been researched within the realm of academia. There exist several books that analyze jazz compositions such as *Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice*, by Ted Pease, which takes a look at compositions from artists such as Charles Mingus and Bob Brookmeyer.

While Dave Douglas is highly respected in the jazz field, his music still remains somewhat obscure do to its eclectic nature. It rarely falls under the umbrella of “straight-ahead jazz”, and can often be quite challenging to the casual listener. Perhaps this is why there has been little written about Douglas’ music. Because of his insightful and coherent thoughts about music, he has been extensively interviewed, but there exists no in-depth analysis of his music as of yet.

Douglas’ compositional aesthetic represents a musical niche largely unexplored in scholarly research. Douglas occupies a pivotal position in the evolution of jazz music, as he is one of the few artists that have successfully fused traditional jazz with elements of the “avant-garde”.

Douglas cut his teeth as a “straight-ahead” jazz trumpeter in the hard-bop tradition, including a stint with Horace Silver’s band, a chair occupied at one time or another by trumpeters such as Blue Mitchell, Donald Bryd, Art Farmer, Woody Shaw,

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Tom Harrell, and even University of Miami’s own Brian Lynch. Douglas also has had important relationships with seminal avant-garde artists such as John Zorn. Douglas was a member of Zorn’s band Masada from 1993 through 2008. It is the confluence of these two distinct genres in Douglas’ music that defines his compositional style, making it unique, and Douglas an important part of the lineage of jazz composers.

Also, it is important for jazz scholars to research the most current musical developments in an effort to keep collegiate jazz programs as relevant and up-to-date as possible. The idea of the “old” versus the “new” is represented in a 2004 article from Jazz Times by Thomas Conrad which actually compares Dave Douglas with prominent jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis in a dual album review of Douglas’ Strange Liberation and Marsalis’ The Magic Hour. It is clearly a pro-Douglas article that paints a picture of the outsider (Douglas), versus the establishment (Marsalis). Although Conrad is a bit harsh in his criticism of Marsalis, stating, “Marsalis and his adherents are said to have codified the music in a stifling orthodoxy and inhibited the revolutionary impulses that have always advanced jazz,” the article does have some merit. It seems that more is being done to preserve jazz than to advance it. Lincoln Center, although a wonderful organization, should not be heralded as the peak of jazz in America. Marsalis is an incredible musician and has earned the respect of other jazz musicians, but to many he represents a fairly narrow-minded view of jazz, which some educators and students also subscribe to. This

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9 Horace Silver, *Finger Poppin’*. Blue Note, 1959, LP.
10 Horace Silver, *6 Pieces of Silver*, Blue Note, 1957, LP.
13 Horace Silver, *Silver ’n Brass*, Blue Note, 1975. LP.
is why a study of the music of Dave Douglas is particularly relevant, at a time when jazz has made a transition away from the predominantly straight-ahead style popularized by the “young lion’s” of the 1980’s and 1990’s. Hopefully more will be written about other innovators in contemporary jazz to keep the spirit of jazz, which is progress, alive.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to analyze compositions of Dave Douglas, thereby extracting the pedagogical implications of his music as it pertains to contemporary jazz composition.

Research Questions

1. What compositional devices and trends can be identified in the music of Dave Douglas with regard to melodic and rhythmic content?
2. How does Dave Douglas approach harmony in his compositions, whether it be emphatic, implied, or resulting from contrapuntal elements?
3. How are formal structures handled in the compositions of Dave Douglas?
4. How does Dave Douglas employ the use of improvisatory material in his compositions?
5. What impact does instrumentation have on Dave Douglas’ compositional approach?
6. How do external influences, such as world culture and the music of other major ensembles and artists, manifest in the compositions of Dave Douglas?
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Albums

By far the preeminent resource type for this paper is recordings by Dave Douglas. Compositions from a majority of Douglas’ varied projects were analyzed, therefore albums will be grouped according to the ensemble.

Douglas’ first album as a leader was *Parallel Worlds* which was recorded by his string group of the same name, featuring violinist Mark Feldman, cellist Erik Friedlander, bassist Mark Dresser, and drummer Michael Sarin in 1993.\(^\text{16}\) Two other albums, *Five* and *Convergence* followed in 1995 and 1998.\(^\text{17,18}\) Douglas writes in a wide array of styles for this group, often taking advantage of contrapuntal approach typical of string writing. The band also plays Douglas’ arrangements of classical pieces such as Messiaen’s *Desseins Eternels*, and Webern’s *Sehr Bewegt*.\(^\text{19}\)

Another of Douglas’ early groups is the Tiny Bell Trio, which also features Brad Shepik on guitar and Jim Black on drums and percussion. According to Douglas’ official website, “the repertoire was mostly traditional East European folk music that Douglas had been exploring with accordionist Nabila Schwab.” This group has recorded four albums to date. Their self-titled debut album *Tiny Bell Trio* mostly adheres to the groups Balkan roots.\(^\text{20}\). Their other albums, *Constellations, Live in Europe*, and *Songs For

\[^{16}\text{Parallel Worlds, Parallel Worlds, Soul Note, 1994, CD.}\]
\[^{17}\text{Parallel Worlds, Five, Soul Note, 1996, CD.}\]
\[^{18}\text{Parallel Worlds, Convergence, Soul Note, 1999, CD.}\]
\[^{20}\text{Tiny Bell Trio, Tiny Bell Trio, Songlines, 1994, CD.}\]
*Wandering Souls* are less focused on the ethnicity of the music and tend to represent Douglas’ sonic experimentation, adding bop tunes and classical interpretations to the mix.²¹,²²,²³

Douglas’ first “traditional” jazz group was his Sextet, which features piano, bass, drums, trumpet, trombone, and saxophone/reeds. Each of the sextet’s three albums pay tribute to legends of jazz composition. The album, *In Our Lifetime*, an homage to trumpeter Booker Little,²⁴ represents one of the few instances in which Douglas has written about his compositional techniques, as he contributed an essay to John Zorn’s *Arcana II*, a collection of writings by creative musicians.²⁵

Charms of the Night Sky is the name of another of Douglas’ bands as well as the title of their debut album.²⁶ Like the Tiny Bell Trio, Charms of the Night Sky’s repertoire is inspired by Eastern European folk, but with a modified instrumentation. The members of this band are Douglas, accordionist Guy Klucevsek, violinist Mark Feldman, and bassist Greg Cohen. The group’s lack of a drummer contributes to its “chamber” quality and the rich sound of the accordion provides a sonority not found elsewhere in Douglas’ catalogue. This band also recorded the album, *A Thousand Evenings* released in 2000.²⁷

The Dave Douglas Quartet is a chord-less group featuring Douglas, saxophonist Chris Potter, bassist James Genus, and drummer Ben Perowsky. Their music is similar to the Ornette Coleman/Don Cherry free–jazz recordings of the 60’s, though with the clear addition of Douglas’ own compositional voice. Initially intended to be a

²¹ Tiny Bell Trio, *Constellations*, Hat Art, 1995, CD.
²³ Tiny Bell Trio, *Songs for Wandering Souls*, Winter & Winter, 1999, CD.
²⁴ Dave Douglas Sextet, *In Our Lifetime*, New World, 1995, CD.
“cover” band of modern jazz tunes, eventually original compositions edged out these “contemporary standards.” This band recorded two albums: *Magic Triangle* and *Leap of Faith*.  

Douglas’ music, although quite unique, is steeped in tradition, and is by no means void of external influences. Recordings by musicians and groups that have influenced Douglas’ music were referenced in order to fully analyze his compositional style. The music composed for Douglas’ brass band Brass Ecstasy, for example is largely inspired by the compositions and performance of trumpeter Lester Bowie.  

The researcher became acquainted with his music, particularly his work with his brass group, Lester Bowie’s Brass Fantasy, to be as informed as possible about the music of Brass Ecstasy.

**Musical Scores**

Mr. Douglas has made scores for hundreds of his compositions available for purchase at his labels website. Many of the score samples referenced were purchased online. Mr. Douglas was gracious enough to provide scores for many of the works that are not available for purchase. When available these scores are referenced, but several compositions were transcribed by the author.

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29 Dave Douglas Quartet, *Leap of Faith*, Arabesque Records, 2000, CD.  

Jazz and General Composition

Writings about composition and music theory from a number of disciplines were referenced in this essay. Dave Douglas has a widely varied approach to composition, so a variety of compositional sources were required to adequately analyze his music.

Several texts on jazz composition were consulted in reference to topics such as jazz voicing types, arranging elements, and definition of jazz terms, among other items. Some of the jazz composition texts referenced include Ted Pease’ *Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice*, Jerry Coker’s *A Guide To Jazz Composition And Arranging*, and Richard Sussman and Michael Abene’s *Jazz Composition and Arranging in the Digital Age*.

Douglas’ compositional style cannot be fully interpreted exclusively through the lens of jazz composition. In addition to the jazz composition sources listed above, composition and theory sources from other disciplines, primarily classical and world music, were referenced when appropriate. For instance, a few of the pieces analyzed herein make use of 12-tone composition techniques. Douglas has stated that the primary 12-tone text he’s worked from is Charles Wuorinen’s *Simple Composition*. This book and others are referenced when applicable.

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32 Pease, *Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice*.
Other Miscellaneous Sources

Other sources were consulted that may not fit into the categories listed above. These sources are related to different influences on Douglas’ music, or previously conducted interviews of or writings about Douglas, or even writings by Douglas himself.

One example of Douglas’ own writing is an entry in *Arcana II*, a compilation of modern musicians’ writings about music.\(^\text{36}\) In this brief essay, Douglas focuses on the music of Booker Little, one of his compositional and improvisational influences. He even goes as far as to analyze portions of Little’s compositions. One of Douglas’ first albums *In Our Lifetime* actually pays homage to Little.\(^\text{37}\) Also included in the essay are brief analyses of some of the music from that album. In other words, Douglas briefly analyzes his own music, certainly a telling look at how Douglas perceives his own work.

Other sources that will be used include texts or articles about the many influences on Douglas’ compositions. Some of Douglas’ ensembles are often compared to those lead by Miles Davis. When similarities between the two artists was apparent Lex Giel’s *The Music of Miles Davis: A Study and Analysis of Compositions and Solo Transcriptions from the Great Jazz Composer and Improviser* was referenced.\(^\text{38}\) Other sources referenced are related to influences from other jazz artists such as Thelonious Monk or Don Byron, as well as influences from world music styles such as Jewish Klezmer music.

\(^{36}\) Zorn, *Arcana II*.

\(^{37}\) Dave Douglas Sextet, *In Our Lifetime*.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Part of the goal of this essay is to provide a fairly comprehensive examination of Dave Douglas’ approach to writing for each of his ensembles that have been created to date. As Douglas is known for rapidly forming various musical ensembles, this resulted in the analysis of twenty pieces of music, many of which are little more involved than a simple lead sheet. Of the many ensembles Douglas has formed, sixteen are discussed in this essay.

Data Collection

The first step in data collection was to select the ensembles and pieces that were to be analyzed. Each of Douglas’ ensembles that have recorded two or more albums are discussed, and several that have only made a single recording as well, if it seemed the groups artistic position in Douglas’ development was significant. “One-off” groups that bare close resemblance to more “core” ensembles were not discussed. Also, only projects in which Douglas is clearly the leader and primary artistic voice were selected.

A few of the pieces analyzed were chosen as a result of personal communications with Douglas. Other composition selections were based on a number of factors. The author strove to showcase pieces that demonstrate a variety of musical styles and tempi, as well as various compositional techniques. Pieces that appeared to contain the most compositional “craft” were selected.

The majority of data for this paper was collected from musical scores, some transcribed by the author, along with their corresponding recordings. A great number of
score samples were used in correspondence with each analysis. Each piece, regardless if a score was available or not, was notated in Sibelius 7.5 in order to maintain stylistic similarities between examples and have the ability to focus on select staff and bar groupings not possible if working with a PDF score.

Analysis

Many researchers will break a composition into its many musical elements and analyze them individually, regardless of the musical “flow” of the piece. Though aspects of this approach are taken at times, much of the analyses break down the elements of each section as they are approached, focusing on the most pertinent compositional factors. This accomplishes two goals. The reader maintains a feel for the progress of the piece as it’s being discussed, and only worthwhile musical elements are touched upon.

Topics discussed include melodic shape, as well as any melodic devices employed by Douglas including inversion, retrograde, modality, melodic tonality and melodic strata.

To examine harmony, material played by chordal instruments is discussed when present. Harmonic attributes such as tonality, atonality, mode, chromaticism and others are addressed. Also Douglas’ use of single note instruments in harmony is discussed. A distinction is made between traditional chord based harmony and “implied harmony”, because a considerable amount of Douglas’ bands do not include chordal instruments. Subjects related to harmony include chord density, traditional versus non-traditional intervallic chord movements, pedal point usage, and bitonality, as well as the analysis of
non-functional chords and voicings, often the result of contrapuntal elements converging or multiple voices contracting and expanding voicing “shapes”.

Douglas employs many types of formal structures, from those as simplistic as a 12-bar blues, to pieces that defy traditional ideas about form. When of interest, the form will be analyzed, whether the composition contains a traditional song form comprised of repeating sections, or a through-composed approach. Douglas makes great use of various rhythmic ideas, riffs, and other musical elements that will accompany sections of a piece both in the statement of the melody and in improvisations.

The importance of improvisation in Douglas’ music cannot be understated. When a novel approach is taken the extent to which improvisational elements are at play will be addressed. Many Douglas compositions will include improvisational material typical in jazz, such as rhythm section instruments “comping” over a chord progression that soloists will play over. At times improvisation will take a more pivotal role, including improvised chord changes, melodic group improvisation, and even instances in which tempo and groove are malleable.

Douglas uses a wide variety of instrumentations, and often the instruments are chosen specifically due to the inspiration associated with the given ensemble. Nonetheless, the effect of the instrumentation on the compositional process is evaluated. The presence or absence of a chordal instrument is certainly of importance, as well as the effect of including non-traditional jazz instruments such as accordion, turntables, and samplers. For each ensemble specific sources of influence are discussed. In many instances Douglas has been extremely forthcoming and specific about where the inspiration for each of his ensembles comes from.
Compositions were analyzed in chronological order with respect to the date of creation for each ensemble. Douglas’ string group Parallel Worlds was the first of his ensembles to be recorded, so this is the first material analyzed. The conversation on Parallel Worlds was completed before moving on to other ensembles, even though further Parallel Worlds records were released after the launch of the other Douglas ensembles.
CHAPTER 4
THE EARLY YEARS

The first several years of Dave Douglas’ career as an ensemble leader would set the tone of his artistry for the decades that followed. From 1993 until 2000 his efforts focused mainly on the material for three wildly disparate ensembles, Parallel Worlds, Tiny Bell Trio, and the Dave Douglas Sextet. During this period Douglas released three albums of original material for each of these three ensembles, with a few other “one-off” side projects thrown in the mix, as well as debut albums for ensembles that would continue a bit further. Unlike what’s typical of other jazz artists, Douglas didn’t simply release consecutive albums for each ensemble. Instead each ensemble was active concurrently, rotating the sequence of album releases between the groups. This helped to solidify Douglas’ identity as chameleon-like artist and composer able to integrate multiple styles and work with a variety of instrumentations simultaneously.

Parallel Worlds

Though it may seem incongruent with the theme of this essay, the first of Dave Douglas’ pieces to be examined will be an arrangement by Douglas. The reason being that this arrangement is the very first track from Douglas’ debut solo recording Parallel Worlds. Parallel Worlds features Douglas’ ensemble of the same name, which includes violinist Mark Feldman, cellist Erik Friedlander, double bassist Mark Dresser, and drummer Michael Sarin in addition to Douglas’ trumpet. Later Parallel Worlds recordings

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39 Parallel Worlds, Parallel Worlds.
feature bassist Drew Gress in place of Dresser. The album title (which shares it’s name with the second track) may suggest the relationship and commonalities between avant-garde jazz and contemporary classical composition, and in fact many hallmark techniques of classical composition from the last century can be found within Douglas’ compositions for this group and consequently throughout his writing for other ensembles. Much of the material in *Parallel Worlds* avoids definitive tonality both harmonically and melodically, not unlike the work of composers from the second Viennese school and their successors.

The aforementioned arrangement is that of the third movement from Anton Webern’s *Fünf Sätze für Streichquartett* (Five Movements for String Quartet). Douglas’ title reflects the musical term that appears above movement three in Webern’s original score, *Sehr Bewegt*, which simply translates “very agitated”. The movement is not lengthy, and even with additional material added by Douglas the track length is only 1:30, setting the stage for what became a trademark of the string group, opening studio albums with brief, but intense performances.

Douglas does have his group play the movement from beginning to end, with violin taking the role of violin 1, trumpet as violin 2, cello as viola, and double bass as cello. He uses the original movement to finish the piece, but begins with some additional material. After a brief pizzicato intro from the three string instruments there’s a break in the activity followed by short statements from three of the four pitched instruments, each derived from material in Webern’s movement. The violin plays a variation of one of the original melodic motifs, along with the trumpet playing something

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40 Parallel Worlds. *Five.*
41 Parallel Worlds. *Convergence.*
similar to Webern’s opening minor 6th interval, playing the same pitches as are in the 2nd violin part, which the trumpet continues to play later in the arrangement. This is followed by a series of three ascending pitches played by the double bass, which can be found in Webern’s cello part, played in its entirety later by the bass. Then a 3-note chord “shape” follows consisting of B3 in the cello, F4 in the trumpet, and Bb4 in violin. This particular chord shape does not appear with all notes occurring simultaneously in the original, but the correlation to melodic intervals prevalent in Webern’s piece is clear.

Example 4.1. “Sehr Bewegt” part assignments

After the chord is played the bass performs a descending glissando with tremolo along with a snare roll in the drum set. This is followed by intense free improvisation in all parts with no preset harmonic or rhythmic basis. All instruments including Douglas’ trumpet make use of various “sound effects”.
After about 12 seconds of free improvisation, the trumpet, violin, and cello all play the final melodic statement of the original composition in a quasi-rubato fashion, with the cello an octave beneath the register displayed below.

Example 4.2. “Sehr Bewegt” melodic fragment

All instruments then transition seamlessly back into free improvisation for approximately 10 seconds. The bass then breaks from the improvisation and begins playing in time the repetitive C# staccato quarter notes found in the first 6 bars of Webern’s cello part. The bass almost unnoticeably enters into tempo, yet this sets the stage for the full performance of Webern’s movement from start to finish after an additional 14 seconds of free improvisation. The only alteration to Webern’s original composition from this point on is shifting of octaves to accommodate the change in instrumentation from the original string quartet.

The arrangement is a strong opening statement from Douglas. Yes, there’s a rich history of jazz musicians interpreting classical compositions, but never as an artist’s introduction to the world, and rarely using an atonal piece. Additionally, Douglas draws a clear correlation between avant-garde jazz and contemporary classical compositions, and proceeds to blur the lines between these genres throughout Parallel Worlds.

Douglas follows the Webern arrangement with the title track. “Parallel Worlds” is an atonal piece as well, cast from the mold of twelve-tone composition originally set forth by Webern’s mentor Arnold Schoenberg. Schoenberg and his successors developed a method for composition that does away with the tonal precepts that had guided
composition for centuries by giving equal weight to all twelve chromatic pitches. After working briefly in free atonality, Schoenberg developed the concept of the tone row as a basis for atonal composition. In a tone row all twelve chromatic pitch classes are placed in a particular order, their intervallic relationships becoming the new “tonality” of the composition.\textsuperscript{43}

The following musical event graph displays the progression of sections from “Parallel Worlds” along with brief descriptions as they appear on the Parallel Worlds album. The section letter designations used are taken from Douglas’ hand-written score.

\textbf{Figure 4.1. “Parallel Worlds” Musical Event Graph}

Douglas has mentioned that his piece “Parallel Worlds” was composed, “working pretty strictly with twelve-tone language inspired by Charles Wuorinen and his book

\textsuperscript{43} Joseph N., Strauss, \textit{Twelve-Tone Music in America} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
In *Simple Composition*, Wuorinen details varied approaches to twelve-tone composition, several of which can be found in Douglas’ piece. Based on clues found both in the primary melody and later “aleatoric” material that will be discussed, the initial pitch set, or “P0” is detailed in the notation below.

Example 4.3. “Parallel Worlds” P0

Portions of this row can be seen in the opening repeated bar, in which each of the four pitched instruments play a series of pitch classes derived from the initial set. The violin for instance plays two quartet note triplets consisting of the first half of the pitch classes from the initial tone row.

Example 4.4. “Parallel Worlds” Violin m.1

Simultaneously the trumpet plays a rhythmically clashing quintuplet, playing the 3rd through the 7th pitch classes of the row.

Example 4.5. “Parallel Worlds” Trumpet m.1

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45 Wuorinen, *Simple Composition*. 
The cello material is less prominent as it is using the col legno battuto technique in which the bow stick is struck against the string. The majority of the sound heard from the cello is the percussive sound of the bow stick hitting the neck of the instrument, but still the following four quarter notes can be discerned.

Example 4.6. “Parallel Worlds” Cello m.1

The last three do coincide with the 5th, 6th, and 7th pitch classes of P1, but the “A” note appears out of place as the 5th note of the row is preceded by a B. Interestingly though, the original hand-written score from Douglas does indeed display a B as the first pitch in the cello part. Using a B would make more sense compositionally, so it’s unclear why an A was used instead. Perhaps the way the pitches were produced on the cello made it difficult to sound the B that’s expected here.

Finally the double bass has the most active material in the bar, with a septuplet that contains the last six pitch classes of the row, followed by the first.

Example 4.7. “Parallel Worlds” Double Bass m.1

In addition to the initial set being reflected in the four pitched instruments, the use of polyrhythms with various tuplets (as well as the quarter note pulse) creates a cacophonous effect, sounding like a controlled aleatoricism.

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The primary melody largely consists of a soprano and bass part, with trumpet and violin on the higher part and lower strings on the low part, which at times has a melodicism similar to the top line, and at other points functions more like a traditional bass line. Douglas again derives the material for the two parts from the initial tone row, but in a way that’s not as easily identifiable.

One of the approaches to 12-tone composition detailed by Wuorine involves organizing the tone row into three groups of four pitches or “tetrachords”. The pitch classes from each tetrachord can then be used freely by the composer to create melodic or even harmonic material, with just four pitch classes available to the composer at a time.\(^{47}\) This technique is employed upon entering into the primary melody. The three tetrachords associated with P0 consist of the following pitch classes.

**Example 4.8. “Parallel Worlds” tetrachords**

A quick glance at the tetrachords reveals how material composed using them may be perceived. The first tetrachord is highly chromatic, as chromatic as four pitches can be actually, so it can be expected that melodies derived from these pitches are not likely to suggest any sense of tonality. Tetrachord 3 is nearly as chromatic as the first, containing three consecutive half steps. The second tetrachord however can be interpreted as scale degrees 1, 3, 4, and 5 of an E Lydian scale. Indeed this is often how the pitches from tetrachord 2 are employed, giving a brief sense of tonality when featured in the piece. Though pitch classes from adjacent tetrachords will collide and bleed together at times,

\(^{47}\) Wuorinen, *Simple Composition*, 23.
Douglas primarily will limit pitch choice to the four pitches available in a tetrachord at any given time, most often progressing through them in the order they appear in the initial series. In addition to there being three tetrachords in use, the melody is broken up into three formal sections labeled A, B, and C respectively by Douglas.

The A section functions as the initial presentation of the tone row through the compositional “filter” in use. The section is short, consisting of a mere 5 ½ bars (the last is a bar of 2/4), but in it material from all three tetrachords is developed.

Example 4.9. “Parallel Worlds” section A tetrachords

Any section that uses material from tetrachords 1 and 3 is dominated by 2nd, 7th, and 9th melodic intervals due to the highly chromatic quality of these tetrachords. However, the material derived from tetrachord 2 has the temporary “E Lydian” tonality discussed earlier, due in part to the focus on E in the bass voices at these sections.

In the B section the lower part functions a bit more like a repetitive bass line, though still bound to the tetrachords. In fact the four pitch classes of tetrachord 3 are all
that is found in the lower part of this four bar section. Douglas creates a significantly more dynamic bass line by placing the Gb a m9 above the F as opposed to a m2.

Example 4.10. “Parallel Worlds” section B bass line

![Bass line diagram]

The trumpet and violin melody use pitch classes from tetrachord 3 at the onset of the section, but switch to tetrachord 1 pitch classes at the halfway point.

Example 4.11. “Parallel Worlds” section B melody

![Melody diagram]

Avoiding tetrachord 2 material in the section seems an appropriate choice given the chromaticism of the bass line.

Again there’s a change in texture in section C. The lower part is generally more static, with frequent whole and half notes appearing, diminishing the contrapuntal feel more prominent in section A. The two voices return to the first tetrachord at the beginning of this section. They spend most of the section out of phase with each other in regards to which tetrachord is being referenced. The top part is similar to the content of section A, progressing through the three tetrachords. Douglas blurs the lines between tetrachords by combining a pitch from tetrachord 1 in the trumpet along side a pitch from tetrachord 3 in the violin. Douglas also begins the next phrase with a single note from tetrachord 1, shifting focus to tetrachord 3 at that point.
Example 4.12. “Parallel Worlds” section C tetrachords

The next two bars feature dense chords made possible through the use of double stops in violin and cello. The lead pitches are the F#5 and Eb5 played by the trumpet. Trumpet then drops out in the following bar. All pitches from tetrachords 1 and 3 are represented in these three chords, but none of the pitch classes from tetrachord 2 are in use. The number by each pitch is indicative of which tetrachord they were derived from.

Example 4.13. “Parallel Worlds” tetrachord voicings

Particularly in the second and third chords you can see an attempt to segregate material from the different tetrachords.

A number of background sections that use different treatments of the tone row appear behind the trumpet solo. First the bar 1 material returns in the violin and cello. This is shortly followed by what Douglas has labeled as “D”. Section D is a three-voice “choral” that is played in rubato fashion behind the trumpet solo. The bass and drums gradually drift away from a solid groove once the cello and violin begin the choral. The first four bars of the choral section are repeated, twice through according to the score, but it’s performed three times in the recording. Additionally the bass is instructed to play the written material the second time through, but on the recording the bass does so in the
third and final time through the section after having continued in free improvisation the
two previous times

In Section D the initial row is “passed around” the three voices, nearly adhering
to the original order of pitch classes. In just 8 bars the entire pitch series is cycled through
four times (with omitted pitch classes on the fourth cycle). The numbers 1 through 12
have been assigned to the pitches of the row, with 1 being the first pitch class and 12 the
last.

Example 4.14. “Parallel Worlds” section D

![Example 4.14. “Parallel Worlds” section D](image)

Interestingly, The final statement of the row does not contain “C” the fourth pitch
class in the series, though the cello and bass are simultaneously playing Db, the 2nd pitch
class in the row at the start of the 7th bar of the section. Also it should be noted that the
D4 indicated at the beginning of the 7th bar is not played in the recording, effectively
eliminating two of the twelve pitch classes in the final statement of the row. Perhaps this
is done in order to arrive at particular pitches in the final chord. Douglas is clearly
arranging the pitch order and rhythms to create harmonic dissonance and nebulous
rhythms. Even the “Lydian” sound of tetrachord 2 is lost in the ordering of pitches contained here.

At section E Douglas combines the tone row with elements of aleatoricism. In fact, section D is likely inspired by the micropolyphony technique pioneered by 20th century composer Gyorgy Ligeti, whose writing Douglas has cited as a compositional model.\(^48\) Using micropolyphony, a composer will combine multiple melodic lines of various rhythms and tempi, resulting in a cluster of sound.\(^49\) Though perhaps on a smaller scale, this appears to be Douglas’ aim in the section. The three string instruments remain separated into three individual parts, each playing a portion of the row before convening on a held note. In each measure, one voice plays a six-note phrase, one an eight-note phrase, and one a ten-note phrase, rotating the number of pitches per bar through the voices in each measure. For instance, in the first bar of the section, the violin plays a six-note phrase starting on the second pitch class of the row, and ending on the seventh, which is held. The violin continues on to the eighth pitch class at the start of the next bar, except this time playing an eight-note phrase, starting the row over once the last pitch class is played. The cello begins the first bar on the fourth pitch class of the row, except playing an eight-note phrase and continuing on to a ten-note phrase. The cello begins on a ten-note phrase but then transitions to a six-note phrase. There is no set rhythmic value to any of the pitches, and Douglas instructs the players in the score to “vary timbre and pace”.

\(^{48}\) Dave Douglas, email message to author, October 23, 2016.
Example 4.15. “Parallel Worlds” section E

Each voice arrives at their final held notes in each bar at roughly the same time, though the difference in number of pitches in each part results in all instruments playing at different tempi. Often the strings will “affect” the sound, changing bow position and bowing style, particularly on held notes. Each string plays a 6, 8, and 10-note figure in the first three bars, the sum of which are 24 pitches, which is divisible by 12. Thus they all should repeat the bar 1 material upon arriving in bar 4. At least this would be the case if all three voices played through the initial row with no variation. The violin and cello do just that, but the bass introduces an extra pitch in the third bar (Bb), which puts it a single note behind the other two voices, resulting in a different series of pitches in bar 4 than bar 1, and a different held chord at the end of bar 4. At the end of the first bar the three voices sound a 2\textsuperscript{nd} inversion G minor triad, but since the bass is one pitch behind in bar 4 it ends on a Db, which is one pitch earlier in the row. This results in the final chord of the section
being a 2\textsuperscript{nd} inversion G diminished triad. Perhaps Davis introduced this break in the row for the purpose of changing the final chord, which arguably ends the section with less a sense of finality, or he simply wished to introduce some variety to this portion of the piece.

The only remaining new composed material in the piece is found in the background materials in the violin solo vamp, which is labeled as section F. Douglas instructs the band to use the background figures as a cue for the D.S.. This section contains the only melodic material that doesn’t have a clear relationship with the initial tone row. Rather, the trumpet plays a highly chromatic figure that is matched rhythmically by the cello, except with inverted intervallic relationships. Perhaps the material points to the highly chromatic nature of the tone row, as the first and last 6 pitch classes from the row can be organized into 6 consecutive half steps. Therefore this highly chromatic material could potentially be a reorganizing of the two hexachords of the row. The cello does not play the entire trumpet line in inversion, but will play smaller motifs from the melody starting a m3 or M3 beneath, continuing with inversion in each instance.

Example 4.16. “Parallel Worlds” solo background figure

“Parallel Words” is an exciting piece that explores 12-tone composition techniques within the jazz idiom, specifically for improvising musician, while still
looking back at the stringent self-imposed guidelines of 20th century serial composers. It’s a strong opening compositional statement from Douglas.

Other original compositions from *Parallel Worlds* explore atonality and many of the intervallic shapes seen previously without the stricture of serial composition techniques. While the chromatic approach to harmony and melody blurs the tonality of many of Douglas’ compositions for his string group, other musical elements are similarly obfuscated with intention. In *Piece For Strings* Douglas takes measures to present meter in a way that obscures downbeats, creating a flow of rhythm with unclear boundaries.\(^{50}\)

The form and recorded musical events from “Piece For Strings” are displayed in the figure shown below. Section letter designations are chosen by the author as a score was not available for the piece.

Figure 4.2. “Piece For Strings” Musical Event Graph

\(^{50}\) *Parallel Worlds, Parallel Worlds.*
Douglas initially approaches the repeated bass line with the last two 8th notes of the seven-note phrase, immediately disguising the bar lines for the listener. Each bar of the pattern is broken into a 4+3 formation, but the initial two-note pick-up gives the impression that the phrase begins on the Eb which occurs on the sixth note of the phrase, due in part to the upward half-step resolution into this pitch. This sets up 2+2+3 pattern from the listener’s perspective.

Example 4.17. “Piece For Strings” opening bass line

Trumpet, violin, and cello play a series of seven 8th notes in the last bar of the introduction, holding the last over into the downbeat of the first melodic section, which will be identified as section A. The lack of downbeat articulation further hides the meter, which changes to 5/4 in this section.

Example 4.18. “Piece For Strings” melody into section A
In section A the bass (accented by drum set) plays a 3+2+3+2 rhythm on the pedal E shown above. This rhythmic grouping already contrasts the introduction material as it begins with a triple rhythm that’s followed by a duple rhythm, which is the opposite of the rhythmic grouping in the initial section.

Douglas continues to rhythmically disorient the listener in section B, where the prevailing rhythmic motif is now flipped from section A to a 2+3+2+3 rhythm in the bass and cello, though this time with each 8\textsuperscript{th} note subdivision articulated.

**Example 4.19. “Piece For Strings” section B bass line**

![Example 4.19. “Piece For Strings” section B bass line]

Douglas continues the rotation of meter by transitioning to a 9/8 time signature upon arrival in section C. Section C contains two repeated 4 bar sections, making it the section with the most rhythmic continuity in the piece. Douglas doesn’t subdivide the beats in any way typical of a 9/8 time signature however. A 2+3+2+2 formation is used, which can be challenging for the listener to identify as 9/8. This pattern is reflected in the bass line, which consists of two alternating 2-bar phrases.

**Example 4.20. “Piece For Strings” section C bass line**

![Example 4.20. “Piece For Strings” section C bass line]

In the final eight bars of the section Douglas introduces a cello part that uses three consecutive dotted quarters per bar, reflecting a 3+3+3 rhythm typical of a 9/8 time signature.
Example 4.21. “Piece For Strings” section C bass/cello

This generates an intriguing rhythmic effect in combination with the irregular rhythms found in the other voices. Even though the cello is playing very regular rhythms expected of a 9/8 time signature, it almost seems to “float” out of time over the bass rhythms.

Section C is promptly followed by a section in 3/4, all of a sudden more symmetrical and less agitated than previous sections that consist of oscillating rhythmic groupings.

A harmonic theme is apparent throughout the composition. Douglas makes use of longer rhythmic values in the melody that shift and interact with different bass lines in each section. This will be a recurring theme in Douglas’ music. When multiple voices are available he’ll often use them to play non-functional chords that result from smooth-voice leading, or simply at the composer’s discretion. This results in a harmonic fluidity that’s typical of Douglas’ music, drifting in and out of definitive tonality from bar to bar. In section A there is a constant pedal E in the bass, with the harmonies in the other three pitched voices more or less lining up with the metric divisions.
Example 4.22. “Piece For Strings” section A

The harmonic content can be more readily analyzed with all pitch classes from each bar listed in close position with E as the bass note.

Example 4.23. “Piece For Strings” section A harmonic analysis

In a general sense there is a changing of modes to affect a particular mood. Bars 1 and 3 of section A both contain the flat 5 and major 7 above the bass, very much communicating a Lydian tonality. The remaining bars strike a marginally darker tone, with an E7sus chord in bar two, and an E6 chord in bar four, invoking Mixolydian and Ionian modes respectively. This harmonic tool of oscillating between harmonies with varying degrees of “lightness” and “darkness” over a stagnant bass is repeatedly used by Douglas.

Though section B is somewhat similar, the harmony is obscured by some factors. First, the bass line is repetitive, but also more active, playing consecutive 8th notes for the
duration of the section, so the bass “note” can’t be as easily identified though in and of itself will likely be perceived as D minor or G Mixolydian.

Example 4.24. “Piece For Strings” section B bass line

Also, the cello plays in unison with the bass, leaving the harmonic responsibilities with just the trumpet and violin. Ultimately the specific harmonic content of this section is inconsequential. The result is a descending melody and harmonization that are partially in rhythmic collusion with one another.

Section C is easily the most tonally grounded of the piece, though based on two unrelated chords. Appropriately it’s used as an extended improvisation section for the trumpet later in the arrangement. The bass line alone is indication enough of the harmonic content, but the closely voiced “pads” in the trumpet and violin drive home the intended harmonies. These and all other chord symbols for “Piece For Strings” are added by the author.

Example 4.25. “Piece For Strings” section C harmony

The tri-tone of separation between the two chords maximizes the coloristic differences between them while maintaining a minor tonality. The inclusion of G natural in bars 3 and 4 indicate an “Aeolian” sound, which also contrasts the “Dorian” color of the min6
chord in the first two bars. After this repeated section the bass line continues for another eight bars with the trumpet and violin an octave higher and with the addition of a linear cello part that serves to further outline the harmony and “smooth out” the texture of the section.

Example 4.26. “Piece For Strings” section C cello

Section D sees a return to the pedal bass idea, but as opposed to section A the bass part is a more active figure, which repeats four times, each with a different set of harmonies stacked above.

Example 4.27. “Piece For Strings” section D part 1

In the second iteration of the bass line the violin part descends by a single half-step, which has a significant effect on the perceived harmonies.

Example 4.28. “Piece For Strings” section D part 2

In the third statement of the bass line, the violin and trumpet return to being a third apart, but this time in a descending pattern, again resulting in different harmonies.
Example 4.29. “Piece For Strings” section D part 3

In the fourth and final iteration of the bass line the upper voices move in a way that begins to obscure the harmonic intent. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} bar in particular is highly dissonant, but the listener will likely “ignore” the initial C in the bass and perceive the harmony as C#m/B, which is a logical conclusion based on the voice leading that follows from the previous bar.

Example 4.30. “Piece For Strings” section D part 4

Douglas signals the final section of the piece through a break in texture by arranging all instruments in concerted rhythm and doubling in octaves. This “call to attention” is effective in closing out the form of the piece.
In the final four bars Douglas again uses pedal point, but this time the top voice (trumpet) is supplying the pedal note. As the other voices below descend, a variety of harmonies with varying degrees of traditional functionality result. Simple triads with added altered extensions for example are out of the ordinary. The final voicing likely will have the effect of a 13(b9) chord.

Example 4.32. “Piece For Strings” section E part 2

By the end both the trumpet and bass are sounding “E’s” in distant octaves, a significant pitch class in the piece as the initial pedal point also uses an E, though in the bass voice. Also it should be notated that the pitches in the violin and cello resemble those of the trumpet and violin at their first entrance in the piece, as if Douglas is subtly hinting at the introduction as the composition comes to a close.

Example 4.33. “Piece For Strings” trumpet/violin melody intro

“Piece For Strings” explores many tonal colors enhanced by the sonority of the string instruments, but it’s most effective aspect is the way meter and rhythm is used.
Douglas is able to vary the meter significantly, but not in a way that draws attention to the metric shift, “blurring” the rhythmic delineation in a compelling way.

**Tiny Bell Trio**

The second ensemble recorded by Douglas is his “Tiny Bell Trio” (TBT). TBT is an important landmark in Douglas’ development as a composer and a key piece in his standing as a unique voice in jazz in recent decades. Aside from Douglas the trio consists of drummer Jim Black, and guitarist Brad Shepik. Douglas originally formed the group with the intention of primarily performing covers of Thelonious Monk compositions, but ultimately Douglas would focus on creating pieces inspired by Balkan folk music and other European styles, often with the same eccentric spirit that the music of Monk has been identified with. To date, TBT has released three studio albums and one live album. Chronologically they are *Tiny Bell Trio, Constellations, Live In Europe, and Songs For Wandering Souls.*

The music of TBT will not be covered as extensively as other equally important projects from this period in Douglas’ compositional career as there already exists some scholarly research specifically on this subject. In Taylor Roy Barnett’s doctoral essay “A Stylistic Analysis and Performance Guide to Selected Compositions of Dave Douglas for the Tiny Bell Trio” Barnett analyzes four compositions for TBT including “Song For My Father-In-Law,” and “Shards,” from *The Tiny Bell Trio,* as well as “Prolix,” and “Sam

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53 Tiny Bell Trio, *Tiny Bell Trio.*  
54 Tiny Bell Trio, *Constellations.*  
55 Tiny Bell Trio, *Live In Europe,* Arabesque, 1997, CD.  
56 Tiny Bell Trio, *Songs for Wandering Souls.*
Hill,” from *Songs For Wandering Souls*. Barnett discusses notes for performance of the pieces for trumpeters but also touches on stylistic links between European folk forms and the music of TBT.\(^{57}\)

For that reason “Punchy,” a TBT piece from the debut album *The Tiny Bell Trio*, that has less to do with Balkan and European styles and more to do with the Monk inspired roots of the ensemble, will be discussed. It’s also an insightful look at Douglas’ ability to internalize a given composers approach while allowing his own voice to come through. It’s been said of Douglas that he “adapts and synthesizes unusual forms and creates his own out of disparate elements.”\(^{58}\) His ability to “channel” the compositional style of Monk and interject his own personal touch will be discussed.

Though the piece is formatted in a simple A-A-B-A structure, the arrangement performed by trio is detailed in the following figure.

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Though the bridge material does have a spirit much like the music of Thelonious Monk, the song takes on a stronger resemblance to Monk’s work once the form of the tune begins at the first A section. Immediately Douglas liberally employs a melodic device that has been used on occasion by Monk himself.
Example 4.34. “Punchy” m. 1-9

The seemingly superfluous, ironic, almost “fanfare-like” triplet rhythm in the melody is found in Monk compositions such as “Nutty,” and “Monk’s Dream”. ⁵⁹,⁶⁰

Example 4.35. “Nutty” m. 1-8

The appoggiatura along with the rhythmic scheme in bars 3 and 4 in “Punchy” may be inspired by passages such as those found in Monk’s “Trinkle Tinkle”. ⁶¹

Example 4.36. “Monk’s Dream” m. 7-8

A similar melodic shape is found in the lesser know “Coming On The Hudson”. ⁶²

⁵⁹ Thelonious Monk, Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane, Jazzland Records, 1961, LP.
⁶⁰ Thelonious Monk, Monk’s Dream, Columbia Records, 1963, LP.
⁶¹ Thelonious Monk, Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane.
⁶² Art Blakey, Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers with Thelonious Monk, Riverside Records, 1957, LP.
Douglas also makes frequent use of melodic tri-tones, another staple of Monk compositions. In the A sections melodic tri-tones appear very directly on three occasions, and less directly in others.

Monk brought attention to the melodic tri-tone interval in compositions such as “Humph,” “Think Of One,” and “Brilliant Corners”. 63,64,65

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63 Thelonious Monk, *Humph*, Blue Note Records, 1947, LP.
“Punchy” also shares harmonic similarities with many of Monk’s pieces. First, there exists an uneven ratio of dominant chords versus other chord qualities. Of the 36 chord symbols listed in the “Punchy” score, 25 are dominant. This trend is apparent in many Monk compositions, presumably because various altered or unaltered extensions could be layered on dominant quality chords, as Monk was prone to do. “Humph” for instance, is comprised entirely of dominant chords. “Epistrophy” contains only a single “non-dominant” chord.66

Example 4.43. “Punchy” chord progression

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Example 4.43. “Punchy” chord progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>G7 B7</th>
<th>Eb7</th>
<th>Eb7</th>
<th>Bb7</th>
<th>E7</th>
<th>D7</th>
<th>G7</th>
<th>C7</th>
<th>F7</th>
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<td>D7(b5)</td>
<td>G7(b5)</td>
<td>G7(b5)</td>
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<td>C7(b5)</td>
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</tbody>
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Example 4.44. “Humph” chord progression

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Example 4.44. “Humph” chord progression

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<th>D7</th>
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<th>Bb7</th>
<th>Bb7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>D7(b5)</td>
<td>G7(b5)</td>
<td>G7(b5)</td>
<td>C7(b5)</td>
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Example 4.45. “Epistrophy” chord progression (m.1-4 and 5-8 are switched on second A)

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Example 4.45. “Epistrophy” chord progression (m.1-4 and 5-8 are switched on second A)

<table>
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<th>A</th>
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<th>E7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Fb-7</td>
<td>Fb-7</td>
<td>F#-7</td>
<td>F#-7</td>
<td>B7</td>
<td>B7</td>
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<td>B7</td>
<td>Db7</td>
<td>D7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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66 Thelonious Monk, Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane.
Additionally in “Punchy” there is chromatic planing of dominant chords so common in Monk’s work, notably in m.1-2 of the A section, and m.3, and 8-10 in the B section. Obviously this can be seen in abundance in “Epistrophy”. “Skippy” is another Monk composition that features abundant dominant chords and half-step planing.⁶⁷

Example 4.46. “Skippy” chord progression

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<th>G7</th>
<th>C7</th>
<th>F7</th>
<th>Bb7b5</th>
<th>D7b5</th>
<th>Ab7</th>
<th>Db7</th>
<th>Gb7</th>
<th>F7</th>
<th>Bb7</th>
<th>A7b9</th>
<th>Ab7</th>
<th>G7</th>
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<td>Ab7</td>
<td>G7b5</td>
<td>Gb7</td>
<td>F7b5</td>
<td>Eb7</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>Ab7</td>
<td>Db7</td>
<td>F#7</td>
<td>B7</td>
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<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>D7</td>
<td>G7</td>
<td>C7</td>
<td>F7</td>
<td>Bb7b5</td>
<td>D7b5</td>
<td>Ab7</td>
<td>Db7</td>
<td>Gb7</td>
<td>F7</td>
<td>Bb7</td>
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<td>Db7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Gb7</td>
<td>C7b</td>
<td>B7b</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>Ab7</td>
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<td>G7b7</td>
<td>G7b7</td>
<td>F7b7</td>
<td>G7b7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although not indicated by the chord symbols, there’s also some hinting at quirky Monk voicings that include non-functional pairings of chord tones not typically used in combination, such as the simultaneous use of major and minor 7ths. In JazzTimes pianist Vijay Iyer says of Monk, “He would also combine the minor and major seventh of a chord (a.k.a. the seventh and fifteenth partials), the natural and flat ninths (i.e., the ninth and seventeenth partials) and other “forbidden” combinations that actually sound good and make physical sense.”⁶⁸ Though the chord symbols used make no indication of this, the melody note itself will color the chord in this manner.

The first example may only be alluded to harmonically, but the score indicates the type of non-functional harmonic ideas discussed previously. The D5 held at the end of m.5 becomes the M7 on an Eb7 in the following bar. The melody remains on this pitch until the chord changes on beat 3.

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⁶⁷ Thelonious Monk, *Genius of Modern Music Volume Two*, Blue Note Records, 1956, LP.
Example 4.47. “Punchy” m. 5-6 melody

However, for those two beats the written guitar part is simply a half note G4 and A4.

Example 4.48. “Punchy” m. 5-6

The simultaneous presence of both the major and minor 7th appears again two bars later, though this time arguably just a result of voice leading. Though the listener could make a logical inference as to the intended harmony in bar 6, the lack of the dominant 7 or even the root in the voicing creates enough ambiguity to lessen the effect of the major/minor 7th in the bar.

The penultimate bar of the A section also contains the simultaneous major and minor 7th, this time even written into the score between the trumpet and guitar. In fact the minor 7 in the guitar is voiced an octave beneath the major 7 in the trumpet, creating a m9 interval, which Monk didn’t shy away from as other composers typically do.

Example 4.49. “Punchy” m. 8-9

The phrase lengths are also indicative of Monk’s style. The 9-bar A sections appear to consist of two 4-bar phrases separated by a single “interruption” bar in
between. A quirky guitar voicing and drum hit on beat 3 further set the interruption bar apart from the rest of the section.

Example 4.50. “Punchy” m. 1-9

Monk also has regularly employed the use of odd phrase lengths and subdivides normal phrase lengths in unconventional ways. The bridge to “Brilliant Corners” for instance consists of 7 bars, broken into a 2-bar phrase followed by a 5-bar phrase.\(^{69}\)

Example 4.51. “Brilliant Corners” m. 9-15 (bridge)

One could conceivably interpret the second phrase as being divided into a 3-bar phrase followed by a 2-bar phrase.

“Punchy” is an early example of Douglas’ ability to take on the “compositional persona” of seminal jazz composers and artists. Douglas’ own voice as a composer melds

\(^{69}\) Thelonious Monk, *Brilliant Corners*. 
so seamlessly with that of Monk’s that it can be difficult to know where one composer’s influence begins and the others ends.

Sanctuary

1997’s Sanctuary, though an early album for Douglas, remains one of his most adventurous projects to date. It’s also his first “one-off” band, meaning that he never again assembled the same instruments together in one ensemble, though nearly twenty years later in 2016 Douglas created a “spin-off” group called “New Sanctuary”. The two groups differ significantly in instrumentation. “New Sanctuary” features the same instrumentation as Douglas’ Tiny Bell Trio, though with more instrumental “doubling” and sound manipulation by the trumpet. The original Sanctuary band is an octet or “double quartet,” featuring trumpeter Cuong Vu in addition to Douglas, Dougie Browne on drum set, Chris Speed on reed instruments, bassists Mark Dresser and Hillard Greene, as well as Yuka Honda and Anthony Coleman on samplers. The original and “New” Sanctuary share some commonalities. Both draw inspiration from Italian themes. The original 1997 project was inspired by the story of the building of the Dome of Florence Cathedral and architect Filippo Brunelleschi who helped complete the structure in 1436 after nearly a century and a half of construction. All New Sanctuary compositions are named after Italian names of the months, as the release of each of the twelve tracks coincided with each of the months of 2016 via the Greenleaf subscriber series.

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70 Dave Douglas, Sanctuary, Avant, 1997, CD.
72 Dave Douglas. Sanctuary.
Of the New Sanctuary catalogue Douglas states, “Each composition is one stave long, in other words, the entire suite fits on twelve staves of music. It challenges the performers to maximally tease out the implications of each idea, using their own personal vocabulary to develop and explore the music in fresh ways every time. Each performance invites the improviser to go further; each time is an entirely new solution.” Douglas’ approach seems to have been very similar with the original Sanctuary band, with a major distinction being that the original Santuary was recorded live with smooth transitions between all compositions so that they never really end, they just “bleed” into the next piece. Sanctuary is truly a free jazz album. Most of Douglas’ projects will contain aspects of free jazz, nestled within more of a pre-composed framework, but for Sanctuary the amount of pre-composed material is extremely minimal, with each track consisting of little more than a single short melodic phrase or bass line.

“Heavenly Messenger” is an example of a rather long recorded track at nearly twelve minutes, yet with a very minimal score. The majority of the content is the various improvised “duos” that occur after the melodic statement. This can be viewed in the following event graph for the recording of “Heavenly Messenger”.

74 Greenleaf Music. “Sanctuary: Greenleaf Subscription Series 2016”.
The melody is only twelve bars in length, which doesn’t quite fit on a single stave, but it comes close. The piece plods along at a laborious and steady tempo.

At first glance there seems to be little structure to the melody besides the apparent three phrases of 4 bars apiece. Generally each 4-bar phrase descends in pitch and in rhythmic value so to speak, that is to say they each begin with shorter rhythms that lengthen until ending on a pair of whole notes or approximate whole notes.
Example 4.53. “Heavenly Messenger” melodic rhythmic contour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st bar of each phrase</th>
<th>2nd bar of each phrase</th>
<th>3rd and 4th bar of each phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uses shorter rhythmic values</td>
<td>rhythmic values lengthen</td>
<td>consists of whole note rhythms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 4.53.

Douglas uses the phrasing to hide the fact that the melody is created using a 12-tone row.

The first instance of the row extends until beat 4 of the 5th bar.

Example 4.54. “Heavenly Messenger” melodic tone row

The row is arranged a bit differently than previously seen in “Parallel Worlds” in that it’s not really “arranged” at all. The pitches used in the melody all occur within the same octave. No octave displacement or repetition of pitches was used. The only arrangement of the row that occurs is in the rhythmic values assigned to the notes, and the rests occasionally used.

A second instance of the tone row occurs starting on beat 4 of the 5th bar. Douglas obscures the tone row through this use of phrasing that interrupts the row, “hiding” the compositional “craft” as he’s prone to do. Though some of the pitch classes occur in a different octave in the second iteration, the row still occupies a registral space of less than an octave.
A frantic bowed bass solo that continues from the previous composition accompanies the first statement of the melody. The melody is played with no introduction at the onset of the piece by the trumpets, saxophone, and bowed by the remaining bassist. Besides the melody and soloists there is some light drum work along with some sampled sounds that serves as an ambient texture. A more sedate second statement of the melody follows, with the end of the section signaled by sampled harmon mute trumpet notes in the high register.

As the second statement of the melody comes to a close any semblance of traditional form for the piece ends, as the rest of the piece is comprised of free improvisation. However, Douglas rarely enters into such territory without a plan, and the road map for soloists becomes exceedingly clear as the piece progresses. Essentially the band turns from a double-quartet into a quadruple-duo, in other words each pair of “like” instruments in turn will play an unaccompanied free improvisation together throughout the remainder of the piece.

The samplers are the final pair of instruments to improvise together. A steady drum loop is triggered by one of the samplers as they both create a variety of pitched and non-pitched sounds. In the last few moments of the piece a new sound is heard in a sampler playing a short melodic motif that’s something of a mantra at the beginning of the coming composition titled “Among Frogs”.

Example 4.55. “Heavenly Messenger” pitch class arrangement in second instance of row

```
\begin{music}
\staff{\shortbass}{\defstream{}{\bflc{}\f\bflc\fa\f\bflc\fa\f\bflc\fa\f\bflc\fa\f}}
\end{music}
```
The same motif in different transpositions and variations is heard played by the sax and trumpets out of tempo at the beginning of “Among Frogs” in a parallel unison fashion. Whether predetermined or improvised the inclusion of the “Among Frogs” motif by the sampler in Heavenly Messenger beautifully ties the two pieces together in the performance.

Sextet

Douglas’ Sextet, is his first ensemble comprised only of traditional jazz instruments. The original band includes Chris Speed on saxophone and clarinet, trombonist Joshua Roseman, pianist Uri Caine, bassist James Genus, and Joey Baron on drums. On occasion Douglas adds bass clarinet to some of the compositions for this group, bringing in either Marty Ehrlich or Greg Tardy depending on the album. The group has recorded three studio albums, *In Our Lifetime*, *Stargazer*, and *Soul On Soul*. Each album for the Sextet is dedicated to a different jazz composer, containing a few arrangements of pieces by the composer in addition to several originals of Douglas’ that are inspired by the albums subject. It’s clear though that Douglas is the true central figure of these albums, as his compositional voice is only tinged by the inspirational figure each album is dedicated to. The material for the Sextet represents

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75 “Dave Douglas:Projects,” (Greenleaf Music).
76 Dave Douglas Sextet, *In Our Lifetime*.
77 Ibid.
79 Dave Douglas Sextet, *Soul on Soul*, RCA Victor, 2000, CD.
some of Douglas’ most substantial work for chamber jazz ensembles. These are not typically “head-charts”. Most of the pieces for the Sextet are long-form compositions, containing multiple composed sections, often separated by improvisational sections that may have totally different harmonic settings, tempi, meter, etc.

The “subject” of the Sextets’ debut recording *In Our Lifetime* is trumpeter and composer Booker Little. Little’s compositional output is brief due to his passing at the age of 23. It’s likely that instrumentation for the Sextet is tied to the Booker Little dedication, as Little’s recorded compositions nearly always feature the same group of instruments, using the three horn voices to their fullest extent. The first example of this type of writing is the opening title track for *In Our Lifetime*, which does employ the use of bass clarinetist Marty Ehrlich.

Ultimately the piece “In Our Lifetime” consists of a series of free improvisations bridged together by sections with melodic fragments and chordal pads in the horns. There are shifts in tempo and meter, and the horn section is often asked to play in a rubato style while the rhythm sections (and at times the soloist) plays a steady groove entirely separate from the horns.

The following is a representation of the flow of musical events from the album of the same name, *In Our Lifetime*. Section letter designations were taken from Douglas’ own score.

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In the opening solo, Douglas makes a note over the trumpets slash notation to “Improv on Melody at m.24”. By this he means to use fragments of the melody at 24 as a basis, or “jumping-off-point” for improvisation. Indeed the first phrase played by Douglas on the record is nearly identical to the first few bars at m.24 or “F”.

Example 4.57. “In Our Lifetime” melody m. 24-26
Example 4.58. “In Our Lifetime” 1st three bars of trumpet improvisation

Later in the solo Douglas creates a hemiola and further ties the solo into upcoming melodic material by playing a bass line in 5/4 time later heard in the piece.

Example 4.59. “In Our Lifetime” bass line at letter I

Example 4.60. “In Our Lifetime” trumpet improvisation at approximately 0:31

The trumpet solo is followed by one of several sections of the piece that contains competing time feels within the band. The rhythm section continues a free up-tempo swing pattern while the four winds play a chordal rubato statement. The trumpet melody is harmonized in concerted rhythm by the tenor sax and trombone. After playing a few pedal bass notes the bass clarinet joins the other winds. The function of the bass clarinet as the bass instrument is somewhat obscured by the continued walking pattern in the double bass which doesn’t follow any composed chord progression.
Example 4.6. “In Our Lifetime” A section horn voicings

Harmonic analysis of the horn chords is provided though it’s likely the chords are more a result of the movement of the initial chord shape than a truly “planned” progression. For a majority of the chords the top three are using a 1st inversion chord shape with a “drop 2” voicing applied. Others have features of clusters or quartal voicings, with the trombone voiced a m7 or M9 beneath the melody note. Note that voice crossing occurs in the final chord only, with the trombone climbing up to an Eb4, the 7th of the F13 chord, while the tenor sax plays the 13th a half step below. It’s likely Douglas used this technique to create more dynamic voice leading than the alternative as the sax plays an Eb4 on the penultimate chord, meaning it would not move had the voice crossing not occurred. The rhythm instruments fade as the final chord in the horns is held.

A short 8th note snippet in the trumpet serves as the cue for the next section. This melodic fragment appears in other keys and voices throughout the piece.

Example 4.62. “In Our Lifetime” trumpet m.3

Letter B is significantly slower, with a notated tempo of 72. Also the swing feel is no longer in effect. The rest of the band returns after the above passage is played by the

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trumpet. Though highly chromatic, this and all slower sections of the piece are tonal, while the up-tempo portions have no particular tonal leaning or preset chord progressions. The horn voicings at B contain hints of Booker Little’s part writing techniques, making use of close position voicings and half steps in low and inner voices.

Example 4.63. “In Our Lifetime” m.4-6

Douglas himself has commented in writing on the effect of this technique, stating that “Little often used the interval of a half step within his voicings, and the interval created a complex and sometimes ambiguous chordal harmony that pervades his work.”\(^{82}\) This type of writing can be found in Little pieces such as “Forward Flight”, clearly a favorite of Douglas’ as an arrangement of “Forward Flight” appears on the album.\(^{83}\) The same voicing shapes found in the Cm, Bbm, and Am chords in the previous example are used throughout the introduction of the Little tune.

\(^{83}\) Booker Little, *Booker Little and Friend*, Bethlehem Records, 1961, LP.
Little also defies expectations in his use of voice crossing, similarly to Douglas’ writing in the A section. The trombone overtakes the sax in the second half of m.2, allowing the sax to remain a M3 beneath the trumpet through the whole passage, even though the voicing shape is altered slightly. This adds integrity to the individual lines, and varies the color of the voicing.

As the horns hold the Am chord voicing at m.6 of “In Our Lifetime”, the piano plays a transposed version of the seven-note figure played by the trumpet leading into the B section at m.4. The figure is then transposed up a m3 and the piano is doubled by the double bass and bass clarinet.
The close of the first half of the B section is comprised of dense chords in the piano (with very specific voicings) accompanied by unison quarter note triplets in trumpet and tenor saxophone.

No chord symbols are provided in m.5-8, but the written voicings indicate a G13(b9) chord in m.8 and an unconventional C#maj7(#9) in m.9.

This is followed by a stand-alone 2-bar transition section leading into the second half of section B. The transition section ends with a four quarter note bass figure. Here the bass plays the first five pitches as the trumpet intro to section B, except transposed down a tritone and with the augmented quarter note rhythm. The fifth note of the series lands on the downbeat of m.12, becoming the bass note for a chord in the horns similar to the chords found at the opening of section B, except with less functional harmony.
Measure 14 and 15 see a return to the seven-note figures in the bass, though this time with a quarter note triplet feel. The seventh note of the series doesn’t rhythmically fit in the same bar as the other six, but lands on the downbeat, serving as both the last note in the 1st figure and the 1st note in a transposed version starting on the following bar. Even when entering into section C the bass line in m.15 resolves down a P5 to the pedal Bb, again completing the seven-note phrase as another phrase begins but with a different final interval, treating the F of beat four in m.15 and Bb of the following downbeat as dominant and tonic.

Section C is a four-bar repeated section that features a Bb pedal bass with a trumpet melody (based in Bb natural minor) and the other horns with piano shifting tonalities underneath. The chord symbols indicated are an analysis of the harmonic content and not included in Douglas’ score.
Next, the A material returns in a slightly different form in what’s labeled “D”. The trumpet, sax, and trombone play the same series of pitches, out of time as before. The bass clarinet in this instance though plays a continuous pedal F, and is joined by the piano and bass, all playing some semblance of a tremolo as the drums play out of time, unlike the steady groove heard in the rhythm section at A.

The second solo section follows, featuring the double bass, which begins improvising in free time as the final F13 chord is held. The bass and drums play together in free time alone for about 13 seconds (on the record) until a series of long chords are played by the horns and piano, still as bass and drums play freely together. The progression is similar to the harmonies heard in section C, perhaps even the chords Douglas used as a reference when composing the melody and inner harmonies at C. One distinction between the harmonies at C and E is that the bass instruments play a clear Bb pedal throughout section C, but the Bb roots of the chords at E are voiced in the middle of the horn voicing, in the bass clarinet. The bass clarinet plays a Bb3 on each chord as the other voices shift around it, each slowly descending while the bass clarinet remains stationary. In the initial voicing the bass clarinet is playing the next to lowest note in the voicing, but by the last chord the Bb3 is the highest note in the wind section. From a
compositional perspective this is an interesting way for Douglas to maintain a constant Bb “pedal” while keeping the bass frequencies out of the way of the soloist. The coloristic effect of the other winds moving from above to beneath the clarinet is subtle, yet compelling.

Example 4.71. “In Our Lifetime” m. 22

As the horns progress through the voicings the bass and drums begin to lock into an up-tempo swing feel, setting up the next portion of melody at letter F.

The four winds play a melody voiced in octaves over the free walking bass and drum pattern. Portions of the approaching up-tempo melodies have clear relationships with previously stated melodies. The passage at F is hinted at in the opening trumpet improvisation as discussed previously. Otherwise F is comprised of new melodic material. The centerpiece of the melody at F is three descending four-note motifs, each separated by more variant material. Each four-note motif is a half-step lower than the last.

Example 4.72. “In Our Lifetime” m. 24-30
If not for the D4’s that occur two pitches prior to the first two motifs, the three pitches leading up to them could be included in the exact half-step transposition. The material leading up to the third motif deviates from the pattern.

A sax solo occurs after the melody at F. The horns return with similar melodic material behind the sax at G. Similarly to F, the segment begins with a whole note, but in the following bar this time the exact eight pitches that occur the bar before and on the downbeat of the B section are stated again. The “B intro” motif is restated in a different form in the following bar. It’s brought down a half-step, but the intervallic relationships in the first four pitches are inverted, and the 5th and 6th pitches are omitted.

Example 4.73. “In Our Lifetime” trumpet m. 3-4

Example 4.74. “In Our Lifetime” m. 33-37

Both pitch series’ are followed by the same two note figures, in their respective keys. The third phrase at G seems to be an altered version of the initial phrase at G, or perhaps some type of combination of the first two phrases.
The piano then joins the sax improvisation. The remaining horns again enter behind the soloists at H, playing the 3rd and final up-tempo eighth note section. A series of chromatically ascending and descending M3 interval leaps occur, with varied rhythms and leap direction.

Example 4.75. “In Our Lifetime” m. 39-41

In the next four bars there is a return to the “B” material. If the first pitch were changed to a C5 the first eight pitches would be an exact transposition of the second bar of G. The following three bars seem to indicate a Cm6 chord in effect, a melodic shape that reappears shortly.

Example 4.76. “In Our Lifetime” m. 42-45

The transition to 5/4 time is made when the bass begins playing a one bar repetitive line, the same bass figure initially played by Douglas in the opening trumpet improvisation.

Example 4.77. “In Our Lifetime” bass at “I”
At letter J, the trumpet and tenor play a melodic idea out of time behind the soloists. They begin with the whole note D4, similarly to section F, then play a series of melodic fragments that reference bits of melody found earlier in the piece. After the whole note the first four pitches of the inverted B melody are played, then transposed up a m3. Starting at the Gb4 there is an exact transposition of a melodic fragment at the end of letter F. The final two sets of pitches indicate F#m6 and Am6 respectively, similarly to the last several notes at the end of H.

Example 4.78. “In Our Lifetime” trumpet and sax letter J

Sections L and M mirror letter B and C from the beginning of the piece. The only difference being that the pedal Bb section (M) this time instead of a 4-bar repeated section has all 8 bars written out in order to lead in appropriately to the next section. The trumpet descends towards the end of the section, ultimately landing on a middle C as the pedal bass then switches to an F at letter N.

N consists only of a 3 bar pedal bass figure played by bass, piano, and bass clarinet that will continue through to the end of the piece. After the initial statement of the pedal bass figure the remaining three horns enter, playing the same melody and harmonies as letter A, except now for the first time playing with the rhythm section pulse. Still there is an aleatoric element as the pitches need not coincide with any particular beat. After each held note there is a rest with a fermata, meaning the winds can enter
again on any beat, as long as they continue playing with the pulse of the rhythm section once they begin. The top note melody ends on the F4 as before, but instead of the F13 cluster voicing occurring, the sax and trombone play an E4 and A3 respectively, suggesting an F maj7 tonality, or F maj9 considering the G at the top of the piano voicing.

Example 4.79. “In Our Lifetime” letter O

“In Our Lifetime” functions as a piece of music on a few different levels. It’s a tribute to Booker Little, employing voicing techniques and harmonic treatment typical of Little’s writing for multiple horns. Douglas is also able to explore a range of metric techniques, often having two independent “pulses” or time feels within different sections of the band. In this way the piece is an example of contemporary jazz composition, not only a tribute to Booker Little, who was primarily active from 1958 to 1961. The treatment of the central solo section in particular demonstrates fantastic interplay between improvisation and composed melodic elements, as well as the “layering” of soloists to create a sense of progression through the form. The multiple timbral options available
also make the Sextet a perfect vehicle for the long-form compositional style seen in “In Our Lifetime”.
CHAPTER 5
SMALL GROUPS, TRADITION, AND KLEZMER

Moving Portrait

Douglas’ *Moving Portrait* is an oft-overlooked record in comparison to much of the rest of his catalogue.\(^{84}\) It occupies an interesting position in his progress as it functions much like a typical “debut” record in terms of the instrumentation and at times in writing style, yet it is Douglas’ seventh album as a leader. The *Moving Portrait* quartet consists of a piano trio accompanying Douglas’ trumpet, which seems like a departure for Douglas after working more often with non-traditional assemblages of instruments up until this point. This is also Douglas first and only outing with the Japanese “DIW” label, most likely a result of Douglas’ relationship with saxophonist and composer John Zorn. All ten of Zorn’s studio recordings with his band ‘Masada”, which Douglas is a member of, are with DIW.\(^{85}\) One of *Moving Portrait’s* defining features is the near impressionistic use of harmony throughout much of the record. The record represents some of the most lush harmonies employed by Douglas, often communicated through a very soft touch by the pianist, conveying something of a “European” approach to jazz.

As Moving Portrait feels much like a more traditional jazz album for Douglas, one of the most “straight-ahead” compositions from the album will be analyzed. “First Frost” is a lyrical jazz waltz which features a traditional AABA form as well as consecutive improvised solos, roughly over the chord changes of the melody, with no written bass lines, rhythmic motifs, or other “Douglas-isms” typical in most


compositions. “First Frost” is nearly as close to a “lead sheet” style composition as Douglas will venture, as the melody and chord changes are all that’s truly needed to perform the piece.

The division of sections as well as the way the solo portion is treated can be viewed in the following musical event graph.

Figure 5.1. “First Frost” Musical Event Graph

In each bar of the piano intro there’s an articulation on beats 1 and 2. The piano first plays just a G3 and G5. At the downbeat of each bar the G3 remains, but the top
pitch descends, playing through the G Phrygian scale with an added M7, or F#. As the beat 1 octaves are held in each bar, additional notes between them are played on beat 2 and held through the bar. Even the top pitch of the inner “beat 2” voices is initially moving up towards the top “beat 1” voice as it descends. The voicings used vary in their degree of functionality as well as the level of tonal lightness versus darkness.

Example 5.1. “First Frost” piano introduction

The form of the melody contains an AABA’ structure. The initial A sections both consist of eight bars, with some slight harmonic changes between them. Douglas plays rhythms and some pitch content just a bit differently in each A section, though it’s likely the written melody in the original score is the same in each A section, other than the changes in the last A’ section. The second bar of the first two A sections contain different chords, but this may be a result of improvised voicings in the piano. The difference between the chords in the last bar of the A sections is clearly intentional as the first A ends with an unstable Gmaj7(#5) and the second A is simply a Gmaj7, providing much more of a sense of finality leading into the B section.
Example 5.2. “First Frost” initial A sections melody and chords

Despite some of the rhythmic movement seen here, the melody is little more than something resembling a “guide-tone” line that follows the harmonic rhythm of the piece. If the melody were reduced to all dotted half notes the same as the first note in each bar the intent of the piece would undergo little change. The beauty of the melody lies in the interaction of the melody notes with the given chord as well as the rise and fall of the melodic contour in each section. Below, the first A section is shown with the melody simplified to just the first notes of each bar, clearly indicating the melodic shape of the section, which it shares with the second A and A’.

Example 5.3. “First Frost” A section melodic contour analysis

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86 Abene and Sussman, *Jazz Composition and Arranging In the Digital Age*, 127.
The transition to the B section from the second A contains a crafty usage of common tone modulation. The F# in the last bar of the melody functions as the M7 of the coinciding Gmaj7 chord. The trumpet continues on an F#, except the tonality changes to B major, with the melody F# as the 5th. The bass lowers down from a G at the end of the second A to an F# on the first bar of section B, creating a second inversion B major chord in combination with the piano. The bass works its way down to a C# over the next few bars, resolving to an F#/C# chord in the fourth bar, which in retrospect reveals something of a “plagal” cadence in F# in the first four bars of section B, though the B/C# chord in the third bar suggests more of a dominant to tonic resolution perhaps.

Example 5.4. “First Frost” transition to B section and first four bars of B

\[ \text{Example 5.4. “First Frost” transition to B section and first four bars of B} \]

The B section then proceeds with a 5 bar section which maintains the C# pedal. The chords in this section can be examined in a couple of ways. They could be viewed simply as diminished “shapes” that follow the melodic movement, or you can see the overarching tonality of the five bar section as being C#13(b9), with a couple voicings veering outside the chord to accommodate the melody notes.

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Example 5.5. “First Frost” m. 5-9 of B section

There’s something like a 2-bar “tag” at the end of the bridge. The pedal C# resolves to an F# chord with the root in the melody. The melody note remains an F# in the following bar, but the chord changes to F13(b9), with the melody note then functioning as the b9. This serves as a left-handed transition back to G for the final A’ section, with the bass notes 2 bars prior to the last section and the first bar of the last section being F#-F–G.

Example 5.6. “First Frost” last 2 bars of B section and 1st bar of A’

The first five bars of A’ are nearly identical to the previous A sections, with a slight variation in the melody of the 5th bar as the section diverges from previous A’s in the following bar. Instead of beginning a melodic descent in the 6th bar as in the other A sections, the melody reaches one half step further, a moment of climax for the piece. Also at this point there’s a brief departure from the pedal driven harmony, with the bass suddenly playing all chord roots with a few consecutive bars’ changing chords. There’s also a quick change in the mood of the piece at the end of A’, with the chords in the latter half conjuring a more “bluesy” feeling than the impressionistic harmonies previously
heard in the piece. Once the melody descends back to a G4, the pedal G returns with the harmonic tonality shifting in each bar for eight measures leading up to the solo section.

Example 5.7. “First Frost” A’

The solo section that follows contains a rhythmically augmented version of the melody chord changes, with some other variations. In the A sections the inverted chords are replaced with root position voicings. The harmonic rhythm speeds up in the last four bars of the A sections, resembling the end of A’ as it occurs during the melody statement.

Example 5.8. “First Frost” A section solo changes

Besides introducing variety to the composition, the augmented harmonic rhythm allows the soloists to “linger” on the various tonalities presented, giving the improvisational section a more open feel. The original harmonic rhythm could lead to a more agitated or rushed improvisational style not consistent with the tone of the piece.

The solo changes in the B section do actually mimic the harmonic rhythm of the melody for a few bars, but then the various harmonic areas of the original bridge are “developed” a bit, moving through various chords super-imposed over pedal bass notes.
that originally only contained a single chord. Particularly the F# major section is expanded upon quite a bit. In the melody B section when the chords first arrive at an F# chord it lasts for only one bar, but in the solo changes the F# section is eight bars long, cycling through a number of triads over an F# pedal bass. After just two bars with the C#7alt chord, which lasted four bars in the melody, the last two chord of the B section occur with the original harmonic rhythm.

Example 5.9. “First Frost” B section solo changes

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{B/F#} & \quad \text{B/D#} & \quad \text{B/C#} & \quad \text{F#} & \quad \text{Bb/F#} & \quad \text{Ab/F#} & \quad \\
\text{F/F#} & \quad \text{C#7alt.} & \quad \text{F#maj7} & \quad \text{F13(b9)} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

There does seem to be a relationship between the triads voiced over the F# pedal and the chords in the melody. Once the Bb/F# chord arrives, if the F# where changed to C# the harmonies would be very similar to what occurs in the melody, except without the top trumpet note.

Example 5.10 “First Frost” B section solo changes – F# pedal section

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Bb/F#} & \quad \text{Ab/F#} & \quad \text{F/F#} & \quad \\
\end{align*}
\]

Example 5.11. “First Frost” initial B section voicings without melody

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{voicings with trumpet} & \quad \text{melody note omitted} \\
\text{Bb/C#} & \quad \text{Ab/C#} & \quad \text{F/C#} & \\
\end{align*}
\]
A single extra chord is interjected into the progression for solos on A’. The D7alt chord follows the A13 chord. Also the final 4 bars of the section are repeated once.

**Quartet**

Douglas’ *Moving Portrait* may have been his first quartet album, but his “chordless” quartet has endured as the ensemble that maintained the title of “Dave Douglas Quartet”. Though not his first ensemble to forgo chordal instruments, (*Parallel Worlds* has that distinction), it is the first with the true spirit of a chordless ensemble, as the string group has three melodic voices that can form chords, and the strings are capable of performing multiple stops, making the creation of full chords much easier. Douglas even quipped, “You ever notice how a four-legged chair is often crooked but a three-legged stool is solid? I was trying to see how much harmony I could get into the game with just three notes.”

The members of the quartet other than Douglas are saxophonist Chris Potter, bassist James Genus, and drummer Ben Perowsky. Though the group has been compared to some of the early avant garde jazz figures of the 60’s, the virtuosity and versatility of the Douglas group sets it apart from early avant gardists whose command of their instruments and the jazz tradition may be questioned by jazz hardliners. Often within a single piece the group will oscillate between a mainstream approach and the kind of quirky leaps, hiccups, flurries and bombast associated with the avant-garde and jazz venues like The Knitting Factory, at which Douglas and his contemporaries have been mainstays. “Caterwaul”, from the Quartet’s second album

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88 “Dave Douglas:Projects,” (Greenleaf Music).
Leap Of Faith, is one such piece that can’t seem to decide if it’s a straight-ahead swing tune or a collection of angular melodic leaps and disjunctive rhythms.\footnote{Dave Douglas Quartet, \textit{Leap of Faith}, Arabesque Records, 2000, CD.}

“Caterwaul” is a perfect example of a Douglas Quartet composition. Unlike Douglas’ material for the Sextet and other groups, the Quartet compositions are much more simplistic, often little more elaborate than a lead sheet. “Caterwaul” for instance is only 13 bars in length, notated on a grand staff, with rarely more than two simultaneous pitches notated (and never more than three). In essence it’s a medium swing tune (even marked as such) but less than half the bars contain a steady swing feel complete with a walking bass line both in the presentation of the melody and in solo sections that follow. Rhythmic variation is a big theme in the piece. No two bars in “Caterwaul” contain the same rhythmic scheme. Douglas also seems to use intervallic relationships in an interesting way in the piece.

The 13 bar form of the melody is played twice at the onset of the recording. The trumpet performs two improvised “choruses” over the form, followed by two from the tenor saxophone. Throughout the solos the other horn that’s not soloing will play fragments of the melody or ideas based on the melody. One final performance of the melody follows the sax solo, ending rather unexpectedly on the final two “pick-up” 16th notes.

The “Caterwaul” melody begins with an almost comically formal entrance, as if the melody announces it’s presence in a tongue-in-cheek way not uncommon in Douglas compositions. Immediately the note choice in the melody and bass part in addition to the walking bass pattern briefly sets up a “bluesy” sound. This is quickly interrupted by a
fast, angular line in the horns. Already it’s apparent that Douglas has a talent for arranging melodic intervals in an intriguing way. In beats three and four there essentially exists a melodic m6 leap up in both beats, but each is enclosed by half steps from either direction.

Example 5.12. “Caterwaul” melody m.1

The pulse quickly comes to a halt at a fermata on beat two of bar 2. This is followed by a series of wild leaps, octave displacements, and contracting or expanding intervallic relationships that help to characterize the piece. Starting at the end of bar 2 there’s a series of high and low pitches that creep towards each other with “filler” material in between. Essentially the “anchor” pitches are as follows.

Example 5.13. “Caterwaul” outer enclosing pitches m. 2-4

Here are the pitches in context, marked blue.

Example 5.14. “Caterwaul” melody m. 2-4
Bar four sets up a melodic device that persists on and off for several bars, the use of the root and M3 of the chord (or “perceived chord”) as pivotal figures, or more precisely the interval of a M10th, beginning with an E4 and G#5. The pattern continues with a descending tendency through m.10, with some interruptions along the way. In m.9 the top melody notes continue the downward trend set up by the M10 intervals, though the relationship with the root is changed until the following bar.

Example 5.15. “Caterwaul” m. 4-10

In bars 9, 12, and 13 Douglas returns to the idea of expanding and collapsing intervallic relationships. The large leaps in the melody can give the impression of two independent melodic lines being presented in either of the winds. Bar 9 is particularly intriguing as it contains expanding intervals, collapsing intervals, and contrary motion all in a single bar using only three pitched voices. The trumpet and tenor saxophone play in unison on the upper notes, but break into harmony on the lower pitches, with the trumpet
notes ascending as the sax descends. Additionally the bass notes are creeping upwards. This yields collapsing intervals between the bass and lower sax pitches, expanding intervals between the lower trumpet and sax notes, and another set of collapsing intervals between the top trumpet and sax notes and lower trumpet line. In the example the saxophones lower pitches will be expressed in the bass clef and the bass part will be notated in it’s sounding range in order to more clearly view the relationship between all voices.

Example 5.16. “Caterwaul” m. 9-10

The following example isolates the pitches of the separate lines, removing rhythm as an element in the music in order to see more clearly the contour of the musical lines. The colored dashed lines indicate the direction of the different “voices” in the section.
Expanding and collapsing intervals can also be found in bars 12 and 13 respectively. In m.12 the trumpet and tenor sax are in exact unison, both playing descending low pitches alternating with higher ascending pitches. The bass also descends, maintaining a distance of a P5 below the lower descending pitches in the horns.

Bar 13 sees all instruments in unison or octaves, the only time in the piece the bass joins the sax and trumpet in consecutive intervallic leaps. All voices both independently and as a group create a collapsing interval melodic shape.
Example 5.19. “Caterwaul” m. 13

The very title of the composition gives the listener a sense for Douglas’ intention with the piece. The intervallic leaps of varying sizes, direction, and rhythmic content effectively represent the impression of a screeching wail indicated by the title “Caterwaul”. The use of elements from the melody and bass line throughout the solo section contributes to a consistent character for the piece, with the melodic shapes functioning similarly to the way a chord progression may in a typical jazz composition. This is part of what makes the varied rhythms and meters so effective. A “chorus” through the form becomes like a series of events, with the listener enjoying the anticipation of how the soloist will handle each musical event.

Charms Of The Night Sky

Charms Of The Night Sky is the title of Douglas’ eleventh album as a leader and subsequently the name that’s been used for the group it features.92 “Charms” is Douglas’ first “drum-less” chamber ensemble that occupies a stylistic space somewhere between his string group and Tiny Bell Trio. The full band includes string group member and violinist Mark Feldman. On acoustic bass is Greg Cohen. The core of the group along with Douglas however is accordionist Guy Klucevsek, who even contributes a number of

92 Charms of the Night Sky, Charms of the Night Sky, Winter & Winter, 1998, CD.
compositions to the album. The inclusion of the accordion along with the writing style conjures touches of Klezmer music and other traditionally Jewish styles. Douglas had only a few years prior to the release of *Charms Of The Night Sky* been involved in clarinetist Don Byron’s Klezmer ensemble that produced an album in tribute to legendary Klezmer musician Mickey Katz.

Much of the material for “Charms” features only the trumpet and accordion, with the full quartet used on less than half the tracks from the bands debut album. Much of the material for the Charms band is heavily lyrical and serene. The accordion brings a warmth and sonority to the music that’s unlike any other of Douglas’ many projects, perhaps with the exception of the 2014 Quintet album *Be Still*. The use of accordion with Douglas’ lush and often dark harmonies has a beautifully haunting effect. The band can just as easily play much more upbeat pieces that sound as if they come straight from a traditional Jewish celebration.

The title track for *Charms Of The Night Sky* is a medium tempo straight 8th piece with a rather dark, introspective tone, though at the same time quite warm and beautiful. The bass pattern that persists throughout much of the piece is likely inspired by Klezmer rhythms, specifically that of a Freylekhs dance which often contains an underlying 3+3+2 rhythm.

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93 Ibid
Example 5.20. “Charms Of The Night Sky” bass “Freylekhs” figure

The rhythmic scheme adds a kind of “lilt” to the feel of the piece, and helps to provide some forward motion that may have otherwise been lacking without a drummer present.

The rhythmic scheme in the bass persists throughout all but 10 of the 44 bars in the score.

The full arch of the composition and subsequent recorded performance is displayed in the graphic below.

Figure 5.2. “Charms Of The Night Sky” Musical Event Graph
The harmonic aspect of “Charms Of The Night Sky” is rather unique within Douglas’ vast catalogue. Of all the music composed by Douglas for jazz groups, his music for the “Charms” band is perhaps the least open to interpretation. All accordion voicings are written out, and played as written. Pedal point plays a large role in the piece. Only 8 bars in the middle of the composition contain a dynamic bass line accompanied by functional jazz chords symbols. The F pedal is the most enduring tonal area in the piece. In the introduction there are two chords that the accordion oscillates between. One indicates an F Aeolian sound, containing both the 9th and minor 6th above the F bass note, with similar voicings later recognized as Bbm/F. The second chord is plainly an F7sus chord. Douglas repeatedly shifts the quality of the harmony that’s used in conjunction with the bass pedals. The opening accordion voicings are arranged in an interesting way. Each of the voicings begin with a syncopated dyad, either a 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} interval between the two notes, than a beat later two additional notes are added a step away on the outside borders of the dyad, yielding cluster voicings. Though in the score a rearticulation of the original dyad notes is shown, the reality is that the new notes are simply added to the original dyad notes, which are held as the other pitches enter.


\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{F aeolian} \\
\text{Bbm/F} \\
\text{F7(sus4)}
\end{array}\]

(with F pedal in bass)

The A section where the melody enters makes further use of the F pedal. The accordion plays a series of descending m6 dyads throughout the repeated 8 bar section. For the most part the melody does little more than play the top pitch for each dyad. The dyad choices
often alternate between “dark” and “light” sounding tonalities, depending on which mode of F they’re derived from, when paired with the F pedal bass. The first m6 dyad is a Db5 and F4, suggesting Bbm/F. This moves down a half-step to E and C in the following bar. The two pitches move a M3 down in the third bar, followed by a half-step drop in the 4th bar. This sets up a 2-bar pattern that descends by a P4 in each instance of the pattern and continues through the section. The only exception is that the bottom D-note of the Bb-D dyad in the 7th bar descends a whole step instead of a half-step in order for the chord to resolve to an F major triad.

Example 5.22. “Charms Of The Night Sky” A section accordion and bass

With the exception of a “line” played in the 5th and 6th bars of A, the melody in the A section merely plays along with the top note of the accordion dyads with some light ornamentation. Even in the more active 5th bar the melody begins on an Eb4, the same as the top dyad note of the bar, and then quickly veers off from there. All instances in which the melody note and top note of the accordion dyad are the same are marked blue in the following example.
The melodies in the 5th and 6th bars of A do not strictly adhere to the presumed harmony of the bars, which seem to indicate Eb/F and D/F, though the note choice in m.5 may indicate dominant extensions of Eb, or perhaps a Bbm6 sound, which the accordion notes would fit inside. The four descending pitches in the 6th bar of A indicate a Dºmaj7 sound, which could be “overlayed” upon the D major sound in the accordion, particularly as it is voiced above the accordion notes. There’s a sharp contrast as the very tonal and triadic material returns in the final two bars of the section, with a IV and I chord.

An interlude section marked as “A2” very similar to the introduction bridges A and B. Douglas uses the same type of chord qualities and syncopated “building” of the accordion voicings, though voiced in a lower range to allow smooth voice leading from the previous section.
Example 5.24. “Charms Of The Night Sky” interlude accordion voicings

The B section that follows contrasts the A section though it is similar to it in many ways. The rhythmic scheme of all the voices is the same or nearly so. The contour and level of activity in each bar of the melody is similar to the way it functions in section A. The main difference between the two sections is that B features a dynamic chord progression in which the roots move in each bar and the bass moves with them, unlike all other sections in the piece. Still, the bass maintains the rhythmic scheme heard previously for the most part and the melody often focuses on the top note of the voicings, though all the accordion voicings in this section are comprised of four notes instead of two. The voicings used are “cluster-like” or contain aspects of quartal voicings.

Example 5.25. “Charms Of The Night Sky” section B melody and chords
The rhythmic scheme for the first five bars is virtually identical to the first five of section A, even the more active bar 5 is rhythmically the same, with a similar melodic contour even though the harmonic content differs.

Example 5.26. “Charms Of The Night Sky” section A and B rhythmic similarities in melody

The eight bars that follow greatly contrast the previous sections, and although not marked as a new section in the score will be referred to as section C here. The section is comprised of four 2-bar pedal bass figures, each with a different bass note but the same syncopated rhythm that accents different beats than the previous bass line rhythms. Each pedal bass note is accompanied by half-note dyads in the accordion, comprised of Major and minor 6ths. The dyads move in a particular fashion in each 2-bar sub-section. After the initial half-note on beat 1, the dyad notes move down a step, then up a 3rd, then down a step back to the starting dyad. The register lowers in the accordion every two bars. The scales indicated by the accordion dyads all belong to a tonic a M3 above the pedal bass notes with the exception of the final 2 bars, which reflect a G7(#11) tonality. It’s hard to say whether or not it was intentional, but it’s interesting that the final pitches in the accordion before a return to Fm are E and C#(Db), and the bass on a G, all of which would be found in a C7(b9) chord which would typically precede an Fm tonic. The chords listed below are not listed in the score but are the author’s harmonic analysis of the section.
Example 5.27. “Charms Of The Night Sky” section C with harmonic analysis

On the record Douglas will play some stagnant pitches behind the other soloists as well as create “sound effects” such as moving air through the trumpet (not sounding a pitch), often with a pulsating kind of “articulation” to create a “breathing” or “wind circulation” effect, displaying a rare occurrence of Douglas using sound effects in a more lyrical and serene setting. This technique has been referred to as an “airstream effect” by those that employ or study extended trumpet techniques. The violin plays through the section C material. All written material for the accordion is played exactly as written even in solo sections, an unusual mode of operation for a Douglas band but effective in the setting.

The bass solo that follows skips past the introduction section and begins right at A with the descending accordion dyads. The melody returns at the B section and the trumpet solo begins 8 bars later at C. After C the piece travels to a new 8-bar vamp on which the trumpet continues to solo. The F pedal bass is featured once again, with different triads voiced above in each bar. Triads over an F bass are listed as the chords in

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the score, but Douglas voices each with cluster voicings that include extensions or chord additions not listed in the score.

Example 5.28. “Charms Of The Night Sky” final vamp accordion voicings

After a few repetitions of the section the accordion simply holds the chord in the initial bar of the section as the bass continues the pattern, with all instruments ultimately performing a live fade.

“Charms” is certainly a departure for Douglas. The inclusion of accordion and exclusion of drum set make the band Douglas’ most sonically intimate at the time of its formation. Other pieces from the debut album such as “Sea Change” and “Little One” have a similar lyricism and warmth. “Charms Of The Night Sky” achieves this effect in a number of ways. The use of pedal bass ideas with various harmonies undulating above gives the piece a sense of stasis, even through the harmonic movement. The coloristic effectiveness of the melodic material is often the result of the top melody notes being doubled in trumpet, violin, and often accordion as well. All of this is tinged with the subtly “ethnic” quality that comes from the rhythmic patterns and dramatic minor sounds of Klezmer music. Other examples have displayed Douglas’ ability to write in the style of another composer, but this is his first major attempt at assimilating the musical character of a particular geographic region or culture.
CHAPTER 6
ELECTRIC EXPLORATIONS

First Quintet

The Quintet is easily one of Dave Douglas’ most enduring and popular ensembles. The researcher prefers to separate the Quintet’s timeline into two parts, not unlike Miles Davis’ first and second quintets. There are a few reasons for this. The most compelling reason is that the first three albums from the quintet feature electronic instruments. *The Infinite, Strange Liberation, and Meaning & Mystery*, were all recorded between 2002 and 2006, all of which feature fender Rhodes as the keyboard instrument exclusively, and even the electric bass at times. Bill Frisell guests on the electric guitar for much of *Strange Liberation*. A live album was released in 2007, with a few new pieces, then the next Quintet album wasn’t released until 2011. Four years is something of an eternity in the world of Dave Douglas’ recorded output. He released ten albums between his last studio record with the Quintet in 2006 and the next. The 2011 Quintet album is *GPS, Vol 2: Orange Afternoons*, which was part of a special three album series of music released exclusively as a digital download on the Greenleaf website. *Orange Afternoons* retains none of the personnel from any of the previous Quintet albums and makes a shift to acoustic piano. Of the other four members of the *Orange Afternoons* band, only bassist Linda Oh is present on further Quintet albums. As

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98 “Dave Douglas:Projects,” (Greenleaf Music).
100 Dave Douglas Quintet, *The Infinite*, Bluebird/RCA, 2002, CD.
part of the Greenleaf Portable Series (GPS) *Orange Afternoons* doesn’t have the same presence or distribution as Quintet albums to come, or album length for that matter, making it something of a “soft open” for the second Quintet. All other Quintet albums to date since *Orange Afternoons* contain the same personnel, with the exception of guest vocalist Aoife O’Donovan on *Be Still*. Since *Orange Afternoons*, the longest period of inactivity for the Quintet has been two years to date.

Interestingly it’s Douglas’ first Quintet that draws comparison to the music of Miles Davis’ *second* great Quintet, specifically the period in which they were entering the world of electronic instruments, with albums like *Filles De Kilimanjaro* and *Miles In The Sky*. Douglas’ “Earmarks” from the record *Live At The Village Vanguard* draws a clear resemblance to the material from the aforementioned Davis records as well as others that followed it, yet still allows Douglas’ unique voice to shine through.

“Earmarks” is a fairly unassuming piece, with only 19 unique bars of notation in the score, with the same 8 bar bass line present in 16 of those bars. The form as represented in the live performance of the piece is displayed in the following image.

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105 Miles Davis, *Filles De Kilimanjaro*, Columbia Records, 1968, LP.
The spirit of the piece is reminiscent of the opening track of Miles Davis’ *Filles De Kilimanjaro* titled “Frelon Brun”. Both have a straight 8\textsuperscript{th} feel, with a similar groove in the drum set, and both contain a bass line that’s doubled in the electric piano.\textsuperscript{108}

Example 6.1. “Earmarks” m. 1-8

\textsuperscript{108} Miles Davis, *Filles De Kilimanjaro*. 
The bass line consists of two 3-bar phrases followed by a 2-bar phrase, equaling a standard 8-bar song section, but with a tilted approach. If not for the pattern on the drums one might be inclined to perceive the meter for much of the bass figure to be 6/4, due to the two 8\textsuperscript{th} notes that occur six beats after the initial two 8ths at the beginning of each of the 3-bar phrases at bars one and four. Both 3-bar phrases begin with the same rhythm in the first bar, both have roughly the same rhythm in the second bar, and both use longer rhythmic values in the third bar. The melodic shape of the bass figure is interesting. There’s a masterful “hinting” at tonality without ever really providing a firm sense of tonic. There’s a sense that Douglas intends to feature D and Eb, yet in a clever way that blurs the lines between the two key centers. The initial two D’s clearly set up the sense that D is tonic, but that is immediately obscured by the m9 jump to Eb on beat 3. The m9 leap is not only a common feature of Douglas compositions, it also serves to separate the unexpected note from the initial perceived tonic, allowing the listening to “reset” in a way. At this point the two G 8ths on beat three of the second bar may seem like the IV chord, but also could be the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of an Eb chord. In fact the keyboard harmonizes that particular note first as a Gsus chord and then with a Db on the second time through the intro, as if the harmony at play is an Eb7 chord when heard in context with the Eb and C in bar 1. The third bar of both phrases starts with a half note A. It’s likely this will be perceived as a 5 in D to many, but may sound like the flat 5 in Eb, with the following C# and D either having a leading tone to tonic relationship or simply a two half-step walk up into the next phrase which begins in Eb. The two Eb’s are a half step higher then the rhythmically identical D’s at bar 1, however instead of leaping a m9 the bass jumps a m7 to Db, landing on Bb at beat 4. This sets up a more firm Eb tonic for this portion. This is
also an interesting use of collapsing intervals, with the lower note in bar 4 higher than the lower pitches in bar 1, and with the higher pitches moving the opposite direction. The second bar of the second phrase contains a similar tonal ambiguity to bar 2 of the first phrase in that the Gb on beat three will likely sound like a m3 in Eb, but the note is also the M3 in D, with the jump to A at the downbeat of the next bar seemingly supporting that idea. The switch to Bb on beat three of bar 6 further solidifies the Eb tonic idea, but this is turned upside down with bar 7 suggesting a B7 tonality. The keyboard often harmonizes a M3 above the bass in the bar, cementing the B7 sound, but there’s a clear return to D in the last bar of the section, making the A and B in bar seven seemingly more like the 5th and 6th scale degrees in D in retrospect. Also it should be noted that the intervallic relationship between the four pitches from the downbeat of bar 3 until the downbeat of 4 are repeated a M3 lower starting on the last note in bar 5 and through to the first note in bar 7, though in a different rhythmic sequence.

Like much of Miles Davis’ work in the late 60’s and beyond, there is no set chord progression, so the chordal element is somewhat free to riff improvised chords over the bass line. Unlike many of Davis’ electric compositions the bass moves around a good bit, making it difficult to “milk” a particular pedal bass note the way Herbie Hancock or Chick Corea might. With the moving bass line it provides something of a moving target for the keyboard harmonies. In his analysis of Davis compositions, author Lex Giel writes on this topic, “the F7 now can be thought of as F7#9, F13#11, F9b5, etc. Using the minor 3rd substiturion principle, the F7 can also be thought of as Ab7, Cb7, and D7, each bearing their relative scales, upper partials, and alterations.”109

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109 Lex Giel. The Music of Miles Davis, 150.
After a repetition of the bass line the melody enters a cappella, providing a 3-bar introduction into the melody. The melody is highly chromatic, with even more tonal ambiguity than the bass line.

Example 6.2. “Earmarks” m. 9-11

Much of the melody introduction is actually something of a re-working of a chromatic scale, especially when octave displacement is taken out of the equation. If you take the pitch classes from the first six and ¼ beats and choose the nearest octave for each subsequent pitch class, you get this variation on the chromatic scale.

Example 6.3. “Earmarks” pitch class relationships at B

The only pitch class from the lowest to highest pitch that’s not present is D. The extreme chromaticism discontinues half way through the 2nd bar of the phrase, though the “m2 down M2 up” idea reappears at the end of the third bar.

It’s also possible the letter B melody is constructed from various transpositions and reordering of a few pitch “sets”. For instance, three consecutive half-steps are used to construct the material on beat 1 of the first bar, as well as the idea in beats three and four. The idea in the last two beats of the section is also constructed from three half-steps.

The 3-bar a cappella melody section is followed by the passage that’s the core of the composition, in which a new 8-bar melody joins the initial bass line.
Most of the melodic material in section C is derived from the three bars at B. The last bar is not seemingly related to B, but simply echo material used in the bass line. The second bar starts with an exact replica of the melodic material found at the end of the third bar of section B. The top pitches in the first bar actually coincide with those that precede the last bar of B as well. The fifth and seventh bars of C also contain the melodic shape from bar 2, yet at different transpositions. The third bar at C is identical to the second bar at B. The first half of the sixth bar of C is the same as the first half of the first bar of B. In the below example the material from the melody at B and C are color coded to demonstrate which part of B each bar of C is derived from.
Example 6.5. “Earmarks” section B & C color-coded melodic comparison

The phrasing of letter C, although paired with the letter A bass line is not congruent with it. There are a lot of starts and stops, and the varied rhythms make establishing a flow of phrasing difficult. It is clear however that a phrase begins at the third bar from the end, setting up a potential 5 + 3 measure phrasing in the section, which is clearly out of phase with the phrasing of the bass line.

As stated previously, there is no predetermined harmonic content at letter C except for those harmonies that result from the melodic voices converging with the bass line. Though the bass and soprano voices at C seem to have little to do with each other, there nearly always is some type of harmonic logic to the way the voices combine in counterpoint, as if Douglas chose portions of letter B to “fit” within the “puzzle” of the bass line. An analysis of the harmonies that result from the combined voices could be interpreted as follows:
Example 6.6. “Earmarks” section C harmonic analysis

Note that the electric piano is comping through this section as well, and not with the above analysis in mind. Also the harmonies are not present during the solos, only the bass line with any improvised chords played by the keyboard.

The form for “Earmarks” is not particularly complex as the piece is only 19 bars in length. Letter A is not revisited after it’s first performance. Once the band arrives at B the form throughout the rest of the performance is B-C-C. In the solo section each time through the 3-bar B section is a solo “break”. This means that each soloist will play multiple breaks over the course of a solo, assuming multiple choruses are performed, which is the case on the record. The breaks add to a “light-hearted” tone for the piece, as the breaks are often treated in a whimsical manner, with the intention of eliciting a response from the audience and fellow band members. This differentiates the style of Douglas’ Quintet from Miles Davis’ electric outfits. Douglas is much more open to elements of humor or “tongue-in-cheek”. In fact during his solo Douglas interjects a
musical quote from “Frosty The Snowman” presumably because the live album was recorded in December.

**Freak In**

*Freak In* followed Douglas’ debut with his quintet, and with his twentieth album as a leader the comparisons to Miles Davis’ electric outfits continue. If *The Infinite* was a look back at Davis’ early electric outings, *Freak In*, recorded the following year in 2003, bares a stronger resemblance to the post *In A Silent Way* electric Miles of the 70’s. The resemblance is in no small part due to the augmented personnel for the group. In addition to the Quintet instrumentation Douglas employs the use of electric and acoustic guitars, additional keyboardists and programmers, electronic percussion, sparse vocals, and even the Indian tabla drum, also used by Davis in addition to other world instruments and percussion. *Freak In* contains the same type of “sonic density” that’s such an important element of Davis’ work in the 70’s.

One of the pieces from *Freak In* that closely resembles some of Miles 70’s electric material is the track “Black Rock Park”. The piece begins with a distorted electric guitar solo and sparse rhythm section accompaniment that bares a striking resemblance to a Miles Davis piece titled “Medley: Gemini/Double Image” from his Live-Evil record of 1971. For much of the Davis piece the rhythm section plays little more than a repeated 4-bar vamp that includes only beat one material in the first three measures.

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110 Dave Douglas Quintet. *The Infinite*.  
111 Dave Douglas Septet, *Freak In*, Bluebird/RCA, 2003, CD.  
113 Dave Douglas Septet, *Freak In*.  
Example 6.7. “Medley: Gemini/Double Image” vamp

Both this piece and Douglas’ plod along at a rather slow tempo, with “Medley: Gemini/Double Image” clocking in at about 74 bpm and Douglas “Black Rock Park” at a slower 64. The drum part is often very sparse, playing little more than the hits that accompany the pictured bass part. About half way through the recording the “space” is gradually filled in a bit more by supporting instruments, but the core of the piece is that of a very “open” sound.

A similar tone is struck in “Black Rock Park”, but with the addition of a more dynamic chord structure and melody indicative of a Douglas composition. The form as well as the arrangement of solos and song sections is contained in the figure below.

Figure 6.2. “Black Rock Park” Musical Event Graph
The following pattern is repeated throughout the entire piece with the exception of a solo “send-off” section that is used only once.

Example 6.8. “Black Rock Park” rhythm hits

The funky extension-laden dominant chords are also indicative of Davis’ music from the time period discussed. There’s a sense of melodicism to the chord roots, moving a m3 up from the initial Bb root to Db, then after transferring down to an Ab the bass note again jumps up a m3 to B, only to arrive a M2 lower at the final A chords which provide a smooth transition up a half-step back to the Bb bass note.

The melody enters after the second “chorus” of guitar. Though the form is only 10 bars, due to the slow tempo this does not occur until well over a minute through the recording. The melody is performed in a smooth and connected style, which is a contrast to the jagged, distorted quality of the guitar solo. The angular shape of the melody is consistent with Douglas’ compositional style and differentiates the piece from the more linear melodies typical of Miles Davis pieces. The initial 10-bar melody that accompanies the rhythmic figure weaves in and around the hits, sometimes being punctuated by them, otherwise articulating along with them for an added emphasis.
Example 6.9. “Black Rock Park” primary melody with hits

The note choice in the melody has an intriguing relationship with the harmony in the section. The melody is at first predominated by the upper extensions of the chords at hand, using #9’s or #11’s in the first four bars. An interesting effect occurs between the melody and chords in m.5-7 of the section. An Ab7sus chord is sounding in m.5 as the melody ascends by a half-step into a C#(Db) on the downbeat of the following bar. Though the chord from the previous bar is no longer sounding the melody note agrees with the harmony. The role of the C# changes as a Gmaj7/B chord is performed in the 6th bar, with the overall effect being that the C# is the 9th of a Bm chord with a b6. Douglas then goes on to outline a B major chord in m.7. This is in blatant conflict with the chord used in m.6-7, but is perceived as a brief “escape” into a major tonality because of the breaks between rhythm hits.
Example 6.10. “Black Rock Park” m.5-7 melody and harmony interaction

A recurring melodic shape is first used in the 3rd and 4th bars of the section. It consists of an ascending “up-down-up” 4-note shape that creates an upward trending linear “zig-zag” due to the second upward movement containing a larger interval than the first. The shape appears thrice in the section, though never with the exact same intervallic scheme.

Example 6.11. “Black Rock Park” melodic shapes

Also note that when the tenor saxophone diverges from the trumpet part in the last two bars the series of four pitches is comprised of two P4 interval pairs that move in opposite directions, separated by a tritone. Still the saxophone manages to articulate the same pitches as the trumpet (8vb) when they arrive.

The following section appears only once in the piece, functioning like a solo section “send-off” of a kind, but simultaneously the climax of the guitar solo as well. It’s
a 4-bar section repeated only once. The chords and rhythmic hits are nearly identical to the first few bars of the previous section, except that the material in bars 1 and 2 is repeated once more, with the “& of 3” idea occurring in the first 3 bars. The fourth bar of the section is the same as the third bar of the previous section.

The melody is voiced in a high range and is considerably more tonal and “funky”, helping to solidify the idea that the piece is in Bb. The note choice is fairly simplistic, but the rhythmic content of the melody is interesting. There’s a repetitive two-note pattern that repeats in each bar, but it’s rhythmically displaced in each successive bar, continually moving back rhythmically in the bar. The technique would be compelling enough on it’s own, but combined with the unchanging “& of 3” hit it becomes very effective.


In each bar the initial note of the interval occurs a quarter or 8\textsuperscript{th} note rhythm further in the bar. As the “& of 3” hit remains the same, its relationship with the melody shifts in each bar. The emphasized second note in each bar first sounds after the rhythm hit, then at the same time, then before the hit in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} bar. In the 4\textsuperscript{th} bar the two melody notes are both articulated between the two hits in the rhythm.

In the second and final time through the section a tenor sax solo picks up in the final bar. Due to the similarities with the initial section of the piece the fourth bar of the
repeated section transitions seamlessly to it’s identical counterpart in the solo form, which occurs in m.3. This could be realized on the page through the use of a D.S. and sign.

Example 6.13. “Black Rock Park” sax solo form

The sax solo simply completes the rest of the ten bar initial section. The trumpet then plays two choruses which lead directly back into the melody at letter A. The sparse hits and soloistic nature of the guitar continue through the horn solos and last statement of the melody. To end the piece the first bar is played with the horns joining in on the “& of 3” hit in the rhythm section.

Freak In is set apart from other Douglas ventures for several reasons, but the most prevalent instrumental effect is likely that of the heavy “rock” guitar sound that gives the group a “classic” jazz-rock fusion tilt. “Black Rock Park” is a fantastic vehicle for the band to explore this particular approach, at the same time recalling the drastic changes in sonic density typical of Miles Davis’ later electric projects. All of this is filtered through Douglas’ melodicism and penchant for creating harmonic and rhythmic intrigue.
Keystone

*Mountain Passages* may have served as the debut record and ensemble for Douglas’ label, but his next venture with Greenleaf became one of his most popular and enduring projects to date.116 “Keystone” is both the name of the debut album and band name for another electric group of Douglas’, the only other besides his first Quintet that’s earned him a Grammy nomination.117 Keystone is like Douglas’ *Freak In* band in that it takes his Quintet instrumentation and augments it, retaining the Fender Rhodes in addition to trumpet, saxophone, drums, and bass, though using exclusively electric bass instead of double bass, which is the norm with his Quintet. The additional member in the sextet is turntable artist DJ Olive. This greatly deepens the sonic possibilities the group can achieve.118

From the beginning, Keystone was a different kind of project for Douglas. Each of the three albums for Keystone is not only a work of excellent concert music, but also is conceptualized as film music. Douglas goes as far as to say the material for Keystone is “inspired by films, written for films, both new and old”.119 Both the debut album, *Keystone*, and its follow-up, *Moonshine*, are meant to accompany films featuring early 20th century silent film comedy actor Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle. *Spark Of Being*, the third and last outing to date for Keystone goes a different direction, eschewing the light-hearted Arbuckle antics in favor of a highly stylized silent retelling of the “Frankenstein”

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119 Ibid
story from director Bill Morrison which relies on the use of distressed found footage.\textsuperscript{120} \textsuperscript{121} \textsuperscript{122} Though Keystone’s repertoire literally consists entirely of film music, it functions perfectly well as concert music.

Keystone, like many of Douglas’ electric groups, has drawn comparisons to Miles Davis’ bands. There are certainly similarities between Keystone and other of Douglas’ electric groups, but what’s generally agreed upon is that Keystone has a “funkier” aesthetic than others.\textsuperscript{123} Much of the material is heavily “groove” oriented, but unlike the music of \textit{Freak In}, world music doesn’t play a significant role, and many of the grooves have ties to funk, hip-hop, and other American popular styles. Much of the groove-oriented material will at times sound like something from a Medeski, Martin, and Wood piece, except with the addition of trumpet and saxophone.

“Just Another Murder” for instance, from the \textit{Keystone} album, consists of little more than a one-chord A7 vamp with a funky, upbeat groove. The identifying “Douglas-ism” comes in the form of transitional bass figures consisting of quarter note triplets moving in Perfect 4ths. The sudden mathematical nature of the stacked 4ths is at odds with the “grooving” nature of the rest of the piece. The stacked fourths are tacked onto the end of a repeated 4-bar phrase, but in each instance further P4ths are stacked, elongating the interruption bar or bars leading to the next 4-bar section. The structure of the sections and recorded musical events is shown in the figure below.

\textsuperscript{120} Dave Douglas & Keystone, \textit{Moonshine}, Greenleaf Music, 2007, CD. 
The melody is considerably less angular and more accessible, and repetitive than many Douglas melodies seen previously, suggesting a more laid back, mainstream bent. The melody does make use of ascending P4ths as well, though it is hidden through rhythmic variation and octave displacement.
Example 6.14. “Just Another Murder” Letter A

Letter B draws influence from sources such as Lee Morgan’s “Sidewinder” in which the horns play repetitive harmonized rhythmic hits, not unlike a rhythm guitar part.¹²⁴

Example 6.15. “Just Another Murder” Letter B

¹²⁴ Lee Morgan, The Sidewinder, Blue Note, 1964, LP.
This leads directly into a second statement of the A section, identical to the first except that the final “P4th” figure continues a bit longer, cycling through all pitch classes until arriving back at the tonic. This version of the A section is used for the solo form as well.

Example 6.16. “Just Another Murder” end of second A

Essentially “Just Another Murder” is a simple groove piece, but with the addition of the quarter note triplet interruption sections. If not for the unexpected quartal movement in these sections the piece wouldn’t have the type of identifying “stamp” of a Douglas composition. The piece is also a vehicle for the band and listener to soak in the sonic atmosphere created by DJ Olive.

*Keystone* and the bands second album *Moonshine* have a similar tone, which is not particularly surprising given they both accompany Fatty Arbuckle films. The third album, *Spark Of Being*, has a darker tone, not unlike the film it accompanies. “Tree Ring Circus,” from Spark Of Being functions a bit more like typical film music in that it relies little on improvised material.\(^\text{125}\) In fact the only improvised solo is in the drums at the end of the piece. It’s an energetic straight 8\(^{\text{th}}\) tune that uses various odd meters and changing time signatures to create rhythmic urgency and intrigue. For much of the piece the meter switches each bar between 4/4 time and either 7/8 or 3/4. In such sections there always

\(^{125}\) Dave Douglas & Keystone, *Spark Of Being.*
exists musical elements that align with the downbeat of each bar and others that seemingly ignore the time change, plugging away at a simple duple rhythm as the downbeats shift, which causes a type of “phasing” between the voices.

The various time signature changes and overall shape to the arrangement is displayed in the musical event graph shown below.

The introduction consists of only bass and drums with a percussive repetitive chord from the keyboard. The bass line is rhythmically quite simple, framing the meter and oscillating between D and F#, two tonal centers explored later in the piece.
Immediately the 7/8 bars are exploited for rhythmic musical intrigue. The rhythmic chords fall squarely on the off beats in the 4/4 bars, but there’s not rhythmically enough space for the dotted 8\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} at the end of bars two and four. Instead the bars are organized into a 2+2+3 8\textsuperscript{th} note pattern, with the last three 8ths split in half rhythmically, using a dotted 8\textsuperscript{th} rest, followed by an 8\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} in the melody. The pitches used indicate an Esus2 chord in and of themselves, though in combination with the bass form a D6/9 chord or F#7sus chord depending on the bass note. The harmony in the next section suggests a Bm/D sound, so the chords on the intro may function as a Bsus chord, preparing the ear for the suspended “E” to move down to the m3 of Bm.

There’s an abrupt shift in groove as well as melodic and harmonic content in the following section, which serves to set up the feel that persists through the first melodic section. The bass and keyboard initially play continuous 8ths that alternate between D and F#, pitches prepared by the bass part in the previous section.

Example 6.17. “Tree Ring Circus” 1\textsuperscript{st} intro section

Example 6.18. “Tree Ring Circus” 2nd intro section bass

Because of the odd number of 8ths in the 7/8 bars, the relationship of D and F# to the downbeats and upbeats switches in the third bar. If not for the accented pitch at the beginning of the third bar there would be little indication of a change in meter. The
keyboard plays the 8th note bass figure the first two times through the section. On the remaining two times the keyboard in a sense plays two parts simultaneously.

Example 6.19. “Tree Ring Circus” 2nd intro keyboard “parts”

Though all the pitches could be notated in a single stave, the B3 and F#3 function independently of one another, approached conceptually as two distinct voices. The F#3 part contains consecutive quarters that begin on the “& of 1” in the first bar, but shift to the downbeats in the third bar due to the odd 7/8 bar. The quarters flip back to off beats after the final 7/8 bar in the fourth measure. The B3 part however is a 2-bar “back-beat” figure that “resets” after the 7/8 bars. This yields a shifting relationship between the B and F# parts in which they trade off downbeats and off beats in the first 2 bars, and then only articulate on downbeats in the third and fourth bars. The keyboard and bass parts continue into the A section, which contains the first melodic line in the winds.

At letter A there are 8 unique bars of melodic material that accompany the repeated 4-bar rhythm backing. The melody is highly chromatic, seemingly having nothing to do with the implied Bm/D in the rhythm section. It has the angular shape and varied intervallic relationships typical of many Douglas melodies. Only once is a melodic interval used consecutively throughout the melody. The continuity comes from the shape of the line, and the number of pitches in each two bar segment. Each 4/4 bar and 7/8 bar combination contains four “core” melody notes. Two of the 2-bar sections technically contain five melody notes, but the extra note is a quick 8th note that approaches the third
“core” melody note by a m2 from above or below. Each of the 4-bar phrases begin with a m2 movement and contain at least one leap a P4 or larger.

Example 6.20. “Tree Ring Circus” Letter A melody

The top melody is played by the trumpet, but tenor saxophone accompanies it with a harmonization. The intervallic relationship between the two voices is just as varied as the melodic intervals used in the trumpet part. Only once are there two adjacent instances of the same interval between the voices being used.

When played against the Bm/D material in the rhythm the result is a melodic statement that goes through various levels of dissonance and consonance in relationship with the other instruments.

Letter B follows, which strongly emphasizes a Bb bass note. The meter continues to shift each bar as before, but now the 7/8 bars are replaced with 3/4 bars, effectively creating a bar of 7/4 for each set of two bars. The top line melody in the trumpet simply has held pitches that last 2 bars a piece in the first 6 bars of the section. Meanwhile the saxophone plays a more rhythmically active line, outlining some of the quality identifying chord tones along the way. The first and last notes of the repeated 2-bar saxophone rhythm line up with the rhythm section hits, but the rhythms in between are out of phase with them. The second sax note comes an 8\textsuperscript{th} note rhythm after a rhythm section hit, and the third comes an 8\textsuperscript{th} note rhythm prior to the next rhythm section hit.

Example 6.22. “Tree Ring Circus” Letter B
The Bb “power chord” rhythmic phrasing can be conceptualized in a couple ways. It seems readily apparent that there’s a repeating 2 bar rhythm, but the two dotted quarters in the even number bars lead back into another dotted quarter at the beginning of the next 2 bar segment, creating a rhythmic continuity that spills over the perceived phrase point.

The 2-bar bass line at the end of B is a clear reference and transition to the A section bass line. The alternation between Db and D reflect the Bb minor and/or #9 harmony at B. The final Db in the bass beautifully resolves by a half-step up to the beginning D in the A section bass line, functioning similarly to a leading tone. At the end of B, “DA CAPO” is marked in the score, which leads to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} intro section for our purposes, as the 1\textsuperscript{st} is not present in the Douglas score.

Example 6.23. “Tree Ring Circus” bass at end of letter B, leading to 2\textsuperscript{nd} intro section

After a restatement of the material through B, completely new content arrives at letter C. C is the only substantial section of the piece that doesn’t alternate the meter in every bar. Instead the phrases are made up of 3 bars in 4/4 time, and ending in a single 7/8 bar. All of C focuses in on a Gb minor tonality, which is the enharmonic spelling of F#, one of the two pivotal pitch classes in the composition. The section can be viewed as having four 4-bar phrases. The rhythm section material is the same in each section besides some minor adjustments in chord quality. The rhythms of the hits used are identical in each phrase. The chords that accompany them are all permutations of Gbm,
and those used in the first 8 bars of the section are repeated in the last 8. The rhythm in the 7/8 bars creates a sequence of dotted quarter equivalent rhythms that lead back to the downbeat of a new section.

Example 6.24. “Tree Ring Circus” letter C rhythm hits and chords

The melody at C can be conceptualized as four 4-bar segments that form something of an A – B – A’ – B formation, meaning that the first and third 4-bar sections have small differences, but the 2nd and 4th phrases are identical. The melody moves at a quicker, 8th note based pace. Rhythmically it often fills in gaps between the rhythm section hits, or joins the hits on occasion. The trumpet and saxophone are often in unison or octaves, but much of the melody is harmonized. The note choice doesn’t indicate a direct relationship to the Gbm sound used in the rhythm, in fact the M3 above Gb is often used prominently, even as the final held note of the section. The contour of the melody line seems to be the most consequential aspect, zigzagging through the section using seemingly unrelated arpeggios and scalar passages.

Example 6.25. “Tree Ring Circus” letter C melodic contour graphed
The A’ sub-section within letter C is rhythmically identical to the first 4 bars, but raised in pitch by either a step or a 3rd. The saxophone part drifts in and out of unisons and harmony with the trumpet. The harmony parts will at times move in an exact parallel to the trumpet, an approximate parallel, or using contrary or oblique motion. This all occurs within an 8 bar section, so the harmony line varies quickly within a short amount of time.

Example 6.26. “Tree Ring Circus” letter C melodic harmonization

The harmony in the last four bars of the section is identical to the fifth through eighth bars of the section.

A transitional 4-bar section marked as “D” follows. Initially a Dmaj7 sound is implied in the first two bars. The last two contain an alternating B to C 8th note line that serves to return the listener to the Bm/D tonality of the next section marked “E”, which is virtually the same as the four bars that precede letter A.
After a repeat of E, letter F begins the “solo form” of the piece. Sections F and G are both repeated 4 bar sections that contain material in the rhythm similar to letter A, and repetitive horn parts that take advantage of the shifting meters. After getting through G, F and G are repeated, with small alterations to the horn material. The meter at F returns to the alternating 4/4, 3/4 idea of section B. The bass however plays the same D – F# pattern, but using triplets, which is reinforced in the section by the drum groove. The horns play a quarter note alternating C# - D# idea, with the downbeat note changing due to the 3/4 bars. The second time through F the trumpet plays an offbeat “B” idea, which “resets” at the 3rd bar, forming a new relationship with the saxophones C# - D# motif. Again Douglas achieves the effect of altering the perception of a particular melody through moving of the rhythmic elements that surround it.

Example 6.27. “Tree Ring Circus” letter F

![Example music notation]

The bass moves back to playing D – F# with 8th notes at letter G, but the horn parts become more complex. The horns play (in unison the 1st time and harmony the 2nd) a repetitive 16th note phrase that forms a hemiola in the alternating 4/4, 7/8 section. The motif alternates between C# and E, taking up the rhythmic value of three 8ths, or six 16th notes. The combination of the 4/4 and 7/8 bars occupies fifteen 8th note rhythms, or thirty 16th rhythms, so the melodic motif is played five times in each 2 bar segment, or ten
times in the full 4 bar section. Douglas even marks “feels like ten times” in the part, to avoid confusion.

Example 6.28. “Tree Ring Circus” letter G m.1-2

The only solo in the piece is a drum solo that cycles through letters F and G until fading out. Consistently a triplet feel is used when soloing over F, and a duple feel when soloing at G.

The constant change of meter and textures in “Tree Ring Circus” create a sense of unrest for the nearly the duration of the composition. The piece represents one of Douglas’ most adventurous explorations of meter. Additionally Douglas is seen creating melodies and harmonization that don’t often agree with the “harmony” of the piece, yet he’s able to develop the melodic ideas successfully through the use of melodic contour and rhythmic continuity.
Brass Ecstasy

Brass Ecstasy marks the beginning of a new period in Douglas’ development. As the name implies, Brass Ecstasy is an acoustic brass group, which came as something of a departure for Douglas when the bands first album was released. Spirit Moves was released in 2009, after an eight-year focus on electric bands, with the exception of the one-off album, Mountain Passages. Ten records with electric groups were released in that time. With the exception of Keystone’s Spark Of Being in 2010, Douglas from then on would focus on acoustic material, until the formation of his band, High Risk in 2015. Though Spirit Moves was released in 2009, the beginnings of the group can be traced back to 2005, at “The Festival Of New Trumpet Music”, an annual festival founded by Douglas. An early version of the group played at the festival, though the French horn was substituted with a second trombone. They’re performance was dedicated to jazz trumpeter Lester Bowie, one of the founding members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, as well as the leader of his “Brass Fantasy” group, which is cited as the main inspiration for Brass Ecstasy.

It’s true that Brass Ecstasy and Lester Bowie’s Brass Fantasy have much in common, though many of their similarities are shared by many other brass groups of the

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126 Dave Douglas & Brass Ecstasy, Spirit Moves, Greenleaf Music, 2009, CD.
127 “Dave Douglas:Projects,” (Greenleaf Music).
last few decades. A sense of levity is something the groups share. Bowie’s and Douglas’ brass groups each often exude a humorous quality, whether it be through whimsical arrangements of popular songs, or through sound effects and extended techniques used in an irreverent fashion. The humor in Bowie’s and Douglas’ music is more subtle than other brass groups such as Austria’s Mnozil, whose performances are as much theater as music.\footnote{“Home Page,” (Mnozil Brass), accessed January 7, 2017, http://www.mnozilbrass.at/en/.

\footnote{Lester Bowie’s Brass Fantasy, \textit{When the Spirit Returns}, Birdology, 2000, CD.

\footnote{The Righteous Brothers, \textit{Hung On You/Unchained Melody}, Philles Records, 1965, LP.}} For instance, simply using the brass to convey material typically played by a rhythm section instrument requires a bit of a “wink” from the composer and performer. Bowie’s version of the Righteous Brothers’ “Unchained Melody” is a prime example.\footnote{Lester Bowie’s Brass Fantasy, \textit{When the Spirit Returns}, Birdology, 2000, CD.

\footnote{The Righteous Brothers, \textit{Hung On You/Unchained Melody}, Philles Records, 1965, LP.} Trumpets and tuba are used to imitate the guitar arpeggiations heard in the original record, but with the pitches passed around the section, an arranging technique sure to instigate smirks from listeners, particularly in a live setting.

\begin{example}{Example 7.1. “Unchained Melody” original guitar part}
\begin{music}
\begin{align*}
\begin{array}{c}
\begin{music}\note{C2} & \note{E2} & \note{G2} & \note{C2} & \note{E2} & \note{G2} & \note{C2} & \note{G2} \\
\note{G2} & \note{C2} & \note{E2} & \note{G2} & \note{C2} & \note{E2} & \note{G2} & \note{C2} \\
\note{G2} & \note{C2} & \note{E2} & \note{G2} & \note{C2} & \note{E2} & \note{G2} & \note{C2} \\
\end{music}
\end{array}
\end{align*}
\end{music}
\end{example}
Similarly to Bowie, Douglas also covers a few popular tunes on *Spirit Moves*. The most “tongue-in-cheek” selection is likely the cover of Otis Redding’s “Mr. Pitiful”. Much of the material used is derived from horn section figures from the original recording. The tuba mimics the electric bass part from the original version, perhaps one of the more light-hearted aspects of the arrangement.

Douglas’ arrangements for Brass Ecstasy (of popular tunes and his own compositions) represent some of his most ambitious material for small group. Like the writing for the Sextet, much of Brass Ecstasy’s repertoire is substantial in regards to the “through-composed” nature of the pieces, containing varied song sections, transitions, written solo backgrounds, and other arranging elements. This may in part be due to the effect of a prolonged exposure to an overly brassy timbre. The listener may require more variety within a composition to limit “listeners fatigue”.

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The piece aptly titled “Bowie” for instance is a series of musical vignettes that often seem to have little relation to each other, with the final section a rendition of the folk tune “Mrs’ O’Leary” which tells the tale of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, perhaps included due to Bowie’s long association with the Chicago jazz scene.\textsuperscript{134,135} Depending on how the form is broken down, there are four or five other sections with completely unique material. Douglas’ goal for the piece seems almost to disorient the listener, using contrasting sections in an eclectic manner. A complete view of the various sections is displayed in the figure below.

Figure 6.4. “Bowie” Musical Event Graph


The opening tuba part resembles something like a Motown bass line to a certain degree, but in the short span of four bars there appears to be multiple key centers in play through the use of deceptive resolutions. The first bar and ½ are solidly within E major. The tuba ascends, with an expected return to tonic, but instead lands on F, which serves as a launching point into a brief foray in Bb starting in the third bar. The D that follows will be perceived as the third in Bb, but quickly ascends to E and F#, as if the D was functions as the dominant 7 in E. The F# and D#/Eb that follow seem to firmly tonicize a return to E, but the final Eb in the fourth bar leads in as the dominant 7 in the F major section at letter A.

Example 7.4. “Bowie” tuba intro into letter A

There’s a change in stylistic tone already in the 5th bar at the arrival of letters A and B. The tonality is firmly rooted in an F7 chord. The snare heavy drum pattern suggests a casual militaristic feel to the music. Any drum notation is transcribed from the recording as the drum part in Douglas’ score only uses cues from brass parts.
The melody consists of only two pitches, F and Eb, with their respective major chords voiced in the brass with each note. Letters A and B are the same except that the trumpet and horn play the melody in unison at A, and the trumpet drops down to playing fifths at B. All brass, but primarily trumpet will play melodic fills in phrasing gaps.

The brass resolve to the F major chord at the downbeat of letter C which gives way to an eight-bar drum solo, leading in to a contrasting “modern jazz” section containing more angular melodies and free improvisation at letter D. A 1-bar drum pattern cues the brass back into the 5th bar of the section after the open free improvisation.
Example 7.7. “Bowie” letter D

The melody at first continues to suggest F7, but then cycles through multiple key centers, first by playing a seemingly unrelated flat-2 (F#) in the second bar in the higher voices, which is “answered” with a low D in the trombone and tuba, suggesting D major harmony. A Bb whole-tone scale is used for the line following the free improvisation, continuing the sense of chromaticism established in the previous bar. This is quickly followed by a one-note rhythmic idea on Db that’s later developed at letter E, though a half-step higher on D.

The call and response idea that began at the second bar of D picks up again in the last 5 bars of the section. The high and low brass trade off Eb “hits” in the first bar, then use the major scale a tritone away at A to arrive on E in the third bar. The Db and F played by the high brass ultimately sound like the 7th and 9th of an Eb9 chord once the Eb7 is sounded out in the final 2 bars. All brass play only the D pitch class at letter E, so
the Eb7 chord harmonically resolves down by half-step, but the top and bottom voices resolve away from each other in contrary motion as the trumpet on the Db 7th resolves up to D, and the tuba on the Eb root resolves down to a D root.

At letter E the single-note rhythm motif returns. Clearly the melodic and harmonic content of the section is extremely limited, but this makes way for a lot of variation rhythmically, with each of the bars containing a unique rhythm, even if only a variation of the rhythm from another bar. As varied as the rhythms are, still Douglas seems to have limited the rhythmic denominations in the section to mainly 8th and quarter notes and rests, with a few rhythms the length of a dotted quarter. A 9th bar is appended to the repeated section to further disguise a concrete sense of phrasing, and an additional bar of similar material is placed after the repeat, bridging the way to the next section and continuing to obscure the perception of the form. The second time at E the trumpet alternates between playing F#3 and G3, effectively creating D and Dsus chords with the rest of the brass.

Example 7.8. “Bowie” letter E

The drum pattern at E is also an important aspect of the sections character and contrast with other sections. The key element is the open-hat articulated on “big” beats 1 and 2 in
cut time. This technique conjures a “hard rock” feel, a far cry from the march-like snare heard earlier in the piece.

Example 7.9. “Bowie” letter E drum pattern

The section begins with the above pattern, but does cycle through a few other variations before the close of letter E.

Letter F is a short transition section that uses material derived from letter D. A 2-bar angular line almost seems to “pull” the listener back to Eb, and then D is again hammered in by the low brass, as if there’s a “struggle” between D and Eb tonal centers throughout the past few sections. The last three notes of the trumpet not only serve to return to the previous bar in the repeated section in an interesting way, but they are also the beginning melody notes for letter G, which is a rendition of the folk song “Mrs. O’Leary’s Cow”.

Example 7.10. “Bowie” letter F

There’s nothing particularly novel about the folk tune treatment in the brass at letter G. It’s a faithful rendition of the tune, with minor improvisations in the inner voices. The most intriguing aspect may be the “drunken” sounding rhythmic
“wobbliness” employed by the band members. The drums alternate between march-like snare figures and near-random banging that sounds like a child at the set. The brass often stretch or truncate rhythms in a “sea-sick” manner.

The tuba plays a simple 1-5 “oom-pah” style bass line for much of letter G, staying on the tonic F chord for the entirety of the tune until a strong V chord completes it in the last few bars of the section. Some of the trombone part and all the horn part at G is notated, but much on the recording is improvised or merely uses the notation as a guide. The other notated brass parts are displayed below. If only two notes are present it’s due to the trombone part containing slash notation only. This begins in the fifth bar, with notated whole notes returning in the last two bars of G. The horn and trombone (when notated) are either playing “march-like” rhythmic accompaniments, harmonization of the melody, or countermelody material derived from the melody. Also of note is the “horn 5ths” harmonization style used in the 7th bar of the section, with the horn harmonization outlining the F triad below the more scalar trumpet notes, though in traditional “horn 5ths” harmonization the top line melody would typically use scale degrees 3-2-1-2 along with the arpeggio notes in the horn.\textsuperscript{136} The technique arose as a result of early brass instrument limitations, so it’s appropriate in this setting.

\textsuperscript{136} Adler. \textit{The Study of Orchestration}. 629
Example 7.11. “Bowie” letter G notated brass

This leads into a raucous ending of the melodic form at letter H. After resolving to the final F chord of the O’Leary melody, a series of wildly leaping quarter-note triplets ensues. The odd number triplets form a final melodic idea, a chromatic walk-up to the leading tone, followed by a leap up to scale degree three, as if the tonic will follow immediately. In between odd number triplets there are seemingly unrelated pitches, anywhere from a P5 to a M13 below the melody note that precedes it or follows it. The odd number “melody” triplets are performed in the trumpet and horn and the low brass play the even number pitches.

Example 7.12. “Bowie” letter H

It’s anticipated that the A5 in the trumpet melody will resolve down to the F tonic that’s been established in the previous section. Instead the final chord is Bb, with the A resolving up to the Bb root. Douglas manages to hide the fact that the Bb chord is the
subdominant of the firmly established key of F major in two ways. There is an
“interruption” bar between the final chord and the melody note that precedes it. The Gb’s
and Ab’s used (enharmonic spelling) indicate VI and VII chords in the parallel Bb minor
key. Also, immediately after the melody “A” note, the triplet in the low brass that follows
is on an F, which seems like a premature arrival at the tonic at the time, but sets up a 7-5-
1 in Bb major between the A in the trumpet and horn, the F in the low brass, and the final
Bb trumpet note.

The solo form for “Bowie” begins with a free swing section complete with
walking bass in the tuba immediately after H. Trombone is the first soloist, with trumpet
joining the trombone after a short time. The trumpet cues the melodic material from letter
A, ultimately cajoling the other brass to join in with parts similar to what appeared at
letters A and B. The section ends similarly to the way letter B ended previously in the
piece, only the drum solo that follows leads straight into material from letter E. Initially
the trumpet and trombone play the single-note rhythmic idea from the section, with horn
beginning an improvised solo moments later. After the trumpet and trombone play
through the sequence a number of times they begin to improvise the note choice, but
continuing with the notated rhythms. They fade out as a horn and drum duo continues,
only to return with the trombone and tuba on D and trumpet oscillating between F# and
G. When the other brass return it’s treated like the second time through letter E, with the
rest of the piece continuing as written after the end of the horn solo.

Letter G is considerably more boisterous the second time through, with little of
the actual melody being played as written. The piece comes to a close when the band
returns to the Bb major chord at the end of letter H.
“Bowie” is not only a fitting tribute to one of Douglas’ musical heroes, it’s also a great representation of Brass Ecstasy’s group concept, as well as Douglas’ compositional proclivities. The major stylistic shifts throughout the piece serve multiple purposes. They generate the kind of excitement and spontaneity associated with brass band music. The various sections also serve to create an ever-changing backdrop for soloists as the improvisers progress through the form. Douglas’ eclectic compositional style is also represented through the composition.

**Big Band**

Though many great jazz composers have never composed or arranged for big band, some consider it a rite of passage. Douglas is credited with completing one collection of pieces for big band. He was inspired to create “Letter From America” during the 2008 presidential race.\(^\text{137}\) Many of the pieces have titles that correlate to politics and American government such as “The President’s,” and “Campaign Trail” and sonic allusions to rustic Americanism or the “statelyness” associated with government and government officials.\(^\text{138}\) “Letter From America” is a suite of nine pieces that’s never been recorded in it’s entirety, but three selections from the suite are included in Douglas’ only big band recording, *A Single Sky*, which also includes several big band arrangements by Jim McNeely of other Douglas pieces.\(^\text{139}\) One of Douglas’ originals from “Letter From America” included in *A Single Sky* is a raucous piece titled “Blockbuster”. The title may refer to the “entertainment” aspect inherent in the US election process, or perhaps is

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\(^{139}\) Ibid.
inspired by Webster’s definition of a blockbuster as “a very large high-explosive bomb”, which after hearing the piece does not seem unlikely.140

“Blockbuster” reaffirms many of Douglas’ compositional trends, and also is a rare look at how such a vast number of voices and registral capabilities are employed by the composer. Douglas focuses on linear driven composition for much of the piece. There are absolutely no chord symbols notated in the rhythms section parts or any of the improvised sections in the winds. Douglas instead relies on general key areas and some very specific voicing shapes in particular sections. Aside from a 16-bar section at letter B, there are never more than two layers of strata, with basically a soprano and bass line for most of the piece. Only at B is there countermelody material. The rest of the time the melody is either doubled in octaves or harmonized, often a perfect 4th or 5th below. The piece is quick in tempo, yet there are no 8th note “lines” in the melody or supporting elements. All melodic ideas are based on longer rhythms, giving the piece a certain “weightiness” not easily accomplished through fluttery 8th note lines.

The instrumentation is for a traditional eight brass, five saxes, and rhythm trio, with the addition of a trumpet soloist. The only exception is that Douglas uses soprano sax in place of alto 1. The top melodic voice is doubled between trumpet 1 and soprano sax throughout the entire arrangement, including some rather high material in the final section which ventures well into the soprano sax altissimo range.141

The form from the A Single Sky recording is shown below. There are some differences between Douglas’ score and the performance, mainly that some solo sections are omitted, and more of the melody is performed after the solo sections. The letter

141 Adler. The Study of Orchestration. 232
designations are taken from score, but the reason there is a gap in letters between E and J is because of the changes in the version performed on the record.

**Figure 7.1. “Blockbuster” Musical Event Graph**

In each section of the piece there’s a tonic with varying degrees of solidity derived from the bass line as well as the intervallic relationships in the upper voices. The beginning includes a 3-note repeated bass line motif which gets used as a source of material for further bass lines and melodies. It features a M6 drop from the initial note, followed by a M2 step upwards.
There’s some ambiguity as to whether there’s an Em tonality, or possibly A7 or Am. The jump from B to E in the pickup bar helps to suggest Em is the predominant tonality. This is reinforced by some light improvisation in the opening vamp. The 4-bar introduction section is marked as “open” and played eight times in the recording. In addition to the bass figure it features atmospheric atonal “noodling” improvised in the winds behind a slightly more prominent improvisation from Douglas.

The 16-bar section A that follows contains the first melodic statement, accompanied by an extended version of the previous bass line. The initial 3-note motif which begins on the downbeat of the section is repeated on beat 3 of the second bar, but transposed up a tritone, creating something of a “split” tonality between Em and Bbm going forward as the bass interacts with the melodic material. The Db and Eb 8th notes at the end of the fourth bar appear to function within Bbm, but also serve as the raised 6th and 7th scale degrees of an E melodic minor scale, effectively leading back to the E in the 5th bar to reset the pattern.

The transposition of the 3-note motif accomplishes a few objectives. It introduces the melodically dissonant m9 interval that is often a staple of Douglas compositions.
between the A2 in the second bar and the following Bb3. Also, due to the ambiguous tonality of the 3-note fragment and some of the melodic note choices, the listener may perceive the second instance in Bbm as being indicative of Eb7 or even Ebm, creating a half-step relationship between the two tonal areas.

The 4-bar letter A bass line repeats four times through the 16-bar section, but the melody is unique without repetition throughout the section. Douglas uses the soprano and alto saxes in unison with trumpet 2, as well as tenor sax 1 doubled an octave below.

All pitches of the initial melody are part of an E Dorian scale, and all notes of the scale are used at least once. As a result the melody seems to be firmly within E minor whenever the E minor portion of the bass line is being performed. However, when the transposition of the bass line switches to Bb minor, the tonality of the line is somewhat obscured. Interestingly, Douglas’ note choice in each of the four instances of the 3-note Bbm motif seems to shift the function of the bass line, alternatively suggesting B/D#, Bbm, Ebm, Eb, and Bb.
Example 7.15. “Blockbuster” Letter A melody and bass

The melody is moderately fragmented in its phrasing, sometimes filling rhythmic gaps in the bass line, or in concerted rhythm with it. The justification for the fragmentation of the line is given at letter B.

All voices active at letter A play the same material again at B, but a secondary melodic line is added. Instead of playing the melody and bass line, the piano is instead asked to play the two melodic lines. The countermelody is voiced in the remaining two saxophones, as well as trombone 1. It has a bit less “melodic pull” than the initial line, but is similarly fragmented and occupies a similar range of pitches half an octave lower. The secondary line however does not conform to E Dorian like the initial melody, though with one small exception it remains within E Dorian whenever the E minor bass line is
sounding. The two voices often intermingle with the bass to create some interesting harmonic scenarios. There seems to be a concerted effort to cycle through different tonal qualities, particularly in the second half of each 4 bar phrase, implying minor chords, major chords, and #9 chords, among others. The melody, countermelody and bass voice at letter B are shown below.

**Example 7.16. “Blockbuster” Letter B melody, countermelody, and bass**
Rhythmically speaking, the second voice is in concerted rhythm with the initial melody in the last 7 bars, but often fills gaps in the phrasing in the first half of the section. To illustrate the rhythmic result of the combined voices they’ll be notated in a single staff, with the pitches of one voice ending as notes from the other are articulated, demonstrating how the listener perceives the entrances. Pitches are marked according to which voice they reflect at the time, with “V1” meaning “voice one” and “V2” as “voice two”.

Example 7.17. “Blockbuster” m.1-9 of B melody and countermelody rhythmic combination

At letter C the initial bass line from the introduction returns, except transposed down a m3. One may be inclined to think this constitutes a change in tonality to C#m, but Douglas uses the tonal ambiguity in the figure along with the voicing in the horns to solidify F# as the tonic in this section. The F#5 “power chord” in the winds makes this abundantly clear. It’s truly a thing of wonder that the tonality seems to shift up a whole step despite the bass line moving down a m3.
Example 7.18. “Blockbuster” winds and bass at letter C

The bass figure sounds four times through the 16-bar C section, with Douglas adding the bass trombone to the bass figure, playing quite low in the sounding range of the double bass where the voice will remain for a majority of the rest of the arrangement. The second instance of the bass figure is accompanied only by light soloing from Douglas and tenor 1 which occupies the first half of letter C.

The second half of C has the horns playing 1-5-8 “power chords” or fifth chords using exact voice planing over the F# bass pedal using long rhythmic values. Though the shape of the line is the defining factor here, the chords that result from the shifting fifth chords are almost always consonant.

Example 7.19. “Blockbuster” end of letter C

The melody in this section no longer conforms in a functional way within the implied harmony. The first four notes starting on E4 are constructed of a M3 leap upward followed by two consecutive m3 movements downward. The pattern is then nearly repeated verbatim up a P4, except the final melody note moves up a m2 instead of down a m3. This may be a preparation for another P4 leap up to D5, the first melody note in
section D. The bass starts off as if it will be identical to the 4-bar pattern at B and C, but new material continues in m.5-8, creating an 8 bar figure which repeats once in the 16 bar section.

The main unifying factor remains the bass line as letter D arrives.

Example 7.20. “Blockbuster” letter D bass line

Rhythmically the new material starting in the 5th bar of D seems as if it will follow the pattern established in the first four bars, but the last few bars are constructed of longer un-syncopated rhythms that are in concerted rhythm with the melody. As in previous sections the melody and bass line in at D initially seem to have little to do with each other, but the harmonies that arise from their convergence are effective.

The melody at letter D is an 8-bar pattern that repeats once, with a single note change at the end of the second instance of the section. Rhythmically the melody and bass are polar opposites. The bass figure is highly syncopated, even using hemiola. The melody rhythm only articulates pitches on the first or third beat of each bar, and for the entire 8-bar section only three “half-bars” go by without an articulation. Together the bass and melody articulate notes within gaps in their counterparts phrasing. Besides the concerted rhythms in the 7th and 8th bars of D, there’s only one instance in which the bass and melody articulate a pitch at the same exact time.
Example 7.21. “Blockbuster” letter D melody and bass

The melody does manage to stay close to the E Dorian scale, only playing two pitches from outside the scale toward the end of the section, though it seems that the melody is intended to combine with the bass in intriguing ways, especially when the harmonic implication is considered.

In the first 8 bars of D there is one harmony part sounding beneath the melody. Ten of the notes in the section are harmonized a P4 beneath the melody. The remainder of pitches are tritones, 3rds, and 6ths. All harmonization notes not a P4 beneath the melody are marked in blue in the following example.

Example 7.22. “Blockbuster” letter D melody and harmonization

The use of perfect intervals and even rhythms in the melody conjure a “stateliness” that’s undermined a bit by the tritone and other intervals.

When combined with the bass voice the note choice begins to make a bit more sense. The harmonization in the melody converges with the bass line to create some interesting, though fleeting, implied harmonies. Each “tonal center” barely takes root in the listeners mind long enough to truly be perceived, but the overall result is very effective. A harmonic analysis for the bass and two-voice melody line is listed below.
Example 7.23. “Blockbuster” letter D melody, harmonization, and bass

The melody and bass line are repeated in the second half of letter D, with only the last melody note changed and a few rhythmic values lengthened. The harmonies used underneath the melody are rather different though. An additional third voice is added below the melody, and some of the pitches in the initial harmony line are changed. The following chords are implied by the bass and three part harmonized melody in the second half of letter D.

Example 7.24. “Blockbuster” m.9-16 of letter D. Bass and harmonized melody

Much of the voicings are totally “quartal” containing only P4ths between pitches. Some voicings do contain a single A4th, adding tension and a “sinister” color to the section. The final two melody notes in the area are voicing in a highly unusual way, both containing a m9 interval between the top melody note and a lower voice. The technique is used to create “drama” at the end of the section, using tension and obscured tonality.

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There’s also some intriguing voice leading from the last bar of D into E. The top voice is continued on a sustained note at the beginning of E. The two harmonization voices both move down a half-step while the bass moves in contrary motion by a whole step.

Example 7.25. “Blockbuster” voice leading into letter E

The orchestration is augmented at letter D. Several voices that had not been heard up until this point are added to the mix, using the full compliment of instruments throughout the section. There’s a clear simplicity to the orchestration upon close examination. In the first 8 bars of the section each of the instruments will fall into one of three roles, either playing the melody, the harmonization, or the bass line. Each of these ideas is represented in two adjacent octaves, with the exception of the piano, which plays the melody and harmony part up an additional octave in the right hand. The trumpets are split evenly, with trumpet 1 and 2 on the top melody line and the remaining trumpets on the harmonization part. The solo trumpet part is also slated to play the primary melody. The soprano and alto saxophones are in unison with high trumpets. Tenor sax 1 is the only part doubling the melody an octave beneath. Tenor 2 is the only saxophone playing the harmony part, in the same octave as the melody in soprano and alto. The bari sax plays the bass figure, notated in the same range as the double bass, but of course the bass is sounding an octave lower due to transposition. Trombone 1 and 2 play the harmony line in octaves, with trombone 1 in the same range as tenor sax 2, and trombone 2 an
octave beneath. Trombones 3 and 4 double the bass line, with trombone 3 in the same
range as the bari sax and the bass trombone doubling the exact pitches of the double bass.
The piano plays the same pitches as the higher octave melody and harmony parts in the
left hand and doubles both an octave higher in the right hand. Note that in the following
example the different voices are color-coded to show the orchestral strength of each
line. The main melody is colored blue, the harmonization is red, and the bass line is
purple.
Douglas clearly is giving more weight to the top line melody as six voices in the winds carry it in addition to the piano. Nearly as many voices play the harmonization part.
Douglas made a choice to favor the higher octaves of the melody and harmony lines. In each case only one voice is playing the lower octave versions of both the lines, with tenor 1 doubling the melody an octave lower, and trombone 2 doubling the harmonization down an octave. This contributes to the clarity of the section while still providing some of the “weight” of octave doubling.

In the second phrase at m.9 of D a second harmonization part is added, but since the full band is in use the extra line must barrow from previously committed instruments. The initial harmony instruments send the largest amount of players to the second harmonization part. Three that played the higher part in the previous phrase switch to the lower note. Tenor sax 1 takes up the first harmonization instead of playing the melody down an octave, allotting three winds on both harmony parts. Octave doubling in the horns is eliminated here except for the low trombone bass line. The only voice undisturbed by the additional harmony line is the bass line, which remains in the same instruments as previously. The piano now plays the 3-note melodic harmonization, with the top note doubled up an octave. In the example the additional harmony part is colored green.
Example 7.27. “Blockbuster” m.9-16 of letter D

Here ends the “head in” for the arrangement, which leads into a solo section between trumpet and tenor saxophone 1. At the onset of the solo form the Em bass figure from the introduction is used. As the soloists begin to increase intensity, backgrounds in
the winds are added, but not using written material as is typical. Instead the conductor will instruct the players to play random pitches at different dynamic levels and note lengths through the use of hand or body gestures. This aleatoric element adds a sense of chaos to a section that may otherwise seem like a simple Em vamp. There’s no attempt in the winds to remain in Em in any way, and often they’re asked to perform wild leaps and sweeps across the range of each instrument. Ultimately the rhythm section joins the rest of the horns in a cacophonous, arrhythmic wash of sound as the soloists come to a fever pitch in improvisation. The texture begins to thin out, with the bass and drums eventually linking together on the groove, except now using the letter B “dual tonal center” bass figure, preparing for the restatement of the melody.

Sections B through D are then repeated just as before, but with more active solo “fills” in trumpet and tenor saxophone. The coda is a very dense and intense final eight-bar section that follows the second statement of letter D. For the first time in the piece there is consistent use of concert rhythm between all voices.

The top voice and bass seem to be wholly unrelated, though both have some sense of logic and coherence to them. The first several pitches of the bass voice at J are identical to the bass at letter D, except with a totally different rhythmic scheme. The blue colored notes in the following example at J are identical to the pitches used in the bass line at D.
Example 7.28. “Blockbuster” letter D and J bass comparison

The remainder of the bass line cycles through P4th interval leaps, besides a tritone in the 6th bar and M3 drop to the last bass note.

The melody consists of an ascending syncopated figure that begins on E5 and reaches all the way up to Gb6. Conceptually it’s separated into two halves. In the first four bars the melody more or less is informed by the harmonies implied by the bass line. The consecutive E5’s agree with the Em tonality in the first bar. The bass pitches in the 2nd and 3rd bar of the section could be interpreted as outlining Ebm, and the melody for a time uses notes from an Ebm pentatonic scale. The Gb, C and Ab bass notes in the 3rd and 4th bars appear to be treated as roots of m6 chords. The melody as well as harmony parts agree with this.
Example 7.29. “Blockbuster” melody and bass, first four bars of J

The melody continues to climb in the second half, this time using a 4-note melodic fragment that’s transposed up a M3 after the initial statement. The last note of the piece would be the first of a new instance of the melodic fragment if it was played in full. The relationship with the bass is often unclear, with the harmonic element only becoming functional on the last couple of notes.

Example 7.30. “Blockbuster” melody and bass, second four bars of J

The melody is played by the soprano sax and trumpet 1, the bass by trombones 3 and 4 as well as double bass. The piano plays both parts. All remaining voices are playing harmony parts beneath the primary melody. The functionality of the chords, voicing density and proximity of voices varies greatly in this section. In the first half Douglas uses 3-note voicings and even a few notes that are not harmonized at all. All voicings are at least marginally functional in combination with the bass. In the following example only the highest instance of any pitch class used is displayed in the score sample. The chord symbols displayed are harmonic analysis of the section, not used in the score or conceptualization of the section.
Example 7.31. “Blockbuster” simplified voicings, m.1-4 of J

Douglas uses octave doubling alone for two of the melody notes in the 3rd and 4th bars of J. This provides not only a change of texture, but also highlights the dissonance of the following chords after being juxtaposed beside such hollow voicings.

The choice of harmonies changes in the second half of J along with the change in melodic contour. The chords are much more dense, with few having discernable traditional functionality.

The first two chords used may be the most dissonant. With the F bass note the sum of the upper harmonies nearly indicate an Fø sound, in addition to F containing Ab, B, Eb, and Bb. The presence of an E natural in a couple voices, voiced a m9 above Eb is the only exception. It’s more likely that the chord is the result of the combination of two quartal voicing shapes.

Example 7.32. “Blockbuster” voicing pairs at m.5 of J

The following melody note moves up a M2. All the other chordal voices do the same, though the bass moves down a tritone to B. Already by the next bar the approach to
voicings changes. The first note of the bar is a simple slash chord, albeit a dissonant
Db/E, involving a triad in the upper voices. The next voicing is the only cluster voicing in
the section, alluding to a Bbmaj13(#9#11) or perhaps a modal sound built off the 6th
mode of the D harmonic minor scale.

Example 7.33. “Blockbuster” 6th bar of J, voicings and bass

The last five melody notes are generally harmonized through the stacking of 4ths,
mostly perfect 4ths with a few tritones used. The two chords in the next to last bar each
consist of five consecutive stacked P4ths. Each contains a single note that if left out
would create a more functional sound. The first would resemble an Ebºmaj7 if the E
natural were omitted. The second would strongly suggest an Abm11 chord without the
top E note, though with the E it may be thought of as an E6/9 chord in first inversion. As
in the fifth bar of J the second chord is an exact transposition of the first up a M2, yet the
bass moves a different interval, up a P4.

Example 7.34. “Blockbuster” 7th bar of J, voicings and bass
The voicing pattern continues in the first chord of the last bar of the piece, except this time the lowest note of the voicing is only present in a lower octave. This is true of the next chord, but the lowest note is lowered an additional half step to an A4, making the next to last chord a Gb13. For the final chord the voicing is simplified greatly, using a three note voicing (besides the bass note) of a Dmaj7(b5) chord. This provides a clarity to the final chord which leaves the listener with more of a sense of finality.

Example 7.35. “Blockbuster” final bar voicings and bass

There are a few interesting facets to the orchestration of the final section. One unusual aspect is that the top four saxophones are voiced in the same range as the trumpets, which climbs quite high. It would typically be expected that the saxes would either occupy the trombone range, or some kind of space in between the trumpets and trombones. By the last couple of bars all the saxes minus the baritone sax are asked to play into the altissimo range. Altissimo notes are colored red in the following example.
Example 7.36. “Blockbuster” saxes (minus baritone) and trumpets at J

Unlike other similar sections in the piece, the only definitive and consistent lines at J are the top line melody and bass. No two voices that play any other harmonies play exactly the same thing. There is a constant shifting around between different chord tones. This is due to the constant changes in voicing density that occurs. In the following score sample each instance a voice “departs” from playing in unison with another voice is marked in red. All voices strictly playing the bass line were excluded.
Example 7.37. “Blockbuster” letter J line divergence

One of the most interesting factors of “Blockbuster” is that it’s one of few compositions by Douglas that uses as many individual voices, but at the same time largely revolves around just three notes. The 3-note bass idea is the backbone of the composition, and Douglas uses transpositions and variations of the figure to generate material for the piece. Douglas is even able to use the ambiguity of the idea to create
different tonal centers over the same bass notes. “Blockbuster” may also be the best example in Douglas’ catalogue of his ability to bring together seemingly unrelated melodic ideas to generate rich harmonies that can evolve as new melodies and harmony parts are interweaved.

**Second Quintet**

The second iteration of the Dave Douglas Quintet may have found a place as his “core” ensemble, and could represents the purest compositional approach by Douglas of all his various projects. If one wishes to get the clearest view of Douglas’ voice, unfettered by external influences or tributes, the second quintet is likely the ensemble to look to. It’s the first ensemble of Douglas’ since the short-lived *Moving Portrait* quartet with a mainstream acoustic jazz instrumentation, with the possible exception of his Sextet. The three and four wind players used in the Sextet are far less common than the two present in the Quintet, and each Sextet album was created in tribute to other jazz composers, so perhaps a less transparent view of Douglas’ writing style. JazzTimes’ Geoffrey Himes even said of the groups’ third album *Time Travel*, that it “may well be the most mainstream jazz album Douglas has ever released.”

The second Quintet had something of a “soft debut” with *Orange Afternoons* in 2011. It was part of a three album series released exclusively at Douglas’ labels website. It may not be considered the debut for the group by some because the players are

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145 Dave Douglas Quintet, *GPS, V2: Orange Afternoons.*
largely different from those on following outings with the ensemble. *Orange Afternoons* does include bassist Linda Oh, but it’s not until the following album that pianist Matt Mitchell, saxophonist Jon Irabagon, and drummer Rudy Royston are secured. Also, the nature of the digital release meant there was less press and distribution for *Orange Afternoons*. However, the instrumentation is the same as future albums, and the spirit of the music is similar.

Though the personnel of the band was solidified on the next album, 2012’s *Be Still*, the record is very much a stylistic departure for the band in comparison with other efforts before or since. It’s actually a departure in the music of Douglas as a whole as it’s the only album of Douglas’ to feature a lead vocalist for the bulk of the recording, in this case Aoife O’Donovan. There’s a stylistic shift on *Be Still* as well. Douglas was moved to take on the project in remembrance of his mother after her passing. It’s a collection of interpretations of folk tunes, spirituals, and hymns, along side some originals of Douglas’. Douglas’ lyricism abounds on the record, but the compositional voice he had become associated with largely gives way to the beauty of the melodies and desire to reverently honor his mother’s memory.

It’s with 2013’s *Time Travel* that the Quintet returns to the stylistic approach first visited in *Orange Afternoons* characterized by clever, though not over-complicated, modern jazz compositions that focus on the formation of a group concept. That

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146 Dave Douglas Quintet, *Be Still*.
147 Ibid
149 Dave Douglas Quintet, *Time Travel*. 
particular mode of operation continues to be carried out in the 2015 album *Brazen Heart*, from which the composition “Miracle Gro” will be analyzed.\(^{150}\)

“Miracle Gro” is a medium straight-8\(^{\text{th}}\) composition in 4/4 time. The form of the piece and recorded performance is listed in the following figure.

Figure 7.3. “Miracle Gro” Musical Event Graph

The opening repeated 4-bar vamp serves as a type of “mantra” for the piece. It initially features the rhythm section, with the notated bass line and piano loosely playing at the notated chords or playing soloistically, often using lines wholly unrelated to the notated chord progression. The bass figure is merely a 2-bar idea that’s repeated within the vamp section. The initial F7 chord is perceived as the tonic chord, though the ambiguity of the progression leaves the possibility that the C7 at the downbeat of the

\(^{150}\) Dave Douglas Quintet, *Brazen Heart*. Greenleaf Music, 2015, CD.
second bar is the tonic as well. This is corroborated by much of the melodic material in upcoming sections. The F7 descends to Db7 on the offbeat F3. This “& of 3” hit becomes a defining characteristic of the piece. The bass then arrives at C7 in the second bar. The bass again moves down a M3 to an Ab7 chord, as if the progression will continue go down in P4’s, but instead there is a return to F7, an additional m3 below Ab7.

Example 7.38. “Miracle Gro” introduction bass line

After the rhythm section plays the progression through a number of times, a trumpet solo occurs over the repeated 4 bar section. The use of improvisation material based in F further solidifies the sense of F as tonic.

The melody is added to the preexisting rhythm figures at letter A. The melody introduces a dotted 8th, 16th rhythm that is a recurring idea throughout the piece. The almost majestic rhythm and intervalllic shape of the melody at A creates an interesting dichotomy with the quirky blues connotation in the rhythm. Like the bass line, the melody also takes a short motif and repeats it transposed down a P4, but the melody motif takes place over a span of two bars, unlike the 1-bar bass figure.

Example 7.39. “Miracle Gro” first four bars of letter A
The note choice in the melody contributes to tonal ambiguity, perhaps being closer to a C major melody than F due to the C – G relationship, though an F tonic is indicated by any other musical element. The beat 3 melody notes in the first and third bars both are consonant when articulated, then immediately clash with the chord on the “& of 3” hit, finally arriving at consonance again at the downbeat of the following bar. The C5 on beat three of the first bar is the 5th of the F7 chord, then briefly a dissonant M7 on the Db7 chord, resolving to the root of the C7 chord on the downbeat of the second bar. The G4 on beat three of the third bar is the 9th of the F7 chord, than briefly a flat 5 on the Db7 chord, resolving to the 5th of the C7 chord on the downbeat of the fourth bar.

After twice through the section, the 4-bar second half of letter A is performed. The relationship to the melody in the two halves of A is abundantly clear. The “5-1” intervallic shape is clear throughout the 4-bar phrase. The rhythms are similar, with the higher pitches on strong beats and notes leading in to them on the “e” and “a” beat subdivisions. Again the melodic phrase here is a repeated (with slight variation) 2 bars, but there is no transposition as is found in any other previous melodic section. Essentially the pitch choices from the first bar of A are moved up a M2 for the motif after the repeat.

If the D pitch classes are seen as focal or arrival points in the melody, the harmonic rhythmic follows along with these pitches. Douglas moves the bass and chord quality around for each of the melody D’s, finding new ways to fit the top melody note in with different chords, first as a M7, then m7, 6, b9, M3, then back to M7.
Example 7.40. “Miracle Gro” last four bars of letter A

The formal sounding dotted 8\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} rhythm is found in the bass line filler in the second bar of the above score sample.

There’s an abrupt stop as the band enters letter B. There’s no break in time, but there’s a back and forth between single-bar a cappella winds and two bars of the full band. These 3-bar groupings occur twice in the section, with solo winds playing a contrastingly scalar passage. The chordal hits that follow in the full band mimic the harmonic rhythm at the fifth bar of A, consisting of a half note, dotted quarter, and 8\textsuperscript{th} note chords. The winds play in concerted rhythm with the rhythm section, forgoing the 16\textsuperscript{th} note pitches that occur at the fifth bar of A. Again the top melody note C remains stationary as the chord shifts, first functioning as the 3rd of an Abmaj7 chord, than the 5th of an F triad in first inversion, then the d5 of an F\#maj7, which is expressed as Fmaj7/F# though the E indicated in the symbol is not played in the recording. The harmony pitches used in the saxophone move in contrary motion with the bass, using similarly sized intervals.
Example 7.41. “Miracle Gro” first three-bar phrase at letter B

The second 3-bar phrase features identical rhythms and similar melodic shapes as the first, except with saxophone taking the lead in the a cappella bar and top line above a trumpet harmonization in the second. Also, the chord in the final bar is held, which becomes the ending of the piece during the “head out”.

Example 7.42. “Miracle Gro” second three-bar phrase at letter B

The rhythm section holds the final E7sus chord as the new rubato melody at letter C enters. The melody at C is derived from some of the 8th note lines at B, though they are performed in unison by both horns now, with the trumpet taking the bottom pitch when harmony arises. The first line at C is an exact m3 lower transposition of the material in the first bar of B, played over the E7sus chord. The final 8th note of the phrase is held through to the following bar in the sax though in the original version at B it resolves down to a new pitch in the following bar. As the sax note is held the trumpet then plays the first five pitches from the original transposition at the beginning of B, holding the fifth into a 2/4 bar with a fermata, again a 3-bar phrase, yet with two fewer beats as those
found at letter B. Here the bass note remains the same throughout the phrase as the chords and melodies change harmonic quality.

**Example 7.43. “Miracle Gro” first three-bar phrase at letter C**

A second 3-bar phrase is then used, beginning with an 8th note line similar in shape to that in the first bar of the second 3-note phrase at B. The bass note remains the same for the first two chords, using a C7alt chord in the first bar and a Cm9 in the second. Quickly on beat three of the second bar the bass notes begin to change, beginning a cycle of quartal root movements.

**Example 7.44. “Miracle Gro” second three-bar phrase at letter C**

The last four bars of the section are broken into 2-bar groupings, each with melodic material in the first bar and held notes in the second, as well as quartal root movement into the second bar, with a Dbmaj7 and F#m7 chords in the first 2-bar section, and the chords transposed down a m2 to Cmaj7 and Fm7 in the second phrase. Besides the first note which transposes down with the chords, the melody pitches in the first phrase are partially repeated in the second, but with an augmented rhythmic value.
Example 7.45. “Miracle Gro” last four bars at letter C

After a brief pause the group arrives as letter D, which is identical to letter A. If there’s a difference it’s only that the trumpet takes more improvisational liberties at letter D, often leaving the saxophone to carry the written melody.

Letter E functions like a kind of “shout section” in the melody as well as a bridge between solos. It’s characterized by three layers of melodic material. The bass line, played by left hand piano in addition to bass, is a reworking of the two-bar phrase found at letters A and D. Rhythmically it’s very similar, consisting of the two 8\textsuperscript{th} notes on beat one, but the dotted quarter at the end of each bar is split in half, becoming two dotted 8\textsuperscript{th} notes. The second bar of the phrase is an exact transposition up a P4 from the first, whereas the second bar of the 2-bar phrase at A and D is a P4 \textit{below} the first. Throughout the 2-bar phrase at E the pitches are consistently moving upward with a combination of m2 and M2 step-wise movements. The bass line at A also ascends a m2 in the two 8\textsuperscript{th} notes on beat one of each bar, but each bar descends into the next.
Example 7.46. “Miracle Gro” comparison of bass lines at letter A and E

This 2-bar bass figure is repeated four times in the eight-bar section with no alterations.

The same is true for the top line melody played by the saxophone. It also consists of a repeating 2-bar phrase that is unchanged throughout letter E. There are rhythmic similarities between the saxophone melody and other melodic ideas in the piece. It contains the dotted 8\textsuperscript{th}-16\textsuperscript{th} rhythm that’s present at letters A and B. The listener may also draw a correlation between the first bar of the melody and the first bar at letter A as both contain articulations on C5 that occur on beats one, two and three.

Example 7.47. “Miracle Gro” saxophone melody at letter E comparison with first bar of letter A

The stagnant second bar of the saxophone phrase at E may be an attempt to emulate the phrasing at letter A, but it also has an inverse relationship in activity with the trumpet countermelody idea. As the whole note C5 is held in the saxophone the trumpet plays a
more rhythmic idea that contains the dotted eighth, sixteenth rhythm found in the first bar of the saxophone.

Example 7.48. “Miracle Gro” sax and trumpet counterpoint at letter E

The trumpet countermelody at letter E is the only element of the music that changes after the first 2 bars. It’s also composed of 2-bar phrases, but a new 2-bar phrase begins at the fifth bar of the section. The first phrase is shown in the above example. In the first bar of the first phrase the trumpet part is essentially a harmonization of the saxophone part. The rhythms may not be identical, but if the sixteenth note passing tones in the saxophone where eliminated the rhythms would be the same. The trumpet takes on a more prominent role in the second bar, referencing rhythmic material from the previous bar in the saxophone.

The trumpet lines relationship with the bass figure is also of interest. They both feature an ascending line, and generally contain the same amount of “target” pitches. In the first bar, both the trumpet and bass have four ascending pitches. The bass moves by half steps until ascending a M2 into the last note. The trumpet part is entirely chromatic. Since the trumpet Eb and bass A are a tritone away, the tritone relationship remains until the bass moves a M2, resulting in a smaller P4 interval with the trumpet. Each pitch in the sequence for each instrument overlaps with the corresponding note in the sequence of the other except the second. The trumpet E occurs on beat two immediately after the bass
note, but the sound of the Bb lingers, allowing the listener to group the two notes together conceptually.

Example 7.49. “Miracle Gro” trumpet and bass at 1st bar of letter E

![Score image](image)

In the second bar of the phrase the trumpet part becomes more active, but essentially is just an ornamented version of the first bar but raised a M3. Since the second bar of the bass is raised a P4 it changes the intervallic relationship between the voices, with the first three target pitches in the trumpet a P4 above the bass, and the last a M3 above.

Example 7.50. “Miracle Gro” trumpet and bass at 2nd bar of letter E

![Score image](image)

These two bars in the trumpet are repeated once more at letter E before introducing new material.

The harmonic effect of the combination of the three voices is compelling. The tritone relationship between the trumpet and bass creates a sinister tone in the first and third bars, which is tempered slightly in the even number bars when the tritone
relationship discontinues. A harmonic analysis of the implied chords that result from the combination of the three voices is shown below.

**Example 7.51. “Miracle Gro” harmonic analysis at first two bars of letter E**

The trumpet line changes in the fifth bar of E while the other voices remain the same. It becomes significantly more active, diminishing any harmonic role the voice may have had in the first half of the section. It’s an entirely new melodic statement, with seemingly no relationship or commonalities with previous melodic ideas. It adds a sense of syncopation to the section that had only been present in the bass voice up until this point. Rhythmically the second trumpet phrase contends with the higher saxophone melody for prominence. The note choice suggests that either the first or second bass note in each bar is treated as a “tonic” note, informing the creation of the trumpet melody. At the first bar of the phrase the trumpet plays notes from an A minor pentatonic scale, which would function well if used over either of the first two notes in the bass. In the second bar an Eb major tetrachord is used, suggesting the Eb on offbeat of 1 in the bass serves as the root. This is a logical conclusion as it mirrors the function of the bass line at A. Therein the second bass note is certainly the root as the listed chord symbol agrees with this.
Much of the beauty of “Miracle Gro” is the effectiveness of the simple 4-bar vamp that occupies much of the performance. All improvisation occurs in this vamp, which hardly even consists of four unique bars as the 3rd and 4th are simply a transposition of the first two. This speaks to the improvisational prowess of the players as well as the potential found in a simplistic harmonic and rhythmic device. “Miracle Gro” is also a terrific example of motivic development, both through the variation of melodic and rhythmic content in overt and subtle ways.
CHAPTER 8

COLLABORATIONS

Riverside

Many of Douglas’ latest projects have been more “collaborations” than strict solo projects. Riverside is one such ensemble. Douglas co-leads the group with Canadian saxophonist and clarinetist Chet Doxas.151 The two met at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity while Douglas was the artistic director for the Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative music.152

The groups mission is clearly defined at the Greenleaf website, where it states that Riverside is “Dedicated to exploring and expounding upon the musical legacy of the late jazz clarinetist and saxophonist Jimmy Giuffre”.153 Giuffre has been often associated with “West Coast” jazz, but it was his “blues-folk” style and experimentation with free improvisation that attracted Douglas and Doxas. Bassist Steve Swallow, a former bandmate of Giuffre is also a member of the group, playing electric bass as he came to in Giuffre’s band. Jim Doxas rounds out the quartet on drums.154 Douglas and Doxas apply their contemporary jazz approach with a flair of “Americana”, the name “Riverside” meant to conjure the image of wild American frontiers.

In addition to a few arrangements, both Douglas and Doxas contribute compositions to the album. One of Douglas’ presents a unique opportunity to look at a

151 “Dave Douglas:Projects,” (Greenleaf Music).
154 Riverside, Riverside, Greenleaf Music, 2014, CD.
Dave Douglas contrafact.\textsuperscript{155} The piece is titled “No Good Without You” and it’s based off the chord progression from the jazz standard “All Of Me”. Though it’s unlikely the reason the source material was chosen, Giuffre did play the tune as a sideman on a Shelly Manne record.\textsuperscript{156}

The score is marked as a “medium swing” with a metronome marking of 166. The key is not altered from the “All Of Me” C major. Like other compositions for the group there are no chord changes notated, as there is no chordal instrument, instead a melody and bass line are present, with occasional harmony parts in the melody as well as some double-stop bass notation. The implied harmonies generally follow many of the harmonies present in “All Of Me” though there are many exceptions. There are also clear references to the source material in the melody and bass part.

The piece opens right at the top of the form with a C major ascending bebop line in the horns, though in bar 2 the implied harmony is quickly obscured when the melody outlines a Db chord, the first of several instances in which the original “All Of Me” chords are moved by a m2.

Example 8.1. “No Good Without You” melody m. 1-2

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example81.png}
\end{figure}

After the melody arrives at the Db in the second bar, the bass enters on beat 3 with a melodic shape that imitates melodic material from “All Of Me” but also serves to


\textsuperscript{156} Shelly Manne Septet Featuring Jimmy Giuffre & Art Pepper, \textit{West Coast Sounds}, The Jazz Factory, 2003, CD.
lead to an E7 chord in the third bar. As the low E is held in the bass in bar 3 the melody plays an E major-blues idea. In the following bar the harmony seems to shift up an additional M3 to Ab, briefly leaving the tonal function of the source material in favor of mathematical intervallic relationships.

Example 8.2. “No Good Without You” m. 3-4 with bass pick-up

Example 8.3. “All Of Me” source material for bass m.2 in “No Good Without You”

The bass and melody in bar five agree with the A7 chord found in the same location in “All Of Me”, but the bass then moves to Bb in the following bar, again altering the harmony by a m2. The winds then enter on beat three with an equally unexpected melodic shape.

Example 8.4. “No Good Without You” m. 5-6

Bars 7 and 8 in “All Of Me” contain a Dm chord. In “No Good Without You”, the melody begins on the 3rd of Dm then descends in a chromatic “Miles Davis-like” pattern
that uses enclosures of each chromatic note, eventually arriving at a D.\textsuperscript{157} The bass however primarily cycles through ascending 5ths or descending 4ths, arriving at a B precisely when the melody arrives at a D. This serves not only to obscure the Dm tonality, but also sets up a transition to E, which reflects the E7 chord found in the ninth bar of “All Of Me”.

\textbf{Example 8.5. “No Good Without You” m. 7-8}

\begin{center}
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\end{center}

At bar 9 the melody uses the most blatant reference in the piece to the “All Of Me” melody. It’s identical to the bar 9 melody, except it’s transposed down a M3. The bass note however is not transposed, which results in the final held note in the melody arriving at a Bb, the tritone of E, instead of the dominant 7\textsuperscript{th} as in “All Of Me”. The double stop E and G\# idea in the bass in the following bar indicates a strong pull to Am, but the bass unexpectedly arrives at Bb, with the melody seemingly “playing at” Am for a moment before conforming to the Bb in the bass. As the next bar unfolds the melody and bass begin to suggest an Amaj7(b5) sound, as if there is an arrival at the expected A root, but with the tonality inverted from minor to a much brighter maj7(b5) chord.

\textsuperscript{157} Miles Davis, \textit{E.S.P.}, Columbia, 1965, LP.
Example 8.6. “No Good Without You” m. 9-12

The only change in form from “All Of Me” comes in the elongated close to letter A, before the second half of the piece. It does strongly indicate the D7 chord found in the same location in “All Of Me” but contains two more bars than the 4-bar section at the close of the first half of “All Of Me”. The elongated form is partially due to two consecutive five-beat phrases used in m. 13-15.

Example 8.7. “No Good Without You” m. 13-15

The triplet line that begins in m.15 continues throughout the next bar and a half, playing figures that indicate chromatic ascending harmonies, ultimately arriving at G in preparation for a return to the material from the opening of the piece.

Example 8.8. “No Good Without You” m. 15-18
At letter B the first seven bars of the piece are repeated with an altered eighth bar leading into the final eight bar section. Instead of arriving at a Bm dyad the bass line stops short, ending on E, allowing a half-step resolution up to the IV chord at the beginning of the final section, just as the last eight bar section of “All Of Me” begins with the IV chord.

Example 8.9. “No Good Without You” m. 25-27

![Example 8.9](image)

The implied chords at m.27 and 28 mirror those found at the beginning of the final section of “All Of Me”. The F#º chord doesn’t resolve up to G however, it arrives at G#. Beside the F#º, a series of major chords is formed, ascending in m3’s, all containing 9ths or b5’s in the wind harmonies.

Example 8.10. “No Good Without You” m. 27-30

![Example 8.10](image)

Interestingly the implied chords or bass notes starting in bar 29 with the Bb/Ab begins a series of root movements up to the final chord that resemble “train changes” with the root ascending in alternating m3’s and P4’s.\(^{158}\)

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The F#/B serves a dominant function moving to a clear E major sound at the fourth from the last bar in m.31. The melody at m.31 resembles the equivalent bar in “All Of Me” and the last three bars that follow are the same melodically as “All Of Me”. The repeated G# and B at m.31 are a m2 below the pitches used in the equivalent bar in “All Of Me”. Together with the E on the downbeat of the following bar they spell an E major chord, which is consistent with the bass note present in m.31. This is a clever way to approach the E melody note at m.32, changing its perception in comparison with the E that arrives in the same place in “All Of Me”.

Example 8.11. “No Good Without You” m. 31-32

The harmony note at m.32 begins to descend chromatically as the bass line ascends. As the fourth scale degree is suspended in the next to last bar the bass plays a quarter-note triplet idea first introduced in m.7 melody. The bass and harmony resolve to the C major chord as the melody C is held through the final bar.

Example 8.12. “No Good Without You” m. 32-34
After the statement of the melody the chord changes from “All Of Me” are used. Immediately a less-than reverent quote from “All Of Me” is used by Douglas, playing four bars of the opening melody with the final note in bar four altered.

**Example 8.13. “No Good Without You” beginning of trumpet solo**

![Example notation](image)

The drummer is the last to solo, and snippets of the bass part are played by the winds as background figures during the drum solo.

A piece like “No Good Without You” is a gift for a music analyst. Seeing Douglas take a preexisting form and set of chord changes and weave new content on top, while looking back at the source material is a telling look at the way he views composition. It’s almost akin to the kind of anticipation that comes from seeing a classical composer’s treatment of sonata-allegro, or rondo form. With certain limitations placed, how does the composer navigate the task of creating something new and interesting? As is often the case, Douglas approaches this challenge with some irony, using snippets of the original melody in irregular ways, arriving deceptively at harmonies that seem a caricature of the original, or simply through the use of unexpected melodic devices that appear seemingly out of nowhere.

**High Risk**

The most recent of Douglas’ ensembles to make a second trip to the studio is his electric quartet High Risk.\(^{159}\) Besides Douglas the band features drummer Mark Guiliana

\(^{159}\)“Dave Douglas:Projects,” (Greenleaf Music).
and bassist Jonathan Maron, but the driving force behind the bands aesthetic comes from electronic musician Zachary Shigeto Sainaw, simply known as “Shigeto”. Shigeto has been described as a composer of “lightly psychedelic instrumental hip-hop”. High Risk is set apart from other of Douglas’ electric groups. The loops and textures that emanate from Shigeto’s laptop and sequencers serve as the only harmonic element in the music, besides the foundation of the electric bass. In other groups like Keystone the electric component, such as the work of DJ Olive, is a textural addition to an already complete band. In High Risk, the electronic sounds are much more of a key element, with Shigeto’s role in the group sound being central. As a result the band takes on the character of much of Shigeto’s own material, exploiting moody ambiance and effect-laden loops that serve as a “bed” for the melodies and improvisations of Douglas.

High Risk has released two studio albums to date. The first is the self-titled High Risk, recorded in 2015. Dark Territory, the sophomore album, was released in 2016. Conceptually there is little difference between the two albums. Dark Territory may in fact have a “darker” tone over all, but both are dominated by the lush soundscapes of Shigeto and Douglas’ uncharacteristically mellow trumpet stlyings.

Most of what makes the music of High Risk unique is not readily analyzable by traditional means. An attempt to describe the various effects and sound manipulations employed by Shigeto would likely be dubious. Instead the melodies, and bass material notated by Douglas will be examined, in addition to any solid harmonic content provided through the various electronics. Some High Risk compositions do contain chord symbols,

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161 Dave Douglas, High Risk, Greenleaf Music, 2015, CD.
162 Dave Douglas, Dark Territory, Greenleaf Music, 2016, CD.
though it’s not always clear if the chord is meant to be perceived by the listener, or merely a visual guide for improvisation.

One such piece is that does have an intended chord progression is “Etiquette” from the debut album. Etiquette is a 24-bar blues, though it may not be readily apparent to the listener. The piece is centered around a repeated bass figure that occurs in each even number bar, with the exception of a few breaks. It’s comprised of a four quarter-note chromatic “walk up” from the sixth scale degree to the tonic, which is Bb. At the introduction the bass line is accompanied by a harmony part supplied by either the bass or electronics. The figure is transposed up a P4 when the IV chord is introduced in the ninth bar of the repeated blues section.

Example 8.14. “Etiquette” bass figure

There’s a “plagal” approach to each of the tonic chords in the piece, and a plagal tonicization of the IV chord when it arrives in the second 8 bar section. Even the “turn-around” section in the last 8 bars displays the IV – I formation, with the first two bars functioning like a IV/V resolution to the V chord, followed by a m2 upward transposition of the chords. The notated chords are displayed below, but often the written chords are not truly perceived. A Roman numeral analysis of the potential conceptualization of the harmony is included.
Example 8.15. “Etiquette” written harmonies with Roman numeral analysis

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The only chordal element that appears throughout the track is a distorted, trebly 2 bar guitar loop that’s present for a majority of the track. It really only “works” when used in conjunction with the IV – I measure pairings, in other words when used alongside the Eb7 moving to Bb7. The distortion and EQ make the notes a bit difficult to identify, but the loops seems to contain the following pitches and rhythms.

Example 8.16. “Etiquette” guitar loop

The loop is cleverly constructed. The resolution to the tonic chord on the fourth beat lines up with the bass line, which arrives at Bb after the chromatic walk-up on beat four as well. Also the loop can be used with moderate success throughout the first 16 bars of the form. The Bbm chord spelling in the second bar works in a “bluesy” sense as the tonic chord, and when the IV chord arrives at bar 9 the Bbm chord simply is perceived as the 9, 5, and 7 of an Eb7 chord. Interestingly the loop is at times used even for the turn-around segment in bars 17 – 20, despite clashing severely with some of the chords used.

Though only a portion of the changes are truly perceived in the piece, the notated chord structure is a telling look into Douglas’ harmonic conceptualization. The use of transition, or preparation chords is of particular interest. There’s a clear attempt to
tonicize all the key moments of the blues form. This may be born out of the way the bass line functions. The delayed arrival at tonic on even number bars seems like an unexpected use of the chromatic “walk-up” bass line. Perhaps the Bb chord could be used even if paired with the bass line, but Douglas chooses to treat the initial “G” as the 3rd of the IV chord Eb7. Once the melody is examined much of the altered extensions listed will be made clear, but the first piece of harmonic analysis that needs clarification is the A7 chord entering bar 9. The analysis is unconventional, listed as a bII/IV/IV. This simply means that the ninth bar begins with an Ab7, a secondary plagal anticipation of the IV chord Eb7, and the A7 in bar 8 is a tritone substitution for the Eb chord that could be used with a dominant function leading into the Ab7. A tritone substitute transition to the IV chord is not uncommon, but using it in this fashion is almost like a “double-tonicization” which is an interesting approach. In bars 9 – 12 it would be expected to see the Ab7 – Eb7 two-bar pairing used twice, but instead a Bb7/D as the IV chord appears before the delayed resolution to the tonic chord.

Even the V chord appears to be preceded by it’s own secondary subdominant, starting off the final turnaround with a I chord, which is actually functioning like a IV/V chord. This is likely the reason the tonic chord is not used as expected in the previous bar, to allow for some contrast. After arriving at the V chord there is a repetition of the two previous chords, but transposed up a half step. Even the final tonic chord in the last bar is changed to a sustained chord, functioning as a V/IV in order to lead back to the IV chord at the onset of the progression.

Douglas makes clear the harmonic malleability of the song by changing the perceived tonic during a “break” in his solo. He goes from playing material related to Bb
to playing as if the blues is in Eb. Once Douglas starts playing Eb material all of a sudden the bass figure begins to sound as if it’s just a chromatic movement from the 3rd of an Eb chord to the 5th. The tonal duality is reflected in the melody as well.

The melody is quite simplistic, though note choice is often contrary to what you might expect to occur in certain spots in the form. In the score Douglas often uses two pitches in the melody part, so it may be possible that the piece wasn’t originally intended for High Risk, or perhaps High Risk was intended to have a second melody instrument. Often when the harmony notes arise Douglas will oscillate between the two pitches or simply favor one over the other. Each 4-bar phrase contains just three moving melody whole notes, with a bar of inactivity at the end of each phrase. More than once the top melody note will remain stagnant as the harmony line moves. When this occurs the trumpet will preserve the integrity of the notated two-part melodic shape by shifting between upper and lower parts. Below the notated two-part melody will be displayed alongside what is actually played by Douglas.

Example 8.17. “Etiquette” written and performed melody m.1-16 of blues form
Notice the emphasis of Eb and Gb at the end of each eight-bar phrase, as if Eb is the tonic chord, with the lowered 3rd “blue” note Gb. The tonal duality of the piece seems to be an element that Douglas is highlighting.

The following 4-bar segment is the only contrasting section in the piece. It features consecutive leaping half notes for the duration in both the melody and bass line, briefly foregoing the quarter note walk-up idea.

Example 8.18. “Etiquette” m. 17-20 of blues form

The melody consists primarily of movements of P4ths and P5ths. The first four pitches in fact could be expressed as consecutive ascending P5ths or descending P4ths using octave displacement. The bass plays the chordal 3rd and 5th from each chord, ultimately outlining both the Dm7 and Ebm7 chords.

The familiar bass line and melodic scheme returns in the last four bars of the solo form, repeating the same material found in bars 13-16.

“Etiquette” is harmonically more diverse than many compositions for *High Risk*. An example of a piece that remains harmonically stationary is “Loom Large” from *Dark Territory*. “Loom Large” is a slow-tempo, brooding piece, with an F# minor sound consistent through the entire composition.
The bass line mostly consists of variations on a three pitch motif that encloses F# with minor 3rds above and below it, suggesting an F#m6 sound when paired with other musical elements.

Example 8.19. “Loom Large” bass figure

The only other major indicator of tonality is a held F#-A dyad crescendo loop used frequently in the track.

The score for “Loom Large” doesn’t include any chord symbols, only the melody and an indication to use with Shigeto’s “Loop 2”. Much of the melody is set up like a series of calls and responses. There will be a 2-bar melodic idea, with much of the activity occurring in the first few beats, and a 2-bar “answer” that mimics or “mocks” the previous idea in some way. This is particularly true in the first half of the piece, marked as letter A. In most cases at letter A the initial 2-bar phrase is developed in the second phrase through a reversal of melodic contour or change in tonality, but the rhythms often stay the same.

The first phrase pairing contains scalar ascending and descending patterns using the F# Dorian scale, making it the phrase most in sync with the bass and dyad loop. Both phrases contain the exact same rhythms, and the second phrase is a transposed inversion of the first. The 2-bar ideas are expressed as one bar in Douglas’ score, missing the bar of inactivity heard in each two-bar phrase in the recording. The melody will be represented here as performed.
Example 8.20. “Loom Large” first phrase pairing at letter A

![Music notation](image)

The next phrase pairing introduces two additional pitches per phrase, covering a larger range. The first line is built from an F# major pentatonic scale, the second nearly an F# Locrian idea, except that it contains both a major and minor 6th scale degree. The rhythms are again identical, and the second phrase again moves in the opposite direction as the first.

Example 8.21. “Loom Large” second phrase pairing at letter A

![Music notation](image)

The third phrase pairing returns to five-note lines, but introduces multi-directional melodic shapes, both phrases forming a kind of melodic “hook”. The rhythms are again identical, but the second phrase moves in the same direction as the first, just positioned a bit higher in pitch and spanning an octave as opposed to the first phrases’ m7. The first phrase again uses pitches from the F# major pentatonic scale, while the second suggests F# Lydian.

Example 8.22. “Loom Large” third phrase pairing at letter A

![Music notation](image)

The last four-bar segment at A bucks previous trends. Still it is divided into two separate ideas, with a break in activity between them, but bars 3 and 4 of the section have nothing
to do with the first 2. The first bar seems rhythmically opposed to previous material, starting with a longer note and following it with shorter rhythms. The note choice suggests an F# natural minor sound. The last 2 bars consist of a 2-bar held Bb, preceded by a short G pickup note. When paired with the F#-A dyad the impression of a “double-diminished” dominant voicing is implied. It’s clear Douglas intends to give this impression as the original score contains a simultaneous G and Bb in these bars instead of the pickup note G. As in “Etiquette” Douglas finds a way to satisfy the melody and harmony notes.

Example 8.23. “Loom Large” last four bars of letter A

After a few bars of rhythm section groove without the trumpet, the trumpet returns at letter B. The phrasing is similar to A, but the clear relationship with rhythms and melodic contour is no longer present. The “phrase pairing” that occurs at A isn’t intact, but there may be an attempt to correlate phrases through the number of pitches used, if not through rhythm or melodic shape. In the first pair of 2-bar phrases at B, the first contains six articulations, and the second contains five, but in the following three phrase pairings both phrases in each set have the same number of articulated pitches. If you were to include the pick-up G#’s into the fifth bar as a part of the previous phrase as one pitch, the phrases from the first phrase pairing would contain the same number of pitches.

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163 Abene and Sussman. *Jazz Composition...*, 348-349.
Example 8.24. “Loom Large” first phrase pairing at letter B

In the original score each 2-bar phrase is notated as a single bar, so the G# 16ths are in the same bar as what is seen as the third bar in the above example, strengthening the case that they are part of the same phrase conceptually.

If instead the G#’s are included with the following phrase, and each articulation is counted, then both phrases in the second phrase pairing contain seven articulated notes. Perhaps the pick-up notes were designed to serve dual roles.

Example 8.25. “Loom Large” second phrase pairing at letter B

In Douglas’ score, the number of notes in the next pair of phrases is not identical, the first phrase contains eight notes, and the second, nine. However, an additional note is added to the first phrase in the recorded version.

Example 8.26. “Loom Large” third phrase pairing at letter B

Notice that the rhythmic scheme varies greatly between the last pair of phrases, but still each phrase contains eight notes.
High Risk may be the most collaborative project in Douglas’ career to date, in that the extent that his compositional voice is featured may be diminished in comparison to other projects. Both “Etiquette” and “Look Large” seem like the loops used may be the impetus for the composition, with Douglas melodies simply woven over the sonic “bed” provided by Shigeto. Many Douglas compositions consist of little more than a simple melody, but the way the melodies in this case must serve the sonic environment of the loops, instead of it working the other way around, is a bit of a departure. Perhaps the most defining quality of High Risk remains Douglas’ trumpet tone and improvisational approach.

**Fabliaux**

For Fabliaux Douglas teams up with the Monash Art Ensemble of Melbourne, Australia’s Monash University.\(^{164}\) The group includes an equal representation of all major instrument families, in addition to others, described at the Greenleaf website as being “Scored for four winds, four brass, four strings, and four percussion, including electronics”.\(^{165}\) “Fablieux” is actually the plural form of “Fabliau”, a type of comic, and often objectionable, theatrical work from the Middle Ages that has its origins in

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France. The album name is related to the source of musical inspiration Douglas draws from. Douglas states that the primary inspiration for Fabliaux is music from the French “Ars Nova” movement in the late Middle Ages, focusing on the work of composer Guillaume De Machaut. Some of the compositional techniques from the period including hocket, isorhythm, and modal counterpoint are used as “points of departure” in the compositional process for the ensemble.

The Fabliaux composition that will be analyzed is a rather sinister up-tempo piece titled “Legions” which often oscillates between 4/4 meter and 7/8. Though the ensemble contains over a dozen players there are only four staves used with no specific instrumentation delineated. The main melody is in the top line, and countermelody material is found in the second stave from the top. This is followed by notated chord voicings of various elongated rhythms. The bass line is shown in the lowest staff.

It’s fitting that like the first Douglas composition analyzed in the essay, this piece too is a twelve-tone composition, though it doesn’t adhere to tonal serialism nearly as strictly. The piece is broken into two main sections. Letter A is a 16-bar section full of contrapuntal melodic lines and dynamic accompaniment figures. The meter often switches between 4/4 time and 7/8, but will remain on either meter for longer periods unexpectedly. Letter B is a repetitive 8 bar “vamp” section, with a much more transparent arrangement. It contains only a fairly stagnant bass line and chords played by all other pitched instruments. The meter is also more predictable, constantly switching between 4/4 time and 7/8 in each bar. The sections will be discussed in the order they appear in

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168 “Fabliaux,” (Greenleaf Music).
the score, though letter B appears first in the recording. The form will then be analyzed after an initial analysis of the individual sections.

The five-note lead into letter A constitutes the first five pitches of the tone row used to create much of the material in the piece. The initial bar line into letter A splits the row in two, with the five notes leading into it taking on a prominent role in the piece.

**Example 8.28. “Legions” five-note “pick-up” into letter A**

![Example 8.28](image)

The bar is expressed as a 5/8 bar in the score, but this is rendered obsolete since the recording begins at letter B. The above figure always comes in to occupy the last five 8\textsuperscript{8}’s in a bar of 7/8.

The full P0 tone row is shown below.

**Example 8.29. “Legions” P0 row**

![Example 8.29](image)

The full row is completed in the top melody line after the downbeat at letter A. Also, the melody line doesn’t pause after the completion of the row, but instead it proceeds as if the row will be immediately restated in retrograde.

**Example 8.30. “Legions” melody m.1-3**

![Example 8.30](image)
What occurs over the next few bars is a masterful working of the tone row. A countermelody line appears to “pick up” where the melody drops out in the third bar. It uses transposed portions of the initial row to complete the final nine pitches of a new row begun in the last three pitches of the primary melody. The first five pitches of the secondary melody are a retrograde of the first five pitches from the initial row, except transposed down a m9. It could be considered an “R11” reworking of the first five pitches of the initial row. The following four pitches may just be a new interpretation of the remaining four pitches of the new row, but the interval relationships could also be derived from a reordering of the first four pitches of the melody at letter A.

Example 8.31. “Legions” relationship between melody and countermelody at letter A.

Still, Douglas manages to combine the nine pitches in the secondary melodic line with the last three in the top line melody to create a whole new row, even if derived entirely from portions of the initial row.

Example 8.32. “Legions” second tone row

It was mentioned previously that the last four pitches of the initial row are stated in retrograde as soon as the initial row is completed, as if a full retrograde of the row is in
process. Though it was discovered that a new row follows from these pitches, it’s also true that the full retrograde occurs, just after some rests in the top voice. After the completion of the second row in the countermelody the remaining eight pitches from the retrograde are played by the primary melody instruments starting at the fifth bar of the section.

Example 8.33. “Legions” full retrograde of initial row

The final “B” is perhaps used to transition to the next melodic fragment in the secondary melodic part, which then begins an “I5” version of the last seven pitches of the initial row, in which the pitches are inverted and transposed up a P4 from the original. Like the initial row this phrase also ends with a partial retrograde of the pitches, though it never completes the full retrograde as seen previously.
Example 8.34. “Legions” I5 melodic fragment at m.5 of letter A compared with initial tone row

At the ninth bar of A the secondary melodic line gives way to a lengthy phrase in the primary melody. At first glance it appears to be an inversion of the last ten pitches of the initial tone row, transposed up or down a tritone, including the three repeated pitches that follow the tone row.

Example 8.35. “Legions” initial tone row and I6 phrase at ninth bar of letter A

Interestingly, if one were to include the last two pitches in the top melody that occurred two bars prior to the above phrase it would be an exact inversion of all melodic pitches of the first three bars with the 5/8 “pick-up” bar.
Example 8.36. “Legions” I0 for initial tone row and additional pitches at m.6-11 of letter A

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Example 8.36. “Legions” I0 for initial tone row and additional pitches at m.6-11 of letter A

The last three pitches of the phrase are then “echoed” in the secondary melodic part, followed by a transposition of the minor triad shape and ascending m2 interval found in the 3rd through 6th notes of P0.

Example 8.37. “Legions” primary and secondary melody m.10 – 13 of letter A

Example 8.37. “Legions” primary and secondary melody m.10 – 13 of letter A

The melodic idea in the top line that follows at m.13 of A is a retrograde inversion of the 2nd through 8th pitches of P0.

Example 8.38. “Legions” primary melody at m.13-15 of letter A

Example 8.38. “Legions” primary melody at m.13-15 of letter A

The first five pitches of P0 are repeated in both melodic voices leading into letter B.

The bass line at letter A which accompanies all the material reviewed thus far is a single, rhythmically elongated instance of P0 in its original transposition. The bass line also includes the three retrograde pitches that follow the initial instance of P0 in the
melody, as well as a few notes at the end of the section that don’t seem to have an apparent relationship with the tone row. The rhythms used support the melodic ideas and the chordal element yet to be discussed.

Example 8.39. “Legions” letter A bass line

In addition to the two melodic parts and bass line there is a “chord” part with notated pitches and rhythms that form a harmonic backing for the other voices. It consists primarily of dyads but will occasional break into three or four-note voicings. The note choice in the chordal element at times will seem to correlate to the tone row in some way. For instance, all but one pitch class in the first three chords used is found in the opening five notes of P0. The pitches in the example are marked with numbers indicating their order of occurrence in the tone row.

Example 8.40. “Legions” chordal part at letter A

Often however the chords or dyads have no discernable relationship to the tone row, simply adding a sense of temporary tonality or even reinforcing atonality in a given
passage. There seems to be a clear functional relationship between the voices about halfway through letter A. There’s a strong “B major” statement by all instruments in the 7th bar of letter A, followed by Ebm, D7sus(b9), and Dbmaj7(b5). The combination of major chord tones and minor melody notes at the ninth bar of letter A suggests a split maj/min sound.

Example 8.41. “Legions” Harmonic analysis of m. 7-10 of letter A

Letter B takes an entirely different approach. All instruments except bass and soloists are playing voicings, each lasting two bars. The section is a repeated 8 bars, with the first five notes of P0 used to return to the top of the section in each instance of the final bar. The bass line is also derived from P0. Rhythmically it’s much more repetitive than at letter A, but the pitches are derived from P0. The notes are an exact retrograde of the first seven pitches of P0.

Example 8.42. “Legions” letter B bass line
The chordal overlay in the other voices attempts to maintain the top pitch as the bass note changes, with many of the inner voices being altered. The chords are very dense, each with various degrees of chordal functionality. Douglas was able to keep all chord tones except for one in place as the bass changes from a focus on E to F in the first 4 bars of the section. The pitches of the first chord indicate an E harmonic minor sound, but with the shifting of B to Bb, and the change of the E bass note to F the chord becomes an F9(add4) chord.

Example 8.43. “Legions” harmonic analysis of m.1-4 of letter B

The rhythms of m.1-4 of letter B are repeated in m.5-8, but the pitches are lowered, and the chords are more dissonant. It may be a coincidence, as the technique doesn’t seem to be used in the other voicings, but the chord at the 5th bar of letter B is comprised of six consecutive pitches from P0, the 5th through 10th notes of the row.

Example 8.44. “Legions” voicing at m.5 of letter B
Similarly to the first half of letter B, only one pitch is altered from the first voicing to the second, in addition to the bass note.

Example 8.45. “Legions” m.5-8 of letter B

Douglas switches between song sections and varies layering of instrumentation to create movement and musical intrigue throughout the piece. The piece opens on the B section, which serves as a “home base” for the composition because it contains a sense of stability and repetition not found at letter A. Soloists play over both A and B section, but the primary development and “stirring of the pot” occurs at letter B. In the following analysis it’s assumed that drum set and bass is present unless otherwise stated.
Example 8.46. “Legions” form analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Section</th>
<th>Section Repetitions</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Electric piano solo with bass accompaniment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Add vibraphone chords with continued electric piano solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Add string instruments with continued electric piano solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Full ensemble with continued electric piano solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Full ensemble as written without drum set. End electric piano solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Return to electric piano solo with full ensemble. Drums return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Soprano sax solo with bass and vibraphone on written chord voicings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sax solo continues. Add limited instruments to chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Trumpet solo with bass clarinet added to bass voice and electric piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>added to chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Trumpet solo continues with full ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strings only on primary and secondary melodic parts. Vibraphone plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Full ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Add electric piano solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Winds ext, leaving strings with electric piano solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rhythm instruments only with continued electric piano solo. Piano ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>piece after playing five-note figure and holding chord at letter B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Legions” is in a way a contradictory piece. The interleaving melodic ideas contain elements of the contrapuntal style so integral to the inspiration for *Fabliaux*. Yet at the same time Douglas uses elements of tonal serialism, which creates an interesting dichotomy. The instrumentation is also an example of the combination of “old and new”. The under-representation of the strings in combination with the winds is indicative of a musical era unbound by some of the orchestration conventions developed in the common practice period. With the addition of vibraphone, electric piano and drum set the
resulting group timbre seems in and of itself a contradiction, but also a compelling combination of instrumental colors.
Before a brief overview of individual musical elements it should be highlighted that Douglas’ compositional choices nearly always have a direct correlation with the band members chosen for each ensemble. Additionally the different musicians in each group will interpret similar material in vastly different ways. Douglas’ music is truly chamber music, in that a dialogue is ever-present between band members. As much as the written notation is central to the performance and perception of the pieces, the ultimate result is a marriage between the scores of Douglas and the individual approach of each ensemble member.

In making any over-arching observations about Douglas’ music as a whole, it would be impossible not to mention the importance of his voice as a trumpeter. Douglas’ trumpet is the unifying instrumental color across all of his compositional output, with the exception any pieces commissioned by other ensembles. Douglas’ tone is easily one of the most readily identifiable trumpet sounds in the jazz world. His vibrato in particular makes for the perfect vehicle to effectively communicate the irony behind many of his compositions. He plays with a certain elasticity that makes it possible to execute the virtuosic phrases he often creates. Douglas is equally adept when interpreting a sweet or somber ballad. His crystal clear tone and strength across all registers are integral to the success of his compositions.

One of the most striking elements of Douglas’ compositional approach is his unmatched ability to incorporate musical elements, no matter how broad or meticulous, from a wide variety of inspirational sources. Through the course of the essay the reader
has witnessed Douglas “channel” many composers, including Anton Weber, Thelonious Monk, Booker Little, Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis, and others. He’s assimilated stylistic idioms, whether from world culture, music history, or performance practices of seminal jazz artists.

To make a definitive statement about Douglas’ approach in the creation of melodies would be challenging. His melodic tendencies are as vast as the many musical styles from which he draws inspiration. Speaking in generalities, it can be stated that Douglas favors angular melodies as opposed to more linear ideas. He will often rely on 12-tone techniques, even if only used in partiality, to attain unexpected and exciting musical phrases. Examples were shown of Douglas using tone rows to elicit a correlation with seminal atonal classical composers, but he also would use the technique in scenarios unrelated to Schoenberg and his protégés. It should be noted however that Douglas will “change gears” entirely when creating a ballad or more lyrical piece, most often choosing more tonally grounded material and using smoother intervallic succession. This demonstrates that Douglas is not “committed” to any particular form of melody creation, but instead will use multiple melodic “tools” to achieve a very measured effect. Another common theme in Douglas’ melodies is an emphasis on compelling melodic contour. Often the “shape” of a musical phrase or group of phrases will supplant tonal functionality as an organizational factor. Douglas will also frequently use motivic development as well as restructuring of melodic material, favoring the inversion, retrograde, and transposition of melodic elements in ways more often associated with classical composers.
Douglas will forgo the use of traditional chord symbols and structure more than is typical of mainstream jazz composers. Much of his music is driven by concurrent melodic voices, often as simple as the combination of a soprano “lead” voice and a bass line. As much as Douglas strives to leave much to the imagination of the individual performers, his bassists are likely more bound to the score than is common because the bass line become much more integral to the character of a piece when there are no preset chord changes or a chordal element is not present. Typically there is still a discernable harmonic intent, even if no chord symbols are notated. Often the prevailing tonality becomes somewhat malleable, especially in linear driven harmony. In several instances in this study a tonal ambiguity was discovered, in which a given musical passage could be interpreted as belonging to two or more different keys, with the surrounding voices ultimately shaping the perceived tonality. Often Douglas will repeat a musical element verbatim while another shifts in some way, resulting in a change in perceived harmony. When chordal instruments are present a number of approaches are taken. Whether chord symbols are in use or not, Douglas makes frequent use of pedal point. The shifting of modality over a stationary bass is a common thread in his compositions, often oscillating between “light” and “dark” sounds through the indication of particular modes or chord qualities. Generally Douglas will keep chord symbols very simplistic, allowing the player to interpret whether or not extensions are appropriate, and what kind if so.

Rhythm and meter are an important factor in Douglas compositions, though perhaps less central to his identity as a composer in comparison with melody and harmony. Generally Douglas is inclined to use simple meter divisions such as 4/4 and 3/4 time. Projects inspired by European folk styles are more likely to contain compound
meter. Typically when odd meter is used in other ensembles it’s usually in conjunction with periods or instances of simple meter. Douglas often demonstrates an ability to disorient the listener with many musical elements. Rhythm is no exception. Douglas will often write long passages or even entire pieces in which no two bars share the same rhythmic scheme. Conversely, rhythm is also often used to tie musical phrases together, particularly when tonality can’t be relied on.

Form is typically simplistic in Douglas’ music. Many of the pieces detailed in this essay can be represented on a single page of notation, only occasionally taking a novel approach with the ordering of song sections and improvised solos. Some of Douglas’ ensembles, such as his Sextet and Brass Ecstasy, receive a more through-composed treatment, often with an interspersing of song sections and improvised solo sections. Often such pieces contain a variety of meter, tempi, or stylistic shifts.

Instrumentation represents a musical factor that’s uniquely relevant to Douglas’ compositional voice. Of the many non-traditional jazz instruments used by Douglas, a distinction should be made between many of them. Acoustic instruments such as violin, accordion, French horn, and others receive very specific musical directions from Douglas. They supplement the compositions similarly to the way a trumpet or saxophone would. But when unusual electronic instruments such as turntables, samplers, electronic percussion, and others are used it’s likely that little direction is given, with Douglas simply seeking to add a particular “color” or density to a piece or project through the player adding their own personal touch. The inclusion or exclusion of a chordal instrument is one of the primary orchestrational influences on compositional style. Often when non-jazz instruments are employed, Douglas will strive to make use of their vast
timbral possibilities, in the case of Parallel Worlds, using tremolos, double stop, glissandi, pizzicato, and other techniques as opposed to simply adding the instrument’s color to the arrangement.

In a general sense, a great deal of compositional “craft” is apparent in the music of Dave Douglas. Often the effect of his writing is the result of the combination of a litany of very small details. One gets the sense that Douglas derives a great deal of fulfillment from writing music. He’s not only concerned with the end result of composition, but also seeks to make choices that have meaning on the page, not unlike many of the classical masters.

At the conclusion of this essay, what should be abundantly clear to the reader is the enormity of the scope of Dave Douglas’ compositional technique and output as well as its significant artistic value. His compositional style simultaneously has both microscopic and macroscopic implications. Douglas’ music is both a window into, and perhaps through, the mind and perceptions of an individual composer and artist, as well as a representation of the vast musical world around us.
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APPENDIX A

SCORES
FIRST SOLO WITH INTERJECTIONS / SECOND SOLO OPEN

FADE
Piece For Strings

Dave Douglas

Trumpet

Violin

Cello

Bass

6

Tpt.

Vln.

Vc.

Db.

10

Tpt.

Vln.

Vc.

Db.
Concert Score

PUNCHY

Dave Douglas (1993)

*transpositions for guitar, B♭ & E♭ instruments available at greenleafmusic.com
HEAVENLY MESSENGER

Dave Douglas

1. SPARSE FILL

2. OPEN FREE IMPROV - 2 TPTS, SAX/DRUMS, 2 BASSES, 2 SAMPLERS
In Due Lifetime

8. CLE & Ten Join Improv (V/Pno & Tenor)

Bass & Drums Gradually Switch to 5/4

Continue Improv

Continue Improv

Continue Improv

Continue Improv

On Cue

Tpt & Tenor Rubato over Rhythm Section Groove

(cont. Improv)

(cont. Improv)

(cont. Improv)

(cont. Improv)
In Our Lifetime

Open

(Tpt, Ten & Ten Rubato over Rhythm Section Groove)

Repeat Figure Ad Lib To Arrive With Horns at Fermata

Straight 8ths

(E7 G7 C Bb A)

Bass mp
FIRST FROST

Dave Douglas
CHARMS OF THE NIGHT SKY

A2

\[ \text{C major chord} \]

\[ \text{Eb}_6/\text{F} \]

\[ \text{D/C#} \]

\[ \text{Ab}/\text{C} \]

\[ \text{A}_7 \]

\[ \text{F}_#-\text{D}_7 \]

\[ \text{C pedal} \]
BLACK ROCK PARK

3x's - GTR THROUGHOUT
HORNS BED X

Dave Douglas

To Coda

FMaj7 (NO BASS)
E

SHUFFLE FEEL

STRAIGHT FEEL

(Feels like ten times...)

TO F FOR DRUM SOLO ON F & G, EIGHT TIMES, THEN FADE.
SOLOS ON CHANGES TO 'ALL OF ME'
(Goes with Shigeto Loop 2)

LOOM LARGE

DAVE DOUGLAS 2014

\[ \text{Sheet Music} \]
APPENDIX B

RECORDING LINKS
**Parallel Worlds**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/6yM7SWsROtBcENGFBuh2t8
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_f7ljL0YG-Y

**Piece For Strings**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/5yO2205CvAIJuTwEZ0iqn1
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAT3I6r2O4A

**Punchy**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/50d7K03mKO4WeFLbR85UFu
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQDI7FCD03k

**Heavenly Messenger**

**In Our Lifetime**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/6cfIBud1QDNGGuqPrgCE25
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoF0Wm7AqrA

**First Frost**
Amazon purchase link: https://www.amazon.com/Moving-Portrait-Dave-Douglas/dp/B000007N6Q

**Caterwaul**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/3Gxet3GEQtJbk97wdSSk
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vlr5GBFJjuT0

**Charms Of The Night Sky**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/5u0Z7Hj5CyGS7CporUDWDF
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vlr5GBFJJuT0

**Earmarks**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/1qrf0JV7yYZ0c7roIMOqc
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MchBV0V3_Ks

**Black Rock Park**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/6xzur4x2w5VIVYk3zaxZ0y
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6IPR6r957o

**Just Another Murder**
Spotify link: https://open.spotify.com/track/1MaHacgOjNLqS7JJBtA2E
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jycNcIL27A
**Tree Ring Circus**
Spotify link:  https://open.spotify.com/track/3HDNds6PZ5wbqZoE5GaxCs
Youtube link:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McNYN63PANY

**Bowie**
Spotify link:  https://open.spotify.com/track/45Kje0PwypAm8WnFdsCPlx
Youtube link:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=op_kKiGCU38&list=PLA989DAB13E7299B7&index=3

**Blockbuster**
Spotify link:  https://open.spotify.com/track/20ZXa468C07EQtH99hFsVJ
Youtube link:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt51jVDZJwA

**Miracle Gro**
Youtube link:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3u8ide0yDY

**No Good Without You**
Spotify link:  https://open.spotify.com/track/4nfsDVQHKCgg8HWDnT77bX
Youtube link:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKUkrpeJm4I

**Etiquette**
Spotify link:  https://open.spotify.com/track/0kdtoXcXcJxfu2vYP4VlW
Youtube link:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DozjUEM3RqE

**Loom Large**
Spotify link:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukhwZDc-P1U
Youtube link:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DozjUEM3RqE

**Legions**
Bandcamp link:  https://davedouglas.bandcamp.com/track/legions