

**COMPOSITIONS INSPIRED BY DAVID FOSTER WALLACE'S *INFINITE JEST***

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a collection of seven jazz compositions that are based on, or otherwise inspired by, David Foster Wallace's novel *Infinite Jest*. The compositions attempt to engage the novel in a way that makes use of the text, themes, characters and events to inform the melodies, harmonic progressions, instrumentation and structural elements of the music. While not intended to be a definitive musical interpretation of *Infinite Jest*, these pieces offer insight into one reader's experience with the novel.

In addition to the analyses of each composition, a cursory overview is provided of both Wallace's work and the plots, characters and themes in *Infinite Jest*. This is followed by an examination of the various compositional techniques used in these compositions, including the use of text-based melodies, alphabetic pitch series, leitmotifs and programmatic instrumentation. Appendices provide additional information regarding notational and stylistic considerations in the music.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a suite of seven musical compositions, each inspired by David Foster Wallace's novel *Infinite Jest*. In his reader's guide, Stephen Burn wrote that "much of Wallace's fiction was written with its aural dimension prioritized. ... A rhythmic pulse is everywhere in Wallace's prose,"<sup>1</sup> and Wallace himself explained that *Infinite Jest* is "really designed more like a piece of music ... a lot of it consists of leitmotifs and things that curve back."<sup>2</sup> It is fitting then that these rhythmic and musical elements in Wallace's writing be used as a generative tool for music composition.

Several musical artists have already recognized this potential and there exists a growing number of pieces that reference *Infinite Jest*. A few examples include: Chris Tarry's "P.G.O.A.T. (Prettiest Girl of All Time)"<sup>3</sup> (a reference to a character's nickname), Equilateral's "Infinite Jest,"<sup>4</sup> and the Decemberists' music video for "Calamity Song"<sup>5</sup> (which recreates a pivotal scene of the novel). While those works connect with *Infinite Jest* through primarily referential means, the compositions in this thesis engage with the novel directly—using the novel's text to inform the melodies, harmony and structural elements of each of the pieces—to add to this growing body of work in a manner that is both respectful and considerate of Wallace's work.

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1 Stephen J. Burn, *David Foster Wallace's Infinite Jest: A Reader's Guide*, 2nd ed. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 15.

2 Anne Marie Donahue, "David Foster Wallace Winces at the Suggestion that his Book is Sloppy in Any Sense," in *Conversations with David Foster Wallace*, ed. Stephen J. Burn (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 71.

3 Chris Tarry, *Sorry to be Strange*, Chris Tarry Group, Cellar Live 23106, 2006, compact disc.

4 Equilateral, *...And Another Thing*, 2009, digital file.

5 The Decemberists, "Calamity Song," (music video), Youtube, Adobe Flash Video file, posted August 16, 2011, accessed December 10, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJpK7l404I>.



Due to the size and scope of the novel, these compositions do not attempt to represent the entirety of the story. Instead, the pieces are based on individual scenes and chapters that represent some of the novel's major themes, including addiction, anhedonia, choice, communication, infantilization, and "the self-destructive consequences of the obsessive pursuit of happiness."<sup>6</sup> The order of these pieces is based on the order of their respective chapters in *Infinite Jest*. However, the three movements of "Hillside Rendezvous" are separated in order to reflect the fragmented, recurring nature of their related scenes in the novel and are not based on their respective narrative positions.

Musically, the compositions are largely in a straight 8ths jazz style<sup>7</sup> and scored for small-to-medium-sized jazz ensembles, with many of the compositions including extended sections for improvised solos. While some of these solos include instructions to help shape the performance, others simply provide a harmonic framework for the soloist to improvise on.

Before analyzing each of the compositions contained in this thesis, it is necessary to provide a basic introduction to both David Foster Wallace and *Infinite Jest*. In the nearly twenty years since *Infinite Jest* was published, much has been written about both the novel and its author. While a thorough literary analysis and/or critique of Wallace's work is beyond the scope of this paper, an effort has been made to provide enough information throughout to familiarize the uninitiated with both Wallace and the general plots and themes of *Infinite Jest*.<sup>8</sup>

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6 Jeffrey W. Hunter, ed., introduction to "Infinite Jest—David Foster Wallace," *Contemporary Literary Criticism* 281 (2010): 289.

7 See Appendix B.

8 Please note that characters and events in Wallace's novel will frequently be discussed in this thesis and may not always be clarified as fictional creations (i.e. a meeting of characters, or a number of films that exist within the novel's universe).

## CHAPTER 1

### ON DAVID FOSTER WALLACE AND *INFINITE JEST*

David Foster Wallace (1962–2008) was an essayist, professor and acclaimed novelist. A brief selection of his honours includes recognition on Time Magazine's list of the best English-language novels,<sup>9</sup> a MacArthur Fellowship, and a posthumous Pulitzer Prize nomination. Although he is often included in discussions of postmodern literature—that which is characterized "by a reliance on such literary conventions as fragmentation, paradox, unreliable narrators, ... parody, paranoia, dark humor,"<sup>10</sup> and irony—Wallace is perhaps best characterized as either a *post*-postmodern author or a "member of some still-unnamed ... third wave of modernism ... [that] proceeds from the assumption that *both* modernism and postmodernism are essentially 'done.'"<sup>11</sup>

In 1993, Wallace wrote "E Unibus Pluram," a criticism of the cultural effects of both television and postmodern irony. This influential essay has been described as a manifesto for post-postmodernism, comparable to John Barth's postmodern manifesto "The Literature of Exhaustion."<sup>12</sup> In it, Wallace posits that while "irony and ridicule are entertaining and effective ... they are [also] agents of a great despair and stasis in U.S.

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9 Lev Grossman and Richard Lacayo, "All-Time 100 Novels," *TIME*, last modified January 7, 2010, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://entertainment.time.com/2005/10/16/all-time-100-novels/slide/infinite-jest-1996-by-david-foster-wallace/>.

10 James Fleming, "Postmodernism in Literature," *Education Portal*, accessed January 2, 2015, <http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/postmodernism-in-literature-definition-lesson-quiz.html>

11 Marshall Boswell, *Understanding David Foster Wallace* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 1.

12 *Ibid.*, 11–13.

culture."<sup>13</sup> Continuing, Wallace suggests,

The next real literary "rebels" ... might well emerge as some weird bunch of "anti-rebels" ... who treat old untrendy human troubles and emotions in U.S. life with reverence and conviction ... The old postmodern insurgents risked the ... shock, disgust, outrage, censorship, accusations of socialism, anarchism, nihilism. The new rebels might be the ones willing to risk the yawn, the rolled eyes, the cool smile, the nudged ribs, the parody of gifted ironists, ... accusations of sentimentality, melodrama. Credulity.<sup>14</sup>

As such, Wallace's writing frequently attempts to dismantle the notion that cynicism (i.e. postmodern irony and ridicule) and naïveté (i.e. sentimentality and heartfelt emotion) are mutually exclusive.<sup>15</sup> Describing the apparent paradoxes of Wallace's "emotionally affective and ruthlessly abstract"<sup>16</sup> writing, former editor Gerry Howard stated that "there's a hypersincerity ... which I think David was in tune with—or that he really wanted to be sincere, even though his brain kept turning him in the direction of the ironic."<sup>17</sup>

When writing *Infinite Jest*, Wallace "wanted to do something sad ... about what it's like to live in America around the millennium."<sup>18</sup> He continues to explore the effects of postmodern irony and entertainment on American culture through a story set in a fictional near-future in which a "reconfigured" North America has become the Organization of North American Nations (O.N.A.N.) and the nine most recent years have been named by sponsoring corporations (e.g. Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, which is

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13 David Foster Wallace, "E Unibus Pluram", *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 171.

14 Ibid., 192–193.

15 Boswell, *Understanding*, 16–17.

16 Paul Giles, "All Swallowed Up: David Foster Wallace and American Literature," in *The Legacy of David Foster Wallace*, ed. Samuel Cohen and Lee Konstantinou (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012), 19.

17 Quoted in David Lipsky, "The Lost Years and Last Days of David Foster Wallace," in *Conversations With David Foster Wallace*, ed. Stephen J. Burn (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 168.

18 Laura Miller, "David Foster Wallace," *Salon*, March 9, 1996, accessed October 13, 2014, [http://www.salon.com/1996/03/09/wallace\\_5/](http://www.salon.com/1996/03/09/wallace_5/).

suggested to correspond with the year 2009<sup>19</sup>). The culture of the reconfigured America depicted in the novel is one that is very much addicted to entertainment; by naming this nation after the biblical figure Onan, Wallace alludes to "the self-absorbed disconnection and solitary pleasure-seeking of its citizenry."<sup>20</sup> The lengthy work explores the above ideas, as well as related themes including addiction, the nature of choice, infantilism, and communication (among others) in an elaborate story involving numerous characters and interweaving plot lines.

One major story arc, set at the fictional Enfield Tennis Academy (E.T.A.), centres on the young tennis prodigy Hal Incandenza and focuses on his training, relationships with friends and family, and his growing problems with drug addiction. Another story arc is set in a halfway house and follows the life of Don Gately, a recovering drug addict and former burglar. An overarching plot concerns a mysterious film created by Hal's deceased father James O. Incandenza, an avant-garde filmmaker and the founder of the Enfield Tennis Academy.<sup>21</sup> This film, also titled "Infinite Jest," is so entertaining that it leaves viewers with the sole desire to continuously watch the film, with fatal consequences that have been described as a "literalization of the argument contained in the title of Neil Postman's ... *Amusing Ourselves to Death*."<sup>22</sup>

Incandenza's fatally entertaining film is at the centre of a plot involving the terrorist organization *Les Assassins des Fauteuils Rollents* (also referred to as the A.F.R. or the Wheelchair Assassins) who wish to disseminate the film to the pleasure-hungry American

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19 Greg Carlisle, *Elegant Complexity: A Study of David Foster Wallace's Infinite Jest* (Los Angeles: Sideshow Media Group, 2007), 493-494.

20 Frank Cioffi, "'An Anguish Become Thing': Narrative as Performance in David Foster Wallace's 'Infinite Jest,'" *Narrative* 8, no. 2 (May, 2000): 171.

21 To eliminate any possible confusion over two characters with the same last name, this paper will refer to Hal Incandenza in short as "Hal" and James Incandenza as "Incandenza."

22 Michael North, *Machine-Age Comedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 167.

public. These plans are discussed through a series of recurring scenes featuring the A.F.R. agent Remy Marathe and American secret agent Hugh Steeply. In another example of intertextuality in *Infinite Jest*, the parallels between these characters and with both the historical Jean-Paul Marat and Marquis de Sade, as well as their depictions in the Peter Weiss play *Marat/Sade*, provide additional insight into the motivations of these characters.<sup>23</sup>

While these are just some of the many characters and stories that Wallace explores in his encyclopedic novel, these details are particularly relevant to understanding the compositions in this thesis as they were used to inform various harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and structural elements in the music. Several of these techniques, as well as their historical precedents, must be discussed before analyzing each of the compositions.

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23 This connection is further supported by the novel's endnotes which reveal that Incandenza created a film adaptation of Weiss's play. In David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 993.

## CHAPTER 2

### *INFINITE JEST AS A GENERATIVE TOOL FOR MUSIC COMPOSITION*

Instrumental music is occasionally described as being either *programme music*—that which "can be descriptive, can tell a story, or ... can throw an illuminating light on the sister arts of painting and literature"<sup>24</sup> (e.g. Gustav Holst's *The Planets* or Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*)—or *absolute music*—that which is "oriented to content and nothing else, as 'music for music's sake'"<sup>25</sup> (i.e. a numbered concerto, prelude or symphony). These terms are generally associated with the music of the Romantic era and are not used to describe popular music styles (which are typically song-based and/or given evocative titles that may affect the listener's experience). It is worth noting that the merits of these categories are frequently contested, with some suggesting that the distinctions between the two "are purely arbitrary; ... If we press the distinctions of absolute and programme ... we shall very soon find ourselves in difficulties."<sup>26</sup>

Regardless, the musical devices and techniques associated with programme music can be used in the creation of music inspired by literature. Some of the programmatic compositional devices used in this thesis include: leitmotifs (recurring musical ideas that may represent characters or textual themes), the use of specific instrumentation to represent characters, or the use of external texts (such as poetry or literature) to inform

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24 Leslie Orrey, *Programme Music: A Brief Survey From the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1975), 15.

25 Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 126.

26 L.N. Higgins, "Absolute and Programme Music," *The Musical Times* 65, no. 981 (Nov. 1, 1924): 988.

compositional structures. These techniques were used in this thesis, as well as two others: the use of melodies derived directly from the novel's prose, and a system for creating musical cells based on any series of letters from the alphabet.

### **Text-Based Melodies**

In many of the compositions in this thesis, *Infinite Jest*'s text has been used directly to create melodies. This was done by examining fragments of the novel's prose and treating the accents and stresses as if they were free verse poetry. Similar to music's use of beats and time signatures, poetry generally measures rhythms in iambic feet<sup>27</sup> and meter (referring to the number of feet in a line of poetry). Drawing a similar parallel between the worlds of poetry and music, poet Robert Pinsky said that "rhythm is the sound of an actual line, while meter is the abstract pattern behind the rhythm, roughly analogous to the way 4/4 time in music underlies the actual dotted eighths and sixteenths and so forth."<sup>28</sup>

Pinsky goes on to suggest "that the sound of [a poem] would be there even if we typed the poems up as blocks of prose: it would just be much harder for the reader to detect the sound."<sup>29</sup> If so, then perhaps the opposite is true and the prose of *Infinite Jest* can be treated as free verse poetry (i.e. poetry without consistent meter) by turning the accents and rhythms of the words and phrases into musical rhythms. This method was used to create whole melodies for "Year of Glad" and "Hillside Rendezvous," as well as several melodic fragments in "The Wraith Himself" and "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid." One specific application of this process is discussed in Chapter 3.

While the pitches of these melodies have largely been determined based on the

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27 An *iamb* is an unstressed syllable that is followed by a stressed syllable (e.g. "above" or "today")

28 Robert Pinsky, *Sounds of Poetry* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 52.

29 Ibid., 43.

harmonic progressions of the compositions, "Year of Glad" uses a more specific approach: the melodic—and, by extension, harmonic—content is derived from the actual pitches of an aural reading of the relevant text. Historically, a number of composers have adapted speech to music, (often accompanied by a recorded sample of the speech).

Minimalist composer Steve Reich has worked with speech in a number of his compositions, perhaps most notably in his composition *Different Trains*. In that piece, a string quartet performs melodies based on speech fragments while accompanied by the same pre-recorded samples.<sup>30</sup> Musician/composer Charles Spearin worked extensively with recorded speech on his album *The Happiness Project*.<sup>31</sup> For this project, Spearin recorded casual interviews with his neighbours and attempted to create music from the "accidental" melodies that he heard.<sup>32</sup> Jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran used a similar technique for his composition "Ringing My Phone"<sup>33</sup> in which his band plays along with, and improvises around, a recording of a woman speaking on the phone.

The use of this technique for these compositions has resulted in unexpectedly interesting results, such as unusual phrase lengths and interesting harmonic progressions and melodic structures.

### **Alphabetic Pitch Series**

Throughout *Infinite Jest*, Wallace frequently uses acronyms and wordplay to either reveal subtext or to create contrasting ironies. One example can be found in the initials of James Incandenza: J.O.I. (i.e. *joy* or *joie*), an ironic contrast to the character's depression,

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30 A more detailed look at *Different Trains* can be found in Steve Reich, *Writings on Music: 1965–2000*, ed. Paul Hillier (New York: Oxford, 2002), 151–155 and *Ibid.*, 180–183.

31 Charles Spearin, *The Happiness Project*, Arts & Crafts A&C039, 2009, compact disc.

32 Charles Spearin, "About the Happiness Project," Arts & Crafts: The Happiness Project, accessed October 16, 2014, <http://www.happiness-project.ca/about.php>.

33 Jason Moran, *The Bandwagon*, Blue Note 7243 5 91893 2 4, 2003, compact disc.



alcoholism and eventual suicide. The prominence of such abbreviations in the novel made them stand out as something to be used in the creation of this thesis' music.

Perhaps one of the most familiar examples of a composer using letters to generate musical content is the unfinished fugue of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Art of Fugue*, in which he writes a fugue based on the pitch series B $\flat$ –A–C–B  $\sharp$  (i.e. B–A–C–H in German notation).<sup>34</sup> The application of Bach's device, however, becomes problematic when dealing with letters beyond H and so a new system was devised to generate musical content for this thesis. By relating the letters of the alphabet to a number series (where the letter A=0, B=1, C=2, etc.) and applying that to a separate series of notes beginning on any pitch, musical spellings can be found for any combination of letters (Fig. 2.1).



Fig. 2.1: Example of alphabetic pitch series beginning on B $\flat$ .

This alphabetic pitch series technique was used in two of the compositions to generate harmonic and melodic material from James Incandenza's initials. These initials (and their related pitch series [9–14–8]) determined the three key centres of "The American Century as Seen Through a Brick" (Chapter 5), and are used as a recurring motif in "The Wraith Himself" (Chapter 7).

### Leitmotifs and Programmatic Instrumentation

Commonly associated with the music of Richard Wagner, "a leitmotif is a theme ... whose purpose is to represent or symbolize a person, object, place, idea ... in a dramatic

<sup>34</sup> Johann Sebastian Bach, *Die Kunst der Fuge*, BWV 1080 (Berlin: Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, 1751).

work."<sup>35</sup> These themes are used as recurring devices, although they do not need to remain unaltered and may show various changes "in rhythm, intervallic structure, harmony, orchestration or accompaniment."<sup>36</sup> These variations can be used to represent contextual or narrative developments, such as major variations for positive developments, and minor or diminished variations for negative developments.

In this thesis, a three-note theme is used to represent the character Don Gately. This theme, which consists of three half notes, the last two ascending by diatonic step, is used in "The Wraith Himself" and "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid" (Fig. 2.2<sup>37</sup>). Furthermore, the complete melody of "Hillside Rendezvous I" (a theme for the character Hugh Steeply) is reprised in "Hillside Rendezvous III." These compositions use recurring themes to mark the presence of their respective characters in the novel's corresponding chapters.

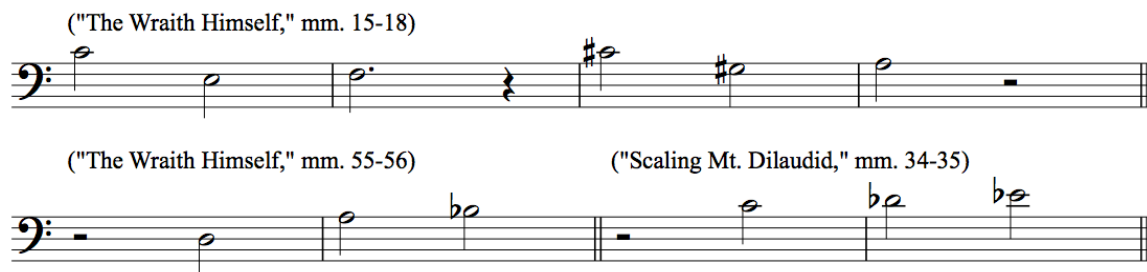


Fig. 2.2: Appearances of the "Gately theme" in "The Wraith Himself" and "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid"

In addition to the use of leitmotifs to represent the characters of *Infinite Jest* in these compositions, specific instrumentation is also used as a programmatic device. According to Kathryn Kalinak, "instrumentation ... reflects and defines narrative content"<sup>38</sup> in music

35 Barry Millington, *The New Grove Guide to Wagner and His Operas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 153.

36 Ibid.

37 Note the use of octave displacement and changes in intervallic structure to represent the development of Gately's character.

38 Kathryn Kalinak, "The Classical Hollywood Film Score," in *The Classical Hollywood Reader*, ed. Steve Neale (New York: Routledge, 2012), 276.

and is used in this thesis to emphasize the narrative connections between the compositions. A recurring example of this is the trombone as Gately. Non-recurring considerations regarding programmatic instrumentation (e.g. the bass clarinet representing Incandenza in "The Wraith Himself") were made to highlight personal details about those characters, or to provide context into the corresponding chapters.

### CHAPTER 3

#### YEAR OF GLAD

"Year of Glad" is a jazz composition for tenor saxophone, piano, bass and drum set. The form of the piece features an exposition of the melody, an open section for improvisation by one or more soloists that is based on the harmonic progression of the exposition, and a final recapitulation of the theme. The composition is inspired by the opening chapter of *Infinite Jest*, which is set in the subsidized Year of Glad (approximately one year after the events of the main narrative).

Before learning about Hal Incandenza's growing problems with addiction and his gradual lapse into solipsism, this first chapter marks the *end* of Hal's story arc with his eventual visit to the University of Arizona. During his admissions interview, his verbal communications with the university staff are mysteriously heard only as "subanimalistic noises and sounds."<sup>39</sup> This chapter is a rare instance of first-person narration in *Infinite Jest* and, as such, the melody of "Year of Glad" attempts to capture Hal's internal dialogue directly by translating an aural reading of the novel's opening paragraph to music. This paragraph reads as follows:

I am seated in an office, surrounded by heads and bodies. My posture is consciously congruent to the shape of my hard chair. This is a cold room in University Administration, wood-walled, Remington-hung, double-windowed against the November heat, insulated from Administrative sounds by the reception area outside, at which Uncle Charles, Mr. deLint and I were lately received. I am in here.<sup>40</sup>

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39 Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 14.

40 Ibid., 3.

To generate music from this paragraph, the accents and stresses of the reading were first assigned rhythms without a specific or intended rhythmic meter (Fig. 3.1).

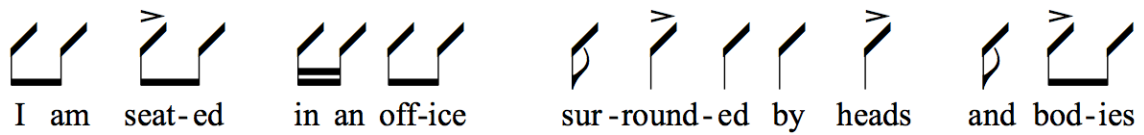


Fig. 3.1: Assigning rhythms to the novel's text

As the first strong accent comes at the beginning of "seated," the words "I am" were made into a pickup beat of two eighth notes. The remaining text mostly fits into groupings of two or four beats and indicates that a 4/4 time signature would be suitable for most of the paragraph (Fig. 3.2). The only exception to this appears in m. 5 of "Year of Glad," which was expanded to a single measure of 6/4. Several rhythms were later modified to be either more idiomatic for the performing instruments or to be more stylistically appropriate. The free-form nature of the prose resulted in several unusual phrase and section lengths (e.g. the seven-bar section at the beginning of the composition).

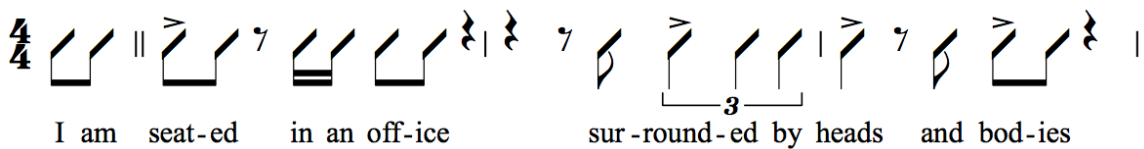


Fig. 3.2: Placement of the novel's text in 4/4 time

Pitches were subsequently assigned to these rhythms based on a transcription of the text being read aloud (Fig. 3.3). In adapting this transcription for musical instruments which may have limited control over phrasing with rapidly repeated notes (e.g. saxophone, which must re-attack each note), several passages that featured many repeated notes were modified to be more instrumentally idiomatic (Fig. 3.4).



Fig. 3.3: Pitches associated with a reading of the novel



Fig. 3.4: Passage in "Year of Glad" modified for instrumental considerations (mm. 7–10)

The speech melody was then used to determine an appropriate harmonic progression for the composition. Fragments of the melody were found to be in similar tonal centres and, by assigning the notes situated on rhythmically "strong" beats (i.e. beats 1 and 3) to chord tones, a harmonic progression was created (Fig. 3.5).<sup>41</sup> Due to the freeform nature of speech, the resulting harmony did not entirely belong to a single tonality or key centre and frequently relies on parallel or otherwise non-functional harmony (i.e. the chords do "not interact with [the other] chords in a key-defining ... manner"<sup>42</sup>).

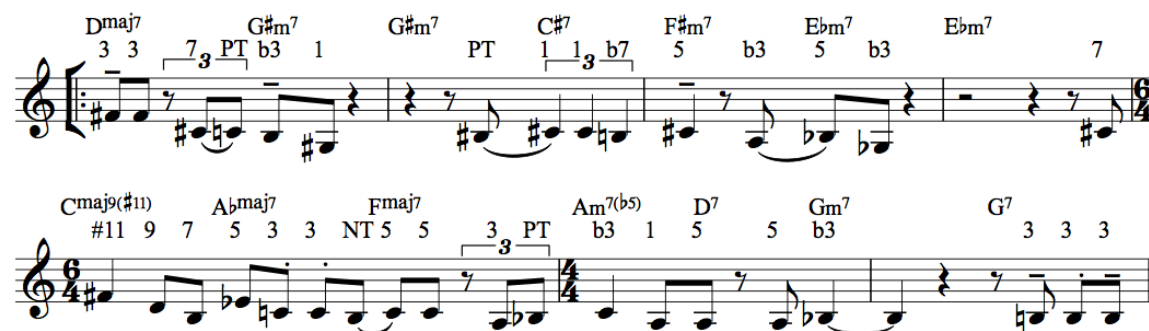


Fig. 3.5: "Year of Glad" harmony with melodic analysis (mm. 1–7)

41 Various nonchord tones (including passing tones, neighbour tones, anticipations and enclosures) appear in the melody. Those appearing in Fig. 4.5 are labelled in shortened form as PT (passing tone), NT (neighbour tone) and ANT (anticipation).

42 Patricia Julien, "The Function of Non-Functional Harmony," *Jazz Educators Journal* 34, no. 2 (September 2001): 53.

# Year of Glad

Straight 8ths Jazz ♩ = 145

1

Brad Cheeseman

Tenor Saxophone

*mf*

Piano

*mf*

L.H. comps

Bass

*mf* broken style bass line

Drum Set

*mf*

(melodic cue)

Chords: Dmaj7, G#m7, G#m7, C#7, F#m7, Ebm7, Ebm7

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Chords: Cmaj9(#11), Abmaj7, Fmaj7, Am7(b5), D7, Gm7, G7


8


T.S. 

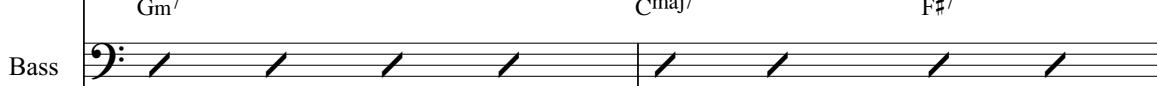
Pno. 


Bass 


Dr. 


T.S. 

Pno. 


Bass 

Dr. 

T.S. 

Pno. 

Bass 

Dr. 



17

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Fine

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

24

Open for solos

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Chord progression for measures 29-31:

Chords: Cmaj9(#11) A $\flat$ maj7 Fmaj7 Am<sup>7</sup>(b5) D<sup>7</sup> Gm<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup>

Instrument parts: T.S., Pno., Bass, Dr.

Section 31

Chord progression for measures 32-35:

Chords: Dmaj7 G $\sharp$ m<sup>7</sup> G $\sharp$ m<sup>7</sup> Gmaj9 Gmaj9 C $\sharp$ m<sup>7</sup> Bbm<sup>7</sup>


Instrument parts: T.S., Pno., Bass, Dr.


Chord progression for measures 36-40:

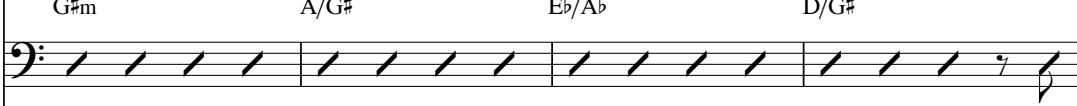
Chords: Gm<sup>7</sup> Cmaj7 F $\sharp$ <sup>7</sup> Bm<sup>9</sup> F<sup>7</sup>( $\sharp$ 11) F $\sharp$ <sup>7</sup>


Instrument parts: T.S., Pno., Bass, Dr.

**40**  $G^{\#}m$   $A/G^{\#}$   $E^b/A^b$   $D/G^{\#}$

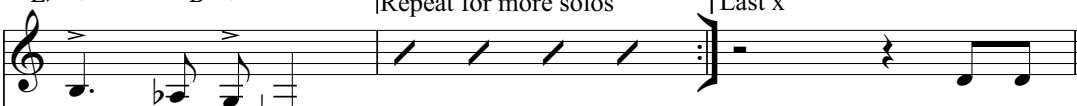
T.S. 


Pno. 


Bass 

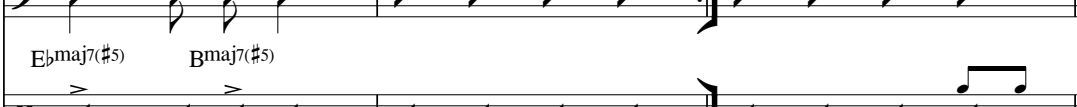
Dr. 

$E^b\text{maj}7(\#5)$   $B\text{maj}7(\#5)$  Repeat for more solos Last x **D.C. al Fine**

T.S. 

Pno. 

Bass 

Dr. 

## CHAPTER 4

### HILLSIDE RENDEZVOUS I: STEEPLY

"Hillside Rendezvous" is a series of three compositions that are based on the structure of Chris Tarry's composition "Three Short Stories."<sup>43</sup> These pieces represent the secret meeting of Hugh Steeply and Remy Marathe in *Infinite Jest* (cf. Chapter 1). The three "Hillside Rendezvous" compositions act as segues between the four other pieces in this thesis, similar to the way that their related scenes in the novel occasionally act as transitions between chapters. The first movement is discussed in this chapter, with the second and third being found in Chapters 6 and 8 respectively.

The meeting of Steeply and Marathe finds the two agents discussing the A.F.R.'s plan to disseminate the lethally entertaining film "Infinite Jest" to American viewers (cf. Chapter 1). Marathe and the A.F.R. believe that the plot would be successful because, to them, the American people "choose nothing over themselves to love" and "would die ... for the so-called perfect entertainment."<sup>44</sup> Throughout these scenes, the two characters discuss the nature of choice; Steeply extols the virtues of American freedom and the pursuit of happiness while Marathe lectures about the emptiness of such an idea. Marathe explains to Steeply that the word *fanatic* "comes from the Latin word for 'temple' ... literally, 'worshipper at the temple'" and that "our attachments are our temple, what we worship."<sup>45</sup> Much attention is given to the importance of choosing one's attachments (and

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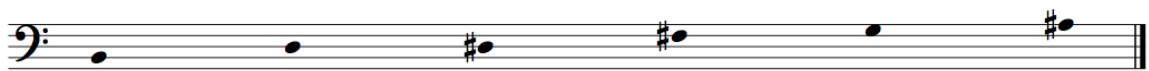
43 Chris Tarry, *Rest of the Story*, Chris Tarry Group, Nineteen–Eight Records, 2012, compact disc.

44 Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 318.

45 Ibid., 107.

temples) carefully.

The first movement of "Hillside Rendezvous" is a solo bass feature and is intended to represent Steeply's thoughts on the nature of choice. Because this movement immediately follows the B augmented major seventh chord at the end of "Year of Glad," "Hillside Rendezvous I" uses the symmetrical B augmented scale (Fig. 4.1) for the entirety of the composition. The open nature of the solo, and the allowance for interpretation and embellishment in the second section of the piece, are indicative of Steeply's view that the "whole [American] system is founded on your individual's freedom to pursue his own individual desires" and that "[Americans primarily] want choice."<sup>46</sup>



*Fig. 4.1: B augmented scale*

The melody that follows the opening improvisation is derived from a question asked by Steeply: "What if sometimes there *is* no choice about what to love? What if the temple comes to Mohammed? What if you just love?"<sup>47</sup> This melody uses a compositional technique similar to the speech melody of "Year of Glad" but with a less direct application; this melody translates Steeply's words into music using rhythmic groupings that are loosely based on the accents and stresses of those sentences when spoken aloud (cf. Chapter 2). Pitches were later to these rhythms assigned based on the augmented scale that is central to this composition (Fig. 4.2, next page).

To emphasize the freedom that encompasses Steeply's core values, this piece does not use a time signature, nor does it use note stems to indicate rhythm; it is up to the performer to interpret this melody freely. The provided phrase markings only serve as a

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 423.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 108.

suggestion of accents, phrasing and rhythms. Ultimately, the lack of specific directions in this piece is intended to create a wide variety of interpretations through performance.

The image displays two staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and contains a melody with notes: B-flat, A, G-sharp, F-sharp, E, D, C, B. The second staff continues the melody with notes: A, G-sharp, F-sharp, E, D, C, B, A. The lyrics are: "What if some-times there is no choice a - bout what to love?". The third staff begins with a repeat sign and contains a melody with notes: B-flat, A, G-sharp, F-sharp, E, D, C, B. The fourth staff continues the melody with notes: A, G-sharp, F-sharp, E, D, C, B, A. The lyrics are: "What if the tem-ple comes to Mo-ham-med? What if you just love?".

What if some-times there is no choice a - bout what to love?

What if the tem-ple comes to Mo-ham-med? What if you just love?

Fig. 4.2: "Hillside Rendezvous I" melody compared with source text

# Hillside Rendezvous I

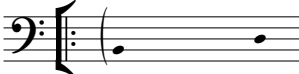
Steeply

Brad Cheeseman

## Pensive

Open Solo (B augmented)

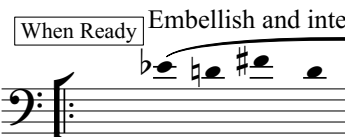
Bass



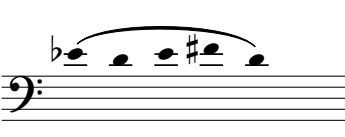
When Ready

Embellish and interpret freely

Bass

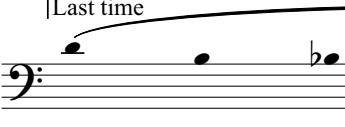


Bass



Last time

Bass



## CHAPTER 5

### THE AMERICAN CENTURY AS SEEN THROUGH A BRICK

"The American Century as Seen Through a Brick" is a jazz composition for alto and tenor saxophone, piano, 5-string electric bass and drum set. The piece is an interpretation of the James Incandenza film of the same name, which is described in several parts of *Infinite Jest*. This film is partially about *anhedonia*, a type of depression which the novel describes as "a kind of spiritual torpor in which one loses the ability to feel pleasure or attachment to things formerly important."<sup>48</sup> This is a recurring theme in *Infinite Jest* and can be seen in its effects on several characters in the book. Much of the musical composition is derived from the detailed description of Incandenza's film that is provided in the novel's endnotes:

As U.S. Boston's historical Back Bay streets are stripped of brick ... the resultant career of one stripped brick is followed, from found-art temporary installation to displacement by E.W.D. catapult to a waste-quarry in southern Quebec to its use in the F.L.Q.-incited anti-O.N.A.N. riots, ... all intercut with ambiguous shots of a human thumb's alterations in the interference pattern of a plucked string.<sup>49</sup>

More details are provided in a chapter in which Hal views the film; the plucked string initially produces a "very sweet unadorned solo sound" that is described as a piano's high D. The string is abruptly muted by the intruding thumb and an "excruciating" silence follows. At the end of the film, the thumb is removed allowing the string to ring once again but the sound that follows is described as "extremely pure ... with something rotten about it underneath, ... something sick-sweet and overripe and potentially putrid,"

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<sup>48</sup> Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 692.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 989.



which leaves the viewer "praying for the return of the natal thumb, to shut [the ringing] up."<sup>50</sup> Allusions are also made to the film's commentary on the novel's political climate, as well as its "unsubtle thesis" regarding the exclusivity of naiveté and cynicism (cf. Chapter 1). Many of these details were used to inform the musical content of this composition.

Incandenza's role in the creation of the film is here reflected in the composition's three tonal centres. By using the alphabetic pitch series technique discussed in Chapter 1 to translate Incandenza's initials (J. O. I.) to music, the corresponding pitch series of 9–14–8 became G–C–Gb (cf. Fig. 2.1). During the compositional process, these three key centres became G minor, C major and Gb major respectively.

The composition begins with the piano playing a high D, much like Incandenza's film, which is then doubled in unison and octaves by the other instruments, each introduced with a dramatic crescendo. This crescendo compensates for the natural decay of the piano's sustained note and serves to increase the "sweetness" (i.e. tonal richness) of the note. This increased instrumentation makes the abrupt silence that follows (a reference to the muting thumb) more dramatic.

The opening section of the melody (mm. 7–22) centres around the note D—continuing the film's recurring string motif—while frequently resting on chord tones and common extensions of the harmony. This consonance is contrasted with the frequent use of augmented second intervals in the melody, which foreshadow the unrest that is eventually depicted in the film (i.e. the "anti-O.N.A.N. riots"). The piano plays a rhythmic motif throughout this section that is also centred on Ds played in octaves (Fig.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 695.

5.1), shifting up or down by step where it would otherwise cause unwanted dissonance with the harmony.



Fig. 5.1: "The American Century..." piano motif (mm. 3–6)

The second section of the piece (mm. 23–46) contrasts the former, signifying a noticeable change in setting (as relating to the film's synopsis), by introducing a new key centre, a change in rhythmic feel, and an overall increase in rhythmic activity. The bass figure that is introduced here is inspired by the intervallic melodies of saxophonist and composer Donny McCaslin (particularly "Stadium Jazz"<sup>51</sup>) and is supported rhythmically by the new drum groove; the ride cymbal pattern of this Afro-Cuban groove shares many of the accents found in the bass line. The phrase lengths of mm. 23–38, which are stretched beyond the common length of four bars to five- and sometimes five-and-a-half-bars long, create a growing sense of instability, as suggested in the film's description. The melody of this section also expands on the first through its continued use of augmented second intervals, which are here derived from the sixth mode of E harmonic minor (Fig. 5.2<sup>52</sup>).



Fig. 5.2: Augmented second intervals in "The American Century..."

51 Donny McCaslin, *Casting for Gravity*, Greenleaf Music GRE-1028, 2012, compact disc.

52 Note that the enharmonic spelling has been modified in several of these passages to more clearly demonstrate the use of augmented second intervals.

The final section (mm. 47–58) begins with one last change in key centre. After the harmonic and melodic structures of this section have been established, the drums perform a metric modulation at m. 51 which makes the time signature feel like a slower 3/4 meter, as if the melody's quarter note triplets were eighth notes (Fig. 5.3). This final section concludes with a sustained D in the melody, reminiscent of both the opening measures of the composition and the film's recurring string motif (as described earlier in this chapter). While the opening D of the piece functions as the dominant of the first key centre (G minor), the sustained D at m. 55 is the *augmented* fifth of the Gb augmented harmony; this dissonance is used to represent the "overripe and potentially putrid" qualities associated with the string motif's final recurrence in Incandenza's film.

The image displays a musical score for Piano and Drum Set, comparing the written notation (left) with the performed notation (right) for measures 51-52. The left side is marked with a tempo of 140 and shows a 4/4 time signature. The piano part features quarter note triplets, and the drum set part has a pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes. The right side is marked with a tempo of 105 and shows a 3/4 time signature. The piano part's triplets are performed as eighth notes, and the drum set part is adapted to the new meter, featuring a pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes.

Fig. 5.3: Comparison of mm. 51–52 as written (left) and performed (right)

After the melody, a solo section allows for each saxophone to improvise over the entire harmonic form of the composition. This is followed by a reprise of the entire melody with the addition of a coda in which the final "overripe" D is played by the saxophones, each increasing in volume until the musicians can no longer sustain the note, as if someone was "praying for the return of [the film's] thumb, to shut [the ringing] up."

# The American Century as Seen Through a Brick

Brad Cheeseman

**1 Conducted**

Alto Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Piano

Electric Bass

Drum Set

let piano strings resonate

*mp*

*ppp* *f*

*ppp* *f*

*ppp* *f*

**Straight 8ths**  
♩=140

**3**

Pno.

Dr.

ride cymbal

*mp*

7

A.S. *mp*

T.S. *mp*

Pno. *mp* L.H. comps

Gm<sup>7</sup> Bm<sup>7</sup>/E

Bass *mp* (melodic cue)

Dr. *sim.*

A.S.

T.S.

Pno. *mp*

Gm<sup>7</sup> C#m<sup>7</sup> C#7(b<sup>9</sup>)

Bass *sim.*

Dr.

A.S. 

T.S. 

Pno.   
Cm<sup>9</sup> D<sup>7(b9)</sup>/F<sup>#</sup>

Bass 

Dr. 

A.S.   
sfz

T.S.   
sfz

Pno.   
Bm<sup>7</sup> Ab/G G<sup>7</sup>(#5)

Bass   
Bm<sup>9</sup> Ab/G G<sup>7</sup>(#5)

Dr.   
set up 12/8 feel

23

12/8 Afro-Cuban Feel

1st x only

A.S. 1st x only

T.S. 1st x only

Pno.

Bass

Dr. (fill 2nd time)

*sim.*

28

A.S. *mf*

T.S. *mf*

Pno. *mf* Cma<sup>13</sup>(#9) R.H. comps

Bass *mf*

Dr. *mf* (melodic cue)

A.S.

T.S.

B<sup>7</sup>alt.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

fill

A.S.

T.S.

Cma<sup>13</sup>(#9)

Pno.

Bass

Dr.



A.S.

T.S.

B<sup>7</sup>alt.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

39

A.S.

T.S.

A<sup>b</sup>maj7(b13) Am

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

fill

play time

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Bbm<sup>9</sup> Am<sup>9</sup>

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

A<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> Eb<sup>7</sup>/G

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Fm<sup>6</sup>

fill

47

omit lower note to breathe when necessary

omit higher note to breathe when necessary

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

*f*

*f*

*f*

(bass hits)

*sim. groove*

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Measures 35-36. The vocal parts (A.S. and T.S.) feature triplet eighth notes. The piano accompaniment includes triplet chords in the right hand and sustained bass notes in the left hand. The bass line and drums provide a steady accompaniment.

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Measures 37-38. The vocal parts continue with triplet eighth notes. The piano accompaniment features triplet chords and a "sim." (sustained) marking. The bass line and drums include triplet patterns and accents.

♩ To Coda

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

**Straight 8ths**

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

*sfz*

*sfz*

G $\flat$ maj7(#5)

G $\flat$ maj7(#5)

textural playing

# Solos 59

Chord progression for Solos 59:

Gm<sup>7</sup> Bm<sup>7</sup>/E Gm<sup>7</sup> C<sup>#</sup>m<sup>7</sup> C<sup>#</sup>7alt.

1st x: solo

2nd x: solo

comp for solos

play in a "broken" style

play time

Dr.

# 67

Chord progression for 67:

Cm<sup>9</sup> D<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>9</sup>)/F<sup>#</sup> Bm<sup>7</sup> A<sup>b</sup>/G G<sup>7</sup>

transition to 12/8 groove

Dr.


75


12/8 Afro-Cuban Feel


Cma13(#9)


B7alt.


Play 4x

A.S. 

T.S. 

Pno. 

Bass 

Dr. 

80

A♭maj7(b13)

Am

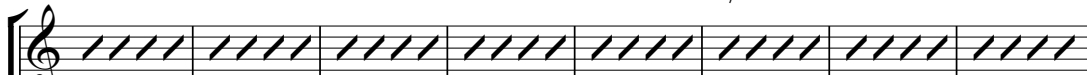
B♭m9

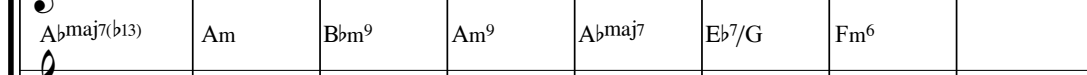
Am9

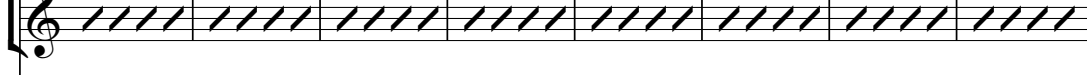
A♭maj7

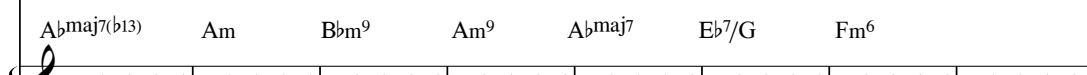
E♭7/G

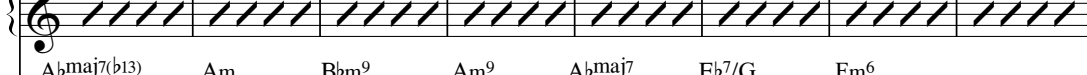
Fm6

A.S. 

T.S. 

Pno. 

Bass 

Dr. 

88

88

A.S.  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

T.S.  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

Pno.  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

Bass  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

Dr.  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

A.S.  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

T.S.  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

Pno.  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

Bass  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

Dr.  $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $G\flat\text{maj}7$   $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $D7(\sharp 9)$



1. **D7(#9)** **Back to 59 for Tenor solo** 2. **D.S. al Coda**

A.S.

T.S.

Pno.

Bass

Dr. 1. fill (set up straight 8ths feel) 2. fill (set up straight 8ths feel)

**Coda**

A.S. hold and crescendo until nearly out of breath (saxes end together) //

T.S. hold and crescendo until nearly out of breath (saxes end together) //

Pno. natural decay //

Bass natural decay //

Dr. natural decay //

## CHAPTER 6

### HILLSIDE RENDEZVOUS II: MARATHE

Contrasting the first movement's basis in both improvisatory and metaphoric freedom (cf. Chapter 4), "Hillside Rendezvous II" is a through-composed solo piano piece in D minor, inspired by the compositional style of Frédéric Chopin. The lack of improvisation reflects Marathe's values based on discipline, commitment to a cause and his willingness to die for "something bigger than the self."<sup>53</sup> As the piano is played while seated, the instrumentation acts as a parallel to Marathe's confinement to a wheelchair.

The right hand melody of "Hillside Rendezvous II," like the previous movement, is derived from dialogue in the novel; this time Marathe's warnings to Steeply: "Make amusement all you wish. But choose with care. You are what you love. No? ... This, is it not the choice of the most supreme importance? Who teaches your U.S.A. children how to choose their temple? ... For this choice determines all else. No?" (Fig. 6.1, next page).

As in "Hillside Rendezvous I," the rhythms of these sentences were used to create a rhythmic outline of a melody, with most of the pitches assigned afterwards to fit the harmonic progression. One exception to this is the recurring leading tone (C#) in measures 6 and 23; these are a reference to Marathe's own recurring leading question "no?" Another exception is the arpeggiated major triad in m. 17 (corresponding with Marathe saying "U.S.A.") which references the opening notes of the American national anthem "The Star-Spangled Banner."

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 107.

1 Dm Gm<sup>6</sup>/D

Make a - muse - ment all you wish. But choose with care.

A<sup>7</sup>/D A<sup>7</sup>/C<sup>#</sup>

You are what you love. No?

D<sup>7</sup>/C Gm

This, is it not the choice of the most su - preme im -

E<sup>b</sup> A<sup>7</sup>(sus4) A<sup>7</sup>

por - - - - - tance?

16 Dm A<sup>+</sup>7(<sup>#</sup>9)/C<sup>#</sup> F/C Bm<sup>7</sup>(b5)

Who tea - ches your U - S - A chil - dren how to choose their tem - ple? For

E<sup>7</sup>/G<sup>#</sup> E<sup>7</sup>(sus4) A(sus4) A<sup>7</sup> Dm D(sus2) A<sup>7</sup>

this choice de - ter - mines all else. No?

Fig. 6.1: "Hillside Rendezvous II" melody compared with source text

The harmony of this piece is a notable contrast to the other compositions in this thesis as it is almost entirely diatonic to D minor (with a few exceptions, e.g. the neapolitan chord in mm. 12–13). It is also mostly triadic, with sevenths only appearing on dominant chords (with the exception of m. 19) (Fig 6.2).

mm. 1–2	3–4	5–7	8–9	10–11	12–13	14–15
Dm	Gm <sup>6</sup>	A <sup>7</sup>	D <sup>7</sup> /C	Gm	E <sup>b</sup>	A <sup>7</sup>
Dm: i	iv	V <sup>7</sup>	V <sup>7</sup> /iv	iv	bII (N)	V <sup>7</sup>

m. 16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Dm	A <sup>7</sup> /C <sup>#</sup>	F/C	Bm <sup>7</sup> b5	E <sup>7</sup> /G <sup>#</sup>	A <sup>7</sup>	Dm	A <sup>7</sup>
i	V <sup>7</sup>	bIII	vi dim	V <sup>7</sup> /V	V <sup>7</sup>	i	V <sup>7</sup>

Fig. 6.2: "Hillside Rendezvous II" harmonic analysis

# Hillside Rendezvous II

Marathe

Brad Cheeseman

Slow Waltz

1

Piano

*mp*

*Red.*

Pno.

Pno.

Pno.

*mf*

*mp*

*rit.*

16

3

3

3

## CHAPTER 7

### THE WRAITH HIMSELF

"The Wraith Himself" is a straight 8ths jazz composition for bass clarinet, trombone, piano, bass and drum set. It is titled after the family nickname for Incandenza ("Himself") and is based on the pivotal chapter of *Infinite Jest* in which a hospital-confined, incapacitated Don Gately (represented in the music by the trombone) is visited by the wraith of the late James Incandenza (represented by the bass clarinet). This particular scene was chosen as the basis for "The Wraith Himself" as it embodies many of the novel's dominant themes, including isolation and the "unfilled desire to communicate" that Lee Konstantinou considers to be one of the core concepts of *Infinite Jest*.<sup>54</sup>

During this visit, Incandenza discloses to Gately that he created the endlessly entertaining film "Infinite Jest," (cf. Chapters 1, 4) in order to communicate with his son and to "reverse thrust on [Hal]'s fall into the womb of solipsism, anhedonia, death in life." He also reveals that the film was created as "a way to say I am so very, very, sorry" to his son.<sup>55</sup> Compare this statement with the film's lead actress explaining that her lines in the film were "various apologies. ... There were at least twenty minutes of permutations of 'I'm sorry.'"<sup>56</sup>

"The Wraith Himself" begins with the rhythm section softly improvising in D minor,

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54 Lee Konstantinou, "No Bull: David Foster Wallace and Postironic Belief," in *The Legacy of David Foster Wallace*, ed. Samuel Cohen and Lee Konstantinou (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012), 85.

55 Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 838–839.

56 *Ibid.*, 939.

representing the background noise of the scene's hospital environment. Eventually, the bass clarinet begins playing a melody (m. 1), which seems to float freely over the rhythm section improvisation; this was inspired by both Reid Anderson's "Silence is the Question,"<sup>57</sup> which features a rubato piano melody played against textural, rubato rhythm section accompaniment, and Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman,"<sup>58</sup> which has similar rhythmic qualities. This bass clarinet melody is based on the same three-note "J.O.I." pitch series that was developed for "The American Century..." (cf. Chapter 5).

Because these three notes belong to a diminished scale, which consists of symmetrically repeating minor- and major-second intervals, they can be freely transposed to three other positions within the same scale (Fig. 7.1). This form of internal modulation is used here, along with octave displacement, to create several variations on this melodic cell throughout the piece (Fig. 7.2).



Fig. 7.1: Half-whole diminished scale and related diatonic seventh chords

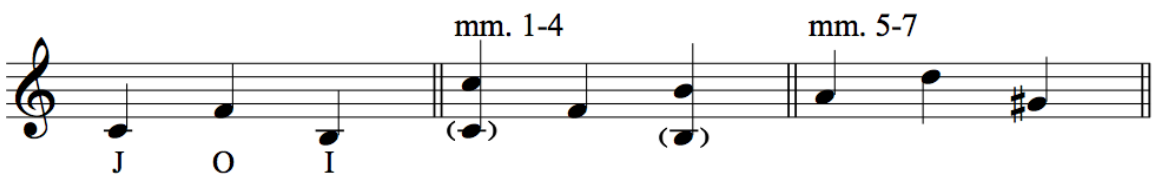


Fig. 7.2: J.O.I. melodic cell in "The Wraith Himself"

The slow, sustained nature of the bass clarinet melody contrasts the textural playing

57 The Bad Plus, *These Are the Vistas*, Columbia CK 87040, 2003, compact disc.

58 Ornette Coleman, *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, Atlantic SD 1317, 1959, LP.



work in life (e.g. "*Acciactura* and *alembic*, *Latrodectus Mactans* and *neutral density point*") are sometimes forced into Gately's head with a "roaring and unwilling force" that is described as "somehow violating, a sort of lexical rape."<sup>61</sup> The abrupt dynamic shift that follows (m. 29) makes this transition more dramatic and also marks the beginning of a new section (mm. 29-44). This second section continues to express the interactions between Incandenza and Gately through a development of the wraith theme.

The melodic phrases that make up the final section of the melody (mm. 45–68) represent the various apologies in Incandenza's film (described earlier in this chapter). The three-note cell that leads into this section represents the phrase "I'm sorry" (Fig. 7.4), while the bass clarinet melodies from mm. 53–59 are derived from the phrase "I am so very, very sorry" (Fig 7.5).



Fig. 7.4: Musical apology 1



Fig. 7.5: Musical apology 2

During the second set of musical apologies, a modified version of the "Gately theme" is introduced. This variation lowers the first note of the previous cell by one octave to emphasize the upward trajectory of both the melody and the character (Fig. 7.6, next page). A third variation of this melody later appears in "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid."

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 832.



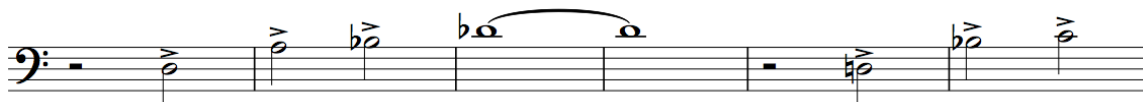


Fig. 7.6: Modified "Gately theme" in "The Wraith Himself" (mm. 55–60)

This piece features an extended trombone solo beginning at m. 69. This represents the related chapter's transition into a separate Gately-centric chapter (as the trombone represents Gately in this composition) and the diminishing role of the wraith in the story. The static D minor harmony for the first part of the solo is a representation of Gately's hospital-bound stasis, while the cued section that follows provides additional harmony for the soloist (which is based on the harmony of mm. 15–28). During this second section, the bass clarinet plays a background melody that is a rhythmically augmented variation of the wraith theme; this was inspired by the solo background figures in Chris Tarry's "An Unlikely U.F.O."<sup>62</sup>

The piano's lone, unsupported statement of the wraith theme in the coda, combined with the unresolved secondary dominant chord that concludes the piece, represents a conclusion to the wraith's story. This final dominant chord is used as a pivot chord to transition into "Hillside Rendezvous III."

62 Chris Tarry, *Almost Certainly Dreaming* Chris Tarry Group, Nineteen–Eight Records, 2007, digital file.

# The Wraith Himself

Brad Cheeseman

**Introduction** **Open**

Bass Clarinet

Trombone

Piano *p* textural improvisation in Dm

Bass *p* textural improvisation in Dm

Drum Set *p* brushes textural improvisation

**Straight 8ths**  
♩=120

1 Bass clarinet begins when ready

B. Cl. *mp* follow bass clarinet cue

Tbn. Dm continue improvising; follow cue Dm<sup>6</sup>

Pno. (bass clarinet cue) *mp* Dm continue improvising; follow cue Dm<sup>6</sup>

Bass *mp* Dm continue improvising; follow cue Dm<sup>6</sup>

Dr. continue improvising; follow cue

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

$D7(\sharp 11)$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

$D7(\sharp 11)$   $D7(\sharp 9)$

### A Tempo

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Dm Dm<sup>7(b9)</sup> Dm

Dm Dm<sup>7(b9)</sup> Dm

**15**

B. Cl. *mf*  
play

Tbn. *mp*

Pno. *mp* L.H. comps  
Am<sup>7</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup>/A F#m<sup>11</sup>

Bass *mp*  
Am<sup>7</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup>/A F#m<sup>11</sup>  
play time

Dr. *mp*  
play time

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno. Bm<sup>7</sup> C#<sup>7</sup>/B F#m/A Dmaj<sup>7</sup>/A

Bass Bm<sup>7</sup> C#<sup>7</sup>/B F#m/A Dmaj<sup>7</sup>/A

Dr.

**25**

B. Cl.  $D\flat\text{maj}7(\sharp 5)$  build to cacophony

Tbn.  $D\flat\text{maj}7(\sharp 5)$  build to cacophony *ff*

Pno.  $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $Cm^7$   $D\flat\text{maj}7(\sharp 5)$  build to cacophony *mf* *ff*

Bass  $B\flat\text{maj}7$   $Cm^7$   $D\flat\text{maj}7(\sharp 5)$  build to cacophony *mf* *ff*

Dr. busy playing; build to cacophony *mf* *ff*

**29**

B. Cl. *sub. mp*

Pno.  $B\flat m^6$   $F\text{maj}7/A$  light fill *sub. mp*  $F\text{maj}7/A$

Bass *mp* *sim.*

Dr. stirring brushes *mp*

B. Cl.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

E7/G#

Am/G

light fill

37

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

*mp*

F#m9(b5)

B7

B7(#9)

F#m9(b5)

B7

B7(#9)

*slight crescendo*







B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

$G^{\#}m^{11}$   $B^{\flat}maj7$

$G^{\#}m^{11}$   $B^{\flat}maj7$

⊕ To Coda

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

$Bm7(b5)$   $C^9(sus4)$   $C^{\#}o7$

$Bm7(b5)$   $C^9(sus4)$   $C^{\#}o7$

$f$

$f$

$f$

58

B. Cl.

*mp*

Tbn.

*mp*

Dm

Pno.

*mp*

Bass

*mp*

Dr.

stirring brushes

*mp*

solo pickup  
Dm

sparse comping

**69** **Trombone Solo**

Dm

Open

Tbn.

*cresc. as necessary as solo builds*

Pno.

Dm

comp for trombone solo

*cresc. as necessary as solo builds*

Bass

Dm

*cresc. as necessary as solo builds*

Dr.

*cresc. as necessary as solo builds*

On Cue

73

(solo background)

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Am<sup>7</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup>/A F<sup>#</sup>m<sup>7</sup>

Am<sup>7</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup>/A F<sup>#</sup>m<sup>7</sup>

Am<sup>7</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup>/A F<sup>#</sup>m<sup>7</sup>

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Bm<sup>7</sup> C<sup>#</sup>7(b<sup>9</sup>)/B F<sup>#</sup>m/A B<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup>

Bm<sup>7</sup> C<sup>#</sup>7(b<sup>9</sup>)/B F<sup>#</sup>m/A B<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup>

Bm<sup>7</sup> C<sup>#</sup>7(b<sup>9</sup>)/B F<sup>#</sup>m/A B<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup>

83

D $\flat$ maj7(#5)

D.S. al Coda

B. Cl. *f* *ff*  
D $\flat$ maj7(#5)

Tbn. *f* *ff*  
D $\flat$ maj7(#5)

Pno. *f* *ff*  
D $\flat$ maj7(#5)

Bass *f* *ff*  
D $\flat$ maj7(#5)

Dr. *f* *ff*

Coda

B. Cl. flutter

Tbn. *mp* *ppp* *out*

Pno. *mp* Dm E7(b9)/D

Bass *mp* stirring brushes *out*

Dr. *mp*

## CHAPTER 8

### HILLSIDE RENDEZVOUS III: MARATHE AND STEEPLY

"Hillside Rendezvous III" is a composition for piano, bass and drums in the key of A minor. It is influenced by the structural organization of the final movement of Chris Tarry's "Three Short Stories." Like Tarry's composition, it is comprised of a repeating piano figure, a melody, and a countermelody, each introduced on subsequent repetitions of the song form. Both pieces grow in dynamics and intensity through their expanding instrumentation and the textural accompaniment in the drums.

Throughout "Hillside Rendezvous III," the piano's right hand plays a repeating melodic figure that is a development of m. 9 of "Hillside Rendezvous II." This fifteen-bar melody uses the same technique as the previous "Hillside Rendezvous" movements to adapt the following lines spoken by Marathe:

Someone taught that temples are for fanatics only and took away the temples and promised there was no need for temples. And now there is no shelter. And no map for finding the shelter of a temple. And you all stumble about in the dark, this confusion of permissions. The without-end pursuit of a happiness of which someone let you forget the old things which made happiness possible. How is it you say: *"Anything is going?"*<sup>63</sup> (Fig. 8.1; next page)<sup>64</sup>

The organization of notes in this melody is informed by the tintinnabuli technique developed by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. This compositional technique features one melodic voice (or group of voices) exclusively arpeggiating the notes of the tonic chord,

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63 Ibid., 319–320.

64 Parentheses in this figure show where pauses in the recitation of the text were replaced with notes.

while a second voice (or group of voices) moves by step.<sup>65</sup> In the piano accompaniment figure of "Hillside Rendezvous III," each note that falls on a downbeat descends diatonically by step,<sup>66</sup> while upbeat is part of the tonic triad A minor (Fig 8.2).

Some-one taught that tem-ples are for\_\_\_ fa-na tics on-ly and took\_\_\_ a-way the tem-ples and  
 prom-ised there was no need for tem ples. And now there is no shel-ter. And no map for find- ing\_ the  
 shel ter of a tem- ple. And you all stum-ble a-bout in the dark, this con-fus-ion of per-miss  
 ions. The with-out-end pur-suit of a hap-pi-ness of which some-one let you for-get the old things which  
 made hap - pi - ness pos - si - ble. How is it you say: "An - y - thing is go- ing?"

Fig. 8.1: Comparison of "Hillside Rendezvous III" piano R.H. with source text

top voice moves by step  
 bottom voice arpeggiates tonic triad

Fig. 8.2: Demonstration of tintinnabuli style in "Hillside Rendezvous III"

The bass melody that begins at m. 16 is a slightly modified reprise of the "Hillside Rendezvous I" melody (cf. Fig. 4.2), here augmented rhythmically. After completing one full statement of this melody, the bass and left hand of the piano play a brief melodic phrase together that is based on the piano's right hand melody.

65 David Pinkerton II, "Tintinnabulation," David Pinkerton's Arvo Pärt Information Archive, last modified 1996, accessed October 27, 2014, <http://www.arvopart.org/tintinnabulation.html>.

66 The F natural is skipped here to avoid unwanted  $\flat 9$  dissonance with any Es in the other melodic parts.

The third and final section (beginning at m. 22) introduces a counterpoint melody in the piano's left hand. It is derived from another statement by Marathe who, commenting on his belief that Steeply is "a fanatic of desire [and] a slave to [his own] individual subjective narrow self's sentiments" says: "You in such a case have nothing. You stand on nothing. Nothing of ground or rock beneath your feet. You fall; you blow here and there. How does one say: 'tragically, involuntarily, lost'"<sup>67</sup> (Fig. 8.3).

You in such a case have no thing... You stand on no thing... No thing of  
ground or rock be - neath your feet. You fall; you blow here and there. How does one say:  
tra - gic - ally, in - vol - un - tar - i - ly lost?

Fig. 8.3: "Hillside Rendezvous III" piano L.H. (mm. 22–36) compared with source text

The frequency of the word "nothing" in this passage is emphasized through the use of a recurring, descending E–A (mm. 24, 26, 27). The repetition of this interval adds weight to the words that these melodic fragments represent. Similar devices have been used in other pieces based on literature and/or poetry, such as John Coltrane's tone poem "Psalm,"<sup>68</sup> which uses a "formula characterized by a minor third or fifth descending to the tonic" to represent the phrase "thank you God."<sup>69</sup>

The perfect authentic cadence at the end of "Hillside Rendezvous III" reflects a conclusion to the meeting between Marathe and Steeply that these pieces represent.

67 Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 108.

68 John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*, Impulse! A-77, 1965, LP.

69 Lewis Porter, "John Coltrane's 'A Love Supreme': Jazz Improvisation as Composition," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38, no. 3 (Autumn 1985): 616–619.

# Hillside Rendezvous III

Marathe and Steeply

Brad Cheeseman

1  $\text{♩} = 85$  Play 4x

Piano *p*

Bass

Drum Set

Pno.

Dr.

*sim.*

*ppp*

7

Pno. *mp*

Bass *mp*

Dr. *mp*

play texturally (follow bass cue)



Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

22

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

*mf*

bring out L.H.

*mf*

*mf*

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

The first system of music features a piano part with a continuous eighth-note melody in the right hand and a bass line with a half-note pattern in the left hand. The bass part consists of a steady eighth-note rhythm. The drum part is a simple pattern of eighth notes.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

The second system continues the piano melody and bass line. The piano part includes some phrasing slurs. The bass part has a few notes with accidentals. The drum part maintains its eighth-note pattern.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

rit.

The third system concludes the piece with a ritardando (rit.) marking. The piano part features a final phrase with a fermata. The bass part also has a fermata. The drum part ends with a final pattern and a fermata. The system concludes with a double bar line.

## CHAPTER 9

### SCALING MT. DILAUDID

"Scaling Mt. Dilaudid" is a composition for soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone, trombone, piano, an extended-range bass instrument (e.g. upright bass with C-extension or 5-string electric bass) and drum set. The music is partially influenced by the music of Nik Bartsch, as well as Stravinsky's "Spring Rounds."<sup>70</sup> The composition is based on the closing chapter of *Infinite Jest* in which the recovering addict Don Gately relives his "bottom" (i.e. the moment after which he decided to pursue recovery).

In a flashback set nearly eight years before the main narrative, Gately binges on what is described as a "mountain of Dilaudid"<sup>71</sup>—a literal pile of the opioid hydromorphone hydrochloride—with Gene Fackelmann, a companion who had stolen the narcotics from a local bookie. This bookie sends a gangster to violently punish Fackelmann for his thievery but spares Gately (recognizing his innocence in the theft) and instead administers an additional drug which results in a euphoric, "obscenely pleasant"<sup>72</sup> high. "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid" recreates the contrast between Fackelmann's torture and Gately's high through its use of melody, rhythm, texture, harmony and form.

To imitate the opioid effects of the Dilaudid, a drug which Gately describes as making him feel "mute and sodden,"<sup>73</sup> the introductory measures of "Scaling Mt.

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70 Particularly the interpretations by jazz ensembles like the Bad Plus (*Rite of Spring*) and Esbjorn Svensson Trio (*Good Morning Susie Soho*)

71 Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 933.

72 Ibid., 981.

73 Ibid., 915.

Dilaudid" focus on the use of musical space (a term that partially refers to both the density and volume of the music<sup>74</sup>) rather than harmony and textures; the drums play quarter note and half note rhythms (with some ornamentation) while the bass and piano play a slow, sustained bass line without chordal accompaniment (Fig. 9.1).

**1**

The musical score for Figure 9.1 shows three staves: Piano (Pno.), Bass, and Drums (Dr.). The Piano and Bass staves are in bass clef and 4/4 time, featuring long, sustained notes. The Drums staff is in treble clef and 4/4 time, featuring a rhythmic pattern of quarter and half notes. The score is divided into three sections: measures 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12. The first section is in 4/4 time, the second is in 8/8 time, and the third is in 4/4 time. The Drums part includes a 'like echo' annotation over measures 5-8.

Fig. 9.1: Example of the use of space in "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid"

The sustained notes of this bass line are broken up every fourth measure with dotted quarter note interjections. These come in various groupings: first there is a pickup measure of four dotted quarters, then three (m. 4), four (m. 8) and finally two (m. 12). The changing length of these measures is based on Fackelmann's limited verbal abilities while under the effects of Dilaudid; he responds to questions almost exclusively with variations on "that's a goddamn lie" (e.g. "goddamn lie," "a goddamn lie," etc.)<sup>75</sup> (Fig. 9.2). Furthermore, these dotted quarter notes, when played without any rhythmic ornamentation by the drums, sound as rubato quarter notes, reflecting the intangible nature of the Dilaudid high.

<sup>74</sup> Robert P. Morgan, "Musical Time/Musical Space," *Critical Inquiry* 6, no. 3 (Spring, 1980): 528.

<sup>75</sup> Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 935.



Fig. 9.2: "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid" bass line compared with Fackelmann quotes

After one complete statement of the bass line, the melody is introduced at m. 16 by the soprano saxophone, signifying the arrival of the ganger. The rhythmic complexity (i.e. the 4:3 rhythms in mm. 16, 24, 32) and high melodic range contrast the bass line and suggest the arrival of a character who does not belong in the scene, adding to the tension of the piece. This is supported by the ambiguous tonality which is created through the use of the diminished scale in the bass line, melody and harmonic accompaniment throughout this section (cf. Chapter 7). While the melody is based on the same diminished scale as the bass line, it gravitates more towards the tensions and upper extensions of the harmony (Fig. 9.3).



Fig. 9.3: "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid" melody (mm. 16-29) with harmony and tension details

The piano accompaniment throughout this section is based on the slow, brooding feeling found in the "Spring Rounds" movement of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, which has

been previously interpreted by jazz artists like the Bad Plus<sup>76</sup> and Esbjörn Svensson Trio.<sup>77</sup> Each of these elements add tension to the section and foreshadow the ensuing demise of Fackelmann.

When measures 17–32 are repeated, a countermelody is introduced in the trombone part; as in "The Wraith Himself," this represents Gately's presence in the scene. The trombone melody from mm. 17–34 can therefore be seen as Gately trying to reason with the gangster, suggesting that they "get cleaned up real quick and ... work out an accord."<sup>78</sup> The soprano saxophone melody is also now doubled one octave lower by the tenor saxophone as a means of supporting and adding fullness to that melody.

A new section begins at m. 34 that represents Gately's new drug-induced euphoria, a feeling that he describes as "less high than disembodied."<sup>79</sup> This section is a stark contrast to the prior section; while the previous saxophone melody was dissonant, highly rhythmic and with a generally descending melodic orientation, this new section is mostly diatonic, rhythmically even, and gradually ascending. Furthermore, the harmony in this section is more consonant than the shifting diminished harmony from the previous section, and the rhythm section's textural playing contrasts the prior section's slow, sustained rhythms. The melody here is a variation on the Gately theme introduced in "The Wraith Himself" (cf. Fig. 7.6), now beginning with step-wise motion, rather than by leap, representing an early stage in the character's recovery. The melody begins each phrase on a tension of the Db major harmony (e.g. maj7, #9, b9) before resolving upwards by step, symbolizing Gately's eventual ascension from his addiction (Fig. 9.4, next page).

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<sup>76</sup> The Bad Plus, *The Rite of Spring*, Sony Masterworks 88843024052, 2014, digital file.

<sup>77</sup> Hidden track on Esbjörn Svensson, *Good Morning Susie Soho*, Esbjörn Svensson Trio, ACT 9009–2, 2000, compact disc.

<sup>78</sup> Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, 978.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 981.

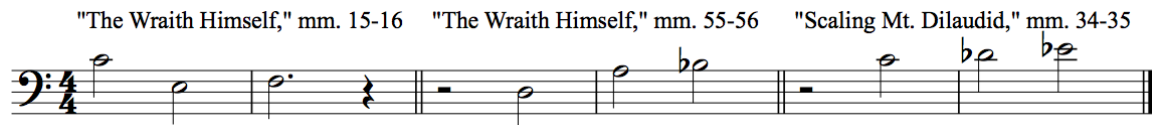


Fig. 9.4: Comparison of "Gately theme" variations

The solo section of "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid" is based on the form of the melody, with two 16-bar sections of dissonance and one 14-bar consonant section. The first two sections represent Fackelmann's demise and feature collective improvisation—representing the scene's unfolding chaos—while getting progressively louder with each repetition of the form. The third section represents Gately's perspective and reprises the "Gately theme" variation of mm. 34-47, now with the saxophones playing improvised textural backgrounds. To contrast the first two sections of the solo form, this section gets progressively softer with each repeat and, on the final repeat, leads directly into the composition's "free" ending.

Unlike the previous improvisatory pieces in this suite, "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid" does not reprise the melody after the solos. This parallels *Infinite Jest*'s notorious non-ending in which, following Gately's "Mt. Dilaudid" flashback, the novel abruptly ends, leaving many plot lines unresolved. Frank Cioffi suggests that Wallace's decision to end the novel with such a violent flashback puts the reader in "the position of an addict who no longer has any options left" and is forced to read through the violence for the faintest hope of narrative resolution.<sup>80</sup> "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid," the last in this series of compositions, leaves the listener in this same position; it too lacks resolution and its final section, the softest of the solo form, suggests a climax that never comes.

<sup>80</sup> Cioffi, "An Anguish Become Thing," 175.



# Scaling Mt. Dilaudid

Brad Cheeseman

**Straight 8ths**  
♩=110

Soprano Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Trombone

Piano

*mp* L.H. 8vb throughout

Extended Range Bass

*mp*

Drum Set

*mp*

**1**

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

like echo

The musical score is arranged in three staves. The top staff is for Piano (Pno.) in bass clef, the middle for Bass in bass clef, and the bottom for Drums (Dr.) in a drum clef. The Pno. and Bass parts are identical, featuring a melodic line in 4/4 time that changes to 6/4 for the final two measures. The Dr. part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes in 4/4 and sixteenth notes in 6/4. The piece concludes with a *sim.* (fine) marking.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

*sim.*

The musical score consists of three staves: Pno. (Piano), Bass, and Dr. (Drum). The time signature is 4/4. The Pno. and Bass staves both feature a 3-measure rest, indicated by a large '3' over the staff. The Dr. staff shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the first two measures, followed by a 3-measure rest in the third measure, and then a single eighth note in the fourth measure. The Pno. and Bass staves are both in the bass clef, and the Dr. staff is in the treble clef.

[illegible]

**17** gradual bend

S.S. (2nd x only; w/ sop.)

T.S. (2nd x only)

Tbn.

Pno.  $C7(\sharp 11)$

Bass

Dr.

S.S.

T.S.

Tbn.

Pno.  $C7(\sharp 11) A7(\sharp 11)$

Bass

Dr.

S.S.

T.S.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

$E_b7(\sharp 11)$

1. make wind sounds

S.S.

T.S.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

1. low "rumbling" toms

$C^{13}(\sharp 11)$  high clusters

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*





**48** Collective Improvisation

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) solo frenetically (all figs. optional to 76)

*mf-f-ff*

S.S.

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) solo frenetically (all figs. optional to 76)

*mf-f-ff*

T.S.

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) solo frenetically (all figs. optional to 76)

*mf-f-ff*

Tbn.

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) comp

*mf-f-ff*

Pno.

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

*mf-f-ff*

Bass

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

*mf-f-ff*

Dr.

*mf-f-ff* simile

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) *A*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

S.S.

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) *A*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

T.S.

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) *A*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

Tbn.

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) *A*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

Pno.

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) *A*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

Bass

*C*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>) *A*7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

Dr.

$E\flat 7(\sharp 11)$   
 S.S.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $E\flat 7(\sharp 11)$   
 T.S.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $E\flat 7(\sharp 11)$   
 Tbn.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $E\flat 7(\sharp 11)$   
 Pno.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $E\flat 7(\sharp 11)$   
 Bass  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $E\flat 7(\sharp 11)$   
 Dr.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

$C^{13}(\sharp 11)$   
 S.S.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $C^{13}(\sharp 11)$   
 T.S.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $C^{13}(\sharp 11)$   
 Tbn.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $C^{13}(\sharp 11)$   
 Pno.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $C^{13}(\sharp 11)$   
 Bass  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   
 $C^{13}(\sharp 11)$   
 Dr.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$



64

64

C7( $\sharp 11$ )<sub>9</sub>

S.S.

T.S.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

C7( $\sharp 11$ )<sub>9</sub> A7( $\sharp 11$ )<sub>9</sub>

S.S.

T.S.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

Eb7( $\sharp 11$ )  
 S.S.

Eb7( $\sharp 11$ )  
 T.S.

Eb7( $\sharp 11$ )  
 Tbn.

Eb7( $\sharp 11$ ) Dbmaj13  
 Pno.

Eb7( $\sharp 11$ ) Dbmaj13  
 Bass

Eb7( $\sharp 11$ )  
 Dr.

76

Dbmaj13 textural backgrounds  
 S.S.

Dbmaj13 textural backgrounds  
 T.S.

mf-mp-p cresc.  
 Tbn.

mf-mp-p  
 Pno.

play in a broken style  
 Bass

mf-mp-p  
 Dbmaj13 textural playing  
 Dr.

mf-mp-p

(lead)

*mf*

S.S.

T.S.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

1.2. C<sup>7</sup>alt.

S.S.

T.S.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

1.2. C<sup>7</sup>alt.

3. C<sup>7</sup>alt. "free" sounds

S.S.

T.S.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bass

Dr.

decay to low rumble

decay to low rumble

decay to low rumble

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

This series of compositions is a detailed addition to the growing body of artistic work celebrating both David Foster Wallace and *Infinite Jest* and also demonstrates a number of possible methods for composing music based on literature or other existing artworks. The application of the compositional tools and techniques discussed in the previous chapters, combined with a close, critical reading of the source material, could be used as a framework to create additional pieces inspired by *Infinite Jest*, based on additional scenes and chapters of the novel.

While these compositions are not intended to be a definitive interpretation of the novel, they do offer insight into one reader's experience with the unique world that Wallace created. Through live performances and recordings of these compositions, other readers will be able to engage with the music in unique ways, reflecting their own personal experiences with *Infinite Jest*.

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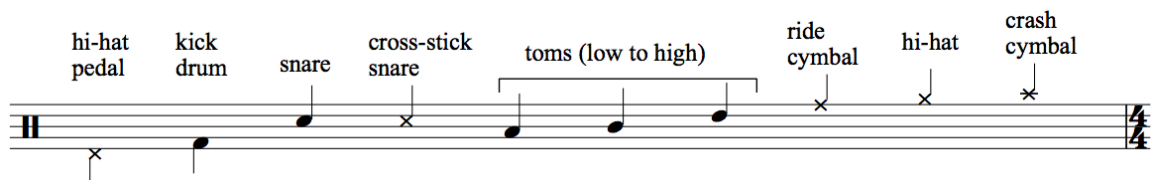
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## APPENDIX A

### DRUM NOTATION SYSTEM

Given the variety of conventions for drum notation,<sup>81</sup> the notation system used in this thesis needs to be clarified. The placement of instruments on the staff is largely in accordance with the Percussive Arts Society standard.<sup>82</sup> In this system: all cymbals (e.g. hi-hat, ride cymbal, crash cymbal) are notated with "x" note heads; all drums (e.g. kick drum, snare, toms) are written with standard note heads, except for the cross-stick snare which is marked in the same space but with an "x" note head. All instruments played with the feet (e.g. hi-hat pedal, kick drum) have downward-pointing stems, while all instruments played with the hands (e.g. snare, toms, cymbals) have upward stems (Fig. 11.1). This notation is used when the drummer must play a specific passage.



*Fig. 11.1: Drum instruments on the staff*

Various notational methods are used when improvisation is involved (Fig. 11.2). To indicate general improvisation, either for accompaniment (i.e. "play time") or solos, the beats in any given measure are marked with beam-less slashes. This indicates to the performer that they are to improvise as directed. If the drummer is to perform specific

<sup>81</sup> Jonathan Feist, "Drum Set Notation in Finale," accessed October 14, 2014, [http://www.berkleeshares.com/songwriting\\_\\_arranging/drum\\_notation\\_finale](http://www.berkleeshares.com/songwriting__arranging/drum_notation_finale).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 3.

rhythms without embellishment or without specific drums, the rhythm is written with beamed slashes. Some notation systems simply use a standard note head on the middle line of the staff to represent rhythmic notation<sup>83</sup> but, as using a standard note could be confused for playing one of the toms, rhythmic slashes are less ambiguous and are in accordance with the notation standards of the other instruments. To indicate either a melodic cue or rhythmic hits which are to be played while the drums also play time, slash marks are written within the staff while the rhythm of the cues or hits are written with standard note heads above the staff. As there is no drum represented by a standard note head above the top line of the staff (only the cymbals, which are marked with "x" note heads), there can be no confusion.

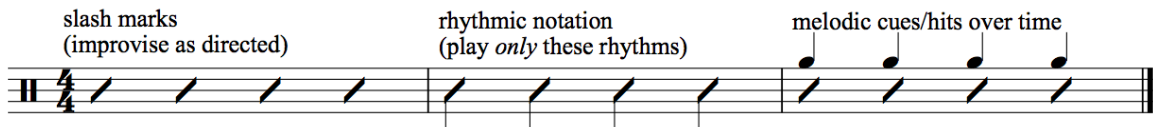


Fig. 11.2: Improvisation in drum notation

Lastly, chord symbols are frequently provided above the staff during solo sections so that the drummer can associate long passages with the harmonic content of the section (Fig. 11.3).

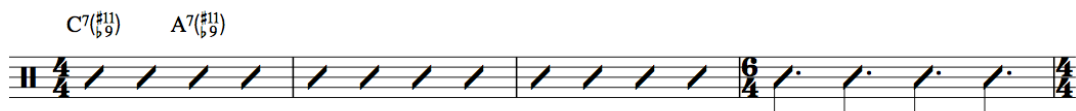
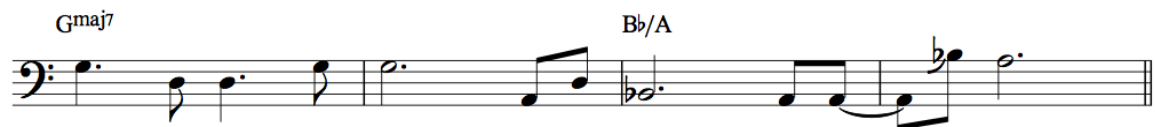


Fig. 11.3: Chord symbols in "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid" drum part (mm. 52–55)

83 Bill Dobbins, *Jazz Arranging and Composing: A Linear Approach* (Advance Music, 1986), 37.

## Straight 8ths Jazz

Some of the performance indications in this thesis can be associated with this style, such as "broken-style bass line," which appears in a number of the pieces; this is an indication for the bass player to play in an even eighth notes style which is neither a walking line nor a common rhythmic pattern or figure (i.e. a bossa nova) (Fig. 12.1).



## "Free" Playing and Textural Accompaniment

In his book *Free Jazz*, Ekkehard Jost makes a distinction between melodic line playing and what Archie Shepp calls "*energy-sound*"<sup>86</sup> playing (referring to "the

86 Ekkehard Jost, *Free Jazz* (Da Capo Press, 1994), 71.

increasing trend in collective improvisation ... toward playing with tone colour and away from motivic improvisation"<sup>87</sup>). Several performance indications in this thesis are related to this style of playing, including those which indicate "textural" playing (e.g. "The Wraith Himself") or "free" playing (e.g. "Scaling Mt. Dilaudid").

Textural playing can be compared to the "sheets of sound" style associated with the music of John Coltrane, in which a rapid succession of notes and broken chords "can be described only as a vertical and horizontal occurrence ... and not as individual tones."<sup>88</sup> Textural piano accompaniment, for example, can therefore be understood as the harmony being played with either rapid arpeggiation or tremolo effects, yet in a manner that is without any distinct rhythmic or melodic qualities. Likewise, textural drumming might consist of cymbal swells and/or rapid playing that is heard more as an instance of sound or energy, rather than an organized structure of notes and rhythms.<sup>89</sup>

Indications in the scores referring to "free" playing do not simply suggest improvisation without formal harmonic structures; these are used as shorthand to suggest improvisatory styles based on tone colour and/or energy-sound playing (as discussed above), which are common in free jazz. For the performers, this comparison quickly brings to mind the playing styles of musicians like Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, and (post-1965) John Coltrane, allowing them to respond appropriately.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>89</sup> Examples of these devices can be heard on John Coltrane's "Psalm" (cf. Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*).