

**INSPIRATION TO FRUITION:
FOUR COMPOSITIONS FOR JAZZ QUINTET**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines four of my recent compositions for jazz quintet. The compositions were conceived to comprise a collection or suite, with each piece inspired by the work of a master of a particular creative discipline. Moved by the work of Haruki Murakami (literature), Wassily Kandinsky (painting), Jim Jarmusch (cinema) and Frank Gehry (architecture), I composed a piece as an homage to each of them. My intent was to convey through the compositions the mood, atmosphere and imagery communicated by these masters through their own art. I discuss the development of each of the compositions, as I moved from the compositional analogues to putting notes on paper. I describe specific concepts, structures and techniques I used in the process, and the motivating factors behind those decisions. I cite certain composers (present-day and deceased) whose work impacted my own, and illustrate the ways in which they informed my work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis demonstrates my process in composing four compositions for jazz quintet during the first four months of 2012. I see my work during that time as the continuation of a new direction for me as both a composer and an improviser, begun in 2010. I am grateful for a project grant from the Canada Council For The Arts that enabled me to study composition and improvisation privately in 2010/11 with American musicians Myra Melford and Jason Moran, significantly impacting both my mindset and methods.

I would like to thank the director of the Graduate Program in Music at York University, Michael Coghlan, professors David Mott, Trichy Sankaran and Dorothy De Val, and Graduate Program Assistant Tere Tilban-Rios. I am particularly grateful for the clear information, sage advice and humour of Barry Elmes, supervisor of this thesis. My friend and colleague David Occhipinti was a classmate in most of the MA courses I took at York, and I greatly appreciated our exchange of thoughts on the courses, laughter and espresso beverages.

Portuguese Water Dog puppy Peggy arrived midway through my studies at York, and provided a welcome distraction from the stress of undertaking the MA while continuing my work as a freelance musician and adjunct professor at Humber College. My greatest thanks go to my husband Kieran Overs, who was supportive and encouraging throughout the process, plying me with comfort food and helping me keep things in perspective.

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TRANSPOSDED SCORE

I READ IT SOMEWHERE...

NANCY L. WALKER
2012 SOCAN

STRAIGHT 8THS
♩ = 160

$E^b_{MA} 7(911)$

(Play this note, or improvise)

BASS CLARINET

ELECTRIC GUITAR

PIANO/DRUMS
Drums tacet
Drums enter with Afro-cuban groove>>>

ACOUSTIC BASS

B. CL.

E.GTR.

PIANO/DRUMS

A.B.

B^b MA⁷(#11) E^b MA⁷(#11)

B. CL. (Play these notes, or improvise)

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

You're a gentle human oscillator...

Drums tacet

A.B.

(A) - OPEN GUITAR SOLO -

B. CL. You're a gentle human oscillator... Drop out periodically, Breathe, and re-enter

(Use notes and intervals from B Major Scale / The lower register is your friend You are the unlikely hero, with nothing to prove)

E.GTR. Grad. decrescendo, fade out after 1st X (Bass Clarinet will keep playing)

PNO./DRUMS Drums re-enter (continue Afro-Cuban feel)

A.B.

B [On Cue] Grad. decrescendo...fade out after 2nd X

B. CL. $C^{\sharp}MIN^9$ B^2/D^{\sharp} $E^{\flat}9$ B^2

E.GTR. Keep soloing...

PNO./DRUMS $C^{\sharp}MIN^9$ B^2/D^{\sharp} $E^{\flat}9$ B^2

A.B. $C^{\sharp}MIN^9$ B^2/D^{\sharp} $E^{\flat}9$ B^2

16

4 X] **C**

B. CL. $G^{\sharp}MIN^{11}$ $F^{\sharp}6sus4$ F^{\sharp} $C^{\sharp}MIN^9$ B^2/D^{\sharp}

E.GTR. Keep soloing...

PNO./DRUMS $G^{\sharp}MIN^{11}$ $F^{\sharp}6sus4$ F^{\sharp} $C^{\sharp}MIN^9$ B^2/D^{\sharp}

A.B. $G^{\sharp}MIN^{11}$ $F^{\sharp}6sus4$ F^{\sharp} $C^{\sharp}MIN^9$ B^2/D^{\sharp}

20

1

B. CL.

E. GTR.

PHO./DRUMS

A.B.

24

E^b₉ B² G⁺_{MIN}¹¹ F⁺_{SUS}₄ F⁺

2

B. CL.

E. GTR.

PHO./DRUMS

A.B.

28

F⁺_{SUS}₄ F⁺ E^b_{MIN}⁹ E^b_{MIN}⁹

Rit....

End Solo!

D

B. CL.

E. GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

32

Drums tacet

Drums re-enter>>>

E - OPEN PIANO SOLO - (PIANO PLAYS CLUSTER RIFF 1ST AND LAST Xs)

B. CL.

E. GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

36

PIANO FLOURISH... (F)

B. CL.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS
Drums tacet

A.B.

- OPEN BASS CLARINET SOLO -

(G) F^{MA7(911)} E^{2/G#} B^{bMA7(911)} C^{MAJ7}
You're the unlikely hero

B. CL.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS
Drums enter>>>

A.B.

E^{bMAJ7(911)} D^{2/F#} A^{bMAJ7(911)} B^{bMAJ7}

E^{bMAJ7(911)} D^{2/F#} A^{bMAJ7(911)} B^{bMAJ7}

[On Cue]

(H)

F^bMA⁷(#11) E²/G[#] B^bMA⁷(#11) CMAJ⁷ F^bMA⁷(#11) E²/G[#] B^bMA⁷(#11) CMAJ⁷

Keep soloing...

End Solo]

B. CL.

E.GTR.

PHO./DRUMS

A.B.

47

B. CL.

E.GTR.

PHO./DRUMS

A.B.

49

Musical score for four instruments: B. CL., E. GTR., PNO./DRUMS, and A.B. The score is written on four staves. The B. CL. staff is in treble clef and contains rests. The E. GTR. staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth notes. The PNO./DRUMS staff consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs) and contains rests. The A.B. staff is in bass clef and contains rests. A measure number '51' is written below the first measure of each staff. The word 'FINE' is written at the end of the A.B. staff.

TRANPOSED SCORE

NIGHT ON EARTH

NANCY WALKER
2012 SOCAN

J = 200
- LIGHT HIP-HOP GROOVE -

Musical score for the first system, featuring four staves:

- BARITONE SAX.**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Rests for the first two measures, then plays a melodic line.
- ELECTRIC GUITAR**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Rests for the first two measures, then plays a melodic line.
- PIANO/DRUMS**: Grand staff (treble and bass clefs), 4/4 time. Rests for the first two measures, then plays a rhythmic accompaniment.
- ACOUSTIC BASS**: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Plays a steady eighth-note bass line.

Musical score for the second system, featuring four staves with performance instructions:

- B. SX.**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Starts with a circled **A** and the instruction: **- OPEN BASS SOLO -** Play quietly, but intensely, under solo. Ends with a circled **B** and the instruction: **- ON CUE -** (BASS GOES BACK TO LINE).
- E.GTR.**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Rests for the first two measures, then plays a melodic line. Instruction: *Play quietly, but intensely, under solo*.
- PNO./DRUMS**: Grand staff, 4/4 time. Rests for the first two measures, then plays a rhythmic accompaniment. Instruction: *Play quietly, but intensely, under solo*.
- A.B.**: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Rests for the first two measures, then plays a melodic line. Chord symbol **G⁷** is written above the staff.

- QUASI DRUM SOLO THROUGH NEXT SECTIONS

(REPEATS AS MARKED)

(C)

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

(D)

DRUMS TACET!

DRUMS IN!

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

Piano Tacet - Guitar/Bari cue only

(E) (PIANO ENTERS) (BASS ENTERS)

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

(F) **(G)** (GUITAR ENTERS)

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

(H) (PIANO AND BARI ENTER)

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

- SLOW SWING -
♩ = 100

Rit...

Rit...

Rit...

Rit...

Drums set new tempo quiet, brushes

- Piano and Drums only, until [J] -

(J) - OPEN GUITAR SOLO -

(K) - ON CUE -
(BASS ENTERS 1ST X, BARI 2ND X)
Play 2nd X Only

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

- Play as written -

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS


A.B.

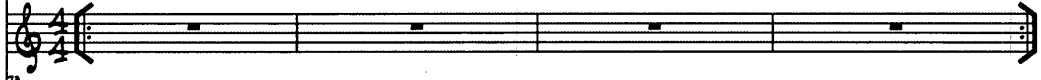
(FASTER)

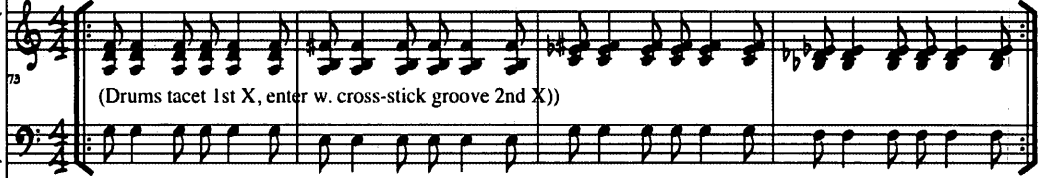
- STRAIGHT 8THS, UNDERLYING DBL-X FEEL -

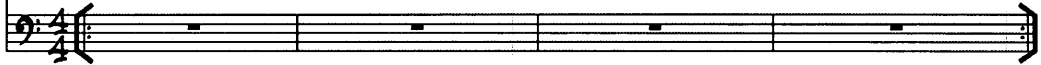
①

Play 2nd X Only

B. SX. 

E.GTR. 

PNO./DRUMS  (Drums tacet 1st X, enter w. cross-stick groove 2nd X)

A.B. 

- OPEN BARI SOLO -

②

E⁹SUS

C⁹SUS

A/DIN/E

D^{7(b13)}SUS

B. SX. 

E.GTR. 

PNO./DRUMS 

A.B. 

- ON CUE -
(GUITAR ENTERS - BARI JOINS GUIT. 3RD X)

Keep Soloing 1st and 2nd X
- play line 3rd X

3 X

Musical score for the first system. It consists of four staves: B.Sx. (Baritone Saxophone), E.GTR. (Electric Guitar), PNO./DRUMS (Piano/Drums), and A.B. (Alto Saxophone). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 5/4. The B.Sx. staff starts with a circled 'N' and contains a melodic line with some accidentals. The E.GTR. staff has a circled '21' and contains a melodic line. The PNO./DRUMS staff has a circled '21' and contains a rhythmic accompaniment. The A.B. staff has a circled '2' and contains a bass line. The system ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

$\text{♩} = 130$

0

A bit faster...

- LIGHT HIP-HOP GROOVE -
(GUITAR IN 1ST X, PIANO 2ND X)

A bit faster...

A bit faster...

- Drums Tacet -

Drums re-enter>>>

- Piano Tacet 1st X -

A bit faster...

Musical score for the second system. It consists of four staves: B.Sx., E.GTR., PNO./DRUMS, and A.B. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 130. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 5/4. The B.Sx. staff starts with a circled '0' and contains a melodic line. The E.GTR. staff has a circled '25' and contains a melodic line. The PNO./DRUMS staff has a circled '25' and contains a rhythmic accompaniment. The A.B. staff has a circled '25' and contains a bass line. The system includes performance instructions: 'A bit faster...' above the first three staves, '- LIGHT HIP-HOP GROOVE - (GUITAR IN 1ST X, PIANO 2ND X)' above the E.GTR. staff, '- Drums Tacet -' below the PNO./DRUMS staff, 'Drums re-enter>>>' below the PNO./DRUMS staff, and '- Piano Tacet 1st X -' below the PNO./DRUMS staff. The system ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

(P) - OPEN PIANO SOLO -

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

91

91

91

91

F MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ D^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ B^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ E^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ F MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ D MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ G MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾

F MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ D^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ B^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ E^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ F MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ D MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ G MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾

(Q) - ON CUE -
(GUITAR ENTERS)

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

97

97

97

97

Keep Soloing 1st X, Play Line 2nd X

F MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ D^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ B^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ E^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ F MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ D MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ G MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾

F MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ D^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ B^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ E^b MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ F MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ D MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾ G MA⁷⁽⁴⁵⁾

ACCELERANDO POCO A POCO...!

101

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A. B.

ORIGINAL TEMPO!

J = 200

109

B. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A. B.

Musical score for "Night on Earth" featuring four staves: B. Sax., E. Gtr., Pno./Drums, and A.B. The score includes guitar chords (A, F, D, G) and performance markings such as "Rit..." and "FINE".

B. Sax. 115

E. GTR. 115
A F D G A F D G

PNO./DRUMS 115

A.B.

Rit... FINE

SHADE OF MANY SHADES

TRANSPPOSED SCORE

NANCY WALKER
2012 SOCAN

STRAIGHT 8THS
♩ = 96

ALTO SAX.

ELECTRIC GUITAR

PIANO/DRUMS

ACOUSTIC BASS

(A) A. SAX.

E. GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

SHADE OF MANY SHADES

2

A. SX.
E.Gtr.
PNO./DRUMS
A.B.

9

A. SX.
E.Gtr.
PNO./DRUMS
A.B.

13
15

SHADE OF MANY SHADES

A. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

17

17

17

17

G^bMA7/F $E7(b9)$ G^bMA7/F E^bMIN7 B^b2/D

- Sticks -

(B)

A. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

21

21

21

21

$BMA7/B^b$ $B^b13(b9)$ G^bMAJ7 $G^b9(b5)$

SHADE OF MANY SHADES

4

A. SX.
25

E.GTR.
25

PNO./DRUMS
25

A.B.
25

*C*MA7(11) E^bMA7(45) D¹³SUS4 GMAJ7

- OPEN PIANO SOLO -
(PIANO PLAYS LINE 2X TO GO ON)

(C)

A. SX.

E.GTR.
29

PNO./DRUMS
29

A.B.
29

1 2 PICKUP TO BASS SOLO...

- OPEN BASS SOLO -
(QUIET, MOODY ACCOMPANIMENT)

①

1. 2. PICKUP TO ALTO BLOWING...

A. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

32

B^bMI7(b6) B^b13(411) E^bMIN7/B^b B^b2 B^b2

B^bMI7(b6) B^b13(411) E^bMIN7/B^b B^b2 B^b2

To beefier groove>>>

- OPEN: ALTO & GUITAR TRADE 8'S -
(TAKE 2ND ENDING LAST X ONLY ON CUE)

②

1. E^bMAJ7

A. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

37

A^bMAJ7/G G¹³(b9) E^bMAJ7 D^{b7}(42) A^bMA7(411) C⁹(b5) B¹³5b4 E^bMAJ7

B^bMAJ7/B^b B^b13(b9) G^bMAJ7 E7(42) C^bMA7(411) E^b9(b5) D¹³5b4 G^bMAJ7

B^bMAJ7/B^b B^b13(b9) G^bMAJ7 E7(42) C^bMA7(411) E^b9(b5) D¹³5b4 G^bMAJ7

B^bMAJ7/B^b B^b13(b9) G^bMAJ7 E7(42) C^bMA7(411) E^b9(b5) D¹³5b4 G^bMAJ7

SHADE OF MANY SHADES

6

2 E MAJ⁷ (F) A^b MA⁷/G G¹³(b9) E^b MAJ⁷ E^b9(b5)

A. SX.

45 G MAJ⁷ B MAJ⁷/B^b B^b13(b9) G^b MA⁷ G^b9(b5)

E.GTR.

45 G MAJ⁷ B MAJ⁷/B^b B^b13(b9) G^b MA⁷ G^b MAJ⁷

PNO./DRUMS

45 G MAJ⁷ Drums busier, and reinforce bass line

A.B.

45 G MAJ⁷

A MA⁷(#11) C MA⁷(#5) B¹³ MAJ⁷ E MAJ⁷

A. SX.

50 C MA⁷(#11) E^b MA⁷(#5) D¹³ MAJ⁷ G MAJ⁷

E.GTR.

50 C MA⁷(#11) E^b MA⁷(#5) D¹³ MAJ⁷ G MAJ⁷

PNO./DRUMS

50

A.B.

50

SHADE OF MANY SHADES

(G)

A. SX.

E.GTR.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

Drums quasi-solo until end, keep reinforcing bass line

FINE

TRANSPPOSED SCORE

FOLDING

NANCY L. WALKER
2012 SOCAN

CHORALE-LIKE $J = 80$

SOPRANO SAX.

GUITAR

PIANO

ACOUSTIC BASS

DRUMS

Tacet - Piano cue only Soprano enters:

(A) Reverently
(more expressively on repeat)

S. SX.

GTR.

PNO.

A.B.

DRUMS

Tacet 1st X (Sweep in and out of clusters using volume pedal)

Sneak in here (on repeat only)
Quiet, spacious drum solo

S. SX.

GTR.

PHO.

A.B.

DRUMS

(B)

S. SX.

GTR.

PHO.

A.B. Tacet 1st X

DRUMS

FOLDING

3

1

S. SX. 17

GTR. 17

PNO. 17

A.B.

DRUMS 17

Detailed description: This system contains measures 17 through 20. The music is in 6/4 time, which changes to 4/4 time at the start of measure 18. The S. SX. part features a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The GTR. part has a melodic line with a long slur. The PNO. part consists of two staves with chords and moving lines. The A.B. part has a simple bass line. The DRUMS part has a steady rhythmic pattern.

2

(C)

S. SX. 21

GTR. 21

PNO. 21

A.B.

DRUMS 21

Detailed description: This system contains measures 21 through 24. The music is in 6/4 time, which changes to 4/4 time at the start of measure 22. A circled 'C' is placed above the S. SX. staff in measure 22. The S. SX. part has a melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The GTR. part has a melodic line with a long slur. The PNO. part consists of two staves with chords and moving lines. The A.B. part has a simple bass line. The DRUMS part has a steady rhythmic pattern.

S. SX.
26

GTR.
26

PNO.
26

A.B.

DRUMS
26

Sneak out to conclude drum solo...

S. SX.
30

GTR.
30

PNO.
30

A.B.

DRUMS
30

Rit....

FINE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years I have been drawn to music that pulls at the boundary between jazz and classical music. I have also been fascinated by the idea that it is possible for music to contain elements of the avant-garde, yet be accessible to a fairly broad audience. These are concepts that I aim to bring to my own music.

This thesis examines four of my compositions, written between the months of January and April, 2012, for my own jazz group. My working unit over the past few years had been a quartet with the instrumentation of piano, guitar, bass and drums (I am the pianist). Just prior to writing these compositions I expanded the group to include a saxophonist whose primary instrument is the baritone saxophone, but who also plays all the saxophones, flute and bass clarinet. I saw the introduction of this additional "voice" in the group as an opportunity to mine the areas of compositional potential offered by the possibilities for harmony parts, "beefier" unison lines, melodic and rhythmic counterpoint, and a greater variety of sonic textures and timbres in the group.

These four compositions were conceived to comprise a collection with each piece inspired by the work of a master of a particular creative discipline. Moved by the work of Haruki Murakami (literature), Wassily Kandinsky (painting), Jim Jarmusch (cinema) and Frank Gehry (architecture), I composed a piece as an homage to each of them. "I Read It Somewhere" was written for Murakami, "Shade Of Many Shades" for Kandinsky, "Night On Earth" for Jarmusch, and "Folding" for Gehry. My intent was to

convey through my compositions the mood, atmosphere and imagery communicated by these masters through their own art.

There were some specific objectives I wished to undertake in the course of writing the compositions. As a composer in the (broad) genre of jazz, I am interested in writing in such a way that the sections of improvisation within the compositions feel integral to the compositions themselves, rather than seeming to function as gratuitous opportunities to depart from the composition in order to improvise. I am also interested in breaking from the traditional jazz scenario of rhythm section members “comping” (improvising their accompaniment) for the solo improviser. It was my aim in these compositions to explore the potential for all members of the ensemble to act as accompanists for the improviser of the moment, and for the parts played by the accompanists to be more fully integrated into the compositions. This thesis will demonstrate how I endeavored to accomplish these goals.

I will discuss the transformation and development of each of the compositions, as I moved from the compositional analogues to putting notes on paper, aiming to arrive at musical representations of the feelings and impressions evoked by the works of my subjects. I will describe the compositional concepts, structures and techniques I used in the process, and the motivating factors behind those decisions. The work of certain specific composers (present-day and deceased) definitely impacted my own work here; I will cite these diverse influences, and illustrate the ways in which they informed my work.

The thesis will also describe my process in preparing the compositions for performance: details and instructions to the ensemble on the score and parts, verbal and conceptual information, editing, and discoveries made during the rehearsal and recording processes that impacted changes to the compositions.

Initially, my intent in writing these compositions was not only to dedicate each piece to the individual whose own work inspired it, but also to capture the essence of that individual's work in the music. Listening to the compositions (individually and as a collection) with the subjects of my inspirations in mind, they may vividly describe my impressions of my muses' work to the listener; conversely, it is possible that my initial inspirations may not always be obviously evidenced in the end result. I will address the issues of whether I have achieved my objective in representing these beacons musically, and whether as a collection there is unity and cohesion among the pieces.

I describe each composition here in the order in which I composed them since each piece was in some way informed by the previous one(s). I think of these compositions as a collection or volume, more so than a suite. Each one stands on its own and can be performed individually. The saxophonist plays a different instrument in each of the four compositions (bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, alto saxophone and soprano saxophone, respectively), as each horn has an individual sonic character that helped convey the atmosphere required of the piece in which it was used.

CHAPTER 2

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

In writing these four pieces I was inspired by a few composers in particular whose work was especially resonant for me at the time.

The jazz saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter is like a beacon for me. His work has been a significant and frequent source of inspiration throughout my own career. To me, his music has an ethereal, mysterious quality, and at times an almost classical sense of stateliness. In addition to his distinctive voice on the saxophone, he has his own characteristic voice as a composer. His motivic development, his eschewing of the stereotypical thirty two bar “AABA” jazz standard form in favour of through-composed and other non-standard forms, and his use of “non-functional” chords are all signifiers of his compositions.¹

I am attracted as much to Shorter’s concepts as a composer and band-leader as I am to his compositions. I am inspired by his ability to transform his quartet (with the stereotypical jazz quartet instrumentation of saxophone, piano, bass and drums) into a chamber group with an impressionistic, almost orchestral presentation. In his live performances in recent years Shorter has all but abandoned the usual formula of “intro, 'head' in, individual soloists play over the form, possibly soloists trade phrases with the drummer (or have an unaccompanied drum solo), then 'head' out”, in favour of a more

¹ Steven Strunk, “Notes on Harmony in Wayne Shorter’s Compositions, 1964-67”, *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 303.

distilled rendering of his compositions. It is a situation in which no one is “soloing” and everyone is “soloing”. I have tried to bring this Shorter-inspired sense of flow and distillation to my compositions.

In a performance situation in which improvisation is a key element it is reasonable to assume that the line between the composition and its performance may be blurred. The strength of a Wayne Shorter composition is such that the quotation of just a fragment proclaims to the listener that he is the composer. I am inspired by the clarity and singularity of his voice as a composer, and I aspire to write music that is as compelling and enduring.

Minimalist composer Steve Reich's work has intrigued me since my first exposure to it many years ago. His music has a hypnotic quality and a feeling of unhurriedness that I am attracted to. Individual motivic cells in his music can often be quite simple; the music's intricacy comes from the manipulation and development of these nuggets. He uses repetitive phrases, subtly shifting rhythms and layering of parts, creating tension and building momentum.

I am similarly intrigued by the serial compositions John Hollenbeck writes for his group *The Claudia Quintet*. The improvisation sections of his pieces rise out of the compositions so subtly that they seem integral to the compositions themselves. Evocative of the work of Reich,² Hollenbeck writes layered ostinato parts. Typically, a composition will begin with one instrument playing a short phrase which is repeated numerous times.

² Devin Leonard, *John Hollenbeck Only Looks Like A Jazz Musician*, www.observer.com/2009/11/john-hollenbeck-only-looks-like-a-jazz-musician/ (accessed May 27, 2012)

With staggered entries the other instruments join in, each with its own repeated phrase. A grid is constructed of the layered phrases and tension is built due to the continued repetition. Deviation from the pattern is provided either by the subtle shifting of a part or parts or by a soloist (or soloists) playing against the backdrop of the grid. The individual parts in Hollenbeck's compositions, like Reich's, tend to be relatively simple; it is the layering of the parts that creates a sense of complexity.

The Catalan composer Federico Mompou (1893 - 1987) has been a major inspiration for me over the last several years. Critically acclaimed for the beauty and simplicity of his music, he has been compared to Debussy, Ravel and Satie. His obituary in *The Musical Times* affirmed: "Attracted by the new French school, Debussy and Satie, and by Catalan folk music, he created a highly personal idiom, aiming for maximum emotional expression through minimal means and remaining untouched by current trends."³ Mompou made his reputation as a miniaturist, composing small, haunting pieces. I am moved by a hymn-like quality that pervades much of his music, which is both restrained and emotional.

Around the time when I was composing "I Read it Somewhere", "Night On Earth", "Shade Of Many Shades" and "Folding", the music of Wayne Shorter, Steve Reich, John Hollenbeck and Federico Mompou had been swirling prominently in my consciousness. Their music shares a sense of economy and patient development that I hope has informed my own work.

³ Obituary: Federico Mompou, *The Musical Times*, Vol. 128, No. 1735 (Sep., 1987): 511 www.jstor.org/stable/964861

CHAPTER 3

I READ IT SOMEWHERE

The inspiration for "I Read It Somewhere" is the work of the Japanese writer Haruki Murakami. I am fascinated by his writing style, particularly the way in which he incorporates elements of fantasy and science fiction with everyday situations in his novels and by the character types and themes that are hallmarks of his work. It was my intent with "I Read It Somewhere" to write a musical analogue, a composition that would capture the feeling of Murakami's work. I began by doing a general analysis of the novels of his that I had read, noting any traits that seemed to be characteristic of his writing. I observed that his novels usually involve a central male character who is simultaneously completely ordinary, yet somehow special, a trustworthy person singled out for important duties, involved in dangerous situations. There are surreal and highly improbable situations in his books. Often there are scenes of extreme violence, abrupt changes of direction, wry humour and incredible attention to detail. Murakami is a music enthusiast (he used to own a jazz club in Tokyo)⁴, and his novels always include musical references (his novel *1Q84* opens with the female protagonist listening to Janacek's *Sinfonietta* in a cab). There are strong female characters in Murakami's fiction, and the male/female relationships are often complex and fraught with dilemmas. Wound springs, wells, subterranean environments, cats and a male protagonist in running shoes and

⁴ Sam Anderson. "The Fierce Imagination Of Haruki Murakami", in *The New York Times Magazine* (Oct. 23, 2011), 38.

t-shirts, are all favourite motifs that Murakami repeats from book to book.

I wanted to create musical motifs which would represent some of Murakami's literary ones. It was not my intention for these motifs to be necessarily obvious representations, but for them to be part of the subtle fabric of the composition.

Example 1. "I Read It Somewhere", eight-note sequence from D minor pentatonic



It seemed to me, initially, that the male protagonist (an ordinary guy in running-shoes and a t-shirt) should be represented by a musical motif that was similarly "ordinary" - perhaps derived from a major triad or similar "ordinary" chord type, perhaps in the key of C major (the most "ordinary" of keys). I determined that I shouldn't lose sight of the fact that, although the hero is ordinary, he finds himself in uncommon situations. This led me to select a D minor pentatonic scale as the source material for the motif to represent the unlikely hero. I felt that the pentatonic aspect of the scale would offer a somewhat exotic implication, and that D minor was "ordinary" enough, with no sharps or flats in its minor pentatonic scale. I reordered the pitches, arriving at an eight-note figure with a descending arc derived from the scale (*Example 1*). Each alternate note, beginning with the first one, was then treated as a grace note. I reinforced the figure

(introduced in the piano part) by harmonizing it in fourths and fifths, including the grace notes (*Example 2*).

Example 2. "I Read It Somewhere", embellished sequence (piano, right hand)



In representing the image of the well, it made sense to consider the juxtaposition of someone looking down the shaft of a well ("high"), against the depth of the well itself ("low"). I considered representing this image by having one instrument play in its highest register, then drop to its lowest. Instead, the bass clarinet plays the note G in its upper register (functioning as #11) against the root Db in the bass, doubled (and supported by a perfect fifth above it) by the piano in its low register. The bass clarinet ("high") anticipates the bass and piano left hand ("low"), just as the action of tossing a pebble down a well would precede its landing at the bottom. The instruction to the bass clarinetist "Play this note (G), or improvise" is meant to encourage experimentation with the entry, as he becomes more familiar with the piece. In rehearsal, I suggested that he start on the G indicated and perhaps cascade downward with a glissando or short flurry of notes. The guitar supports the bass clarinet by doubling the note G (functioning as the middle note in a "power chord" of C-G-C). Bass clarinet was chosen for this piece

(versus any of the saxophones) because I felt its softer, more vulnerable sound would provide an apt sonic representation of an unlikely hero.

The wound spring is represented by a four-note cluster of adjacent semitones (E#-F#-G-Ab) in the piano part (*Example 3*).

Example 3. "I Read It Somewhere", "wound spring" motif (piano, right hand)



I also experimented with a "clarion call" motif, which I intended to include as a theme representative of Murakami's typical strong female characters. Eventually I concluded that pursuing more motifs might dilute the sense of unity in the composition and I elected not to use it. I decided instead to explore the possibilities for "connective tissue" offered by the motifs of the ordinary guy/hero, the well and the wound spring.

"I Read It Somewhere" opens with the motif of the unlikely hero played in the right hand of the piano alone. The motif comes to rest briefly on the last note of the figure, then it repeats. My intention here was to create tension as the piano motif repeats, while the other instruments (and the left hand of the piano) enter and shift around it. The figure is in triple meter, and although it could have been written in 3/4 time, the time signature of 9/4 is more appropriate, owing to the consistent repetition of the phrase and its inherent subdivision.

The D minor pentatonic motif in the right hand of the piano is rendered more complex as it is juxtaposed against the harmonic implications suggested by the other parts, metaphorically representing the ordinary guy thrown into complex situations. The tonality suggested at the beginning of the piece is most likely G mixolydian, but the entry of the open fifth of Db and Ab in the piano's low register on beat four of the third measure (with the bass doubling the Db) suggests Db lydian. The drums enter with an Afro-Cuban groove in the fourth measure, which is a shorter measure of three beats. The entry of the drums here, and the truncated three-beat measure, were intended to build a sense of drama and unpredictability. The descending D minor pentatonic motif begins again in the right hand of the piano, and repeats. This time open fifths in the left hand (again with the bottom notes doubled by the bass) begin to ascend the D minor pentatonic scale in opposition, and then shift up a semitone, contracted rhythmically. The figure lurches to a halt in a cadence of three major seventh chords moving in a cycle of fourths from Eb to Ab to Db.

Measure ten ushers in a repeated three-bar phrase in 9/8 in which the motif of the unlikely hero continues in the right hand of the piano, this time up a semitone, unharmonized and without grace notes, and further rhythmically contracted. The motif is embellished at the end of the third measure of the phrase with an arpeggiated Ebmi7 eighth-note quadruplet. At [A] the figure continues, taken up by the bass clarinet, and provides the backdrop for an open guitar solo. The guitar solo is accompanied solely by the bass clarinet and drums here, and instructions to the guitarist suggest B major as a possible source for pitch choices. Instructions also suggest using the lower register,

adding "You are the unlikely hero, with nothing to prove". My intention here is to represent the protagonist's inner hero gradually rising to the surface. Instructions to the bass clarinetist suggest dropping out periodically, taking a breath, and re-entering.

On cue at [B] piano and bass enter with an ascending gospel-influenced chord progression in B major, underpinning the guitar solo with greater support. The chord progression occurs over a six-measure phrase while the bass clarinet continues with its own three-measure phrase. The section is played four times, and the bass clarinetist is instructed to decrescendo gradually and fade out after the second time through. Some of the chords played by the piano and bass are rhythmically displaced in this phrase, rather than occurring predictably on beat one of each measure. Piano and bass enter on beat four of the first measure of the phrase, which I intend to be momentarily confusing to the listener, perhaps obscuring the time signature. Just as the plots of Murakami's novels take unexpected twists and turns, it is my intent for "I Read It Somewhere" to do the same.

The bass clarinet re-enters at [C] with an anthemic melody played twice over the same progression. The melody has an ascending arc and is based on B major pentatonic (with the addition of the leading note A# in the sixth measure of the phrase). The melody provides an added layer of interest intended to build further momentum behind the guitar solo, and to aid in bringing the solo to its conclusion in the two measures prior to [D]. A change of mood is telegraphed in those two measures (mm. 30 and 31) as the progression shifts from a diatonic B major centricity through one measure of Emi9, slowing to pause on an Ebmi9 chord for the conclusion of the guitar solo.

The motif of the wound spring arrives at [D] bringing with it a change of atmosphere and a new time signature. In a repeated one-measure pattern in 4/4 time, the semitone clusters are played in the right hand of the piano on beat one and the second eighth-note of beat two, answered by an open fifth of Eb and Bb on beat four, tied over to the next measure (*Example 4*). The intended result is an atmosphere that is both lopsided and somewhat ominous. At [E], bass clarinet, guitar, drums and bass enter, taking up the syncopated rhythms of the piano part, freeing the pianist up to improvise freely over the jagged rhythmic backdrop. [E] is an open solo section; the pianist cues the conclusion of the piano solo by playing the cluster riff as written once through the four-measure section, ending with an improvised flourish or cadenza, over a pause on the open fifth (Eb and Bb).

Example 4. "I Read It Somewhere", mm. 32-35 (piano)

The musical notation for Example 4 consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The right-hand staff (treble clef) contains a four-measure pattern of semitone clusters. The first measure has notes G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5. The second measure has notes Ab4, Bb4, C5, D5. The third measure has notes Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5. The fourth measure has notes C5, D5, Eb5, F5. This pattern repeats. The left-hand staff (bass clef) contains a four-measure pattern of syncopated chords. The first measure has notes G2, Bb2, D3. The second measure has notes G2, Bb2, D3. The third measure has notes G2, Bb2, D3. The fourth measure has notes G2, Bb2, D3. The right-hand part is marked 'Drums tacet' and 'Drums re-enter>>>'.

The D minor pentatonic motif of the unlikely hero returns in 9/4 at [F] in the right hand of the piano, unaccompanied, as it was played at the top of the piece. This time, the left hand ascends the D minor pentatonic scale to the note A in the third measure. The rhythm shifts in the fourth measure, as the right hand plays descending three-note

voicings diatonic to D minor and the left hand ascends with chromatically inflected fifths and sixths. Bass and drums enter with supporting parts at [G]. The resulting four-chord progression serves as the accompaniment for an open bass clarinet solo (*Example 5*).

Example 5. "I Read It Somewhere", chord progression for bass clarinet solo

$E^b_{MAJ} 7^{(911)}$ D^2/F^\sharp $A^b_{MAJ} 7^{(911)}$ $B^b_{MAJ} 7$

On cue at [H] guitar enters with a stripped down motif of the unlikely hero under the instruction "You're a gentle human oscillator". The rhythm of the figure itself is simple and unsyncopated, but rhythmic complexity is created by the juxtaposition of the straight rhythms of the guitar part against the syncopation of the other parts and by the displacement of the four-beat figure played in 9/4 time. The guitar enters as a subordinate part, an additional layer of interest behind the bass clarinet solo. But as the bass clarinetist concludes his solo and plays an ascending pentatonic melody in rhythmic unison with the piano and bass, the guitar part becomes more prominent. The other players stop playing, either by pausing on the optional ending at the end of m. 50, or by fading out. In either case, the guitarist continues to play the displaced motif and ends the piece with the motif unaccompanied, without a ritard.

CHAPTER 4

NIGHT ON EARTH

My muse for "Night On Earth" is the filmmaker Jim Jarmusch. Jarmusch's films are characteristically zen-like, seemingly more about atmosphere than plotline.⁵ I took the title "Night On Earth" from a film of his with the same name. In the film, Jarmusch plays out the same theme (a taxicab ride) in five different cities on the same night. The situation of the cab ride features a cab, a driver and a passenger (or passengers), yet the experience of the ride is completely different in New York than it is in Los Angeles, Rome, Helsinki or Paris. My intent with my own "Night On Earth" was to take a small nugget of musical material, and develop it into several distinct "vignettes" within the piece.

A G9 chord (with no third) is the musical nugget that is the basis for this composition. Containing four of the five notes in the D minor pentatonic scale, I chose the G9 chord specifically because of the relationship (no matter how subtle) that would be created between "Night On Earth" and "I Read It Somewhere". A four-bar syncopated rhythm and blues inspired riff arpeggiates down from the ninth to the tonic, then repeats again, this time followed by three eighth notes at the end of the fourth bar, moving chromatically upward from the ninth (or second degree) to the third (*Example 6, over*).

⁵ *Senses Of Cinema*, "Jim Jarmusch", <http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/great-directors/jarmusch/>

Example 6. "Night On Earth", bass riff



Intending to build on the foundation of that riff (which was initially all I had), I began by experimenting with stacking thirds above and below the four-bar figure. The idea was to come up with lines that would harmonize the bass part in rhythmic unison and would also work well individually. Rather than reproduce the descending arc in all parts, I thought it would be more interesting if some of the parts moved in different directions, and if some parts contained different intervallic movement (horizontally). My rough sketch for the composition shows the opening line on the top staff in the bass clef; the staves below it show my harmonization of the line (*Example 7*). In the end, the line on staff #4 was not used in that register, but was played two octaves higher in the piano part.

Example 7. "Night On Earth", original riff and harmonizations

A musical score with five staves, numbered 1 to 5 on the left. Staff 1 is in bass clef and contains the original four-measure riff. Staves 2 through 5 are in treble clef and contain five different harmonizations of the riff, each with its own rhythmic notation. The score is divided into four measures, corresponding to the four measures of the riff. The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals.

The piece opens with the riff played twice by the bassist, unaccompanied. Then piano, baritone saxophone and guitar take up the riff, with drums playing a light hip-hop based groove. I chose to use baritone saxophone in this piece due to its rich, punchy quality; I felt it would be ideal in this "funky" setting. At [A] there is an open bass solo, while the other players continue playing the riff quietly as accompaniment. The bassist cues the end of his solo at [B] by returning to the riff, playing it twice. Beginning at [C] a series of repeated four-bar sections follow in which various harmonizations of the riff are introduced under a quasi drum solo. First, the original riff is played by bass, guitar and piano, while the baritone saxophone plays the harmonization shown on staff #3 of *Example 7*. This harmonization moves through the #11, 11, 9 and 5 of the G chord on the syncopated line, and the 6, 7 and leading tone on the three eighth notes at the end of the fourth bar of the phrase. Next, the guitar part shifts to the harmonization shown on staff #2 of *Example 7*. Now each of the notes of the original riff are harmonized in major triads: A, F D and G on the syncopated line, and chromatically ascending triads A, Bb (A#) and B on the three eighth notes at the end of the fourth bar of the phrase.

At [D] drums, bass and piano drop out, leaving only the baritone saxophone and guitar maintaining their parts for eight bars. Drums re-enter for eight bars, then at [E] piano re-enters, this time playing the part shown on staff #4 of *Example 7* in octaves in the treble clef. Now, with the original riff missing, the triads provided are C# diminished, A diminished, F# diminished and B minor (in various inversions) on the syncopated line, and C# diminished, D diminished and D# diminished on the three eighth notes at the end of the fourth bar of the phrase. Eight bars later, guitar drops out and bass re-enters, this

time playing the part shown on staff #5 of *Example 7*. Now the harmonic implications are less clear, and more tense. The first chord, with F as the bass note, and C# and G above it, has a whole-tone implication. The second chord has a feeling of suspension (with Db as the bass note, and C and Eb above it), as does the third chord, intervallically equivalent down a minor third. The fourth chord, with Eb as the bass note, and D and F# above it, implies Eb miMA7. The chords harmonizing the three eighth notes at the end of the fourth bar of the phrase have a nebulous, transparent quality. If we take the bass note as the root of each chord, there is an implication of chromatically ascending major ninth chords, but with no thirds in the chords it is only an implication. The harmony becomes more obscure still at [F] when the baritone saxophone drops out, leaving the bass and piano parts in major ninth intervals, and a minor tenth on the fourth chord of the syncopated line.

At [G] piano drops out and guitar re-enters, this time playing the original riff. This results in the guitar harmonizing the current bass line in consistent major thirds. Eight bars later at [H] piano and baritone re-enter and guitar and bass parts shift, so that all are playing the original riff in octave unison. This particular vignette within the composition is concluded with a reiteration of the three eighth notes at the end of the fourth bar of the riff in rhythmic augmentation. The original three ascending eighth notes (A, A#, B) are played by the baritone. Piano, guitar, and bass play the harmonized parts indicated on staves 2, 3 and 5 of *Example 7* respectively, resulting in chromatically ascending MA7#5 chords (FMA7#5, F#MA7#5 and GMA7#5). The ascending eighth note figure augments

first to dotted quarter notes, then to half notes, with a ritard, and a pause on GMA7#5 (Example 8).

The MA9#5 chord serves as the basis for the second vignette in the composition. There are six individual MA9#5 chords represented in the harmony here (Example 7). Vertically, the syncopated line provides FMA9#5, DbMA9#5, BbMA9#5 and EbMA9#5, and the chromatically ascending eighth notes provide FMA9#5 (again), F#MA9#5 and GMA9#5.

Example 8. "Night On Earth", rhythmic augmentation of eighth note figure

The musical score for Example 8, "Night On Earth", is presented in four staves. The top staff is for B. SN. (Bass Saxophone), the second for E. GTR. (Electric Guitar), the third for PNO/DRUMS (Piano/Drums), and the bottom for A.B. (Acoustic Bass). The music is in 4/4 time. The first measure features a syncopated eighth-note figure. The second measure shows the rhythmic augmentation of this figure to dotted quarter notes. The tempo slows down (Ritardando) in the third measure. The music concludes in the fourth measure with a half note. The PNO/DRUMS staff includes a note: "Drums set new tempo quiet, brushes" at the end of the fourth measure.

I wanted a change of atmosphere for this second vignette and decided to set the new mood in $\frac{3}{4}$ time with a slow swing feel. Drums introduce the new tempo with a pickup figure of three eighth notes into [I] (re-using the motif of the three eighth notes at the end of the fourth measure of the opening riff). Piano enters at [I] playing the first

four chords in the sequence as a repeated four-bar pattern in dotted half notes. At [J] piano and drums continue the same pattern as accompaniment for an open guitar solo. I like the idea of having the guitar solo over the amorphous progression of major ninth chords accompanied only by piano and drums. My intent here is to evoke a dreamlike atmosphere in which the listener can get lost in the sound of the series of chords of the same type, lacking a sense of cadential movement. At [K] the progression is lengthened to a repeated seven-bar phrase, using all of the chords provided by the harmonization of the riff. The phrase, expanding the progression with more chords of the same type, promotes even further the feeling of suspension and instability. Bass enters here with a consistent quarter note/half note rhythm carried throughout the progression. Rather than emphasizing the roots of the chords, the bass part focuses on the major 7ths, augmented fifths and major thirds of the chords, playing intervallic leaps of major and minor sixths. On the second pass through the seven-bar phrase, baritone saxophone enters, doubling the bass part. The bass entry at [K] and subsequent entry of the baritone were intended to build interest, tension and momentum underneath the guitar solo. The guitar solo and the vignette itself conclude unceremoniously at the end of the repeated seven-bar progression, pausing on GMA9#5, with bass and baritone saxophone holding the third of the chord.

The horizontal possibilities offered by the riff and its harmonizations are explored in the next vignette. The first four notes of the opening riff (A, F, D and G) combine to make a chord which, depending on the inversion, could indicate a D minor triad with added 4th (11th), an F6/9 chord without the 5th, or a G9 chord with no 3rd. The first four

notes of the harmonization of the riff shown on staff #2 in *Example 7* (E, A, F# and B) combine to make a chord which could be B7sus4, F#mi11, E9sus4 without the 7th, or an unstable cluster of two major 2nds (E-F# and A-B). The first four notes of the harmonization shown on staff #3 (C#, C, A and D) yield chords that are dissonant and atonal, regardless of inversion or voicing. The first four notes of the harmonization shown on staff #4 (G, Eb, C and F#) indicate a C diminished triad with added G, or a C minor triad with added F#. The harmonization shown on staff #5 indicates Eb7sus2 (Eb9 without the third), Db6/9 without the 5th, Bb minor triad with added 4th, or F7sus4(b13).

After experimenting with various inversions and voicings of the chords in sequence (and discarding the chords provided by the harmonization on staff #3 of *Example 7*), I arrived at a progression that offered relatively smooth voice-leading and had an eerie quality I found pleasing. At [L] the progression is introduced by the piano as a four-bar repeated pattern in 4/4 time, at a faster tempo than the previous one, and with a consistent rhythm of eighth-quarter-eighth. Here again the progression has a nebulous, floating quality, both due to its repetitive rhythm and to the absence of functional harmony. Drums enter on the repeat at [L] with a cross-stick pattern, intended to help propel the progression rhythmically with suggestion of double-time. Baritone enters with the drums, playing a part that mimics its role at [K]. With a consistent rhythm of quarter note rest/quarter note/half note, the baritone moves in leaps of major sixths. Its lower notes emphasize not the roots of the chords, but other chord tones, further obscuring the harmonic implications of the progression.

At [M] the saxophone part is taken up by the bass and the saxophone player abandons his part to play an open improvised solo over the progression. An analysis for the progression is provided by the chord changes for the soloist, shown in *Example 9* (up a major 6th in transposed score): one bar each of G9sus4, E9sus4, Cdim/G and F7sus4(b13).

Example 9. "Night On Earth", chord progression for baritone saxophone solo

- OPEN BARI SOLO -

E⁹sus₄
C^{#9}sus₄
Adim/E
D^{7(b13)}sus₄

B. Sax. M

E. Gtr.

PNO./DRUMS

A.B.

On cue at [N] piano, bass and drums continue their accompanying parts and guitar enters with an arpeggiated part based on the opening riff. In the first bar, the guitar part is a verbatim version of the syncopated line, rhythmically contracted to fit within one bar. The same rhythm is used in the three subsequent bars of the section, with the pitches corresponding to their respective chord changes (the notes of the piano voicings in each bar), shown in *Example 10* (over). Section [N] is played three times. The first two times,

the baritone solo continues over the accompanying parts. The third time, the solo concludes with the baritone part doubling the guitar part. Baritone, guitar, piano and drums come abruptly to a halt on an FMA9#5 chord at [O], ending the current vignette.

Example 10. "Night On Earth", guitar and piano at [N]

The image shows a musical score for guitar and piano/drums. The guitar part (E.Gtr.) is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a 5/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some accidentals. The piano/drums part (PNO./DRUMS) is written in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The drums are indicated by a simple rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the bass line. The score is divided into four measures, with a double bar line at the end.

A new vignette is introduced at [O] as the tempo quickens and the time signature shifts to 5/4. Using the chord progression at [K] as the basis for this vignette, I took the seven chords in the progression and distributed them over four bars in the new time signature. Each bar has two chords per bar, except the fourth bar, which has only one. At [O] the bass, unaccompanied, outlines the chord changes with a combination of plucked notes and harmonics on the D string. The harmonics are not "true" harmonics (dividing the string in half), but are "artificial" harmonics (playing A on the D string). The resulting sound is a soft, muted ringing. The alternation between a plucked note and the harmonic gives the part a quirky, clockwork-like quality that I like.

One of the chords in the progression at [O] differs from the progression at [K]. The sixth chord in the sequence of seven at [K] is GbMA7, but I used DMA7#5 instead at

[O], both because I found the root movement more satisfying and because of the inherent problem with the use of harmonics on the bass in conjunction with the GbMA7#5 chord. Although the note A is not a chord tone on DMA7#5, it works sonically with the chord. On GbMA7#5, however, it would have sounded dissonant and out of context with the pattern as a whole. I considered changing the harmonic note, but any options that were playable were not as pleasing as retaining the note A as the consistent harmonic in the pattern.

Rhythmically, the bass pattern at [O] has a subdivision of two beats and three beats. Four bars later the bass pattern is maintained when guitar enters with a part featuring intervallic leaps of minor and major sixths, mimicking bass and baritone saxophone parts from earlier in the composition. The guitar part has a subdivision of three beats and two beats here. Entering with the guitar, drums employ a light hip-hop groove. This four bar sequence is repeated with piano entering (on the repeat) playing an eighth note line spelling out the chords in five-note groupings (*Example 11*, over).

An open piano solo occurs at [P] over the same chord progression. Accompaniment for the piano solo is provided by drums and bass. Here, both the drummer and bass player can improvise their own accompanying parts. On cue at [Q] guitar re-enters with the part previously played at four bars after [O], the intent being to help build interest and momentum toward the conclusion of the piano solo. The piano solo ends when [Q] is repeated and piano takes up the line previously played just prior to the solo. Four bars later, the time signature shifts to 3/4 and the pitches from the original riff (A, F, D and G) return in the piano and bass parts. This time the disguised riff appears

as the roots of triads in yet another four bar progression, played one chord per bar. The guitar part continues with the same pattern, doubled by baritone saxophone and altered rhythmically to accommodate the new time signature. Another four bars later, the time signature shifts to 4/4 with the direction to speed up gradually (*accelerando poco a poco*).

Example 11. "Night On Earth", mm. 89 - 92

- LIGHT HIP-HOP GROOVE -
(GUITAR IN 1ST X, PIANO 2ND X)

The musical score for Example 11, "Night On Earth", measures 89-92, is presented in four staves. The top staff is for Baritone Saxophone (B. SX.), the second for Electric Guitar (E. GTR.), the third for Piano/Drums (PNO./DRUMS), and the bottom for Bass (A.B.). The score is titled "- LIGHT HIP-HOP GROOVE - (GUITAR IN 1ST X, PIANO 2ND X)". The B. SX. and E. GTR. staves show a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The PNO./DRUMS staff shows a complex rhythmic pattern with a "Piano Tacet 1st X" marking. The A.B. staff shows a bass line with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

The baritone and guitar parts maintain the same pattern, once again altered rhythmically to accommodate the time signature. Four bars later (at m. 109), having returned to the original tempo, the riff from m. 1 is reintroduced in the bass part and the left hand of the piano. The right hand of the piano continues playing A, F, D and G triads in sequence, now adopting the rhythm of the bass riff. Guitar and baritone saxophone both play the harmonization shown on staff #2 in *Example 7*, then in the next four bar phrase the baritone branches off to play the harmonization from staff #3. The distribution of parts is

maintained in the final two bars of the composition when the riff which has been the foundation for the piece is played in the form of the four-chord sequence of A, F, D and G triads. Here the rhythm is not syncopated. The chords are written as emphatic quarter notes on beats one and three of both the penultimate and final bars.

CHAPTER 5

SHADE OF MANY SHADES

The work of the painter Wassily Kandinsky inspired me to compose "Shade Of Many Shades". The title comes from Kandinsky's book *Concerning The Spiritual In Art* in which (in the chapter entitled "The Language Of Form And Colour") he discusses the need for boundaries in the use of colour. He says that when the colour red is presented in painting it must possess "some definite shade of the many shades of red that exist...".⁶ I found the concept of the need for definition in the shade of red, and the idea of a shade being a "shade of many shades" interesting.

I have been drawn to Kandinsky's work since my first exposure to it as a young adult. I am interested in abstract painting in general, but his work in particular has always appealed to me. I am captivated by his use of colour, his marriage of curves and straight lines, geometrical shapes and amorphous forms. His work brims with energy and life.

When I sat down to compose with Kandinsky in mind, initially I assumed that my resulting composition would be abstract, perhaps atonal, and perhaps a vehicle for free improvisation. Despite my assumption, and despite even my methodology (which I chose in order to take the composition in the direction of the abstract), "Shade Of Many Shades" is neither abstract nor atonal. As I worked it became clear to me that the music

⁶ Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning The Spiritual In Art* (translation: M.T.H. Sadler; originally published by Constable and Company Limited, London, 1914) (New York: Dover, 1977), 28.

was going in the direction that it should be. It made no sense for me to try and wrestle it toward abstraction for the sake of a preconceived concept on my part.

I drew on the raw material from "Night On Earth" in constructing a tone row to inform "Shade Of Many Shades". I took the four pitches from the descending G9 arpeggiated bass figure in "Night On Earth" (A, F, D and G) and constructed a nine-tone row around it by adding pitches before and in between those four notes. *Example 12* shows the raw material and the subsequent nine-tone row comprising the notes F#, A, Bb, F, Eb, D, C, B and G.

Example 12. "Shade Of Many Shades", initial sketches

I experimented with several possibilities for using the row as melodic material in a linear sense (by applying rhythm to it in its primary order, inverting it, exploring retrograde etc.) and with splitting the row between treble and bass clefs (exploring the potential for counterpoint). I came up with some ideas that were interesting to me, but

that ultimately were not totally satisfying. When I turned my attention to arranging the notes in the row into combinations of three groups of three, some more intriguing possibilities presented themselves to me. Working with nine-tone rows in the past, I have had satisfying results from looking at the options presented by these combinations. For example, each group of three notes can be used as a chord voicing. I have discovered some pleasing and unconventional three-note chords that I would likely not have come up with otherwise.

I chose to pursue these clusters provided by a permutation of the row: F, Gb and Bb (which I will call cluster #1), D, Eb and G (cluster #2), and A, B and C (cluster #3). In and of themselves, each cluster suggests harmonic possibilities. For example, cluster #1 suggests GbMA7 and could also relate to Ebmi9, Bbmib6 and Abmi13. To mine each cluster for more relationships I used a chord-tone inversion technique on each one. This technique was taught to me by the pianist/composer Myra Melford who also told me that the technique has been used by a diverse array of composers, from Edgard Varèse to Henry Threadgill. The idea is to take a chord made up of any combination of intervals and invert each interval in the opposite direction. If a triad is subjected to the technique there are five possible intervallic relationships in the chord to invert. The technique expands the chord it is subjected to, yielding five additional three-note chords per triad, all related by common tones, yet with new tones introduced.

My rough sketches (*Example 13, over*) show the original three clusters, and the variations on those chords when subjected to the technique. Looking at cluster #1, the middle note (Gb) is a minor second above F. If that chord tone is inverted in relation to

the bottom note F we keep F and Bb, but Gb inverts to a minor second below F (becoming E). This makes a new chord (variation #1 on cluster #1) of E, F and Bb. The top note (Bb) is a major third above the middle note Gb. If we invert that chord tone we keep F and Gb, but Bb inverts to a major third below Gb, making variation #2 (the chord of D, F and Gb). In the original cluster, Gb is a major third below the top note Bb. Subject to the inversion technique, the third variation of the original cluster retains F and Bb, but the Gb inverts to a major third above Bb (making the chord F, Bb and D). Variation #4 works with the relationship of the top note of the original chord to the bottom note. In the original cluster, Bb is a perfect fourth above F. With chord-tone inversion, F and Gb are retained, but Bb inverts to a perfect fourth below F (making the chord C, F and Gb). In the original cluster the bottom note F is a perfect fourth below Bb. Variation #5 is achieved by retaining Gb and Bb, but F is inverted to a perfect fourth above Bb (making the chord Gb, Bb and Eb). The same manipulations are done to the second and third cluster (*Example 13*, middle and bottom staves).

Example 13. "Shade Of Many Shades", clusters (m. 1, top staff) and variations

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff contains a series of clusters of notes, with a large bracket grouping the first two clusters. The middle and bottom staves show variations of these clusters, with notes numbered 1 through 5. The bottom staff includes chord symbols: A 3b 54 and A C 6b. The notation is handwritten and includes various accidentals and clefs.

My method in using the technique was purely to help me arrive at some material (chord progression, bass line and/or melody) that might be unusual (not traditionally or stereotypically functional), yet would be cohesive due to the thread of common tones. My goal was not to be a slave to the device, but to have it inform the composition creatively. I would use it as long as it served the music, and when I felt the need to depart from it I wouldn't hesitate to do so. In the case of this composition, I examined the original three-note chords and their variations and used them to construct a bass line and chord progression.

I used the notes from cluster #1 and four of its variations, note for note, in the arpeggiated bass line of the four-bar introductory chord progression. The chord progression itself was informed by the bass line. Working with the theme of three-note groupings, I also used three-note cluster-oriented chord voicings in the right hand of the piano. Much of the bass line throughout section [A], and a couple of piano voicings, came directly from the original clusters and their variations. Harmonically, the progression at [A] shifts primarily from Gb major to Bb major to G major. The movement chord-to-chord is mostly stepwise and non-diatonic to any particular key.

I liked the voice-leading of the bass line in this configuration and the rhythm I was applying to it, but I felt that the bass line on its own was somewhat static, both rhythmically and in its implied harmony. I wanted to write a melody that would work contrapuntally with the bass line and that would provide some strong interest rhythmically and intervallically. I thought it would work well to give the melody some angularity by using some large leaps, along with some of the same intervallic leaps as the

bass line (3rds, fourths and fifths). The syncopated rhythm, minor pentatonic orientation and instrumentation of saxophone and guitar give the melody somewhat of a rhythm and blues quality. The melody begins in unison, but the guitar part periodically branches into harmony. I like the sound of a variety of intervals being used in two-part harmony (rather than consistent sixths, for example) so the guitar part harmonizes the saxophone in fourths and fifths, as well as thirds and sixths.

Guitar and saxophone switch roles with bass and the left hand of the piano to some degree at [B]. Here, the bass and left hand of the piano play a syncopated line derived from the melody at [A]. But while the melody played by the saxophone and guitar at [A] develops a sense of flow as the phrases increase in length over the sixteen-bar section (sounding more legato as it progresses), the line played by bass and piano at [B] maintains short, punchy phrases throughout the section. The bass/low piano phrases are also constantly displaced over these eight bars, never starting or ending on the same beat (or portion of a beat) of the bar, intended to create a sense of urgency, tension and momentum.

Saxophone, guitar and the right hand of the piano are teamed to create a kind of “horn section” sound, playing anticipated held notes that sound a call to which the bass/low piano part answers (*Example 14, over*). The shift in atmosphere at [B] is also helped by its opening BMA7/Bb chord, which re-uses the right-hand piano voicing from the first bar of the composition, but with the darker harmonic implication Bb minor. By the end of the eight-bar section the progression arrives again at G major.

Example 14. "Shade Of Many Shades", first four bars of [B]

The musical score for Example 14 shows the first four bars of section [B]. It features four staves: A. Sax., E. Gtr., PNO./DRUMS, and A.B. The key signature is Bb major. The chord progression is: Bbm7/Bb, Bb13(b9), Gbmaj7, and Gb9(b5). The saxophone and guitar parts play a melodic line, while the piano and drums provide a rhythmic accompaniment.

At [C] the first bar and a half of the melody from [A] becomes a repeated two-bar riff, serving as the backdrop for an open piano solo. The chord symbol Bb7sus4 is indicated due to the harmonic implications of the riff, but the symbol is just for reference. My intent is not to have the solo stay within any harmonic boundaries. On cue the riff concludes and the atmosphere shifts, becoming moody and quieter at [D]. Here, an open bass solo over a Bb pedal point is accompanied by piano and drums. The four-bar repeated section moves from Bb minor to Bb major in a cycle of tension and release.

On cue at [E] saxophone and guitar "trade eights" (alternate soloing over the eight-bar section) over a chord progression based on the progression from [B]. Both chord progressions are identical, except for two changes. I decided to change the Gb9#5 chord in bar four to an E7(#9b5) chord. The right hand piano voicing (D, E and Bb) of the Gb9#5 in [B] can also be used as a voicing for an E7b5 chord, and the last three

sixteenth notes of the fourth bar of [B] can imply E7b5 in addition to Gb9#5. Since the piano and bass accompaniment to the alto/guitar trading is improvised based on the chord changes, it struck me that the E7 chord provides more interesting built-in root movement for this section. I also changed the EbMA7#5 chord in the sixth bar of the progression to Eb9#5, since the three-note voicing (Eb, F and B) of the EbMA7#5 chord at [B] can also be used as a voicing for Eb9#5, and the dominant chord provides a stronger function moving to D13sus4. I decided to retain a few small details (other than the chord progression) from [B] to "spice up" the accompanying parts at [C]. The last three sixteenth notes from bar four of [B] are played by the bass and left hand of the piano in the same location at [C], reinforced by the drums, followed by a "hit" on the CMA7#11 on the "and" of beat one in the next bar. The same players also reiterate the last four notes of the eighth bar of [B] in the same location at [C]. The inclusion of these unison figures serves to help shape and give added compositional "glue" to the solo section.

On cue, the alto/guitar trading concludes with both players taking up the unison figure in the eighth bar of the progression (in the second ending) along with bass and piano. Section [F] is a reiteration of [B], after which the ensemble plays the first five bars of [B]'s bass line in unison at [G], with drums quasi-soloing while also reinforcing the line. At the sixth bar of [G] alto, guitar and right hand of the piano revert to offbeat "horn section" chords while bass, drums and left hand of the piano maintain the bass line. The composition ends abruptly on the last eighth note of the eight bar phrase.

CHAPTER 6

FOLDING

"Folding" was inspired by the work of the architect Frank Gehry. I have long been a fan of Gehry's style; his iconic buildings are quirky and bold, yet they have an inherent simplicity and organic quality. I was stunned at the revelation of his creative process in Sydney Pollack's 2006 documentary film "Sketches Of Frank Gehry".⁷ Gehry is shown in meetings with his team, taking pieces of paper, folding the paper into various shapes, in some instances cutting pieces of paper, then attaching the manipulated pieces of paper together with tape or staples. The end results are design mock-ups of building exteriors, such as the Guggenheim Museum at Bilbao.

In writing a composition dedicated to Gehry, I wanted to capture the sense of clarity, purity and almost naiveté or innocence that resonated with me from having a glimpse into the way he works. I also felt that the idea of working with simple "shapes" should inform the composition. Sitting at the piano, with no specific pitch sets or tonality in mind, I gravitated toward a three-note shape comprised of a perfect fourth and a major second above it (A, E and F#). With the image of folding a piece of paper around on itself (in a loose conical shape, with no crease, as I had seen Gehry do in the documentary) in my mind, I felt that the shape (played with two notes in my right hand and one in my left) could "widen" somewhat, expand outward, then fold back in toward itself. Adding one

⁷ *Sketches Of Frank Gehry*, DVD, directed by Sydney Pollack (Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2006).

more note in the left hand, I experimented with combinations of intervals to create shapes that would shift subtly. I liked the idea that the first chord could resonate, then a short progression could develop slowly. I constructed phrases that expanded, from the resonance of the first chord, to three chords, to five chords. I arrived at the first four measures not concerning myself with possible bass notes to be added later, chord function or harmonic progression at this point. Intentionally though, there is an inherent expansion and contraction (like an inhalation and exhalation) within the arc of the phrases subsequent to the resonance of the first chord. This is not only due to the expansion in length of the short phrases, but also to the successive expansion and contraction in the intervallic ranges of the shapes (*Example 15*). The effect of holding the last chord of each short phrase for four beats also helps build this breath-like rhythm.

Example 15. "Folding", piano introduction



The introductory four-measure expanding sequence (played solo piano) is reiterated at [A] where soprano saxophone enters with a melody having an ascending and descending arc, in the same rhythm as the piano part. The register and tone of the soprano saxophone help bring a light, lyrical quality to the melody. The melody itself adds to the

sense of expansion and contraction, both because of its arc and because it initially duplicates the top notes of the first two chords in the sequence, then branches off above the top notes of the piano part. At the fifth bar of [A] the sequence is duplicated again with one difference: the saxophone melody note in the fourth bar of the sequence rises to a C#, where in the previous sequence it fell to an A#.

At [B] the sequence starts again with the same initial chord, but over the proceeding four bars it shifts away from its previous sharp-inclined shapes toward shapes with one flat and shapes with no sharps or flats. Revolving around the note D, the saxophone melody is pitched lightly higher here and has no sharps or flats. Another four-bar sequence follows, again with the same initial chord, but with a sense of increased tension in the second bar as the piano part ascends chromatically in the left hand. A sense of release follows, as half note chords in the third measure descend by whole step toward the final chord of the section, and the saxophone melody descends from D to C to A.

At the conclusion of [B] there is a repeat back to the beginning of the piece. The opening sequence is once again played solo piano. On the repeat at [A] guitar enters subtly, using a volume pedal to sweep in and out, playing a series of sustained major second intervals throughout the repeat. Each interval has a considered harmonic relationship to the chords over which it is played. Drums enter similarly, with instructions to "sneak in" at [A] on the repeat, beginning a spacious and quiet drum kit "solo" over the piece in progress. Alto saxophone, instructed to interpret the melody "reverently" the first time through, is directed to play more expressively now on the repeat.

The bass entry on the repeat at [B] anchors the piece with a newfound weight and brings definition to the harmony, revealing the roots of the chord/shapes played by the piano. The progression ascends from D(add2) through F6/9 to Gmi11 in the first two bars, then repeats those chords and continues ascending to Abmi6, falling to G7sus4 in the fourth bar. The fifth bar of [B] begins with D(add2) again, this time ascending in the sixth bar to D#6/9 and E9sus4. The progression descends in the seventh bar to C13(#11) then Bb13(#11), and in the eighth bar (second ending) A13(add4) moves to F#7(add4) with an A# bass note approaching the chord at [C], B9sus4.

Section [C] reintroduces the piano and saxophone parts from [A]. The guitar part here is like the guitar part at [A], with a few changes to accommodate the harmony suggested by the bass line. Ascending from B9sus4 in the first bar of [C] through C#mi11 and DMA7(#11) in the second bar, then descending back down through C#mi11, B9 and E2sus4 in the third bar, the progression comes to rest on F#(add4) in the fourth bar. The next four bars move similarly, from Bmi11 through C#mi11 and DMA9#11, then ascending again in the seventh bar of the section from Bmi11, through C#mi11, DMA7(#11) and E6/9, coming to rest on F#(add4). Drums recede, "sneaking" out by the end of the eighth measure. The last four measures of the composition recap the opening sequence, concluding the composition as it began, with solo piano.

CHAPTER 7

PERFORMING THE COMPOSITIONS

Rehearsing, performing and recording the music proved to be a continuation of the compositional process. Some changes were made to the music once I had the opportunity to hear the pieces in rehearsal with my group and some aspects of the music needed to be approached differently in a live performance situation than in recording.

When I initially presented "Shade Of Many Shades" to the quintet in rehearsal, I had written the entire sixteen-bar progression of section [A] to be played as an introduction by piano, bass and drums prior to the saxophone/guitar melody. In rehearsal though, the section simply felt too long without the melody, and I abbreviated the introduction to include only the first four measures of the progression.

Verbal direction brought greater clarity to the rehearsal process, helping realize my ideas in a way that reading the music alone could not have done. Rehearsing "I Read it Somewhere", the instruction "Play this note, or improvise" was clarified for my saxophonist when I talked about the image of the well, giving him an understanding of the purpose of his role. I wanted "Night On Earth" to feel more raucous as it approached its conclusion. Rather than use dynamic markings, or write more directions on the parts, I encouraged the musicians to play with a sense of abandon: "It should get a bit wilder at the end!"

I usually provide my drummers with a part that outlines the melody, and any other important elements that I would like him to refer to, rather than write specific drum parts

using drum notation. Sometimes I write an amalgamated part for piano and drums that includes directions specifically for the drummer, such as "Drums enter here with Afro-Cuban groove", "Brushes, half-time swing", "Fill", etc. I have always relied on verbal direction to help clarify anything on the page, particularly if I "hear" certain things I would like played on specific elements of the kit. I might say something like "try more of an implication of double-time on the hi-hat". I have considered what it might be like to have a group other than my own interpret the compositions (without the aid of my presence to direct the group) and have concluded that some additional written performance notes could provide similar guidance.

We (the quintet) recorded the pieces before we performed them in a "live" situation. Recording the music and listening back to the recordings allowed me to assess the pieces with a somewhat more objective perspective. At section [A] in "I Read It Somewhere" the bass clarinet part is meant to oscillate repetitively as part of the backdrop for the guitar solo. It makes sense for the bass clarinet to drop out periodically in order to take a breath. After we recorded it, it struck me that when I returned for the mixing session I could overdub a Fender Rhodes part there, to reinforce the bass clarinet part and also add another colour and dimension to the track. At the end of the same piece the guitar sequence continues while the rest of the ensemble concludes. When we rehearsed the piece we ended it as written. During the recording process I experimented with having the rest of the ensemble carry on playing at full intensity rather than end as written, then fade the ensemble out during mixing. The effect is similar with the guitar sequence continuing on its own at the end, but I much preferred the result of the fade-out.

Now in live performances we try to simulate the fade performed by the recording engineer.

I had originally written the bass to enter on the repeat at [A] in "Folding", playing roots that moved the four-bar progression from D major to B major, then repeating the sequence. During the recording of the piece I tried delaying the entry of the bass until [B]. This meant that the entries of the various instruments were now staggered, helping to build momentum, a result I preferred.

CHAPTER 8

REALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT

My original goal in writing these compositions was to compose pieces dedicated to heroes of mine in the fields of literature, film, painting and architecture. It was my intention to capture the feeling of each of my heroes' work in my compositions. I also wanted each composition to be complete unto itself, yet contain some kind of musical thread or connective tissue that would unify the compositions as a grouping.

In reflection, I have succeeded in creating four compositions, each with its own shape and mood, yet with unifying factors among them. Each composition's inspiration was distinct, and varying methodologies and techniques were used in the composing of each piece. Some recurring pitch class sets, the use of pentatonic scales, similar three-note shapes occurring in the piano parts, and similarly syncopated rhythmic figures are elements that unify them.

Ultimately, I found a benefit to having worked with these objectives in mind. Regardless of whether anyone else hears the representation of my heroes in the music, the intent with which I wrote the compositions informed them in a way that could only have occurred with that intention. I also found a benefit to thinking of the pieces as belonging to a collection rather than a suite. There is no limit to the number of compositions I could add to the collection in future since there are many more sources of inspiration to pursue.

APPENDIX A

Audio CD In Sleeve

(Inside Back Cover)

APPENDIX B

CD Credits:

Track #1	"I Read It Somewhere"	5:54
Track #2	"Night On Earth"	9:49
Track #3	"Shade Of Many Shades"	8:31
Track #4	"Folding"	3:36

All compositions by Nancy Walker ©2012 SOCAN

Nancy Walker	Piano
Ted Quinlan	Guitar
Shirantha Beddage	Bass Clarinet (Trk. #1), Baritone Saxophone (Trk. #2), Alto Saxophone (Trk. #3), Soprano Saxophone (Trk. #4)
Kieran Overs	Bass
Ethan Ardelli	Drums

Recorded April 22, 2012 by John 'Beetle' Bailey at The Drive Shed, Toronto

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