Developmental Devices Used to Create Coherence and Unity in Multi-Movement Suites in a Modern Jazz Orchestra Setting

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ABSTRACT

Solipsis is a six-movement composition for a seventeen-piece jazz orchestra. Each movement was composed to possess its own unique qualities and be able to stand alone. Yet one of the main objectives of this project was to create unity and coherence through the entire suite through the use of non-musical ideas like programmatic themes and conceptual ideas as well as applying various musical techniques such as melodic motifs, harmonic progressions and concepts, chord voicings and rhythm to develop musical ideas.

As a way of creating a sense of unity between each of the pieces, each movement is inspired by themes and motifs inherent in the film *Synecdoche, New York*, and musical concepts such as non-functional harmony (modal harmony and atonal harmony) form the basis for much of the melodic and harmonic material contained in *Solipsis*.

As preparation for the composition of *Soilipsis* I studied two three-movement suites from two of the more prominent jazz orchestra writers working today; *One Question, Three Answers* written by Jim McNeely, and *Scenes from Childhood* by Maria Schnieder. What follows is a detailed analysis of their works followed by a comprehensive breakdown of my own *Solipsis*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Solipsis is a six-movement suite written for a modern jazz orchestra. With the composition of this piece, I had two main objectives:

- To write a long-form piece of music for a modern jazz ensemble.
- To utilise musical techniques and devices used by some of the most important composers currently writing for modern jazz orchestras to create unity through the suite at both local and global levels.

The second of these two objectives is the main focus of this paper, and in turn, influenced a significant number of my decisions in the compositional process both conceptually and musically.

During this first chapter I will briefly outline the significance of these objectives and how they are applied to *Solipsis*.

Grey Music vs. Creative Music

Trying to identify and define characteristics of *modern* jazz composition, other than jazz music that has been written recently, can be reasonably difficult, so for a more specific explanation I have adopted Graham Colliers's definition of what he calls *creative music* in his book *The Jazz Composer: Moving Music of the Paper.*[1]

1. Collier, Graham. *The Jazz Composer: Moving Music off the Paper*. London, U.K.: Northway Publications, 2009.

Collier states that there is a lot of music that he finds boring, and lacking in both creativity and life.[2] He classifies this as *grey music* which can be described as music in which:

- Chord voicings are formulaic and basic.
- The reoccurrences of musical themes are easily recognisable with only minor variations.
- Solos and the accompanying background figures are independent of the tune written by the composer.

In contrast, Collier describes *creative music* as music in which:

- Voicings are more interesting and colourful, including voicing across sections, in a similar way to what Ellington achieved.
- May include a slightly different instrumentation from standard expectations; the possible use of additional reed instruments, strings or electronics for example.
- Major musical themes undergo significant transformation and development.
- The inclusion of solo sections is of great importance, and any background figures are used to stimulate and support the demands of the piece.

With this in mind, my next task was to identify some key composers associated with jazz orchestra writing. Collier identified Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus and Gil Evans as key contributors to *creative* jazz. However as all of these composers are no longer alive (and haven't been for over twenty years now), I decided to refer back to my original statement, that modern means recent, and study composers who currently are having significant impact on the development of jazz composition for a large ensemble. In the following chapters I will analyse music from composers Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider, two composers I believe best exemplify modern jazz composition for large jazz ensembles.

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2. Collier, Graham. *The Jazz Composer: Moving Music off the Paper*, pp. 206-207.

CHAPTER 2

KEY COMPOSERS

Jim McNeely

Jim McNeely's contribution to large ensemble jazz composition and arranging has been significant over the course of his musical career. He is currently the pianist and composer-in-residence of one of the most significant big bands in New York City, The Vanguard Orchestra (formerly known as the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra). McNeely's work with the Vanguard Orchestra cements his place in the lineage of significant composers associated with the ensemble such as Thad Jones and Bob Brookmeyer.

McNeely's reputation as a prominent composer/arranger for large jazz ensembles has led to associations with some of the world's leading large jazz ensembles such as: the Frankfurt Radio Big Band (as artist-in-residence), the Danish Radio Big Band (as Chief Conductor and composer/arranger for five years), the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band; the Metropole Orchestra (Netherlands), the Swiss Jazz Orchestra, the Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, and the West German Radio (W.D.R.) Big Band. Additionally, McNeely's work has earned him nine Grammy nominations.[1]

I am a huge fan of McNeely's writing for jazz orchestras, and feel that his writing is among that which best exemplifies what modern jazz composition is about: the use of sophisticated voicings; complex techniques used to develop musical themes and ideas; writing with specific soloists in mind; the use of solo sections to enhance the overall composition.

With this in mind, it makes sense that when studying techniques and devices used in modern jazz writing for larger ensembles, a study of some of Jim McNeely's work is necessary. His work will be discussed in CHAPTER FOUR: *ONE QUESTION, THREE ANSWERS*.

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1. Jim McNeely. 'Biography', http://www.jim-mcneely.com/ (accessed October 10, 2012)

Maria Schneider

Maria Schneider's 1994 album *Evanescence*[2] has become a quintessential album for modern jazz orchestra writing; jazz composer and educator David Springfield called it "Another step forward in the evolution of big bands."[3]

The compositions are intricate and complex and the development of rhythmic and melodic themes is elaborate and sophisticated. From this point on Schneider established herself as one of the most significant jazz composers/arrangers working today.

After leaving the Eastman School of Music in New York on completion of a Masters of Music degree in 1985, Schneider began a musical apprenticeship with jazz legend Gil Evans which lasted for several years as well as studying with Bob Brookmeyer from 1986 to 1991.

Largely guided by the big band writing of Bob Brookmeyer, and the Third Stream[4] influence of Gil Evans, Schneider's music blends plenty of genres, and as such her list of commissioners has grown to be quite varied and includes: the Norrbotten Big Band, the Danish Radio Band, the Metropole Orchestra, the Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra, the Monterey Jazz Festival, and New York City's Lincoln Center.[5] Additionally, Maria Schneider and her jazz orchestra have been nominated for nine Grammy awards, and have won two.[6]

Maria Schneider's attention to texture, use of additional woodwind instruments, use of solo sections to enhance and serve her compositions, and the Third Stream influence are among some of the reasons why I believe she is another great example of the modern jazz composer. As such, her work will be the subject of discussion in CHAPTER FIVE: *SCENES FROM CHILDHOOD*.

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2. Schneider, Maria. *Evanescence.* Enja, 1994. CD.
3. Springfield, David, quoted in, Hadley, Frank-John. 'My Favorite Big Band Album: 25 Essential Recordings'. *Downbeat*, 77/4 (2010), p. 44.
4. *Third Stream* is a term coined by composer Gunther Schuller to describe a musical genre that takes influences from both jazz and classical music.
5. Maria Schneider. 'Biography', http://www.mariaschneider.com/ (accessed October 28, 2012)
6. 'Best Large Ensemble Album' in 2005 for *Concert in the Garden*, and 'Best Instrumental Composition' in 2007 for 'Cerulean Skies'.

There are of course many other great examples of significant composers for large jazz ensembles whose work warrants further study in this area of research.

Bob Brookmeyer, who was instrumental in the development of both McNeely and Schneider (and many other current composers), has a huge body of work and collaborators, but because of his much longer career, dating back to the early 1950s up until his death at the end of 2011, he fits into a slightly different school than McNeely and Schneider.

Darcy James Argue is another composer/arranger of large jazz ensembles based in New York; he too is a former student of Brookmeyer. In 2004 he formed Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, an eighteen-piece steampunk big band.[7] A significant feature of his writing is that he often dabbles with science-fiction influences and electronic elements which make him a perfect example of the development of the modern jazz composer. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this, he has only released one album, *Infernal Machines*,[8] and being relatively new to the scene, doesn't have a lot of material to study.

Music journalist James Isaacs writes: "Within the past twenty-five years or so years, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Sammy Nestico, Bob Florence, Maria Schneider, and Jim McNeely are among those who have extended the idiom of big band composition."[9] This adds further evidence to the impact that composers Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider have had on modern jazz composition and affirms my choice of them as the main focus of my research in compositional techniques for modern jazz composition. I feel both are held in very high regard in this field and their contributions to modern jazz composition that have helped define what it is today.

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7. *Steampunk* is described as being a sub-genre of science fiction, generally featuring steam-powered machinery and inspired by an industrial setting.
8. Darcy James Argue's Secret Society. *Infernal Machines*. New Amsterdam, 2009. CD.
9. Isaacs, James. quoted in, Collier, Graham. *The Jazz Composer: Moving Music off the Paper,* p.121

Having said that, I think it is worth referring back to Graham Collier's definition of *creative music*. While I certainly agree that McNeely and Schneider are among some of those who best exemplify what the modern jazz composer is based on his definitions, Collier makes several specific mentions in his book of how he is a little sceptical of these composers.

Collier asks if writers such as McNeely can "be called jazz composers when they are, in the main, using formulaic *arranging* methods common over the past fifty or more years."[10] He also provides several examples of composers whom he believes demonstrate "a different language, a more contemporary language, a much more *individual* language, than that used by Schneider, Brookmeyer or McNeely, whose music is so firmly rooted in the past."[11]

Collier's argument lies in the fact that these composers haven't really extended the idiom of big band composition as they are drawing too much from past influences, and haven't really made significant advances by themselves. I can agree with this to an extent; while they are certainly at the forefront of the development of composition for large jazz ensembles (which is certainly worth recognition), they are rooted in the tradition of writing for large jazz ensembles. And while McNeely may be continuing the tradition of Thad Jones and Bob Brookmeyer, and extending those techniques to a more modern context, I believe Maria Schneider is certainly developing her own style (and Collier acknowledges that many of his remarks are less directed at her than the others).

This aside, I certainly believe that the two composers, Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider are great examples of the development of jazz compositions for large ensembles. Maria Schneider for example is constantly writing for additional instruments such as flutes, clarinets and over-driven guitar, varying from the standard jazz band instrumentation and her wide range of influences such as third stream and Brazilian music push her music beyond standard big band traditions.

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10. Collier, Graham. *The Jazz Composer: Moving Music off the Paper,* p. 2.

11. Collier, Graham. *The Jazz Composer: Moving Music off the Paper,* p. 124.

And through his association with some of New York's finest jazz musicians Jim McNeely is able to draw on their capabilities and write music that also pushes the limit of what big band music can be.

McNeely and Schneider's continuing contributions to the evolution of this tradition certainly places their music into Collier's definition of *creative music*, making their commonly used musical techniques and devices ideal for further study in the field of modern jazz composition.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Rayburn Wright's 1982 text: *Inside the Score*[1] set the benchmark for the analytical study of writing for large jazz ensembles, and has been considered one of the primary textbooks for jazz composition for thirty years, recommended by the likes of Jim McNeely.[2] Using a series of annotations, score reductions and interviews Wright provides a complex analysis of a number of charts written by three significant composers/arrangers: Thad Jones, Sammy Nestico, and Bob Brookmeyer.

The main features of Wright's analysis include detailed examinations of common musical elements such as; "voicings, orchestration, textures, melodic construction, position of climaxes, passing chords, and substitute chords – all of which are clearly annotated."[3]

My analytical study of charts by Jim McNeely, Maria Schneider, and my own *Solipsis* will draw extensively from Wright's analytical formulae. However, as Wright's text serves as a practical study and listening guide, rather than a theoretical exercise, I will undertake my analysis from a slightly different angle and use some of his analytical techniques to outline how musical ideas are developed in the areas of melody, harmony and rhythm as opposed to just discussing the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements that make up certain musical themes.

Fred Sturm's text *Changes over Time: The Evolution of Jazz Arranging*[4] was devised to determine the evolution of jazz arranging from the 1920s to the present day through the analysis of rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, orchestral, and structural variation. *Changes over Time* focuses on just four tunes, but draws on examples from thirty-five arrangements of those tunes from significant composers/arranges from the history of jazz such as Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, Gil Evans, Thad Jones, and Bob Brookmeyer.

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1. Wright, Rayburn. *Inside the Score*. Delevan, N.Y.: Kendor Music Inc, 1982.
2. Jim McNeely. 'Recommended Resources ', http://www.jim-mcneely.com/ (accessed October 10, 2012)
3. Wright, Rayburn. *Inside the Score,* p. 2.
4. Sturm, Fred. *Changes Over Time: The Evolution of Jazz Arranging.* Advance Music, 1995.

Sturm's analytical style is similar to that of Wright's; however the main emphasis in his text is on how each idea is developed in subsequent arrangements. This is one particular approach I will utilise as my study is based on how musical ideas are developed through multi-movement suites, and my analysis will include a discussion of the techniques and devices used by my chosen composers to successfully develop their ideas.

Application

Through the use of reduced scores I will examine musical elements from each movement of a multi-movement suite from each Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider. The purpose of this analysis is to identify ways in which musical themes and ideas are developed, and unity is created at both local and global levels. This analytical style is largely based on those of Wright and Sturm. I will then apply my findings to my own composition, and discuss in detail how I have applied and developed McNeely and Schneider's techniques to my own work. The musical examples I have chosen to analyse will fall under several categories:

- **Melody:** In this section, rather than copy out melodies and give a theoretical analyses of what is happening (such as in the books by Wright and Strum), I will identify commonly used scalar/intervallic ideas, and examine recurring themes and motifs. This will be accompanied by a discussion of how they have been developed.
- **Harmony:** Here I will discuss ways in which chordal movements have been developed as well as how chord voicings (both within instrumental sections and across the whole band) are used and developed through each suite.
- **Rhythm:** I will identify commonly used rhythms and analyse how reoccurring themes and ideas have been developed using rhythmic devices.

Notes on the Reductions

Following the models of Wright and Sturm, musical examples given in the following chapters will be reduced from the master score to fit in as few staves as practically possible. For ease of reading, some bass lines or other instrumental lines may be transposed by an octave to avoid excessive use of ledger lines. All parts will be shown in concert pitch.

CHAPTER 4

ONE QUESTION, THREE ANSWERS

One Question, Three Answers, is a suite in three movements written by Jim McNeely for the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra (VJO), and featured on the album *Up from the Skies, Music of Jim McNeely*.[1] In reference to the title of the suite, McNeely has stated that "it's up to the listener to figure out what the question might be."[2] One conceptual feature of the suite is that each movement features a contrasting pair of soloists. After deciding that the third movement would include a tenor saxophone battle, McNeely determined "that one piece should feature two upper-register soloists and another, two lower-register players."[3]

The opening movement is 'Almost Always' and features the two low-register soloists, John Mosca and Gary Smulyan on trombone and baritone saxophone respectively. Mosca's solo section is at a reasonably slow tempo at 80 beats per minute, and is "harmonically dark" consisting of mainly sus chords and minor/major7th chords, whereas Smulyan's solo section is a contrast being faster (160 beats per minute), and lighter using mainly major7th chords. At the end of the piece, Mosca and Smulyan come together, with their "voices crying out in an augmented wilderness"[4]

'Hardly Ever' is the second movement and features solos from the high duo of Greg Gisbert on flugelhorn and Dick Oatts on alto saxophone. Much like the end of 'Almost Always', near the conclusion of 'Hardly Ever' Gisbert and Oatts trade phrases.

The final movement 'You Tell Me' features an old fashioned tenor battle between Rich Perry and Ralph Lalama. Again, these solos are contrasting with Perry's solo based on modal harmony and Lalama's based upon more traditional jazz changes, with both of them trading lines towards the end.

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1. The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. *Up from the Skies, Music of Jim McNeely.* Planet Arts, 2006. CD.
2. McNeely, Jim. [Liner notes]. In *Up from the Skies, Music of Jim McNeely.*
3. McNeely, Jim. [Liner notes]. In *Up from the Skies, Music of Jim McNeely.*
4. McNeely, Jim. [Liner notes]. In *Up from the Skies, Music of Jim McNeely.*

McNeely's idea of contrasting pairs of soloists serves as the main inspiration behind the suite, and certainly functions as one way in which the three movements are united together.

Another technique employed by McNeely is the use a segues between each movement to give the effect of a single continuous piece of music.

One way in which unity can be achieved through any piece of music is through repetition. In a jazz context this is often in the form of a melodic reprise near the end of the piece. In Jim McNeely's three-movement suite, *One Question, Three Answers* this technique is used to create unity at a local level within each movement.

The first movement, 'Almost Always', features two distinct parts separated by a double-time tempo change. Both of these sections feature repetition as a way of book-ending each part. The first section, characterised by its slower tempo of 80 bpm, begins its melodic theme at the sixth bar. After a trombone solo, this theme is reprised at bar sixty-seven. A double time tempo change occurs at bar seventy-seven and a new melodic theme begins at bar eighty-one. After a lengthy baritone saxophone solo over similar harmonic material as that of the trombone solo, the melodic theme is once again reprised, starting at bar 254. This repetition of melodic material is an effective way in which McNeely creates cohesion through the piece at a local level.

'Hardly Ever', the second movement, features a melodic reprise in much the same way. At bar 263, after trumpet and alto saxophone solos, melodic material from earlier in the movement is referenced. The final movement, 'You Tell Me', again features some sort of melodic reprise. At bar 295 the introduction is repeated before the tenor saxophone battle commences. A restatement of earlier melodic material begins at 419 linking the piece together effectively.

The use of melodic restatement is featured in all three movements by McNeely and successfully serves the purpose of creating unity within each piece.

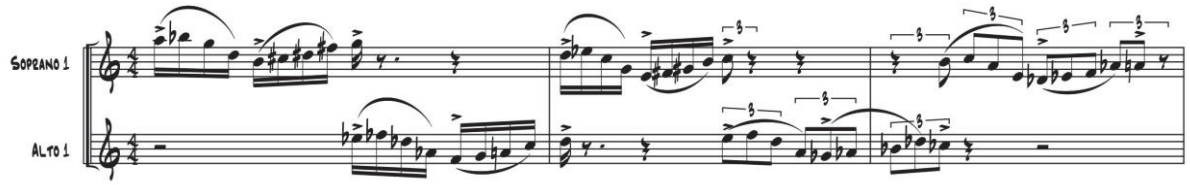
Melodic Motifs

While the distinct melodic sections for each movement are relatively independent from each other, there are a number of reoccurring melodic motives throughout the suite.

According to McNeely, "The melody of the opening ensemble 'spiral' (figure 4-1) is from a pitch row that forms the basis for elements in the other two pieces too".[5] This can be seen in the following examples, figures 4-4 through to 4-7.

Figure 4-1

'Almost Always' melody of the "opening spiral" (mm. 1-3)



This opening melody, shared between the soprano and alto saxophone, and doubled on trumpets one and two respectively, shows a nine-note cell being transposed to different keys. This motif is referenced throughout each of the three movements in various forms, usually being shared among several instruments in a cascading effect as shown in figure 4-1.

Figure 4-2 shows another occasion where this motif in referenced in this first movement. Although it is shown on a single stave, each (consequent) cell is shared among instruments. This is a far simpler idea than that of figure 4-1; however the opening motif has served as an inspiration for this idea using the concept of a repeated melodic cell modulating through various keys. In figure 4-2 an ascending minor third interval is repeated through key centres, for the most part descending in major thirds.

1. McNeely, Jim. [Liner notes]. In *Up from the Skies, Music of Jim McNeely.*

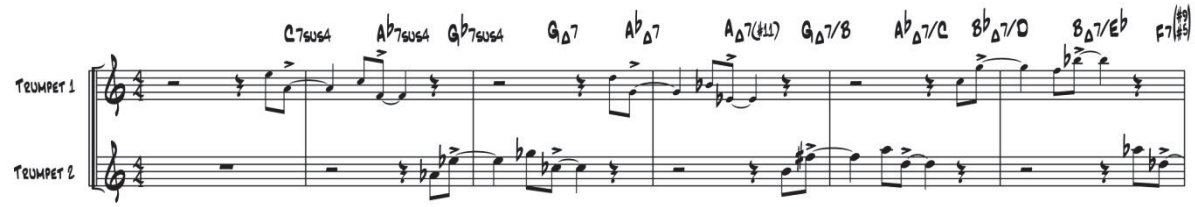
Figure 4-2

'Almost Always' minor third intervals, shown on one stave (mm. 86-90)

This same intervallic motif continues through 'Almost Always', becoming extended and increasingly varied each time, eventually progressing to perfect fifth intervals, both ascending and descending (figure 4-3). This example also shows the way in which the lick is cascaded through the instrumental parts. Trumpet one and two share their parts with the alto and soprano saxophones respectively, and are joined with harmony lines through the rest of the band.

Figure 4-3

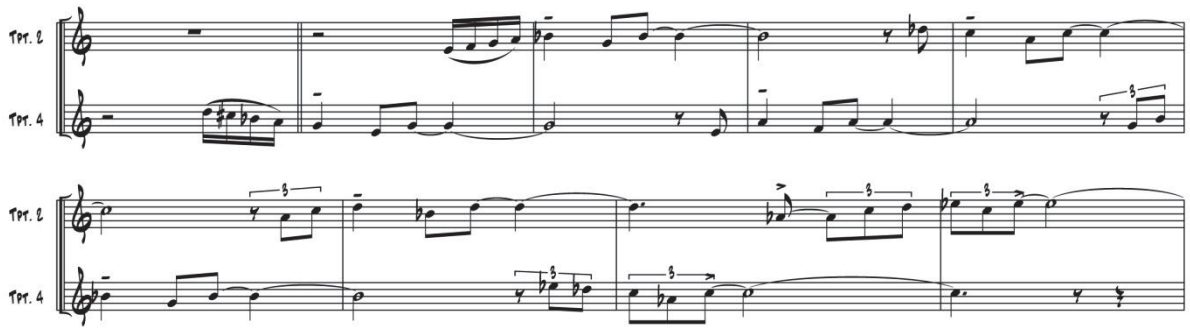
'Almost Always' perfect fifth intervals transposed through keys as shared by trumpets 1&2 (mm.113-118)



The same motif is then referenced in 'Hardly Ever', the second movement, with further development, and again shared among two voices. Figure 4-4 shows the motive played between the second and fourth trumpets; this is again doubled on the soprano and first tenor saxophone respectively. The main melodic idea (which is preceded in each instance by a short, fast phrase) is a modification of the idea shown in figure 4-3. The lick now descends through an interval of a third (a mixture of major and minor thirds) then jumps back up to the starting note. The cell is then once again transposed through several keys.

Figure 4-4

'Hardly Ever' intervallic motif shared by trumpets 2&4 with variation (mm. 138-146)



During the third movement, 'You Tell Me', the motif is again present and developed further as a significant element to the piece's melody.

Figure 4-5

'You Tell Me' top line opening melody, condensed to a single stave (mm. 24-28)

The main melody for 'You Tell Me' features a several sequences of semitone cells transposed to different keys, and rhythmically displaced. Each cell contains four notes of alternately ascending and descending half steps. This is a development by elongation on figure 4-4 where each cell was only three notes. Once again each cell is shared among voices. Once again for ease of reading figure 4-5 is written on a single stave.

The following figure 4-6, features the same four bar section of melody as shown in figure 4-5, however this time it is shown across three staves (as it appears in the score) so that the cascading effect of the orchestration can be seen. Each part is doubled in the saxophone section while the rest of the trumpets (and trombone two) provide a harmony line.

Figure 4-6

'You Tell Me' semitone motif, cascading effect (mm. 54-58)

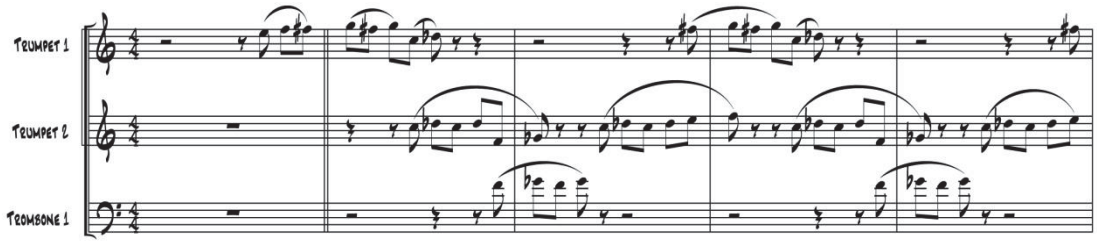


Figure 4-6 shows how this melodic idea has been shared among different voices. Where previous examples have shown no overlap between lines, figure 4-6 shows that the beginning and ending notes of the motif are overlapped by the other voices. Additionally, while other examples have featured the motif being continuously transposed to different keys, figure 4-6 shows the motif being first transposed down a tritone, then a perfect fifth, then back up the same intervals. The two-bar phrase is then repeated.

A final example of this motif comes from the final bars of 'You Tell Me' and shows the same semitone motif being used but the transposition has been varied.

Figure 4-7

'You Tell Me' cascading semitone motif in the brass (mm. 504-507)

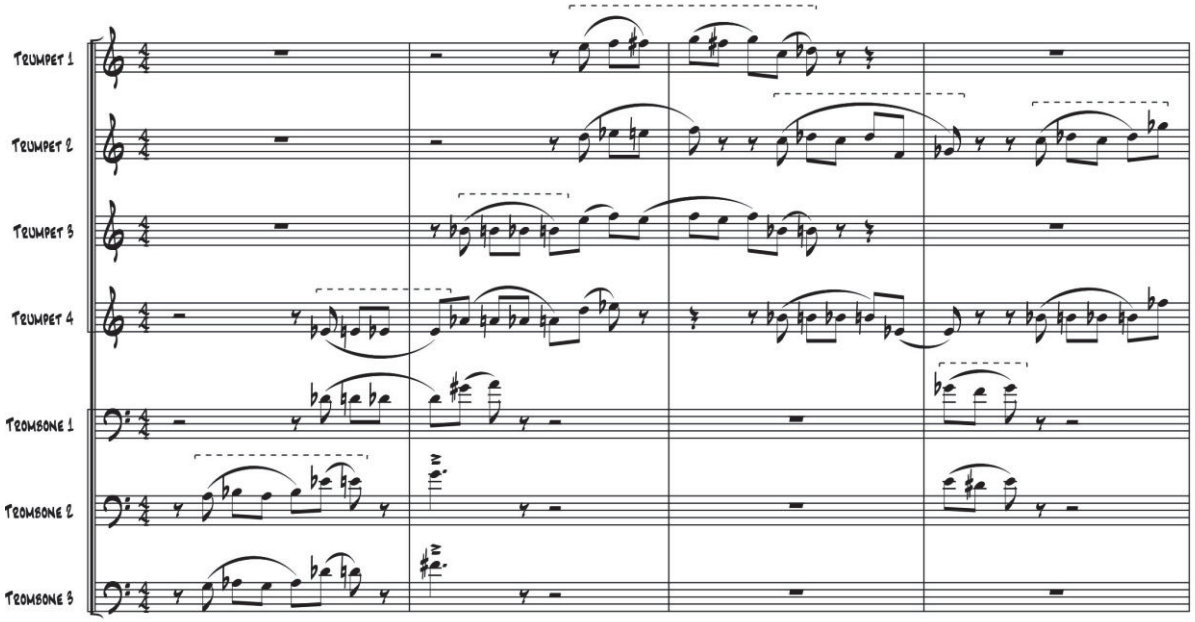


Figure 4-7 shows the full brass section playing the cascading motif. Included in this example is also the harmony line which is a whole-tone below the top line. The top line at any given point is indicated by a dotted line above it; this is to show that with the inclusion of overlapping voices in this example, one voice may be playing the top line at the beginning of their phrase but might be playing the harmony line by the end of it such as the fourth trumpet part in bar two of the example. This concept takes the overlapping idea a step further with the top line and harmony lines often switching parts. This final example also shows how complicated the motif has become, almost serving as a bookend to the initial, complex idea that opened the first movement (figure 4-1).

McNeely's "spiral" idea, initiated in the opening bars of the first movement contains plenty of material on which subsequent ideas are based throughout the full suite. It is worth noting that while the original idea underwent plenty of development throughout the whole suite, in each individual movement the motif takes on certain characteristics specific to that movement. During 'Almost Always' the motif only contained two notes, an interval of only a minor third or a perfect fifth (figures 4-1, 2, & 3). In 'Hardly Ever' the motif was extended to three notes, with the final note returning back to its original pitch (figure 4-4). In the final movement the motif consisted of four notes with the intervallic leap essentially being played twice, and this time these were all based on half steps (figure 4-5).

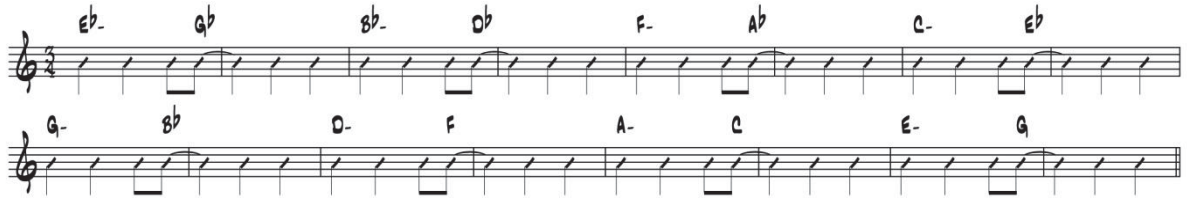
Harmonic Development

While each of the movements of *One Question, Three Answers* feature many characteristics that are specific to each movement, as with the melodic elements discussed above, there are many instances in which specific harmonic concepts are also referenced throughout the suite.

Figure 4-8 shows a chord progression used during the second movement 'Hardly Ever'. The harmonic material of this example first appears at bar twenty seven during the melody, in a shorter form. But as shown in previous examples (see figures 4-2 & 4-3), one technique that McNeely frequently employs is that of taking a small musical idea then repeating it in different keys. Figure 4-8 is one instance in which a small harmonic idea (minor triad ascending to its relative major triad) is repeated, each time in a different key.

Figure 4-8

'Hardly Ever' harmonic movement during the third trumpet solo (mm. 83-98)

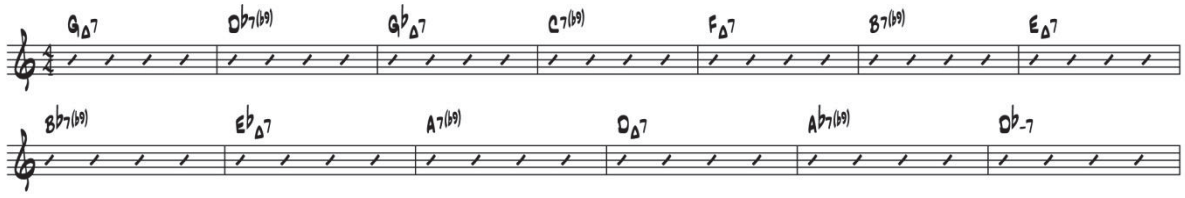


In figure 4-8 each two bar grouping starts with a minor chord moving to its relative major chord. This two-chord motif is the cycled through keys ascending by perfect fifths.

The idea of a two chord motif moving through key centres can also be found during the third movement 'You Tell Me' as shown in figure 4-9. Here the key centres descend by semitones and each major7th tonic chord is preceded by its dominant.

Figure 4-9

'You Tell Me' harmonic movement during the tenor solo (mm. 239-253)



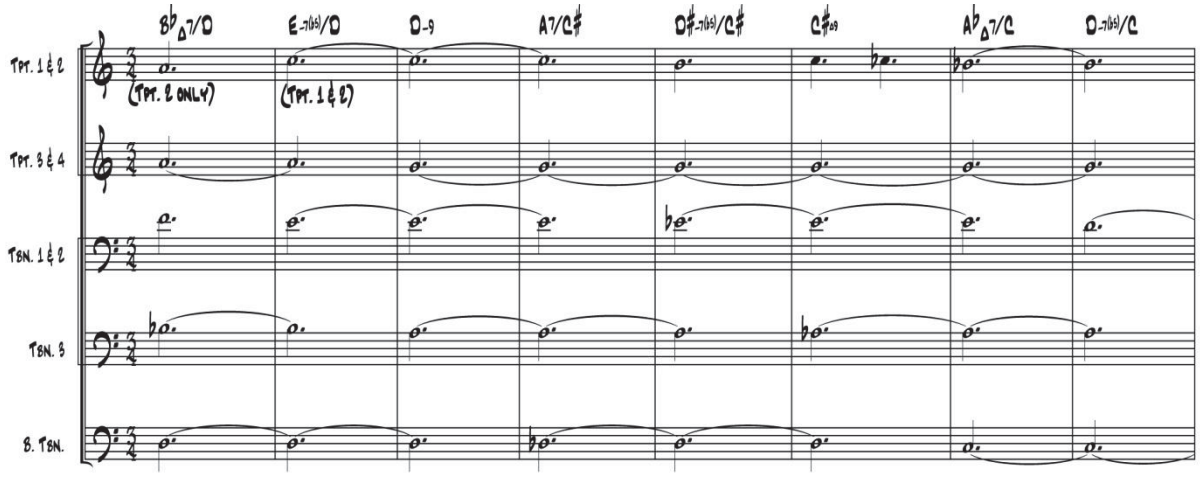
Both of these examples give the effect of a relatively quick harmonic rhythm as not only is the chord changing every bar, but key centres are also changing every two bars.

A significant element in each of the movements is small melodic and harmonic cells transposed through different key centres. These examples of similar harmonic movement are a further indication of unity between the three movements.

Another harmonic concept (related to chord voicings rather than progressions) which is found in the last two of the three movements occurs during the alto saxophone solo section where the brass section play fully harmonised voicings over a chromatic or stepwise moving bass line where groups of voices inside the chords move independently from each other. This instance occurs in 'Hardly Ever' starting at bar 207. The below figure (4-10) shows an eight-bar segment featuring the brass section with accompanying chord changes playing this harmonic idea.

Figure 4-10

'Hardly Ever' brass backgrounds during the alto solo (mm. 207-214)

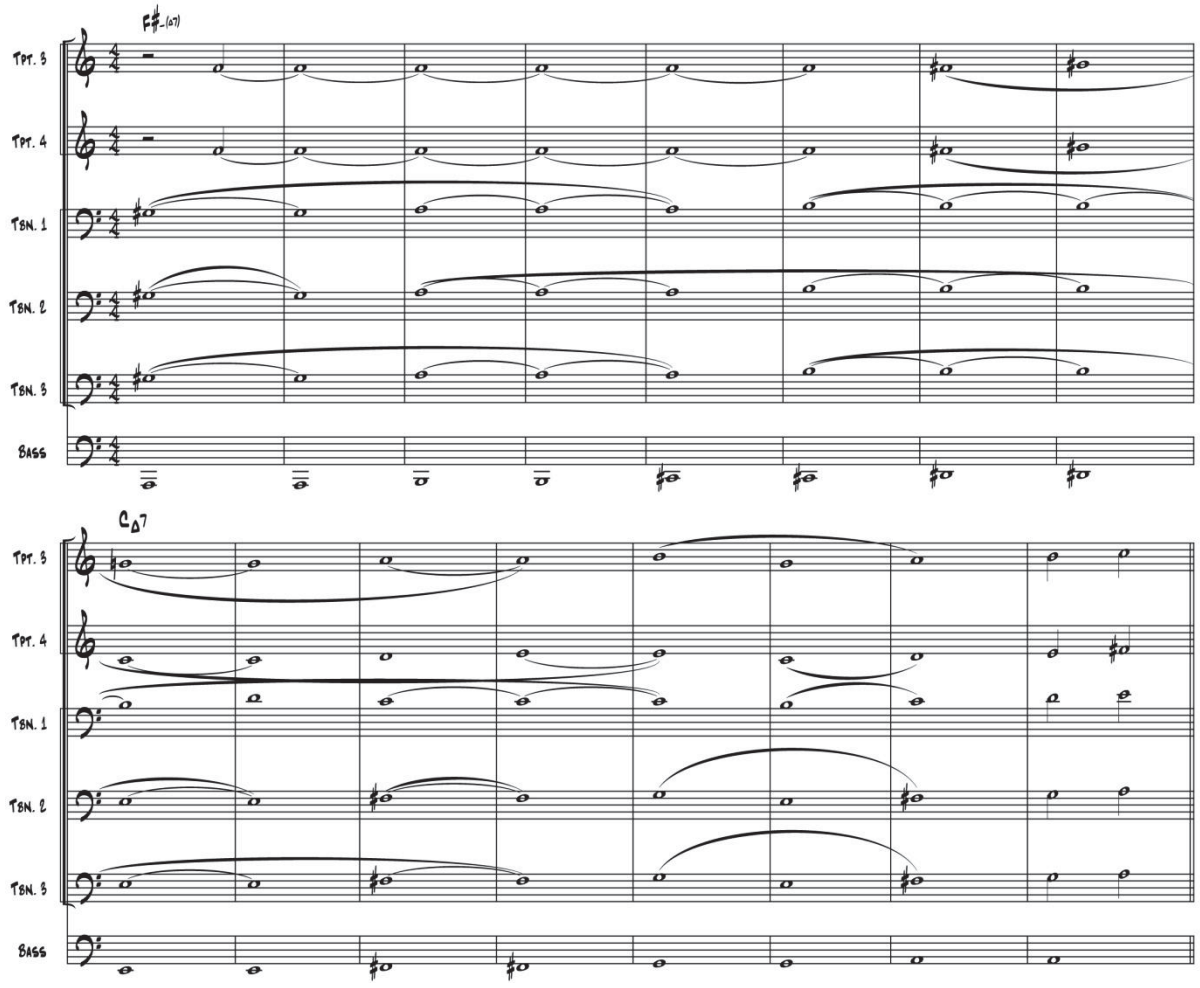


Each note played by each of the voices lasts for three bars and with the exception of the trumpets, every voice moves down chromatically every three bars, however each of the three bar sections have been displaced by a bar for the three trombone voices. This lends itself to the creation of some very interesting harmonic choices which are depicted by the written chord changes.

A similar concept of chordal voicings is used in the final movement, ‘You Tell Me’ again during solo sections. As shown in figure 4-11 a chord symbol is given as an indication of the general tonality for the soloist while the bass line ascends stepwise through the diatonic scale. Again voices that make up the brass figures move independently from each other. Here my focus is on the voicing of the brass section and how they relate to each other as opposed to the key centre implied by the F#minor$^{(major7th)}$ chord.

Figure 4-11

‘You Tell Me’ harmonic content during the tenor 1 solo (mm. 159-174)



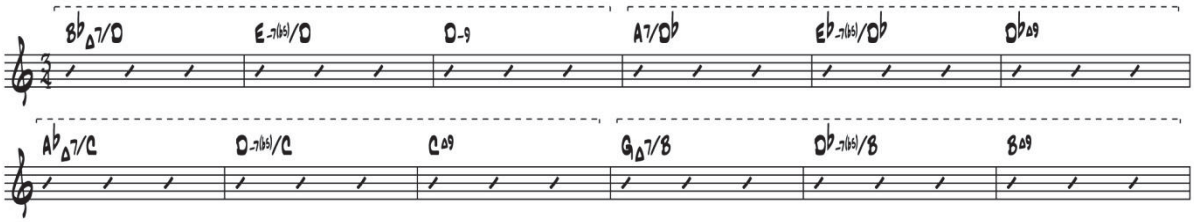
In this example, the bass line ascends up the scale in stepwise motion spending two bars on each note while other voices tend to move independently from the bass note and each other. Even when the parts are doubled such as the second and third trombone parts, the phrase marks indicate that each part is intended to be played slightly different.

These two examples show how a harmonic concept can be applied to two movements to link them together. Each example features a bass line moving in a scalar motion (chromatic or diatonic), below a brass section whose voices are moving independently from one another in small intervals. I believe that these two ideas are related in terms of chord voicings (as they contain the same style of voice-leading where only some voices move while others remain static and are held over the change of bass note), and chord progression (where the bass movement of any implied chord moves in a stepwise fashion).

Figure 4-10 is also related to figures 4-8 and 4-9 through it use of a three chord progression being repeated (with a little variation) in successive descending half steps. Figure 4-12 shows the chord progression of figure 4-10 in full, highlighting each three bar segment.

Figure 4-12

'Hardly Ever' chord progression during the alto solo (mm. 207-218)



In the above figure, all three chords within each three bar segment share a common root note. The three-bar segment is then transposed down a half step each subsequent time (albeit with a couple of variations in chord qualities).

The above examples on harmonic development show various techniques Jim McNeely has employed to create a common thread between two movements in his suite. Through the use of repeated harmonic concepts related to chord progressions and harmonic voicings, McNeely is able convey a sense of unity at a global level while still keeping each movement relatively independent through the development of these ideas at a local level as well.

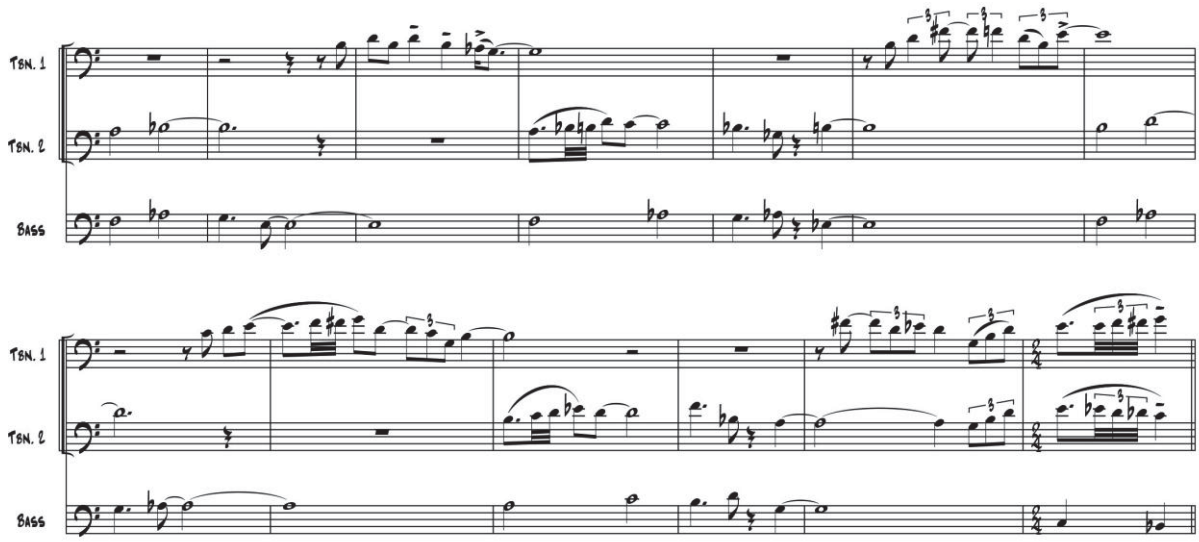
Rhythmic Development

As already discussed there are many instances in which Jim McNeely reuses musical ideas across the three movements of *One Question, Three Answers*. In the following section I will outline several ways in which some of these ideas have undergone development in regards to rhythm.

A significant transformation occurs during the first movement, 'Almost Always' at bar seventy seven when the tempo is doubled. Before this happens, there are several instances in which this transformation is somewhat foreshadowed by means of rhythmic development. Figure 4-13 shows the melody of the slower section of 'Almost Always' as it first appears, shared between the first and second trombones. The bass movement is also shown to reveal the rhythm of the harmonic movement, which is at this point unaccompanied by any chordal instrument.

Figure 4-13

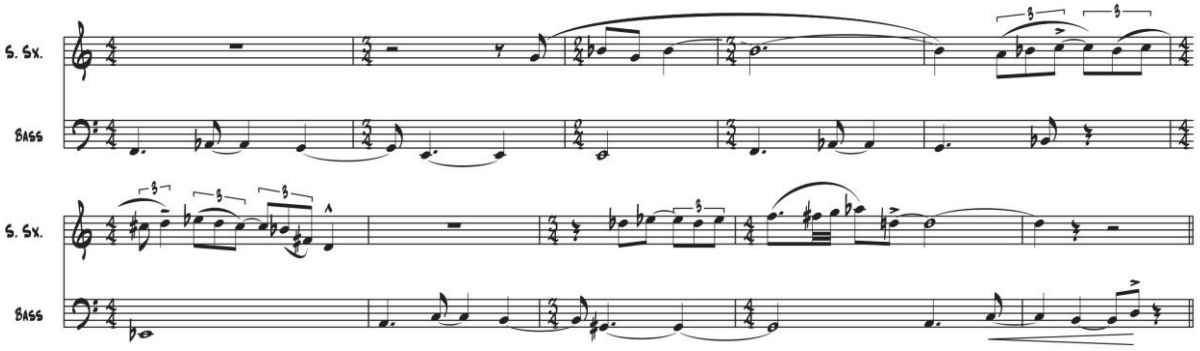
'Almost Always' trombone melody with bass movement (mm. 6-18)



The rhythmic ideas of figure 4-13 are referenced again later on during bars 67-76 (figure 4-14). As with figure 4-13, the example contained in 4-14 also occurs prior to the piece's tempo change.

Figure 4-14

'Almost Always' appearance of the melody and modified harmonic rhythm (mm. 67-76)



One significant rhythmic development that has occurred in figure 4-14 is the use of differing time signatures, while still retaining melodic fragments and the harmonic movement from figure 4-13. Another significant development is to do with the melodic rhythm. This time appearing in the soprano saxophone part, the melody is rhythmically more straight-forward; many of the fast scalar and chromatic runs contained in figure 4-13 are simplified to long notes or triplets; however melodic shapes still remain.

The melodic lick contained in the eighth and ninth bars of both examples also contains the same melodic contour, but with slight rhythmic variation at the beginning and end of the examples. The second trombone line in the tenth bar of 4-13 offers a small response to the full line played by the first trombone in the bars preceding it.

The harmonic rhythm (as seen in the bass part of the two examples) undergoes a significant transformation, mainly in response to the differing time signatures, but also perhaps as a foreshadowing to the double-time section which occurs at bar seventy-seven, straight after figure 4-14. Where bass movement of figure 4-13 made use of plenty of half notes, always starting on beats one or three, example 4-14 makes heavy use of the dotted quarter note rhythm. The effect that this creates is that of speeding up the harmonic rhythm, in preparation for the double-time section, and also producing a more unpredictable and interesting rhythm where notes are able to start on alternating on and off beats.

Another source of rhythmic development contained within the first movement ‘Almost Always’ is in relation to some of the ideas discussed in the previous section on melodic development.

Figure 4-15 shows the first appearance of the minor third intervallic motif in ‘Almost Always’, this example shows the idea consisting of two eighth-notes starting on the second and fourth beats of the bar with the second note occurring on the respective off beats. This second note is tied to a quarter note and so lasts for a total of one and a half beats.

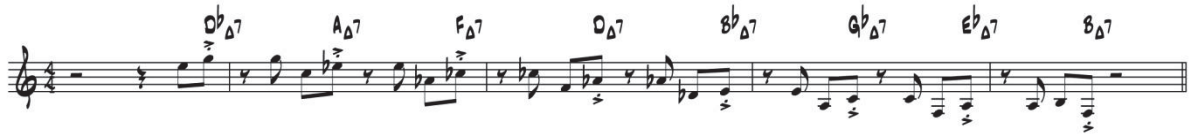
Figure 4-15

‘Almost Always’ minor third motif shown on one stave (mm. 86-90)

In figure 4-16 the minor third intervallic motif reappears but with some rhythmic differences. The motif occurs in the same place of the bar but this time the second note is cut short. Each minor third interval is also preceded by the last note of the previous cell.

Figure 4-16

‘Almost Always’ minor third motif shown on one stave (mm. 96-100)

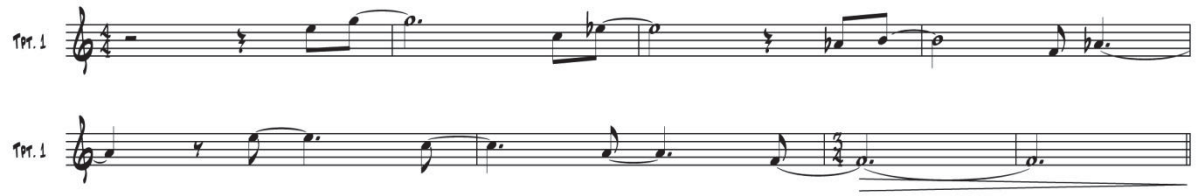


This is an effective way of creating variation and interest. The effect of the long note versus the short note concept also gives the feeling that figure 4-15 is at a more relaxed time feel, whereas the short phrases in figure 4-16 hint at a more ‘deliberate’ feel that is right up on the beat.

Figure 4-17 shows a number of different techniques to modify rhythmic ideas. The first three bars contain only the intervallic idea that starts on beat four creating a half time effect, possibly referencing the beginning of the piece which was written at half the tempo as this section.

Figure 4-17

'Almost Always' minor third motif as played by the lead trumpet (mm. 126-133)



In the third bar, the idea has been rhythmically displaced by a beat so that it starts on beat three (a technique used much like that of the shortened harmonic rhythm of figure 4-14 to create variation and unpredictability).

The fifth and sixth bars of figure 4-17 feature two cells per bar, but this time only the second note is included; another way of creating the illusion of the piece slowing down.

Conclusions

Unity and coherence at a local level within *One Question, Three Answers* was largely achieved through the restatement of musical material within each movement. Through the subsequent melodic, harmonic and rhythmic development of this material it is fair to say that much of the musical content contained within *One Question, Three Answers* adheres to Graham Collier's definition of *creative music* where musical themes undergo transformation so as to generate a greater level of interest with the listener.

Unity at a global level within Jim McNeely's suite appeared to be a lot more subtle. No specific musical material was shared across movements; instead musical concepts on which ideas were based provided the basis for a lot of the elements that appeared to connect each piece. This includes the concept of a short repeated pattern (melodic or harmonic) being transposed through various key centres, as well as the concept of 'cascading' melodies which occurred in all three movements. These two ideas featured prominently throughout each movement and certainly helped create a sense of unity at a global level.

It would appear that one of the more significant elements to creating coherence at a global level across McNeely's *One Question, Three Answers* would be the use of non-musical concepts; in particular the idea of featuring a contrasting pair of soloists in each piece. Another major element to creating unity was the use of segues between pieces, creating the effect of a single piece of music.

CHAPTER 5

SCENES FROM CHILDHOOD

Scenes from Childhood is a three-part suite written by Maria Schneider, commissioned in 1995 by the Monterey Jazz Festival. The suite is performed by the Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra and is included on their album *Coming About*.[1] The three movements of the suite are united by the use of a programmatic theme[2] with each movement being inspired by a childhood memory.

'Bombshelter Beast', the opening movement, is inspired by the "gut-wrenching fear of illogical things... You know, monsters under the bed – that kind of thing."[3] The movement doesn't really have a distinguishable melody, however does have a reoccurring triplet motif.

This is followed by 'Night Watchmen' an "eerie nocturnal landscape set outside Maria's childhood home".[4] Schneider recalls "the atmosphere was surreal: men working in the mill by day, watchmen making the rounds at night... That's what 'Night Watchmen' is about: imagination and fantasy. And about discovering your own sensuality: attraction, repulsion, confusion."[5] This movement contains plenty of chorale-like figures, plus an appearance of the triplet motif from 'Bombshelter Beast'.

The final movement, 'Coming About' shares its name with the album's title, a sailing term for a manoeuvre also known as *tacking*. Following the increasing levels of tension in the previous movements, 'Coming About' provides a significant contrast, reminiscent of "summer days spent sailing on a Minnesota lake."[6] Schneider writes that the piece is about "arrival, about finding the positive in what used to seem negative."[7]

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1. Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra. *Coming About*. Enja, 1996. CD.
2. *Programmatic music* is music that is largely inspired by a non-musical idea usually indicated in the title. As such, the music usually evokes a certain feeling or atmosphere related to the programmatic theme.
3. Schneider, Maria. [Liner notes]. In *Coming About.*
4. Teachout, Terry. [Liner notes]. In *Coming About.*
5. Schneider, Maria. [Liner notes]. In *Coming About.*
6. Teachout, Terry. [Liner notes]. In *Coming About.*
7. Schneider, Maria. [Liner notes]. In *Coming About.*

Following in the footsteps of Duke Ellington and Gil Evans, Maria Schneider is currently at the forefront of modern orchestral jazz, and as such brings a variety of new ideas and sounds to the table that are not often associated with the jazz tradition. *Scenes from Childhood* is a great example of Maria Schneider's compositional style. It embodies the idea of modern jazz writing through her use of rich textures, orchestral colours and modal harmony. Additionally it serves as an example of how she is able to weave a consistent thread through several movements to convey a sense of unity and coherence through a multi-movement suite.

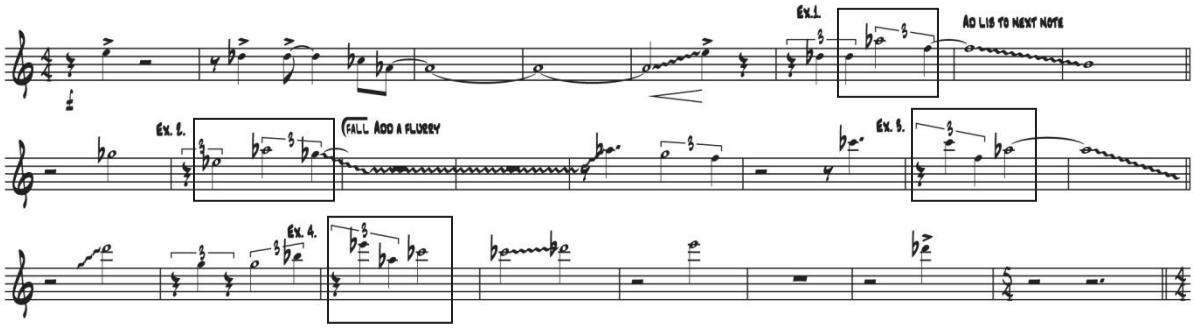
Like Jim McNeely, Maria Schneider also uses segue between each movement to link the suite together, an effective way of transitioning from one section to the next without interruption. And once again significant musical themes from each movement are reprised towards the end of that movement to create a sense of continuity at a local level.

Melodic Motifs

The opening band shout of ‘Bombshelter Beast’ acts as the piece’s melodic statement, although it doesn’t really have a discernible melody. The opening passage features the full band blasting out a number of small phrases, including a reoccurring triplet motif. This motif occurs in several instances, and in slightly different forms. Figure 5-1 shows the lead trumpet line of the first 24 bars of ‘Bombshelter Beast’ with the triplet motif’s appearance indicated each time.

Figure 5-1

‘Bombshelter Beast’ lead trumpet playing the main theme (mm. 1-24)



The triplet motif starts on the second or third note of a triplet grouping, never the first and always crosses over into the next triplet. Example 1 from figure 5-1 shows the first appearance of this motif. The three notes make up a major triad starting on the root, jumping up the fifth then descending to the third. The use of a simple triadic chord remains central to the motive in most cases, but the order of notes is sometimes changed.

Examples 3 and 4 feature F minor and A♭ minor triads. In these two examples the quality of the triad has changed as has the order of notes. Example 2 from figure 5-1 varies in that is doesn’t feature a full major or minor triad. Here the melodic contour is the same as example 1.

In these four examples of the motive we can see two types of melodic variations: variations in the chord quality, and of the melodic contour. In figure 5-2 we see further developments of this motif take place in respect to these aspects and in terms of the width of the intervallic leaps contained in the motif.

Figure 5-2

‘Bombshelter Beast’ melodic phrases between two registers (mm. 33-38)

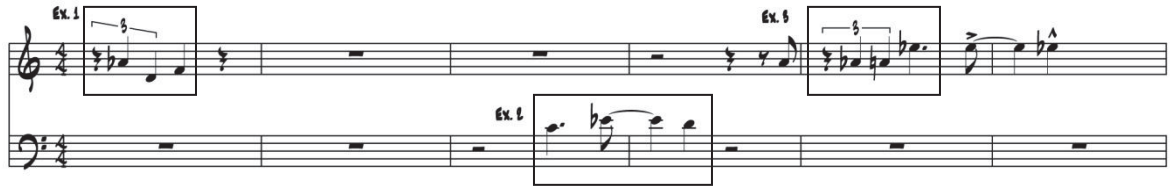


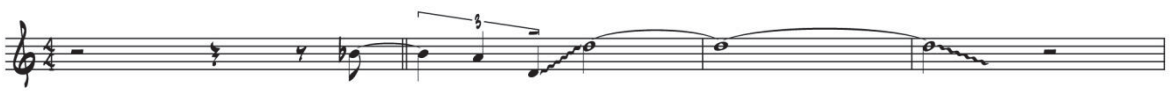
Figure 5-2 gives another three examples of the motif, only two of which remain constant with the triplet rhythm, the other (example 2) using dotted quarter notes to imply a polyrhythmic effect. Example 1 of figure 5-2 features the same melodic contour of examples 3 and 4 of figure 5-1 but uses a diminished triad, starting on the flattened fifth.

The second example from 5-2 follows the melodic contour of the first two examples from figure 5-1, but the range of the intervals has been diminished. Hinting at a C minor tonality, this example starts on the root, then only jumps up to the minor third before descending a half step to the ninth. The intervallic jumps and melodic contour are further developed in example three of 5-2 where the first interval is an ascending half step followed by an ascending tritone. This is the first example where the two intervallic jumps have moved in the same direction, and in addition, these last three examples have included a number of more dissonant intervals such as half steps and tritones, increasing the level of tension as the piece progresses.

In another appearance of this triplet motive, the intervallic leaps are a lot wider, consisting of a perfect fifth and a whole octave (figure 5-3). Much like in example 3 of 5-2, the three note motif in figure 5-3 is approached from a half step above. By this stage, to give the impression that it is evolving, the triplet motif no longer outlines a specific triad, instead the dissonant sound of half steps and tritones, or the consonance of perfect fifths and octaves provide the intervallic make up of the motif.

Figure 5-3

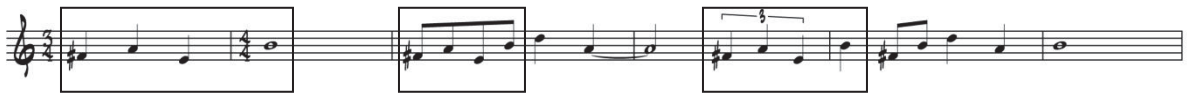
‘Bombshelter Beast’ triplet motif (mm. 50-53)



Much like the opening bars of ‘Bombshelter Beast’ where the triplet motif was embedded within the melodic theme of the piece, a four-note motif with a similar melodic contour is embedded within the main melody of the second movement of *Scenes from Childhood*, ‘Night Watchmen’. Figure 5-4 shows this melody with the various appearances of the motif highlighted. While this may not necessarily be a direct development on the triplet motif from ‘Bombshelter Beast’, I believe that the idea is certainly connected to the triplet motif due to its non-linear melodic contour and its many concealed appearances within the melody.

Figure 5-4

‘Night Watchmen’ opening melody (mm. 0-5)

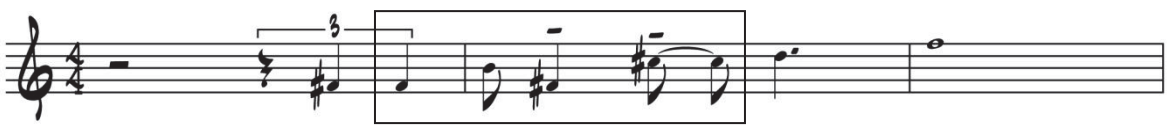


While the four-note motif from figure 5-4 may not resemble the triplet motif from ‘Bombshelter Beast’ melodically, the intervallic leaps of an ascending minor third, descending perfect fourth followed by an ascending perfect fifth appear related to the melodic contour of the triplet motif, and an example of Schneider linking movements together using similar melodic material.

At several other points during ‘Night Watchmen’ a similar four-note motif is used. Eight bar melodies commence at bars twenty-two and thirty, and both begin with a motif similar to figure 5-4. Figure 5-5 shows the example as starting from bar thirty. The only melodic difference is that in figure 5-5 the first note is (relatively) a whole step below where it appeared in figure 5-4. Other than that, the rest of the motif follows the same intervallic pattern.

Figure 5-5

‘Night Watchmen’ four note motif (mm. 30-32)

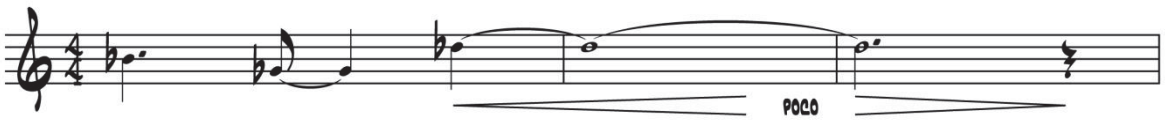


This relates to the development of the triplet motif from ‘Bombshelter Beast’ where Schneider preserved the melodic contour, but transformed the intervallic movement. The context in which the example from figure 5-5 appears is also slightly altered to that of figure 5-4 in that it is embedded within a phrase, surrounded by other notes.

After an open piano solo upfront in the third movement of *Scenes from Childhood*, ‘Coming About’, the full band enters with a figure baring a striking resemblance to the triplet motif from ‘Bombshelter Beast’ (figure 5-1). The three notes here (figure 5-6) make up a major triad starting on the third, descending to the root then jumping up to the fifth.

Figure 5-6

‘Coming About’ top line of the melody (mm. 2-4)



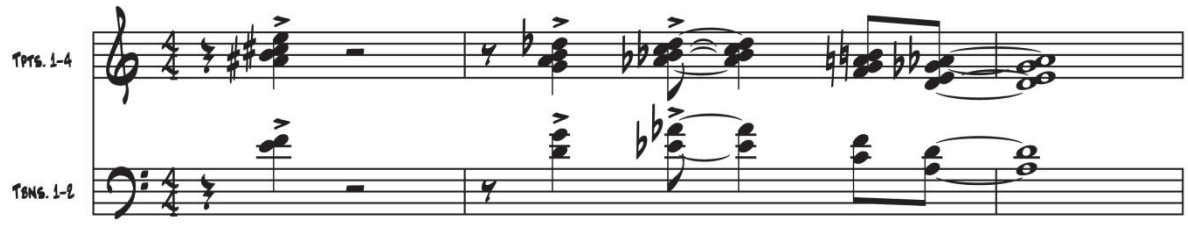
The configuration of the notes is also in the same style as many examples of the triplet motif; however this particular configuration (third, root, fifth) hasn’t been used before. By referencing this melodic shape in ‘Coming About’ Maria Schneider redeploys material in the third movement first heard in the first movement, an effective way of creating coherence through *Scenes from Childhood*.

Harmonic Development

One way in which solo sections contribute to the continuity of a composition is through referencing some of the piece's melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic material in the form of background figures. Maria Schneider uses this technique in 'Bombshelter Beast' through drawing on material from the piece's opening melodic statement to use as background figures during the baritone solo. Figure 5-7 shows how the brass section is harmonised while the lead trumpet plays the top line of a melody central to the piece's main theme that first occurs during the opening bars of the piece.

Figure 5-7

'Bombshelter Beast' harmonised melody as played by the brass section in concert transposition (mm. 1-3)



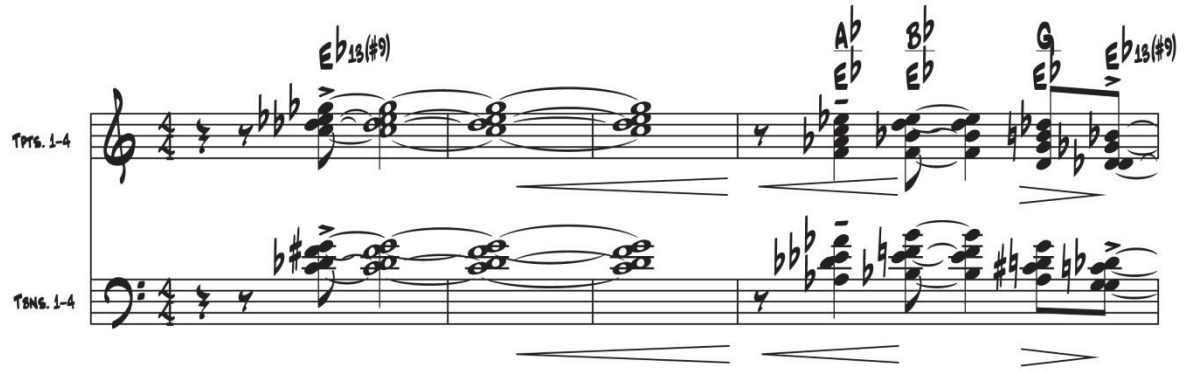
As seen from her harmonisation of the line in figure 5-7 the clusters of notes do little to outline any specific harmony, instead their use here is more likely to be for the tense and dissonant sound these clusters of semitone and whole-tones produce in a voicing.

During a solo section background figures are used accompany and support the soloist, as such it is a good idea that background figures are rhythmically strong and convey clear harmonic information for the soloist to work off.

Figure 5-8 shows the same line played by the lead trumpet (up a whole step), but harmonised differently. The first notable difference between figures 5-7 and 5-8 is the contrast between cluster voicings and close position voicings. We can also see that during the final bar (of figure 5-8) the trombones are doubling a lot of the trumpet notes an octave below, and are in fact staying very close to the chord symbols above, only adding an 11^{th} to the A♭ and a 9^{th} to the G.

Figure 5-8

'Bombshelter Beast' background figures during the baritone saxophone solo as played by the brass in concert transposition (mm. 193-196)



The arrangement in figure 5-8 conveys a far more conventional sense of harmony; this provides a more concise sense of harmony for the soloist and creates contrast to the initial statement (figure 5-7) by providing a more open, consonant sound. This is a good example of Schneider developing ideas to fit the context. Where a clearer sense of harmony wasn't needed Schneider took the opportunity to write supporting lines to convey a certain sound reminiscent of her childhood memories, in the case of figure 5-7 dissonant clusters of semitones and whole-tones painted a picture of scary monsters under the bed relating to the piece's programmatic theme.

The variation on the harmonic element to figures 5-7 and 5-8 is a great way of creating contrast on the same melodic line, and of connecting the solo section to the rest of the piece in an interesting way; where the line first created a strong sense of tension with the use of cluster voicings, later on in the piece the use of close position triads acts as a release of that tension.

Rhythmic Development

Rhythmic development is one way in which Maria Schneider is able to subtly repeat ideas through her three-movement suite *Scenes from Childhood*, ensuring that continuity within the piece is achieved but musical ideas are able to remain fresh and interesting when restated.

One instance in which a specific rhythm is repeated differently occurs during the solo sections of the opening movement, 'Bombshelter Beast'. During the baritone saxophone solo, rhythmic figures are played by the rest of the band. Figure 5-9 shows an eight bar passage indicating the placement of these figures.

Figure 5-9

'Bombshelter Beast' rhythmic motif during the baritone saxophone solo (mm. 185-192)

As seen in the above figure this four bar rhythmic idea is very simple, just two notes occurring on the third beat and half-way through beat four of the first bar of the four-bar phrase. During the second solo of the piece (the guitar solo), this rhythmic motif is used again, creating continuity through the movement, although in this instance it has undergone a rhythmic transformation. This is like Schneider's method of embedding melodic motifs in different settings. This example is shown below in figure 5-10.

Figure 5-10

'Bombshelter Beast' developed rhythmic motif during the guitar solo (mm. 265-272)

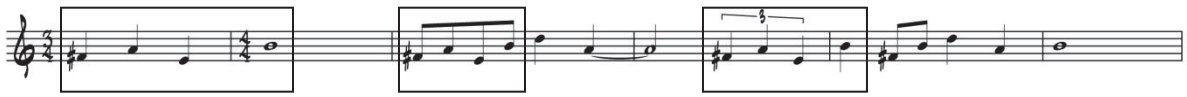
This second example of the rhythmic motif (figure 5-10) has undergone rhythmic development in several ways. First the articulation has changed. In the first example each note was held for its full value, here the initial figure is a short note, and the second is cut off on the second beat of the second bar to each four-bar phrase. Additionally an extra beat has been added to the fourth bar of each phrase through the addition of a 5/4 bar.

These two rhythmic devices are useful tools in developing ideas. Long notes can become short (or vise versa), as was seen in several examples of Jim McNeely's development of his melodic motifs. Also extra beats can be added or subtracted to create a sense of rhythmic interest.

Another instance of rhythmic development occurs during the opening melodic statements of the second movement of Maria Schneider's *Scenes from Childhood*, 'Night Watchmen'. Figure 5-11 shows the four note motif already discussed in regards to figures 5-4 and 5-5. The three examples shown is this figure show ways in which rhythm can be used to develop a single idea while still retaining its melodic characteristics.

Figure 5-11

'Night Watchmen' opening melody (mm. 0-5)



Each instance of this motif is written using a different rhythm and demonstrates another way in which Maria Schneider is able to use rhythmic devices to transform an idea.

It is also worth noting here the use of the quarter note triplet figure in the third example of figure 5-11. This rhythmic figure also features several times later on in the piece, most notably towards the end of the trumpet solo from bar 198 onwards. This is quite possibly in reference to the triplet motif that was so prominent in the previous movement 'Bombshelter Beast', creating a common thread between the two movements.

Conclusions

Unity and coherence at local levels within Maria Schneider's *Scenes from Childhood* was once again largely achieved through the restatement of musical material specific to each movement.

Unity at a global level within Schneider's suite appeared to be even more subtle than that of Jim McNeely's *One Question, Three Answers*. Again there was not really any restatement of specific musical material across movements, but where McNeely was able to create a common thread across movements with his use of a repeated intervallic motif; melodic motifs in *Scenes from Childhood* remained exclusive to their own movement. The only exception being the reference to the triplet motif (a significant part to the first movement 'Bombshelter Beast') towards the end of the second movement, 'Night Watchmen'.

One significant element to creating coherence at a global level was the use of non-functional modal harmony. In all three movements from *Scenes from Childhood* Maria Schneider uses non-functional modal harmony to open up solo sections and give each movement a common harmonic framework, giving the suite a certain common *sound*.

Once again the most significant elements in creating unity and coherence at a global level through *Scenes from Childhood* were the use of a programmatic theme linking each movement conceptually and the use of segue between movements.

CHAPTER 6

SOLIPSIS

Solipsis is a six-movement composition for jazz orchestra. Each movement was composed to possess its own unique qualities and be able to stand alone. Yet one of the main objectives of this project was to create unity and coherence through the entire suite through the use of non-musical ideas like programmatic themes and conceptual ideas, as well as applying various musical techniques such as melodic motifs, harmonic progressions and concepts, chord voicings and rhythm to develop musical ideas. Through the use of these techniques I was able to create a multi-movement composition that conveys a sense of unity throughout and is relevant to the modern jazz tradition.

In beginning this project I referred back to my two main objectives:

- To write a long-form piece of music for a modern jazz orchestra ensemble.
- To utilise musical techniques and devices used by some of the most important composers currently writing for modern jazz orchestras to create unity through the suite at both local and global levels.

All six movements were written for a seventeen piece jazz orchestra consisting of a five-piece saxophone section, four trumpets, four trombones, and a four-piece rhythm section consisting of guitar, piano, bass and drums.

Ideally, I would be continuing in the tradition of Ellington and Mingus; writing parts and delegating solos to specific instrumentalists, however for the purposes of this project I will not be composing for a specific band. As such, during the compositional process, this element to creative writing wasn't taken into consideration. Instead, decisions to choose a particular solo instrumentalist over another were made to serve timbral objectives.

One unifying concept used to tie each movement together is that, much like McNeely's *One Question, Three Answers*, each of my movements feature a pair of specifically chosen solo instruments. In keeping with my goal of writing *creative music* both solo instruments were purposefully chosen to complement each other and to enhance each movement musically whether it be for timbral or functional reasons.

As another way of creating a sense of unity between each of the pieces, each movement is inspired by connected themes. Much like Maria Schneider's *Scenes from Childhood*; *Solipsis* features the use of a programmatic theme to link each piece. Each movement in *Solipsis* is inspired by themes and motif inherent in the film *Synecdoche, New York*[1]

Synecdoche, New York is a 2008 film written and directed by Charlie Kaufman. The plot follows the story of Caden Cotard; a theatre director struck by numerous physical ailments and becoming progressively more mentally fragile as he copes with a strained relationship with his wife. He hits rock bottom when she leaves to start a new life in Germany, taking their daughter with her. Shortly afterward he is awarded a MacArthur Fellowship, giving him the financial resources to create a theatre piece of brutal realism and honesty. Gathering an enormous cast and acquiring a massive warehouse he begins to create his magnum opus. As years go by the lines between real life and the world of the play are distorted with actors playing actors, and the creation of a full size New York City inside a warehouse, a warehouse inside that warehouse, and so on.

The plot of the film is extremely hard to follow given its non-linear timeline, vague distinction between fact and fiction, and increasingly complex layers of actors playing actors and warehouses within warehouses; however it is rich in reoccurring themes and motifs. As such, each of my movements is inspired by a certain theme or motif to give the suite a kind of conceptual coherence. A detailed explanation of the way in which this was achieved is contained within the following section.

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1. *Synecdoche, New York*, writ. and dir. Charlie Kaufman, DVD, Sony Pictures Classics, 2008.

The suite's title is derived from the psychological idea of solipsism; the theory in which the self is the only thing that can be known and verified.[2] This relates to one possible explanation of the film in that much of the film's plot is constructed by Caden in his mind after his death.[3]

The compositional process began with extensive planning to ensure a good balance between cohesion and contrast, keeping in mind that it was essential to create common threads linking each movement to the next. Six themes were written to be represented by the six movements and with each theme the general idea of the sound and intention of each piece began to emerge.

Though the main aim was to create a suite of related pieces of music, I also wanted each movement to be able to exist as a separate composition, conveying its own musical themes and ideas, not reliant on other pieces for each of them to make sense.

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2. 'Solipsism', *The Free Dictionary*. http://www.thefreedictionary.com/solipsism. (accessed February 20, 2013)
3. "Charlie Kaufman's Synecdoche, New York", *italkyoubored* (2012) http://italkyoubored.wordpress.com/2012/03/09/charlie-kaufmans-synecdoche-new-york/. (accessed February 20, 2013)

I. Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis

The opening movement of *Solipsis* serves as an introduction to the suite where several of the major musical themes are established and the band is introduced. One major consideration in writing this movement was pacing. Being the first of six movements I didn't want start with dense, dark harmony and heavy orchestration. Instead, I wanted to draw in the listener with bright, major tonalities and a brisk tempo around the 180 bpm mark. This would also serve as a good contrast to the dense and dissonant pieces that will follow.

The inspiration behind the piece is Caden's search for identity and quest for meaning; he is described as being "a man already dead. He lives in a half-world between stasis and anti-stasis."[4] Reviewers agree that one of the major themes of the movie is Jungian psychology, and Caden's journey to self-realiastion.[5,6] This concept of Jungian psychology served as a springboard for several ideas in future movements (which will be discussed further along), and acts as a climax to the suite when Caden finally realises the truth about his life.

'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' features a trumpet solo very early on in the piece. Being the dominant voice of the big band, I felt it was important to feature the trumpet first up; in fact its first appearance occurs before most of the band has come in. As a contrast the second solo is written for guitar.

While the role of the guitarist in big band music has been predominately to provide chordal accompaniment, Alex Stewart (2007) writes that in some modern bands the guitar is now used to fulfil an important melodic role. "Some contemporary big bands, such as Maria Schneider's, feature the guitar as a prominent timbral and solo resource.

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4. Millicent Weems in *Synecdoche, New York*, writ. and dir. Charlie Kaufman, 2008.
5. "The Life of the Minded: On Synecdoche, New York", *Filmbrain.com* (2008) http://www.filmbrain.com/filmbrain/2008/11/the-life-of-t-1.html. (accessed February 15, 2013)
6. Jungian psychology is the school of psychology conceived of by psychiatrist Carl Jung.

At times sustained and distorted rock guitar parts dominate the entire band."[7] With these two instruments able to fulfil a similar role in the big band, but with contrasting timbres, I thought they would complement each other nicely in this opening movement.

7. Stewart, Alex. *Making the Scene: Contemporary New York City Big Band Jazz*. California, USA. University of California Press, 2007, p. 115.

II. Sycosis and Psychosis

One of the film's reoccurring themes is that of delusion. Caden's surname, Cotard, is a reference to Cotard delusion; where one believes they are dead or that their organs are decaying.[8] Additionally, a character called Capgras is also alluded to in the film: Capgras delusion is where one believes their family or friends have been replaced by identical imposters[9]; this theme is explored more later on. The title of this movement is in reference to both a physical condition and a mental condition[10,11]; however this piece is largely inspired by Caden's mental instability.

The harmonic elements to this piece are very simple; a major theme is that of a static bass line with differing triads superimposed over the top creating several tonal shifts but always remaining fairly bright and based within a major tonality. 'Sycosis and Psychosis' notably features guitar and piano playing the melodic line in octaves in a reasonably high register.

Given the fact that the melody features guitar and piano, it seems only right that the soloists should be these instruments as well. This helps unify the piece and helps balance between similarities and contrast over the whole suite by using two rhythm section instruments that have many timbral differences.

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8. Berrios, G.E. and Luque, R. 'Cotard's Delusion or Syndrome?'. *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 36/3 (1995), 218-223
9. 'Capgras Syndrome', *MediLexicon*. http://www.medilexicon.com/medicaldictionary.php?t=87775. (accessed February 15, 2013)
10. Sycosis being the inflammation of hair follicles. 'Sycosis', *The Medical Dictionary*. http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/sycosis. (accessed February 15, 2013)
11. Psychosis referring to a mental state where one has lost a sense of reality. 'Psychosis', *The Medical Dictionary*. http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/psychosis. (accessed February 15, 2013)

III. Infectious Diseases in Cattle

The title of this third movement is taken from one of the many provisionary titles Caden gives to his theatre piece. The inspiration for this piece comes from Caden's preoccupation with, and the film's reoccurring themes of death and decay.

Where 'Sycosis and Psychosis' was inspired by conditions of the mind, 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' is intended to act as a contrast, inspired by physical ailments. As such, many elements to 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' are designed to create an entirely different atmosphere. As a result of this the movement features darker tonalities, more dissonant melodies and denser chord voices than its predecessor. For example the main melodic theme of this piece draws extensively from more dissonant intervals such as half steps and tritones, and is harmonised in whole steps for the most part (see from bar twenty five) .

The movement also features several ostinati played in a very low register by the bass and doubled in the left hand of the piano for a thicker sound. Many of these passages also draw from the modes of the ascending melodic minor scale creating a much darker feel than that of 'Sycosis and Psychosis'. A sense of urgency is also evoked by its brisk 240 bpm tempo.

The first soloist of the movement is the tenor saxophone. I thought the timbre of the horn matched the overall mood of the piece so thought it would be a good fit. As the solo (played a half the original tempo) reaches its climax, the original tempo is reinstated and the second solo section begins immediately after (at bar 231). With the idea that the second solo section could effectively be a continuation of the first, but at double the tempo and harmonic rhythm (and therefore an increased level of intensity), I felt it would be a good idea for the second soloist to be an alto saxophone, maintaining the same timbral effect as the tenor saxophone but in a higher register to further aid the development of the piece.

IV. The Burning House

In one of the more metaphorical episodes of the film, one of the main characters buys a house that is eternally on fire. She expresses an initial concern about dying in the fire, but in the end buys the house anyway. The motif of the burning house appears throughout the film, culminating in the character's death due to smoke inhalation afters many years of residing there.

In interpreting this theme I felt that it should convey a sense of panic and urgency; so the harmonic element of the main melodic theme of the piece is based on a Lydian-augmented chord for a more 'sharp', angular sound. The melodic elements of this theme consist of short, frantic phrases utilising some wide intervals played by the saxophone section in an attempt to convey the image of a house on fire. Again, this movement features several modal ostinati linking it to the previous movement. This time as well as being played by the bass and left hand piano a bass clarinet part is included in increase timbral density.

As the main melodic theme is played by the saxophones I thought it would be appropriate to feature the first tenor saxophone as a soloist. This gives this piece a kind of consistency contributing to the piece's overall coherence. As a contrast, the second solo is written for the trumpet. The contrast in timbre between the woodwind and brass instruments is something that interests me and the choice to use two instruments that are able to hit high notes and make brash sounds (in reference to the altissimo register of the tenor saxophone) is an attempt to recreate the sounds of sirens and shrill screams reflective of a house on fire.

V. Simulacrum

Simulacra and Simulation is a philosophical text written by Jean Baudrillard.[12] In it he explains that simulacra are copies of things that either never existed or no longer have an original. This concept features several times in *Synecdoche, New York*. In the creation of Caden's masterpiece the play within a play concept is used. As such, actors are hired to play real life characters, consequently actors are hired to play those actors, and so on. In Caden's journey to self-discovery he hires an actor, Sammy, to play himself. Sammy has been following Caden for years and knows Caden more intimately than Caden knows himself. This example of simulacra also relates to Jung's theory of self-realisation, in that one particular stage is where the subject becomes conscious of their shadow; they learn their true personality and become more self aware; Sammy helps Caden do this. The idea of simulacrum also relates to the previously mentioned Capgras delusion linking together some of the main thematic material of the film.

In composing this piece I used this idea of creating a copy of something. So the motif played by the rhythm section is taken from a section in 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' (starting at bar 127), however through use of a few developmental techniques it is somewhat disguised. The melody is played by a tenor saxophone and trombone. This is a contrast to the pairing of guitar and piano in 'Sycosis and Psychosis', where the sound produced is a totally different timbre and in a different register. The tempo is 120 bpm, very similar to 'Sycosis and Psychosis' and the major-ish tonality remains consistent.

The use of the tenor saxophone and trombone pairing is playing with the idea of simulacrum, as they share a similar register. An obvious choice could have been the use of two of the same instrument, but consistent with the aim of creating an interesting piece of music I decided to go with a woodwind versus brass instrumentation.

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12. Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. France. Éditions Galilée. 1981.

VI. Lighting an Obscure World

'Lighting an Obscure World' is the final movement to *Solipsis* and acts as the grand climax to the suite. The piece is inspired by Caden finally realising the truth about life and finally figuring out how he will stage his play. This marks Caden's accomplishment of achieving self-realisation and success in his quest for meaning.

As a way of tying the whole suite together and a way of marking Caden's discovery, I decided that this movement would contain a lot of previously composed material but feature these ideas in different ways.

The main melodic theme from this piece is a single-note line made up of many quirky melodic cells. Many of these small melodic fragments appear throughout the suite in various instances; however their appearance in 'Lighting an Obscure World' puts them in a brand new context.

I also decided it would be important to create a kind of bookend by placing an emphasis on referencing the opening movement 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' more than the others. As a result whole sections from 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' can be heard in 'Lighting an Obscure World' albeit with slight variations.

I wanted the final movement to sum up the feelings and moods of the whole suite. Adhering to this goal I ensured that 'Lighting an Obscure World' reflected key ideas in terms of melody and tonality. As the piece approaches its end I decided to reference important musical themes from each movement before reaching the conclusion of the suite. I also thought it would be important to base solo sections on previously heard harmonic concepts such as bass ostinati and harmonic frameworks.

The featured pairing of soloist was also based on my decisions from earlier in the work. As it was the trumpet that opened the suite I thought it appropriate to have the trumpet soar over the band as it reaches its climax. For the other soloist I thought it would be important to stick with an instrument from the rhythm section as before, but to create contrast and a sense of development I have opted to replace the guitar solo with a piano solo owing to its extended range and capabilities.

Each of the six pieces were originally conceived as being a part of a larger work. Strong ties between each movement are achieved by: a connected programmatic theme; reoccurring musical concepts related to melody, harmony, and rhythm; keeping a balance of similarities and contrast. Though each composition can exist as its own entity, the development of the above ideas throughout the suite helps create a sense of unity and coherence.

The following chapters address the topic of musical development throughout the suite in terms of melody, harmony and rhythm using specific examples from the scores.

CHAPTER 7

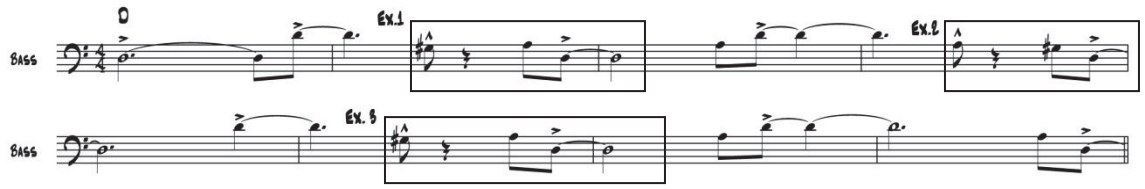
MELODY

As demonstrated in Jim McNeely's *One Question, Three Answers* and Maria Schneider's *Scenes from Childhood* an effective way of connecting several movements together is through the use of reoccurring melodic motifs. The development of these motifs across longer works ensures that the music remains fresh and interesting.

Therefore it was my intention to use reoccurring melodic motifs as the basis for creating unity and coherence over the six movements. The first appearance of such a motif occurs in the bass line eight bars into the first movement, 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' (SBSA).[1] Figure 7-1 shows the eight bar long bass line with the three occurrences of the motif highlighted.

Figure 7-1

'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' motif examples in an eight bar solo bass line (mm. 9-16)



The main characteristic of this three note motif is the intervallic pattern of a semitone (both ascending and descending in the three examples of figure 7-1) followed by a descending fifth (diminished or perfect). All three examples feature the same notes, the only difference being the order of notes in example two.

1. For future reference this motif will be referred to as the 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' motif or the SBSA motif.

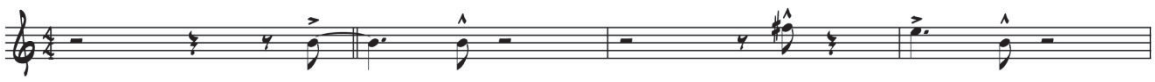
In all three examples in figure 7-1 the motif resolves to the root of the chord. The use of the dissonant intervals (such as the semitones and tritones in this example) will become a central element to much of the melodic material in *Solipsis*,[2] and through their use here (in the first 16 bars of the suite), establish themselves as being an important musical theme.

The melodic contour of the line (a smaller interval to start, followed by a descending interval of a fourth or fifth of some kind) will remain an important element to the motif as it recurs.

Figure 7-2 occurs straight after the bass line of figure 7-1 and is played by the guitar and piano over a D pedal in the bass. The SBSA motif appears in the melody in bars eighteen and nineteen of 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' (the third and fourth bars of figure 7-1). Where all examples in figure 7-1 used a tritone and perfect fifth in relation to their final notes, figure 7-2 uses a perfect fourth and fifth in relation to its final note.

Figure 7-2

'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' motif in the melody (mm. 16-19)



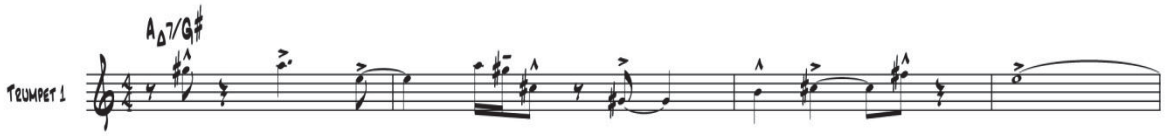
Where the initial appearance of the motif established the tritone interval early on, foreshadowing the tritone's importance in regards to much of the melodic content of *Solipsis*, the use of perfect intervals in figure 7-2 produces a more consonant sound allowing for development to take place in regards to the addition of more dissonant intervals

2. As established in the previous chapter, a lot of the ideas which have influenced these movements draw on themes of mental instability, disease and death. As a result of this I wanted to make sure the whole suite was able convey these ideas through the use of a consistent element. To do this a lot of the melodic material includes an abundance of dissonant intervals, mainly semitones and tritones to create a consistent *sound* through the entire suite.

In a transitional section between solos another instance of the SBSA motif is embedded in the melody. Figure 7-3 shows the four-bar melody as played by the lead trumpet which starts at bar 242. The very first three notes of this melody share many similarities with the examples from figures 7-1 and 7-2.

Figure 7-3

'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' melody as played by trumpet 1 during the transition between solos (mm. 242-246)



Here the motif starts on the major seventh of the A major7th chord, ascends up a semitone to the root, and then descends a perfect fourth.

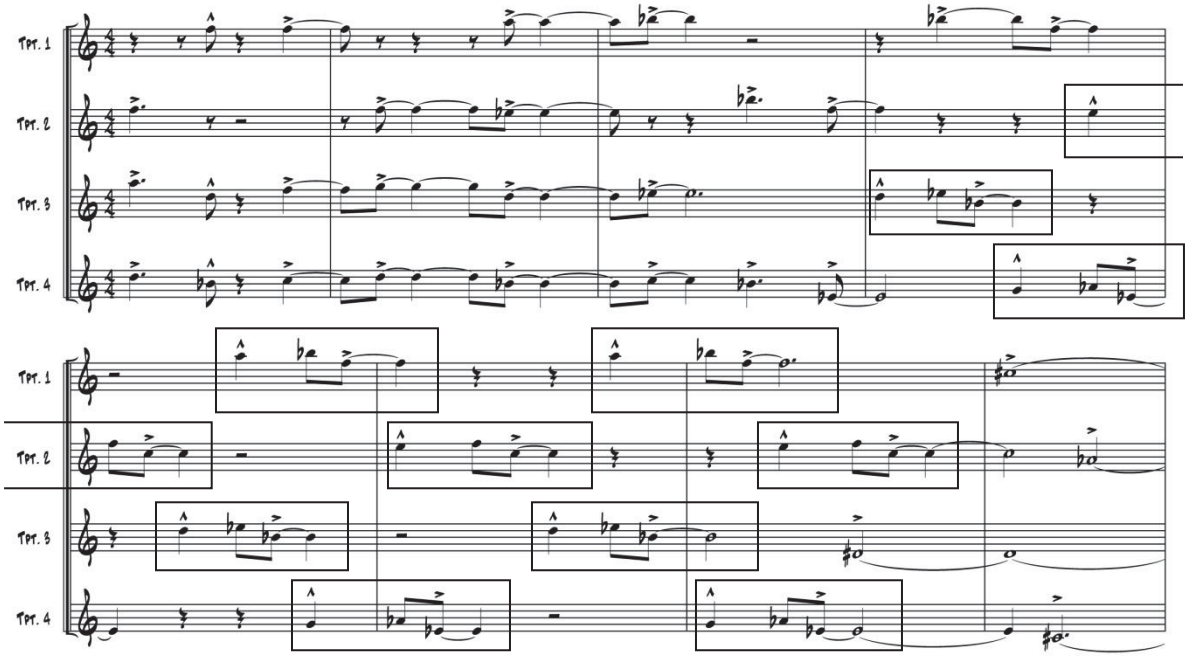
The specific pitches and intervals in all of three of these examples were chosen to control the balance between consonance and dissonance. When using perfect intervals the SBSA motif feels more stable against the implied harmony (figure 7-2). The semitones and tritones used in the motif can sound a little unstable against the harmony if the notes clash with the implied harmony. Figure 7-3 gives an example of a semitone being used to create only a little tension because the notes are consonant with the implied harmony.

The second movement of *Solipsis*, 'Sycosis and Psychosis', attempts to musically represent the fragility of the human mind. As such I wanted a particular section of the movement to convey the idea of someone falling apart mentally. Figure 7-4 comes from this particular moment starting at bar 106. This example is in part inspired by Jim McNeely's technique of repeating the same motif continuously but through different transpositions each time (sees figures 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3 for a few examples), although in this example each instrument maintains the same pitches, but are in different keys to each other.

Here the SBSA motif is spelt out more obviously in the melodic sense[3] and is presented without any other melodic material.

Figure 7-4

'Sycosis and Psychosis' SBSA motif as played by trumpets 1-4 (mm. 104-111)



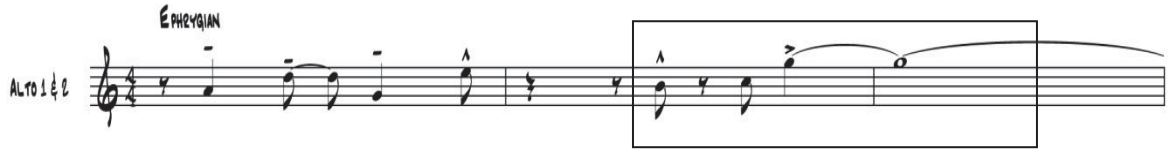
In the first four bars of figure 7-4 the SBSA motif only appears in its entirety only twice, both in the fourth bars of the third and fourth trumpets. However as the first four bars of the first and second trumpet parts indicate, the SBSA motif is subtly referenced and gradually formed. The notes the lead trumpet play in relation to the motif are F, A and B♭. While it's not until bar 5 of figure 7-4 that the actual motif is played, each of the three notes that comprise it appear various times in the first four bars. The third bar of the second trumpet part also references the descending perfect fourth interval, foreshadowing the full appearance of the motif. From bar five of figure 7-4 each trumpet part is playing the intervallic pattern of an ascending semitone followed by a descending perfect fourth, however each part is separated rhythmically by a beat and each motif is played in a different key.

3. Refer to next chapter on harmony for a more detailed analysis of the harmonic aspects of this section

Figure 7-5 shows a development on the SBSA motif in the third movement ‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’. The implied harmony of this section beginning at bar 159 is based on E Phrygian with the motif itself highlighting the half step interval between the fifth and minor sixth of the scale.

Figure 7-5

‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’ example of the SBSA motif as played by the alto saxophones (mm. 159-161)

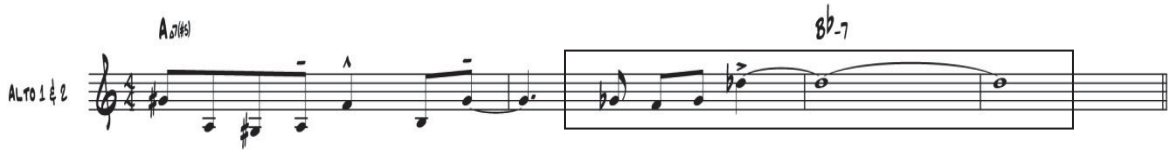


Here the motif is inverted. It begins with a short note on the fifth of the chord, ascends a semitone, then ascends a perfect fifth to the minor third of the implied harmony. The intervallic pattern of an ascending semitone and descending perfect fourth (or its inversion) becomes a major characteristic of this motif in its future appearances.

Following on from the example in figure 7-5, figure 7-6 comes from the main melody of the fourth movement, ‘The Burning House’ and contains a version of the SBSA motif that features a slightly altered initial semi-tome interval and finishes on an ascending perfect fifth.

Figure 7-6

‘The Burning House’ melody as played by the alto saxophones (mm. 46-49)



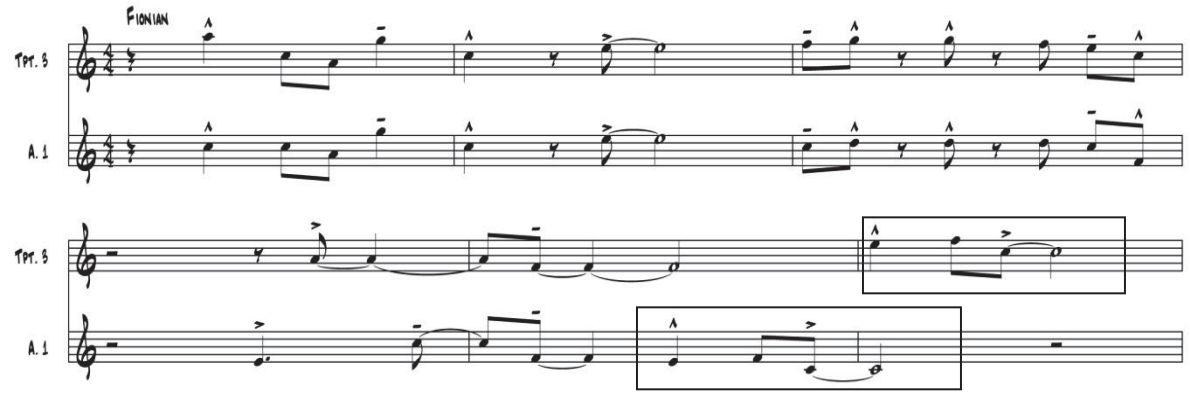
The second bar of figure 7-6 shows the SBSA motif as a four note development of figure 7-5; the additional note being the G♭ preceding the lick, and further emphasising the heavy use of half steps forming a large basis for the melodic material of the suite.

The context in with the SBSA occurs in figure 7-6 is an example of my desire to embed various melodic motifs and themes within a longer melodic line. This draws from the technique used by Maria Schneider in *Scenes from Childhood* where her small three and four note motifs were only a small part of a larger melodic section (see figures 5-1 and 5-5 for great examples of this).

In the fifth movement, 'Simulacrum', the motif acts as a cadence point at the end of the main melodic statement. Figure 7-7 shows the final bars of the main melodic theme ending with the SBSA motif.

Figure 7-7

'Simulacrum' end of the main melodic theme as played by trumpet 3 and alto 1 (mm. 37-42)



In the first three bars of figure 7-7 the third trumpet and first alto move from playing in unison to harmony, and in the fourth bar briefly switch to counterpoint before a short unison note (F), prior to the first alto part clearly stating the SBSA motif in the fifth bar. This is followed by the third trumpet playing the motif two beats later in the sixth bar an octave above.

The motif here uses the same melodic contour as figures 7-3 and 7-4 (ascending semitone followed by a descending perfect fourth), and even plays the same pitches (in relation to the chord) as figure 7-3 (major seventh, root, fifth).

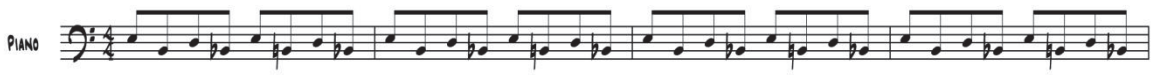
The repeated use of the SBSA motif over several movements is one of the techniques I have employed to create unity through multiple movements. Through the use of melodic development and the variations on the melodic context in which it appeared, the motif was able to be somewhat hidden in earlier movements and only fully revealed itself, serving as a cadence in the melody as shown in figure 7-7.

Following the examples of Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider, one important element to motivic development is that the melodic contour remains largely consistent. In the cases in which it is varied, it is important that some of the intervallic features remain constant in order to create a sense of continuity. In the above examples I believe I have achieved this through establishing a significant melodic contour (generally ascending a small interval then descending a larger interval), as well as establishing important intervals, in particular the semitone and perfect fourth/fifth.

Another motif which I have used to create continuity through several movements features a different melodic contour but in keeping with the suite's overall sound it again makes reference to the half step and tritone intervals. The first appearance of this motif occurs at the start of the third movement, 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle', where the four-note motif is repeated in the left hand of the piano and shown in figure 7-8.[4]

Figure 7-8

'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' solo piano introduction and first instance of the IDC motif (mm. 1-4)



This four-note motif begins by descending a perfect fourth, ascending a minor third, descending a major third before ascending a tritone to repeat the pattern. Within the four notes that make up this motif a semitone exists between the second and fourth notes (in this case the B and B♭), and a tritone exists between the first and last notes of the pattern (in this case the E and the B♭).

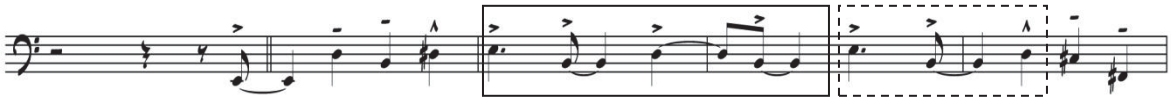
The zigzagging melodic contour of the line will remain a constant characteristic of this motif while the dissonance (much like in the development of the SBSA motif) will once again vary depending on the harmonic context.

4. For future reference this motif will be referred to as the 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' motif or the IDC motif.

After the initial melodic statement of ‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’ is made, a short solo bass line (starting at bar 42) briefly makes reference to the IDC motif. Figure 7-9 shows the first four bars of the bass line with the motif reference in the third and fourth bars.

Figure 7-9

‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’ solo bass line between melodic statements containing the IDC motif (mm. 41-45)

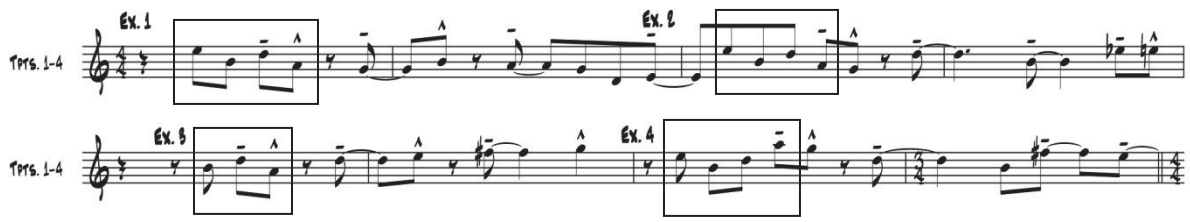


Starting on the third bar of figure 7-9 the E, B and D from figure 7-8 are all referenced again, the only difference being the last note (this time remaining on the B). The first three notes of the motif are then repeated (as shown by the dotted box). The melodic contour has remained constant but with the loss of both the semitone and tritone intervals a lot of the tension from figure 7-8 has been removed. Another important element to the placement of this motif is that is occurs within a larger melody, embedding it within a melodic context much like several of the examples from Maria Schneider’s *Scenes from Childhood.*

The IDC motif is soon referenced several times in the melody as played by all four trumpets at bar 107. This example shown in figure 7-10 is very reminiscent of figure 5-1 where four examples of the motif are played within a melodic line, each example slightly different from the others.

Figure 7-10

‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’ trumpet melody featuring four example of the IDC motif (mm. 107-114)



All four examples draw on the same melodic contour as figures 7-8 and 7-9 and the same first three notes, however it is the last note that differs from the previous examples. Although where the final note remained static in figure 7-9, in figure 7-10 the zigzag pattern is continued (in the same vein as figure 7-8) with the final note being approached from a perfect fourth above (or a fifth below in the last instance).

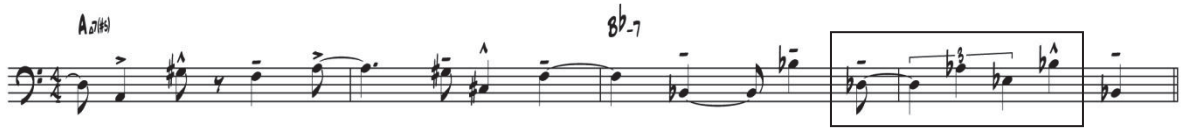
From a melodic standpoint, examples one and two of figure 7-10 are exactly the same (the variation coming from rhythmic development), the latter two examples feature a slight variation. One difference is the fact that the first note (E) is missing from example three shortening the lick and creating a rhythmic difference as well. Additionally the final note from the example four is an octave above where the previous examples have placed it.

Development has also occurred in the sense that the lick now is made up of two pairs of descending perfect fourth intervals a whole step apart from each other, a very consonant sound compared to its first appearance at the start of ‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’.

A significant element to the next movement, ‘The Burning House’, is the bass ostinato; the final phrase of which draws from the idea of two pairs of intervals moving parallel to each other. Figure 7-11 shows the final four bars of the ostinato, with a development on the IDC motif occurring in the final bar, although beginning in the bar preceding it.

Figure 7-11

‘The Burning House’ final four bars of the bass ostinato (mm. 13-16)



In the final bar of this example two pairs of ascending perfect fifths are played a whole step apart from each other. This is essentially the same concept as the examples in figure 7-10; the same pitch relationship exists between notes, but inverted.

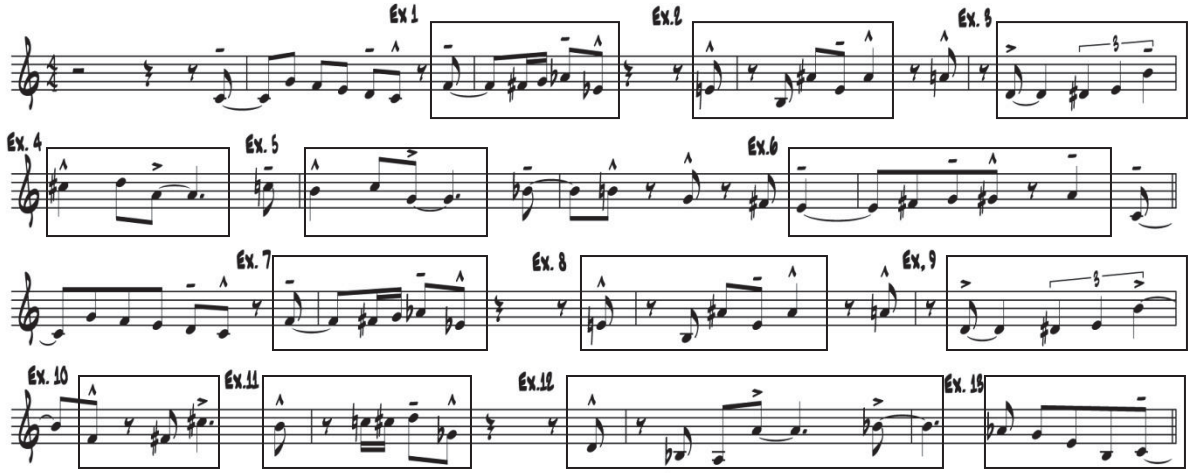
This relates to techniques Jim McNeely used in his development of the intervallic motif from *One Question, Three Answers* where the contour of the intervallic movement remained the same, but the intervals themselves were varied in each example (for example figures 4-4 and 4-5). It also draws from the Maria Schneider example of embedding a motif within a longer melody (figures 5-1 and 5-5); in this case the motif acts as the final statement to the repeated bass ostinato.

A final significant element to creating melodic unity and coherence through each movement of *Solipsis* is the reuse of various significant melodic themes in subsequent movements. An obvious way of creating coherence in a piece of music at a local level (i.e. in a single movement) is the restatement of the melody at the end of the piece. While the two suites I studied, *One Question, Three Answers* and *Scenes from Childhood* were each only three movements long and *Solipsis* is over twice as long with seven movements, I decided to take this technique a step further and make direct reference to significant melodic material across several movements. However in keeping with my desire to develop melodic material, I wanted these restatements to evolve across the work and adhere to one of Graham Collier's definitions of *creative music* where major musical themes undergo significant transformation and development.

As the final movement, I wanted the main melodic theme of 'Lighting an Obscure World' to be reflective of the whole suite. As such the small melodic elements that make up the eight bar phrases are based on material from earlier movements from the suite. Figure 7-12 shows the sixteen bar melody to 'Lighting an Obscure World' with each small melodic reference highlighted. The atonal nature of the melody is in reference to the melody of 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle', where a stronger emphasis is placed on note choice and certain intervallic sounds (i.e. the dissonant semitones and tritones).

Figure 7-12

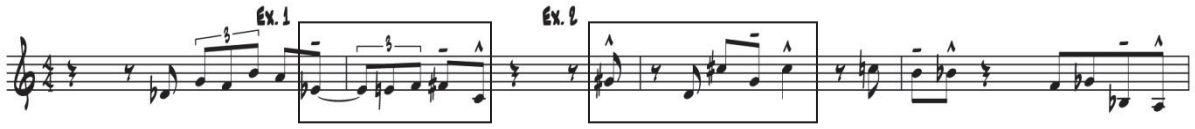
‘Lighting an Obscure World’ 16 bar melody (mm. 16-32)



As shown in the above example there are plenty of instances of licks drawn from earlier movements. The first example from figure 7-12 comes from the melody of ‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’. A four-bar section of the melody is shown below in figure 7-13 to show the context.

Figure 7-13

‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’ four bar section of the melody (mm. 27-30)



Examples one and seven (which are exactly the same) of figure 7-12 are taken directly from the first example of figure 7-13 (the only difference being the descending perfect fourth as opposed to the tritone in the final two notes). While the line in ‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’ was harmonised, the appearance of the lick in ‘Lighting an Obscure World’ had to establish a strong enough melodic line as to be able to stand alone, and as such a D (instead of the E♭ I chose to use) at the end would not have given this section a strong enough resolution. Example eleven does however follow the exact melodic template as figure 7-13 with the descending tritone to finish.

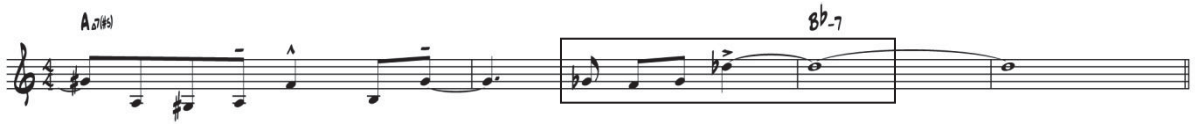
The second example from figure 7-12 (and the eighth) is based upon the lick that directly follows the above mentioned lick from 7-13 (example 2). This lick is very representative of the intervallic themes of the suite in its exclusive use of only dissonant intervals.

In example two of figure 7-12 the initial interval is a perfect fourth, but the major seventh and final tritones remain the same as the source material seen in figure 7-13. This is another example in figure 7-12 of a more consonant interval being used in place of the dissonant tritone. This is again to provide a stronger sense of resolution in an atonal context.

Example three from figure 7-12 (as well example nine which is the same, and example ten which is very similar) is based on a fragment in the melody for 'The Burning House'. It also shares similarities with the SBSA motif as described in figure 7-5. Figure 7-14 shows the fragment as in appears in 'The Burning House', with the most significant difference between the two versions being the first few notes.

Figure 7-14

'The Burning House' four bar section of the melody (mm. 46-49)



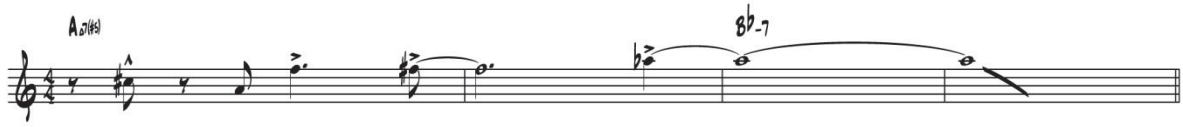
While the example from figure 7-12 features a chromatic line leading to the perfect fifth interval, in the second bar of figure 7-14 the notes preceding the perfect fifth interval are alternating semitones. While the use of the repeated G♭ in figure 7-14 was effective due to the harmonic context being provided by the rhythm section and horns, in the example from figure 7-12 a more precise approach was required to propel the melody forward.

As already explored in regards to figure 7-5, this particular fragment (examples three and nine of figure 7-12) is derived from the SBSA motif, a melodic idea that is more explicitly stated in examples four and five of figure 7-12.

The twelfth example from figure 7-12 again draws from ideas found in ‘The Burning House’ Figure 7-15 shows the final four bars of the movement’s main melodic theme and the inclusion of the lick as used in figure 7-12.

Figure 7-15

‘The Burning House’ final four bars of the main melodic theme (mm. 30-33)

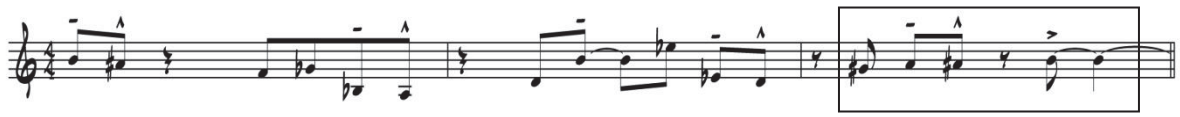


In figure 7-15 the C# descends a major third to the A, which then jumps up an augmented fifth (shown as a minor six in the example to avoid the unnecessary use of an E#) to the raised fifth of the chord, then moving up by a half step. The first two notes of example twelve from figure 7-12 outline the initial descending major third interval, and the half step remains constant in the final two notes, but inbetween there is slight melodic variation. Instead of making the large leap up, example twelve descends by a further semitone before ascending an octave to precede the half step between the final two notes. In this example the melodic fragment contains a greater range between its intervals which I feel better suits the fragmented and broken nature of the whole sixteen bar melody of figure 7-12.

To mark the end of the first eight-bar section of figure 7-12 a phrase is used (example six) which also marked the end of several eight-bar sections in ‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle. Figure 7-16 shows the final three bars of the piece’s eight bar melody, which begins at bar twenty-five of that movement and illustrates the similarities with the lick in example eight.

Figure 7-16

‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’ final three bars of the eight bar phrase (mm. 30-32)



The final bar of figure 7-16 and the ninth bar of figure 7-12 feature the same chromatic line (although starting on different pitches).

The melodic fragments that make up the melody to ‘Lighting an Obscure World’ draw from melodic elements from across the whole of *Solipsis*. The continued use of the SBSA motif further establishes it as playing a significant role in evoking unity throughout the suite. The use of melodic elements from previous movements, mainly ‘Infectious Diseases in Cattle’ and ‘The Burning House’, further help link the movements together. On top of that, the melody of ‘Lighting an Obscure World’, as shown in figure 7-12 is consistent with the melodic style of the rest of the suite through the use of the dissonant intervals like semitones and tritones, and the balance between the smaller stepwise movement and larger leaps.

Following the examples from Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider, each movement of *Solipsis* has its own melodic characteristics. While various melodic concepts are adapted to fit the aesthetic of each movement of the suite at a global level, the repeated use and development at the local level is far more obvious.

Through the use of melodic restatements, unity and coherence at a local level starts to become apparent. In adapting ideas to create unity at a global level I took a more obvious approach than McNeely and Schneider in *One Question, Three Answers* and *Scenes from Childhood* in my use of the SBSA and IDC motifs and in the melody to ‘Lighting an Obscure World’. This was partly due to the fact *Solipsis* is six movements long as opposed to just three, and the fact that I felt a more obvious approach was needed in this case to convey a more explicit sense unity to adhere to the aims of this project. In saying that, I believe there are more subtle ways in which I set out to achieve unity and coherence at a global level through melodic means.

Each of the movements contain melodic themes that draw extensively from specific intervallic choices, mainly semitones and tritones. Additionally each of these melodic themes maintains a good balance between smaller stepwise motion and larger intervallic leaps. Through the use of these melodic concepts, a lot of the melodic material used in *Solipsis* share many of the same aesthetic values creating a level of cohesiveness through the entire suite.

CHAPTER 8

HARMONY

The technique I've used of repeating harmonic themes throughout the suite stems from the idea of repeating melodic themes to create a connection between movements. This plays on the idea of repeating melodic content at both local and global levels and applying the technique to harmonic content. Again this is influenced by the repeated use of melodic motifs in *One Question, Three Answers* and *Scenes from Childhood*, and once again in an attempt to create a more obvious sense of unity through all six movements each occurrence is based on similar material as opposed to appearing in a completely different guise in subsequent movements.

The use of common harmonic concepts draws upon the influence of Jim McNeely in *One Question, Three Answers* where the concept of small harmonic cells being repeated and transposed through different keys (figures 4-8, 4-9 and 4-12) was referenced across several movements.

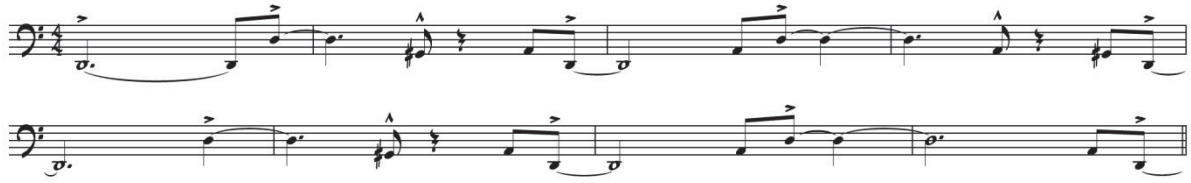
Maria Schneider was also able to create a common *sound* in *Scenes from Childhood* through the repeated use of non-functional modal sections. The inclusion of modal sections in each of the movements was able to create a common harmonic element to each piece creating a sense of unity and coherence.

One example of creating a common harmonic framework throughout the suite is the repeated use of non-functional harmony. Each movement contains significant amounts of non-functional harmony, drawing from specific modes or no specific harmony at all (atonality).

This first appears in the ninth bar of the opening movement 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' when the bass comes in playing a D pedal as shown in figure 8-1. The bass line draws heavily on the D note but implies no functional harmony as it is has no need to *lead* anywhere in a harmonic sense.

Figure 8-1

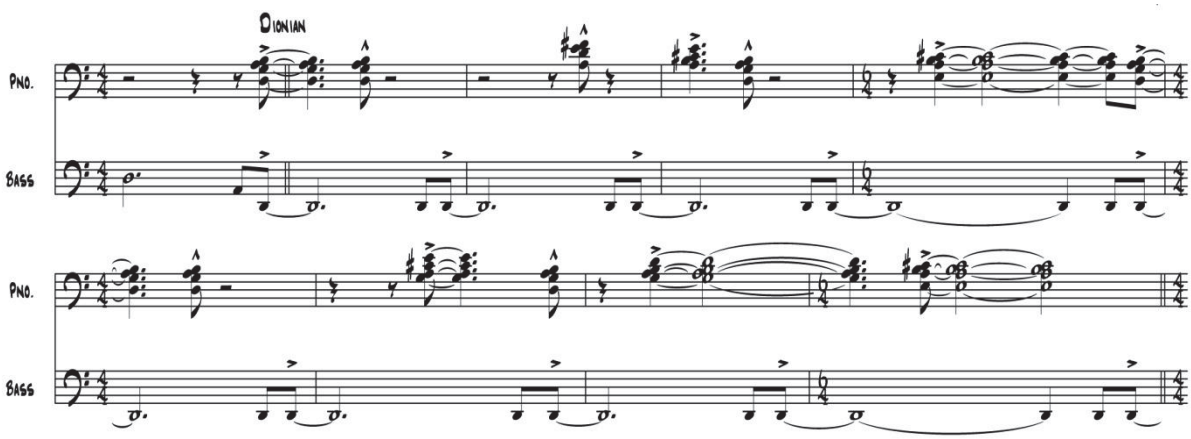
'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' eight bar solo bass line (mm. 9-16)



Following this line the piano and guitar play various chords structures over the D pedal implying a D Ionian tonality (figure 8-2). This is soon followed up by the bass pedal changing to an A then G outlining other modes related to D Ionian.

Figure 8-2

'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' Chord structures played over a D pedal (mm. 16-24)

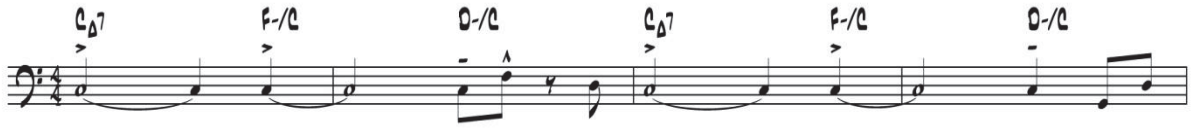


While the chord structures played above the D pedal note in the above example are acting in a functional way (harmonically speaking), this is more to achieve a *sound* of diatonic chords over a pedal tone which is serving a non-functional purpose.

The idea of diatonic chords over a pedal tone is then developed during the second movement, 'Sycosis and Psychosis' where much of the significant harmonic material is provided by non-diatonic chords over a static C pedal note in the bass creating more dissonance. Figure 8-3 shows the static bass line with chord movement to show the relationship between the two.

Figure 8-3

'Sycosis and Psychosis' bass pedal with non-functioning harmony over top (mm. 9-12)



Here we can now see three chords without functional relationships implied by the rhythm section over the static bass line connecting this fourth movement with the previous three through its significant use of non-functional harmony.

The concept of non-functional harmony continues through the third movement 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' where after a twenty-four-bar introduction based solely upon the IDC motif as exemplified in figure 7-8, the main melodic theme is based on no specific key centres, conveying a sense of atonality.

The first eight bars of the main melodic theme to 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' is shown below in figure 8-4. As the example demonstrates, each small melodic cell is shared among the horn section (the brass parts are doubled by the saxophone section), and is harmonised by a line a major second apart (for the most part). Figure 8-5 is also included below and features just the top line of the melody written on a single stave.

As is apparent in figure 8-5 the extensive use of the chromatic scale means that many of the melodic cells are harmonically independently of one another negating any sense of a tonal centre. This is further emphasised by the harmonisation of the line written at a constant major second below (figure 8-4). The melodic theme from 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' shows that as well as drawing from modal writing, atonal writing is another way which can highlight the concept of non-functional harmony present through many of the movements in *Solipsis*.

Figure 8-4

'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' first eight bars of the main melodic theme as played by the brass section (mm. 24-32)

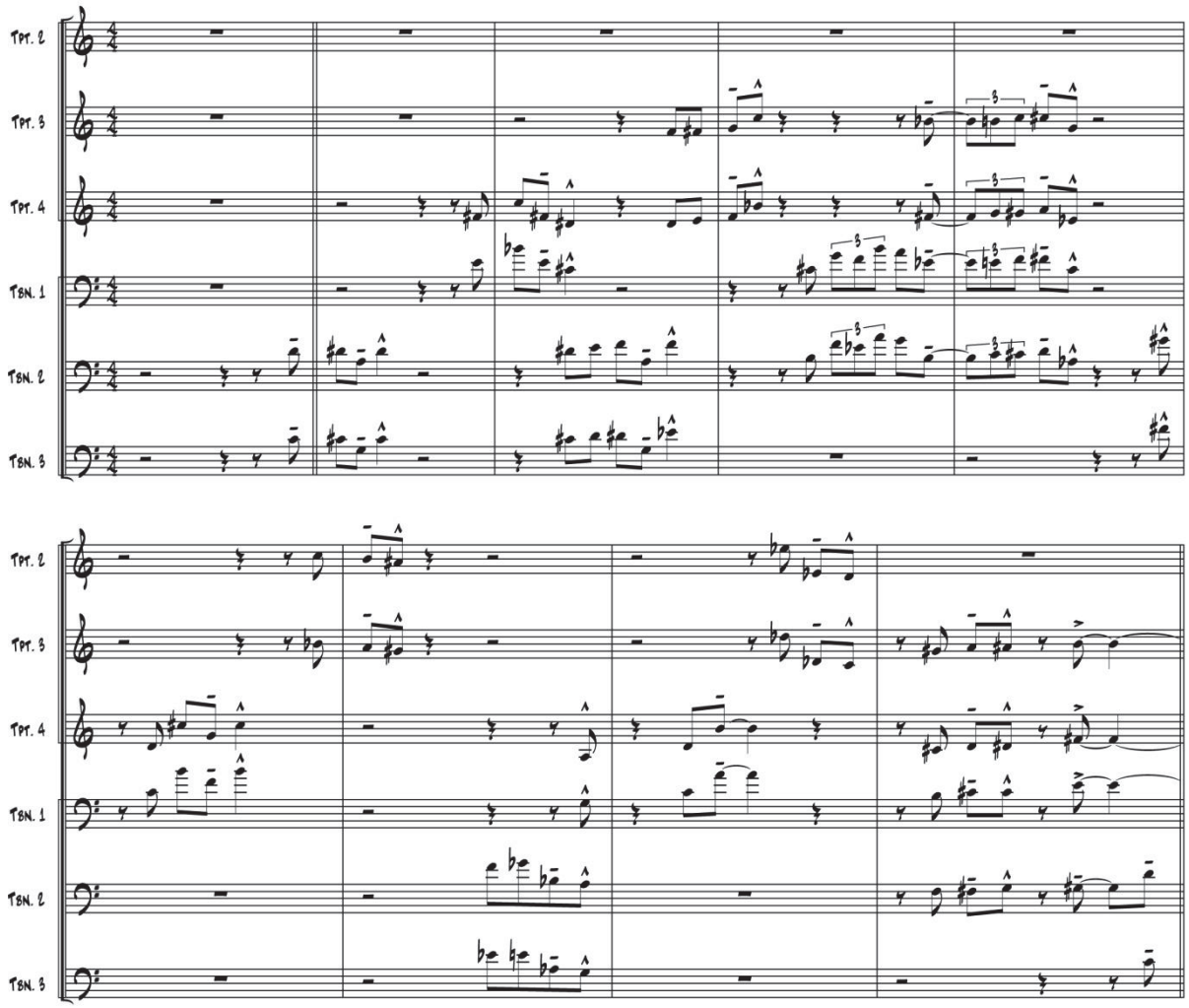
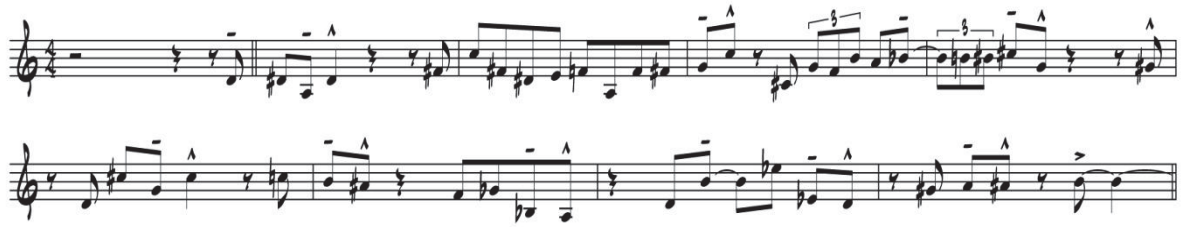


Figure 8-5

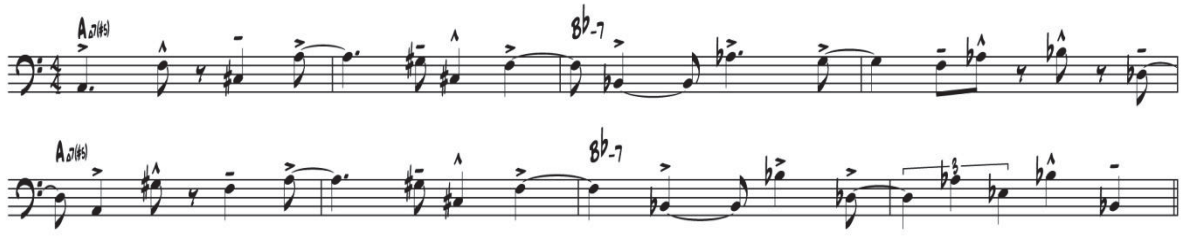
'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' first eight bars of the main melodic theme as played on one stave (mm. 24-32)



The modal theme is continued into the next movement, ‘The Burning House’, where a significant amount of the melodic material is based upon a bass ostinato. This ostinato (figure 8-6) implies movement between A Lydian-augmented and B♭minor7th, and is a further example of the non-functional element found throughout the harmonic elements of *Solipsis*.

Figure 8-6

‘The Burning House’ bass ostinato (mm. 9-16)



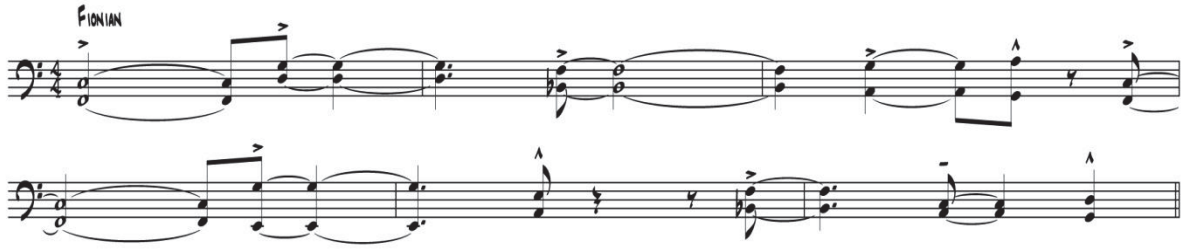
The use of ostinati is an effective way to accompany modal harmony and feature frequently in several of the movements in *Solipsis*, as another way in which harmonic content is developed over several movements. One particular development that differentiates figure 8-6 from the modal section in ‘Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis’ (figure 8-2) is the inclusion of a harmonic material not diatonic to its key centre. Figure 8-2 drew exclusively from the D major scale where figure 8-6 draws on two unrelated scales derived from the two chords A Lydian-augmented and B♭minor7th.

The fifth movement, ‘Simulacrum’, again uses an ostinato throughout most of the movement. This ostinato is based around a single key centre (F Ionian), and this time is played by two voices in counterpoint as opposed to just a single bass line (as seen in figure 8-5). Figure 8-7 shows the six-bar ostinato as it is played under the main melodic theme starting at bar thirty one.

This ostinato (figure 8-7) continues the ongoing theme of non-functional modal ostinati as a significant harmonic device in each of the movements, and also displays as sense of development through the inclusion of an extra voice moving in counterpoint to the bass line.

Figure 8-7

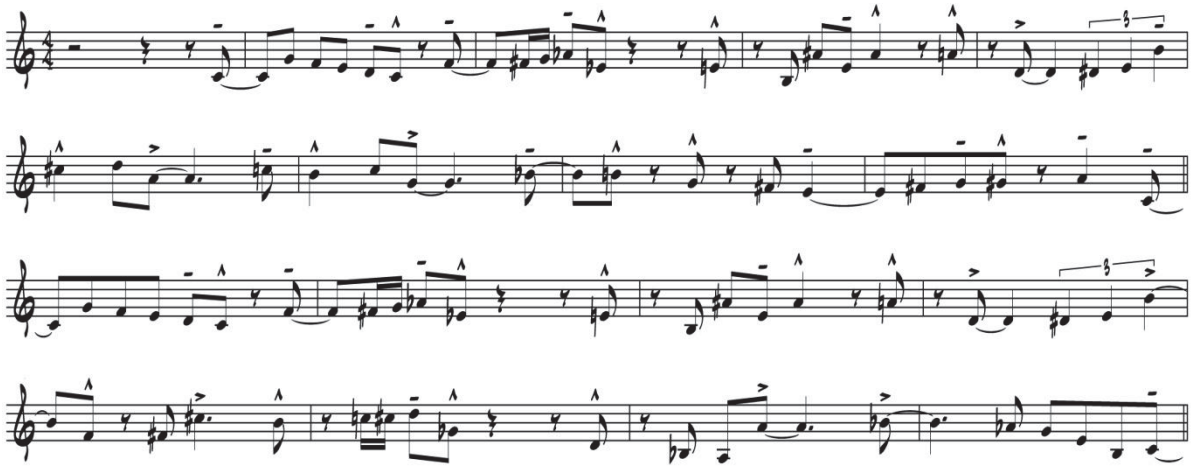
'Simulacrum' ostinato as played by two voices (mm. 31-36)



The final movement 'Lighting an Obscure World' draws heavily from the atonal ideas of 'Infectious Diseases in Cattle'. But where the third movement featured most of the horn section playing alternating fragments of melody and with a harmony line a major second below (see figure 8-4), the melody in 'Lighting an Obscure World is written as a single monophonic line (figure 8-8).

Figure 8-8

'Lighting an Obscure World' 16 bar melody (mm. 16-32)



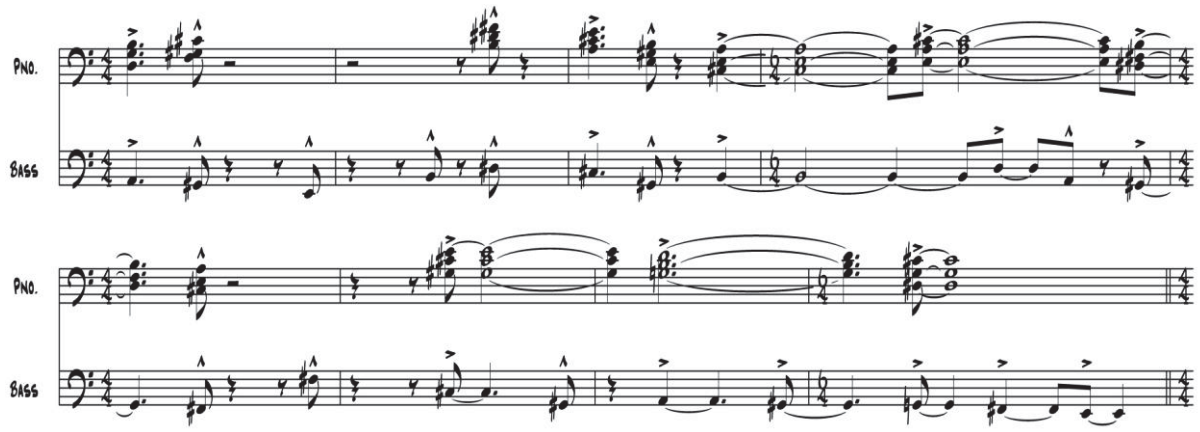
While this melody continues the use of non-functional harmony within the suite it takes the concept further through its use of atonality. The clear link between this melody and the one from 'Infections Diseases in Cattle' (figure 8-4 and 8-5) reveal how atonality helps create unity and coherence between movements.

The way the line is written in regards to its monophonic harmonisation and linear nature as opposed to that of figure 8-4 is an attempt to musically represent the programmatic theme of self-realisation. Where the initial instance of this melody seems sporadic and confused (see the orchestration and harmonisation of figure 8-4), figure 8-8 is a much more cohesive melodic line (despite its atonality) musically representing Caden's success in finally learning the truth about himself and life.

A final example taken from 'Lighting an Obscure World' is inspired by some of the harmonic and melodic material featured during the opening movement 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' and discussed in regards to figure 8-2. Example 8-9 shows development in regards to the chord voicings used to imply non-functional harmony and is in direct relation to the examples in figures 5-7 and 5-8, where Maria Schneider used reharmonisation to develop a musical idea.

Figure 8-9

'Lighting an Obscure World' Chord structures played over an ostinato (mm. 57-64)



Example 8-9 continues the atonal concept of the main melody to 'Lighting an Obscure World' and applies it to material taken from an earlier movement. This also acts as a book-end to the suite with same melodic line and rhythm being played in figure 8-9 as was first introduced in 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' (figure 8-2).

Where figure 8-2 featured diatonic chords over a static bass line, figure 8-9 uses a series of mainly non-diatonic chords over an ostinato which doesn't lend itself to any particular key centre.

The above examples show how non-functional harmony is used in each movement and functions as a way of connecting each piece together. The development to which these harmonic devices are subjected to also contributes to the harmonic evolution of the suite.

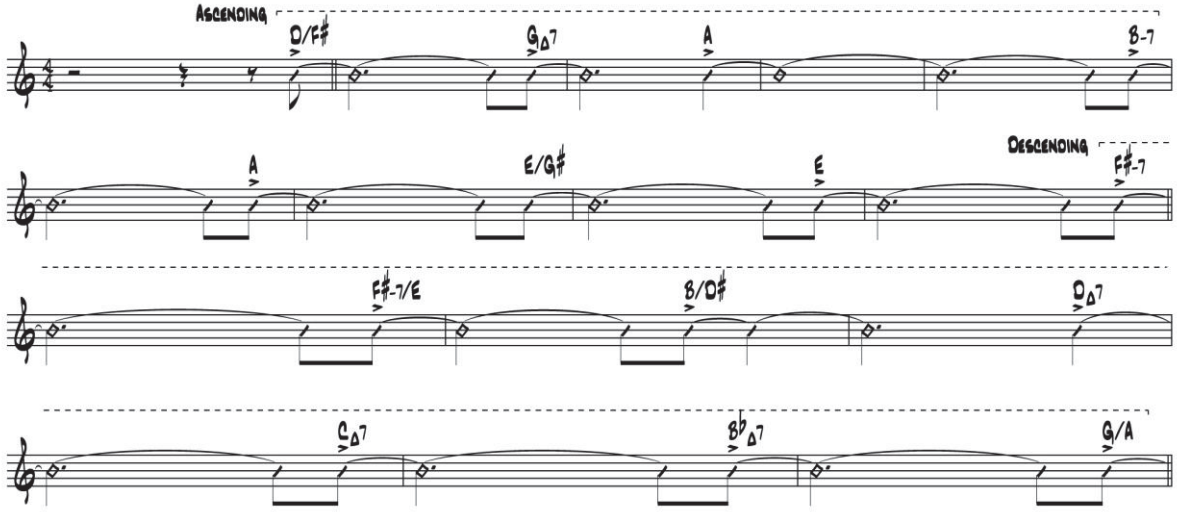
A second harmonic device I have used several times throughout the *Solipsis* to create unity across movements is a harmonic progression with root notes moving in stepwise motion for the most part. This harmonic motif is implemented in a similar fashion to the SBSA and IDC melodic motifs in that it is often embedded with the harmonic framework of each movement, and its reoccurrence and development becomes a central musical theme to the suite.

The following few examples outline another harmonic concept referenced in several movements. Much like in the way in which Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider were able to create coherence through their pieces was through model and sequence (theme and variation). While this technique was largely used in *One Question, Three Answers* and *Scenes from Childhood* in regards to melodic development, I have adapted the technique to accommodate harmonic gestures as well.

The first appearance of the harmonic motif occurs during the main melody of the opening movement, 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis'. There are two components to the following example (figure 8-10); the ascending root movement and the descending root movement.

Figure 8-10

'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' chord movement during the main melodic statement (mm. 48-62)

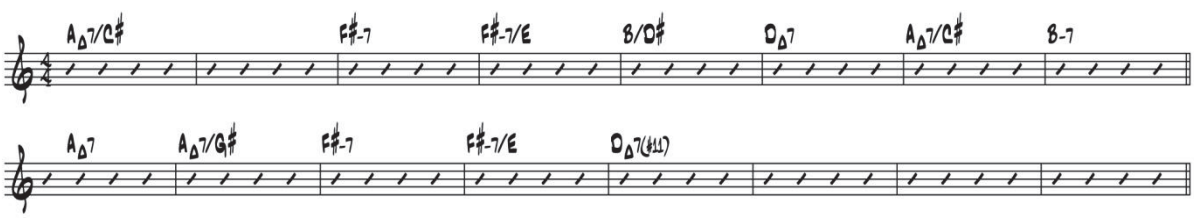


The first four chords in this example move up diatonically through the key of D major starting from the third degree of the scale before making their way back down to the A major chord which is now acting as the tonic chord. Beginning with the F# minor7th chord (the submediant), the bass line moves down to the E while the chord remains static, then approaches the subdominant (D major7th) using an non-diatonic passing chord (B/D#). The chord progression then continues this downward motion modulating down by whole steps.

While figure 8-10 shows both an ascending and descending root movement, many of the subsequent occurrences of this motive only contain one or the other. One such example of this is during the trumpet solo of 'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' at bar 213. Figure 8-11 shows the sixteen bar long harmonic progression as it appears in this instance.

Figure 8-11

'Somewhere Between Stasis and Anti-Stasis' harmonic motif during the trumpet solo (mm. 213-228)

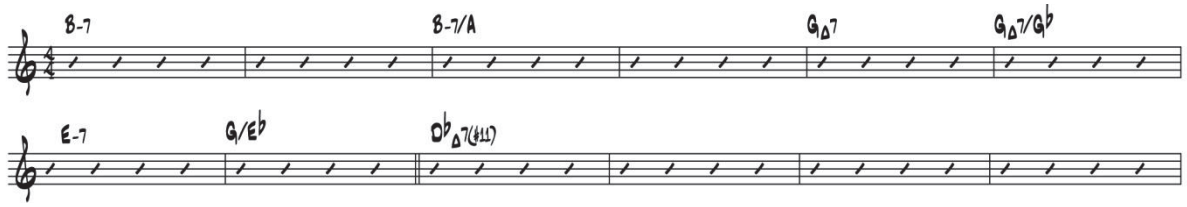


The descending bass line is a key characteristic of the motif and is shown here in the third and fourth bars of figure 8-11 with a static minor seventh chord moving from root position to third inversion, with the seventh on the bottom (diatonic elaboration of static harmony). Following this, the bass line continues to descend by a mixture of half and whole steps, not always moving at the same rate as the chord progression. This stepwise movement gives the chord progression a somewhat melodic quality through the use of counterpoint between the bass line and chord movement.

Another appearance of this harmonic motif occurs during the guitar solo of the second movement, 'Sycosis and Psychosis' and is outlined in figure 8-12. This instance once again occurs during a solo and remains in one key centre (for the most part), but is slightly different in regards to its use of non-diatonic passing chords.

Figure 8-12

'Sycosis and Psychosis' harmonic motif during the guitar solo (mm. 145-156)

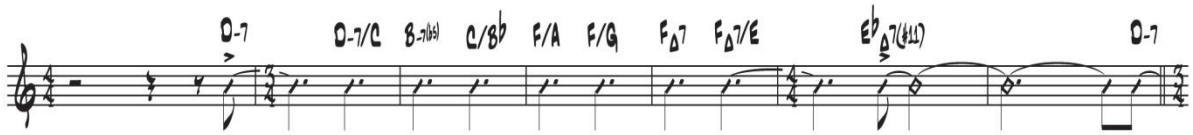


The example starts off with the same bass movement to the seventh of the minor chord as figure 8-11 (albeit in a different key); although in this example there is no chromatic passing chord before the G major7th chord. As the bass line descends from the G to the G♭, E and E♭, the upper structure remains the same (G major), and the progression then resolves down to the new key centre of D Lydian. The use of a static chord in this example varies from figure 8-11 where the chords changed to others within the key, sometimes with passing chords in-between.

The fifth movement, 'Simulacrum', features a short transitional section at bar eighty three just before the tenor solo. This section features another example of this harmonic motif and is outlined in figure 8-13.

Figure 8-13

'Simulacrum' harmonic motif during transitional section before the tenor solo (mm. 82-88)



This example is in F major and as with the previous two examples starts on the submediant chord of the scale and has its bass note descend to the seventh of the chord. A passing chord is once again used before the subdominant chord (C/B♭). This is followed by the same relative bass movement as the other examples but this time the underlying chord remains as the tonic starting in the first inversion and working its way down the scale to the tonic chord in third inversion (again, an upper structure over a descending bass line). This resolves out of key briefly to the E♭Lydian (F/E♭) before returning to the original tonality with the D minor chord.

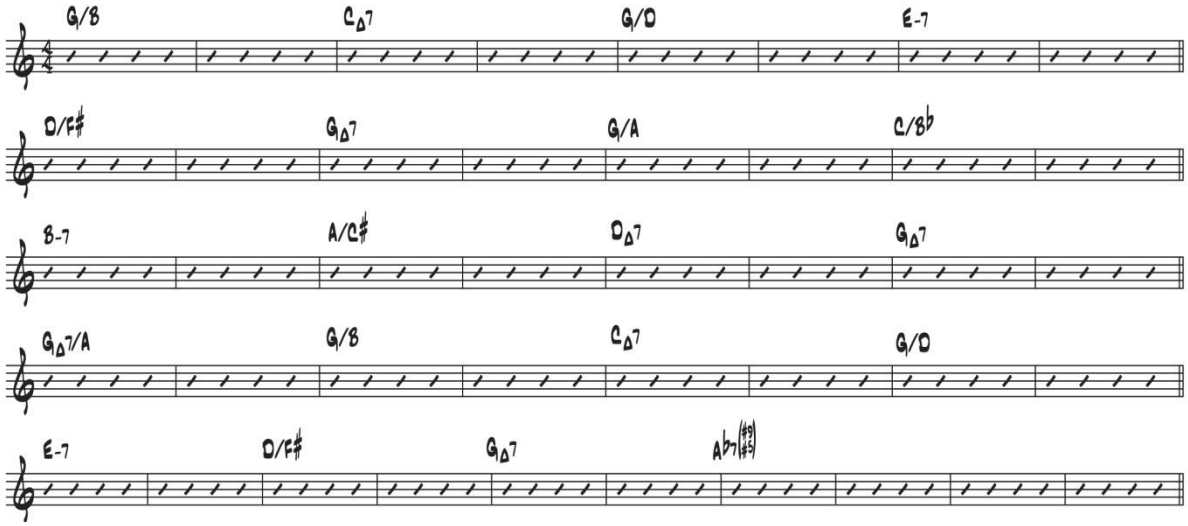
Each example featuring the descending root movement reaches the subdominant chord in the same way (although figure 8-12 doesn't use a passing chord to approach it chromatically); however the way in which the progression reaches the tonic chord differs in each example. Figure 8-12 stays on the subdominant chord while the bass line descends towards the tonic (although it doesn't quite get there, resolving a semitone below). As mentioned above, figure 8-13 moves straight to the tonic chord after the subdominant letting the bass note approach it from a major third above, while figure 8-11 uses a mixture of the two, using chord which best outline the specific function within the key.

Towards the end of the final movement, 'Lighting an Obscure World', a similar harmonic progression occurs but this time it is more in reference to the first five bars of figure 8-10 where the chord movement moves upwards in stepwise motion. Where this example (figure 8-14) varies is that it forms a loop, constantly moving in an upwards direction.

Figure 8-14 features a bass line constantly moving up by half and whole steps (with the exception of the cyclic movement between bars twenty two and twenty three), mainly staying within the G major tonality, but occasionally stepping out so that the bass line can continue ascending unbroken.

Figure 8-14

'Lighting an Obscure World' ascending harmonic motif during the trumpet solo (mm. 291-332)



In the twenty-seventh bar of the example the progression starts again, and in theory could continue in a never ending loop. This marks the final development in the harmonic motif in which stepwise bass movement was achieved through a mixture of diatonic stepwise motion and non-diatonic passing chords create an unbroken bass line. This led the chord progression to take on a somewhat melodic quality and made it highly distinguishable.

The subtle differences between the above examples by way of the inclusion of passing chords and the use of various slash chords, made each occurrence unique and helped conceal it among the harmonic framework of each movement.

Much like with the reoccurrences of the melodic motifs at a local level in *One Question, Three Answers* and *Scenes from Childhood*, and the appearances of the SBSA and IDC motifs throughout *Solipsis*, this harmonic motif helped link various movements together in a subtle way through its restatement and subsequent development.

CHAPTER 9

RHYTHM

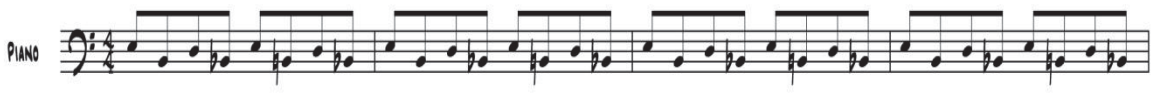
The aim of this chapter is to reveal how rhythmic concepts and elements are used as a way of linking each piece of *Solipsis* conceptually.

A significant element to the development of the melodic motifs used throughout *Solipsis* is the development of rhythm. In most cases it is rhythmic development that helps transform the appearance of the reoccurring motifs.

In its first appearance, the four-note IDC motif was written as four eighth notes starting on beats one and three as shown in figure 9-1.

Figure 9-1

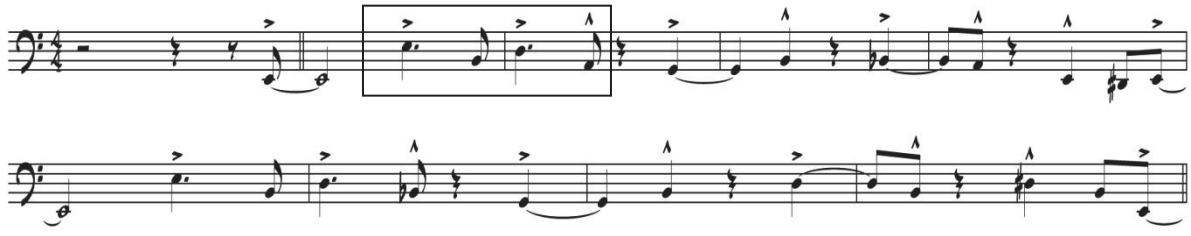
'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' solo piano introduction and first instance of the IDC motif (mm. 1-4)



This four-note motif repeats in a continuous loop with no variation to its two beat cycle. Figure 9-2 shows a subsequent instance in which this motif appears. This occurs at bar 67 after the main melodic theme is played and where the rest of the band temporarily drops out so that the only time implied is from this bass line. As with the example from figure 9-1, the example from figure 9-2 also occurs at around 240 bpm.

Figure 9-2

'Infectious Diseases in Cattle' solo bass line playing a version of the IDC motif (mm. 66-74)



The four-note motif begins on beat two of bars two and six of figure 9-2. This already differs from the beats one and three starting point of figure 9-1. The next most obvious development on the motif is that it appears to be in a half-time feel. With this bass line providing the only source of tempo at this time in the piece the longer duration of each note creates the illusion of a half-time feel with the dotted quarter and eighth note pairs that make up the motif hint at a strong swing feel at the fast tempo. This is a subtle reference to the half-time tempo change that occurs soon after at bar 107 and draws on influence of Jim McNeely in regards to foreshadowing a tempo change with he used during 'Almost Always' the first movement to *One Question, Three Answers*, and discussed in CHAPTER FOUR: *ONE QUESTION, THREE ANSWERS* in relation to figure 4-9.

This use of rhythmic development serves the purpose of creating unity at a local level through the fact it is used to link the two tempos and that it serves as a significant element to the development of a reoccurring musical theme.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

The purpose of my composition, *Solipsis* was to utilise compositional techniques and devices to construct a six-movement work for a modern jazz orchestra that conveyed a strong sense of unity and coherence at both local and global levels. This goal was achieved through the identification and adaption of techniques used by Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider (two composers I believe best exemplify modern jazz composition for large jazz ensembles), through the study of their own multi-movement suites: *One Question, Three Answers,* and *Scenes from Childhood.*

Non-musical themes such as a programmatic theme related to significant themes and motifs prevalent in the film *Synecdoche, New York*, and the use of two specifically chosen solo instruments in each movement were a couple of the ways I was able to achieve unity at a global level in *Solipsis*.

The use of segue between each movement also proved effective with both McNeely's *One Question, Three Answers* and Schneider's *Scenes from Childhood,* and was considered to be used in *Solipsis*, but ultimately didn't serve the needs of the music.

From a musical standpoint, as discussed in the previous chapters, the reuse and subsequent development of musical material plays a significant part in creating unity and coherence at both local and global levels of a multi-movement suite. Development in regards to melody, harmony and rhythm were all important in ensuring the music remained interesting and *creative* as according to Graham Collier.

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