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# A Performance Analysis of Saxophone Trios by William Albright and Daniel Schnyder

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A PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF SAXOPHONE TRIOS BY WILLIAM  
ALBRIGHT AND DANIEL SCHNYDER

A Thesis  
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

William Ross Gillespie  
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May 2012

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While there is a plethora of music for solo saxophone, saxophone with piano, and saxophone quartet, the repertory for saxophone in a mixed chamber ensemble is still very limited. This document provides a formal analysis and brief harmonic analysis for two important pieces for mixed chamber ensemble: *Worlds Beyond* by Daniel Schnyder and *Pit Band* by William Albright. It also includes performance techniques for the saxophone player, as well as rehearsal techniques for the full ensemble.

This document includes an interview with the composer Daniel Schnyder as well as biographical information on William Albright. Both composers have written numerous works for the saxophone, and they view the saxophone from opposite ends of the compositional spectrum.

The purpose of this project is to gain insight and experience in the performance of modern chamber ensemble music. It also provides important performance information to others who wish to perform these pieces.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would also like to give a special thank you to the C.F. Peters Corporation for allowing me to reproduce excerpts from William Albright's *Pit Band*.  
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The focus of this document is to bring to light two really interesting and exciting contemporary pieces that are still somewhat obscure. By providing an analysis and performance techniques for two pieces for saxophone trio, I hope to encourage other saxophonists to take up these works.

There are a few reasons that these two pieces have not been performed often. First, they both have a unique instrumentation. *Pit Band*, by William Albright is written for alto saxophone, bass clarinet, and prepared piano, while *Worlds Beyond Suite* is scored for soprano sax, bass trombone, and piano. The next challenge is actually finding players that are capable of the difficulty of this music. Both pieces are advanced literature and require advanced techniques discussed in later chapters. Finally, both pieces require vast amounts of rehearsal time, both individually and as an ensemble. These factors should not deter performers from working on these pieces; they should only be seen as challenges to performing two fantastic pieces for chamber ensemble.

Historically, the 20<sup>th</sup>-century has seen an increased output in chamber music, especially for wind instruments. This was caused by a number of reasons. First, using smaller ensembles, performances and rehearsals became a more viable option. Second, it allowed composers an option that rejected the 19<sup>th</sup>-century traditions of Romanticism.<sup>1</sup> It also provided a drastic increase to the number of timbres available. These factors contributed to a number of interesting and odd instrument combinations

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<sup>1</sup> Christina Bashford, *Chamber Music*, vol. 5 of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 444-445.

(i.e. Schoenberg's *Pierrot Luniare*, Webern's *Quartet, op. 22*, Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*). The growth in unusual combinations was partly driven by non-traditional chamber ensembles that commissioned works by well-known composers. One of these groups, the Verdehr Trio, has commissioned over 200 works for their combination of clarinet, violin, and piano.<sup>2</sup> They have a set a precedent for other ensembles, such as the mixed trio of Daniel Schnyder's *Words Within Music*, to do the same.

Daniel Schnyder was born in 1961 in Zurich, Switzerland. He is well known for being a performer, composer, and arranger in all styles, including classical jazz, and world music. While primarily a saxophonist, Schnyder is especially well known for his bass trombone concerto, *SubZero*. He tours extensively with symphony orchestras, jazz bands, and chamber groups as a performer and clinician, giving lectures on composition, chamber music, improvisation, and saxophone performance. He has been the composer-in-residence with the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, and the Absolute Ensemble of NYC, as well as writing numerous commissions. He classifies his music as "global music," and cites influences from "Latin music, ethnic music, Arabic music, jazz, rock music, avantgarde music, experimental music, the sound of nature, and the great masters (jazz and classical) of the past"<sup>3</sup>

William Albright (1944-1998), was best known for his works for organ and piano, but his other chamber music, especially his saxophone music, has recently become popular with conservatory and university musicians. Albright studied

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<sup>2</sup> Verdehr Trio, "About the Trio," <http://www.verdehr.com/about.htm> (accessed April 6, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Schnyder, personal communication via email, 27 March, 2012.

composition with many of the well-known twentieth-century composers, including Ross Lee Finney, George Rochberg and Olivier Messiaen. He is also partly responsible for renewed interest in ragtime, boogie-woogie, and stride piano styles. His compositional style has been called “polystylistic” and “quaquaversal,” meaning, “dipping outwards in all directions from a center.”<sup>4</sup> He combines, in many mediums of composition, atonal and rhythmic elements of twentieth century classical music with American popular music and world music. According to *Oxford Music Online*,

Albright's compositional philosophy stresses the value of music as communication and the supremacy of intuition, imagination and beauty of sound. Much of his music displays exuberant humour and a fresh improvisatory spirit.<sup>5</sup>

Each of these composers is as unique as the music they write, and because of their numerous stylistic influences, each piece is very accessible to audiences as well as the performers. Both *Pit Band* and *Worlds Beyond Suite* are exceptional compositions and have been a joy to analyze and perform.

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<sup>4</sup> Evan Chambers, “In Memorium William Albright,” *Perspectives of New Music* 37, no. 1 (Winter, 1999): 32.

<sup>5</sup> Don Gillespie, *Albright, William (Hugh)*, vol. 1 of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 325.

## CHAPTER 2

### ANALYSIS OF *WORLDS BEYOND SUITE*

*Worlds Beyond Suite* (2002) is a five-movement work by Daniel Schnyder. The *Suite* was written for his contemporary chamber ensemble Words Within Music. The ensemble consists of Daniel Schnyder, saxophones and flute; David Taylor, bass trombone; and Kenny Drew Jr, piano. Words Within Music is a group that tries to bridge the gap between musical styles, whether they be jazz, classical, Latin or baroque. They play both original compositions by Schnyder and transcriptions of standard repertoire - everything from J.S. Bach to Richard Strauss. Their concept is that instead of performing “jazz” or “classical,” they play music in a way in which they feel is appropriate at that time. Sometimes their music is very free and has a distinct jazz feel, while other times it is very strict and classical.

#### I. Worlds Beyond

The first movement, titled “Worlds Beyond,” is a very fast movement in arch form. It starts with a short introduction, based on an appoggiatura figure in A major, resolving to D minor in measure 13. The A section starts in measure 13 and is based on the melodic idea B-E-G-F#, and sequences thereof.

Figure 2.1. Schnyder, Movement 1, A Section Motive, m. 12-15



The A section is divided into three distinct parts: measures 13-35, measures 36-56, and measures 56-67. At measure 67, the introductory material returns to provide closure to the A section.

The transition material into the B section is a driving rhythmic line in 2/4 in D major. The piano and bass trombone provide the basis for the groove, while the saxophone outlines the chord progression. The B section is a Latin 4/4 groove in C minor that starts in measure 93. The left hand of the keyboard provides the rhythmic and harmonic foundation, while the bass trombone provides melodic counterpoint to the soprano saxophone. The right hand of the piano is comping lightly. The saxophone melody is both rhythmically and melodically much lighter than in the A section and floats above the rest of the ensemble. The melody also foreshadows the main theme from the second movement.

Figure 2.2. Schnyder, Movement 1, B Section Motive, m. 182-183



Harmonically, the B section is a series of ii-V-I patterns (with some substitutions), which are very common in jazz. The B section repeats, with some modifications, at measure 121.

In measure 137, Schnyder begins a very short C section, which provides a contrast to the rest of the movement. He uses the main theme from the A section as well as some new material to do this, but most importantly, he uses new timbres. Schnyder essentially turns this section into two short duets: one between soprano sax and piano, and the other between bass trombone and piano. He utilizes different colors of each instrument as well. Instead of being fast and heavy, like much of the piece, he turns to the light side of the soprano saxophone and piano. Both instruments play in their respective upper registers before the bass trombone takes

over with a bass line. After the short duets, Schnyder uses a bitonal line in B<sup>b</sup> and A (based on the introduction) to set up a rhythmic pattern, which foreshadows the fifth movement. This groove is similar to the first transition in that the piano and trombone provide the bass line while the saxophone outlines the chord changes. This section diminuendos into a single held note in the soprano saxophone with a light quarter-note bass line in the right hand of the piano. The soprano joins this bass line movement and uses it as an anacrusis into the B' section at measure 182.

The B' section is almost an exact repeat of the B section. Some minor modifications occur, mostly in rhythmic values in the saxophone part. Otherwise it is exact repetition until measure 225, where the introductory material again becomes transition. The A' section starts in measure 233, and like the B' section, repeats almost verbatim. The coda starts in measure 287 and continues in 2/4 and 4/4 until measure 304, where Schnyder uses syncopations in 3/4 to create a swelling, rush to the finish.

Figure 2.3. Schnyder, Movement 1, Syncopation in the Coda, m. 304-306

The musical score for measures 304-306 is presented in three staves. The top staff is for the Soprano Saxophone (S. Sax.) in treble clef, the middle for the Bass Trombone (B. Tbn.) in bass clef, and the bottom for the Piano (Pno) in grand staff. The time signature is 3/4. Measure 304 begins with a syncopated rhythm. The saxophone part features a melodic line with a sharp accidental in the third measure. The piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and a bass line. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests, along with dynamic markings like *z* (zaccato).

## II. Blues for Schubert

The second movement of the *Worlds Beyond Suite* is titled “Blues for Schubert.” According to Schnyder, the right hand piano part is inspired by Schubert’s *Six Moments Musicaux*, D. 780 (Op. 94).<sup>6</sup> While there is no direct quotation from any part of *Six Moments Musicaux*, one can certainly hear the influence on this movement. To contrast the fast tempo of the first movement, “Blues for Schubert” is marked at 60 beats per minute. The form of the piece includes a one-measure intro, three “choruses” of the standard 12-bar blues, and a six-measure coda.

Each “chorus” is divided into an eight-measure antecedent and four-measure consequent. There are a few modifications in each “chorus,” but generally each antecedent and consequent begin exactly the same. The melody, as seen in the other movements, is provided primarily by the soprano saxophone with the bass trombone providing a melodic counter line. The piano provides the harmonic and rhythmic foundation for this movement.

After an ethereal one bar introduction, Schnyder offsets the first statement of the theme by two measures. He uses the left hand of the piano to establish tempo by writing a bass pattern of rising perfect fifths, starting on A<sup>b</sup>. This bass pattern is found at the beginning of every antecedent phrase. As previously mentioned, the main theme of this movement is the theme from the B section of the first movement: F-A-G<sup>#</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel Schnyder, personal communication via email, 27 March 2012.

Figure 2.4. Schnyder, Movement 2, Motive of the Antecedent, m. 14



Schnyder repeats this in various rhythmic displacements and keys throughout the movement, but it is always found as an F quarter note descending to an A quarter note (within an 8<sup>th</sup> note triplet), descending to an G<sup>#</sup> eighth note (finishing out the triplet) tied for two and a half beats. The rest of the line changes between each chorus, but always centers around two aspects typical to the blues style: movements in minor thirds, and triplet rhythms. The movements of a minor third create the harmonic sound of the blues, as the blues scale (discussed on page 9) includes three minor third intervals. The triplet rhythms create a swing-style rhythmic feel that is prominent in the blues.

Figure 2.5. Schnyder, Movement 2, Antecedent, m. 5-6



The consequent phrase is both a change in harmonic background and style. Schnyder breaks away from the heavily rhythmic soprano line and writes a very melodic line in the saxophone. The piano also changes style drastically, playing 16<sup>th</sup> note sextuplets in the upper register in the right hand and block chords in the left hand. The trombone's part is similar, although also notably more melodic than in the antecedent.

Figure 2.6. Schnyder, Movement 2, Consequent Phrase, m. 22-23

The musical score for Figure 2.6 consists of three staves: S. Sax., B. Tbn., and Pno. The S. Sax. staff begins at measure 22 with a melodic line. The B. Tbn. staff features a descending line with triplets. The Pno. staff has complex sixteenth-note patterns with sextuplets and triplets in both hands.

After three variations of this material, Schnyder closes with a six measure coda built on the F blues scale. The blues scale is built on the I,  $^b$ III, IV,  $^b$ V, V, and  $^b$ VII degrees of the major scale. In the F blues scale, those notes are F, A $^b$ , B $^b$ , B, C, and E $^b$ . Each instrument plays fragments of the F blues scale, highlighting the altered notes (of the major scale), as the line descends down to a low A $^b$  ( $^b$ III) below the bass clef. The piano then rises to a B natural ( $^b$ V) above treble clef and the trombone plays a low A $^b$  (again below the bass clef). The last note in the piano is a glissando on the strings of the piano in the lowest register from B, all the way down.

### III. Chase

The third movement of *Worlds Beyond Suite* is titled “Chase.” As the title implies, this movement is very fast and almost frantic. The marked tempo is 288 beats per minute and the entire movement is based around the first three notes of the C minor scale. (The soprano saxophone part is transposed to B $^b$ ).

Figure 2.7. Schnyder, Movement 3, Motive, m. 9

The musical score for Figure 2.7 shows two staves. The top staff is for the Saxophone (S. Sax.) in treble clef, and the bottom staff is for the Trombone (B. Tbn.) in bass clef. Both staves begin with a measure number '9'. The saxophone part starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4 and B4, then a quarter rest, another quarter rest, a quarter note C5, and a quarter note D5. The trombone part starts with a quarter note G3, followed by quarter notes A3 and B3, then a quarter rest, another quarter rest, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4.

This movement is largely through-composed; only the introduction and two measures of the original melody return. Each section has new material, and the last section has qualities of a simultaneous recapitulation. The saxophone, trombone and piano are all playing different lines, all based on the original motive. Each line has occurred in the movement previously. The saxophone line is the introduction, the trombone line is the piano bass line during the main motive, and the piano line is taken from the saxophone part in measure 56.

Figure 2.8. Schnyder, Movement 3, Simultaneous Recapitulation, m. 90

The musical score for Figure 2.8 shows three staves. The top staff is for the Saxophone (S. Sax.) in treble clef, the middle staff is for the Trombone (B. Tbn.) in bass clef, and the bottom staff is for the Piano (Pno) in grand staff. The score begins with a measure number '90'. The saxophone part features a series of triplet eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, E31, F31, G31, A31, B31, C32, D32, E32, F32, G32, A32, B32, C33, D33, E33, F33, G33, A33, B33, C34, D34, E34, F34, G34, A34, B34, C35, D35, E35, F35, G35, A35, B35, C36, D36, E36, F36, G36, A36, B36, C37, D37, E37, F37, G37, A37, B37, C38, D38, E38, F38, G38, A38, B38, C39, D39, E39, F39, G39, A39, B39, C40, D40, E40, F40, G40, A40, B40, C41, D41, E41, F41, G41, A41, B41, C42, D42, E42, F42, G42, A42, B42, C43, D43, E43, F43, G43, A43, B43, C44, D44, E44, F44, G44, A44, B44, C45, D45, E45, F45, G45, A45, B45, C46, D46, E46, F46, G46, A46, B46, C47, D47, E47, F47, G47, A47, B47, C48, D48, E48, F48, G48, A48, B48, C49, D49, E49, F49, G49, A49, B49, C50, D50, E50, F50, G50, A50, B50, C51, D51, E51, F51, G51, A51, B51, C52, D52, E52, F52, G52, A52, B52, C53, D53, E53, F53, G53, A53, B53, C54, D54, E54, F54, G54, A54, B54, C55, D55, E55, F55, G55, A55, B55, C56, D56, E56, F56, G56, A56, B56, C57, D57, E57, F57, G57, A57, B57, C58, D58, E58, F58, G58, A58, B58, C59, D59, E59, F59, G59, A59, B59, C60, D60, E60, F60, G60, A60, B60, C61, D61, E61, F61, G61, A61, B61, C62, D62, E62, F62, G62, A62, B62, C63, D63, E63, F63, G63, A63, B63, C64, D64, E64, F64, G64, A64, B64, C65, D65, E65, F65, G65, A65, B65, C66, D66, E66, F66, G66, A66, B66, C67, D67, E67, F67, G67, A67, B67, C68, D68, E68, F68, G68, A68, B68, C69, D69, E69, F69, G69, A69, B69, C70, D70, E70, F70, G70, A70, B70, C71, D71, E71, F71, G71, A71, B71, C72, D72, E72, F72, G72, A72, B72, C73, D73, E73, F73, G73, A73, B73, C74, D74, E74, F74, G74, A74, B74, C75, D75, E75, F75, G75, A75, B75, C76, D76, E76, F76, G76, A76, B76, C77, D77, E77, F77, G77, A77, B77, C78, D78, E78, F78, G78, A78, B78, C79, D79, E79, F79, G79, A79, B79, C80, D80, E80, F80, G80, A80, B80, C81, D81, E81, F81, G81, A81, B81, C82, D82, E82, F82, G82, A82, B82, C83, D83, E83, F83, G83, A83, B83, C84, D84, E84, F84, G84, A84, B84, C85, D85, E85, F85, G85, A85, B85, C86, D86, E86, F86, G86, A86, B86, C87, D87, E87, F87, G87, A87, B87, C88, D88, E88, F88, G88, A88, B88, C89, D89, E89, F89, 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B138, C139, D139, E139, F139, G139, A139, B139, C140, D140, E140, F140, G140, A140, B140, C141, D141, E141, F141, G141, A141, B141, C142, D142, E142, F142, G142, A142, B142, C143, D143, E143, F143, G143, A143, B143, C144, D144, E144, F144, G144, A144, B144, C145, D145, E145, F145, G145, A145, B145, C146, D146, E146, F146, G146, A146, B146, C147, D147, E147, F147, G147, A147, B147, C148, D148, E148, F148, G148, A148, B148, C149, D149, E149, F149, G149, A149, B149, C150, D150, E150, F150, G150, A150, B150, C151, D151, E151, F151, G151, A151, B151, C152, D152, E152, F152, G152, A152, B152, C153, D153, E153, F153, G153, A153, B153, C154, D154, E154, F154, G154, A154, B154, C155, D155, E155, F155, G155, A155, B155, C156, D156, E156, F156, G156, A156, B156, C157, D157, E157, F157, G157, A157, B157, C158, D158, E158, F158, G158, A158, B158, C159, D159, E159, F159, G159, A159, B159, C160, D160, E160, F160, G160, A160, B160, C161, D161, E161, F161, G161, A161, B161, C162, D162, E162, F162, 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C210, D210, E210, F210, G210, A210, B210, C211, D211, E211, F211, G211, A211, B211, C212, D212, E212, F212, G212, A212, B212, C213, D213, E213, F213, G213, A213, B213, C214, D214, E214, F214, G214, A214, B214, C215, D215, E215, F215, G215, A215, B215, C216, D216, E216, F216, G216, A216, B216, C217, D217, E217, F217, G217, A217, B217, C218, D218, E218, F218, G218, A218, B218, C219, D219, E219, F219, G219, A219, B219, C220, D220, E220, F220, G220, A220, B220, C221, D221, E221, F221, G221, A221, B221, C222, D222, E222, F222, G222, A222, B222, C223, D223, E223, F223, G223, A223, B223, C224, D224, E224, F224, G224, A224, B224, C225, D225, E225, F225, G225, A225, B225, C226, D226, E226, F226, G226, A226, B226, C227, D227, E227, F227, G227, A227, B227, C228, D228, E228, F228, G228, A228, B228, C229, D229, E229, F229, G229, A229, B229, C230, D230, E230, F230, G230, A230, B230, C231, D231, E231, F231, G231, A231, B231, C232, D232, E232, F232, G232, A232, B232, C233, D233, E233, F233, G233, 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G328, A328, B328, C329, D329, E329, F329, G329, A329, B329, C330, D330, E330, F330, G330, A330, B330, C331, D331, E331, F331, G331, A331, B331, C332, D332, E332, F332, G332, A332, B332, C333, D333, E333, F333, G333, A333, B333, C334, D334, E334, F334, G334, A334, B334, C335, D335, E335, F335, G335, A335, B335, C336, D336, E336, F336, G336, A336, B336, C337, D337, E337, F337, G337, A337, B337, C338, D338, E338, F338, G338, A338, B338, C339, D339, E339, F339, G339, A339, B339, C340, D340, E340, F340, G340, A340, B340, C341, D341, E341, F341, G341, A341, B341, C342, D342, E342, F342, G342, A342, B342, C343, D343, E343, F343, G343, A343, B343, C344, D344, E344, F344, G344, A344, B344, C345, D345, E345, F345, G345, A345, B345, C346, D346, E346, F346, G346, A346, B346, C347, D347, E347, F347, G347, A347, B347, C348, D348, E348, F348, G348, A348, B348, C349, D349, E349, F349, G349, A349, B349, C350, D350, E350, F350, G350, A350, B350, C351, D351, E351, F351, G351, A351, B351, C352, D352, E352, F352, G352, A352, B352, C353, D353, E353, F353, G353, A353, B353, C354, D354, E354, F354, G354, A354, B354, C355, D355, E355, F355, G355, A355, B355, C356, D356, E356, F356, G356, A356, B356, C357, D357, E357, F357, G357, A357, B357, C358, D358, E358, F358, G358, A358, B358, C359, D359, E359, F359, G359, A359, B359, C360, D360, E360, F360, G360, A360, B360, C3



Figure 2.11. Schnyder, Movement 5, Introduction

The musical score for Figure 2.11 consists of three staves: Soprano Saxophone, Bass Trombone, and Piano. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The time signature is 7/16. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The Soprano Saxophone and Bass Trombone parts are in the upper staves, and the Piano part is in the lower staves. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with syncopation and a dynamic marking of 'f' (forte).

This figure is repeated two more times. In measure eight, Schnyder changes the syncopation so that it fits in a single measure. Now the groupings are: 4 + 3. This is repeated six times.

Figure 2.12. Schnyder, Movement 5, m. 8

The musical score for Figure 2.12 shows the Soprano Saxophone (S. Sax.) part starting at measure 8. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The time signature is 7/16. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The S. Sax. part features a complex rhythmic pattern with syncopation and a dynamic marking of 'f' (forte).

The first A section starts in measure 15. The A section is in 11/16 time and features the left hand of the piano providing an ostinato bass line. The bass line outlines the following 16<sup>th</sup> note groupings for each measure: 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2. This provides a steady rhythmic pulse that allows this section to flow. The right hand of the piano punctuates chords, while the trombone plays another ostinato figure in two measure phrases.

Figure 2.13. Schnyder, Movement 5, Piano and Bass Trombone Ostinati, m. 15-16

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Bass Trombone (B. Tbn.) and Piano (Pno). The time signature is 11/16. The B. Tbn. part is in the bass clef and features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Pno part is in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and features a complex rhythmic pattern with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The piano part includes accents and slurs over the bass line.

The saxophone melody focuses on the downbeats, providing some rhythmic stability.

Figure 2.14. Schnyder, Movement 5, Saxophone Melody, m. 21-23

The image shows a musical score for a Saxophone (S. Sax.) in the treble clef. The time signature is 11/16. The melody starts at measure 21 and consists of a series of notes with rests, creating a rhythmic pattern.

Each successive four-measure phrase adds rhythmic values, until the saxophone finally outlines each big-beat pulse in the left hand of the piano.

Figure 2.15. Schnyder, Movement 5, Saxophone Melody, m. 32-35

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Saxophone (S. Sax.), Bass Trombone (B. Tbn.), and Piano (Pno). The time signature is 11/16. The S. Sax. part is in the treble clef and features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The B. Tbn. part is in the bass clef and features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Pno part is in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and features a complex rhythmic pattern with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The piano part includes accents and slurs over the bass line.

The B section, starting in measure 39, fluctuates between 5/16 and 11/16. The pulse is not consistent, as it is in the A section. Instead, Schnyder alters the pulse of the 16<sup>th</sup> notes, often grouping them in three's over the bar line, creating the feel of a

hemiola. The only element that holds this together rhythmically together is that, in between each odd grouping, there are two measures of the original 11/16 time from the A section.

Figure 2.16. Schnyder, Movement 5, Section B, m. 48-52

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Saxophone (S. Sax.), Trombone (B. Tbn.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is in 11/16 time and covers measures 48 to 52. The Saxophone part features a melodic line with various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The Trombone part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The Piano part consists of chords and arpeggiated figures, with some measures featuring a more complex, syncopated rhythm. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature of 11/16.

The B section ends in a solo piano cadenza. While it is not maybe a true cadenza, it certainly has improvisatory elements, and the extreme syncopations create a feeling of it being out of time.

The piano cadenza also acts as a transition back to the A section, which is now truncated to 16 measures, and uses the melody from where the saxophone has every rhythmic pulse. The trombone interrupts in measure 92 with a brief cadenza of its own, acting as transition material to section C. It is marked as “*rubato*/freely,” and is only accompanied by a brief piano punctuation to a phrase. After the trombone reaches the lowest note, EE, the piano and saxophone interject with a unison line that transitions to section C.

Section C is the first peak in this movement. It sets up the 4/4 groove with two measures of 13/16 and finally provides the rhythmic and harmonic stability that the previous 105 measures have been setting up. The saxophone floats over the rest of the ensemble with a flowing, free-sounding melody line, while the bass trombone

plays a countermelody to it. The piano again acts as the rhythmic and harmonic support, outlining a Latin-flavored bass line while the right hand punctuates chords in the key of E major.

Figure 2.17. Schnyder, Movement 5, m. 105-107

The musical score for measures 105-107 is presented in three staves. The top staff is for the Saxophone (S. Sax.), the middle for the Trombone (B. Tbn.), and the bottom for the Piano (Pno). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 105 begins with a treble clef for the saxophone and a bass clef for the trombone. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes. Measures 106 and 107 show a call-and-response pattern between the saxophone and trombone, with both instruments playing descending eighth-note lines. The piano continues to provide harmonic support with chords and rhythmic accompaniment.

After another brief iteration of the A section, the D section begins in measure 135. This section is a big call and response between saxophone and trombone. They each echo the other with descending motive based on a D major scale.

Figure 2.18. Schnyder, Movement 5, Measure 136- 138

The musical score for measures 136-138 is presented in two staves. The top staff is for the Saxophone (S. Sax.) and the bottom for the Trombone (B. Tbn.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 136 begins with a treble clef for the saxophone and a bass clef for the trombone. The saxophone part features a descending eighth-note line with triplets. The trombone part is mostly silent, with a few notes in measure 137. Measures 137 and 138 show a call-and-response pattern between the saxophone and trombone, with both instruments playing descending eighth-note lines. The saxophone part ends with a final note in measure 138.

The D section ends with a similar 13/16 interjection that started section C. The truncated A section returns again before the final peak, the coda. The highly syncopated coda, alternating between 15/16 and 4/4 time, is based on three descending 16<sup>th</sup> notes: Db, C, Bb, written in octaves. As each phrase descends, it rises back up to start the pattern over again.

Figure 2.19. Schnyder, Movement 5, Coda, mm. 178-180

The musical score consists of three staves: S. Sax. (top), B. Tbn. (middle), and Pno. (bottom). The music is in 4/4 time and features a repeating pattern of notes and rests. The pattern is augmented in each iteration, with the three-note motive rising until it is one octave above where it started. The final iteration extends the pattern for four measures, ending on a unison Bb spanning four octaves.

This pattern repeats three times, each time augmented. Each time the pattern restarts, the three-note motive rises until it is one octave above where it started. During this last iteration the pattern extends the final four measures, ending on unison Bb's spanning four octaves.

CHAPTER 3  
ANALYSIS OF *PIT BAND*

*Pit Band* was written by William Albright for a chamber ensemble of alto saxophone, bass clarinet, and prepared piano. It was commissioned and performed in 1994 by the Western Chamber Players of Western Oregon State College. According to Albright, *Pit Band*:

...with its unusual ensemble of three haphazard instruments – a pick-up band – attempts to digest an evening long musical comedy in a few minutes. The program is as follows: Tune-up and introduction, Overture, Opening Number, Vamps and Screams, Love song, Waltz, alla Marcia, Fox-trot and shimmeys, and Finale.<sup>7</sup>

The piece is written utilizing both tonality and atonality. Specifically, Albright structures the work with pitch-class sets. Pitch-class set theory strips away all extraneous musical ideas- rhythm, register, order, and allows music to be analyzed in motives of pitch-classes. The idea is that no matter how a pitch-class set is written, it will retain its interval identity.<sup>8</sup> Albright uses a combination of tonal sections and atonal sections to give mystery, suspense, and beauty to his musical comedy.

The first section of the piece, Tune-up and introduction, is exactly that. The band tunes, and plays a short introduction to the Overture. The introduction starts with what Albright calls “Three Bells” in the piano. The piano pounds out three

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<sup>7</sup> William Albright, *Pit Band* (New York: Edition Peters, 1996). Score.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 33.

clusters, the pitch class set [01346]. This pitch class set is the main harmonic motive of the piece. It is also half of an octatonic scale, D, E, F, G, Ab.

Figure 3.1. Albright, Harmonic Motive Pitch Class Set, m. 6-8

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The introduction is written in such a way that it feels unsure, as if the band is fighting for time and pitch. The bass clarinet and alto saxophone play half steps apart, and never at the same time. There are two repeated sections and two grand pauses. These specifically make it feel like the band is lost and cannot figure out where to start. Finally, everyone seems to agree on measure 22, the Overture.

The second section, Overture, is the first real “song” of the musical. It is marked “funky” and includes incessant accents. He layers the parts in such a way that although each instrument is playing a very syncopated, rhythmic idea, all of the sixteenth notes in each measure are played. Albright also introduces the melodic pitch class set, [01235678]. He uses this set as a melodic figure multiple times in the piece.

Figure 3.2. Albright, Melodic Motive Pitch Class Set, m. 23-24

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The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system has two staves. The top staff contains a melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes, marked with '(3 only)' and '3x'. The bottom staff has a similar rhythmic pattern, also marked with '(3 only)' and '3x', and includes the instruction '(jazz phrasing)'. The second system also has two staves. The top staff features block chords and a melodic line with accents, marked with '(1, 2, 3) "with a beat"', 'f', and 'sfz'. The bottom staff continues the rhythmic accompaniment with block chords and a melodic line.

Albright then transitions to the Opening Number with block chords in the piano and a melody that functions in D minor. This transition serves as a kind of set change for the piece. It occurs multiple times as a transition and once as the main melody. In this way it serves a similar purpose to that of the incidental music of a play. When the transition melody is played in full, Albright calls it “*Maestoso Grunge.*”

The Opening Number continues with block chords in the piano, centering on F# minor. The saxophone and bass clarinet play contrasting lines based on pitch-class set [01346]. The saxophone plays a melodic line over a large interval space while the bass clarinet punctuates with low, rhythmic 16<sup>th</sup> notes. The left hand of the piano joins the saxophone with a melodic countermelody in measure 60.

Figure 3.3. Albright, Opening Number, m. 59-62

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The next section is transitioned to by way of an “applause break.” Albright asks the saxophone and bass clarinet to use key clatter and forceful air (without creating a pitch) to make an “applause” sound. The *Maestoso* Grunge theme makes another brief appearance. This section, starting in measure 98, is Vamps and Screams, *Nessun Dorma*. Translated from Italian, *Nessun Dorma* means “None Shall Sleep.” Albright uses this as a play on the famous Puccini aria by the same name. Puccini’s aria ends happily, with protagonist singing of winning the love of a princess. However, in Albright’s version, the reason none shall sleep is because of the vamps and screams. The vamps in the piano are dotted quarter note- eighth note figures that repeat every bar. The piano vamps are based on the pitch class set [012358], a subset of the “melodic” set [01235678].

Figure 3.4. Albright, Vamps, Piano Part, m. 101-102

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Albright breaks up the vamps with “screams” that are caused by the saxophone and bass clarinet playing large leaps over the full range of the horn. Up until the first *forte* “scream,” everything else is marked *piano* or *pianissimo*.

Figure 3.5. Albright, Screams, m. 107

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Musical score for measures 107-112. The score is in common time (C) and has a key signature of two flats. It features three staves: two for saxophones (treble clef) and one for piano (grand staff). Measure 107 is marked with a box containing the number 12. Dynamics include *f*, *sub. pp*, and *espr.* (espressivo). There are accents (^) and breath marks (v) in the saxophone parts, and breath marks (v) in the piano part.

The next transition is essentially a large *rallentando*, with one new theme added, the “Cry of the Damned.” Albright is very specific about the *rallentando*, with marked tempos of 144, 104, 88, 76, and 60 beats per minute from measures 119-122. The Cry of the Damned theme interrupts in measure 125, creating a brief *accelerando*.

Figure 3.6. Albright, Cry of the Damned, m. 125-126  
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**“Cry of the Damned”**  
**Vivo (♩ = 104)** **Moderato (♩ = 60)**

He then slows down further after the interruption, to 44 beats per minute and begins the next major song of the evening comedy, Love Song. An imitative duet between alto saxophone and bass clarinet, it is very free and expressive. This melody is also based on another subset of the “melodic” pitch-class set, this time [013578].

Figure 3.7. Albright, Love Song, m. 128-132  
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**Love Song** 16  
**Largo e rubato (♩ = 44)**  
*Plaintive and hyper-expressive; alternately swooning and playful; very free!*

Albright then introduces a brief dance number, Waltz, before transitioning to the final two sections of the piece. The real purpose of the Waltz is to set up the metric modulations required to get to the final section of the piece. The Waltz, marked at dotted half note equals 52, is the same quarter note tempo of the next transition, alla Marcia (quarter note equals 156). This, then transitions to the tempo

of the next musical number, Fox-trot marked at half note equals 156. The piano part that moves directly into the Fox-trot is important as well. It is marked “clangorous, wild bells,” and is made up of the main two pitch-class sets of the piece, [01346] and [01235678].

Figure 3.8. Albright, Clangorous, Wild Bells, m. 157-160

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The melody of the fox-trot is again based on the same pitch-class set as the Overture: [01235678].

Figure 3.9. Albright, Fox-trot Melody, m. 168-170

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This melody is first played in unison, and then imitated back and forth between the clarinet and saxophone. It occurs three times and is interrupted each time by a “shimmy” [sic] and a “walking bass” section.

The Finale section is essentially made up of all the music Albright glossed over in the rest of the piece. This includes the Cry of the Damned theme, the transition music, *Maestoso* Grunge, and a new, slow, imitative section. The Cry of the Damned theme opens with a “drum solo” in the piano. Albright accomplishes this

by preparing the piano with rubber mutes between the lowest three strings, creating a percussive sound. He then writes the Cry of the Damned theme in the canon in the saxophone and clarinet, while the piano “solos” underneath. The “clangorous, wild bells” reappear as transition material to get to the first and only full statement of the incidental music.

*Maestoso* Grunge is set in D minor and is the last portion of tonality Albright provides before ending the piece. Instead of keeping the whole theme in 2/4 time, as he does when it is transition music, Albright adds an eighth note to the last measure.

Figure 3.10. Albright, *Maestoso* Grunge, m. 262-264

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The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The time signature is 2/4. Measure 262 is marked with a 'dirty growl' and 'ff'. Measure 263 is marked with 'growl' and 'sfz'. Measure 264 is marked with 'ff' and 'sfz'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and a triplet in the bottom staff.

The next to last section is a brief interlude. It is a slow, imitative section centered around F, C and Db. Albright plays with the colors of the saxophone in the low middle register and bass clarinet in the low clarion register to create an interesting blend. The parts could easily have been reversed, and it might have sounded more distinctly like a bass clarinet and alto saxophone, but the way it is written they are almost mimicking each other’s timbres.

The final section of the piece is the return of the Call of the Damned theme while the piano alternates between “drum solo” and “wild bells.” The Cry of the

Damned is interrupted by a “walking bass” section, which rises with intensity to a  $g^{b3}$  in the saxophone. The bass clarinet and alto saxophone each hold an  $a^2$  before the entire group falls to the lowest D’s on their instrument.

## CHAPTER 4

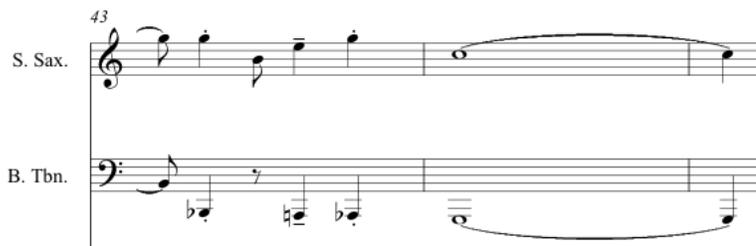
### PERFORMANCE PRACTICE FOR *WORLDS BEYOND SUITE*

The elements of performance practice that require extra attention in this piece include balance, styles, and ensemble rehearsal. While each issue can be rehearsed at the same time, rehearsals can become very tedious if the ensemble is not prepared. The following chapter is a guide to having efficient rehearsals for an effective performance of *Worlds Beyond Suite*.

#### I. Worlds Beyond

The opening movement is the easiest of the fast movements to put together. After each player learns the notes and rhythms, the next step is to agree on style and dynamics. Since there are very few markings, the ensemble can decide exactly how they want to do articulation, dynamics, and style. This is the case for every movement of the suite. Specifically in the first movement, we decided to play the main motive of the A section (starting on the upbeat of two) long, long, short.

Figure 4.1. Schnyder, Movement 1, Articulation for the A Section, m. 43-44



The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is for the Saxophone (S. Sax.) and the bottom staff is for the Trombone (B. Tbn.). Both staves start at measure 43. The Saxophone part has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It begins with a quarter note on G4, followed by quarter notes on A4, Bb4, and C5. The second measure contains a half note on C5. The Trombone part has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It begins with a quarter note on G2, followed by quarter notes on F2, E2, and D2. The second measure contains a half note on D2. Both parts have a fermata over the second measure.

The next main goal for the movement is to establish dynamics. Our ensemble had the most success thinking in terms of a jazz band's dynamics. We tended to have a lot of lines that started *subito piano* and used a *crescendo* to reach a *forte* peak. A good example of this is found in measures 27-36.

Figure 4.2. Schnyder, Movement 1, Dynamics, m. 26-36



For the B section, the most important line is actually the left hand of the piano. Therefore, finding a balance that does not cover this line up becomes a priority. It is also important that the pianist understands different jazz styles, as much of the piece has a Latin accompaniment. The left hand of the piano has the same role as that of the bass in a jazz combo. It must drive the rhythm of the entire ensemble. The right hand is piano “comping” and is not as important to the overall balance of the ensemble. Unfortunately, the right hand is a very busy part and will be very loud if the player is not careful. The basic balance for the piano is the left hand plays *forte* or *fortissimo* and the right hand plays *piano*.

Figure 4.3. Schnyder, Movement 1, Latin Piano Bass Line, m. 182-185



The rest of the movement is fairly simple to put together, as it just repeats the A and B sections. Again, deciding articulation and dynamics will be the priority in this movement.

## II. Blues for Schubert

In addition to dynamics, in the second movement it is important to decide if the trombone will be muted, and how to play the *glissando* on the strings of the piano. There is no mention of using a mute for the trombone in the score, yet on every recording Schnyder has the trombone player use a bucket mute. We decided we liked this sound for this movement.

The next decision is how to play the *glissando* on the strings of the piano in the last measure. What worked best for our ensemble was for the pianist to stand up, while holding down the pedal, and slide the side of his thumb down the lowest strings. This gave the sound a little more definition than just the fleshy part of the thumb, but wasn't harsh as sounding as a thumbnail.

## III. Chase

This movement is the difficult to put together for several reasons. First, the movement is very fast, so staying in time at quarter note = 288 can be difficult. For our ensemble we slowed the tempo down a bit (to around quarter note = 240) and had much easier time playing as a group. The second reason this movement is difficult to put together is that there are two rhythmically challenging sections. Starting at measure 42, the trombone and saxophone play a unison hemiola line over the piano's quarter notes.

Figure 4.4. Schnyder, Movement 3, Hemiola in Horn Parts, m. 43-47

The musical score for measures 43-47 consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Saxophone (S. Sax.) in treble clef, showing a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The middle staff is for the Trombone (B. Tbn.) in bass clef, mirroring the saxophone's melody. The bottom staff is for the Piano (Pno) in grand staff, featuring a steady eighth-note accompaniment in both hands.

The second rhythmically challenging section starts in measure 90, during the simultaneous recapitulation. We found it difficult to find the pulse with all of the different rhythms that are taking place.

Figure 4.5 Schnyder, Movement 3, m. 90-93

The musical score for measures 90-93 features three staves. The top staff (S. Sax.) contains complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sixteenth notes. The middle staff (B. Tbn.) provides a bass line with some rests and accents. The bottom staff (Pno) shows a very fast, dense sixteenth-note texture in the right hand, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. A dashed line with the marking '8<sup>th</sup>' is positioned below the piano part.

In both cases, traditional ensemble rehearsal techniques work well. First, in both cases we rehearsed the passages from slow tempos to fast, stopping on the downbeats that occur together. In measure 90, the right hand of the piano can be difficult to hear due to its register and speed of notes. Having the saxophone play softer so that it does not conflict with the piano is important during this passage.

#### IV. Afterthought

The fourth movement is very simple to put together. On Schnyder's recordings, he again used a bucket mute on the trombone. We chose not to use it for this movement, but we tried it both ways. The piano part should almost sound like a New Orleans funeral dirge in the left hand, slow with a strong emphasis on the quarter notes and some decay in the length of the note (almost like a bell-tone). The only other recommendation for this movement is for the saxophonist to make the part sound as improvisatory as possible.

#### V. We Should Know Better

The final movement is very difficult for the ensemble. It requires a lot of practice both individually and as an ensemble. What is really important is to keep the 16<sup>th</sup> notes grouped properly in the introduction, A, and B sections. In the introduction, we discovered the pulse groupings of 16<sup>th</sup> notes are easier performed if thought of differently than how Schnyder beams them. He beams them as groups of 4 + 3 in each measure.

Figure 4.6. Schnyder, Movement 5, m. 1-2

The musical score for Figure 4.6 consists of three staves. The top staff is for Soprano Saxophone, the middle for Bass Trombone, and the bottom for Piano. All parts are in 7/16 time with a tempo of quarter note = 120. The dynamics are marked as forte (f). The Soprano Saxophone and Bass Trombone parts feature a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. The Piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and slurs.

We found that by changing the grouping and playing two-measure phrases, we were able to sound more melodic and relaxed. We changed the pulse groupings to 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 3 and essentially re-barred each two-measure phrase as one 14/16 measure.

Figure 4.7. Schnyder, Movement 5, Introduction Re-barred

The musical score for Figure 4.7 shows the Soprano Saxophone part for the Introduction Re-barred. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The time signature changes from 7/16 to 14/16. The part features a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs.

Because we wanted to feel the pulse in 16<sup>th</sup> notes, we did not rewrite the time signature to 7/8. We only did this for the first six measures. The final half of the introduction remained written in 7/16.

In the A section, the groove in the left hand of the piano is again very important, as it provides the harmonic and rhythmic stability. The pulse groupings of 16<sup>th</sup> notes should be 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2 in each measure. This is clearly outlined in the left hand of the piano.

Figure 4.8. Schnyder, Movement 5, Section A, m. 15-16



The B section, however, alternates between 5/16 and 11/16 time signatures.

Schnyder groups the 16<sup>th</sup> notes easily until measure 60, where, the pulse becomes 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 in each measure.

Figure 4.9. Schnyder, Movement 5, 16<sup>th</sup> note groupings in B Section, m. 61-62



Sections C and D are Latin grooves, and as always, the important part is the left hand of the piano. The coda, despite it's complicated looking pattern, is easier than it looks. The confusing part is actually a misprint in the music. In the score, Schnyder leaves the time signature of 15/16 in measures 181-186.

Figure 4.10. Schnyder, Movement 5, m. 181-185

Starting in measure 182 however, the music is actually written in 4/4 time, not 15/16. This makes it quite a bit easier to play than if the entire coda was written in 15/16 as the score suggests. It should be noted that starting in measure 186, the score is correct.

I found myself playing this piece like I would a transcribed solo. I learned the notes and rhythms and I listened heavily to the recordings. Then I made it my own. I started to put my inflections on the melody, letting the line be a little more fluid than what's written on the page. What is really important about learning this piece is learning to relax and play melodically.

## CHAPTER 5

### PERFORMANCE PRACTICE FOR *PIT BAND*

In *Pit Band*, Albright makes very high demands of each instrument, including advanced technique, altissimo range, dynamics, and knowledge of contemporary and extended techniques (such as growling, slap tonguing, and prepared piano). It is also very important to understand the stylistic background of the different sections of the piece. The players (especially the pianist) need to understand what fox trot, shimmy, and walking bass line specify. You must also have a very advanced pianist and bass clarinetist for this piece.

The saxophonist has a few extended techniques that he must learn to do properly for this piece. First, there are markings for “slap tonguing.” Slap tonguing is the sound produced by creating and releasing suction on the reed. This is done with the tongue and produces a “slap” sound along with the pitch requested in the music. In this case, the saxophonist would finger a written B.

Figure 5.1. Albright, Slap-tonguing Example, m. 135

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The next technique the saxophonist must learn is a growl. This sound is produced by humming a pitch in the back of the throat, while playing the saxophone. The most intense growl is produced when the saxophonist hums a pitch that is close

to a half step away from the note that they are playing on the saxophone. The saxophonist can alter the sound of the growl by humming different pitches.

Figure 5.2. Albright, Saxophone Growling, m. 262-264

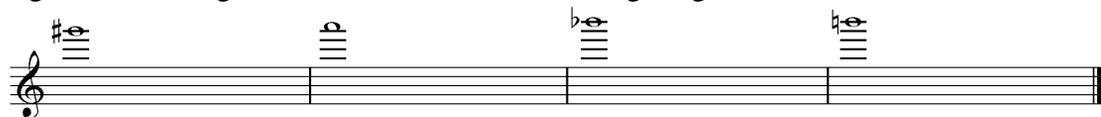
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The next contemporary technique that Albright asks for is an “applause sound.” This is made by forcefully blowing air through the horn without making a pitch, while rapidly opening and closing the keys of the saxophone. In our ensemble, we were able to create the loudest sound by taking our mouths off of the mouthpiece and blowing on the tip of the mouthpiece, between the tip opening and the reed. The altissimo technique in the saxophone is not really an issue as the standard fingerings work the best.

For the bass clarinet, there are very similar techniques required. The slap tonguing, growling, and “applause sound” are performed in the same way as they are on saxophone. There is quite a bit of altissimo technique, however. Provided are the fingerings our bass clarinetist, Andrew Gross, used for performance.

Figure 5.3. Albright, Bass Clarinet Altissimo Fingerings

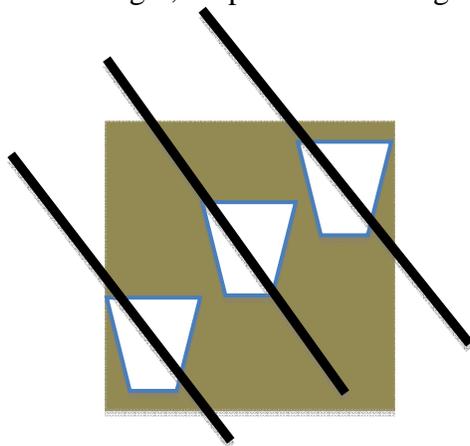


- G#- Register Key + Thumb C
- A- Register Key + Left Pointer
- Bb- Clarion G# with half-hole
- B- Clarion A with half-hole

Out of the three instruments in this piece, the piano part is particularly challenging for a number of reasons. First, the part is quite demanding technically.

There are many difficult passages to play, which are background parts where the pianist must also follow the winds. Second, finding the right way to prepare the piano can be challenging. Albright calls for mutes on the three lowest piano strings: A, Bb and Cb. His original recommendation was rubber tuning mutes, but we quickly discovered that they fall out easily. Our solution, also recommended by Albright, was to use rubber chair feet. While he did not provide a detailed enough example to really solve the problem, it did provide us with the materials to create the right sound. Our pianist, James Householder, discovered that putting a sponge on the soundboard, followed by three chair feet muting the strings, allowed the hammer to hit the string properly, while also creating the “deadening” sound needed for the piece.

Figure 5.4. Albright, Prepared Piano Diagram



The next difficult section of the piece was deciphering Albright’s markings. Every section of this piece is very clearly marked how it should be played, specifically with style and metronome markings. It is almost too specific, however, because some of the ideas that Albright had in mind are counter-intuitive to what is written in the music. In addition, many of his directions are in Italian, but are not

standard Italian musical terms, requiring reference to a regular Italian dictionary. (See Appendix A for a complete listing of Italian terms and their meanings). The performer runs into a problem with one word in particular, however. The word *russanto* appears numerous times throughout the Vamps and Screams, yet, a true meaning cannot be found in any Italian dictionary.

The best course of action for these difficult directions is to practice playing each idea to its extreme. Perhaps the best example of this is in the Love Song. The directions in the music read “Plaintive and hyper-expressive; alternately swooning and playful; very free!” The melody, in the saxophone, seems to be written very rhythmically, but in fact lends itself to this type of playing.

Figure 5.5. Albright, Love Song, m. 128-132  
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The final difficulty that our ensemble faced was actually putting the piece together. For this we had a several different rehearsal techniques. First, we individually practiced with a metronome. Second, we rehearsed in duos, again with the use of a metronome - saxophone and clarinet, saxophone and piano, piano and clarinet. Finally, as we rehearsed together, we took small sections and worked through segments, sometimes as small as one measure. Specific problems arose between rehearsal numbers 14 and 18. Through this section, there are many times where the only thing happening is a tremolo in the piano. We solved many of the problems by having all three of us read from the score, as well as having the

saxophonist cue the downbeats of measures, such as *Cry of the Damned* and *Love Song*.

Some of the biggest problems in this piece can be corrected easily if everyone in the ensemble plays exactly what Albright wrote. Sometimes, in chamber music, there is some finessing of rhythms or dynamics, however with *Pit Band*, it should be played exactly as written. There are many interesting timbres and sounds in this piece, and I encourage the chamber group to explore them all and find what works best for them.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing, rehearsing, researching and performing this music, I have been able to look back on this experience from many angles. First, I have to conclude that both *Pit Band* and *Worlds Beyond Suite* are works of a superior caliber that manage to provide the performers with technical and musical challenges, while also providing them with an intensely emotional, musical experience. Although they are drastically different pieces in every way possible, both Albright and Schnyder have managed to merge elements of classical, jazz, Latin, dance, and popular music into the chamber ensemble world. In an interview with Schnyder, he calls his music “...global music, or new classical music, which...is reflecting on the total of musical expressions available to an urban individual in a major city on planet Earth in 2012.”<sup>9</sup>

There is no reason that the term “global music” could not be applied to Albright as well. While, his music may be employ a more advanced harmonic language than Schnyder’s, the idea is the same. His music is not written in a single style, but rather in multiple, seemingly unrelated styles.

The second thing I have to conclude from performing and studying these pieces is how the identity of the composer really shines through in their compositions. Especially in the case of William Albright, you can actually sense who he was as a person in his works. A former student and now professor of composition at University of Michigan, Evan Chambers, writes about Albright:

Bill was an impossibly complicated man; the deep contradictions he held in his heart, the enormous range of emotions he weathered in his daily life, and

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel Schnyder, personal communication via email, 27 March 2012

the restlessness of his keen mind made his music tremendously rich and his teaching inspired.... In a matter of seconds he could move from uncanny insight to crude humor, through profound contemplation to fond remembrance or blunt rejection of the music in front of him.<sup>10</sup>

One can see Schnyder's personality as well in *Worlds Beyond Suite*. He calls himself an expressionist,<sup>11</sup> and through the emotion he puts forth in his compositions and performances, this is easy to see. His music is very open to personal interpretation and like the term expressionism, his music is difficult to define (hence "global music").

My final conclusion is that these pieces need to be performed more often. They are both works that should be considered important parts of the contemporary chamber music repertoire. They both are compositionally of the highest quality, and because of their stylistic nature, they promote being a well-rounded musician, which is especially important today. They provide the necessary challenges desired by the musician- musical complexity and virtuosity, yet they also are incredibly accessible to the audience. They also paint a good picture of the classical music scene today.

As musicians, we can no longer be categorized as "jazz musician" or "classical pianist," and still expect to advance music as an art form. Classical music today calls for influences from all over the world. *Worlds Beyond* and *Pit Band* are proof that classical music can still be accessible to an audience as well as provide the performers with the necessary challenges required by their craft.

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<sup>10</sup> Evan Chambers, "In Memorium William Albright," *Perspectives of New Music* 37, no. 1 (Winter, 1999): 32.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Schnyder, personal communication via email, 27 March 2012

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## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF UNCOMMON TERMS FOUND IN *PIT BAND*

*Come sopra*- As before

*Eco, quasi una tosse*- Echo, like a cough

*Misterioso e vegetale*- Mysterious and vegetable-like

*Nessun dorma*- None shall sleep

*Pirico*- Gunpowder

*Precipitato*- Hasty/Hurried

*Pressante*- Hurrying

*Rigorismo*- Rigorously

*Ruvido*- Rude

*Scorrevole*- Flowing

*Quasi chitarra*- Like a Guitar

*Quasi cimbalom*- Like a cymbal

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL SCHNYDER

WG: Do you consider your music "Third Stream?" Is there such a thing as "Third Stream?" Why?

DS: *Third Stream is a term by Gunther Schuller and applies to the music of the 50's and 60's. Today, I would call it global music, or new classical music, which is reflecting (like Mozart in his time) on the total of musical expressions available to an urban individual in a major city on planet earth 2012. This is not niche music as the term third stream (not main stream, but third stream etc....) implies. It is played by everybody today in classical programs.*

WG: What inspires your style of writing?

DS: *Latin Music, ethnic music, Arabic music, jazz, rock music, avantgarde music, experimental music, the sound of nature, and the great masters (jazz and classical) of the past. You can hear all that easily. But it is all a part of me and my music. I do not steal. This ain't no patch work puzzle or collage. I played all this music on many tours all over the world.*

WG: What made you decide to write for soprano sax, bass trombone, and piano?

DS: *My TRIO; unbelievable musicians with unlimited possibilities. And crazy enough to go for it....*

WG: Do you write music with a particular person in mind to play it (like Duke Ellington did)? Does your chemistry with this person or their technical abilities affect the way you write?

DS: *YES, most definitely. I have written for trombone players such as: Ray Anderson David Taylor, Joseph Alessi, Jim Pugh, Charlie Vernon, Stefan Schulz, Frederic Belli (German mofo!), and Henning Wiegraebe.*

WG: I've noticed that Schubert pops up a lot in your writing, as well as with interviews with David Taylor. What draws you to his works the most? Why is the second movement called "Blues for Schubert?" I have to admit to not being as well versed in Schubert's works as I could be. Where would be a good place to start with my Schubert listening?

DS: *Moments Musicaux for piano. There you can hear something that relates to the right hand of the piano in the Blues. Schubert was a Blues writer; he changes often between major and minor keys very surprisingly. His songs are the best ever. Unsurpassed. The lyrics are also fantastic. You have to know the lyrics in order to express the song. Taylor and I, etc, are expressionist. We do Interpretation of the*

*music according to the TEXT.*

WG: As I listened to your recording I noticed that you took some liberties with the rhythms in performance. Would you recommend that we take the same liberties in our performance, or play it strictly in time?

DS: *Well, the rhythm in the beginning has to have a flow but should not fall into a 5/4 groove. This is hard. Otherwise we try to play it in time. See, the fundamental, totally undiscussed question is subdivision in 2 or 3 of the musical atom. This is a clear difference. In early music they made that distinction and a jazz drummer makes that distinction. They call it SWING. That discussion is totally banned from classical music since Adorno said that rhythm is primitive. Try to play the rhythms as exact as possible, then round them out and make them like a vocal line.*

WG: Is there anything else you think I should know about the piece? I have it pretty well dissected and analyzed, but maybe some hidden gems that I could have missed?

DS: *Probably not. I wrote We Should Know Better after the Iraq invasion...but it has also music implications...tricky stuff as you know....*