THE MUSIC OF GEORGE HANDY

by

BENJAMIN BIERMAN

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
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dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Joseph N. Straus

Date — Chair of Examining Committee

David Olan

Date — Executive Officer

Jeffrey Taylor

John Graziano

Philip Lambert

Supervision Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

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Benjamin Bierman

Adviser: Professor Jeffrey Taylor

Jazz critics and scholars generally acknowledge composer George Handy's (1920-1997) importance as a jazz modernist. Several of his compositions, such as *Dalvatore Sally* and *The Bloos*, are considered seminal works in the "Progressive" genre. For a short period (1945-1947), Handy was one of the top arrangers and composers in the jazz field, but perhaps because his mercurial career brought him in and out of the musical limelight so rapidly, the contribution he made to the progress of jazz composition has been overlooked and is in need of re-evaluation.

Through my analyses it becomes clear that Handy drew from an unusually wide palette of sources and techniques, particularly for a jazz composer in the 1940s and '50s. He continued to mine these sources throughout the various stages of his career. In addition, several consistent elements in Handy's music are particularly responsible for a recognizable style. Handy has an unusual approach to chords, and chromatic voice leading dominates many of his harmonic progressions. In conjunction with this smooth voice leading, interval-class one is often used for melodic and harmonic motivic

generation. As a result, though the overall quality of Handy's music is tonal, it is frequently difficult to identify a key or centric area.

I contextualize the works, musically and extra-musically. I then use a variety of analytical tools to provide a close reading of particularly interesting or noteworthy elements that illuminate the compositional resources that make Handy such a distinctive and significant composer.

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Introduction

The biography of the composer-arranger-pianist George Handy (1920-1997) is similar to that of countless musicians: a peripatetic career of highs and lows (both artistic and financial) creating the typical ebb and flow of the freelance musician.[1] Handy's career was unusual, however, in that he enjoyed tremendous artistic and financial success, though admittedly for only a short period, as well as great influence in his field.

Handy's best-known compositions and arrangements were written for a dance band, the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra. Handy worked for Raeburn as pianist, primary arranger, and composer, as well as musical director, on and off from 1944-1946, and was given unusually free rein. His experimental approach during this period makes Handy an important member of a small group of composers and arrangers, including Eddie Sauter (1914-1981), Pete Rugolo (1915-), Ralph Burns (1922-2001), Bob Graettinger (1923-1957), Gil Evans (1912-1988), and Gerry Mulligan (1927-1996), working in what is generally referred to as a modernist or progressive style in the late 1930s through the early 1950s. This style emphasized advanced compositional resources, and generally downplayed the role of improvisation.[2]

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[1] The term freelance musician, in this dissertation, refers to musicians who work for a number of employers in such fields as jazz, Broadway musical theater, recording (television and radio jingles, movie soundtracks, pop, etc.), single engagements (concerts, parties, weddings, corporate functions), pop music, etc.

[2] See Max Harrison, "Progressive Jazz," *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 20: 402. See also Leonard Feather, *The Encyclopedia of Jazz* (London: Quartet Books Ltd., 1984), 349-50.

George Handy burst onto the music scene in a stunning manner, taking the big band world by surprise with an individualistic brand of experimentalism.[3] For a short period (from approximately 1945 to 1947), Handy was considered one of the top arrangers and composers in the jazz field. After that time, except for periods of activity in the 1950s and '60s, largely because of the normal vagaries of the music business and difficulties in his personal life, Handy disappeared from the radar of the music world almost as quickly as he had arrived.[4] He never returned in an artistically significant manner. While active, however, his works were influential, and compositions such as *Dalvatore Sally* and *The Bloos* are still recognized by aficionados as seminal works in the "progressive" genre.

Musicians, critics, and scholars generally acknowledge Handy's artistic merit and importance as a jazz modernist, yet in many ways he has remained in the shadow of other Raeburn arrangers, such as Burns, Johnny Mandel (1925-), and Johnny Richards (1911-1968), all of whom became extremely successful commercially. While not necessarily more important or progressive than these other writers, Handy nevertheless made an

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[3] As an example of the critical reaction to Handy's works at this time, Barry Ulanov states that Handy "wrote scores that showed an astonishing growth beyond what he had been doing for the band in New York a year earlier. He had begun to write in earnest, utilizing his playing experience in his native city, New York, and his intensive pursuit of modern musical ideologies at New York University, The Juilliard School of Music, and in private lessons with Aaron Copland. The ideologies were omnipresent: there were echoes of Bartók and Stravinsky, rolled into captivating hollers, in his arrangements of *There's No You*, and *Out of this World*. . . . he was emerging as a jazz thinker of striking originality." (Barry Ulanov, *A History of Jazz in America* [New York: The Viking Press, 1952], 309-10).

[4] Though Handy's period of activity was relatively short, during this time he was quite productive, and has seventy-three compositions registered with BMI.

important contribution to the evolution of jazz composition.[5] Perhaps because his mercurial career brought him in and out of the musical limelight so rapidly, this contribution has been overlooked and is in need of re-evaluation. Such an examination is the purpose of the research and analysis undertaken in this dissertation, as I examine a wide range of issues to better understand Handy's music and his place in the world of jazz writing.

It is challenging to assess Handy's influence on jazz composers, as the number of composers and performers that had contact with him and his music is relatively small. In addition, Handy was such an individualist and iconoclast that direct influences upon or from him are difficult to trace. I posit that Handy's free and individualistic spirit, and the fierceness of his independence, is perhaps his greatest legacy. He inspired a group of composers, many of whom have spoken of Handy reverently, that went on to create a significant body of jazz composition.

Through my analyses it also becomes clear that Handy drew from an unusually wide palette of sources and techniques, particularly for a jazz composer in the 1940s and '50s. He continued to mine these sources throughout the various stages of his career. In addition, several consistent elements in Handy's music are particularly responsible for a recognizable style. Handy had an unusual approach to chords, and chromatic voice leading dominates many of his harmonic progressions. In conjunction with this smooth voice leading, interval-class 1, as a family of intervals (minor-seconds, major-sevenths,

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[5] See the following: Steven Strunk, "George Handy," *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, ed. Barry Kernfeld (London: Macmillan, 2002)**,** ii, 148; Harrison, "Progressive Jazz;" Gunther Schuller, "Arrangement," *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, ed. Barry Kernfeld (London: Macmillan, 2002)**,** 1: 75-81; Gunther Schuller, "Third stream," *New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001)**,** 25: 401; Feather, *Encyclopedia of Jazz*, 349-50; Ulanov, *Jazz in America*, 309-10.

and minor-ninths), is an essential element. Semitones are crucial to Handy's style, both melodically (for motivic generation) and harmonically (as a source of resolution, in place of the dominant to tonic relationship); major-sevenths are used to create both consonance (as a chord tone in a variety of inversions) and dissonance (as open intervals in exposed passages); and the dissonance and resolution of minor-ninths are vital compositional elements. As a result, though the overall quality of Handy's music is tonal, it is frequently difficult to identify a key or centric area.

Chapter 1 begins with a biography of Handy, drawn from oral histories, secondary literature, and interviews with Handy's friends and colleagues. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 each explore one of Handy's major compositions: *Dalvatore Sally* (1945, written for the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra), one of his breakthrough compositions; *The Bloos* (1946, commissioned by Norman Granz for *The Jazz Scene*, a multi-disc portfolio), perhaps Handy's most important work, written for the combined forces of a jazz big band and chamber orchestra; and *The Caine Flute Sonata* (ca. 1955-1956, commissioned by Eddie Caine), a late work, and Handy's only extended composition.

In chapters 2, 3, and 4, I contextualize the works, musically and extra-musically. Then, after a brief formal overview, I use a variety of analytical tools to provide a close reading of particularly interesting or noteworthy elements that illuminate Handy's compositional resources, and make him such a distinctive and significant composer.

Though much is lost, we are fortunate that Handy saved, and kept track of, a great deal of his work. In addition, Handy's second wife, Elaine (now deceased), had the foresight to entrust Handy's papers to the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University-Newark. The collection includes many scores, some instrumental parts, recordings, and

memorabilia. For my analyses of *The Bloos* and *The Caine Flute Sonata*, I have relied on Handy's autograph scores.[6] Handy's approach to accidentals and enharmonics is a loose one. He does not use them to indicate theoretical issues, such as resolution or modulation (e.g., F, as opposed to E-sharp, to F-sharp would be commonly used in a C-sharp7 to F-sharp major resolution). Rather he employs them in a practical manner, typical of a freelance musician, to create parts that can be easily read. I adopt a similar approach, and use Handy's spellings, though, on rare occasions, I have taken the liberty of changing a spelling to make examples easier to read. For my *Dalvatore Sally* analysis, I relied upon a score rendered by Greg Mont. Mont compiled his score from the individual instrumental parts for *Dalvatore Sally*, which he found in the Bill Schremp collection (housed at the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University-Newark).[7] In my examples, I frequently reduce several parts to a stave (for clarity and brevity), and at times include only the instrumental parts that are relevant to my analysis. All parts are notated in concert pitch.

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[6] While the term "score" in jazz can be nebulous, in this paper I am referring to fully notated scores (not transcriptions). The occasional improvisational instrumental solos are notated by a chord progression in the soloist's part.

[7] I also checked all parts against Mont's score. Copyists for music of this type generally use a composer's spellings, but do not hesitate to change a spelling to facilitate performance.

Chapter One

Biography

George (Joseph Robert Abraham Hendleman) Handy was born in Brooklyn, January 17, 1920, and died in Harris, New York, January 8, 1997 of heart disease. Handy's father was a doctor, whose office was located in the family home in the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn. Handy's mother was a pianist, and she provided his earliest piano training at age five, though it was not a good experience. "My mother started to train me and she was an impossible teacher, she made it pure hell for me. . . . She used to shriek and scream if I did anything wrong, take a ruler and whack my fingers while I was playing; so it was great to get away from it, to go out in the street and play ball with the other guys."[1] As a result of this experience, Handy discontinued his musical studies for a time.

Handy feels that his mother's approach "was actually training me to resent being trained by other people. I resented every teacher I ever had. I stopped listening to my teachers; most of them didn't have too much to say actually. I really resented being told anything. I had to do it myself, I had to discover it myself, and that's the way it went."[2]

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[1] Bill Schremp, "George Handy Oral History," (The Institute of Jazz Studies [Rutgers University-Newark], The Oral History Project, 1980), 5-6.

[2] Ibid, 6.

Having ceased his musical studies, Handy indulged his love of sports, such as baseball, football, and swimming.[3] At age fifteen, however, he returned to music on his own, with a new level of excitement. At this point, Handy recalls not distinguishing between classical, jazz, or pop music: "I was just thinking in terms of being inventive, seeing what I could discover at the keyboard, seeing whether I could make sounds I never heard before, harmonic changes [chord progressions] I never heard before."[4] At this time, Handy's listening was focused on the music of Stravinsky, Ravel, and Bartók, and he says that "discovering Stravinsky was a big thing for me."[5] After involving himself heavily with these composers' works, he then began to appreciate Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart for the first time.

In addition to playing the piano, Handy began to compose and arrange regularly, and wrote for all the groups he was associated with. His uncle was a professional violinist, and Handy wrote for the two of them as well. This relationship was an important one for Handy. "He wasn't like my mother or my aunt who used to tell me I was the greatest thing that ever lived, which I couldn't take, it turned my stomach. My uncle was cool. He didn't praise me, but I could tell by the way he worked with me that what I was doing was acceptable to him on a professional level. That was all I needed, that was enough reassurance, which was genuine."[6]

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[3] Handy had considerable success in sports during college, and continued to play later in life as well. In fact, Handy believed that he was a better ballplayer than he was a musician, and felt that he could just as easily have gone into athletics as music. His friends remark on Handy's strength, fitness, and athleticism as outstanding traits.

[4] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 7.

[5] Ibid, 8.

[6] Ibid, 16.

Handy's professional music career began at age fourteen or fifteen. A neighborhood saxophone player invited Handy to join a band, as pianist, for the summer season at a beach resort hotel on Long Island, where they played pop instrumentals. Handy continued to form bands, and little by little, finally realizing that he was not cut out to be a doctor, the family sent him to The Juilliard School for his first formal musical training. The experience was not a good one, however. He felt out of place in the classical music environment, as he and his fellow students had little in common, and his schoolmates were baffled by his involvement in jazz. He also did not receive from his teachers the assurance that the music he was writing was worthwhile. While there, Handy did not find any fellow students who shared his interests in jazz, and did not involve himself in student bands or establish friendships. He went to the movies instead of attending class, and was asked to leave after one year. After Juilliard, Handy attended New York University and continued to be a generally poor student.

After these experiences, Handy's mother sent him to study composition privately with Aaron Copland. About the content of these lessons, Handy recalls that

> he would ask me to write melodies; that's all he ever asked me to do during the period of time I was with him, and I would play them to him, I think the first week, that I went to him I may have worked every day trying to write stuff for him, then I came in and he liked this and he didn't like that and why didn't I take this and develop it up a little higher and bring it higher and I said because I felt that it was going lower and lower. I couldn't appreciate this kind of–that wasn't teaching, he wasn't telling

> me anything. He was telling me his likes and dislikes. . . . He was telling me about Aaron Copland.[7]

In the end, his feelings about his studies with Copland are summed up as Handy describes his studies with Copland in the liner notes for the record set, *The Jazz Scene*: "Studied privately with Aaron Copland for a while, which did neither of us any good."

After Copland, Handy continued his nomadic musical studies by going back to Juilliard, leaving once again, and returning to New York University in 1938. There he studied composition with Marion Bauer. It is clear that Handy was looking for some direction in his composition studies, and it is just as obvious that he was having difficulty finding the type of direction that he was looking for. Handy states, "I knew that I wanted to continue in music, I was just reaching out in all directions, trying to find a place that would fit, that would feel right, and so I kept looking. But nothing felt right."[8]

An informal setting was perhaps much more valuable to Handy's musical education. His Brownsville neighborhood in Brooklyn was home to a surprising number of young musicians, all of whom would soon rise through the ranks to become successful jazz artists. The group has been referred to as the Brooklyn Jazz Mafia,[9] and included, among others, vibraphonist Terry Gibbs, saxophonist-composer-arranger Al Cohn, saxophonist Frank Socolow, and drummer-arranger Tiny Kahn. It later grew to include trombonist-arranger Johnny Mandel, arranger Manny Albam, pianist Lou Levy, and

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[7] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 21-22.

[8] Ibid, "Handy Oral History,"19.

[9] See Burt Korall's discussion of the Brownsville, Brooklyn drummer, Tiny Kahn (Burt Korall, *Drummin' Men: The Heartbeat of Jazz-The Bebop Years* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2002], 204-9).

trumpeter Conte Candoli. They spent a great deal of time together in Socolow's basement, where they would sometimes play, but primarily talked and listened to music (and smoked marijuana). It was in these valuable get-togethers that someone introduced them to the new sounds of bebop that were evolving in New York City. They also spent much of their time listening to classical composers, such as Stravinsky, Bartók, and Varèse.

The first arrangement that Handy wrote professionally was for Richard Himber, whose musical act included magic. Handy was very pleased to hear his music in a professional context for the first time. Handy's first "name" job came about in 1940 when he joined Raymond Scott's Orchestra, as pianist. At some point Scott's management discovered Handy could arrange, and hired him to write some arrangements for them, but did not pay him well enough for him to continue. These arrangements were never recorded. While Handy did not necessarily enjoy Scott's music, he appreciated the fact that it was stylistically unique, and admired Scott's courage for writing "just the way he felt."[10]

In 1940 or 1941, Handy toured for a year with Jack Teagarden, who liked Handy's writing, and of whom Handy spoke very fondly. Both the Scott and Teagarden bands were heavy drinking organizations, and Handy also began to drink. Perhaps this was the beginning of what was to become a long battle with substance abuse. Some of Handy's other early jobs were with the big bands of Michael Loring and Bob Chester, as well as the Dixieland band of Muggsy Spanier.

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[10] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 38.

By this time, Handy had realized that his first love was arranging and composing, and he started writing more and playing less. In addition, though he was an excellent accompanist, Handy did not believe he was a good jazz soloist. In fact, halfway through his stint with the Raeburn band he stopped playing piano with the band, and concentrated on composing and arranging. He listened to artists such as Teddy Wilson, Jess Stacy, and later Art Tatum, but did not have the technical abilities of these pianists. He speaks of having studied Duke Ellington and other important pianists later than he should have.

Handy was drafted into the army in the summer of 1943, but a heel spur ended his career after six months as a litter bearer. After the Army, Handy speaks of writing a book for his Brooklyn compatriot, Herbie Fields.[11] After the band failed, Fields joined vibraphonist Lionel Hampton's big band, and added some of Handy's charts to Hampton's book.[12] Hampton inquired about hiring Handy to write some more arrangements, but again, Handy was not able to reach a satisfactory financial arrangement. The only recorded arrangement from this collaboration is Handy's arrangement of *Star Dust* (Savoy, 1945). At this point Handy considered arranging his career, yet further clarifies, "I knew that I was more than an arranger; I knew that I was a composer."[13]

Up until this time, Handy had worked with a wide spectrum of bands, playing a variety of popular musics of the day, ranging from the novelty sounds of the Scott band, to the big band swing stylings of Teagarden, to the traditional jazz of Spanier. However,

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[11] The term "book" refers to a band's overall collection of musical material.

[12] In the jazz context, "chart" is a ubiquitous and all-encompassing term that generally refers to any written piece of music, but in this dissertation is synonymous with arrangement.

[13] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 65.

Handy's next professional association, with the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra, was the most significant of his career, and produced the majority of his important compositions. Handy was with the band for two one-year stints separated by a six-month hiatus. Boyd Raeburn was primarily a bandleader, and played saxophone as well, predominantly the baritone and bass saxes. He had dance bands as early as 1933, playing middle-of-the-road popular music in Chicago hotels. The character of his repertoire changed dramatically around 1943 when Eddie Finckel and Ralph Flanagan joined the band. The arrangements they wrote, and the influence they wielded over new personnel decisions, transformed the Raeburn band from an undistinguished dance orchestra to a dynamic and experimental jazz big band.

Raeburn's band had a certain degree of success, but commercially had difficulty rising above the second rank. Musicians, however, thought well of the band, and there was positive critical reaction to the orchestra as well. Trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie's arrangement, *Interlude* (which would eventually be called *A Night In Tunisia*, and be one of Gillespie's biggest hits), was first recorded by Raeburn, and featured Gillespie as soloist. The Raeburn orchestra was a white band, but a number of African American instrumental stars played with the group when it was in New York City, including Roy Eldridge, Oscar Pettiford, Benny Harris, Trummy Young, and Charlie "Bird" Parker. Handy recalls that they did not go on tour because they had steady jobs in town. In addition, the band's ability to travel was limited with African American musicians in the band. Other instrumentalists that were to go on to jazz stardom were regulars with the band, such as Serge Chaloff, Shelly Manne, and Al Cohn. Aside from the occasional jazz

stars, the band's biggest attraction was the alto saxophonist Johnny Bothwell (at times dubbed "the white Johnny Hodges," after Duke Ellington's well-known lead alto player).

Handy met Raeburn through his future songwriting partner, the lyricist Jack Segal.[14] Segal had hired Handy to write an arrangement of one of his songs, in hopes of having it played by Raeburn. At this time (ca. late 1943, early 1944), Raeburn had a radio broadcast from the Lincoln Hotel in New York City, and Segal wanted the exposure, so he financed the arrangement himself. Handy says that: "Boyd was impressed with the chart and asked me if I would like to write for the band, and that's how it began. After a little while, I joined the band on piano."[15] Handy's first engagement with the band was in early 1944, at the Commodore Hotel in New York City, and his relationship with the Raeburn band would last until July or August 1946. Initially, Handy recalls generally writing arrangements of non-descript pop tunes, none of which, he believes, were recorded.

During the latter part of 1944, the Raeburn band and the actress and singer Betty Hutton spent several months on tour together, and Handy and Hutton had an affair. Hutton (recently divorced from Cary Grant) convinced Handy to leave the band and move to Los Angeles (ca. November 1944), as it was the only way for the two of them to maintain a relationship. The plan was for him to concentrate on his songwriting, and Hutton would use her influence with Johnny Mercer and Capitol Records to see that his songs would be heard.

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[14] Lyricist Jack Segal had a number of popular hits, including *When Sunny Gets Blue*, *Scarlet Ribbons*, and *When Joanna Loved Me*.

[15] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 120.

Handy again partnered with lyricist Jack Segal, and they proceeded to write some material for Capitol Records. Speaking of his work with Segal, Handy states "it was very easy to write together, and he and I were knocking things off one after another easily. It just seemed to come, and Johnny [Mercer] liked them, everybody liked them, so we were sent for."[16] Consequently, Handy left Raeburn and moved to Los Angeles in 1945.

When he arrived in Los Angeles, Handy and Hutton spent the night together and professed "undying love for each other."[17] Hutton was leaving for a USO tour the next day, and the couple spoke of marrying upon Hutton's return to Los Angeles. However, Handy never saw her again. When she returned she had someone else break off the affair with him, and because Hutton felt badly about how the end of the affair had transpired, she was uncomfortable with Handy on the lot. She was Paramount's biggest star, and they had to accommodate her, so after the tour they made Handy work elsewhere. Even though the affair ended, he decided to stay in Los Angeles. Hutton never recorded any of Handy's songs.

In addition to Capitol Records, Handy and Segal's material was shown to the Paramount music division. Both companies liked the songs, and, all of a sudden, Handy and Segal had contracts with both Capitol Records and Paramount. They were on staff, and Handy became a successful, highly visible composer. As some of his songs were appreciated and recorded, Handy's salary increased, and he was doing quite well financially.

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[16] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 133.

[17] Ibid, 96.

Handy did not take well to the pace of business in Hollywood. He was used to a much more immediate response to his material, a quick yes or no from the New York City publishing houses, and the business in Hollywood involved much more long-term planning than Handy was comfortable with: "In Hollywood it was different. I'd go to the publisher, I'd say I have a song, he'd say great, I'll tell you what, this is January 10, meet me on the golf course July 15 at three o'clock and we'll kick it around."[18] Handy speaks of his disaffection with Los Angeles: "While I was at Paramount there wasn't too much going on; it got to be boring, very boring and I was living downtown in Los Angeles proper, thinking I was in Hollywood. I wondered why the fabulous Hollywood that I always heard about looked so damn grimy and stinky, and it was ugly, and it had to be explained to me that this was not Hollywood, this was Los Angeles downtown. If I wanted to see what I'd always heard about I'd have to go thataway. So I went thataway and I discovered that there was indeed the pretty sections of town, and then I moved up into Hollywood."[19]

In addition to being unable to adapt to the Hollywood pace, Handy also encountered difficulties with publishers. For example, they complained of Handy's use of irregular phrase lengths, and were uncomfortable with songs that began in one key and ended in another. Perhaps these characteristics were also obstacles that inhibited his commercial success. Though he did write many songs, he never had a hit record. Along with the Raeburn recordings, *Forgetful* was recorded by David Allyn (who was with Handy on Raeburn's band), Chet Baker (trumpeter and vocalist), and Steve Lacy

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[18] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 135.

[19] Ibid, 140-41.

(soprano saxophonist); Jo Stafford did many of his songs, including the unreleased *You Were Loved So Well*; Billy Eckstine recorded Handy's *If Love Is Trouble*; and *Where You At?* was recorded by Bobby Troup, David Allyn, the Jimmy and Gary Trio, and, more recently, by the Norwegian singer, Karin Krog. Ella Mae Morse, the pop singer who had a hit with the song *Cow Cow Boogie*, and was Handy's sister-in-law, sang and recorded *Rip Van Winkle*. Handy states that the latter song was probably the closest thing he had to a hit.

Whether Handy remained in Los Angeles or briefly rejoined Raeburn and then moved back to LA is uncertain. At one point, however, Handy and the alto saxophonist Hal McKusick lived together in Los Angeles.[20] While there, they collaborated on several compositions, including *Yerxa* and *Tonsillectomy*. During this time, the Raeburn band was having conflicts with lead altoist Johnny Bothwell, and McKusick was asked to rejoin the band at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco to replace him (c. July 1945). Around the same time, Raeburn's current pianist was injured, and McKusick and Mandel convinced a reluctant Raeburn to rehire Handy.[21]

Disenchanted with Hollywood, Handy rejoined the band and recalls,

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[20] The sequence of events here is unclear. Generally, sources have Handy leaving Raeburn for Los Angeles ca. November 1944 and not rejoining the band until around June 1945 in San Francisco. However, in a phone conversation with Hal McKusick (June 29, 2005), he recalls Handy staying in LA for six months and then briefly rejoining the band in New York. During a job at a Boston ballroom, he and Handy were both having problems with Raeburn, causing them both to quit precipitously. They flew back to New York, and on the cab ride into Brooklyn it came out that McKusick had never been to Los Angeles. Handy had the cab driver turn around and take them back to the airport, and, with whatever little money and possessions they had with them, they moved to Los Angeles for a month or so. McKusick stated that this type of impulsive behavior was typical for Handy.

[21] McKusick recalls that Bothwell left, taking the lead alto parts, the female singer, and the band boy with him. Raeburn relied on McKusick to remember the solo parts to help recreate the book. McKusick describes the relationship between Handy and Raeburn as very stormy, and that convincing Raeburn to bring him back was extremely difficult (McKusick, phone conversation). Handy's recollection does not include Raeburn's reluctance to rehire him.

> I went back and rejoined the band and he wanted a chart on *There's No You* and I sat down and I can't tell you what happened but there was a click in my life, something clicked, all the fences went down and I could see, my horizon was limitless, I could write anything I wanted anytime.[22]

This was a major turning point for Handy, and marks the beginning of the most productive and important part of his writing career. Before even beginning to write *There's No You*, Handy realized he had crossed a barrier, and felt great artistic freedom. Handy recounts that when the band played the chart, the musicians were surprised, and that "everyone was delighted."[23] Handy states that after writing *There's No You*, many of his most important works, such as *Dalvatore Sally*, *Yerxa*, *Gray Suede, Special Maid*, *Hey Look I'm Dancing*, and *Key F* (*Keef*) "just poured out of me at that point":

> It was as if I had found the thing in me that was blocking whatever creativity there was in me, . . . and the minute I found the thing and removed it, it just gushed out. I couldn't—it was hard to stop, it just kept coming and coming and coming. It was hard to do simple things, because I just wanted to keep writing. I began to realize that you don't do it all in

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[22] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 98-99.

[23] Ibid, 101.

> one piece of music. If you are patient with yourself, get to know yourself a little better, you pace yourself, and so all these things began to happen.[24]

The engagement at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco lasted several months. The venue and the band were not well matched, however, as the hotel typically provided more a "society" band, and Raeburn was playing a more energetic and swinging style of jazz at this time. Though this was a difficult engagement, the reuniting of Handy with the band, combined with the unexpectedly experimental and exciting music that Handy was producing, made this, and the time in Los Angeles that was to follow, the apex of the Raeburn orchestra's lifespan and creative output.

After the Palace Hotel engagement, the band moved across the San Francisco Bay to Sweet's Ballroom in Oakland for one week. After this engagement, besides some one-night jobs, the band was not having success with bookings. By October 1945, having moved the band's base to Los Angeles, there was almost no work for the orchestra. By January 1946, Raeburn no longer had a regular band, instead using a mixture of his regular musicians and local Los Angeles players.[25]

During this time, because of the sporadic nature of his work with Raeburn, Handy took what other jobs he could find. In February 1946, one such job was an aborted record date with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, with Handy as leader-pianist-

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[24] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 142.

[25] For information regarding the history of the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra I have largely relied upon Jack McKinney's expertise, as well as the Raeburn discography. In a phone conversation (July 6, 2005), McKinney related the sequence of events, relying upon his research for his upcoming book on Boyd Raeburn, "Boyd Raeburn" (an unpublished manuscript). McKinney also provided me with a tape of an interview that he conducted with Handy (1970), during which they discuss Handy's tenure with the Raeburn band.

arranger (for Ross Russell's Dial record label).[26] During this period, however, Parker and Gillespie did record Handy's tune *Diggin' Diz* (February 1946). This involvement with two of the giants of bebop places Handy in the midst of the most important musicians of the day.

Handy was also writing for other bands, and it appears that it was around this time that he wrote *The Stocking Horse* (c. 1945-1946) for the band of guitarist Alvino Rey. This programmatic composition, with its continually changing time signatures, is often cited as an important example of the use of classical compositional resources in jazz composition.[27]

Raeburn's band was barely surviving, playing occasional dates and recordings, when they took up a three-month residency at the Club Morocco (June-August 1946) in Hollywood. It was during the San Francisco and Hollywood engagements that Handy wrote many of his most important works, such as *Dalvatore Sally*, *Yerxa*, *Tonsillectomy*, *Hey Look I'm Dancing*, *Key F*, and *Gray Suede*. These compositions are primarily responsible for the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra's reputation as a "modernist" or "progressive" big band, and for creating the excitement that was brewing in the music

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[26] Gillespie and Parker were in Los Angeles for their historic engagement at Billy Berg's nightclub, during which bebop was first introduced to the west coast. There are at least two versions of the story of this record date. Handy states that it was to feature Parker, Gillespie, and Lucky Thompson, and fell apart largely because two of the musicians were arrested for drugs (Schremp, "Handy Oral History" 249). Ross Russell states that the date was to feature Gillespie, Parker, and Lester Young. Russell describes the first of two recording sessions as a chaotic free-for-all involving drug use and sexual activity, as well as the completion of one tune (*Lover*, which was probably, in actuality, *Diggin' Diz*, a tune based on the chord progression for *Lover*). He recalls that the date was foiled by Handy's eventual inability to produce Parker or Young for the second session (Ross Russell, *Bird Lives!* [New York: Charterhouse, 1973], 204-5; Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life* [Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996], 122-23).

[27] See Ulanov, *History of Jazz*, 309-10 and Strunk, "George Handy."

world around this experimental music.[28] About the Club Morocco engagement, Handy says, "that's where the band settled in and became what it was."[29] The band was very popular at this point, and it was at this time that Handy stopped playing piano for the band, concentrating solely on his writing.

As arranger and musical director, Handy had an unusual amount of musical freedom, and his creativity was able to grow unchecked for a time. During this period, Handy was considered one of the top arrangers in jazz, alongside Duke Ellington, Gil Evans, and Eddie Sauter. Handy received awards for best arranger from *Down Beat* and *Metronome* magazines in 1946, and in 1947 also received *Esquire* magazine's Silver Award for best arranger.[30] These accolades make the following series of events all the more strange.

During the San Francisco and Hollywood engagements, Raeburn was in the process of switching from the Guild record label to Jewell, a recording company run by Ben Pollack, a drummer and former bandleader. Pollack was looking for a hit band, such as Glenn Miller or Benny Goodman, to record and promote. Raeburn was becoming popular, and obviously wanted to continue to increase the band's commercial success. The second Jewell recording session was originally to include much of the new music (or new arrangements) that Handy had written for the Raeburn band, including *Dalvatore Sally*, *There's No You*, *Out of This World*, *Gray Suede*, *Hey Look I'm Dancing*, *Key F*, and *Memphis In June*. However, in Handy's opinion, because of his interest in creating a

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[28] It is important, however, to appreciate the significance of the contributions that Eddie Finckel and Ralph Flanagan made to the musical evolution of the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra prior to Handy's tenure with the band.

[29] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 178.

[30] During the 1940s, these were the most important and visible media awards in the field of jazz.

commercially viable recording of the Raeburn band in order to collect larger royalties on the recordings, Pollack changed the recording date largely to arrangements of pop tunes instead of Handy's original compositions. The band was gaining a national reputation as an interesting band, yet when this Jewell record was released, without the Handy material, it was a relatively run-of-the-mill pop big band record. Handy felt that Pollack "stopped [the Raeburn band's progress] right at its moment of greatest push forward, stopped it cold." Though he was calm at the time of the interview, one can tell that Handy was frustrated and bitter about Raeburn's unwillingness to stand up for what the band was doing at that time. Handy felt that by following Pollack's advice unquestioningly, Raeburn perhaps ruined any chance the band's chance for success on the magnitude of either of the other "progressive" big bands, led by Woody Herman or Stan Kenton.

There is a strange paradox here, as Raeburn allowed great artistic freedom and created an exciting, progressive band, while also putting a halt to the progressive nature of the band by choosing to change artistic directions on the whim of a record producer. Handy characterizes Raeburn negatively in this regard by saying that "he never caused a damn thing to happen to himself, to his band. Things happened to him, and they happened by accident, they were caused by the men he would hire to work for him. . . . He had the opportunity of rejecting them but he accepted everything that happened to him."[31] Bruce Raeburn, Boyd Raeburn's son, takes a positive slant on the same qualities,

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[31] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 149-51.

and speaks of Boyd Raeburn's willingness to allow experimentation and to encourage the sidemen to create the sound of the band as a strong, positive attribute.[32]

Boyd Raeburn was smart enough to make good personnel choices, to have these players hire other appropriate musicians, and to allow them to set the artistic course of the band. On the other hand, he was confused and somewhat out of his depth, and eventually probably made poor choices regarding the direction of his orchestra. This choice of more conservative material was also symptomatic of the conditions that would lead to the departure of their most important musical asset, George Handy.

Handy relates that a financial matter precipitated his resignation from the band in August 1946. Handy had borrowed several thousand dollars from Raeburn, and had come to an agreement on how the debt was to be repaid. Handy was to receive his full salary of 500 dollars a week for two months, at which time Raeburn would begin to draw half of that amount from Handy's weekly salary until the debt was repaid. However, for the next three weeks, Handy was given no salary whatsoever, and was, he felt, being given the run-around. Handy felt he had no choice but to resign from the band, saying, "I have only one thing to say to you and that is goodbye."[33] Given this financial disagreement, and the circumstances of the Pollack record date, it appears that, even though Handy was primarily responsible for the Raeburn band's good fortunes at this time, Raeburn had, for some reason, soured on him. Perhaps Raeburn was influenced by

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[32] Boyd Raeburn's son, Dr. Bruce Boyd Raeburn, writes extensively on jazz, and is the curator of the Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane University. See Bruce Raeburn's liner notes, "My Dad's Band," for *Boyd Raeburn and His Orchestra, 1944-45*, Circle, CCD-113.

[33] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 182-83.

Pollack's encouragement to adopt a different, and more conservative, strategy regarding the growth of the band's business.

Around the time that Handy began to have these financial problems with Raeburn, an excellent arranger, Johnny Richards (who would go on to considerable success with Kenton and others), was in Los Angeles. About this period, including Richards's presence on the scene, Handy states, "I have a feeling that they were ready for me to leave and they had him ready to step in. . . . I think that they just had planned not to pay me according to the agreement and they were covering themselves in case I did decide to leave, and they might have been hoping that I would accept their way and I didn't, of course."[34] When Handy left the band, Richards was hired in his place.

This final stint with Raeburn, from approximately July 1945 through July or August 1946, was the apex of George Handy's career, and, correspondingly, the high point of the Raeburn orchestra's existence. It was a dramatic encounter, as Handy burst back onto the scene with an entirely new conception and musical freedom, briefly thrusting him and the Raeburn band into the forefront of the jazz scene and the "progressive" compositional movement. This period is largely responsible for Handy's reputation as a composer and arranger.

The speed and intensity with which this creative transition occurred took everyone by surprise. Handy wrote the majority of his seminal instrumental works, such as *Dalvatore Sally*, *Tonsillectomy*, and *Yerxa*, as well as some experimental and creative vocal arrangements, including *Forgetful*, *I Can't Believe That You're in Love With Me*, *I Don't Know Why*, and *Temptation*, in a matter of weeks. The importance of these works

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[34] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 185-87.

to the "progressive" jazz movement is difficult to pinpoint, as the composers in this genre do not speak openly about their influences. However, the importance of Handy's work is demonstrated by the interest shown in his compositions by other major proponents of this style.

During Raeburn's Palace Hotel engagement, Stan Kenton directed his musicians, who were also in San Francisco at the time, to attend Raeburn's rehearsals, as he felt that Handy's writing was leading jazz composition in a new direction.[35] Kenton's chief composer and arranger, Pete Rugolo (one of the more important of the "progressive" composers), regularly came and took notes while listening to the band.[36] Kenton also commissioned a composition by Handy, but the work was never completed. Eddie Sauter, who was writing important modernist compositions before and after Handy, spoke openly of being envious of the compositional opportunities Raeburn gave to Handy. Sauter describes never having had that kind of artistic independence, even with his own band, the Sauter-Finegan Orchestra.[37] Duke Ellington thought highly enough of the Raeburn band to offer his financial assistance during a time of fiscal crisis, as did the singer and bandleader Billy Eckstine.[38] Tadd Dameron, an important composer and arranger of this period, cited Handy as one of his favorite arrangers.[39]

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[35] See Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 102-3.

[36] See Ira Gitler, *Jazz Masters of the 1940s* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 211.

[37] See Bill Kirchner, "Eddie Sauter Oral History" (The Institute of Jazz Studies [Rutgers University-Newark], The Oral History Project, 1980), 74-75.

[38] See Raeburn, "My Dad's Band."

[39] See Gitler, *Jazz Masters*, 275-76.

Johnny Mandel, one of the premier jazz arrangers and composers for many years (and the winner of many of the music business's highest awards, including an Academy award, Grammy awards, and Emmy awards), speaks of Handy in wildly laudatory terms. At the same time, he expresses great frustration when he thinks about what could have been had Handy not been so badly addicted to drugs. Mandel describes Handy as "extraordinarily gifted," and felt that Handy was "definitely in the genius category. He was tremendous." He went on to say that Handy "had such great technique. He knew his orchestra inside out." Mandel says that Handy "heard all this stuff in his head and just wrote it down. He didn't use a piano to write." Mandel feels that Handy was ahead of everyone else writing at that time. When asked regarding important influences on Handy, Mandel said, "I can't think of any influences he might have had. He didn't sound like anybody else. I didn't understand what he was doing technically; I still don't." Mandel distinguishes Handy from Pete Rugolo, Bill Russo, and most of the others that wrote for Kenton, and feels that they intellectualized the process of composing, whereas Handy was more loosely creative and more interested in swinging the band.[40]

Musicians also speak of the Raeburn band, and Handy's contributions particularly, as important in the big band continuum, but also acknowledge that Handy's role has not been fully appreciated. David Allyn, a long-time vocalist with the Raeburn band, says of Handy, "He'd place [an arrangement or composition] in one band, and it would just make so much, say so much, that people couldn't get away from the fact that George was gonna be one of the biggest things in the business. I don't know what he's doing now, but he sure left a mark. What a talent. But he really changed the lives of a lot

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[40] Johnny Mandel, phone conversation, July 11, 2005.

of people there."[41] Buddy DeFranco, an important jazz clarinetist, states: "Boyd Raeburn's band was one of the great bands. An unusual band. It did not make history—then. But I think it will. Johnny Richards. George Handy. Those two guys. *Unbelievable* musicians."[42]

While there is little critical work on Handy's musical contributions to jazz, some scholars have noted his importance, particularly in regard to his work for the Raeburn orchestra. During Handy's heyday, Barry Ulanov wrote that

> George Handy is to arranging what Dizzy and Bird are to their instruments. He is a provocative originator who may, if present indications can be trusted, twist and turn and reorganize jazz. He is not only the most daring of arrangers and composers writing for bands today, but also one of the most skillful and learned. That combination of equipment and the courage to use it has made an idol of him among the men who play his music. Other arrangers and musicians have begun to listen with awed respect to his writings. George Handy is just a few choruses short of becoming the next great influence.[43]

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[41] Gitler, *Jazz Masters*, 212.

[42] Ibid, 213.

[43] Barry Ulanov, "Bearded and bonded, a brilliant musical eccentric," *Metronome* (May 1946): 21-22.

In their discussion of the Handy-Raeburn collaboration, James Lincoln Collier and Barry Kernfeld state: "[Raeburn's] arrangements were commissioned from important modernists of the day, including . . . Handy, who rejoined the band in San Francisco in summer 1945 . . . The music was characterized by harmonic ideas drawn from the French impressionist composers, and, especially, Stravinsky. Although Raeburn's bands were greatly admired by musicians, the music puzzled ordinary dance-band enthusiasts."[44]

Some writers have mixed feelings about Handy's compositions. Max Harrison states that Handy "produced several orchestral pieces . . . that were fairly modern in temper and quite adventurous in their resources, though with an increasing tendency to densely overcrowded scores," and that Handy's music is "self-consciously modernistic." He also notes that Handy's scores "retain their interest," and that "their characteristically complex textures and dissonant harmony were qualified by the exhilaratingly full-throated power of the [Raeburn Orchestra's] performance."[45] John Fordham states: "Handy's problem was restraining his technical knowledge and avoiding the inclination to jam all his favourite devices into every score—distractingly busy time signature changes were popular . . . At his best, however, he could tellingly blend his classical associations with the inspirations of his favourite jazz composer, Duke Ellington."[46]

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[44] See James Lincoln Collier and Barry Kernfeld, "Boyd Raeburn," *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, ed. Barry Kernfeld (London: Macmillan, 2002), 3: 349-50.

[45] See Harrison, "Progressive Jazz."

[46] John Fordham, "George Handy: Riding the musical range," *The Guardian*, February 1, 1997. Walter van de Leur speaks of perceiving the influences of Ellington and, more particularly, Billy Strayhorn on Handy (Walter van de Leur, *Something To Live For* [New York: Oxford University Press,] 2002). However, I have no record of Handy or his colleagues having discussed Ellington's influence on Handy's writing, or of Handy stating that Ellington was his favorite jazz composer. Mandel feels, however, that if Handy would have been influenced by anybody, it would probably have been by Ellington and Strayhorn, primarily because of their interest in the use of orchestral color (Mandel, phone conversation).

Handy describes his departure from the Raeburn band, around September 1946, as "an unhappy experience",[47] and speaks of Raeburn in a withering manner.

> I can't believe that anybody in this world that heard Boyd play saxophone could consider him a good saxophone player. In terms of the best to the worst, if he wasn't the worst, he was giving the guy a hell of a run for the slot. He was a horrible saxophonist. . . . he didn't know a damn thing about music or what a band should sound like. He didn't know anything. I don't know how he became a bandleader . . . Boyd was not a leader; not only a musical leader, he was not a leader of men. He really was a wishy-washy type of guy who people lead around by the nose.

David Allyn agrees with Handy regarding Raeburn's musical skills, but offers a different assessment of Raeburn's character: "I think Boyd was the most loyal [bandleader] I've ever seen or heard of in the business, ever since or before. He wanted the new sound. He was willing to sacrifice bread for it. I mean bread in his mouth for it. You know the times when he could have just gotten a 'Mickey' band and gone back to Chicago and worked all the time, I'm sure.[48] But he wouldn't do that. He believed in George [Handy] and Johnny's [Richards] things and the new sound, and he wanted to be

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[47] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 204.

[48] "Mickey" is a somewhat derogatory musicians' term for a corny dance band, and equates these bands popularity to the child-like appeal of Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse character.

part of it."[49] Mandel agrees with Allyn's statements saying, "Boyd was a great guy to work for," and states that Raeburn gave free license to his composer-arrangers.[50]

While completely dismissive of Boyd Raeburn himself, Handy had an entirely different opinion of the band:

> I think the Raeburn band, in the period '43/'44 was probably the best band that I had ever heard or played with, the most interesting band; it was a marvelous band. The band played like everyone was born together, everybody was a twin, a part of each other, yet, if there were fourteen guys on that band, six of them I would say were top grade musicians, and four of them might have been the worst musicians that ever lived. Yet, together it was an unbelievably marvelous band, and that proved to me that a good band is not created by using the best person you could find on each chair. As long as people could fill the demands of the chair, that's all you need to create a great band.[51]

This period of Handy's career was capped by a major recording project that served as a bookend to his Raeburn tenure. Norman Granz commissioned Handy to write a composition for Granz's ambitious boxed record set, *The Jazz Scene* (which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3), and Handy wrote a piece for jazz big band plus

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[49] See Gitler, *Jazz Masters*, 211-12.

[50] Mandel, phone conversation.

[51] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 158.

strings and woodwinds, *The Bloos*. For this commission, Handy (as was true for the other artists as well) was given carte blanche in regards to content and instrumentation. Though it is not clear whether Handy wrote *The Bloos* while with Raeburn, or just after his departure, the composition was recorded in October 1946 (though the actual record set was not released until 1949), shortly after Handy had left the Raeburn band. Handy's contribution to *The Jazz Scene* displays him at the peak of his creativity, and rates, along with *Dalvatore Sally*, as his most well-known, and perhaps most important work.

After leaving the band, Handy returned to New York. By this time, however, Handy had begun to experiment with heroin, and once he was back in New York, his use grew into a serious addiction that lasted for eighteen years. Handy was generally reluctant to discuss his addiction, but says, "I don't think it did anything but interfere with my creativity for eighteen years, until I got out of it." Because of his addiction, Handy "developed a reputation of being, number one, a junkie, number two, undependable, and number three, untrustworthy."[52]

Handy also had a number of eccentricities. He was known for, among other things, wearing lapel-less jackets, sporting a goatee before it was fashionable amongst musicians, and dying his hair and beard green. He also had a difficult personality that exhibited itself on the bandstand. These personal habits, combined with his drug addiction, forced him out of the music business for a time. One of the more popular Handy anecdotes concerns his foray into the New York City society dance band world. He was playing with the bandleader Herb Sherry, and when it came time for him to play a piano solo on "Night and Day," Handy launched into a barrage of notes. This prompted a

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[52] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 237.

scream of admonition from Sherry, and Handy responded by standing up on the bandstand and cursing at the bandleader. He calmly sat back down and continued in the same vein. Sherry ordered him off of the bandstand, but Handy wouldn't go, and proceeded to finish the night, as well as his career as a society sideman.[53]

In 1949, Handy's contribution to the liner notes for *The Jazz Scene* record set give a good indication of his feelings about the music business, as well as of his overall state of mind: "Raeburn, Babe Russin, Alvino Rey, Buddy Rich, Benny Goodman are some of the bands I've written for. None of them play anything of mine now. Only thing worthwhile in my life is my wife Flo and my boy Mike. The rest stinks, including the music biz and all connected. I'm still living. George Handy."[54]

Given his addiction and the general malaise evinced by the above quote, it is not surprising that after leaving Raeburn, Handy's life and career went into a downward spiral. In the early 1950s, in an attempt to end his drug addiction, Handy spent several years in Lexington, Kentucky undergoing substance abuse rehabilitation. Around 1954, before returning to New York from his stay in Lexington, Handy states in a letter that

> I'm returning to life. Yes, after being away from it these many years I find myself ready, anxious, yes, desirous for the 'home coming'. . . As you probably know, I've been a sick fool for some time, and as a result allowed everything about me to deteriorate . . . everything I needed

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[53] See Gitler, *Jazz Masters*, 197. The story is undated, but probably occurred in Handy's pre-Raeburn days of the early 1940s. Musicians such as Handy were in and out of town with various bands. When they were not traveling, they would pick up freelance work of many types.

[54] Norman Granz, liner notes, *The Jazz Scene*, Clef Records, MG Vol. 1, 1949.

> and wanted evaporated all at once. It threw me for a loop and I was in total despair, but fortunately it caused me to take stock of the scene and realize that something had to be done, and that I needed help to get it done. So down here I came, and am I glad I did!!! For I'm returning to mental health and becoming an integrated, well formed being, and developing worthy groovy habit patterns. No need to go into the psychiatric aspects of my recovery.[55]

Handy's battles with substance abuse were a back-and-forth affair, but he managed to continue working. In the mid-1950s Handy recorded the only two albums that were released under his own name. In 1954, Label "X" (a subsidiary of RCA) record company executives, Jimmy Hilliard and Joe Delaney, commissioned Handy to contribute compositions and arrangements to an album by another leader (Handy could not recall the name of the original leader). When the leader pulled out, Handy was put in charge of the whole record date, which became *Handyland, U.S.A.*[56] Writing the arrangements over the course of several days, the record was intended as a "reflection of the standardized jazz of the day."[57] The record consisted of simple arrangements (melody, solos, melody) of original melodic lines set to the chord progressions of standard songs (e.g., *There Will Never Be Another You*). In 1955, a follow-up record was

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[55] Anonymous, "A Handy Man to Have Back," *Metronome* (October 1954): 15.

[56] Label "X," LXA-1004 (reissued by RCA as BGI 0011122), 1954.

[57] H.J. Morrison, liner notes, *Handyland U.S.A*. Label "X," LXA-1004 (reissued by RCA as BGI 0011122), 1954.

commissioned, and resulted in *By George! Handy Of Course*.[58] This record was far more compositionally adventurous than *Handyland, U.S.A.*, and involved unique reed doublings and the use of violin.

Also in 1955, Handy was asked by ABC-Paramount to conceive and produce an album for his close friend, saxophonist Zoot Sims, with the caveat that Sims be presented in an unusual setting. An idea for the session came to Handy in a dream in which he saw four Zoot Sims's playing alto saxophone on a stage in "perfect harmony, very beautiful jazz harmony."[59] The album, *Zoot Sims Plays Four Altos*, which Handy produced, consisted entirely of his own compositions, and was produced by Handy. He recorded Sims and a trio (bass, and drums, and Handy himself on piano), transcribed Sims's performance, and then wrote three additional alto parts to harmonize and accompany the original Sims performance. Sims then overdubbed himself three times to complete the compositions. While now a common practice, at the time of this recording session overdubbing of this type was an innovative procedure.[60]

At this point, Handy was in the final stage of his compositional career. His musical world and his personal life had shrunk to a small circle of friends and admirers, and essentially everything he composed from the mid-1950s until-the mid-1960s was

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[58] Label "X," LXA-1032, 1955.

[59] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 222.

[60] Information regarding this album can be found in Schremp, "Handy Oral History," and in liner notes for the album, written by George Handy. In a phone conversation with Handy's friend, Eddie Caine (June 30, 2005), he states that Handy was an excellent writer and poet. In the liner notes cited here, Handy indulges in a bit of poetry: "Today the electrically controlled metronome is regarded as the perfect guardian of tempo or, if you prefer, meter or beat. 'But–it hasn't got the Zoot Sims swingin' flow/Or–his ever pulsin' dynamo.' Forgive this rhyme, mine!"

written for a very small but impressive group of musicians.[61] Essentially, he wrote only for his own band, for Zoot Sims, or for the players involved with the New York Saxophone Quartet (NYSQ) whom he had known for many years.[62] Shortly after *By George*, Handy began work on what was to become a four-movement work for flute and piano, the *Caine Flute Sonata*, written for Eddie Caine. He also embarked on a series of three saxophone quartets (*Saxophone Quartet*, Nos. 1, 2, and 3)[63] and a saxophone suite (*New York Suite*, an eight-movement work), all composed for the NYSQ.[64] This group's interest in extended, jazz-oriented, yet compositionally and technically rigorous music was particularly well suited for Handy's compositional aesthetic. Also, the members wanted to help Handy artistically and financially as best they could.[65]

After the 1954-55 record projects, and besides the sporadic production of the works mentioned above, Handy largely disappeared from the music scene, apparently a victim of his personal habits and frustrations. Over time his marriage to Flo Handy fell apart and he lost touch with his three children (two sons, Mike and Peter, and a daughter,

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[61] An example of the alienation that occurred as a result of Handy's drug use is seen in Johnny Mandel's reaction. Mandel says that Handy "was a blast to be with," but once Handy was involved with heroin, Mandel essentially avoided seeing him ever again. Mandel knew what kind of shape Handy was in due to his addiction, and wanted to remember him as he was, not as what he had become (Mandel, phone conversation).

[62] The personnel of the New York Saxophone Quartet, in its first incarnation (they are still extant), consisted of Ray Beckenstein, Al Epstein, Eddie Caine, and Danny Bank.

[63] No one can recall exactly when the sax quartets were written. The closest approximation is the late 1950s to the early 1960s.

[64] The NYSQ self-financed the recordings of two of the quartets. The first was released on 20th Century-Fox (20th Century-Fox 3150) in 1964, and the second was never released. Eddie Caine recalls sight-reading through *New York Suite*. He states that it has some interesting ideas, but that it is very repetitive, so much so that the group was unable to use it, though they gave Handy some money for the work (Caine, phone conversation).

[65] Caine, phone conversation.

Danna).[66] Once he finally managed to resolve his drug habit, Handy says that he had to "start all over from the beginning. Telephones wouldn't answer to me, people weren't into me and this was pretty much warranted. I earned it by being untrustworthy, undependable and an addict, and so I started from the beginning."[67] Handy had not played music for some time, and in the mid-1960s began to attempt to reestablish himself in the music business. He worked his way back up through poorly paying piano jobs while working during the day delivering packages. Handy remarried, and credits his wife, Elaine, with helping him piece his life back together.

In late 1968, he was offered work that allowed him to extricate himself from the high-pressure world of the New York music business. He accepted a job as pianist in the house band at Grossinger's Resort, one of the "Borscht Belt" hotels in the Catskill Mountains. Handy and his wife took to the area, and settled there.[68] House bands generally consisted of a core combo (piano, bass, drums, and two or three horns) and would play throughout the week for dancing. These dance sets consisted of standards

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[66] Flo Handy was a musician in her own right. She was featured as vocalist on a recording, accompanied by George Barnes and Carl Kress on guitars (George Barnes and Carl Kress, *Smokey and Intimate*, Carney Records, LPM 201, 1964). In a conversation with Danny Bank (the baritone saxophonist and long-time friend and supporter of Handy), he recalls that Flo and George collaborated on compositions, even trading off bar by bar (July 6, 2005). Flo Handy is listed as composer (and George Handy is the pianist and arranger) on four songs for a Zoot Sims album, *Zoot Sims* (Jazzland Records, JLP 2, 1957), *Why Cry*, *Echoes of You*, *Swim, Jim*, *Here and Now*, *Fools Rush In*. After her divorce from Handy, she married saxophonist-arranger Al Cohn, who was a friend and Brooklyn compatriot of Handy's as well as a former member of the Raeburn band. Flo Handy Cohn continued to compose, at times in collaboration with her second husband. She died in 1996.

[67] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 237.

[68] Ibid, "Handy Oral History," 238-39.

and some pop tunes, generally with "faked" arrangements.[69] The band would also back up various shows that would change weekly, such as popular singers or comics. The leader would be responsible for rehearsing and leading the band through these shows (with arrangements provided by the acts), as well as calling the tunes for the dance sets. During the summer and on weekends the bands were often augmented with reed and brass players from the area or from New York City. This allowed Handy to keep in touch with some New York City musicians. This type of work was a legitimate option for freelance musicians, and a number chose, as did Handy, to move to the area on a permanent basis, both for the steady work and the change in life style that it provided. Some players would move there for the summer only, while still others might go for a weekend at a time, or perhaps even just a Saturday night.

Handy later moved to the Granite Hotel, as pianist and bandleader. Trumpeter Spanky Davis played in Handy's five-piece band at the Granite Hotel for approximately six months in 1978, and recalls what a pleasure it was to play with a "marvelous show conductor" who also knew virtually "every tune in every key" for the dance sets. In fact, Davis states that the main reason he stayed at the job was because he enjoyed playing and spending time with Handy. The trumpeter remembers Handy as being generally happy, as well as content with his life.[70] Though Handy had a scaled-down career at this later stage of his life, and though he expresses some regrets, as well as bitterness, about the

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[69] The term "faked" refers to arrangements played without written music. They are usually somewhat standardized, and for one to accept the type of work that calls for "faking," the songs, along with the phrasing and harmonies used, are an expected part of the freelancer's repertoire.

[70] Spanky Davis, phone conversation, February 6, 2006.

music business, he still did not seem to be bemoaning his lost opportunities as much as he was thankful to be "back from the dead."[71]

Another important factor in this period of Handy's life is his participation in the methadone program (a legally prescribed substitute for heroin). Davis states he joined it in 1968, which coincides with Handy's move to the Catskills.[72] Handy's reliance upon methadone throughout the rest of his life was well known to his friends.[73]

From the late 1970s through the mid-1990s, the work opportunities in the Catskills were diminishing, and the type of bands that Handy was involved with there were gradually being replaced by smaller ensembles that were catering to changing tastes. It was in this environment that Handy ended his musical career, and it contrasts starkly with 1945, when he wrote such important pieces as *Dalvatore Sally*.

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[71] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 240. I am making these inferences from Handy's oral history, McKinney's 1970 interview with Handy, and from conversations with Handy's friends and colleagues.

[72] Davis, phone conversation.

[73] Caine, Mckusick, Bank, Davis, phone conversations.

Chapter Two

Dalvatore Sally

George Handy's instrumental compositions, rather than his vocal arrangements, are the clearest examples of his adventurously creative abilities.[1] One of the best known and most important of these is the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra's theme song from the 1945-1946 period, *Dalvatore Sally*. The exact date of its composition is unknown, but it was first recorded for the Standard Transcription Service (Standard X-207) in Los Angeles in December 1945, and was presumably composed near that date. The Jewell Recording Company recorded the composition in February 1946,[2] and a V-Disc (V-Disc 677-A) was recorded in June 1946.[3]

Dalvatore Sally employs several compositional resources that were commonly found in classical works, but were unusual for big band writing of the time, including a unique approach to certain intervals often thought of as dissonant (e.g., major-sevenths, minor-ninths, minor-seconds), the juxtaposition of unrelated chords, and non-functional

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[1] Handy's popular-style vocal arrangements also have extremely adventurous elements, particularly in the introductions, interludes, and endings.

[2] *Dalvatore Sally* was released on the Savoy record label's *Innovations by Boyd Raeburn, Volume 3* (Savoy, XP 8042, 1945) and *Boyd Meets Stravinsky* (Savoy, MG12040, 1946). The composition itself has the identifying catalog numbers of Jewell D1-1, and Savoy 801 and XP8043. It is this recording that I used for my analysis of the work. It is currently available on *Boyd Raeburn and His Orchestra 1945-1946*, Storyville, SYE 8313, 2001. Another version, recorded at NBC's Jubilee studio, is available on *Boyd Raeburn Jubilee Performances-1946*, Hep Records, CD1, 1995. See the *Dalvatore Sally* entry in the discography (p. 182) for a list of personnel.

[3] Transcriptions and V-Discs are extremely important sources for recorded music of this period. V-Discs were phonograph records that were intended for distribution to overseas American troops. For these recordings, the musicians, studios, halls, etc., donated their time. Transcription services recorded programming (music, comedy, drama, etc.) and distributed it in disc form to be licensed to radio stations. Raeburn recorded a great deal of music for the Lang-Worth and Standard transcription services.

triadic harmony. Another essential element is the piece's constantly shifting tempos and meters. This radical approach to tempo and meter renders this dance band's theme song undanceable.

During the 1940s, theme songs were used to introduce the orchestra at the beginning of a dance job, concert, or radio broadcast, and to represent the band's sound and style in an immediately recognizable manner. Well-known examples of theme songs are Tommy Dorsey's *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You*, the Duke Ellington Orchestra's *Take the "A" Train*, and Glenn Miller's *Moonlight Serenade*. The instant these songs were heard—on the radio, for example—the general public knew exactly which band was being featured. These more traditional themes were generally chosen either because they were already popularly identified with the band, because they made a statement about the band that the bandleader felt was appropriate, or both of the above. While it is not known whether *Sally* was intended as a theme song, or whether it was anointed as such after its composition, Raeburn's choosing a composition that employed contemporary compositional resources certainly made a statement that this band was unashamedly different. The chasm between *Moonlight Serenade* and *Dalvatore Sally* could not be much larger, so in making this choice, Raeburn was reveling in his role as the leader of an untraditional dance band, while declaring what the band stood for—a progressive modernism.

This discussion of *Dalvatore Sally* examines the work in several ways: as a programmatic piece; as a reflection of Surrealism; and, through musical analysis, as a work employing compositional resources that distinguish it from other compositions of its period. The piece is collage-like, with a quick-cutting aesthetic reminiscent of a

cartoon soundtrack. Because of this, on first hearing, it seems purely episodic, yet recurring melodic and harmonic elements lift the work beyond a series of unrelated vignettes. In line with the cartoon-like character of the piece, there are numerous musical and sound effect references throughout the composition, and they take on a variety of shapes, such as clusters, dissonant sonorities, rhythms, tempos, and melodic lines. Along with programmatic content and a surrealist overtone, as well as references to popular and classical compositions, these elements combine to give the piece a wild, original quality. Handy was known to be prolific at this time, and the work has the sound of someone writing quickly, letting his ideas fly.[4] Along with this looseness is a sense of humor and fun that provides a series of unexpected twists, turns, and juxtapositions.

Form and programmatic elements in *Dalvatore Sally*

Dalvatore Sally is formally emblematic of Handy's compositional style. He strings together a series of sections, or events, many of which have little or no connection with each other.[5] However, while not necessarily harmonically or melodically related, they do manage to hold together as a narrative, or as the soundtrack for a narrative. This

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[4] Handy was known to have been a swift composer and arranger. A large number of works were completed for Raeburn during this period in a matter of weeks. Hal McKusick (who played saxophone with Raeburn, and also co-wrote several compositions with Handy) spoke of copying manuscript for Handy as the composer wrote. While working through the night, they could complete two full charts (score and parts), all the while collaborating on a pastel drawing (Phone conversation, McKusick).

[5] Episodic forms were not at all uncommon in jazz previous to the mid-1940s. Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown, and Beige* (1943) is an excellent example of this. However, *Dalvatore Sally's* form did stand out in Raeburn's repertoire, which, even considering its status as a progressive band, largely consisted of pop material and standard song and big band forms. Handy, in fact, is primarily responsible for the band's progressive reputation.

structure corresponds with Handy's own discussion of his writing when asked about the titling of his compositions:

> My titles came with the music; sometimes before the music I would fantasize something or see something. If it was a title it also had a picture or a story in my head, and I would almost tailor-make the music as if I was accompanying a movie or something, because the movie was going on in my mind. Most of the things I wrote were programmatic, and the titles weren't just titles, they were stories.[6]

Beyond these comments, little is known about the various programs that may have been employed in Handy's music. However, in the case of *Dalvatore Sally*, we are fortunate to have a first-hand account of the programmatic content. George Handy wrote that

> *Dalvatore Sally* is the story of a big city girl who becomes unhappy about the city and what it stands for. She envisions another type of existence for herself. However, money having value, and not to be found in dream sequences, she is brought back to reality, where she stays.[7]

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[6] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 43.

[7] For the *Jubilee* recordings, Handy wrote short comments about the programmatic content of four works, including *Dalvatore Sally*. These were then recorded on V-Disc 677-A (June 1946), and are included in the liner notes for *Jubilee Performances-1946*.

Handy is straightforward and to the point (in typical fashion) when describing his program for the work. He gets right to the topic of disillusionment, a correspondent dream of a different (and presumably improved) reality, and the eventual forced return to the seemingly inevitable and inescapable reality of a life tied to problematic material issues. In line with this interpretation, the quote, though speaking of a girl, has autobiographical significance. Handy is known to have had difficulties coping with the financial and artistic realities of the music business. Consequently, the program could be a metaphor for the work-a-day world (through introductory street sounds), Handy's lofty compositional goals (via dream sequences), and being brought back to earth by the vagaries of the music business (by the presentation of a melancholic air). Given what is known about Handy's personal and career difficulties, it is fascinating to see elements of his life and career described so vividly and clearly, both in the printed program text and the music itself.

After a brief formal overview (fig. 2.1), I discuss the form and programmatic content in greater detail. *Dalvatore Sally* has an ABA form. After an introduction (mm. 1-10), mm. 11-17 and 18-24 comprise the A section. Measures 11-17 consist of shifting chordal dissonances from the winds and brass with an overlaid bebop melody from the rhythm section, and functions as preparation for a tenor saxophone melody (mm. 18-24). Measures 25-32 set up a double-time tempo for mm. 33-42, which feature a rolling saxophone melody. A piano variation of this melody (in the parallel minor) is then presented (mm. 43-59). The shifting chords and bebop line of the A section (from mm. 11-17) is recapitulated (mm. 60-66), and a varied and truncated version of the tenor

saxophone melody (also from the A section, mm. 18-24) concludes the piece, functioning as a short coda (mm. 67-70).

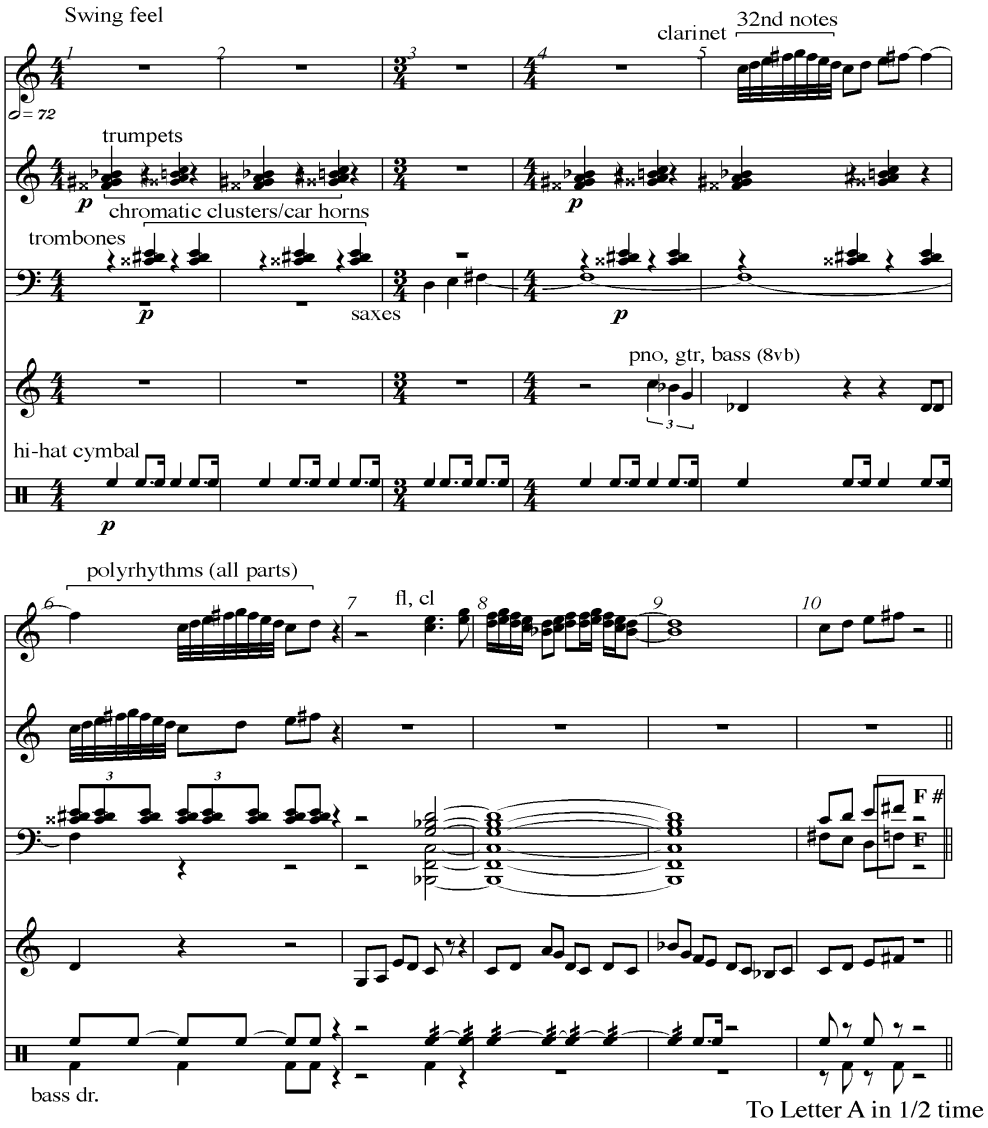
Fig. 2.1: Formal scheme of George Handy's *Dalvatore Sally*.

Rehearsal Letter		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Formal Section	**Intro**	**A** Shifting chords (brass-reeds), bebop line (rhy. section)	T. sax melody	Double time, preparing B melody	**B** Double-time, rolling melody (saxes, trbns, horns) E-flat to F major	Piano variation of B melody, F minor	**A** Recap-shifting chords (brass-reeds), bebop line (rhy. section)	Recap-t. sax melody
Measure Numbers	1-10	11-17	18-24	25-32	33-42	43-59	60-66	67-70

The introduction (ex. 2.1) begins with alternating chromatic clusters between the trumpets and trombones (at a medium-swing tempo) that feature a hocketed melody (mm. 1-2, 4-5, to be discussed below). This is a referential sound that immediately calls to mind the honking of car horns, and is evocative of an urban street scene, the home of "Dalvatore Sally . . . a big city girl." This reference is perhaps a signifier of the car horn allusions found in *American in Paris* by George Gershwin, of whom Handy is known to have thought highly.[8]

[8] Handy discusses his appreciation of Gershwin in Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 90-92.

Ex. 2.1: *Dalvatore Sally*, Introduction, mm. 1-10.
Referential sounds.

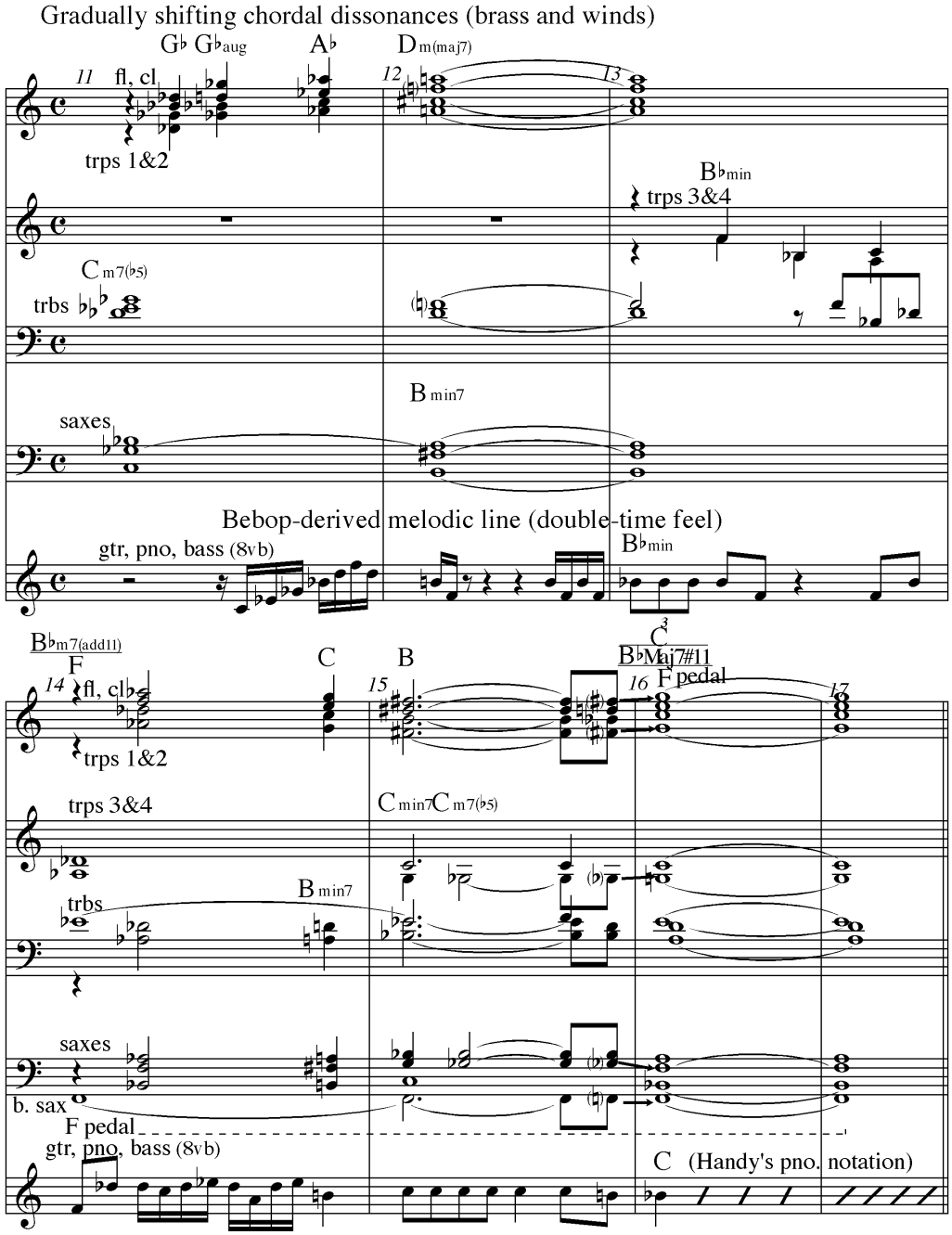


A general chaos and busyness is evoked throughout the introduction (ex. 2.1) through meter changes (mm. 3-4) and metrical ambiguities (mm. 7-8, to be discussed below), polyrhythms (m. 6), and alternating, swirling thirty-second notes (mm. 5-6). The final sonority of the introduction (m. 10), a dissonant augmented octave (F-F-sharp), is a

jarring close to the presentation of a harsh urban environment that makes Sally "unhappy about the city and what it stands for."

Measures 11-17 feature a slower tempo (almost half-time). The ethereal, gradually shifting chordal dissonances (brass and winds, ex. 2.2) create a "surreal," harmonic world that represents the "dream sequences" spoken of in the notes, in which Sally "envisions another type of existence for herself." A unison bebop-derived melodic line (in a double-time feel) by the rhythm section (guitar, piano, and bass) snakes in and out of the woodwind and brass harmonies adding to the otherworldly effect. The shifting chords and the melodic line create a polyphonic texture that is not dominated by either one, and serves as preparation for mm. 18-24.

Ex. 2.2: *Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 11-17.
"Surreal" dream sequence.

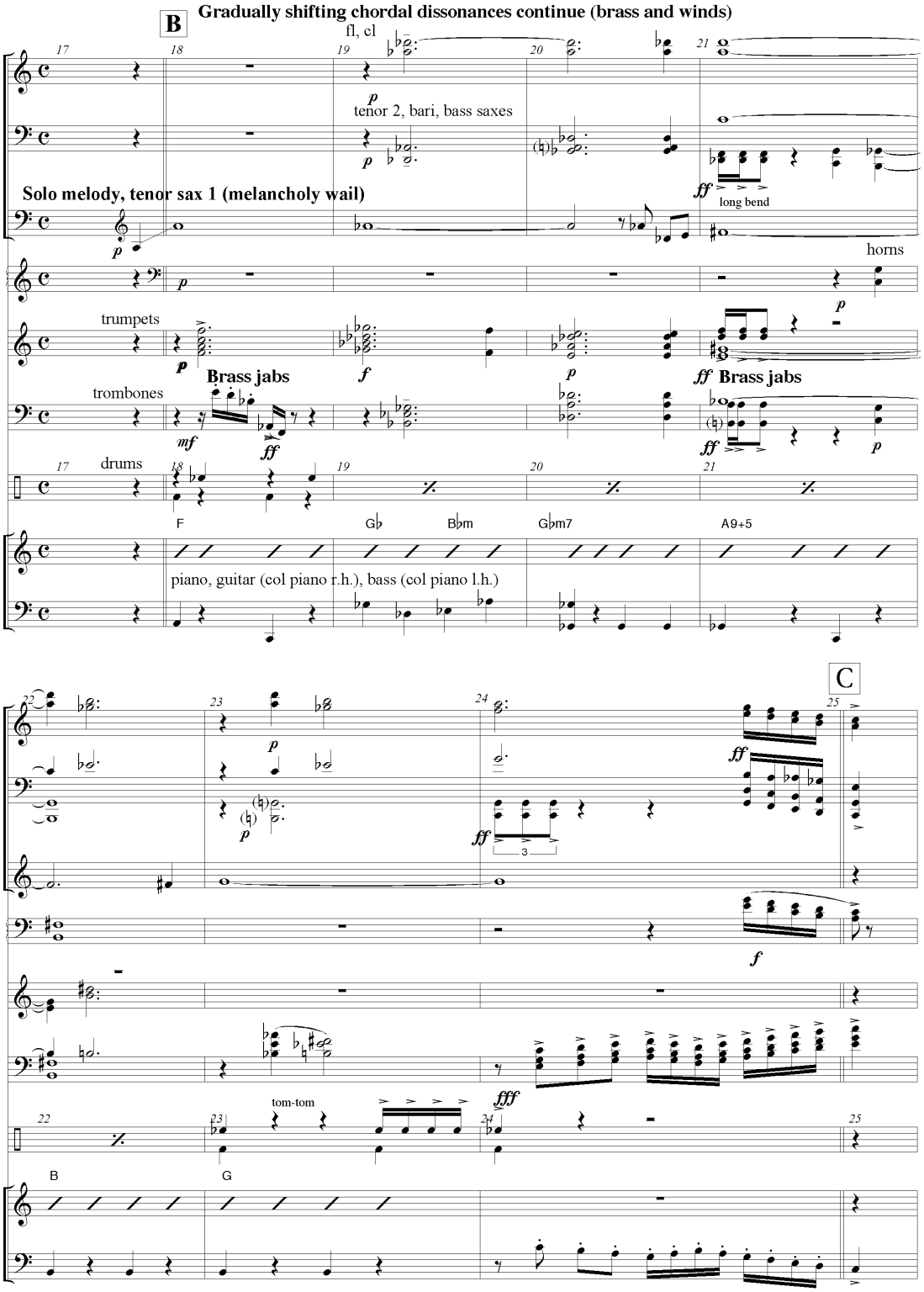


The melancholy wail of a simple tenor saxophone melody (Ex. 2.3, tenor 1, beginning in m. 17) characterizes Sally as one "who becomes unhappy about the city and

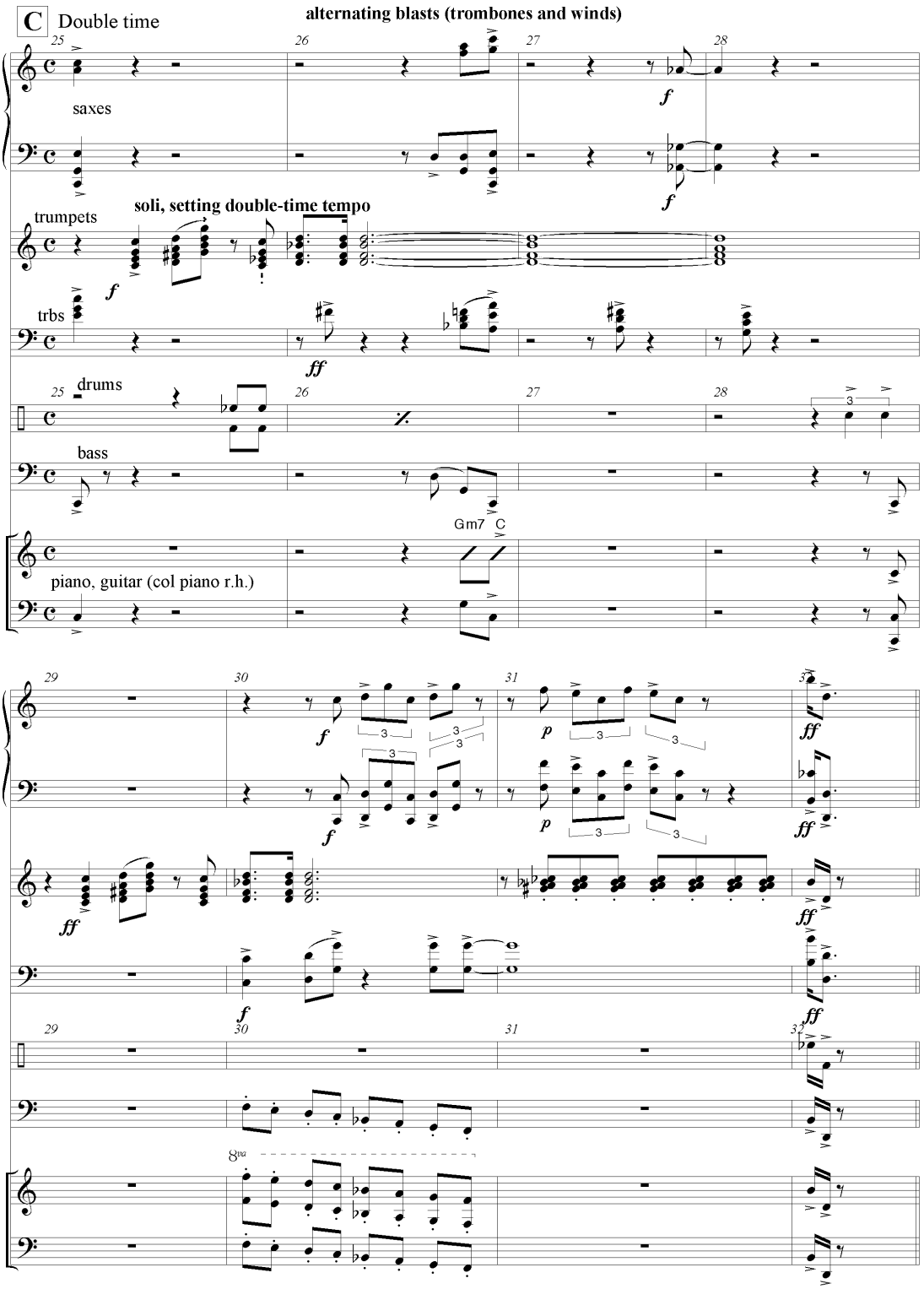
what it stands for." This sadness is portrayed among layers of smoothly shifting chordal dissonances (brass and winds) similar to those used in the dream sequence (mm. 11-17). The section employs unique orchestrational combinations, a characteristic that is an important component of Handy's compositional style.[9] The sax melody is the first song-like melody of the piece, while sharp brass and wind jabs punctuate this world and act as reminders of the urban landscape (mm. 18, 21, 24). The rhythm section plays a more traditional role, providing rhythmic and harmonic support, though the chord progression is unusual.

[9] In mm. 21-22, Handy breaks up the various instrumental sections and combines them into two mixed choirs: flute, clarinet, tenor two, and trumpets three and four; baritone and bass sax, trumpets one and two, and trombones two and three.

Ex. 2.3: *Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 18-24.
Melancholy tenor sax melody over shifting chordal dissonances.



Ex. 2.4: *Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 25-32.
Double-time, abstracted cityscape.



A double-time tempo is created by the trumpets (in cup mutes), with sharp alternating blasts from the various brass and wind sections, and Sally is shaken from her reverie by the noise of a troubling, abstracted cityscape (ex. 2.4). Continuing with the faster tempo, a new, exciting vision of her future has been born, and is depicted in the fast-paced, rolling nature of the B section (ex. 2.5).[10] The rhythm section is again in the familiar role as the rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment, though the chord progression is more straightforward than in mm. 18-24. The show-like, harmonized melody (saxes, horns, and trombones) is reminiscent of the propulsive verse to *The Trolley Song*,[11] and portrays a lively, exciting existence, unimpeded by the vagaries of life. A minor presentation of this melody (mm. 43-59, see ex. 2.6), presented as a harmonized piano (and guitar) restatement of mm. 33-42 with a Latin flavor, taints this vision.

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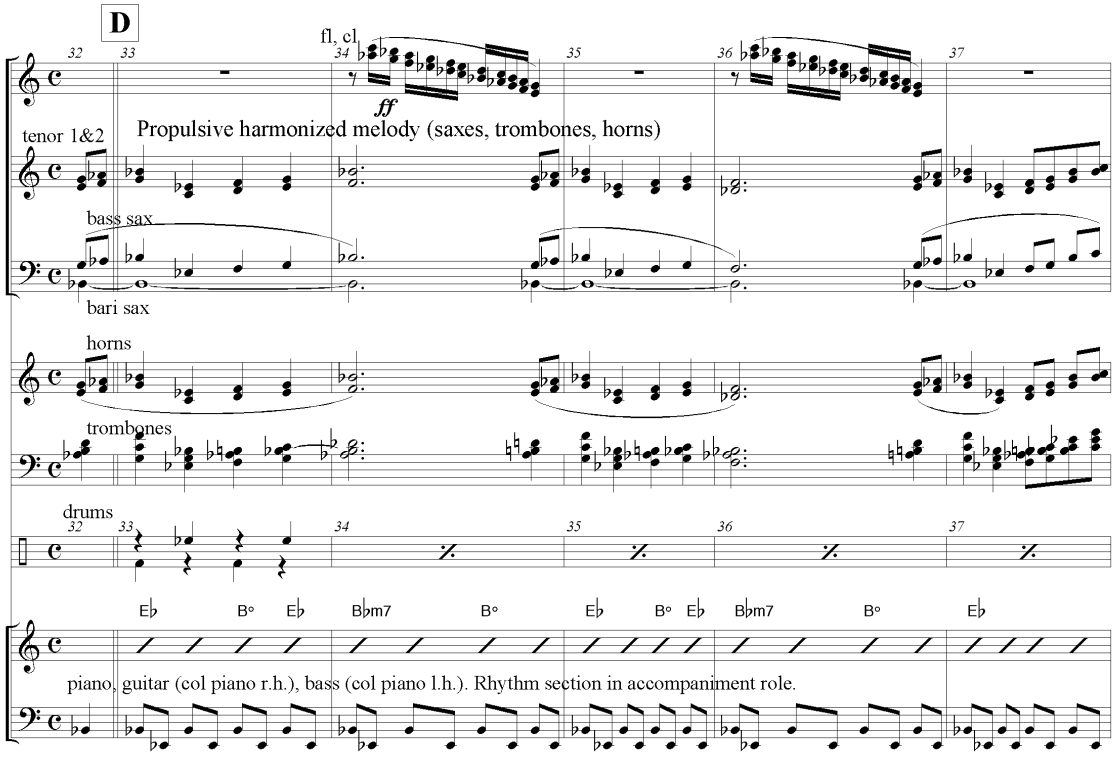
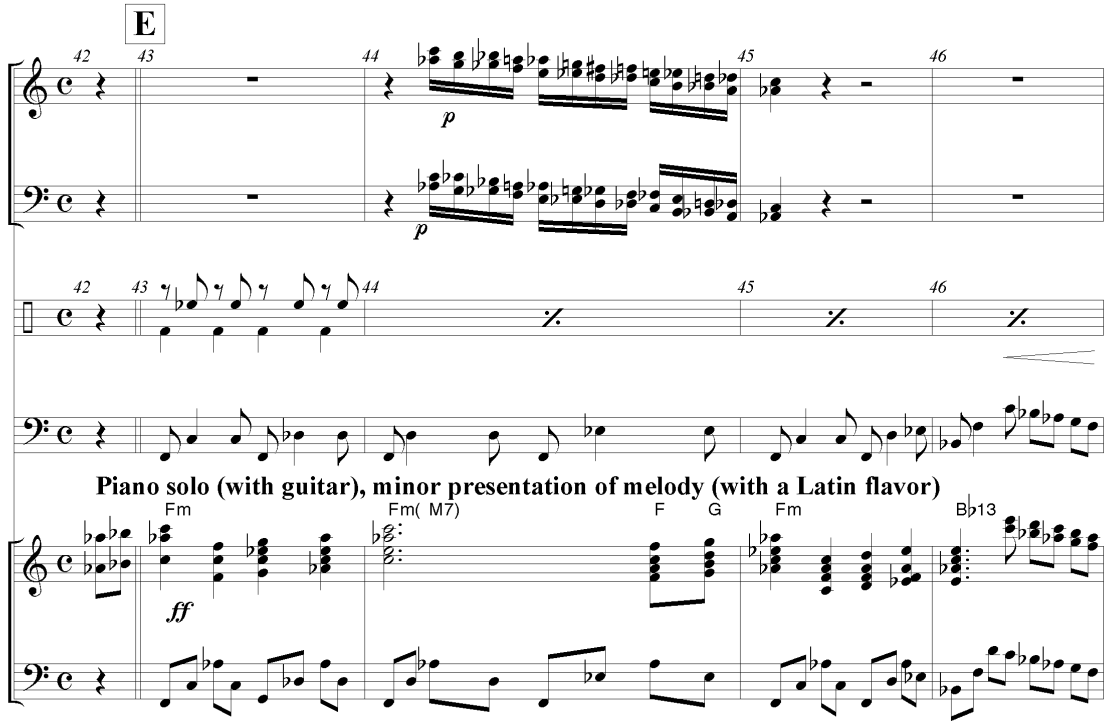
[10] The drums and harmonized melody (saxes, horns, and trombones) have a relaxed, but quick, 2/2 feel, while the steady eighth-notes of the rhythm section and the sixteenth-notes of the flute and clarinet add a more frenetic energy.

[11] Judy Garland sang *The Trolley Song* (written in 1944, with music by Hugh Martin and lyrics by Ralph Blaine) in the movie *Meet Me In St. Louis*. The song, particularly the verse, effectively evokes the speed of trolley cars and the busy street life of St. Louis. The song was a big hit, and was released shortly before the composition of *Dalvatore Sally*.

Ex. 2.5: *Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 32-37.
Propulsive harmonized melody (saxes, trombones, and horns).



Ex. 2.6: *Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 42-46.
Minor presentation of melody (piano and guitar), with Latin flavor.



Handy wraps up the work's stated program by speaking of Sally's final disillusionment: "However, money having value, and not to be found in dream sequences, she is brought back to reality, where she stays." This is manifested (mm. 60-66) in a nearly literal repetition of the original A section's dream world (from mm. 11-17), and depicts Sally's struggles to retain her dream-like existence. The piece concludes with a varied and truncated recapitulation of the mournful tenor sax solo, derived from mm. 18-24 (the A section), portraying Sally's (and, ultimately, Handy's) sadness regarding the harsh realities of life (tenor 1, echoed by horn and trombone, ex. 2.7).[12]

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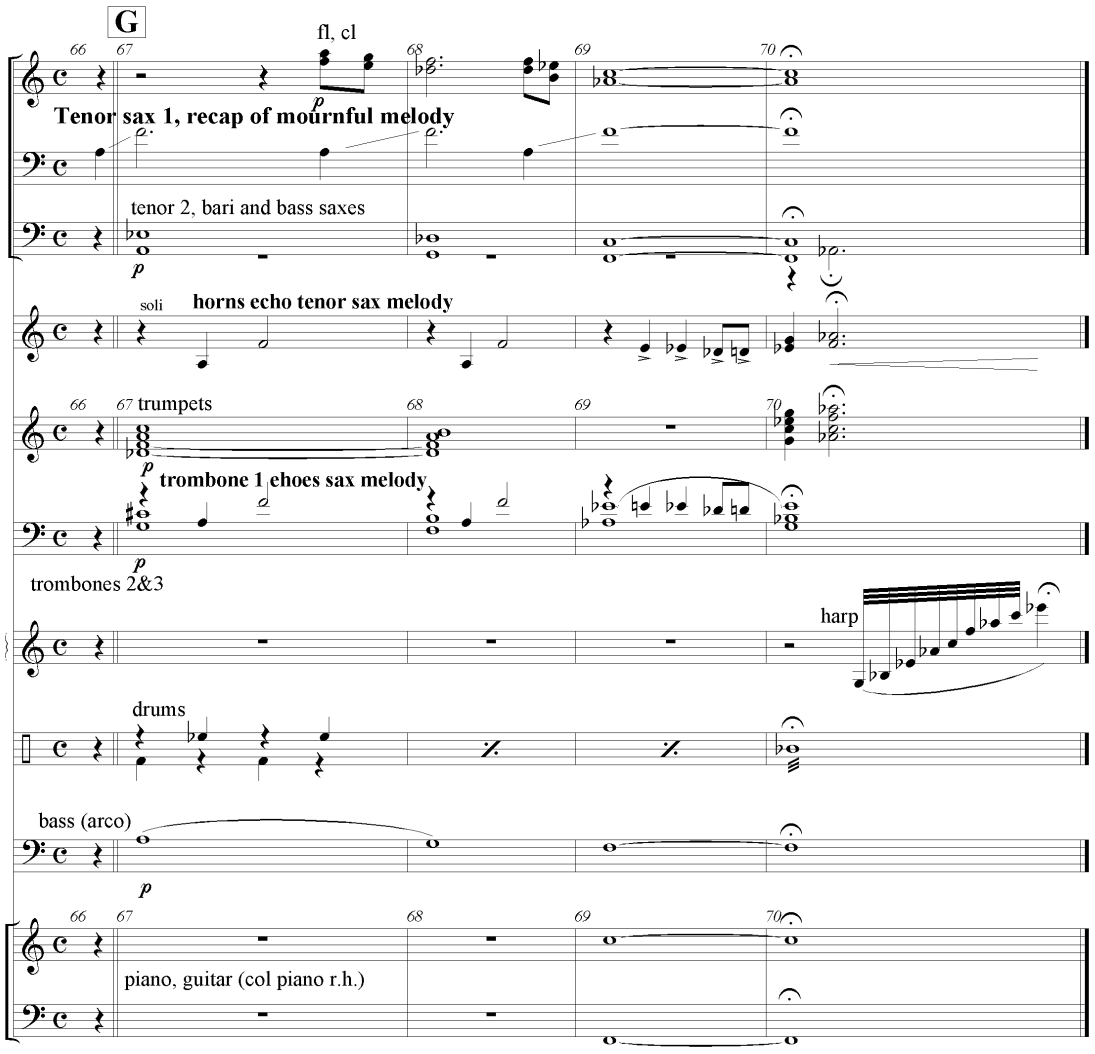
[12] The Jubilee recording mentioned above is performed at a slower tempo. This version feels more ballad oriented, and is consequently even more ethereal, bittersweet, and melancholy. The slower tempo seems more appropriate, and communicates the program in a clearer manner.

Ex. 2.7: *Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 66-70.
Recapitulation of mournful sax solo to conclude piece.



Surrealism and *Dalvatore Sally*

At the time of *Dalvatore Sally*'s composition, Surrealism was an important artistic movement, and was well represented in New York City.[13] Salvador Dalí was one of the world's best-known surrealist artists, and his name was practically synonymous with the

[13] Dalí, Miro, and Matisse all exhibited in New York, and the first large survey of the genre, Alfred Barr's exhibition "Fantastic Art, Dada, and Surrealism" was shown in New York City's Museum of Modern Art in 1936.

movement. Though it is impossible to know to what extent Handy was aware of Surrealism or Dalí's work, the fact that he discusses the dream state in his program notes indicates an awareness of Dalí's interest in the subconscious and the dream state, and, through the play on Dalí's name, seems to have had a bearing on at least the titling of this piece. I posit that it had a greater impact than just the titling, however (either consciously or subconsciously), and that specific aspects of *Dalvatore Sally* are influenced by Surrealism.

The sharp juxtapositioning of disparate elements that is one of the characteristics of Surrealism is rampant throughout the work. Examples of this aural expression of Surrealism occur in mm. 11-17 (ex. 2.2—a fuller discussion of this section is given in the "Musical Analysis" section below) and a nearly literal repetition (mm. 60-66). Here, Handy juxtaposes often-unrelated sustained chords moving in a gradual, chromatic fashion, at times creating powerful dissonances. While woodwind and trumpet chords "float" over the trombones and saxes, the rhythm section is liberated from both its timekeeping and harmonic roles. The rhythm section presents a bebop-influenced melodic line that implies its own harmony, and which has an independent character. This section stands out in the composition, both because of its unique quality as well as the fact that it is recapitulated almost verbatim.

The episodic nature of the work is also a result of the use of disparate elements, but on a larger scale. As mentioned above, *Dalvatore* is divided into strict sections that on first hearing appear to be unrelated, crisply moving from one musical idea to the next, with little or no preparation. Each section, while connected to the preceding and

following ones in some fashion, is a world unto itself with independent characteristics. This rigid division brings the juxtapositional aesthetic to the work as a whole.

Another surrealist-influenced element seen throughout the work is the use of referential material. In an article discussing parallels in the development of art and music in the twentieth-century, Brian Dennis discusses the issue of referential or "transplanted" sounds, and relates it to Dadaism and Surrealism, citing Edgard Varèse's use of a siren in *Ionisation* as an example:

> The use of strange sounds in a piece, with their "transplanted" emotional associations, is possibly influenced by Surrealism. The early Dada movement which ultimately gave birth to Surrealism, followed World War I and indicated a desire to create an anti-art, mocking all the former tenets of artistic merit and advocating a militant overthrow of all sacred ideals.[14]

Dennis's citing of Varèse is particularly apt in the case of Handy, as it is documented that Varèse was one of the composers that Handy and his colleagues listened to and studied during their basement get-togethers.[15] *Dalvatore Sally* employs referential sounds extensively in a musical context, such as alternating brass clusters depicting car horns in the introduction. Another example is the way in which the jagged stabs of the brass and reeds (ex. 2.4), suggesting an urban congestion, give way to the free-flowing,

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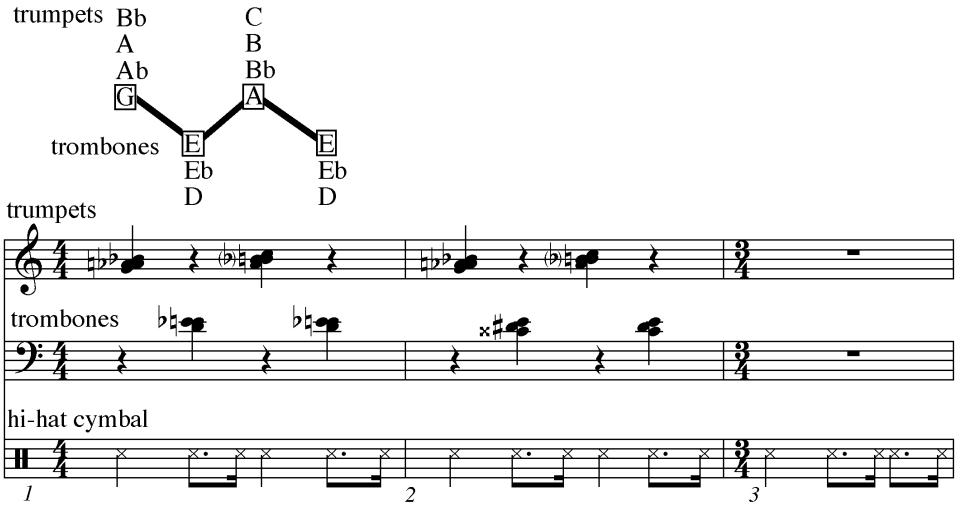
[14] Brian Dennis, "Metamorphosis in Modern Culture: Parallel Evolution of Music and Painting in the Twentieth Century," *Tempo*, n.s., 78 (Autumn 1966): 15-16.

[15] Ira Gitler, *Swing to Bop* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 198.

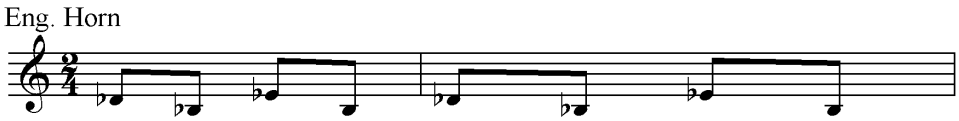
double-time "trolley car" image (ex. 2.5). The gradually shifting chordal layers, along with the multi-dimensionality of section A (ex. 2.2, to be discussed below), team with the harp (an instrument rarely seen in jazz), playing rapidly ascending and descending glissandi to present a referential sound that has become a common musical characterization of the dream state.

There are some direct musical signifiers in the work as well. In *Sally*'s introduction, Handy juxtaposes allusions to Glenn Miller's *In the Mood* and Igor Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*. With the alternating trumpet and trombone chromatic clusters of *Dalvatore Sally*'s introduction, Handy creates a "cluster melody" that mimics the English horn line in "Les augures printaniers. Danses des adolescents" (ex. 2.8). In fact, the hocket created by the bottom trumpet voice and the top trombone voice is a transposition of the English horn melody.

Ex. 2.8: Juxtaposed references to *In the Mood* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*.



***Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 1-2.**



Igor Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*, "Les Augures printaniers, Danses des adolescents," mm. 9-10 (rehearsal number14).

In this same passage is another signifier, this time from one of the big band era's biggest hits, *In the Mood* (ex. 2.8). Handy employs the hi-hat cymbal rhythm of the *In the Mood* introduction, but signifies on it by placing the now-ubiquitous figure in the midst of meter changes and chromatic clusters. As a jazz arranger, Handy was obviously well versed in Miller's music, and through Handy and others, we know that Stravinsky was one of Handy's most important compositional influences. With these juxtaposed influences, Handy immediately exhibits his proclivity towards exploring the worlds of classical music and jazz with his own approach.

Dennis's mention of a mocking anti-art is also a fitting reference, and further cements *Dalvatore Sally*'s Surrealist connections. With all of its wild eccentricities, as

well as its programmatic content, the work makes a bold statement about Handy's view of the state of the musical environment in which he finds himself. The piece flies in the face of commercialism and the jazz big band tradition as it had been practiced up until that time. The bad-boy, troublemaker side of Handy, mixed with his forward-thinking compositional style, gives the piece a pugnacious, yet beautiful, quality, and the work practically mocks the standard forms.[16]

Another extremely important aspect of *Dalvatore Sally* is its sense of humor. A typical first reaction to the piece is laughter, along with an immediate grasp of the "ridiculous" nature of the piece. This is a common bond between Handy and Dalí, as humor and a sense of the "ridiculous" loomed large in Dalí's style. Another similarity is that by the mid-1940s, Dalí, as was Handy, was increasingly involved in the commerce of art.[17] Both were fine artists, yet had no compunction about using their skills for commercial purposes. In fact, Handy generally spoke of himself as an arranger-for-hire, so this seems to have been his primary self-perception.

Meryle Secrest points out yet another common trait:

> Like Duchamp, Picibia, and Max Ernst, Dalí was in revolt against the doctrine . . . that painting had to do with circles and straight lines and not with subject matter.[18]

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[16] The anti-music quality in Handy's music is perhaps most clearly shown in his musical comment on the blues, *The Bloos*, which is discussed in chapter 3.

[17] Meryle Secrest, *Salvador Dalí: the Surrealist Jester* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986), 189.

[18] Secrest, *Salvador Dali*, 126-27.

Dalí's interest in content is mirrored in Handy's compositional style, as evidenced by the earlier quotation regarding the importance of programmatic content to his composition, as well as by the details of *Dalvatore Sally*'s program.

Musical Analysis

In *Dalvatore Sally*, Handy displays a repertoire of compositional resources, and their presence can be heard throughout his works. For example, his fascination with interval-class 1 (ic1), his predilection for juxtaposing unrelated chords or disparate compositional ideas, and his use of metrical ambiguities and shifts are all in evidence throughout his compositions. I will discuss the use of several of these compositional features in the early sections of *Dalvatore Sally*.

The instrumental parts do not have a key signature, which is unusual for this period, and implies that the score also did not employ one. The lengths of phrases and sections are of unusual duration, such as seven, ten, and thirteen measures. Two important elements are used for melodic and harmonic purposes: the B-flat lydian mode and a closely related whole-tone collection. Also, Handy at times replaces the tension and resolution of the tonic-to-dominant relationship with the resolution of an augmented octave, F-F-sharp. In addition, Handy creates other dissonant harmonies by juxtaposing unrelated chords.

In the midst of the juxtaposition of the hi-hat rhythm and the chromatic brass clusters (ex. 2.9, mm. 1-5), Handy immediately inserts a meter change for one measure (3/4 in m. 3), unsettling the ostensibly "normal" jazz ride of the cymbal. The metrical

ambiguity also continues, as the meter could initially be perceived as notated, or as continuing in 4/4 (fig. 2.2).

Ex. 2.9: Metrical interruptions of "typical" swing feel.
***Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 1-10.**

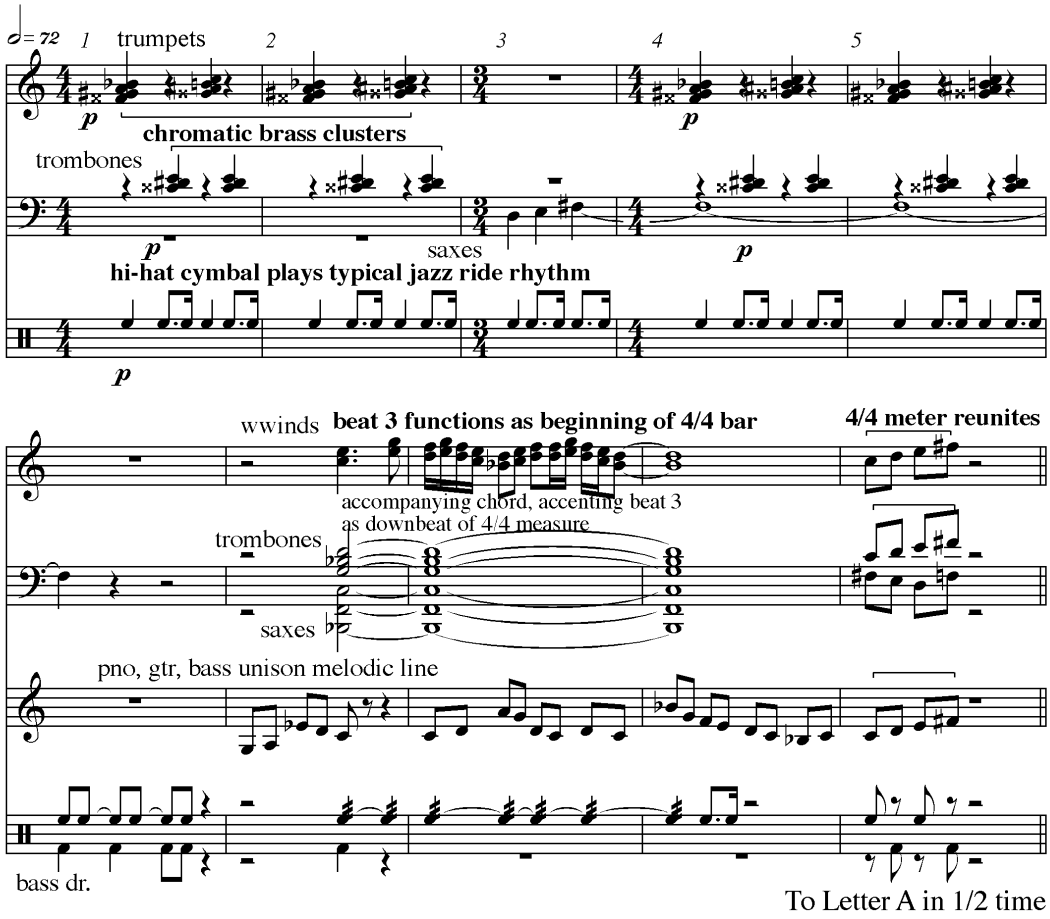
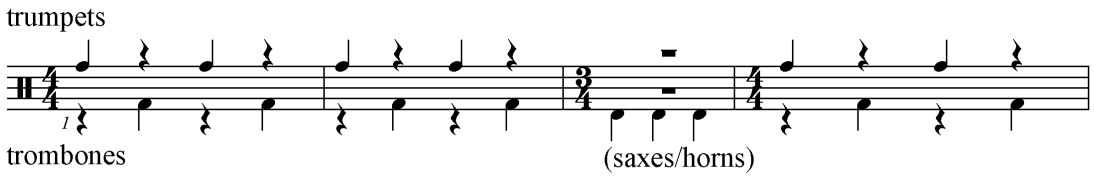
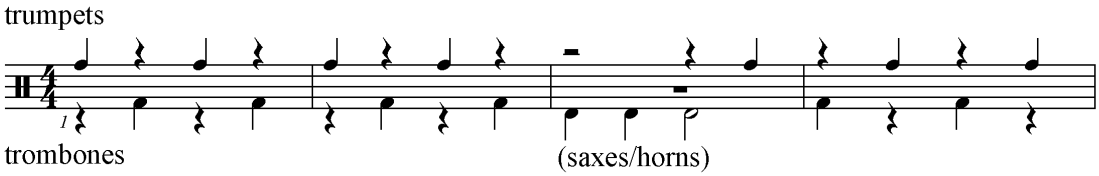


Fig. 2.2: Metrical ambiguity in the brass.
***Dalvatore Sally* introduction, mm. 1-4.**



Measure 1-4 (above) could be perceived as:



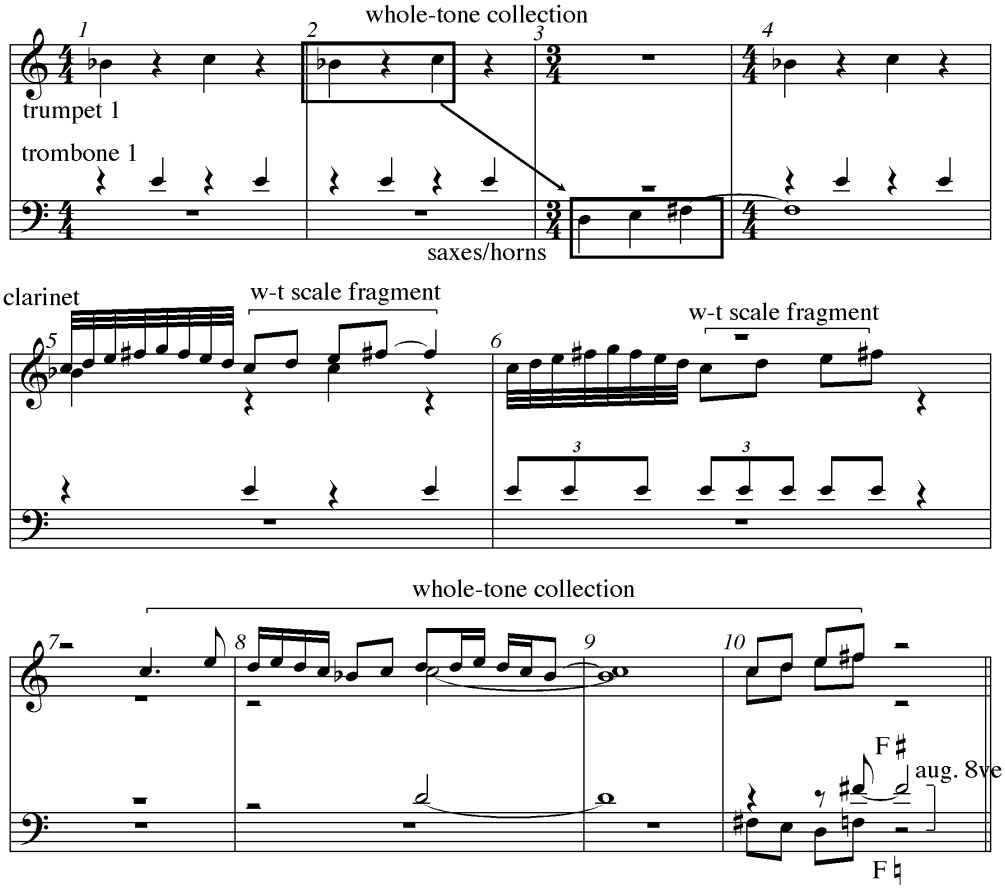
Rhythmic reduction, trumpets and trombones.

The introduction has another rhythmic interruption of a typical swing feel, beginning in measure 7 (see ex. 2.9). The unison melodic line of the rhythm section (piano, bass, and guitar) continues in an obvious 4/4, but a melodic line in the woodwinds, with a prominent accompanying chord (trombones and saxes), begins on beat three of m. 7, seeming to function as the beginning of a 4/4 measure. This creates a subtle, brief, but effective metrical ambiguity until all instruments come together for a 4/4 bar at the end of the introduction in m. 10. If, after all of this, one is still able to hear the steady quarter note pulse of the introduction as an indication of a danceable beat, that idea is quickly shattered as the tempo is cut nearly in half in m. 11.

Another interesting aspect of the introduction to *Dalvatore Sally* is Handy's use of a whole-tone collection (with a B-flat centricity), [Bb C D E F#] (ex. 2.10). These pitches generally dominate the melodic texture of mm. 1-6, and the collection, or

fragments from it, abound (see mm. 2-3, 4, 6, and, particularly, mm. 7-10). The passage concludes with a powerful F-F-sharp augmented octave dissonance, which will be discussed below.

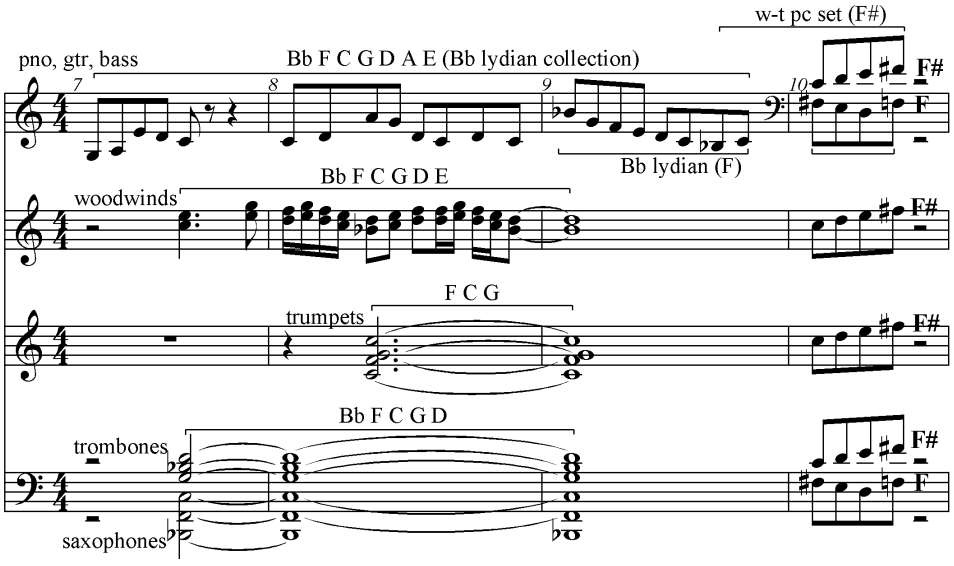
Ex. 2.10: Use of a whole-tone collection (Bb, C, D, E, F#).
Whole-tone collection dominates melodic material, mm. 1-6.
***Dalvatore Sally*, Introduction, mm. 1-10.**



In addition to the whole-tone collection, there is another primary element in the introduction. In mm. 7-9, stacks of fifths are employed in the trumpets, trombones, and saxophones (ex. 2.11). Saxes and trombones spell a B-flat M13 chord, voiced largely in fifths, while the trumpets present a subset of this chord. The woodwinds' melodic lines

encompass this set of pitches, and extend the series of fifths. The rhythm section's melody (piano, guitar, and bass) employs the same set, and continues to expand it. This extended version of the set forms a B-flat lydian collection.

Example 2.11: Use of Bb lydian collection / F-F# conflict (diatonic vs. whole-tone). *Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 7-10.

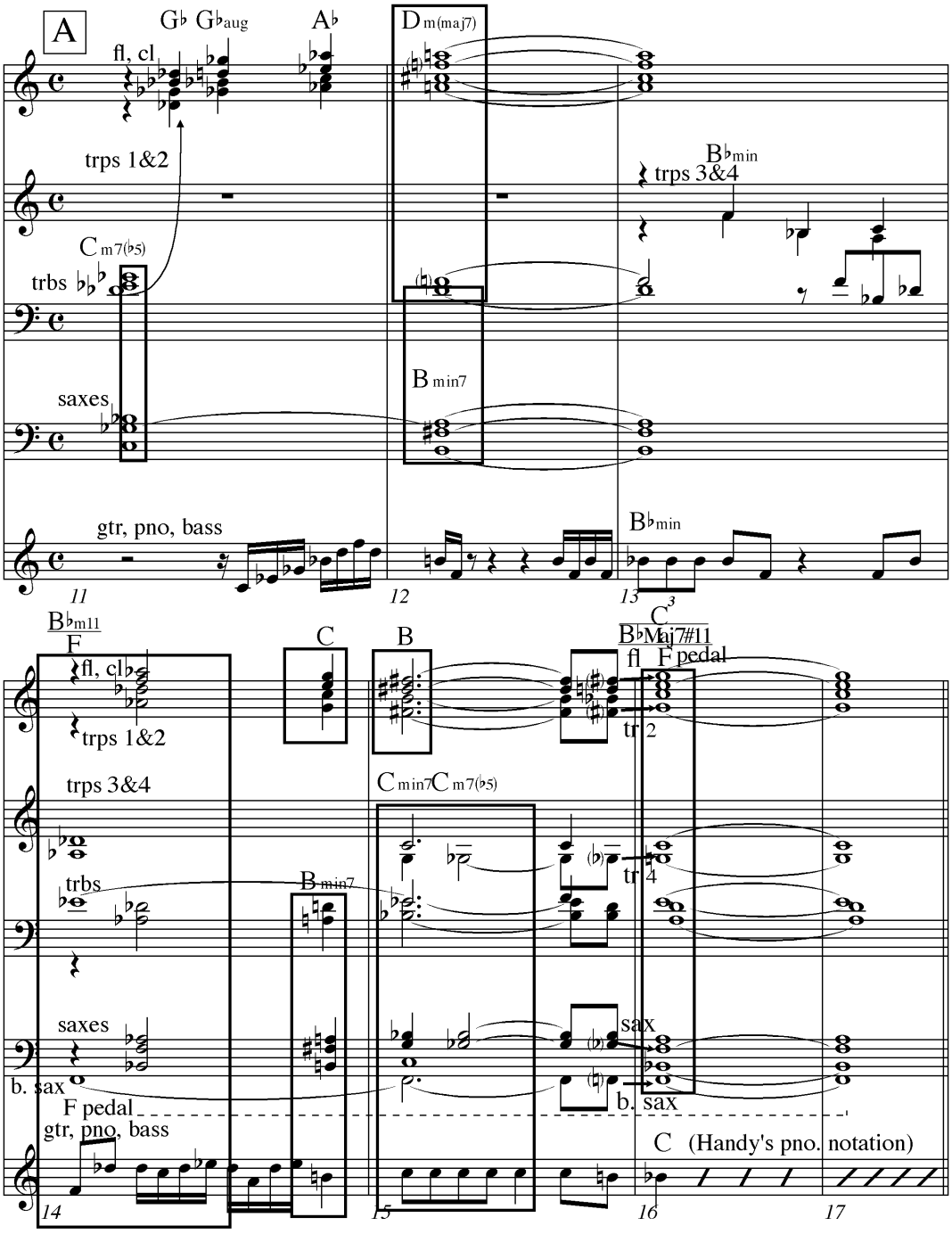


The lydian and the whole-tone collections share the pitches B-flat, C, D, and E. F and F-sharp are the most important non-shared pitches, and are at first isolated from each other. F-sharp is used in conjunction with the whole-tone collection (mm. 1-6, ex. 2.10), and F is employed during the lydian collection's presentation (mm. 7-9, ex. 2.11). The relationship between the two becomes much more intimate in the final two measures of the introduction (mm. 9-10, ex. 2.11).

The rhythm section's descending melodic line in m. 9 represents the dominance of the B-flat lydian and the F natural, while the whole-tone collection, along with its F-sharp, grows directly from the lydian motive in bar 9, beat 4 and is powerfully presented

by the entire orchestra (ex. 2.11). It is here, at the very end of the phrase in measure 10, that the final F-F-sharp augmented octave is boldly stated, creating a deliberate conflict. The resolution of this conflict (to be discussed below) will eventually take the place of a tonally functional resolution, and is one of the central arguments of the introduction and mm. 11-17, which follow.

Ex. 2.12: Chordal dissonance, and resolution of F-F# conflict.
***Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 11-17.**



During mm. 11-17 (ex. 2.12), using smooth voice leading (largely chromatic), Handy creates intense chordal dissonances from juxtaposed triadic and seventh chord material, though some consonance is interspersed. Along with these shifting harmonies, the rhythm section plays a striking and unusual role, as it frequently does in this piece. Guitar, bass, and piano leave their more typical function (for the period) as the rhythmic and harmonic foundation, and articulate a unison, bebop style melodic line.[19]

Throughout mm. 11-17 (as well as in the entire piece), Handy emphasizes a lack of functionality and an absence of resolution. However, this series of dissonances, which include an F pedal in the bass sax (mm. 14-17), does ultimately lead to the resolution of the F-F-sharp conflict (ex. 2.12). In m. 15, the augmented octave dichotomy is powerfully present, with the F on the bottom (bass sax) and the F-sharp on top (flute), and then has a resolution of sorts (mm. 15-16): the flute's F-sharp resolves up to a G, as does trumpet 2 an octave below. G-flat, F-sharp's enharmonic, in trumpet 4, also resolves up to G, yet another octave below. G-flat in the saxophones resolves in contrary motion down to F, and the pedal F is maintained in the bass sax. This final seven-note

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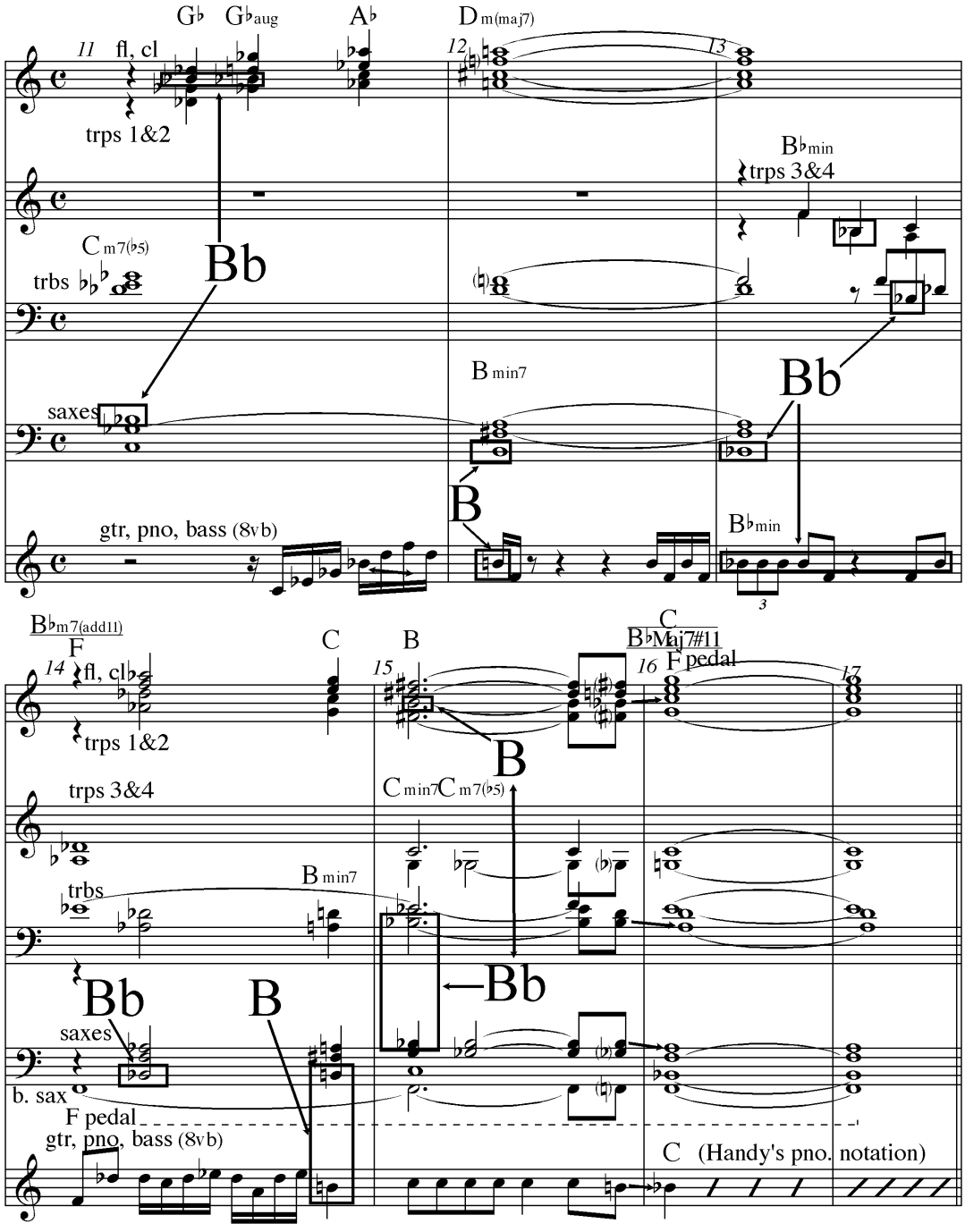
[19] The short-lived Billy Eckstine band (1944-47) has been noted as the first band to have incorporated bebop into its repertoire (Doug Ramsey, "Big Bands and Jazz Composing and Arranging After World War II," in *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, ed. Bill Kirchner [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], 403-17). The band featured bebop luminaries such as Dizzy Gillespie (who also organized and wrote for the band), Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Fats Navarro, Art Blakey, Dexter Gordon, and Gene Ammons. While Eckstine's band is regularly mentioned in this regard, Raeburn's band has not been given enough credit for its incorporation of bebop into its repertoire. Dizzy Gillespie was featured by Raeburn as both a composer and soloist as early as 1944, and the band introduced one of Gillepie's most well-known compositions, *A Night In Tunisia* (it was first released under the title *Interlude*). Raeburn's band also featured other players that were working in the bebop idiom, such as Benny Harris, Al Cohn, Oscar Pettiford, Shelly Manne, Lucky Thompson, and Serge Chaloff. Handy was an important figure in the incorporation of bebop into the Raeburn repertoire. His unison rhythm section line in *Dalvatore Sally* (ex. 2.12) is an excellent example of this. Handy, however, was not a bebop composer, but rather used the style as one more distinctive color in his palette.

chord of the section juxtaposes a C major triad, over a B-flat major7, all over the F pedal, and contains all members of the B-flat lydian collection. The rhythm section's final pitch is B-flat, and sounds to be a point of arrival. However, the polytonal nature of the chord, and the fact that the B-flat major7 portion is in second inversion, renders the chord somewhat ambiguous. With this resolution to the vertical presentation of B-flat lydian, this collection, along with its F natural, assumes primacy over the whole-tone collection and its F-sharp. Also, in retrospect, the F pedal in the bass sax (mm. 14-17) serves a dual function, as it takes part in the F-F-sharp dissonance (and resolution) and also functions as a dominant pedal of sorts to the B-flat major7 portion of the final chord.

During the F-F-sharp dialogue, this interest in ic1 is also simultaneously explored employing B and B-flat. The pcs B and B-flat are first seen in alternation (B-flat in m. 11, B in m. 12, and both, in alternation, in m. 14, ex. 2.13). When the F-F-sharp conflict reaches its apex (m. 15), B-flat and B are also both present (in a minor-ninth configuration), heightening the dissonance of the passage. Typically, Handy again employs smooth voice leading to the B-flat M7#11 (m. 15-16). B moves to B-flat, and the B-flats resolve to A or C.

Ex. 2.13: Further exploration of interval-class 1, employing B and B-flat.
***Dalvatore Sally*, mm. 11-17.**



Handy is very economical with the material he employs in *Dalvatore Sally*, as the work essentially consists of an introduction, a slow section (A of the ABA form, mm. 11-24), an up-tempo section (B, mm. 33-59), and a recapitulation of the A section (mm. 60-70). The F-F-sharp argument is presented in the introduction by contrasting a whole-tone collection (centered around B-flat) with the B-flat lydian collection. This argument is then continued and resolved in the A section (mm. 11-17). Simultaneously, the chromatically shifting brass and wind chords paired with the rhythm section's bebop line prepare the mood for the important tenor sax melody, also in section A. This brooding section, with its layered chords and ambiguous tonality, is then contrasted starkly against a much more traditional cut-time melody with a clearer sense of centricity. After a major and minor presentation of this B theme, the A section, both the shifting chords (with the resolution of the F-F-sharp conflict) and the tenor sax melody are recapitulated.

These examples of the compositional resources employed by the young George Handy, along with his use of surrealistic techniques and programmatic content, display some of the range of Handy's influences (be they conscious or subconscious). He listened intently to a wide variety of music, and his perfect pitch and skilled, experienced musicianship, combined with a great curiosity, allowed him to absorb the artistic environment of his day. He then wrote to please himself and his own creative desires in an unselfconscious manner.

Dalvatore Sally, with its fascinating mixture of compositional elements, is an excellent example of the modernist school of jazz writing, and is one of Handy's most audacious compositions of this period. While *Sally* initiated Handy's final, and most

important period with Boyd Raeburn's orchestra, his composition *The Bloos* brought it to a close.

Chapter Three

The Bloos

Historical Context

George Handy was on top of the jazz world in 1946. His charts for Boyd Raeburn were considered among the most adventurous works written for jazz big band during this period. He was accumulating top awards and critical acclaim, and was in demand as a composer-arranger. This reputation was further solidified by his inclusion in one of the most artistically ambitious recording projects ever undertaken in jazz, *The Jazz Scene*, produced by Norman Granz (1918-2001).

Granz was an artistically, commercially, and socio-politically ambitious music promoter.[1] He is perhaps best known for his successful and innovative concert promoting and record producing, including the popular touring jam session format he created, Jazz At the Philharmonic (JATP). JATP brought together leading jazz players in an informal and unrehearsed manner. They were presented in a "cutting session" format such as often

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[1] Along with his desire to promote jazz as a business, Granz was politically motivated to battle racial discrimination in the jazz field. He also saw jazz as a powerful political tool to be used to promote better race relations in society. One manner in which Granz expressed his political and artistic agenda was through three contractual obligations that he insisted upon for his Jazz at the Philharmonic concert format: proper remuneration for the musicians, no dancing at the concerts, and no racial segregation on the bandstand or in the audience (Arthur Knight, "*Jammin' the Blues*, or the Sight of Jazz," in *Representing Jazz*, ed. Krin Gabbard [Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995], 26). Granz, in a letter to a number of important bandleaders, also encouraged others to follow his lead regarding the contractual demand for a desegregated environment for the presentation of jazz (David Stowe, *Swing Changes* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994], 236).

happened in private, or after-hours, jam sessions.[2] It sought to present the excitement and looseness of these situations to a general public that normally did not have access to this type of playing environment. While JATP showcased the musical abilities of the players, its primary goal was to create an entertaining concert that would appeal to a wide audience. Consequently, it encouraged some of the more obvious crowd-pleasing techniques such as screaming high notes on the trumpet, honking low notes on the saxophone, extremely fast playing, and the excitement of an extended solo.

While JATP was conceived to have a wide appeal and to be commercially viable, *The Jazz Scene* was Granz's self-financed gift to the jazz world, and was intended for a more limited audience.[3] The players and composers were to put their best foot forward without commercial considerations or artistic limitations. The artists were free to choose the instrumentation and their side musicians, without restrictions on the size of the ensemble, the length of the piece, or the studio time needed to record. The objective was to create a snapshot of the most important jazz being played and written in the late 1940s. In Granz's original liner notes for *The Jazz Scene*, he stated that his goal was "to get the artists best illustrating today's jazz scene to record the essence of themselves musically."[4]

The project included works and performances by the most distinguished names in jazz. In addition to George Handy, contributing composers included Duke Ellington,

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[2] A "cutting session" is a generally good-natured competition between jazz soloists. At times, however, these sessions can take on a more seriously competitive undertone, with players' reputations and prospective employment at stake.

[3] Michael Levin, in his review of *The Jazz Scene*, underscores Granz's personal commitment to the project by noting that the expenses for the record set exceeded twelve-thousand dollars, and that the project could, at best, break even (Michael Levin, "Calls 'Jazz Scene' Most Remarkable Album Ever," *Down Beat*, January 1950, 14).

[4] Norman Granz. Liner notes to *The Jazz Scene*, Clef Records, MG Vol. 1, 1949.

Billy Strayhorn, Ralph Burns, and Neal Hefti. Instrumental performers included Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Nat Cole, Buddy Rich, Machito and his orchestra, Flip Phillips, and Willie Smith.

The recording sessions (held in several studios, both in Los Angeles and New York) took place sporadically, beginning in 1946. The final product, released in 1949 on Clef Records, is a high-quality, limited edition folio (5,000, all numbered and signed) of six twelve-inch 78 rpm LPs, encased in a simple cloth-bound hard cover with a ring binding that allows any item to be detached.[5] Each record is sheathed separately and is accompanied by a photo of the featured artist and a profile by Granz. The photography is by the well-known French photographer, Gjon Mili (who worked for *Life* magazine), and the folio concludes with sixteen additional album-sized photos of other prominent jazz musicians. David Stone Martin also contributed artwork. The folio sold for the premium price of twenty-five dollars (approximately 250 dollars in 2006, adjusted for inflation).

Granz and Mili had previously collaborated on another important project. Through his connections and resources as a film editor for MGM studios, Granz coordinated "the first notable jazz documentary," *Jammin' the Blues*.[6] Directed by Mili, *Jammin' the Blues* is a ten-minute jazz documentary that combines photography and film of live jazz performances by Lester Young, Harry Edison, Illinois Jacquet, Sid Catlett, Jo Jones, Red Callender, and Barney Kessel. The film was critically acclaimed as "one of

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[5] As the twelve-inch format was generally reserved for classical music, the obvious intent of using this type of LP was to present jazz with an equal level of artistic integrity (Brian Priestley, liner notes to *The Jazz Scene*, Verve Records [reissue], 314 521 661-2, 1994).

[6] Chuck Berg, "Jazz and Film and Television," in *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, ed. Bill Kirchner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 718.

the few honest motion pictures about jazz,"[7] and received an Academy Award nomination.

Jammin' the Blues is a precursor to *The Jazz Scene*, in that it was conceived as a high-minded project that attempted to uplift and broaden the public perception of jazz by exhibiting it as both high art and entertainment, while presenting the musicians in a respectful manner. Mili's approach in *Jammin' The Blues* inspired Granz to represent the current state of jazz through the combination of music and photography.

Political goals also bind these two projects, for both present jazz as an African American art form, but in a racially mixed artistic environment. In his essay on the film, Arthur Knight discusses the political ramifications of the documentary when he states that "*Jammin' the Blues* functions as the first national advertisement for . . . oppositional inclusion and progressive consumerism."[8] Perhaps this indicates the project's influence on Granz's social and political goals.

In the original liner notes for the record folio, Granz states that "we intend to make *The Jazz Scene* a yearly affair presenting new jazz stars as they appear."[9] However, because of the increased competition in the jazz record business, as well as general contractual difficulties, a yearly release did not come to fruition.[10] Also, after the release of *The Jazz Scene*, Granz became a much more active record producer, which

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[7] Whitney Balliett. *The Sound of Surprise* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1978), 6.

[8] Knight, *Jammin' the Blues*, 37.

[9] Granz. *The Jazz Scene*.

[10] There were also artists that Granz would have liked to include (such as Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Illinois Jacquet, Louis Armstrong, and Eddie Sauter), but was unable, because of artist's record label commitments. (Tad Hershorn, "Let Freedom Swing" [unpublished manuscript, 2005]).

lessened his desire, as well as his sense of urgency, perhaps, to continue a series of representative samplers.[11]

For his contribution to *The Jazz Scene*, George Handy composed a work titled *The Bloos*. He took the commission seriously enough to write an entirely new work for an ambitiously extended big band, but he also seems to have taken the opportunity in stride.[12] As was his custom, Handy appears to have written the piece quickly.[13] He was, after all, one of the country's top arrangers at the time, and was riding a wave of success. This commission might have seemed just one more gig for Handy in a long line of writing projects. However, the work turns out to be Handy's last major work for full (or extended) big band. Coming at the end of his Raeburn period, and in the midst of his greatest commercial and artistic success, it could be seen as his crowning big band composition.[14]

Handy was allowed to choose any instrumentation for his piece, without commercial restraints. Handy recalls that Norman Granz said "I want to give each of you people a side on the twelve-inch record, carte blanche. If you want fifty men, fifty violins, a symphony, you've got it. If you want to . . . just sit at the piano, you've got it."[15]

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[11] Priestley, *The Jazz Scene*.

[12] Not all works for the record set were written specifically for it.

[13] There are a number of shorthand techniques used in the manuscript, such as those referring to already composed sections to be repeated verbatim; the manuscript has the look of a fast hand; and sections that Handy was unhappy with were not changed or edited (to be discussed during the analysis section).

[14] In his article on jazz composition from this period, Ramsey states: "*The Bloos* for Norman Granz's *The Jazz Scene* (Verve) album of 1949 was his last masterpiece" (Ramsey, "Big Bands," 407).

[15] Schremp,. "Handy Oral History," 231.

An excellent band was at Handy's disposal, as arranger Ralph Burns had already assembled a fourteen-piece ensemble—for an earlier session the same day—to record his contribution to the record set, *Introspection*. Handy augmented the band to twenty-seven players.[16] Burns's group consisted largely of members (or veterans) of Woody Herman's big band, as Burns was just coming off a long stint as primary arranger for Herman.:[17]

The five-hour recording session for *The Bloos* must have been grueling, especially considering that the band had recorded Burns's piece earlier in the day.[18] The piece, correctly characterized by Ramsey as "breathtakingly difficult and very funny,"[19] seems to have taxed the highly skilled band's abilities. While the piece is very well played in general, and has a spirited and exciting quality, there are sections that are not correctly performed. The Verve reissue provides added insight into the work and the recording process, as it includes an alternate take of *The Bloos*.[20] There are different errors in each one, but a section that stands out as particularly difficult, mm. 85-93, is not correctly rendered in either take. The percussionists in particular have difficulty with the quirky accents that require them to be independent from the rest of the band, as well as with the correct placement of xylophone parts.

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[16] The instrumentation of *The Bloos* is described as being for twenty-eight players in the liner notes for the record set. The twenty-eighth part on the autograph score is labeled "Piano 2," but appears to be a conductor's part. I posit that Handy conducted rather than played. For a listing of personnel, see the discography entry for *The Bloos* (p. 182).

[17] The liner notes for the album list three violins and one cello, but the instrumentation was the reverse. A source confirms that Harry Bluestone played violin (Levin, "Remarkable Album"), so I am surmising that the others all played cello. No alto sax was used, and according to Hal McKusick, he played the clarinet while Klee played flute (Hal McKusick, phone conversation, February 2, 2006).

[18] Hershorn, "Let Freedom Swing," 266.

[19] Ramsey, "Big Bands," 407.

[20] *The Jazz Scene*, Verve Records [reissue], 314 521 661-2, 1994.

In the original liner notes for *The Jazz Scene*, Granz writes,

> In all of these short profiles about the artists and the music set to record, I've attempted to give some sort of an insight into the man's inner character, and how this character is manifested in the music the man produces. Thus, when I started the descriptive sketches, I asked each man to send me pertinent information about himself. Occasionally, a man's description of himself hits the mark. George Handy sent me a short note which was so succinctly perfect in explaining his music, his attitude about the world around him, that I'm reprinting it in lieu of my writing my impression of him; I couldn't improve it. It explains, at least in part, the bitterness, the confusion, the groping, and the solid musicianship in all of his music. Here it is: "Born in Brooklyn in 1920. Schools—Erasmus High, N.Y.U., Juilliard. Studied privately with Aaron Copland for awhile which did neither of us any good. Raeburn, Babe Russin, Alvino Rey, Buddy Rich, Benny Goodman are some of the bands I've written for. None of them play anything of mine now. Only thing worth while in my life is my wife Flo and my son Mike. The rest stinks including the music biz and all connected. I'm still living. George Handy." When we did the record date, Handy told me that he was tired of everyone doing the blues in the same, conventional way. He said he'd do something different with them. Even his title is wryly different–it's called *The Bloos*.[21]

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[21] Granz, *The Jazz Scene*.

Handy's comments, presumably written approximately three years after the recording session, present a stark reality. The speed with which Handy went from the zenith of the music business (at the time of the recording in 1946) to a seemingly embittered and under-employed musician (around the time of the release of the record set in 1949) is remarkable (as was his quick rise to the top). The pathos of this personal and professional slide becomes even greater when noting that even "the only thing worth while in my [Handy's] life" would turn sour, eventually resulting in Handy's divorce from his wife, Flo, and estrangement from his children.

There was little critical reaction to either *The Jazz Scene* or to *The Bloos*, but the available reviews are favorable to both. Michael Levin called *The Jazz Scene* "the most remarkable record album ever issued . . ."[22] Levin speaks highly of *The Bloos*, but, other than description, orients his discussion around his opinion that the work is "a brilliantly sustained job of satire," and "is a raw commentary on what George Handy thinks of the gentry who keep leaning on the blues for musical assistance in composition." Judging from Handy's own comments (seen below in the discussion of orchestration), as well as my impressions of the music, I do not agree with his assessment, and feel that the work is an expression of Handy's impressions of the blues rather than a commentary or satire of the work of others in the genre.

Paul Bacon also praises the collection as a whole (while disparaging the price of the folio), and characterizes *The Bloos* as an "intense, nervous abstraction of the blues."[23]

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[22] Levin, "Remarkable Album."

[23] Paul Bacon, "One Man's Panorama," *Record Changer* (February, 1950): 14.

His description of Handy is just as colorful (and accurate): "George Handy is an agonized character with a frightening personal history and a peculiar musical reputation; he has followers as devoted as the Apostles, and he is considered, by a lot of other people, to be a writer of movie-type trivia."

Orchestration

Because of the freedom accorded the commissioned composers for *The Jazz Scene*, Handy had the rare opportunity to employ any number of instruments in his composition. As a big band composer-arranger, it was natural for Handy to rely upon the standard instrumentation of trumpets, trombones, reeds, and rhythm section. Handy did take advantage of his freedom, however. He augmented the standard ensemble with strings, woodwinds, horns, and additional percussionists, yet was economical in his choices.

The make-up of the string section is highly unusual. Handy chose to use a bottom-heavy string quartet, consisting of one violin and three cellos. He also incorporated an expanded woodwind quintet: flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, contrabassoon, and two horns. In essence, Handy created a classical chamber ensemble within the confines of a big band. The addition of this colorful, yet somewhat delicate, inner ensemble demands a careful deployment of resources. In order to integrate them effectively, they must not be subsumed by the much louder and heavier big band texture.

Handy discusses the compositional content and his orchestrational choices:

> Coincidentally with Norman making me this offer, I had been thinking about a composition dealing with what I felt were many of the blues feelings or forms, many of the essences of blues, and I wanted to put all these things in one composition and it seemed to me in the colors that I saw that I would need the instrumentation that I decided on. It was just a feeling that this three cello sound was important to me and I didn't feel that I needed more than one violin for what I heard, for what I required. That's how it came about.[24]

Handy's deployment of fine orchestral detail and colorful combinations of timbres was certainly not unprecedented. By 1946, Duke Ellington had long since set the standard for this fine art. Bill Challis and Ferde Grofé, for Paul Whiteman in the 1920s, and Eddie Sauter, for Red Norvo and Benny Goodman in the 1930s and 40s, carefully combined their orchestrational resources in unusual and colorful ways.[25] By 1946, however, few important jazz record dates had included as varied an instrumentation as is employed in *The Bloos*. In fact, in the field of jazz composition, there is little precedent for *The Bloos* in regard to its smooth integration of an unusually disparate

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[24] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 233-34.

[25] Discussions of jazz orchestration and composition can be found in: Schuller, *The Swing Era*; Max Harrison, "Swing Era Big Bands and Jazz Composing and Arranging," in *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, ed. Bill Kirchner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 277-91; Terry Teachout, "Jazz and Classical Music: To the Third Stream and Beyond," in *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, ed. Bill Kirchner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 343-56; Ramsey, "Big Bands."

instrumentation.[26] The influential recording *Charlie Parker with Strings* (that also included Julius Jacobs, the oboist who played on *The Bloos*) was not begun until 1947, and was primarily recorded in 1949. Kenton's forty-piece the *Innovations in Modern Music Orchestra*, was formed in 1950, and Bob Graettinger's final version of his extended modernist work (with an expanded orchestration), *City of Glass*, was written for, and recorded by, Kenton in 1951.[27]

The instrumentation and orchestration of *The Bloos* is one of the more important and salient aspects of this work. In this piece Handy manages to coalesce his interests in jazz and classical music into a very personal and unique musical statement. Though his late works for saxophone quartet and the *Caine Flute Sonata* both have this genre-bending quality, they are written for ensembles commonly found in the classical world. For this reason, *The Bloos* is perhaps Handy's most successful synthesis of jazz and classical influences within the confines of a big-band jazz composition. Gunther Schuller cites *The Bloos* as one of six examples of a style "in which attempts were made to fuse basic elements of jazz and Western art music."[28] Interestingly, Handy apparently did not think of his work in this manner. I am not aware of any evidence, either from Handy or

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[26] This is not to say that strings and other instruments more often associated with classical ensembles had not been previously employed in the context of jazz or jazz-related music. Among many others, Whiteman used strings in his ensemble in the 1920s; Artie Shaw regularly experimented with various string configurations in the 1930s and 40s; and during the 1940s, Earl Hines, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Gene Krupa, and Lionel Hampton briefly included string sections in their big bands.

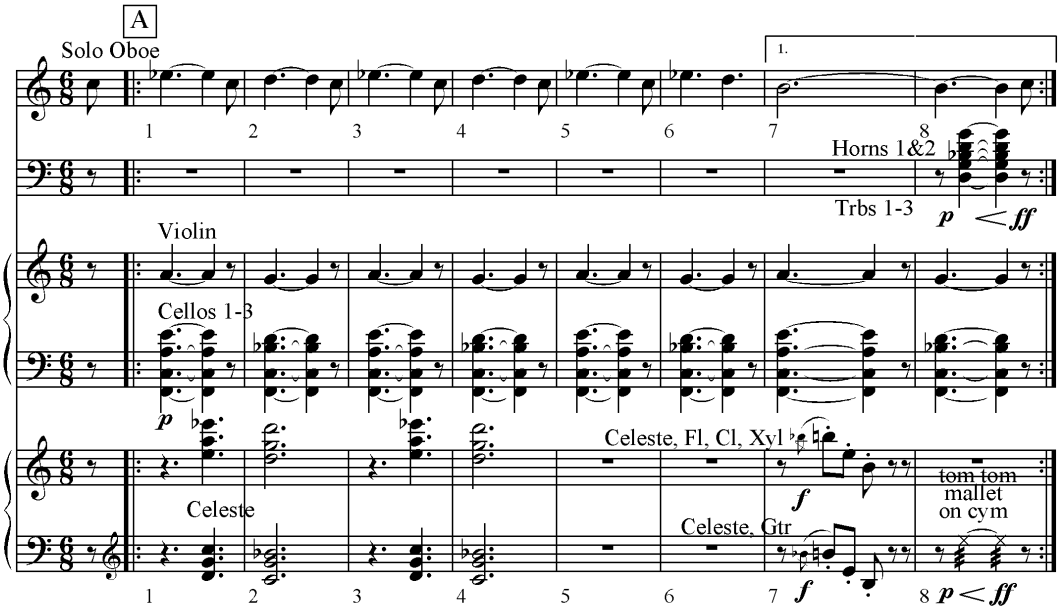
[27] J. Bradford Robinson: "Stan Kenton," *New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 13: 480-81.

[28] Schuller: "Third stream," 401. Schuller's interest in the *Bloos* is also diplayed by the fact the he published a facsimile of the score through his company, Margun Music, BMI, 1996. The other third stream works that Schuller cites as important examples of the genre are: Red Norvo's *Dance of the Octopus* (1933); Ralph Burns's *Summer Sequence* (composed for Woody Herman, 1946); Graettinger's *City of Glas*s; Alec Wilder's *Jazz Suite* (1951); and Rolf Lieberman's *Concerto for Jazz Band and Orchestra* (composed for the Sauter-Finegan Orchestra, 1956).

his friends and colleagues, to suggest that Handy consciously was attempting to create such a fusion of styles. It appears, however, that the lack of restrictions on instrumentation, combined with the freedom from commercial restraints (such as playing for dancing—though he never seemed to worry much about this—and the limits of two songs to a normal 78 rpm record side), allowed him to express the full range of his orchestrational, harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic sensibilities, all of which I will discuss below.

Either Handy wanted to have a careful, gentle orchestrational sensibility, or he was forced to by his own choice of instrumentation. Whichever way it occurred, Handy employs instruments with extremely varied timbral qualities subtly and intelligently. The means by which he does so are exemplified in the opening section of *The Bloos*.

Ex. 3.1: *The Bloos*, mm. 1-10.
Oboe melody with string accompaniment.



The work begins with the chamber ensemble, an oboe melody over a simple string chordal background (see ex. 3.1). This orchestral texture is quite reminiscent of the alto saxophone solo (that also has a simple string background) that dominates the introduction (mm. 1-106) of Milhaud's *La création du monde* (1923). While Handy immediately employs an instrumentation that speaks to the importance of classical orchestral textures to *The Bloos*, Milhaud takes a similar approach, but from the opposite perspective, by using an instrument (the saxophone) that is more readily associated with jazz. More importantly, Handy's oboe melody, that dominates the piece, is a nearly literal quote (at pitch) from the oboe solo in the second section of *La création du monde*. Additionally, the celeste chords (mm. 1-10) call to mind Gershwin's use of the celeste in the orchestrated version of *American in Paris* (1928).

Measures 11-18 (ex. 3.2) bring in the entire ensemble, the brass shouting in their upper registers. The strings and woodwinds are buried in this section, but, of course, add to the overall texture.[29] However, Handy comes out of the fortissimo of this section with a sharp cutoff of all instruments, except for the violin and flute, who continue to hold through a fermata (m. 18). This is a technique I am labeling the "pop-out technique." It is used regularly by Handy (e.g., in *Dalvatore Sally*), and is featured so prominently throughout this piece that it becomes a formal and motivic element.

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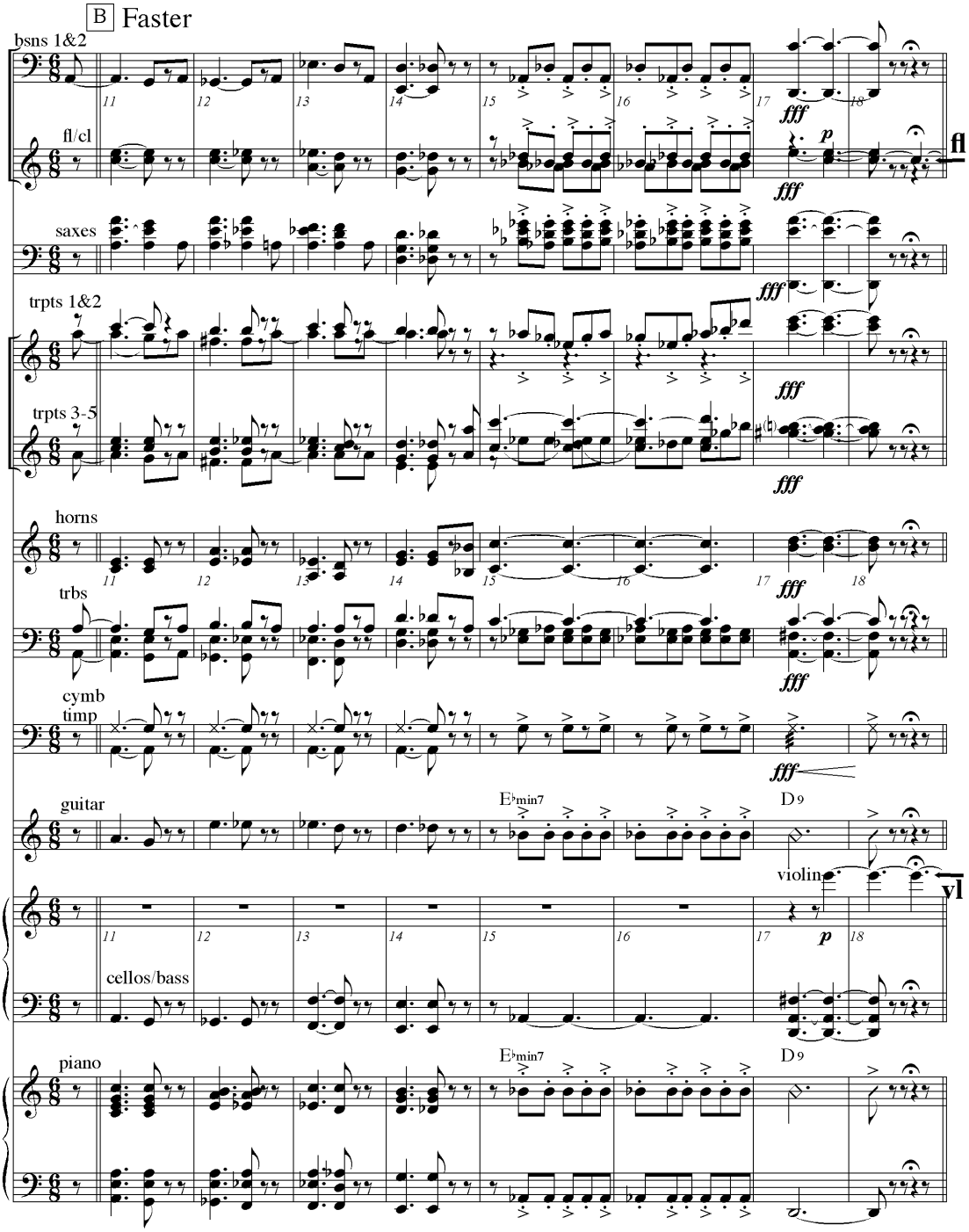
[29] While the woodwinds are largely functioning as part of the reed section, for clarity's sake I am differentiating the saxes from the woodwinds in my analysis.

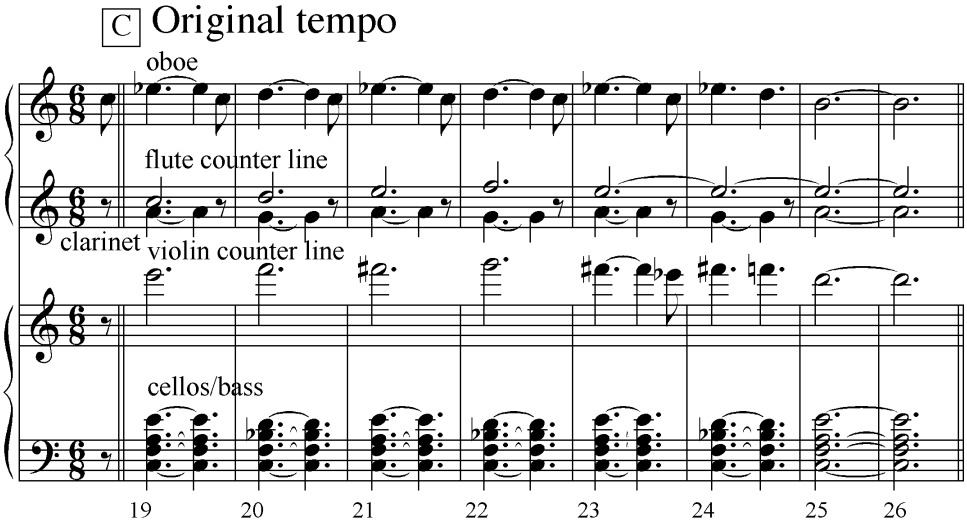
Ex. 3.2: *The Bloos*, mm. 11-18.
Full ensemble; "pop-out" orchestrational technique.



The technique lets the quieter instruments (in this case, the flute and violin) be hidden by the full ensemble, and then to pop-out of the texture as all other instruments

percussively and sharply cut off.[30] The held flute and violin notes lead directly to a repeat of the oboe melody (ex. 3.3) with a slightly varied orchestration, and help create one of the work's most subtly beautiful sections. The clarinet replaces the violin in the string chords, adding a variety of color to the chordal texture. The violin and flute continue, adding an ascending counter line that moves in and out of consonance and dissonance with the oboe. Also, the change in the accompanying chords from root position to second-inversion creates an instability that adds to the gentle nature of the passage.

Ex. 3.3: *The Bloos*, mm. 19-26.
Variation of orchestrational texture: restatement of oboe melody.



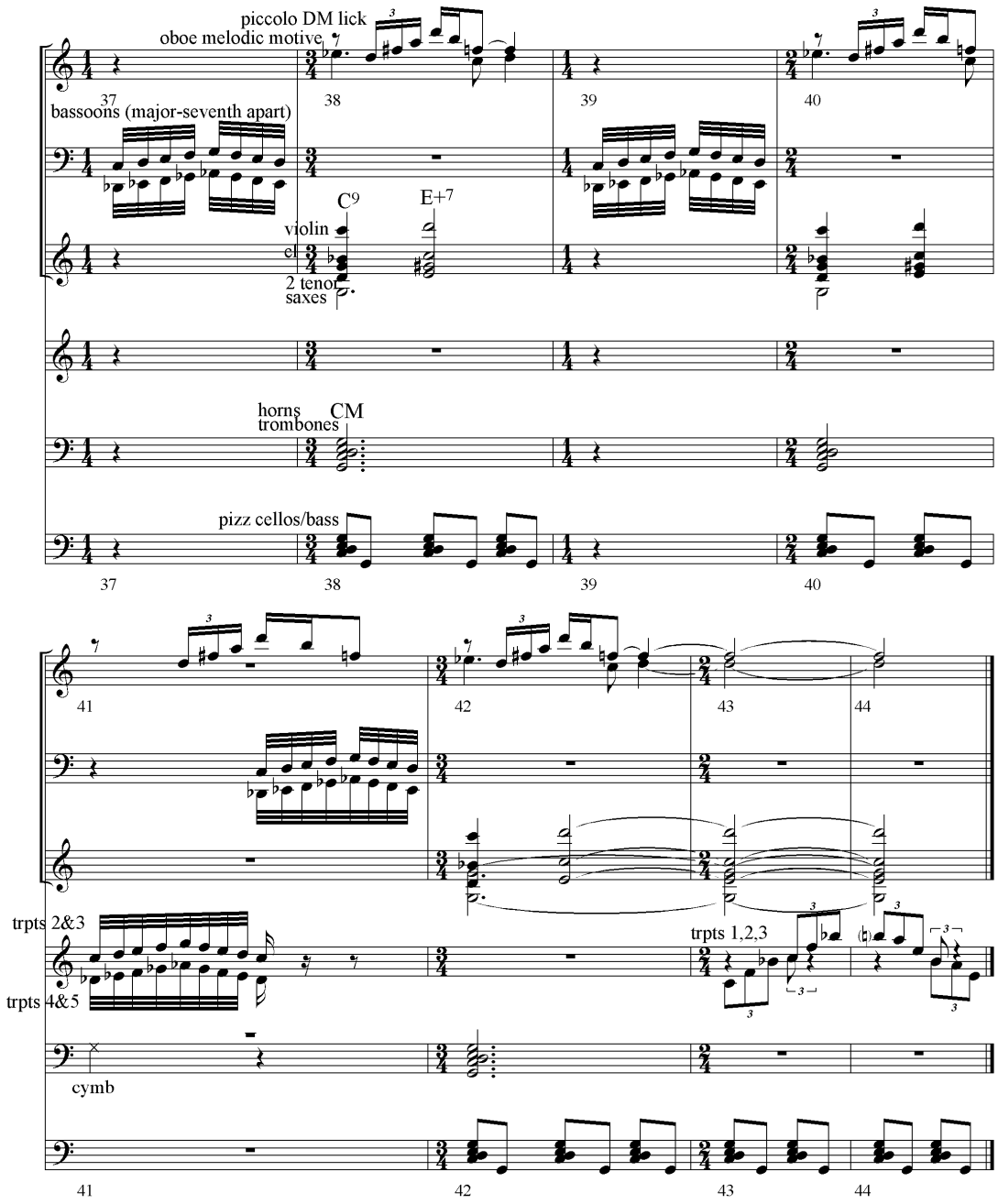
During mm. 37-44 (ex. 3.4), Handy creates a series of melodic gestures that alternate with chords punctuated by pizzicato strings. In this section Handy gives us a

[30] In big band writing, it is a common convention that a tied eighth-note implies a sharp cut-off on a beat, in this case, m. 18, beat one (ex. 3.2).

taste of all of his distinctive orchestral colors, as well as interesting instrumental combinations. The bassoons present a melodic gesture, an ascending major-scale pentachord voiced a major-seventh apart.[31] Alternating with this are groups of chords, the first orchestrated for violin, clarinet, and two tenor saxes (tenors), and the second for horns and trombones, punctuated by pizzicato cellos and bass accenting chordal pitches. While the brass (accented by cellos and bass) maintain a dark, lower-register C major6 chord, the violin, woodwind, and sax group moves from a C9 to an E+7. Over this colorful harmony, the piccolo, heard for the first time, plays a bluesy D major lick (the D major is heard nowhere else at the moment), and the oboe adds in its melodic motive from mm. 1-10 and 19-26, all of which again exhibits Handy's proclivity for superimposing unrelated chords and juxtaposing various elements.

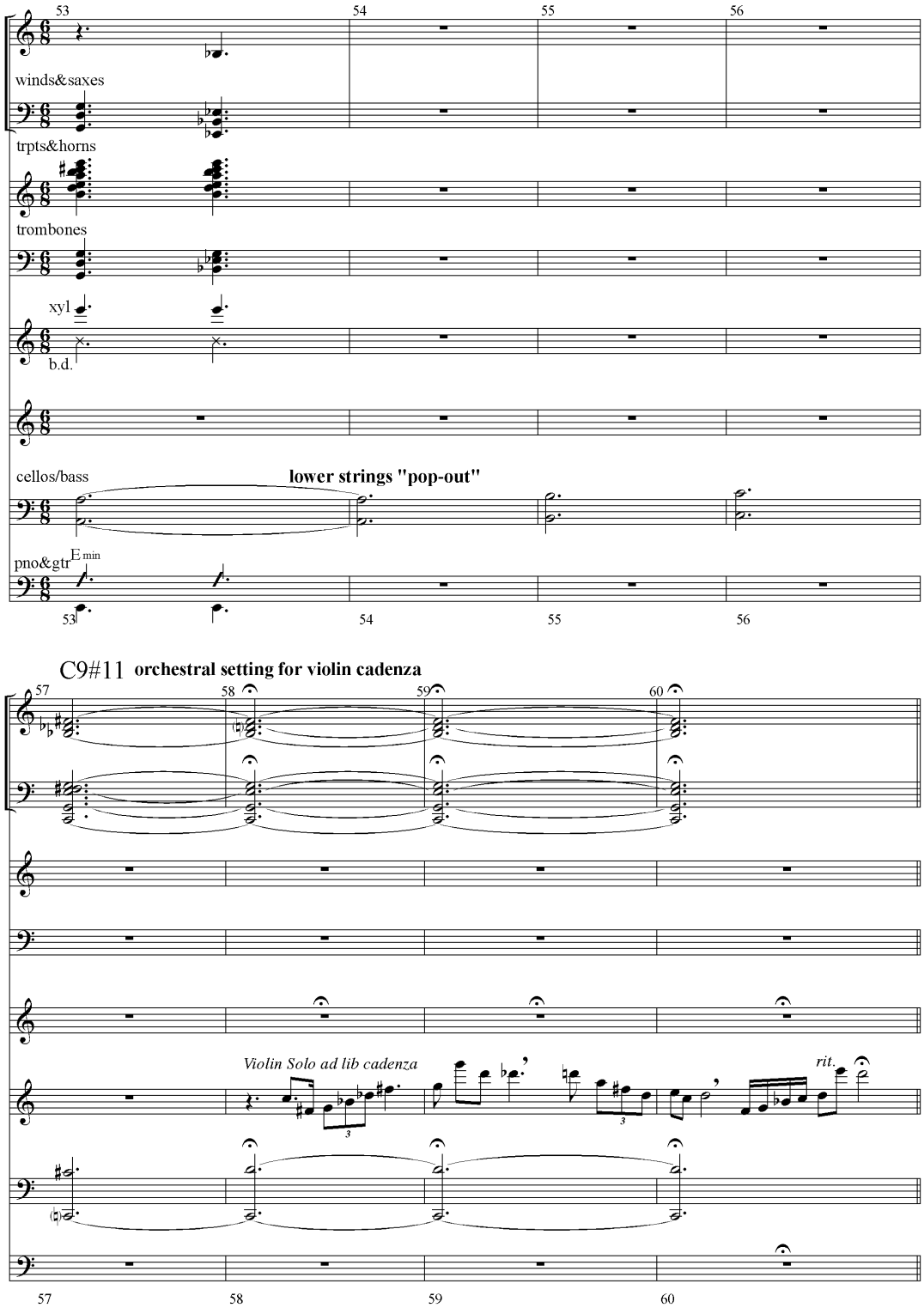
[31] The use of interval-class 1 relationships will be discussed in the musical analysis section below.

Ex. 3.4: *The Bloos*, mm. 37-44.
Distinctive orchestral colors.



Still in mm. 27-66 (ex. 3.5), after two chords from the full ensemble, the lower strings again pop out of the heavy texture (m. 53). After an ascending line, they are joined by the winds and saxes to create a colorful chordal accompaniment (C9#11) for the solo violin cadenza (ex. 3.5). The chord, with its reliance on woodwinds and strings, is very much an orchestral color, and, coupled with the violin solo, would be as at-home in a classical orchestral setting as it is in this big band jazz work. In fact, the violin cadenza again recalls the first movement of Gershwin's *American in Paris*, which employs a similar texture and melodic character. This fusion of classical and jazz styles is perhaps the most significant aspect of *The Bloos*. The combination is so unique and personal that its influence on other composers' works is perhaps peripheral. It lingers not as a direct influence, but rather as a tantalizing and inspirational notion that allows for the articulation of a personal musical vision and the creation of composition free from genre restrictions.

Ex. 3.5: *The Bloos*, mm. 53-60.
"Pop-out" technique and orchestral setting of violin cadenza.



Johnny Mandel supports this concept, as he cannot pinpoint a direct influence within Handy's music. Mandel is also unable to suggest any composers who were directly influenced by his writing. He expresses the feeling that Handy's style was too individualistic to have been absorbed by others. Mandel also notes that Handy was highly respected by his contemporaries, and that younger writers such as himself were inspired by his unique creativity.[32]

After again employing the pop-out technique (this time with trombone 1 emerging from the ensemble), the composed trombone solo in mm. 67-80 is set against another orchestral-like texture (ex. 3.6). Here is an example of a jazz-style melodic presentation (the trombone solo) over an orchestral texture (the accompaniment is dominated by woodwinds and strings), and is another example of a mixture of the two aesthetics. The string, woodwind, and tenor sax background gives ample support for the soloist, but its timbre is soft enough to allow an intimate presentation of the melody as might be seen in a small group setting. An oboe counterpoint is also present. In addition, this is one of only two places in the work (the other is a tenor sax blues solo in mm. 99-109) where the rhythm section is called upon to play a typical accompaniment role (ex. 3.6).[33] The texture thins out at m. 73 (ex. 3.7), becoming trombone and strings, with occasional interspersions from the ensemble.

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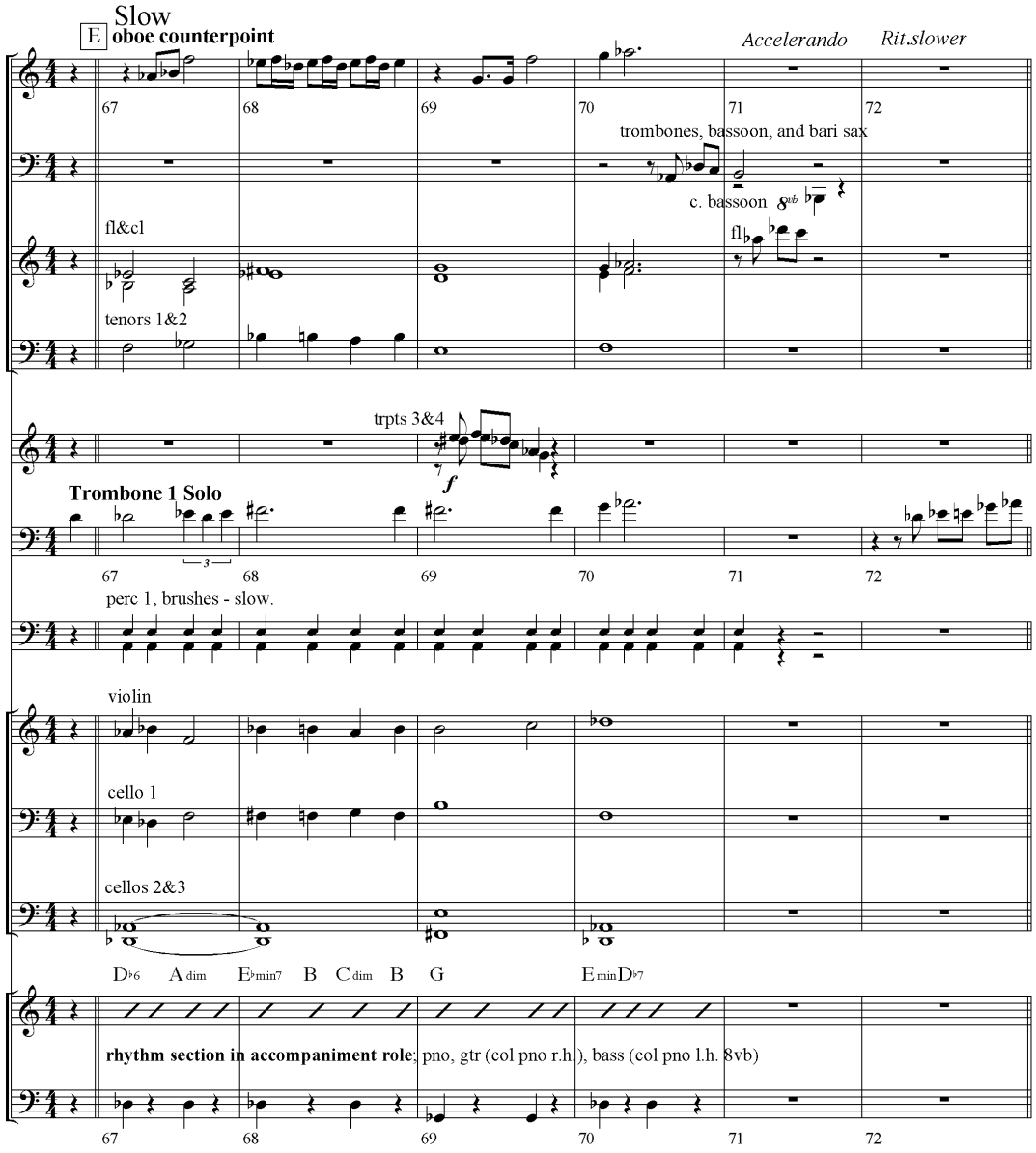
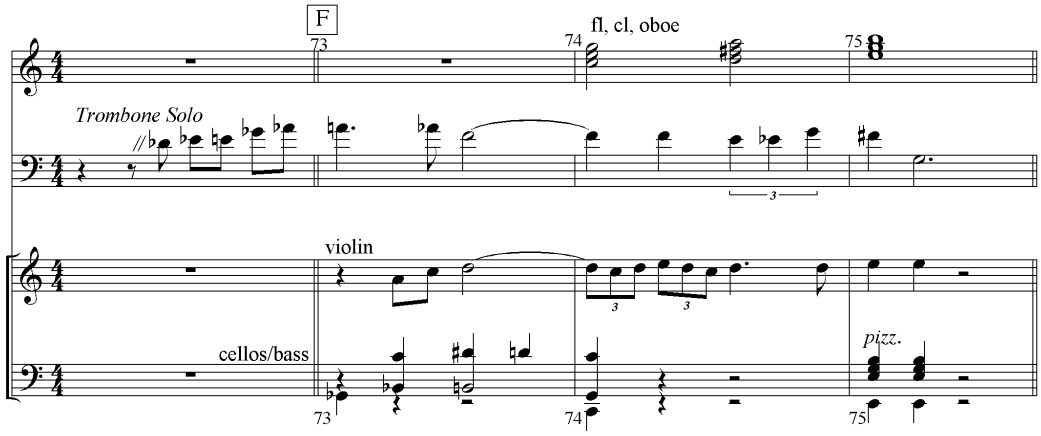
[32] Mandel, phone conversation.

[33] They are given a standard lead sheet-type of notation, which normally provides a chordal (and perhaps rhythmic) outline, rather than a specific, completely notated part.

Ex. 3.6: *The Bloos*, mm. 67-72.
Trombone solo with orchestral texture.

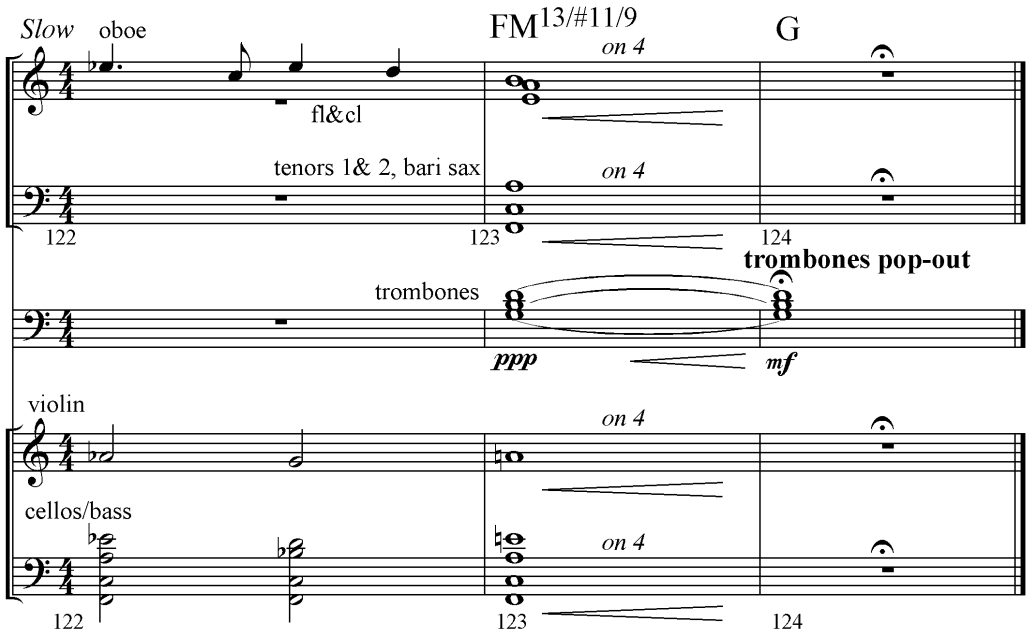


Ex. 3.7: *The Bloos*, mm. 73-75.
Trombone solo with strings.



The pop-out technique is also used in the final chords of *The Bloos* (ex. 3.8). During the last repetition of the oboe theme (originally from mm. 1-10), the last chord is an F major7 (with the oboe melody as the #11, m. 123, ex. 3.8). However, the trombones juxtapose a related G-major triad upon this, extending the chordal structure, creating an F-major13/#11/9. All instruments, except the trombones, are directed to cut off precisely on beat 4 (by the notation "on 4"), which generally implies an almost percussive stopping of the sound. The trombones are left to quietly (ppp) and dramatically pop-out of the texture as they hold their chord. This sonority concludes the piece; it will be discussed below as an important harmonic event.

Ex. 3.8: *The Bloos*, mm. 122-124.
Trombones' final chord; "pop-out" technique.



While Handy never discusses his desire to treat the big band as a hybrid jazz and classical ensemble, his extensive use of woodwinds and strings clearly shows a proclivity towards this concept. Another example of this is seen in his scoring of percussion in *The Bloos*. While the instrumentation of big bands varies (e.g., a trumpet section may have anywhere from two to five trumpets), they have always had one drummer. In jazz, of course, with the use of the drum kit, one drummer is able to play the role of several percussionists.[34] Handy, however, without precedent within the big band tradition, calls for three percussionists, none of whom plays the kit.

For his percussion battery, Handy essentially splits up the drum set, assigning the various instruments (snare drum and snare rim, cymbal—struck with mallets and sticks,

[34] A kit drummer's feet play the bass drum and hi-hat cymbal, while their hands play drums and cymbals.

and tom tom) to the three percussionists. The score also atypically indicates timpani. For the recording session, however, for an unknown reason (perhaps because of a lack of availability), a kick (bass) drum replaces the timpani, and completes the composite drum kit. Another distinctive instrumental choice for the battery is the xylophone, which plays an important coloristic role.[35]

Though the battery is not particularly distinctive, the principal role of the percussionists in *The Bloos* is very unusual within the jazz tradition. A big band drummer's customary role is to articulate and highlight accents in the context of playing "time."[36] However, except for the time kept behind the tenor sax soloist (to be discussed below), the typical drummer's job of keeping time for the big band is eschewed. It is for this reason that Handy split up the battery. He did not want a drummer tied to his kit and playing time, but preferred, as is the case for orchestral percussionists, to have each player free to switch instruments and play different roles.

How the rhythm of a work moves forward temporally is a crucial difference between classical and jazz composition. In jazz, traditionally, the rhythm section is responsible for creating this movement. In *The Bloos*, however, Handy holds the melodic ensemble (brass, woodwinds, saxes, trombones, strings) rhythmically responsible for itself, relying upon the harmonic rhythm of the work to create the rhythmic pulse and

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[35] Vibraphone is also called for in the score, but is replaced by the xylophone throughout the recording. Hal McKusick feels strongly that none of the listed percussionists knew how to play the xylophone, and that an additional (uncredited) studio player must have been hired for that particular part (McKusick, phone conversation, February 2, 2006).

[36] "Time" is an expression used to describe the swing rhythmic patterns that a drummer plays behind a soloist or ensemble. It is generally indicated in the score by the word "time," and might be further notated with forward-slashes from the second to the fourth line of the staff, one for each beat of the time signature, or by quarter notes (again one for each beat). Important rhythmic figures are usually notated on the first space above the staff (stems up).

flow, and he employs the percussion for coloristic effect. This orchestrational concept extends to the entire rhythm section, as the piano, bass, and guitar also do not fill their expected roles as timekeepers and accompanists. This is critically important to the compositional style of the work, and is highly unusual, particularly for 1946.

Even when the rhythm section is accompanying the tenor sax solo during mm. 98-109, the task of playing time is broken up between the three percussionists. One is directed to use sticks, presumably for the snare drum (for backbeats and fills on the snare), one to use brushes (to play a time pattern on the snare), while the third is directed to play time on the high hat cymbal (on the recording, however, the ride cymbal is used instead of the high hat). In effect it sounds like a drum kit, though there are two differences. Most importantly, there is no bass drum present. Typically, the bass drum would be playing a strong quarter note pulse.[37] This effect is not missed, however, as the bass and guitar are both filling that role by playing steady quarter notes, the bass "walking" and the guitar solidly strumming with a pick. Secondly, and less significantly, with one kit drummer we would have either the snare fills or the brushes pattern, but in Handy's version we have both.

The coloristic function of the rhythm section produces one of the major stylistic characteristics that enables *The Bloos* to stand out as a unique jazz composition in its era (and to this day as well). It exemplifies Handy's individualistic approach to composition, which results from his extensive exposure to, and interest in, the worlds of both jazz and

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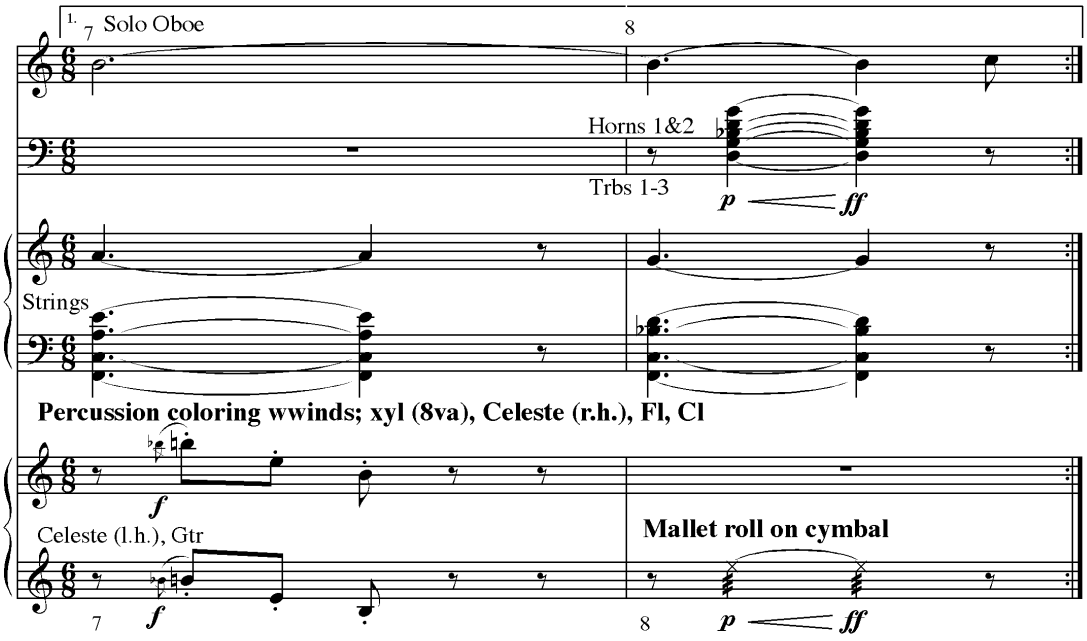
[37] Perhaps this is influenced by the fact that as of the mid-1940s, with the advent of bebop, the bass drum role, particularly in small bands, had been freed from the role of timekeeper and had begun to be used for rhythmic accent.

classical music. What makes the work even more effective and interesting is the entirely unselfconscious manner with which Handy creates this blending.

Handy's coloristic approach is seen in the percussion's initial entrance (ex. 3.9). The flute and clarinet's quirky melodic fill (m. 7) is doubled (an octave above) by xylophone (percussion 3), as well as by celeste and guitar. The xylophone's sharp, percussive character enhances the rhythmic quality of the line and contrasts strongly with the legato oboe and string melody. The score also indicates that the rhythm is doubled by the rim of the snare (percussion 1) but I do not hear this in the recording. Percussion 2 follows with a dynamic mallet roll on the cymbal (m. 8), emphasizing and coloring the sharp crescendo of the horns and trombones.

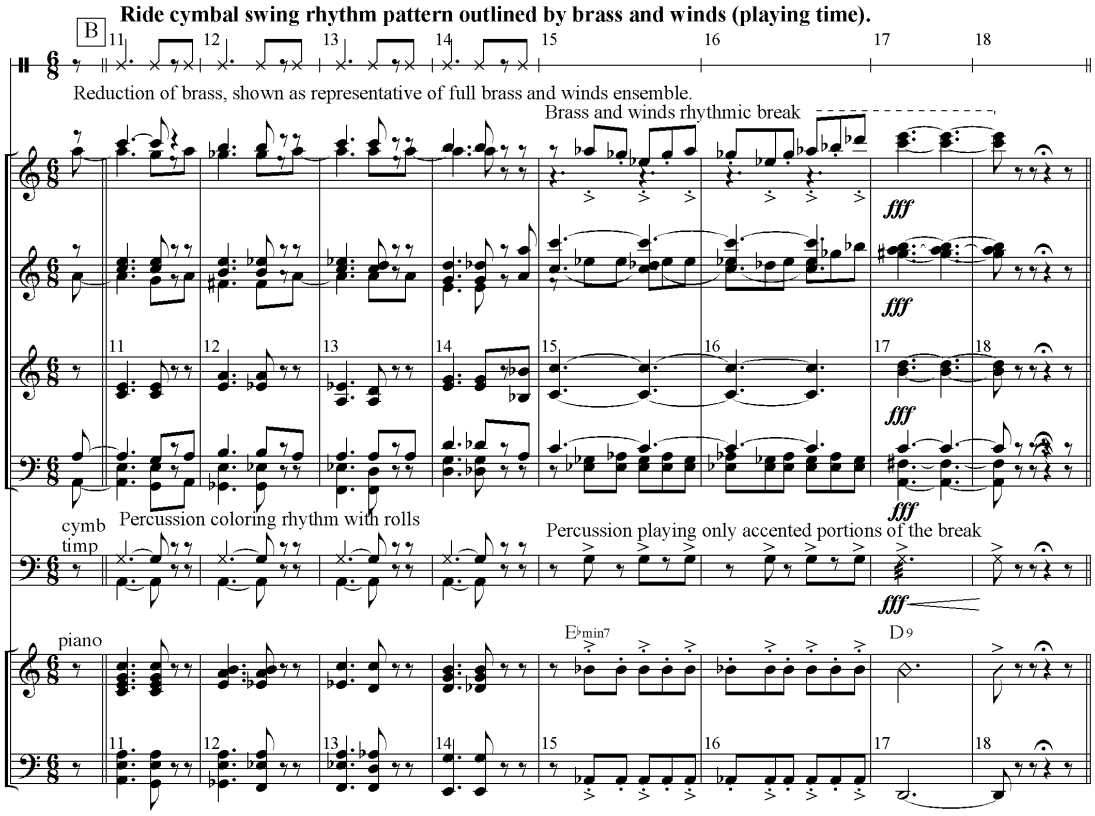
Ex. 3.9: *The Bloos*, mm. 7-8.
Use of percussion as orchestrational "color."



As mentioned above, articulating and highlighting accents in the context of playing time is a typical drummer's role in the big band. Another example (see ex. 3.10) of Handy extricating the percussion from the role of delineating time, while instead concentrating solely on color and accent, is seen in mm. 11-18. Here the non-rhythm instruments (meaning all except piano, bass, guitar, and percussion) take on the role of playing time, as they precisely articulate the typical ride cymbal swing rhythm (mm. 11-14). Instead of playing time, the percussion is limited to coloring the rhythm with rolls that accent the downbeats (mm. 11-14, 17-18). Reeds, brass, and woodwinds then perform a syncopated, accented "break" (mm. 15-16). [38]

[38] A "break" is an interruption—often of one, two, or four measures—during which the rhythm section ceases to play time, allowing for a written or improvised solo (or a rhythmic pattern) to stand alone. The solo or pattern continues over an implied rhythm and harmony that was previously established.

Ex. 3.10: *The Bloos*, mm. 11-18.
Reeds, brass, and woodwinds play "time."



All three percussionists play only the accented portions of the rhythmic break. As is usual with a break, Handy is relying upon the listener to feel an implied pulse, as opposed to the syncopation being clearly juxtaposed against steady time. In this case, however, the accepted roles have been reversed, as it is the melodic ensemble that has established the rhythmic pattern against which the break's implied time is felt. Even the downbeat of the beginning of the break (m. 15, beat one), which is crucial for understanding the implied rhythmic feel of the syncopation (and would normally be played by some or all of the rhythm section, such as the bass, bass drum and piano), is played by brass instruments.

As a final note on orchestration, percussion three contains an interesting use of a "razzer," which is more a toy than an instrument.[39] This occurrence in the score, and the incident that it sparked in the recording studio, is illuminating. In addition, the story alludes to an artistic controversy of the day in relation to Dadaism, the precursor of Surrealism, discussed in chapter 2.

While noting the humorous and angry qualities that he hears in his music, Handy speaks of the (written) trombone solo in *The Bloos* (ex. 3.11). He found himself using blues clichés, and added the bray of a razzer to blow that idea out of the way (mm. 69-71), and as a signal to get back to something meaningful. Handy relates the reasons for introducing the razzer:

> I was discussing blues, all the things that blues could be and I got into something deep, momentarily deep and suddenly from out of that came the cliché blues phrases, that everybody and his uncle is using which was like a momentary aside. I went into a cliché phrase, da-da-da-da. I put it in the trumpets and I think I put it in the bones and I put in the flute ba-ba-ba. And then the hell with it, razzer . . . the hell with this cliché crap, let's get back to reality.[40]

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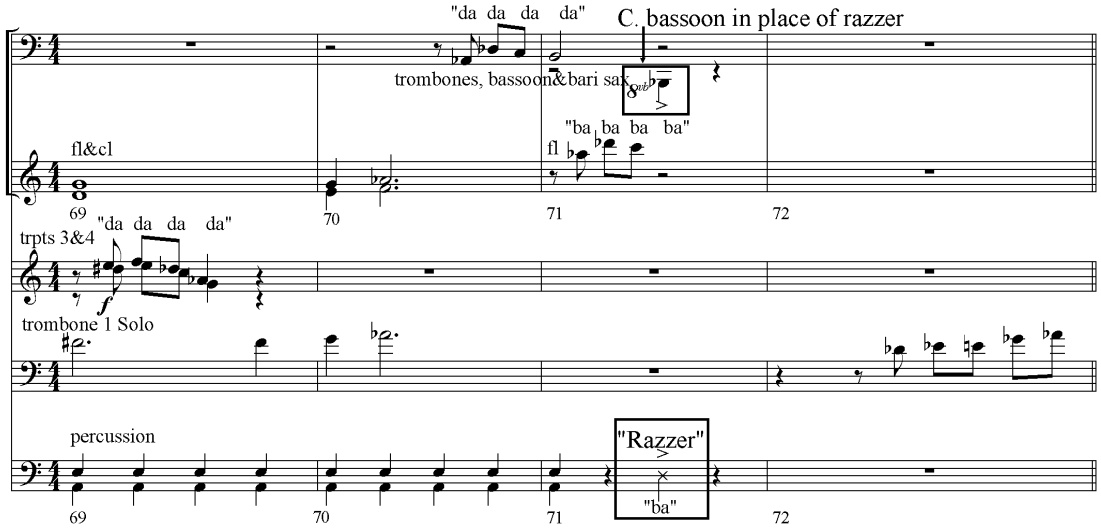
[39] A razzer is a whistle that creates a rude, derogatory sound.

[40] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 44-45. Ex. 3.11 details the figures that Handy sings ("da-da-da-da") in this quotation. The figure occurs twice, and in the third presentation (flute) the phrase is interrupted, with the final note to be played by the razzer.

Ex. 3.11: *The Bloos*, mm. 69-71.
Handy's use of a "razzer."



This scoring sparked an incident in the recording studio, as Barry Ulanov, an influential writer for *Metronome* magazine, was visiting the session and burst out of the control booth screaming that Handy could not use the razzer. Ulanov seemed to be equating the use of the razzer with the inclusion of found objects in art, and declared that this Dadaist principle had no place in music composition. Handy respected and liked Ulanov, and while he disagreed, Handy did not feel strongly enough about the use of the razzer to argue about it and risk breaking up the recording session. Handy felt the implication was that using an instrument to depict the razzer would have been acceptable. He then made a quick adjustment and replaced the razzer with the lowest note of the contra bassoon, revealing his relaxed attitude about his writing and his easy-going and respectful relationships with his colleagues.

One of the most illuminating aspects of this story is the fact that though unhappy with what he was writing at the time, rather than revising, Handy decided simply to

"razz" away the music he did not like and move on. Although he was a thoughtful composer, he spent little effort second-guessing himself, writing in a stream-of-consciousness manner. Any references to compositional systems or techniques, as well as other compositions, were used almost improvisationally.[41]

Harmonic and Melodic Analysis

The Bloos is a well balanced, successful composition. Like *Dalvatore Sally*, it is replete with themes, and though these are disparate and seemingly unrelated, the piece flows well from one idea to the next. The work is approximately four-minutes and fifty-seconds long, but, because of the multi-thematic nature of the piece, it has the feel of a longer composition with a distinct and varied series of events. There are song-like sections contrasted with periods of episodic writing. Also, various instrumental sections (woodwinds, strings, brass, etc.) and combinations of sections are highlighted; soloists, both improvised and non-improvised, are featured (though improvisation plays a very limited role), and two cadenzas occur (violin and trombone). The question of how Handy manages to pull all of these ideas into a cohesive whole is one of the biggest mysteries surrounding his writing, and I will address these issues in the analysis section below.

The title of the work, *The Bloos*, and Handy's comments to Granz about his reasons for writing the piece (discussed above), requires that the work be examined for its relationship to the blues. The composition is an idiosyncratic, abstract, and deconstructed blues that can certainly be described as "something different."[42]

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[41] The above anecdote is based on Handy's recollection of the event (Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 46).

[42] Norman Granz, *The Jazz Scene*.

Jazz has been inextricably linked with the blues since 1910-1920,[43] and during the 1940s, and in the swing era in general, the blues was a staple of the swing band. Ellington based many of his works, in one way or another, on the blues. Count Basie's hard-swinging riff-style music was heavily weighted towards, and steeped in, the blues. Bebop, a music that Handy was heavily involved with (as evidenced by his work with Parker and Gillespie in Los Angeles, as well as by his compositions), also relied upon the blues. In all of these instances, the twelve-bar blues has been the standard form.

Paul Oliver states that the twelve-bar form "is so widely known that 'playing the blues' generally presupposes the use of it." He goes on to note that "the term 'blues' is also used to identify a composition that uses blues harmonic and phrase structure," and that "there are numerous compositions that are in no way related to blues but that bear the name . . ."[44] Handy's *The Bloos* falls somewhere in the middle of Oliver's models.

The only use of a twelve-bar blues is a tenor sax solo over two blues choruses that occur near the end of the composition (mm. 98-109). This section greatly contrasts with the rest of the piece, almost feeling out of place, though it occupies a significant portion of the work. The blues choruses have the work's only improvisation, and contain no written material, contrasting with the piece's emphasis on composition. It is also one of the few moments that the rhythm section plays a traditional accompaniment role.

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[43] See Peter Muir, "Crazy Blues": Commercial Blues in America 1850-1920 (Ph.D. dissertation, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2004). Muir discusses the many forms of the blues leading up to this period.

[44] Paul Oliver: "Blues," *New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 3: 730.

When confronted with criticism that the inserted twelve-bar blues form is compositionally interruptive, Handy replies "I didn't feel that way, I felt it had its place among all the other phases. It . . . [is] the only form that they'll accept. They'll scream for the rest of their life if the other parts are not genuine blues. . . . It was important to me; that's why it was there."[45] From this quote, it appears Handy was concerned with the reception of this work, which seems a bit out of character, and that he felt he was virtually required to include the twelve-bar form in a work focusing on blues expression. Beyond this, though Handy did not elaborate on his response, perhaps the twelve-bar blues represents the culmination of the blues gestures that dominate the rest of the piece, or maybe he intended it to represent the conflict between old and new approaches to the blues.

Much of the blues "feeling" in the blues (in major keys) comes from the juxtaposition of the major quality of the tonic chord and the key's flatted third and fifth scale degrees, the "blue notes." In *The Bloos*, Handy uses this interval-class 1 relationship (e.g., in C major, E and E-flat, and G and G-flat) to indulge his fascination with minor seconds, minor ninths, major sevenths, diminished octaves, and augmented unisons (various members of ic1), and an individualistic approach to the character of blue notes results. This can be seen in the first section of the work.

As is often true with Handy's writing, the opening (mm. 1-10) immediately presents harmonic ambiguity (see ex. 3.12). In this work it is rarely possible to declare a key, and generally, even a clear-cut chord is hard to come by. An F and C pedal point is present throughout this section. Though the strings begin with what seems to be a clear-

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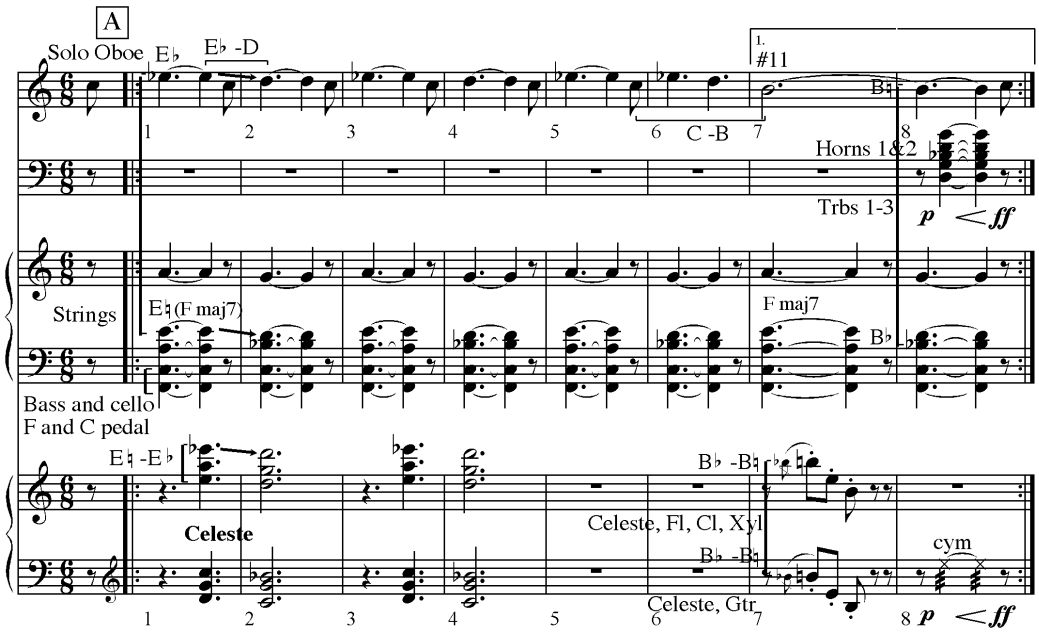
[45] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 234-35.

cut F-major7 (m. 1), the E-flat in the oboe melody confuses this, as does the celeste chord. The E (the seventh of the F major7) and E-flat both resolve to D (m. 2) creating what becomes a repeated alternation of dissonance (F major7 plus E-flat) and consonance (resolution to D) (ex. 3.12). With this harmonic ambiguity, this tension and resolution serves as a manufactured tonal functionality.

Ex. 3.12: *The Bloos*, mm. 1-8.
Harmonic ambiguity; alternation of consonance and dissonance; harmonic and melodic ic1 relationships.



Over the same string progression (mm. 7-8), the oboe's B creates a different type of tension with the F-major7 (functioning as the sharp-11, m. 7). More importantly, in the next measure (m. 8), Handy creates a new ic1 relationship, B and B-flat (oboe, cello 2, and trombone 1), which is presaged by a colorful melodic fill in the flute, clarinet, guitar, and celeste (m. 7). This first melodic presentation (mm. 1-10) focuses on these ic1

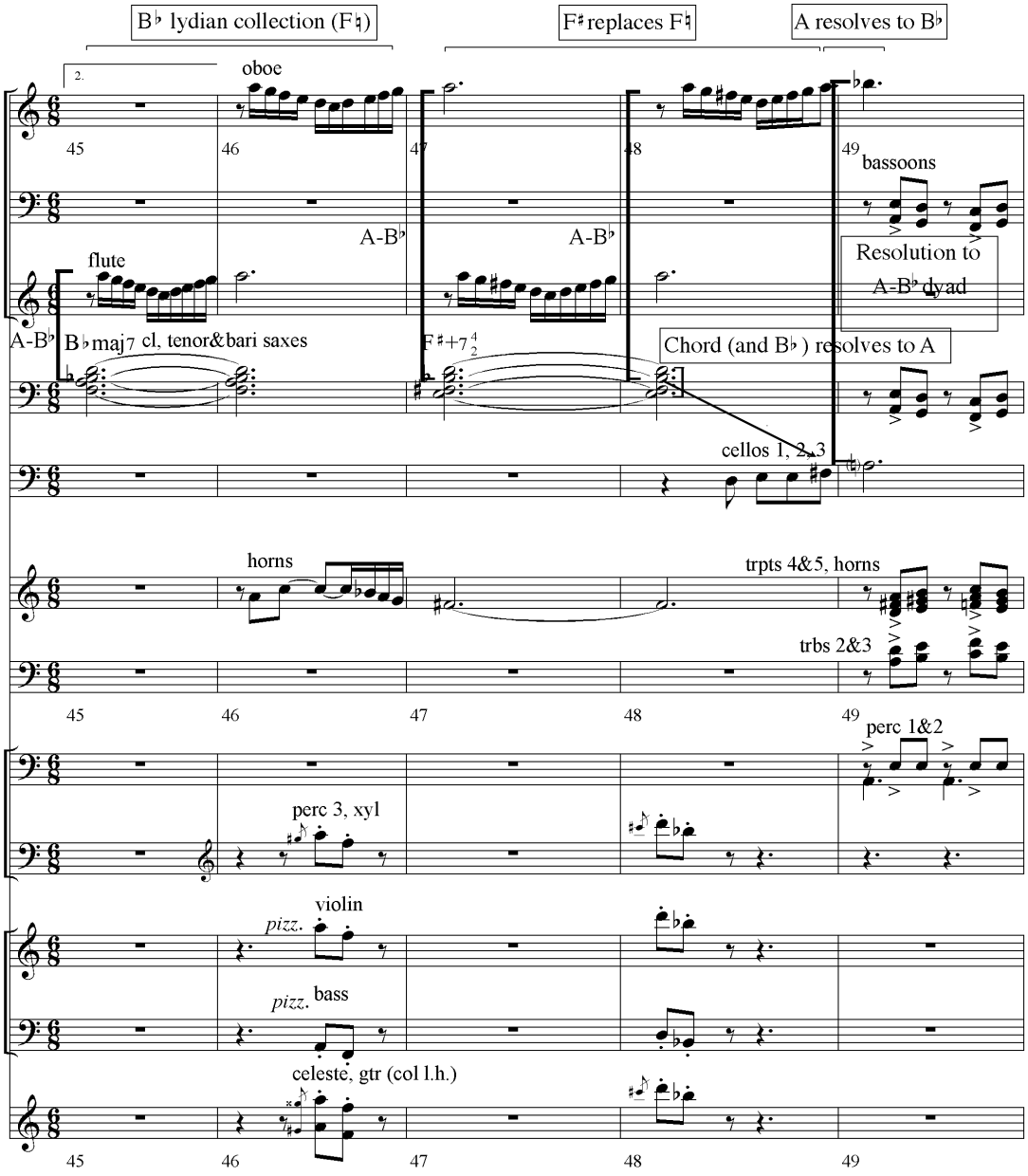
relationships (and in the case of the E and Eb, the resolution to D), and they function as bluesy intimations, as sources of harmonic ambiguity, and as a basis for functionality. While Handy is not employing the blues form, he is relying on the ic1 relationship inherent in it as a basis for much of the piece, and derives harmonic material from it.

Handy also uses ic1 as a source of melodic material, which can be seen in this first section as well. The oboe melody in mm. 1-10 consists of two ic1 dyads, [D Eb] and [B C]. As in the harmony (strings and celeste), the E-flat of the melody consistently descends (or resolves) to D, and the C in the oboe melody has a delayed resolution to B (m. 7).

In my analysis of *Dalvatore Sally*, an emphasis on ic1 was also discussed in regard to the conflict between F and F-sharp in the context of the B-flat lydian and B-flat whole-tone collections (as was the concept of a manufactured tonal functionality). Handy again briefly explores this relationship in *The Bloos*, but with a slightly different approach to the whole-tone fragment, as well as to the resolution of the conflict.

Handy clearly separates these two collections (see ex. 3.13). B-flat lydian is employed by alternating flute and oboe scalar melodic flurries accompanied by a closely voiced B-flat major7 chord (clarinet and saxophones, mm. 45-46). The woodwind lines are repeated (ex. 3.13), but the F is replaced by an F-sharp, and the accompanying chord, while retaining two common tones and employing smooth voice leading (a common Handy characteristic), becomes an F-sharp+7 in third inversion. The only non-shared pitch classes between these two-measure phrases are the F and F-sharp. One of the results of this change is the whole-tone character of the second accompanying chord, F-sharp+7.

Ex. 3.13: *The Bloos*, mm. 45-49.
B-flat lydian and whole-tone character created by use of F and F-sharp; resolution of A and B-flat dyad.



The B-flat lydian collection from *Dalvatore Sally* is mimicked in *The Bloos* (flute, oboe, and accompanying chord, mm. 45-46). The whole-tone fragment from *Sally*,

consisting of [Bb, C, D, E, F#], also stays intact, but a G and A are added (flute and oboe, mm. 47-48), creating a seven-note scale-wise collection.[46] The addition of the A throughout the phrase creates a new ic1 relationship, as an [A Bb] dyad is prominent throughout these four measures. B-flat is in both chords, the B-flat major7 contains the [A Bb] dyad (mm. 45-46), and all of the melodic flurries begin and end on A. This dyad also figures largely in the resolution of this four-bar phrase.

The F and F-sharp created a resolution of sorts in *Sally*, and in mm. 45-49, these two pitch classes are what differentiate the two collections (as was also the case in *Sally*). In this example, with the addition of the A, Handy creates two non-tonal, yet functional, half-step "resolutions," one from A to B-flat (oboe, mm. 48-49), and the other from B-flat to A (as the clarinet and saxophones chord resolves to the unison cellos' A, mm. 48-49).[47] These occur in contrary motion, and give the illusion of resolution, but in actuality they create the very same ic1, maintaining the [A Bb] dyad while still seeming to resolve it.

It is interesting to see Handy's infatuation with the ic1 once again coupled with the repetition of the B-flat lydian and B-flat whole-tone juxtaposition. He clearly hears this sound as an important part of his vocabulary, yet he manages to alter his treatment of it in a subtly effective manner. Perhaps its non-resolving resolution is more in keeping with the character of this piece and drives this different approach (consciously or unconsciously). This theme of non-resolving resolutions is also seen in the final G major triad of *The Bloos* with its unresolved and deceptive character, that in fact completes a long-range progression (to be discussed below).

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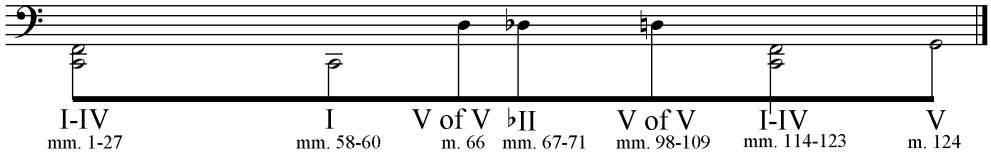
[46] The scale members are the pitches of the G melodic minor ascending scale, but there is no harmonic justification to discuss it in that context.

[47] The F-sharp aug7 chord is misspelled to maintain the spelling of the collection.

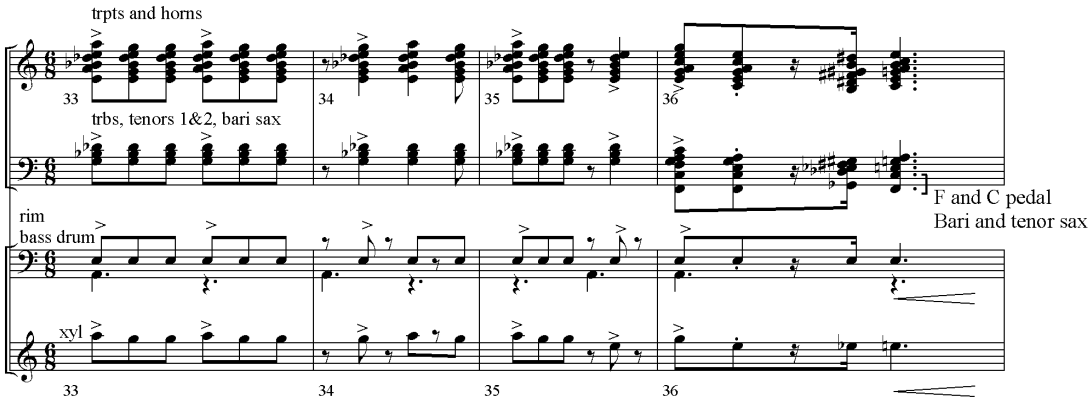
Largely avoiding the twelve-bar I-IV-V blues progression (except for the tenor saxophone solo in mm. 98-109) in a piece titled *The Bloos* is a significant choice, and musically exemplifies Handy's desire to create a new approach to the blues. While it is not possible to ascribe a key to *The Bloos*, and the blues progression plays a relatively minor role in the work, there are certainly formally important harmonic and melodic points throughout the course of the piece. When these points are examined, a skeletal, abstract representation of a long-range I-IV-V progression in C-major emerges as an overall compositional scheme, though C major is never actually established as a key.

Ex. 3.14: Long-range abstract blues progression in C in *The Bloos*.



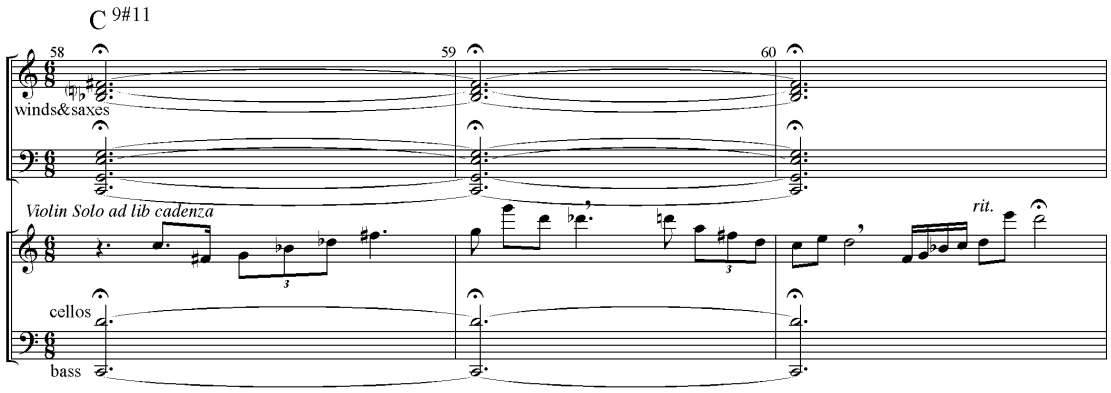
Though Handy's harmony is rarely clear, and key and functional harmony are often nonexistent, the pitches F, C, and G are the fundamental pitches in the bass voice at pivotal points in the work (ex. 3.14). The relationship of the F and C pedal (to be discussed more completely below) to the harmony and the melody is responsible for harmonic ambiguity. The F and C bass notes could be interpreted either as representing I and V (in F) or I and IV (in C). For the reasons below, however, I am interpreting the piece in C major (on a large-scale, but not locally).

Ex. 3.15: *The Bloos*, mm. 33-36.
F and C pedal at cadential point.

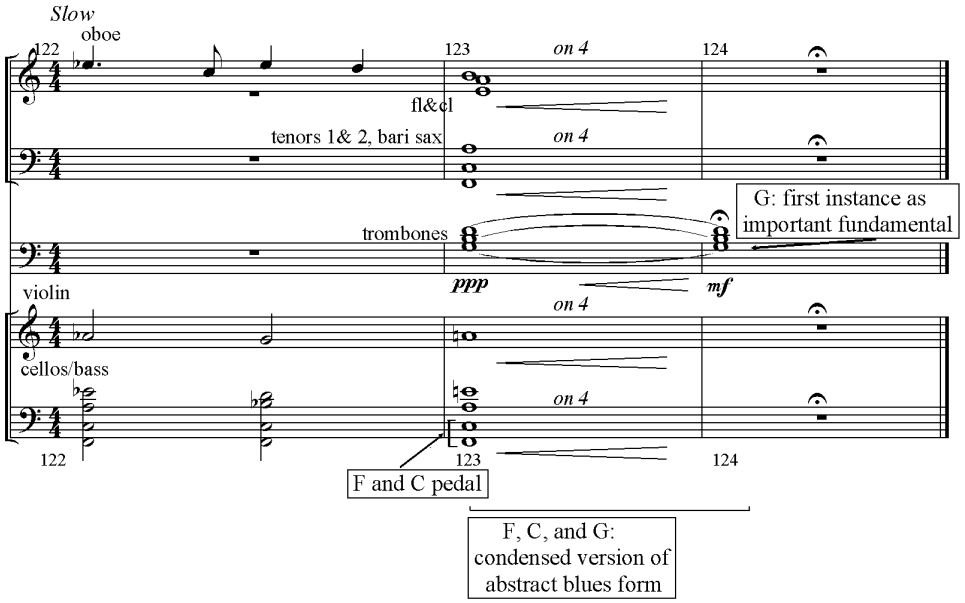


The F and C pedal point is ever-present as an accompaniment to the oboe melody in mm. 1-10, and also mm. 19-27 (bass and cello 3). This same pedal (see ex. 3.15) serves as a cadential point at the end of a major phrase (baritone sax and tenor sax 2, m. 36). As shown in example 3.16, a root-position C9 (one of the few clear, traditional chords to be found) serves as the harmonic base for a violin cadenza that accentuates the upper structures of the C9 chord—the natural and flatted-ninth, natural and raised-eleventh, and thirteenth (mm. 58-60). The F and C pedal recurs (mm. 114-24) in a restatement of the oboe melody (from mm. 1-10 and 19-26). The final chord of the work (mm. 123-24), the trombones' G major triad (that pops-out of the orchestral texture, as mentioned above) is the first instance of G as an important fundamental pitch (ex. 3.17), and finally completes the representation of the I-IV-V progression that occurs in a standard twelve-bar blues in the key of C major. In addition, a condensed version of all three fundamentals of this abstract blues form (F, C, and G) is stated in mm. 122-124, the final two measures (ex. 3.17).

Ex. 3.16: *The Bloos*, mm. 58-60.
C in the bass at a cadential point.



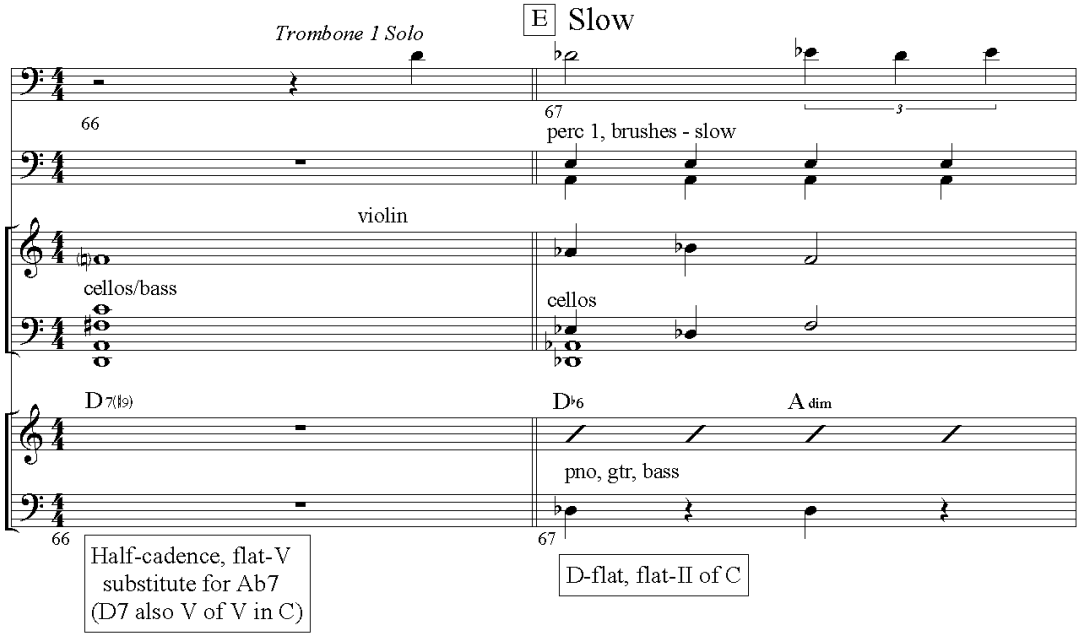
Ex. 3.17: *The Bloos*, final three measures (mm. 122-24).
G in the bass; condensed version of blues form.



The other important fundamental pitches in *The Bloos*, D and D-flat, also have a relationship to C, representing the V of V and flat-II of C major. Functioning in mm. 66-

67 as a half-cadence (ex. 3.18), D7, the flat-V substitute of A-flat (and the V of V of C major),[48] leads into the trombone 1 solo at m. 67 in D-flat major (the flat-II in C major). D also appears as a twelve-bar blues tenor saxophone solo (mm. 98-109) in D major (again the V of V of C).

Ex. 3.18: *The Bloos*, half-cadence into mm. 66-67.
D (V of V in C) and D-flat (flat-II in C) as important fundamental pitches.

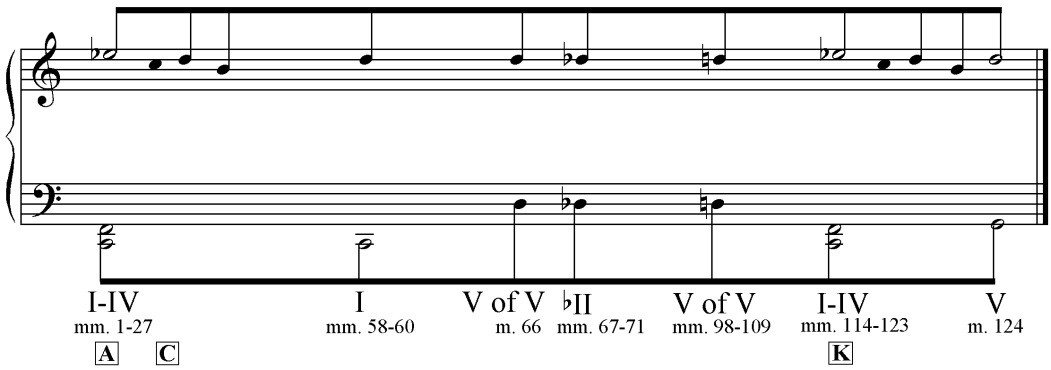


The final G major triad, the V chord in C major in my large-scale analysis, takes the listener by surprise, having never appeared this prominently. It is initially hidden in the orchestral texture, functioning as the ninth, raised eleventh, and thirteenth of an F major chord. In its solo state, however, it appears out of context, and represents a half-

[48] The flat-V substitute, or tri-tone substitution, is a hallmark of progressions and cadential harmony in jazz from the 1940s until today.

cadence in C major that has been prepared by the representation of D (V of V in C) via the blues in D major. It is as if the composition is prepared to go back to the top for another chorus (to C as a tonic—or a non-tonic in Handy's case). The piece ends in an unresolved fashion, yet has its own type of resolution with this eventual realization of the I-IV-V blues progression (ex. 3.14).

Ex. 3.19: Harmonic and melodic reduction of *The Bloos*.



Looking at the melodic structure of *The Bloos* in a similarly reductive fashion, a long-range melodic structure that duplicates the most important local melodic event emerges (ex. 3.19). E-flat, D, and B are the focal points of the oboe melody in m. 1-10, 19-26, and 114-24. This theme begins and ends the composition, and is the most repeated element of the work. Additionally, Eb, D, and B are the concluding pitches of those sections and, consequently, of the entire composition. Because of the episodic and non-repetitive nature of the central part of the piece (mm. 27-109), this phrase, and its key pitches, structurally dominate the work, eventually creating a large-scale descending line from E-flat to D (ex. 3.19). This mirrors, on a large scale, the local "resolution"

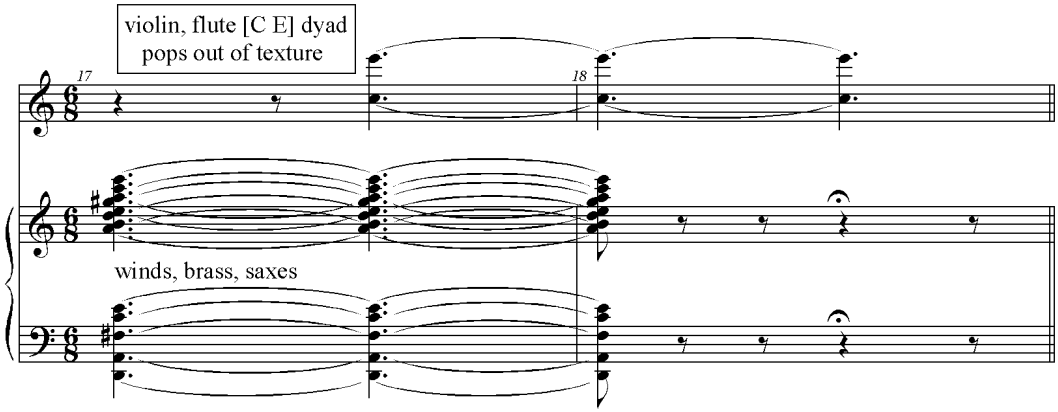
(resolving of dissonance) of E-flat to D that dominates the all-important oboe melody, as discussed above. If *The Bloos* has a strange relationship with C major that creates the representational chord progression C, F, G (I-IV-V), then these dominating pitches and the descending line illuminates, intensifies, and clarifies this large-scale structure in a fascinating manner.

Normally, in a blues in a major key, the I, IV, and V are all presented as dominant seventh chords. Here, of course, there is no such clear presentation, and in fact, these two important fundamental tones, the roots of I and IV in C major, are largely seen simultaneously as the pedal point F and C (ex. 3.19). The melodic pitch E-flat interacts with these fundamental tones in two ways: as the blue note of C7 (the flatted third, also relating to the ic1 relationships discussed above), and as the dominant-seventh of F. This relationship is prolonged through mm 1-10 and 19-26. Measures 98-109 focus heavily on D7 with the twelve-bar blues in D major (ending in a series of octave glissandos from D to D), and the E-flat over the F and C pedal is restated at K. As discussed above, B in the oboe melody has functioned, within the string accompaniment, as a raised eleventh (in relation to the F major chord) and in contrast with a B-flat in the harmony. In the final chord, however, it takes on a new, and more straightforward, guise as the third of the V chord. Along with its chordal accompaniment, this local descending melody, and the large-scale descending line, carefully avoids resolving to C, and the piece concludes with the above-mentioned half-cadence in Handy's abstract world of C major (ex. 3.19).

There are other local melodic factors that support the C major reading. Perhaps most importantly, the solo oboe C pick-up is the first pitch of the entire piece. This C, along with the aforementioned E-flat, D and B, are all essential elements of a blues in C

major. This would not be true for a blues in F. Also, before the restatement of the oboe melody (mm. 17-18), the dyad [C E], again using the pop-out technique (as mentioned briefly above), is carefully highlighted (ex. 3.20). Again exhibiting his penchant for harmonic ambiguity, Handy places the C and E in the orchestral texture (m. 17), functioning as the minor seventh and the ninth of D7. As the rest of the ensemble cuts off, the [C E] dyad of violin and flute is all that remains, restating the C major connection.

Ex. 3.20: Pop-out [C E] dyad emphasizing the key of C, mm. 17-18.

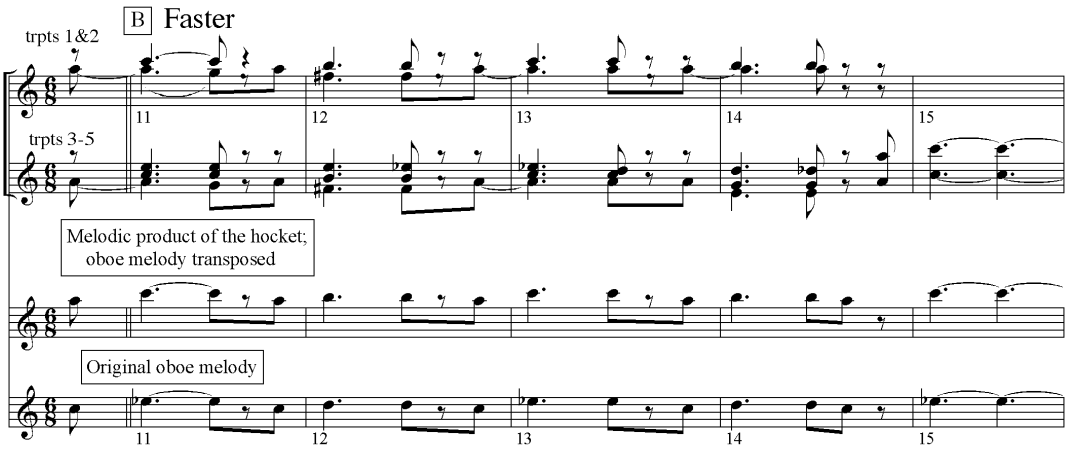


A final look at the motivic use of the opening theme further lends credence to the C reading, while also looking briefly at orchestrational and thematic development. The oboe melody (mm. 1-10) is seen throughout the work, and, as a result of its placement and the number of times that it is heard, is the dominant theme of the piece. The melody is heard twice during mm. 1-10 and once during 19-26 as the AABA presentation that begins the piece (mm. 1-28). It also appears as the final melodic statement of the work (mm. 114-23), and is part of the episodic fabric of mm. 37-44. All of these statements

are at the same pitch level. There is a much more subtle presentation of the principle motive of this theme, however.

Measures 11-15 present the melody's motive in a very disguised fashion (ex. 3.21). The tempo speeds up at m. 11, and the full ensemble has a shouting brass melody with trumpets one, two, and three presenting the motive as a hocket, transposed up a major-sixth to A minor, creating a typical harmonic relationship between C major and its relative minor.[49]

Ex. 3.21: Trumpet hocket; variation of oboe melody transposed to A minor (mm. 11-15).



I posit that though Handy wrote many significant jazz works, as well as some very interesting pieces in a more classically oriented genre, *The Bloos*, and its rarely paralleled success in combining jazz and classical composition, is the finest example of

[49] It sounds as if one trumpet is playing the melody, and is an unusual deployment of the trumpet section. While difficult to execute convincingly, this hocketing allows the trumpets to spell each other, and to be fresh for the high-notes each is called upon to perform. Often a section trumpet will spell the lead trumpet in upper register passages, but this is an unusually intricate example of this technique.

Handy's unique compositional style. It is remarkable to note that this work practically flew onto the paper. As he became more intent on creating a fusion of jazz and classical with his saxophone quartets and the *Caine Flute Sonata*, the relaxed and off-hand quality of his stream-of-consciousness writing disappeared, and his work took on a more serious tone that somewhat negated the exciting, fun, and almost improvisatory quality of his earlier writing, all of which greatly added to its appeal.

Referring back to the unresolved ending of *The Bloos*, the final G triad of this work can be seen as a metaphor for Handy's unresolved, and not fully realized, career. It is a sad irony that, as a result of this lack of resolution, it is as if we are waiting for the next great George Handy big band composition that fails to materialize.

Chapter Four

The Caine Flute Sonata (ca. 1955-1956)

Historical background

The composition and recording of *The Bloos* took place either at the end of Handy's tenure with Boyd Raeburn, or just after his departure from the band. Around this time Handy returned to New York City. This was the high-point of Handy's career; his writing was fluid, creative, idiosyncratic, and iconoclastic, and he was in demand as composer-arranger. Once his connection with Raeburn was severed, however, Handy's drug dependence got the better of him and his life spiraled out of control. This led to an extended period of inactivity (approximately 1947-1954), after which he returned to a scaled-down, yet active, career, including the composition of perhaps his most ambitious composition, *The Caine Flute Sonata*.

Handy's association with Raeburn was a double-edged sword. The composer was frustrated and angered by what he viewed as Raeburn's incompetence and poor judgment. Handy felt that Raeburn was responsible for the band's commercial retrenchment under Ben Pollock's influence, and the consequent de-emphasis on his music. However, while Handy was writing for other groups, the Raeburn band was his primary musical outlet. In fact, the opportunity that Raeburn provided for Handy was extremely unusual, as was the artistic license that Handy enjoyed as featured arranger.

The relationship between Handy and Raeburn was complicated and fraught with difficulty. Handy was resentful, even though Raeburn presented him with the greatest opportunity of his career, and Raeburn seems to have quickly turned on Handy, despite the fact that Handy's composing and arranging was largely responsible for the band's reputation as a significant progressive big band. It is telling to note that once separated, neither was as successful as they were when working together.

Handy was always resistant to authority, yet he seems to have functioned most effectively in structured situations. While bitter about Raeburn, Handy actually thrived artistically in the structured and steady working environment that the Raeburn band provided. He was also extremely productive in Hollywood when working for the studios. Perhaps Handy's unconscious resentment regarding his dependence on external discipline, combined with his fierce independence, was a source of personal frustration for him.

Once back in New York City, Handy was unable to cope with his addiction. Little is known about Handy's life or career during the years 1947-1954. During this time, there is little evidence of his having written, played, or recorded any new material, and his name was largely absent from music polls and the press. Interviews with friends and colleagues have not uncovered any further information on this part of Handy's life, other than the fact that he spent at least several years in drug rehabilitation in Lexington, Kentucky; the dates of his stay, however, are uncertain. Handy does not speak of this period either, but does state that he was commissioned to write a piece for Kenton's large orchestra (including strings) in the early 1950s, and recalls completing the first

movement of what he planned to be a multi-movement work.[1] Handy is unclear about why he did not finish it, and what happened to the score, but, in some fashion, his going to rehabilitation in Lexington interrupted its completion, which could approximate his stay in Lexington from 1951 to 1954.[2]

Handy returned to New York around 1954. In a letter written to the press just prior to his return, he discussed (in a general way) his long-time mental health problems, and professed to be rejuvenated and excited to be resuming his music career.[3] His return to New York and the music business was also touted by *Down Beat* magazine in a brief article that greatly exaggerated Handy's current activities.[4] The brief notice mentioned an upcoming album for Norman Granz's Clef label, two piano concertos to be performed by the Boston Symphony, and a ballet to be performed by the Ballet Theater, none of which, to my knowledge, was ever written, recorded, or discussed in any other source.

Handy resumed his career, though he was no longer being hired for the big-name arranging work that he had previously received. He completed the two albums for Label "X" (a subsidiary of RCA), *Handyland U.S.A*. (1954, LXA-1004, reissued by RCA as BGI 0011122) and *By George!:Handy of Course* (1955, LXA-1032), the only albums made under Handy's own name.

Just after the *By George!* album, Handy had a high-profile two-week engagement at *Birdland*, a top New York City nightclub, sharing a bill with the Count Basie

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[1] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 103.

[2] Jack McKinney also estimates that Handy's stay in Lexington was during these years (McKinney, phone conversation).

[3] This letter was quoted in the anonymous article "A Handy Man to Have Back." For the contents of this letter, refer to chapter 1, pp. 31-32.

[4] Anonymous, "George Handy Back In Music," *Down Beat*, September 8, 1954, 1.

Orchestra. This performance featured the compositions from *By George!*, with much of the recording ensemble intact. The critic Leonard Feather wrote a favorable review of this engagement:

> The intricately woven orchestrations reflect many classical influences in the arranged passages, and some moments suggest Bartók, Stravinsky, and others. But improvisation never is discounted, and there are three frequently featured soloists . . . whose contributions prevent the whole from losing contact with jazz. . . . Despite tempo changes and a great deal of complexity in the writing, the music often swings. The violin is ingeniously used, usually playing a theme while one or two other lines are juxtaposed against it contrapuntally. [5]

A recording exists (from an unknown source) from the July 6 and 13, 1955 performances during this engagement, but it has not been commercially released.

In 1956 and 1957 Handy produced, arranged, and performed on three albums for his long-time friend and colleague, saxophonist Zoot Sims. *Zoot!* (1956),[6] is a quintet date that includes four compositions credited to Handy's wife, Flo;[7] *Zoot Sims Plays*

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[5] Leonard Feather, "George Handy: Birdland, NYC," *Down Beat* (September 7, 1955): 37.

[6] Riverside Records, RLP 12-228, and also issued on Jazzland Records, JLP 2.

[7] Flo Handy (later Flo Cohn) is known to have collaborated compositionally with both Handy and Al Cohn, her second husband, but to what degree she and Handy shared in these particular tunes is unknown. There is a good chance that the credit was given to her for contractual reasons. We do know, however, that Handy was very generous with his handing out of credit to collaborators (McKusick, phone conversation, June 29, 2005).

Alto, Tenor, and Baritone (1956) features Sims overdubbing himself (with all three saxes listed in the title) on eight Handy compositions;[8] and *Zoot Sims Plays Four Altos* (1957) expands and modifies the overdubbing concept on seven Handy originals.[9] Handy also contributed two arrangements to an album, *Cross-Section Saxes* (1958), by his close friend and collaborator, Hal McKusick.[10]

Handy had a variety of other associations during the 1950s. He apparently was rehearsing a big band (exactly when is uncertain), though the charts for this band are lost.[11] There is also one tape of a rehearsal of a big band (it is unclear whether it is the same band as mentioned above) that Handy was leading, perhaps with trumpeter-composer Johnny Carisi. Through McKusick's influence, Handy played with, and wrote arrangements for the Freddie Slack Orchestra (again the dates are unknown).[12] These were all high-level associations, but though Handy was working with top musicians, his career was not as lofty as it had been during the Raeburn heyday.

Shortly after the Label "X" recordings, Handy began a new piece that is unique in his output. He had written flute parts for *By George!* with Eddie Caine in mind, but the latter was unable to attend the recording session. Both men were disappointed, and Caine consequently asked Handy to write something specifically for him. Handy was happy to

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[8] ABC-Paramount, ABC 155.

[9] ABC-Paramount, ABC 198, later reissued on MCA, MCA 29069.

[10] Coral, CRL 571311, re-released as Decca, DL 9209.

[11] McKusick, phone conversation, June 29, 2005.

[12] Ibid. The Freddie Slack Orchestra featured Slack (1910-1965) on piano, and was particularly known for its boogie-woogie numbers. The band's recording of "Cow Cow Boogie" was a hit, and featured Handy's sister-in-law, Ella Mae Morse (Flo Handy's sister), on vocals (George T. Simon, *Simon Says: the Sights and Sounds of the Swing Era, 1935-1955* [New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1971]).

do so, as he and Caine were close friends and musical colleagues, but the composer had an ulterior motive as well.

At this time, approximately 1955, Handy was living with his parents, probably in Cedarhurst, Long Island.[13] His drug dependence continued to be a major problem in his life, and his parents were trying to keep a close eye on him, reluctantly allowing him to leave the house. Writing a commissioned piece for Eddie Caine proved to be an acceptable excuse for getting out, however, and Handy began regular work on a composition for flute and piano, which would come to be titled *The Caine Flute Sonata*. When Caine commissioned Handy for the work, he did not have a large-scale piece in mind.[14] In fact, Handy himself had never completed an extended, multi-movement work.

Handy speaks of a surprise interview during a Jubilee radio broadcast of 1946.[15] After briefly questioning Handy on the definition of jazz, the interviewer and M.C., the African American actor Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman, announced that the band would play the first two movements of "a new jazz symphony,"[16] *Dalvatore Sally* and *Hey Look-I'm Dancing*. Handy states that

> as a matter of fact, the whole scene was ridiculous, the way it happened. I was coming to rehearse a chart that I had written, I was not told that there

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[13] Caine is unsure about the date, but recalls that it was shortly after the *By George!* recording sessions (Caine, phone conversation).

[14] Ibid.

[15] These were radio broadcasts recorded in Hollywood by the Armed Forces Radio Service for distribution to armed forces overseas. This particular broadcast was later released on CD: Boyd Raeburn, *Boyd Raeburn and His Orchestra "The Legendary Jubilee Performances 1946,"* Hep Records CD1.

[16] The interview was recorded as part of the broadcast, and was included on Hep Records CD1.

> was going to be a performance, that we were actually giving a concert on the air, live, with an audience. I showed up in a torn shirt, dirty jeans, huaraches on my feet, no socks, unshaven; I was coming to a rehearsal. That's all I was told. I get there and I walked in and there's a thousand people sitting out there in front, everything going on. I couldn't believe it. I said what the hell is going on. . . . I didn't even know that I was supposed to talk with this guy, the M.C., because after it was over, I walked off and he's supposed to be carrying on a conversation with me and I'm not even there; I didn't have a script, I didn't know what was happening. I left; finished the last piece of music and walked off and he's saying yeah, that's very good, George, what about the—and I'm not there, so he had to ad lib himself out of it. . . . Jazz symphony—never written a jazz symphony.[17]

Other attempts to present Handy's pieces in a more "serious" manner can be seen in the labeling of a stand-alone work, *Yerxa*, as *Elegy* from *Jitterbug Suite*.[18] Discographies occasionally compound this error, but Handy clearly states he did not write a jazz suite.[19] Perhaps the classical form designations were used as a commercial ploy in the interest of keeping up with other bands that were involving themselves in larger forms, such as Woody Herman's commissioning of *Ebony Concerto* from Igor Stravinsky, or Artie Shaw's *Clarinet Concerto*.

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[17] Scremp, "Handy Oral History," 128-31.

[18] On Boyd Raeburn, *Radio Days "Live"—Boyd Raeburn-Dizzy Gillespie Jubilee*, Canby Records CACD-10004.

[19] Scremp, "Handy Oral History," 131.

Terry Teachout states "jazz composers of the '40s continued to show little interest in extended form, remaining content to loosen the rigidly repeating song form structures of jazz. This lack of interest is conspicuous in the otherwise advanced work of Edwin Finckel and George Handy, both of whom wrote for the Boyd Raeburn band . . ." He goes on to list some of "the most innovative big band compositions of the '40s, but none exceeds the length of a 78 rpm side."[20] While Handy's works are short, as mentioned in chapter 4 in my discussion of *The Bloos*, their multi-thematic, episodic quality tends to give the pieces the feel of longer works. Nothing in his output, however, prepares us for the dimensions of *The Caine Flute Sonata*, a four-movement work, approximately twenty-five minutes in duration.[21]

The two would meet at Caine's apartment in Rockaway, ostensibly to go over the piece.[22] However, Handy would drop off whatever he had written (sometimes a significant amount, at others very little), and immediately go off somewhere to buy drugs, leaving Caine to work on the piece by himself. He would then return, they would go over

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[20] Terry Teachout, "Jazz and Classical Music," 52.

[21] Considerably later, probably in the early-mid 1960s, Handy composed another extended work, *New York Saxophone Suite*, which was an eight-movement suite. He presented it to his patrons in the *New York Saxophone Quartet*, but Eddie Caine recalls it as a repetitive work that the group was unable to use. They did, however, pay Handy for it, and Caine felt that this was the primary motivation for this piece (Caine, phone conversation).

[22] Rockaway is a beach community in Queens, New York. Around this time, a small community of close friends, including Handy and his wife Flo, Caine, Hal McKusick, and trumpeter Tommy Allison, were all living close by one another (McKusick, phone conversation, February 2, 2006).

what Handy had written, and Handy would return to his house arrest, having again supposedly outsmarted his parents.[23]

The Caine Flute Sonata, along with Handy's saxophone quartets written for The New York Saxophone Quartet (of which Eddie Caine was a member), represent a different phase of his career. These works were written at a time when Handy had very little else going on in his career. The New York Saxophone Quartet (as discussed in chapter 1) was a unique group. Each of the players was (and is, as the group still exists, though with different personnel) extremely adept in dance music and jazz, yet also had strong technical backgrounds in classical music. This is a rare combination, though it has become more commonplace in recent years, and these players were the perfect foil for Handy's eclectic compositional style.

While his jazz background is clearly and strongly in evidence, these are works that are strictly for listening (as opposed to dance-oriented entertainment), and are in a classical style. Harmonically and stylistically, they are heavily influenced by Impressionistic composers, and others who were known for mixing jazz elements with a classical compositional style, such as Ravel and Debussy, as well as two of Handy's favorite composers, Stravinsky, and Bartók. Handy's sonata also exhibits an affinity for French flute music in the manner of Paris Conservatoire composers, such as Poulenc,

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[23] This type of deception fits in with what Johnny Mandel describes as Handy's child-like behavior (Mandel, phone conversation). It is as if he never quite grew up. Here Handy was, a man in his mid-thirties with a very sporadic career that was spiraling downward, living with his parents, his marriage and family in disarray, making excuses to sneak out of the house for illicit purposes. Even in his later years in the Catskills, his second wife, Elaine, spoke of Handy's later years in the Catskills, indicating that she was very much in a caretaker role, even though Handy was physically able to take care of himself (Greg Mont, phone conversation, July 7, 2005). It seems that everyday life was difficult for him; he was always dependent upon someone. His first wife, Flo, had a very difficult time dealing with Handy's erratic behavior, which eventually led to their divorce. As mentioned in chapter 3, Handy's lifestyle also caused his estrangement from his children. Handy speaks of these years and wonders how he was able to continue writing through all of this (Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 212).

Milhaud, Dutilleux, and Ibert. Handy's work particularly invites a comparison to Poulenc's *Sonata* for flute and piano (1956). The two works were written at virtually the same time, and have strikingly similar styles.

Though occasionally included in lists of Handy's works, *The Caine Flute Sonata* has, to my knowledge, never been discussed in the literature. It was recorded by Eddie Caine in a self-produced session, but has not been commercially released.[24] Consequently, the work is neither widely known nor performed.

In 2002, Caine sent a copy of the score to Handy's wife, Elaine (the copy that I have used for my analysis). In his note to her he discusses the piece:

> As I went through the parts I suddenly felt a great urge to play it again. I have to search out a pianist good enough to play it. Not an easy task. When I originally asked George to write me something, I didn't expect to get a major work. I have always loved and cherished it. When I last talked to George in the hospital, we both agreed, the Sonata was his finest work. It would only be fitting for it to be published, so that other flutists could enjoy it.[25]

It is easily understandable that Handy felt this way about the piece. He spent more time and effort on it than on any other composition in his career, and it appears to

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[24] The recording took place on January 10, 1984. Caine is the flutist, and Neil Posner is the pianist.

[25] Caine's note to Elaine is included in Handy's papers, housed at the Institute of Jazz Studies. It is included here with the author's permission.

have been a labor of love, rather than just another commission. In addition, it incorporates a more traditional twentieth-century classical style, to which he seemed to be leaning at this stage of his career. Also, as mentioned before, it is his longest piece, and holds a unique place in his body of work.

Analysis

The Caine Flute Sonata is Handy's only piece written for a "classical" chamber instrumentation, and it certainly has the smallest instrumentation (flute and piano) of any of his works.[26] The sonata is strikingly different from Handy's earlier works. The musical vocabulary has many Handy trademarks, but the piece is not immediately recognizable as one of his compositions. This later work employs many of the same resources as earlier compositions, such as meter changes, and a creative, expanded vision of chord structure, but it is more serious in tone, and, by dint of its multi-movement format, more expansive. I will briefly examine the form of all four movements, and, through close analysis of excerpts from each movement, will explore the variety of compositional resources that Handy employs at this late stage of his career.

The movements are titled:

I – Allegro

II – Slow

III – Medium Fast

IV – Moderate

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[26] Handy's saxophone quartets could also fit into the category of a classical ensemble, but it is not a standard, or particularly common, configuration.

Form

Movement I

The first movement consists of three principal themes (Fig. 4.1). They are first presented in rehearsal letters A, B, and C, and then again in rehearsal letters E, F, and G. A development of the first theme (rehearsal letter D) separates these two presentations of the three main ideas.

Fig. 4.1: Formal scheme of George Handy's *The Caine Flute Sonata* I.

Rehearsal letter	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Formal section	**A**	**B**	**C**	**A^1**	**B**	**C**	**A**
Measure numbers	1-20	21-45	45-76	77-98	99-141	142-189	190-224

The first allegro theme (ex. 4.1) is a gentle, lyrical melody in 4/4.[27] As is true for much of this composition, the harmonic sensibility lies in a nebulous world between tonality, centricity, and a non-tonal approach to triadic harmony. The music often feels as if it is heading somewhere, yet it is not clear where. Expectations are hard to come by, and are generally not met. Theme one repeats with slight melodic variation but considerable harmonic variation. Throughout the movement, this theme is developed and expanded in a way that sets this work apart from Handy's earlier, shorter, works. The different guises that this theme takes on throughout the piece will be discussed below.

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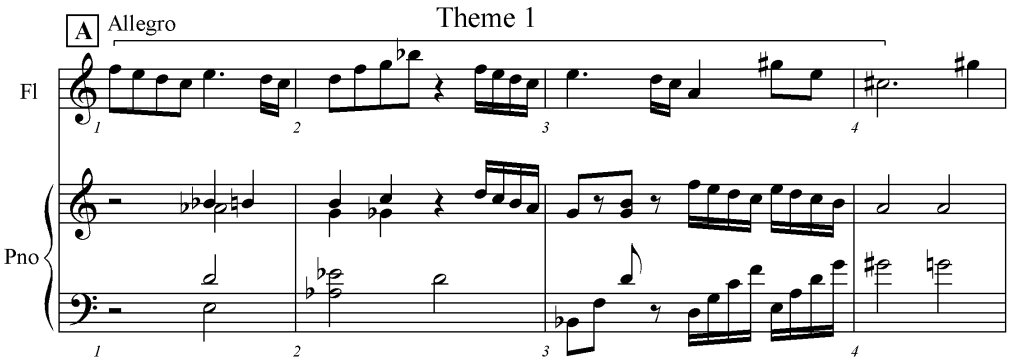
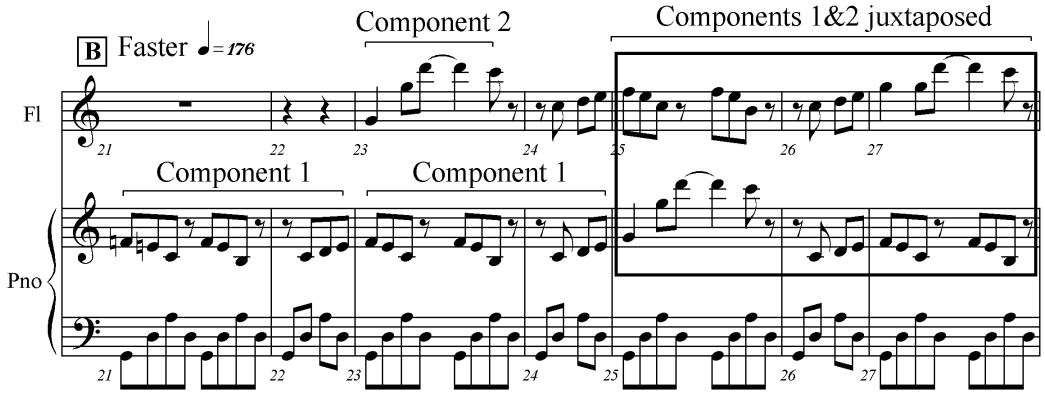
[27] Handy did not indicate time signatures anywhere in the score or the flute part. Consequently, I eschew them in my examples as well.

Ex. 4.1: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 1-4.
Theme one.



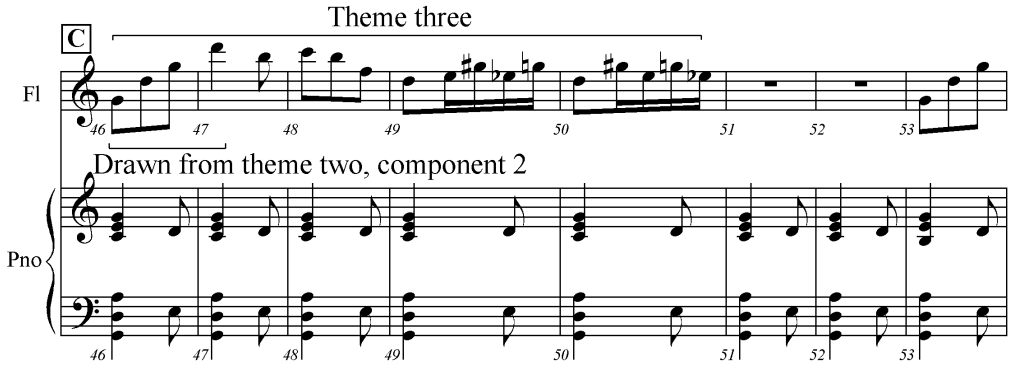
The second theme is faster (quarter-note equals 176) and has two principal components (ex. 4.2). The first component is seen in the piano (e.g., m. 21) and the second in the flute (e.g., m. 23). These components are shifted between instruments and juxtaposed upon each other throughout the section (e.g., mm. 25, 27). An alternation of 4/4 and 2/4 is generally maintained as the theme is developed.

Ex. 4.2: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 21-27.
Theme two.



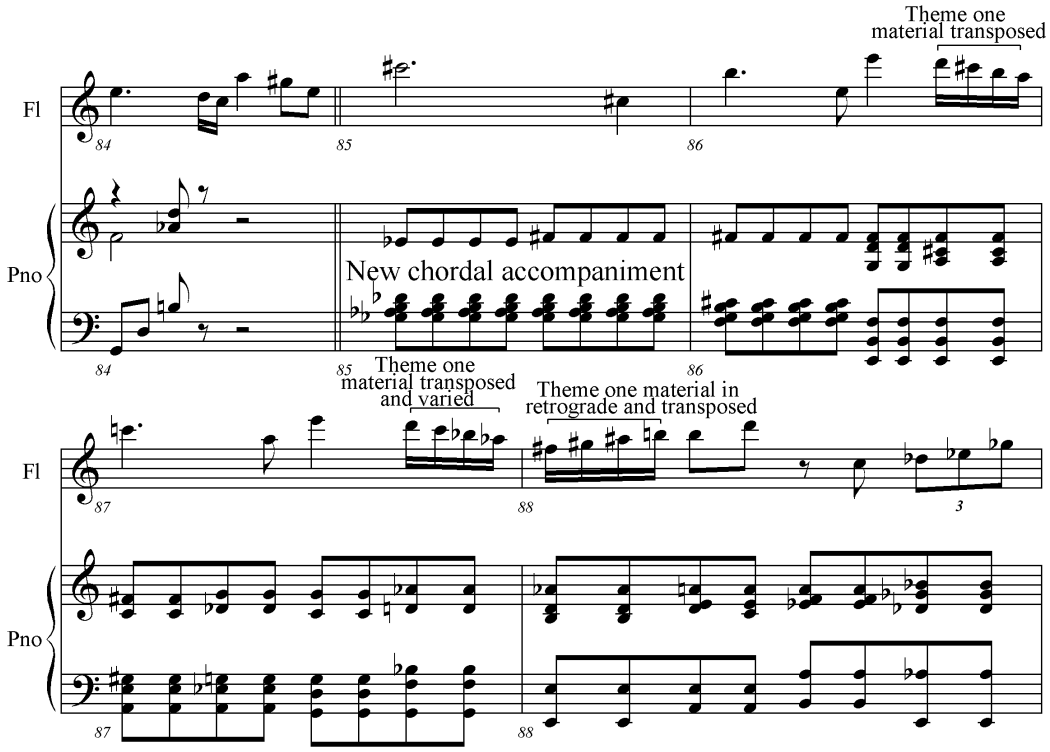
The intervallic second component serves as a basis for the seven-bar third theme. The tempo slows as the meter shifts to 3/8 (ex. 4.3). Though this theme is generated from theme two material, its character is sufficiently unique to become a third theme. This use of similar material in a different meter is a typical Handy technique, and is also seen in the third movement. The open quality of the initial intervals of the consequent (mm. 46-48) is contrasted with the chromatic quality of the antecedent (mm. 49-52).

Ex. 4.3: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 46-53.
Theme three.

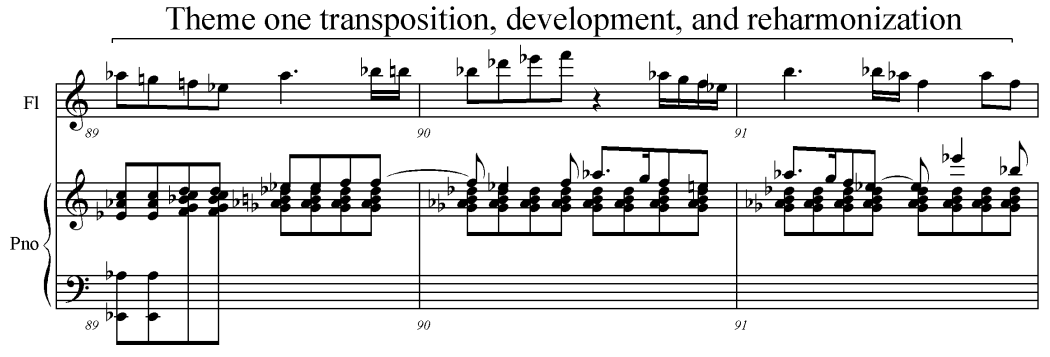


At this point the three principal themes have all been introduced and developed. A literal repeat of theme one is seen in mm. 77-84 (repeating mm. 1-7). Handy continues the melodic repetition but presents an entirely new accompaniment consisting of a series of repeated chords, which in turn prompts a further development of the theme (ex. 4.4). This leads into the transposition, development, and reharmonization of the first theme (ex. 4.5).

Ex. 4.4: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 84-88.
Theme one, new accompaniment and development.

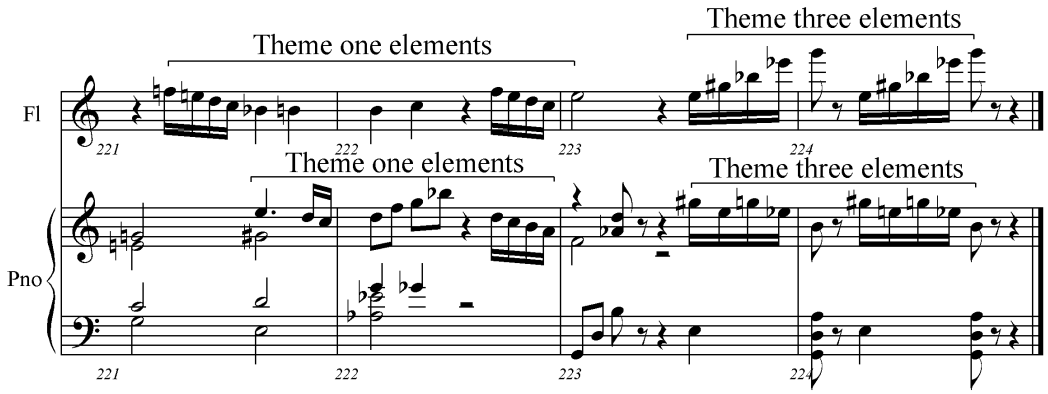


Ex. 4.5: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 89-91.
Theme one, transposition, development, and reharmonization.



Measures 99-141 and 142-89, respectively, employ themes two (from mm. 21-45) and three (from mm. 45-76). Handy then spins out the first theme (in mm. 190-220), including the variation with the repeated chords (heard in mm. 85-92), while the final four measures (ex. 4.6) alternate elements from theme one (see mm. 1-3, ex. 4.1) and the consequent of theme three (see mm. 49-50, ex. 4.3). The piece ends on a G major9 chord, but the listener does not have the sense of G as a tonic, or even as a centric element, giving the movement an unfinished conclusion.

Ex. 4.6: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, conclusion, mm. 221-224.
Themes one and two.



Movement II

The second movement again consists of three principal themes (fig. 4.2), and is more reminiscent of Handy's earlier work, as there is less development than in the previous movement. After the initial presentation of theme one (mm. 1-18), themes two and three (mm. 19-24 and 31-36, respectively), separated by another presentation of theme one, are introduced in turn. After another statement of theme one (mm. 37-46), the

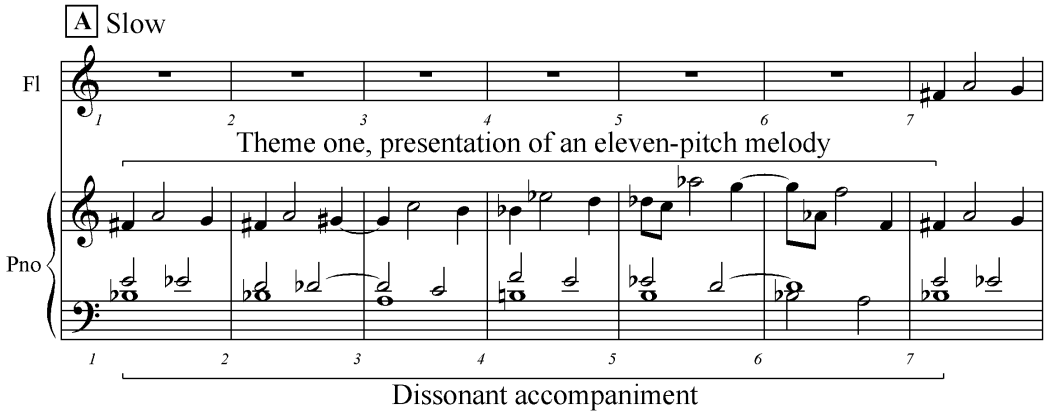
three principal themes are presented in reverse order, interrupted by an interlude based on a theme one motive, which creates a more complicated formal scheme.

Fig. 4.2: Formal scheme of George Handy's *The Caine Flute Sonata* II.

Rehearsal letter	A	B			C		D	E	F
Formal section	**A**	**B**	**A**	**C**	**A**	**C**	**B**	**A^1**	**A**
Measure numbers	1-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-46	47-58	59-71	72-90	91-115

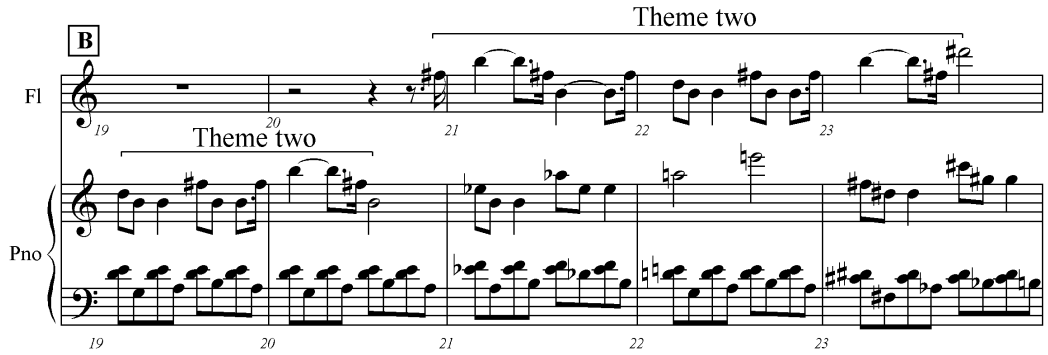
A solo piano provides the first presentation of theme one (ex. 4.7). The melody features a gradual unfolding of an eleven-pitch melody over a stark, dissonant harmony, all of which will be discussed below. This six-bar theme is repeated with the flute playing the melody, and is repeated a third time with melodic and harmonic elaborations.

Ex. 4.7: *The Caine Flute Sonata* II, mm. 1-6.
Theme one; eleven-pitch melody with dissonant accompaniment.

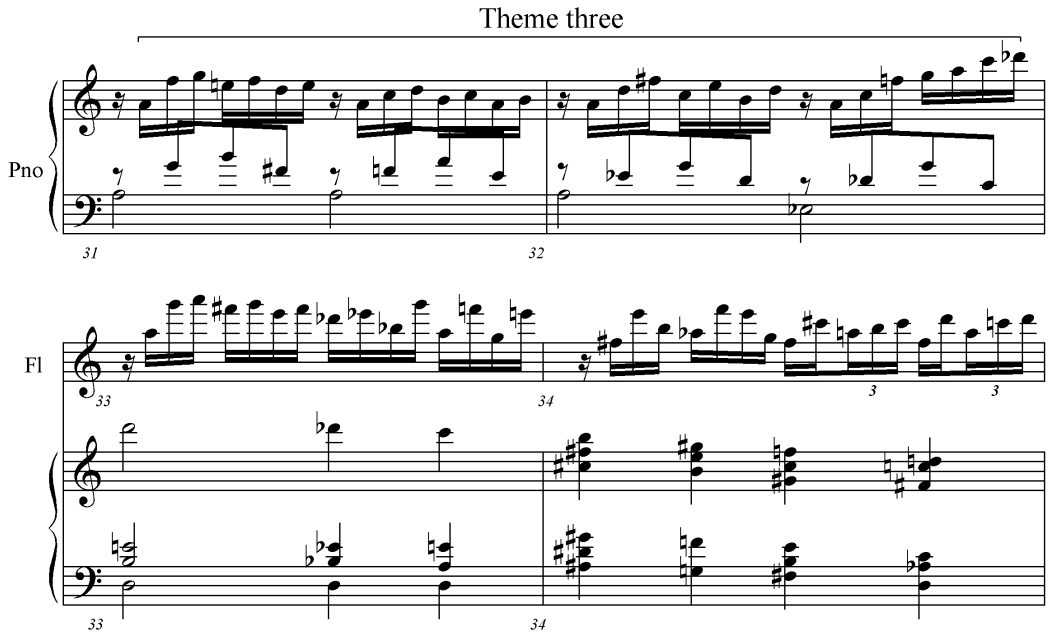


Handy introduces theme two (m. 18) and theme three (m. 31), as well as a repetition of theme one. The second theme is passed from piano to flute (ex. 4.8). This leads immediately into a restatement of theme one, with the flute raised an octave and a new accompaniment. The third theme, with a pointillistic character, is then presented in the piano and flute (ex. 4.9).

Ex. 4.8: *The Caine Flute Sonata* II, mm. 19-23.
Theme two.

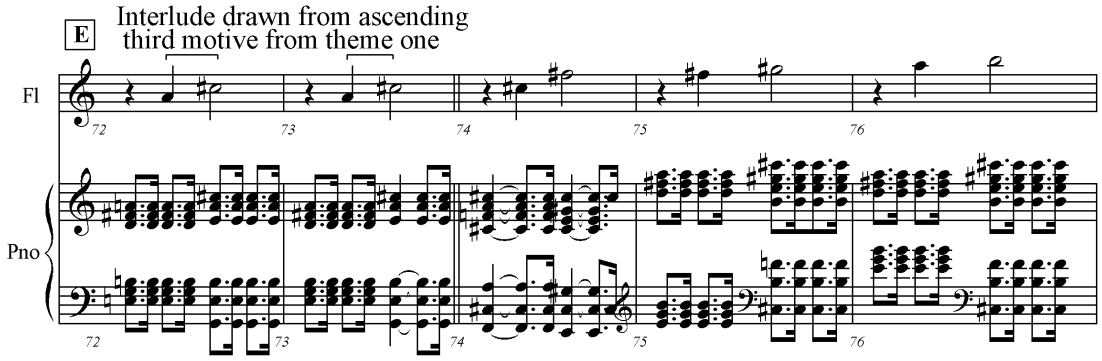


Ex. 4.9: *The Caine Flute Sonata* II, mm. 31-34.
Theme three.

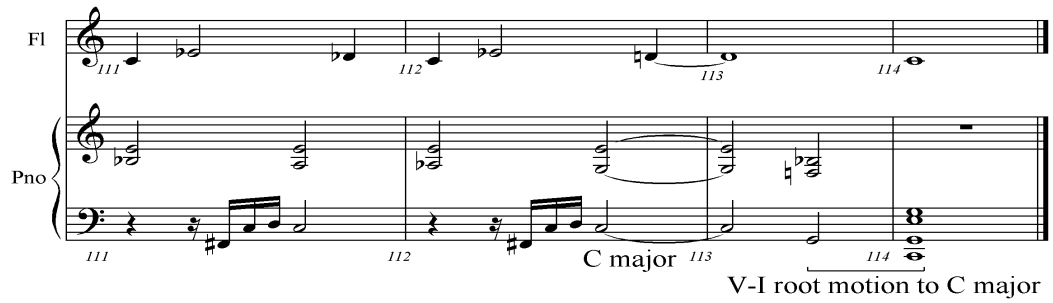


Themes one and three are expanded (mm. 37-48), as is theme two (mm. 59-71). The ascending third motive of theme one becomes the basis of an interlude (ex. 4.10). The movement concludes by developing and transposing theme one. Emerging from a dissonant texture, the movement to C major (ex. 4.11) and the V-I root motion to the final C major triad is unexpected (mm. 113-14).

Ex. 4.10: *The Caine Flute Sonata* II, mm. 72-76.
Interlude based on ascending third motive.



Ex. 4.11: *The Caine Flute Sonata* II, conclusion, mm. 111-114.
Movement concludes on C major chord.



Movement III

The third movement has the simplest form of all four movements, and involves little development. It is also the most straightforward harmonically, using variations of two of the most common progressions in jazz, I-VI-II-V and II-V. This harmonic structure will be a topic for later discussion.

Once again there are three themes, the second being a variation of the first (fig. 4.3). In essence, the movement is a variation of an A A B A song form.

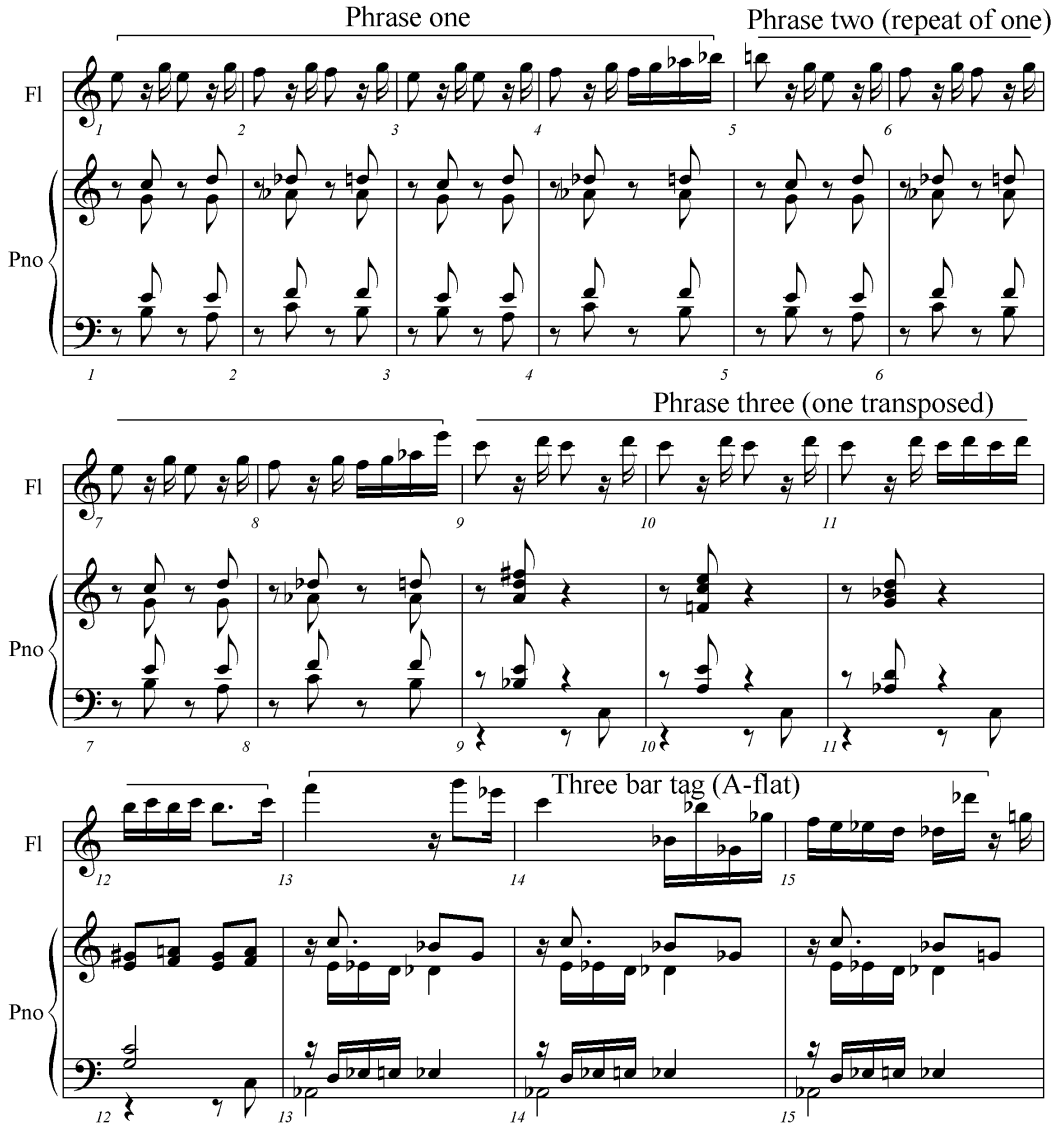
Fig. 4.3: Formal scheme of George Handy's *The Caine Flute Sonata* III.

Rehearsal letter	A	B	C		D
Formal section	**A**	**A^1**	**B**	**A^1**	**A**
Measure numbers	1-35	36-54	55-68	69-78	79-102

Theme one (ex. 4.12) consists of three four-measure phrases and a three-bar tag. The first phrase (mm. 1-4) is in a light and bouncy 2/4 with a cut-time feel, and has an off-beat accompaniment. Its harmonic scheme is a clever variation of I-VI-II-V.[28] The key is C major, though the only resolution to C occurs in the final chord of the movement. The second of the four-measure phrases (mm. 5-8) is a literal repeat of the first, while the third (m. 9-12) is a transposed version with a varied accompaniment. The final three-measure tag (mm. 13-15) strongly contrasts both in character and key area, as the off-beat accompaniment disappears, and the theme moves to A-flat major. This entire form repeats, but in the repetition (mm. 16-34) the piano plays the melody for the first eight measures, while the flute plays in a more florid style, in a style akin to a jazz improvisation.

[28] As an integral component of the chord sequence, "rhythm changes" (which received its name from its role in George Gershwin's song, "I Got Rhythm"), this progression is one of the most important and ubiquitous in jazz composition and improvisation.

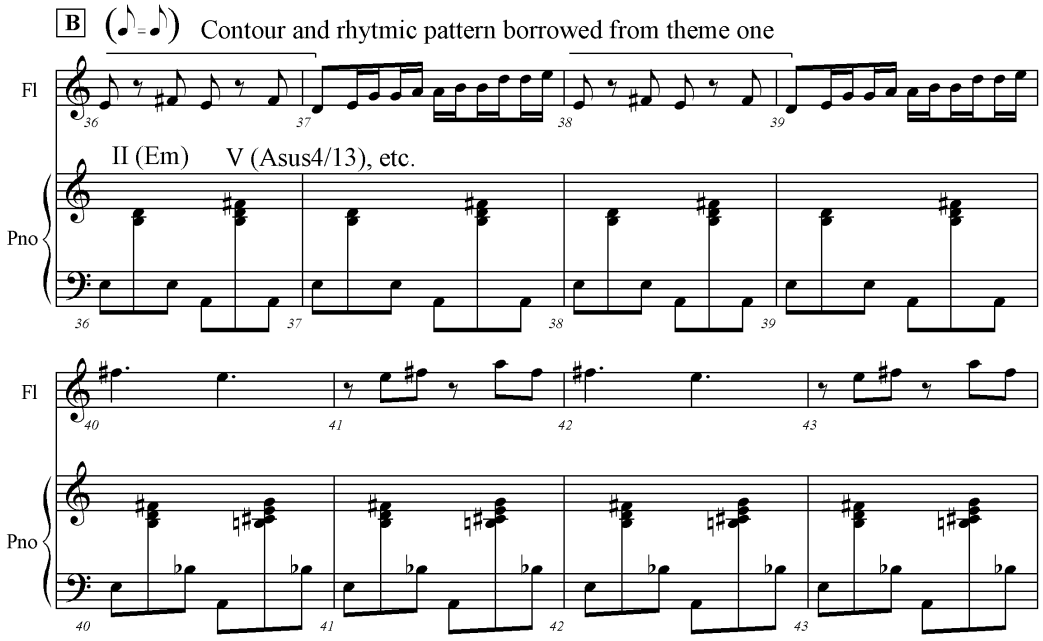
Ex. 4.12: *The Caine Flute Sonata* III, mm. 1-15.
Theme one.



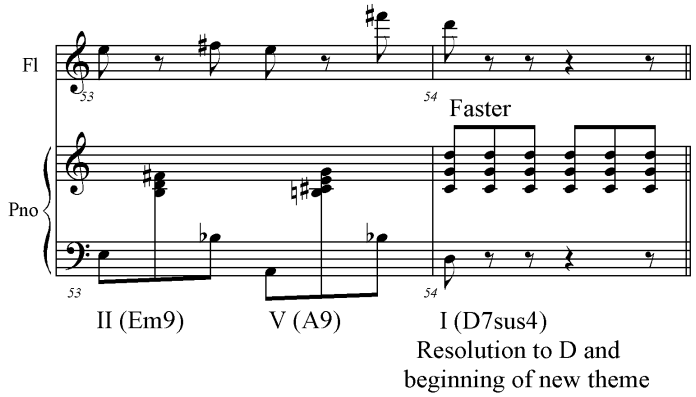
To generate the eight-measure second theme (ex. 4.13), Handy again uses the technique of borrowing material from the first theme (in this case the contour and rhythmic pattern; compare the flute melody in m. 1, ex. 4.12 with the flute in m. 36, ex. 4.13), while also changing the meter. This theme, though in 6/8 (eighth-note equals eighth from theme one), is a lightly-lyrical, medium tempo jazz waltz, and consists

primarily of a series of II-Vs in D major. When the tonic is finally reached (ex. 4.14) the cadence is somewhat thwarted, as it resolves not to a D major, but to a D7sus4, and also functions as the beginning of a new theme. This harmonic scheme, along with the progression from the first theme, will be discussed further below. As with the first theme, this phrase is repeated, but on the repetition the flute plays the melody an octave higher.

Ex. 4.13: *The Caine Flute Sonata* III, mm. 36-43.
Theme two: contour and rhythmic pattern borrowed from theme one.

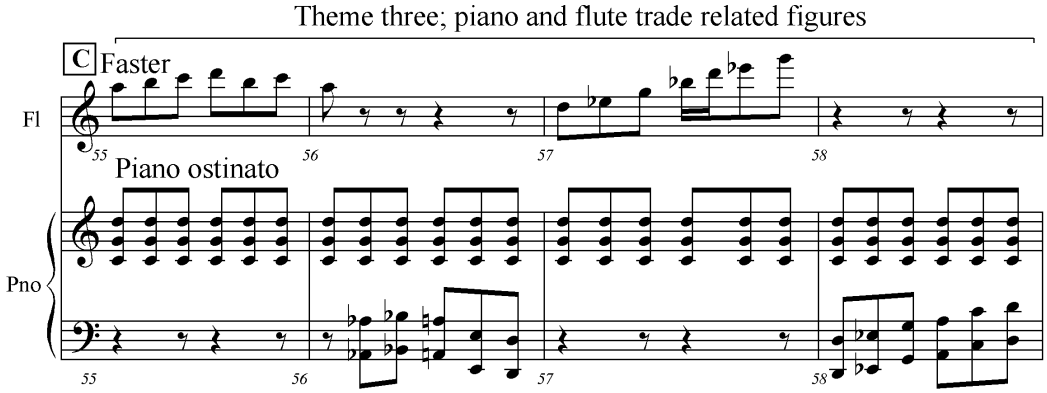


Ex. 4.14: *The Caine Flute Sonata* III, mm. 53-54.
II-V-I resolution to D; conclusion of theme two, beginning of theme three.



The third theme (ex. 4.15) continues in 6/8, but consists of new and contrasting material with a hard-driving quality (as a result of a piano ostinato) and a slightly faster tempo. The flute and piano (in the left hand) trade jab-like, melodically related figures, and are accompanied by insistent repeated chords played on all beats (in the piano right hand). The second theme returns in an abrupt manner for one presentation of the phrase. The first theme played in its entirety concludes the movement (mm. 79-102), with the addition of a sequential tag that finally resolves the variation of the I-VI-II-V progression to its tonic, C major.

Ex. 4.15: *The Caine Flute Sonata* III, mm. 55-58.
Theme three; flute and piano trade related figures; piano ostinato.



Movement IV

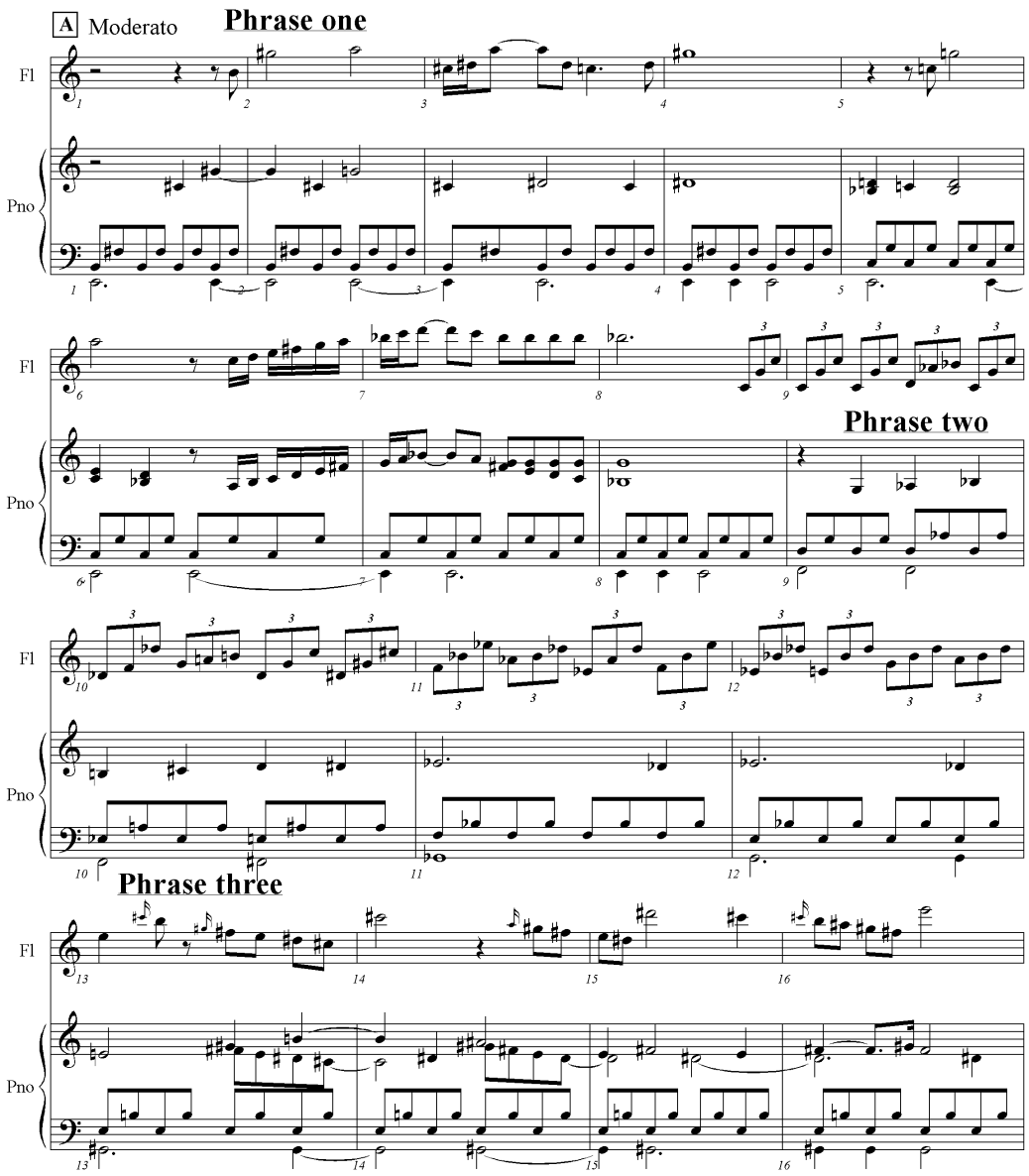
The fourth movement has elements that distinguish it from other examples of Handy's writing. Instead of presenting a series of straightforward, independent themes, Handy creates, for the first time, a theme group (mm. 1-62). The group consists of a seamless blending of phrases with shared motives (particularly an ascending semitone), an overall harmonic concept governed by a gradually ascending chromatic line, and a steady eighth-note-dominated piano accompaniment. The combination of a flowing, lyrical melody, a continuously rolling accompaniment, and the integration of phrases and motives, creates one of Handy's most cohesive compositional statements of this later period, and distinguishes itself from his earlier, block-oriented writing style. This theme group dominates the movement, and, as it perhaps exhibits the zenith of Handy's compositional technique, it will be discussed in detail below. Two contrasting themes (B and C) are sandwiched between presentations of this group (fig. 4.4).

Fig. 4.4: Formal scheme of George Handy's *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV.

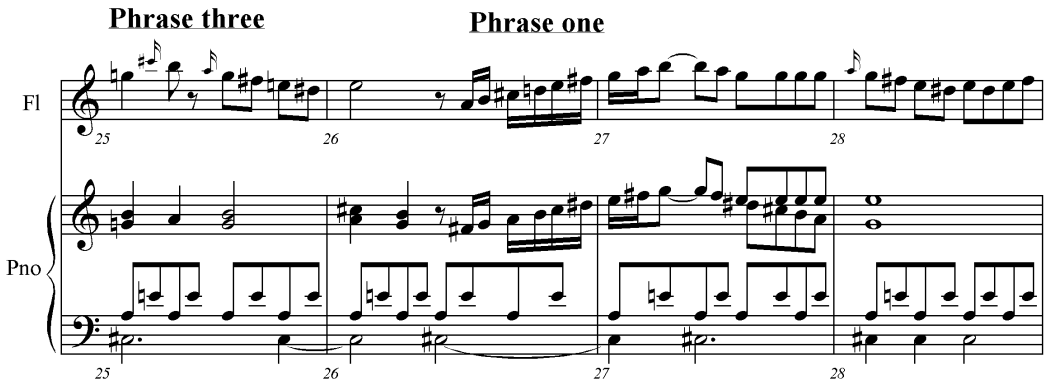
Rehearsal letter	A	B	C	D	E	F
Formal section	**A (theme group)**		**B**	**A**	**C**	**A**
Measure numbers	1-36	37-62	63-92	93-139	140-164	165-199

The group begins with three principal phrases (ex. 4.16, mm. 1-8, mm. 9-12, and mm. 13-16), all of which are transposed and slightly developed throughout the movement. A hint of the eventual merging of phrases at the end of the movement is given as two phrase fragments are connected (ex. 4.17). The polyphonic nature of the theme group is emphasized by the presence of a canon (with a one-beat displacement) over a continuation of the piano accompaniment (ex. 4.18). The theme group continues to develop through mm. 37-62.

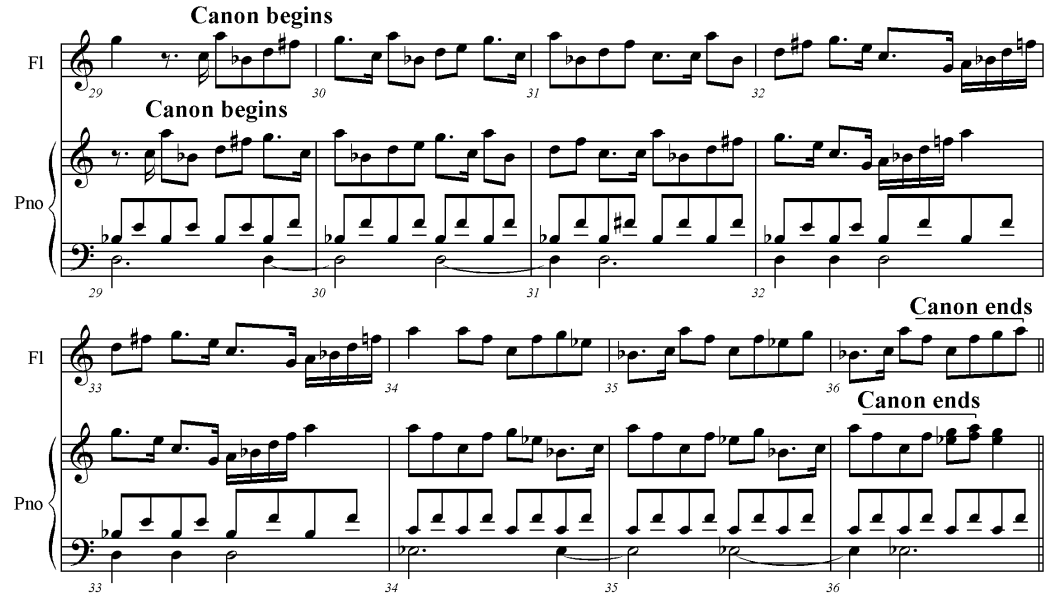
Ex. 4.16: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 1-16.
Three principal phrases of the theme group.



Ex. 4.17: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 25-28.
Merging of theme group phrases.



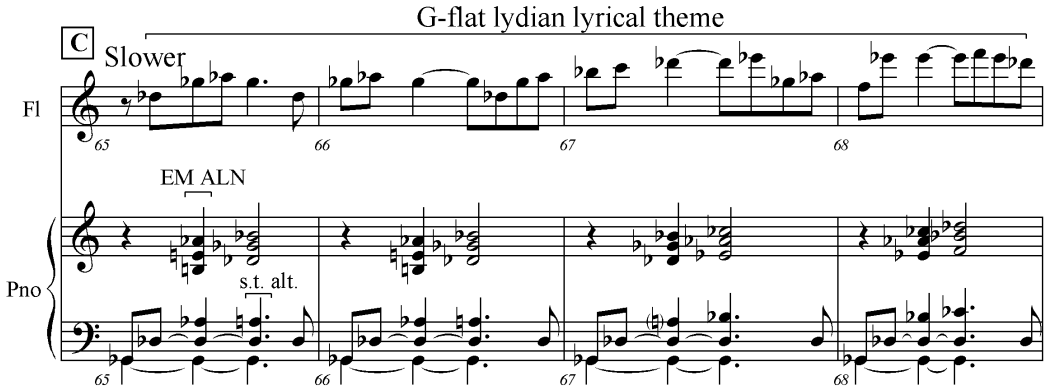
Ex. 4.18: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 29-36.
Canon, emphasizing polyphonic nature of the theme group.



The second theme features a lovely, lyrical, contrasting G-flat lydian melody (and its development) over a repeated arpeggiated accompaniment (ex. 4.19). The theme

would be unabashedly lyrical and romantic, but Handy appears averse to this concept, so he dirties the harmony, for example, with an E major triad (piano right-hand, beat-two, as an accented lower neighbor to the G-flat major, mm. 65-66) and a semitone alteration (A-flat to A-natural in the piano left hand, m. 65-66).[29]

Ex. 4.19: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 65-68.
Lyrical theme two (G-flat lydian), with harmony "dirtied."



After extensive development of the first theme group, a relatively brief (twenty-five measures) third theme (in 3/4) is presented (ex. 4.20). This section has a contrasting static quality that interrupts the forward motion of the piece. Several factors contribute to this stasis: there is little harmonic or melodic material; the accompaniment is extremely repetitive and has little rhythmic drive; and a spare, unaccompanied flute solo at the interlude's conclusion practically halts the piece in its tracks.

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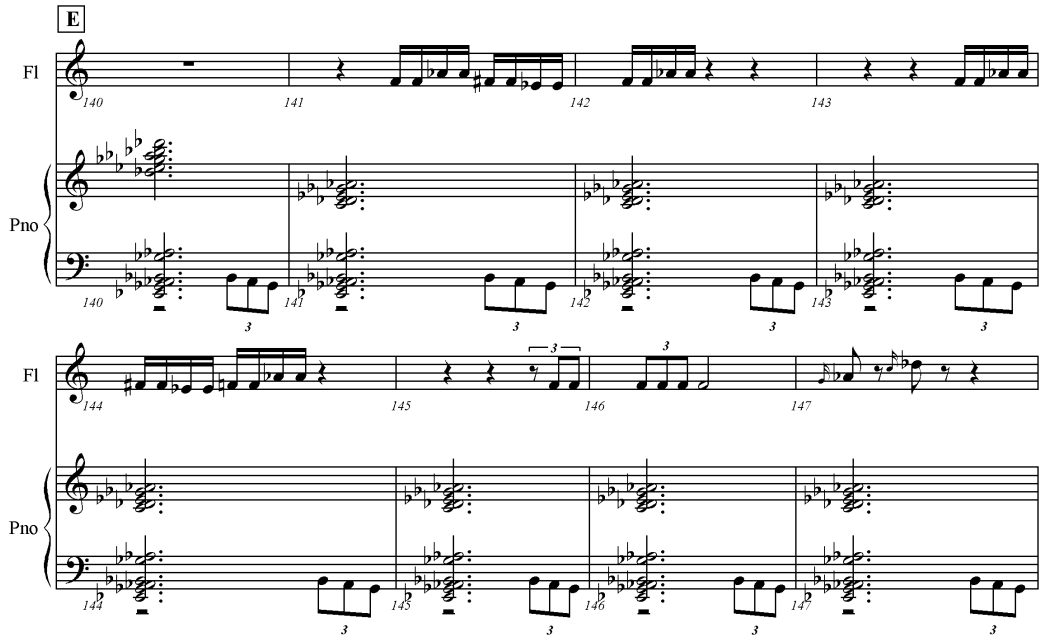
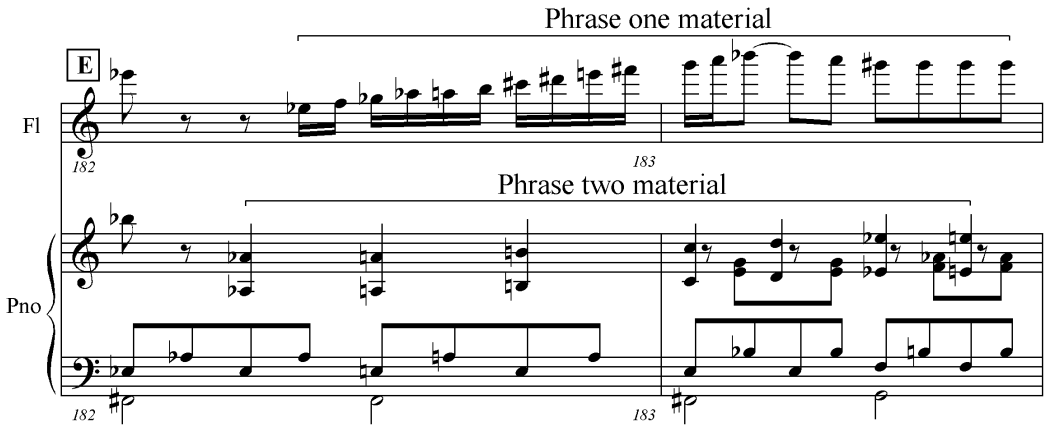
[29] While the spelling of the E major triad (m. 65, beat two) is enharmonic, I believe Handy spelled it in this manner for practical reasons, because in jazz and dance music F-flats and C-flats are not generally employed. As mentioned previously, Handy's use of enharmonic spellings are often based on practicality in this manner.

Ex. 4.20: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 140-47.
Theme three.



The piece is brought to a close with more development of the first theme group, culminating in a simultaneous juxtaposition of its phrases one and two, with the flute in its upper register (ex. 4.21). This is followed by a modulatory extension, and the movement, and the piece as a whole, concludes on an A major chord.

Ex. 4.21: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 182-83.
Simultaneous juxtaposition of phrases one and two from theme group.



The Caine Flute Sonata is the only Handy composition that makes reference to an established classical form. The primary connection to a traditional sonata is the multi-movement format, as Handy clearly takes a personal approach to the form of each movement and to the sonata as a whole. Other links do exist, however, as the work's overall shape is reminiscent of a sonata: the allegro first movement has a relationship to sonata form with its presentation of themes (ABC), a development (A^1), and recapitulation (CBA); the second is an episodic, contrasting slow movement; the simplicity and formal clarity of the third movement, along with its waltz, is reminiscent of a minuet or scherzo with a trio; and the fourth could be seen as a five-part rondo (ABACA).

Each movement of *The Caine Flute Sonata* provides a unique insight into Handy's compositional style during his late period. The first movement is the best example we have of his harmonic development and reharmonization of a motive. The

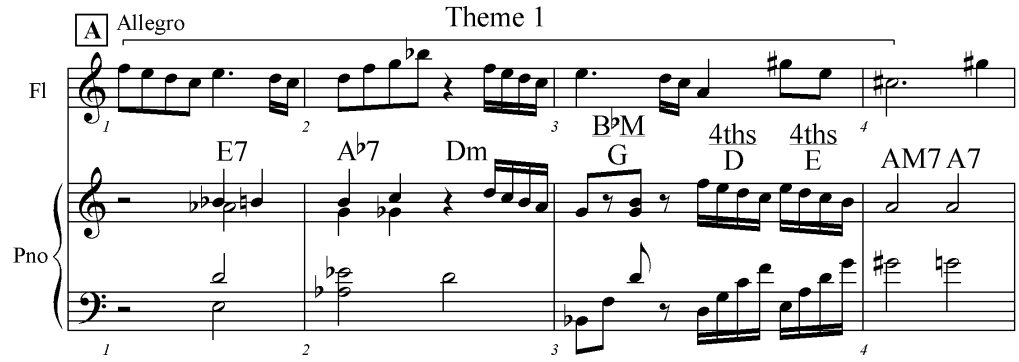
opening of movement two displays Handy's use of non-tonal, chromatic dissonance, while the third allows us to see his subtle approach to two of jazz's most common chord progressions. Finally, the first one-third of the fourth movement demonstrates Handy's integration of motivic material at its highest level.

Movement I, Harmonic variation

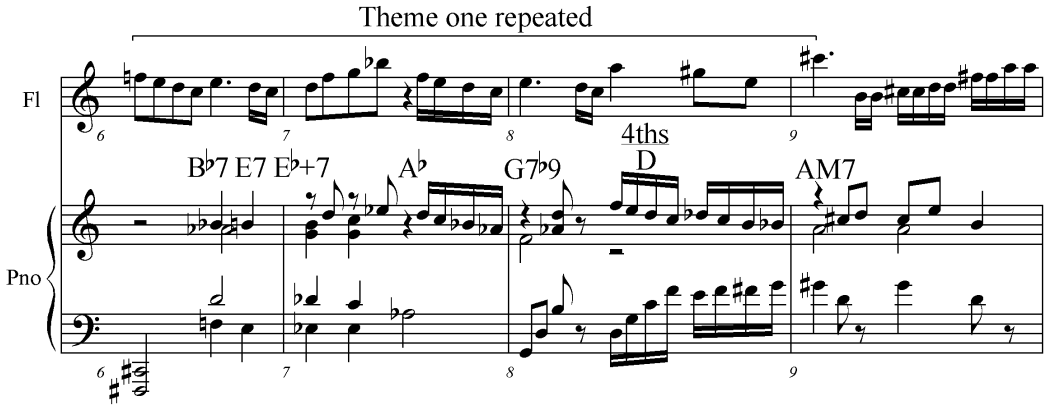
Because of the extended format of this work, which exceeds the three-to five-minute compositions that Handy had written up until this time, the first theme of movement one, a four-bar phrase, and its variations, provide an unusual opportunity to observe Handy's harmonic manipulations. In the jazz world, pianists are typically the most harmonically sophisticated musicians, and Handy certainly fits in with this pattern. In fact, Handy's concept regarding chords was quite unique. This is also exemplified in these excerpts.

In the first three presentations, discounting octave displacements, the flute melody is identical (ex. 4.22, ex. 4.23, and ex. 4.24). These settings of the theme could easily be harmonized by numerous traditional progressions, but instead rarely exhibit completely clear chords or anything resembling a traditional harmonic progression, displaying a non-tonal approach to triadic harmony.

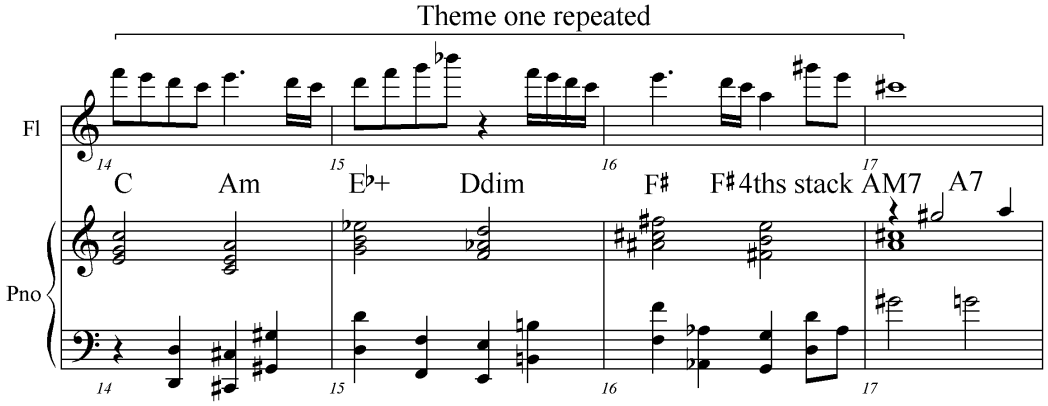
Ex. 4.22: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 1-4.
First statement of theme (one possible harmonic analysis).



Ex. 4.23: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 6-9.
First reharmonization of theme one (one possible harmonic analysis).



Ex. 4.24: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 14-17.
Second reharmonization of theme one.

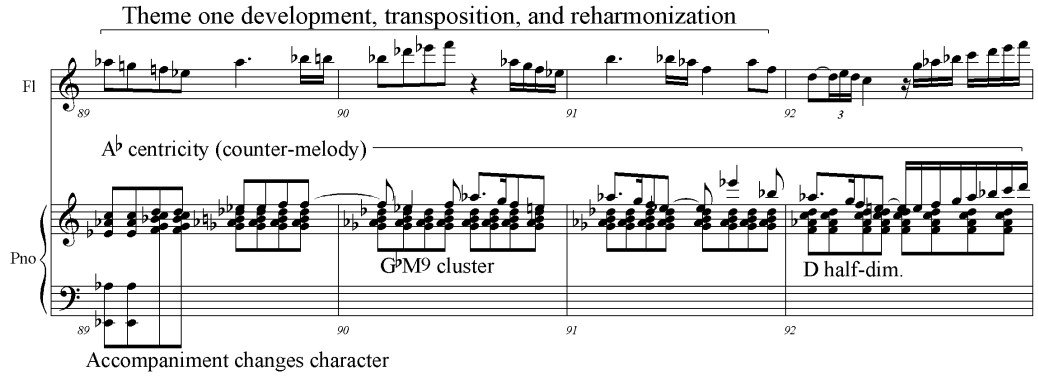


In fact, it is very difficult to talk about these chords. They look like typical chords at first glance, but there is often one, or several, wrinkles that make them difficult to describe. For example, in the initial statement (ex. 4.22), a possible analysis of the progression in the piano is: E7 (with a B-flat as a lower neighbor), A-flat7 (with a B [or C-flat] as a suspension and a major7 in the flute melody), D minor, a G major triad (piano right hand) over a B-flat major triad (piano left hand), two fourths-based chords built on D and E respectively (the latter perhaps functioning as a V chord in A), A major7, and A7 (with a major seventh in the melody as it begins a transition to the next phrase). Typically for Handy, a major component of this progression is smooth voice leading, particularly in the upper-three voices of the piano (mm. 1-2, 4). Aside from the first E7, the construction of these chords (and my analysis) are dubious (as are the analyses that follow). Handy's idiosyncratic harmonic sensibility generally seems to be of the triadic world, yet he is chafing at its restraints.

The second setting (ex. 4.23) is closely related harmonically to the original, with subtle variations, and could be analyzed as: B-flat7, E7 (a flat-V substitute for B-flat7 arrived at by smooth voice leading), E-flat+7 (with a major seventh as well), A-flat, G7 (flat-9), a fourths-based chord (built on D), and two contrary chromatic lines leading to A major7 (which is complicated by a D in each hand). The third setting (ex. 4.24) takes a very different approach. The piano right hand consists primarily of a series of inverted triads (C major, A minor, E-flat augmented, D diminished, F-sharp major, a fourths stack on F-sharp, A major7, A7) with largely unrelated octave bass notes in the left hand (until the A major).

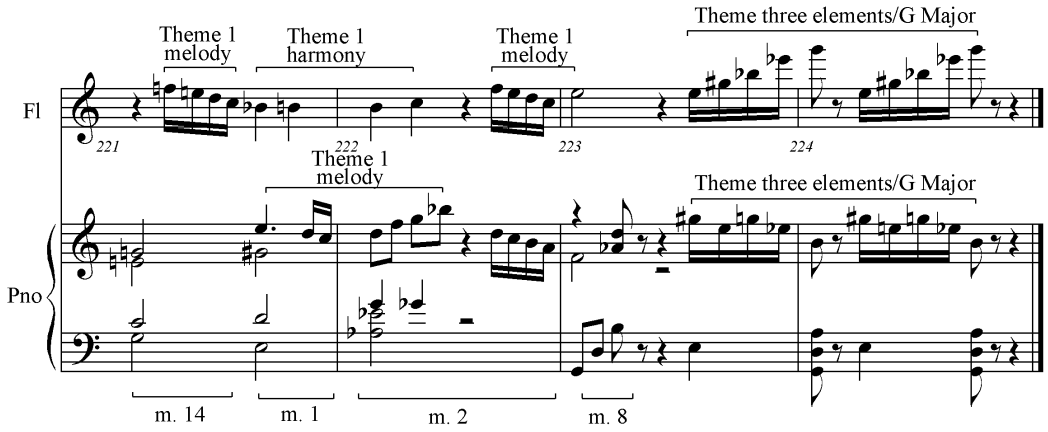
After a literal repeat of the first eight measures (mm. 77-84) and an expansion of the phrase, the theme is transposed, and varied melodically and harmonically (ex. 4.25). For the first time, the theme's accompaniment changes in character, becoming continuous eighth-notes beneath a counter-melody. The melody and its counter-melody have an A-flat centricity, and the harmony is a series of four-part clusters, based largely upon G-flat major9, resolving to a D half-diminished.

Ex. 4.25: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 89-92.
Development, transposition, and reharmonization of theme one.



A final statement of the theme occurs at the end of the movement (ex. 4.26), combining various harmonic elements of the first statement of theme one and its two reharmonizations. The harmony and melody are shifted (in a hocket-like manner) between the piano and flute. While the first three versions of the theme essentially share the final harmony of the phrase, A major7 to A7, this final presentation, and the movement, closes with material from the third theme, alternating E major and E-flat major (over E in the bass) with a G major chord, and ending the movement and the piece on G major (mm. 223-24).

Ex. 4.26: *The Caine Flute Sonata* I, mm. 221-24.
Final statement of theme one, with harmonic elements from all harmonizations.



A chordal analysis does not adequately describe the music. In Handy's own words, he does not use a system to generate harmonies or melodies, and he certainly plays around with chord structure. At this stage of his writing, and even in his second phase with Raeburn, Handy was often employing a non-tonal triadic harmony. His cadences (e.g., V-I, V-VI) are few and far between, and even these often appear with no preparation or after much delay. I posit that he makes these choices "by ear" (simply what sounds good to him) using a combination of methods, as well as incorporating the eclectic musical influences that are part of his sound world. He works intuitively, uses traditional chords with his own twist, and determines much of his direction by, or as a result of, smooth voice leading, which is perhaps influenced by his extensive experience arranging for brass and winds. The harmonizations of the first theme give an indication of this extended concept of chords, and in the second movement Handy stretches a bit farther, and experiments with chromatic dissonance.

Movement II, Chromatic dissonance

In his oral history, Handy notes his awareness of a number of compositional systems, and discusses his general approach to composition:

> I couldn't find myself following a method of writing, a way of writing. Actually, I can see that in the things I've written, I seem to utilize all of it. There's songs or passages that I've written that sound straight out of a Schillinger book, there's other stuff I've done that sounds like it came from the twelve tone system; I don't think about these things when I'm writing. I hear what I hear, I try to put it on paper, try to get close to what I hear, and if I don't, whatever I find is a discovery, whether I can use it then or not. At least you're discovering something and you'll find something new. Keep on searching and you'll find different things.[30]

From this quote, it is clear that Handy was aware of twentieth-century compositional techniques. We know from Handy himself, as well as his friends, of his great love of classical music. Hal McKusick states that besides being an avid listener, Handy also played a wide repertoire of classical piano works from memory.[31] As a result, Handy absorbed the works of numerous contemporary composers. However, in the same way that he had difficulty with authority, Handy also had an aversion to systematic approaches to composition. While resisting the perceived dogma of a system,

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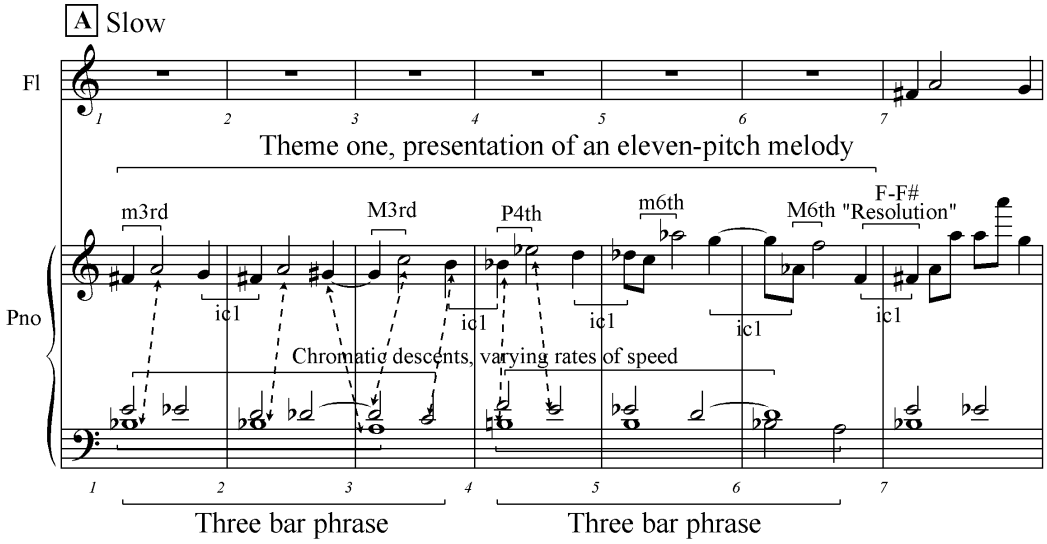
[30] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 88-89.

[31] McKusick, phone conversation.

I posit that the opening phrase of the slow second movement of his flute sonata is an example of Handy's experimentation with a non-tonal chromatic dissonance, as well as of his continued use of ic1 as an essential compositional element.

The principal six-measure melody of the first theme (first performed by solo piano) is an elegant line that gradually presents an eleven-pitch melody. It does so through a succession of one-measure sequences, each of which features an ever-widening interval, beginning with a minor third and ending with a major sixth, and connected by semitones (or ic1) (ex. 4.27).

Ex. 4.27: *The Caine Flute Sonata* II, mm. 1-7.
Theme one analysis; eleven-pitch, gradually expanding melody; dissonant relationship with chromatic accompaniment.



The accompaniment (in the piano left hand) has a chromatic and dissonant relationship with the melody. The accompaniment is broken into two three-measure phrases, and consists of two layers (ex. 4.27). Both layers descend chromatically (note the use of ic1), but at different speeds. The upper layer descends from E to C (mm. 1-3)

and F to D (mm. 4-6), primarily in half notes, while the lower layer descends from B-flat to A (mm. 1-3) and B to A (mm. 4-6), primarily in whole notes.

An important component of the relationship between the melody and the accompaniment is the staggered series of major sevenths (or ic1) that occur between both the upper and lower layers and the melody (annotated by dotted lines). This constant rubbing adds to the impression of chromatic dissonance. However, while the major sevenths are clearly a source of dissonance, the continual semitone descents give a false sense of resolution, or at least of heading towards a resolution. This concept is at odds with the non-tonal character of the phrase, and is an excellent example of the world that Handy so often inhabits, somewhere between tonality and non-tonality. Handy creates the impression of resolution and functionality, but the resolutions are often non-existent or deceptive. In addition, glimpses of triadic structures are found amongst the chromatic dissonance: E-flat major (B-flat, E-flat, G, m. 1), B-flat minor7 (B-flat, D-flat, G-sharp [A-flat], m. 2), G-sharp diminished (B, D, A-flat [G-sharp], m. 5), and B-flat7 (B-flat, D, A-flat, F, m. 6).

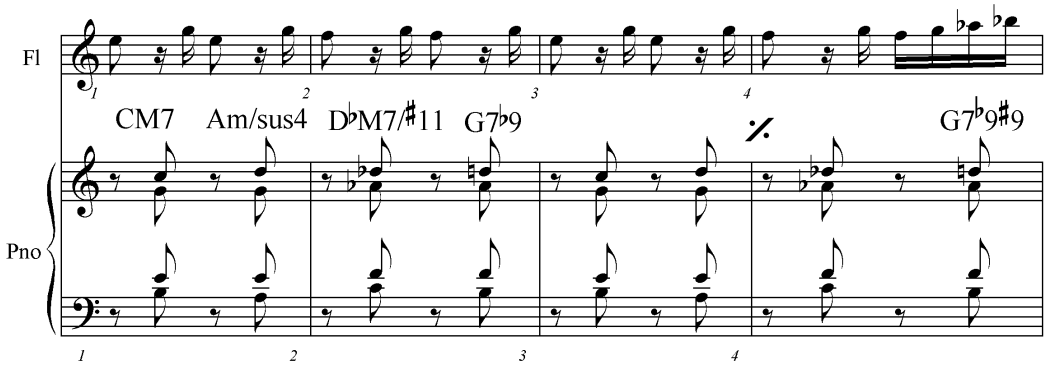
Through his emphasis on chromaticism and dissonance, along with the use of an eleven-pitch melody, Handy creates a starkly beautiful theme for his slow second movement. In contrast to this, the melody and harmony of movement three signal a return to Handy's jazz roots, while also continuing to forge a new style.

Movement III, Chord progressions

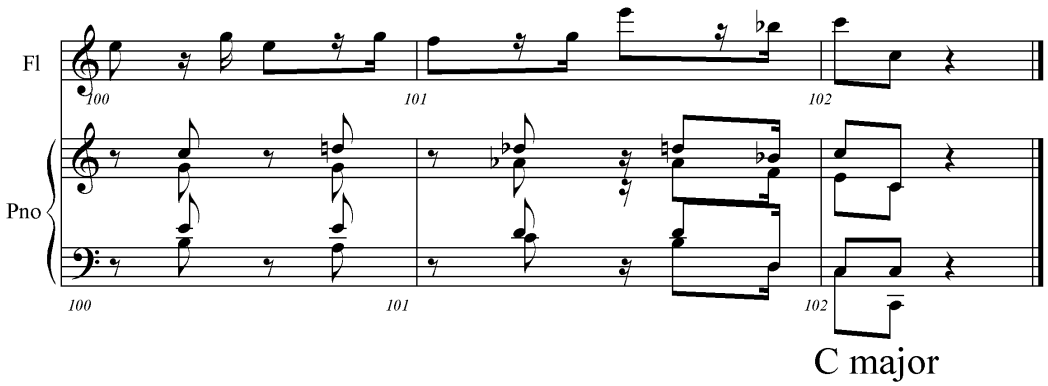
The melody of the third movement is quite straightforward, especially for Handy. It has clear harmonic implications, yet the manner in which Handy plays with these expectations are extremely subtle.

The melody of theme one (ex. 4.28) can imply either a I-V (one bar of each) progression in C major or I-VI-II-V (two beats each), also in C. Handy chooses the latter, and, using smooth voice leading in the accompaniment, makes some simple, but clever substitutions. The progression ends up as: C major7 (third inversion), A minor (with D, a suspended fourth above the root, replacing the third, C), D-flat major7/#11 (third inversion), G7 (flat-9) (first inversion) (mm. 1-4). The arrival on C major occurs only in the final measure of the piece, however (ex. 4.29), and even then, typically, Handy avoids a traditional cadential formula.

Ex. 4.28: *The Caine Flute Sonata* III, mm. 1-4.
Theme one chord progression; altered I-VI-II-V.

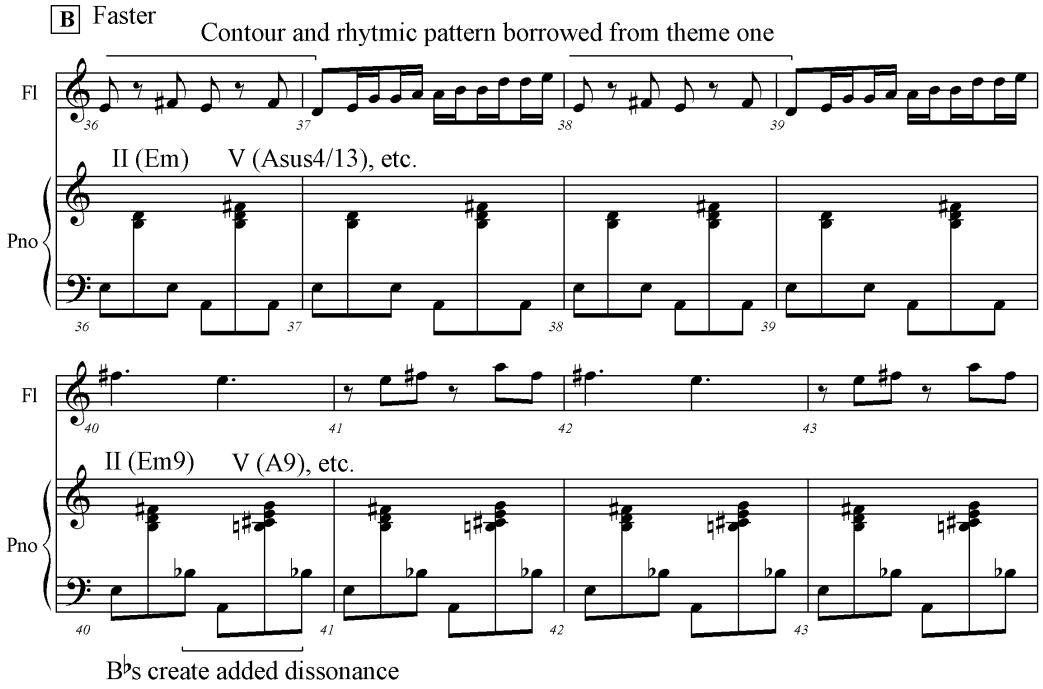


Ex. 4.29: *The Caine Flute Sonata* III, mm. 100-102.
Conclusion on C major.



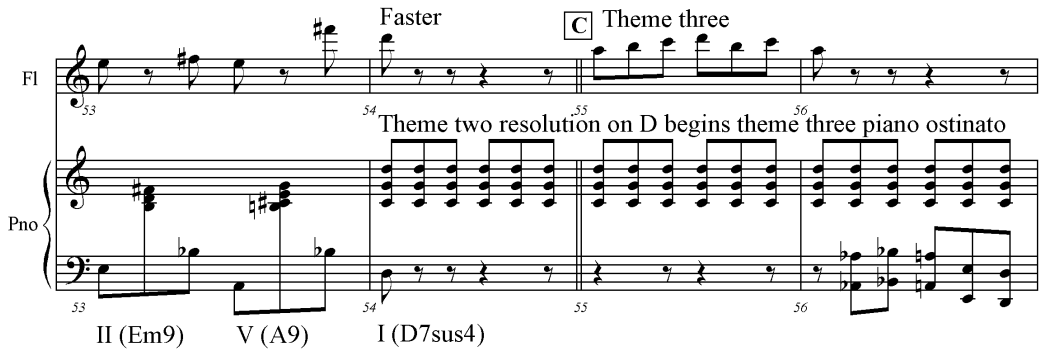
The melody in the following section (mm. 36-54) is motivically related to the previous melody, but the meter is changed to 6/8 (eighth-note equals eighth-note). The bass of the accompaniment implies a clear II-V progression in D major (E minor to A7), however, the chord voicings add a delicate ambiguousness to the progression (ex. 4.30). The E minor has no third (G), while the A chord retains the two pitches in the right hand (B and D), adds the thirteenth (F-sharp), and has no seventh (G is again missing). Also, as in the opening progression's A minor, a suspended fourth (above the root) is substituted for the third. In the consequent (mm. 40-43), a lyrical development of the previous phrase, the voicings are filled out to become E minor9 (still with no third) and A9. In addition, in the bass of both chords, B-flats are added (substituting for one E and one A), creating a minor second dissonance with the B-naturals in the right-hand. As mentioned before in relation to a lyrical theme in movement IV, this melody appears just too pretty for Handy, so the added B-flats mollify his need to squelch any hint of sentimentality.

Ex. 4.30: *The Caine Flute Sonata* III, mm. 36-43.
Ambiguous II-V in D major.



As with the first theme, Handy avoids a resolution. At the end of the section, however, the top and bottom voices do resolve to D, but the chord is a D7sus4, not a tonic D major, again avoiding a cadence. Instead of just closing the section, the D7sus4 also serves as the beginning of the third theme (ex. 4.31).

Ex. 4.31: *The Caine Flute Sonata* III, mm. 53-56.
II-V-I in D concludes theme two while dovetailing into theme three.



This movement, with its jazzy melodic content, stands out in the *Sonata*. The understated variations on standard jazz progressions are particularly appropriate, as they give the impression of a simple jazz composition, yet the movement has a unique harmonic flair. The clear formal delineations and more straightforward harmonic and melodic approach contrasts with the final movement, which features an approach to themes not seen before in Handy's work.

Movement IV, Motivic development

The concept of a theme group in itself is a new one for Handy, and the use of this formal element that begins the fourth movement exhibits Handy's most sophisticated integration of melodic and harmonic material. As noted before, this is Handy's only extended work, and was his first attempt at melodic and harmonic development. In addition, he had always written quickly, never having written a piece over an extended

period such as this.[32] It is noteworthy that Handy's motivic integration is most evident in this, the fourth movement; perhaps he developed this compositional technique as a result of writing the previous three.

A primary motive in this theme group is the ascending semitone, further confirming ic1 as an essential element in Handy's writing. Drawn from this is the concept of a variously expanded step-wise ascending line that, in a variety of ways, permeates all aspects of this theme group.

An ascending semitone motive is sounded at crucial moments of the first theme group. After a pickup, a semitone is the first melodic element in the flute, G-sharp to A (ex. 4.32a). Measure 37 also begins with this motive, transposed, B to C (ex. 4.32b). The semitone is immediately inverted, and becomes the principal motive for the next ten-measure phrase (ex. 4.33). This phrase is then transposed (down a major second) and repeated, further accenting the semitone motive. In addition, the final phrase of the entire theme group recalls the initial semitone motive, at pitch (ex. 4.34). Rather than a full cadence to end the group, a modulatory phrase results in a half-cadence on D-flat7 (m. 62), which then resolves to G-flat to begin the next major theme.

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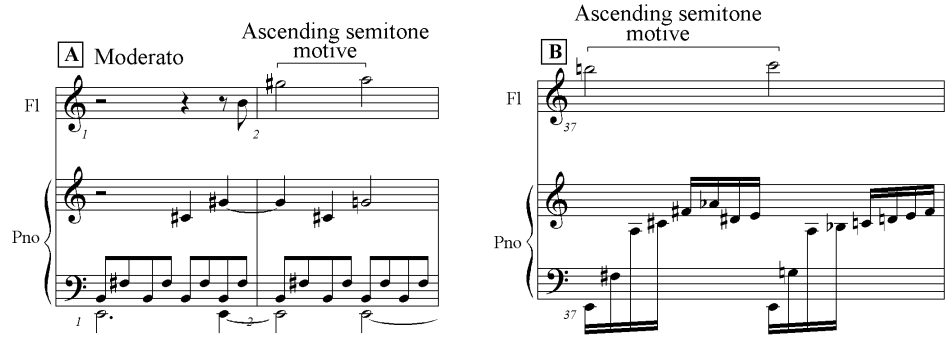
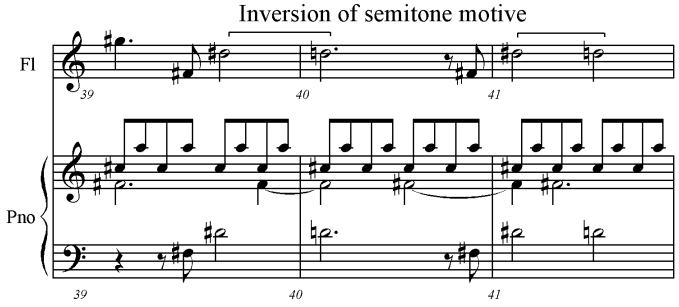
[32] Caine did not recall how long Handy had taken to write the piece, but it was certainly over a matter of months, as opposed to the overnight gestation of many of his pieces (Caine, phone conversation).

Ex. 4.32a, 4.32b: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 1-2, 37.
Ascending semitone motive.

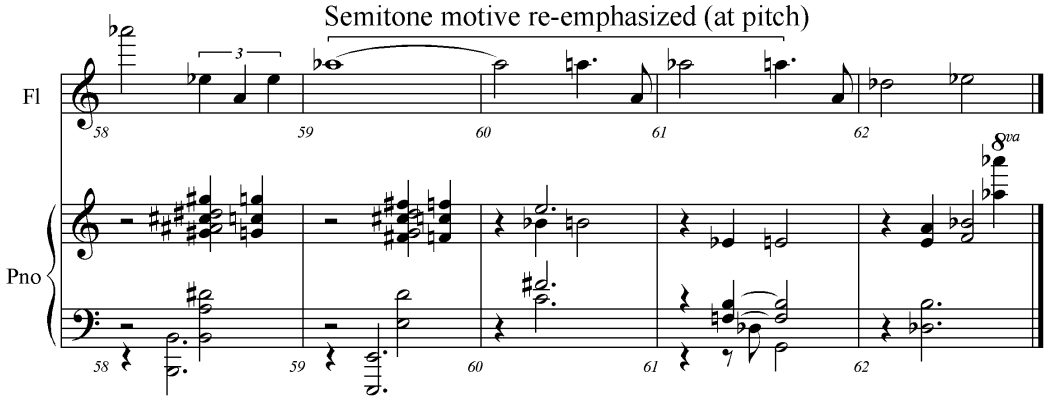


a. **b.**

Ex. 4.33: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 39-41.
Inversion of ascending semitone motive.



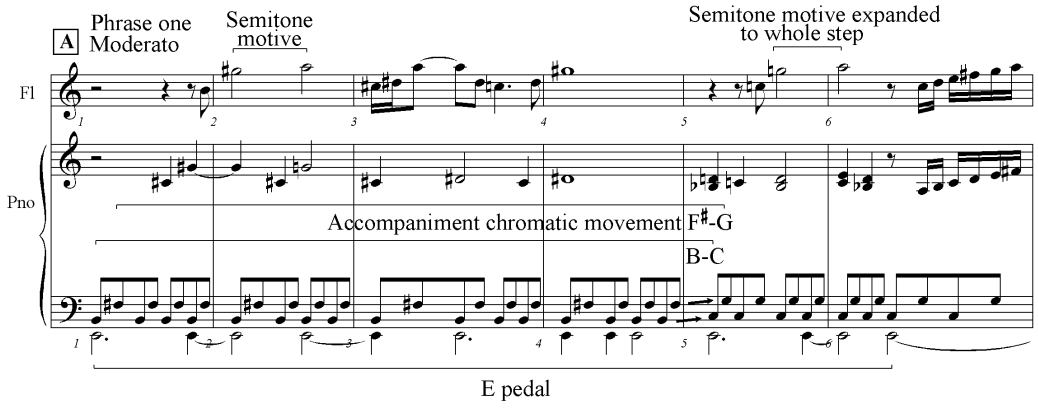
Ex. 4.34: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 58-62.
Theme group concluded with semitone motive (at pitch).



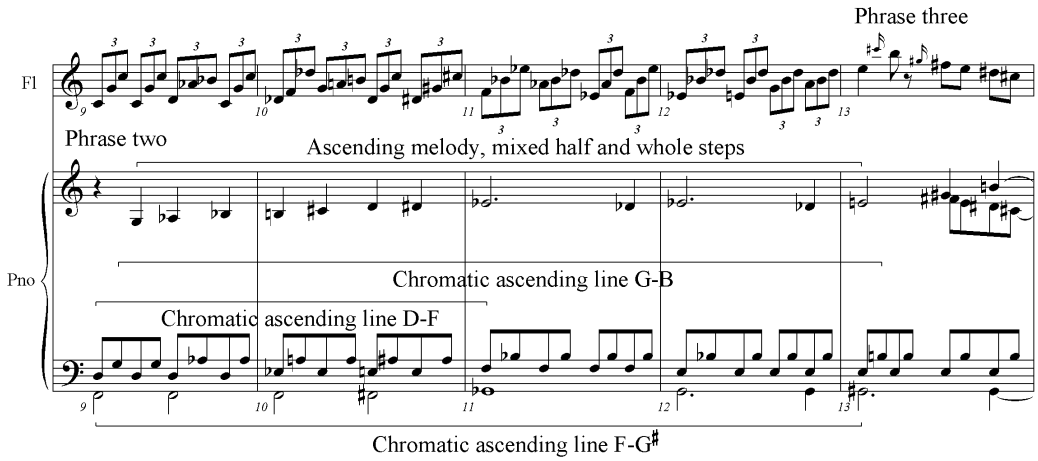
The ascending semitone motive is also prominent in the accompaniment of phrase one (ex. 4.35). The piano left hand has two components. The lower layer features a pedal E, which juxtaposes a 3/4 meter over the 4/4 of the flute and piano right hand (excluding m. 4). The repeated fifths figure in the upper layer, B to F-sharp (mm. 1-4), ascends to C to G (mm. 5-8), which, when reduced, creates two parallel, ascending semitone lines, B to C and F-sharp to G (mm. 1-6). These upper layer lines of the accompaniment continue to move in a predominantly chromatic manner, though often at different rates of ascent, throughout the theme group.

After the initial statement of the semitone motive, the motive immediately expands to a whole-step, G to A (mm. 5-6), and then ascends another semitone, to B-flat. This creates an expanded notion of a motivic line that manifests in an ascending melody in the piano consisting entirely of half steps and whole steps, from G to E (ex. 4.36).

Ex. 4.35: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 1-6.
Chromaticism in accompaniment. Ascending semitone motive expanded.

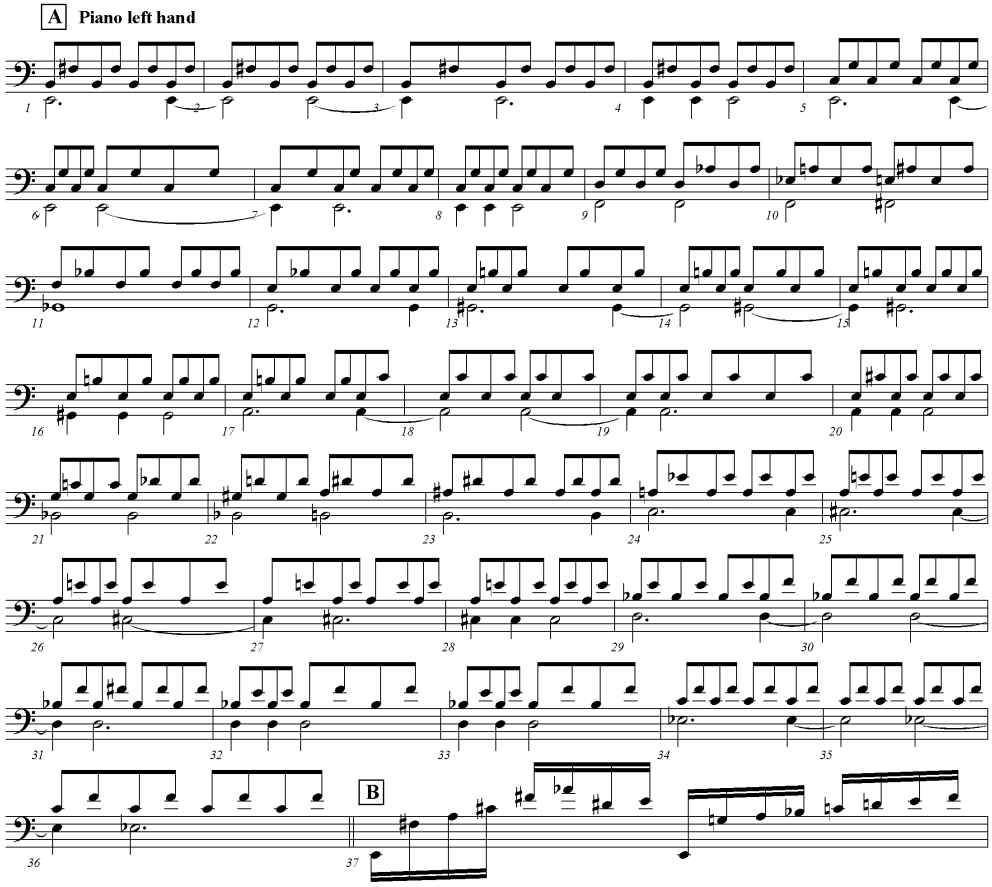


Ex. 4.36: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 9-13.
Ascending melody mixing half and whole-steps,
supported by chromaticism in accompaniment.

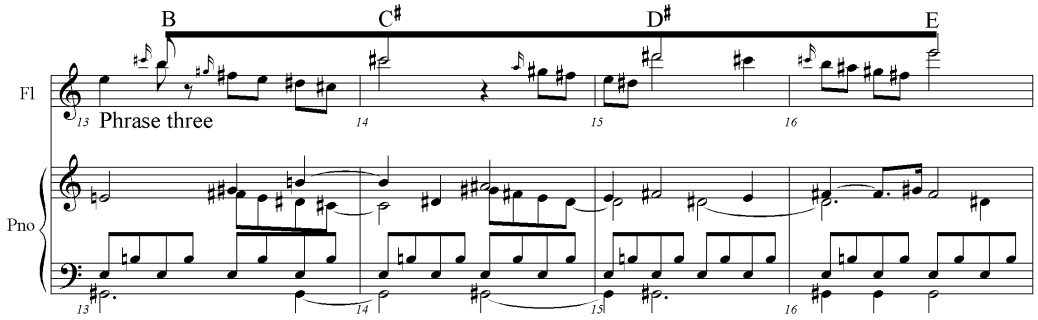


Supporting this theme in the piano left hand (mm. 9-13) are three independent ascending chromatic lines, the lower layer (F to G-sharp), and two in the upper layer, G to B and D-F (and back to E, ex. 4.36). In fact, the chromatic ascent in the lower layer subtly dominates the harmonic scheme of mm. 1-37, as it makes a continuous, gradual one-octave ascent from E to E (ex. 4.37). Both components of the piano left hand upper layer also continue their gradual chromatic ascents as well. Finally, from a reductive standpoint, the third phrase (mm. 13-16) is an ornamented step-wise melody consisting solely of half and whole steps, reminiscent of the second phrase's piano melody, B, C-sharp, D-sharp, E (ex. 4.38).

Ex. 4.37: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 1-37.
Chromatically ascending bass line through all three phrases and canon (E-E).
Upper layers of piano left-hand continue chromatic ascent at varied rates of speed.



Ex. 4.38: *The Caine Flute Sonata* IV, mm. 13-16.
Second ascending melody mixing half and whole-steps.



This motivic development and use of a tightly knit theme group, offer a fascinating window into the growth of Handy as a composer. Perhaps it is this compositional development that led Handy, as Caine indicated, to feel this was his strongest work. While Handy, with his saxophone quartets, continued to write in this vein, *The Caine Flute Sonata*, as his only extended work, gives us valuable insight into the compositional directions that Handy might have pursued had he continued to compose.

Conclusion

To many, when compared to his successes of the mid-1940s, Handy's life as a Catskill Mountains resort musician might seem a fall from grace. However, the careers of most freelance musicians are subject to such extreme shifts in fortune. In this regard, the fact that Handy was able to come back from his drug addiction and rebuild his musical career could be considered a story of success, not of failure. Still, it is tempting to imagine what Handy might have produced had he continued to write.

I can only speculate why Handy stopped composing after the mid-1960s. Comparing the sense of perspective that is articulated in Handy's oral history with the exploits and impetuous ways of his younger years, the former gives the impression of someone who has finally managed to get his life under some control, and of one who is constantly trying to maintain his peace of mind. Perhaps he no longer had the urge to continue writing, or maybe his need to keep his composure and calm is part of what kept him from writing in later years.

A recollection from Eddie Caine indicates that perhaps Handy linked composing to his past life style as well as to career disappointments. When performing the *Flute Sonata* in California during the early 1980s, Caine brought Handy out for the performance and arranged for some of their old friends to be at a party in the composer's honor. Handy became quite upset and uncomfortable at seeing his more successful and prominent colleagues. He was so agitated during this stay that he used larger doses of methadone (which Handy depended upon throughout his later-life to control his drug

dependence) than usual. Because of his emotional reaction, and having used up the methadone that he brought for the trip, Handy cut his visit short and returned home. In connection with this story, Caine wonders if the physical effect of Handy's long-term dependence on methadone also took a toll on his productivity,[1] while Hal McKusick posits that it probably took all of Handy's energy simply to manage to play his various jobs.[2]

In addition, Handy, as is true for many composers, only seems to have worked on commission. He did not write out of some inner need to create, nor did he seem to be driven professionally. When there was money to be made, Handy wrote, yet he does not appear to have actively searched for work. The late 1930s and 1940s were rife with opportunities for arrangers, and, being a great one, Handy was a busy writer. In later years, as the big band scene dissipated and the need for arrangers lessened, along with the professional difficulties he created for himself, Handy's compositional opportunities dwindled to nothing. Also, Handy's situation in the Catskills would not have been particularly conducive to writing, as there were relatively few playing and writing opportunities besides the hotel work.

While I do not want to focus on Handy's substance abuse, it is difficult to avoid the issue. In a 1970 interview with Jack McKinney, the composer openly acknowledges having destroyed his own career through drug use.[3] Also, all of Handy's friends and colleagues point to his addiction as the major factor in the dissolution of his abilities, his

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[1] Caine, phone conversation.

[2] McKusick, phone conversation.

[3] McKinney, Handy interview.

lack of desire to write, the loss of his physical capabilities, and his stunted career. Many lament the lost possibilities of further accomplishment.[4] His friends and colleagues speak of him as a premier talent, and also rave about his qualities as a fine, fun-loving human being.[5]

Describing the music of George Handy

I began this research project intending to discover and establish Handy's conscious efforts to merge his compositional interests in concert music and jazz composition. The deeper I look, however, the clearer it becomes that the important writers of this genre of "progressive jazz" (Handy, Burns, Sauter, Rugolo, Evans, Mulligan, Richards, Graettinger) rarely discuss their approach beyond saying whom they listened to and whose music they enjoyed. This does not seem to be a conscious attempt to hide their musical rationales; rather the issue does not strike them as interesting or important.

Consequently, at this stage of my investigation, I do not believe that Handy concerned himself with bridging stylistic differences between jazz and classical composition. Perhaps it is because he did not intellectualize the compositional process, and the concert music influences were more intuitive than intentional; his inclusion of

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[4] For example, see Ulanov, *History of Jazz*, 310.

[5] McKusick, Caine, Bank, Davis, and McKinney, phone conversations. Several friends also feel Handy was child-like, and that he never quite grew up (Mandel, phone conversation; Wally Kane, phone conversation, June 30, 2005).

classical compositional resources came from a natural absorption process gained by years of studying and listening, rather than a studied attempt to create a fused style.[6]

Handy indicates this, and at times finds himself shocked by what he has written:

> Sometimes I'll write without thinking about the performer–I don't know what I'll be thinking about, it will just come out of me. I'll follow a line with this and follow a line with this and not really have an idea of what they would sound like together, not really caring and yet when I hear the result I'm overwhelmed and with these things I don't feel that I was the great creator. This is another thing that I tripped into, but thank God by that accident I discovered how to create this particular new thing I found. That's the way I write; that's the way I've always written. I let it pour out of me; whatever. It doesn't always come out right either. I've made all the mistakes that everyone else makes.[7]

Handy's discussion of the Schillinger system gives further insight into his attitude towards composition in general, and his desire to be individualistic. Apparently he found the system was too formulaic:

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[6] When speaking of the wide range of Handy's musical interests, Caine and McKusick also note Handy's perfect pitch and his ability to absorb and retain music that he heard (Caine and McKusick, phone conversations).

[7] Schremp, "Handy Oral History," 90.

> I felt like it wasn‘t a live thing if it didn’t grow from its own seed and develop of itself. If it was already created and lying in a drawer to be pulled out and used, I didn’t want any part of it, so I avoided the Schillinger system. I took a quick look at it, felt that I understood what it was doing, I appreciated what it was producing; I didn’t like the way it was being produced.[8]

Handy’s artistic temperament, and the spirit in which he wrote, discourages an attempt to codify Handy’s compositional style. In my analyses, however, several elements have been of consistent importance: an expanded chordal concept, a proclivity for chromatic movement, and the motivic use of interval-class 1, all of which results in a harmonic environment that straddles tonality, centricity, and his non-tonal approach to triadic harmony.

These analytical insights, however, do not adequately describe Handy’s compositions. In fact, written descriptions of music frequently fall far short of actually portraying the sound of a piece. I have not read a good description of Handy’s music, nor have I managed one of my own. Artists in a discipline often rely upon vocabulary from other art forms to more adequately describe a piece of artwork or a style, and the best description I have found for Handy’s work follows in this tradition.

The painter Henri Matisse (1869-1954) was a great collector of textiles, and incorporated many of them as essential elements in his works. A touring exhibit that focused on this aspect of Matisse’s style gives perhaps the best description of Handy’s

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[8] Schremp, “Handy Oral History,” 88.

compositional style I have encountered (including my own). The exhibit discusses the use of textiles in Matisse's "Odalisque" paintings, and quotes Matisse from an interview: "He layered and juxtaposed these elements to create tension, which he then deliberately softened. His goal was to convey the 'impression of happy calm . . . a serenity in the balance of deliberately massed riches.'"[9]

It is not an individual melody or chord progression that stands out. Handy was not a particularly gifted melodist, and his songs, or sections of compositions do not linger in one's ear. Instead, his pieces are generally a collection of disparate ideas, each often expressed in an entirely unique manner with its own internal tension, with an overall formal tension as the ideas collide and meld. It is perhaps Handy's greatest gift that he is somehow able to soften the tension of these ideas, along with his varied resources and styles, and assemble them to create the "balance of deliberately massed riches" that Matisse speaks of.

Future research

Though I express an inability to accurately and completely describe George Handy's music, I do not feel disappointed, but instead see more roads for future inquiry that would provide a more complete picture of Handy's compositional career. There are many pieces from the 1945-46 Raeburn period, such as *Out of This World*, *Key F* (*KeeF*), *Hey Look-I'm Dancing*, *Grey Suede Special Maid*, and *Yerxa*, among others, that bear a close look, as does *The Stocking Horse*, written for Alvino Rey. This was without question Handy's most productive period, and, without denigrating the compositions of

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[9] The quote is taken from the exhibit, "Matisse, His Art and His Textiles," visited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, September, 2005.

the 1950s-1960s, his late Raeburn period works have a liberated, imaginative quality that the later works do not quite match.

Exploration of Handy's arrangements of instrumental standards and vocal numbers would also prove valuable. The introductions, interludes, and codas of these pieces are shocking at times in their melodic and harmonic approach.[10] The only two albums under Handy's own name, *Handyland* and *By George!*, should also be studied. The former shows Handy in a more conventional, "blowing session,"[11] featuring jazz's most typical form, melody, solos, melody.[12] *By George!*, while still in a mainstream style, also incorporates Handy's experimental side and stretches jazz vocabulary in numerous ways. The Zoot Sims albums have much to offer in both their recording (the early use of overdubbing) and musical approaches. Finally, Handy's saxophone quartets, as his last major works, should be examined.

A controversial topic that interests me is the exploration of racial and cultural influences on jazz composers. A particular approach could involve an examination of the various ways in which the blues informs the work of jazz composers, and to compare the approach of white and black American composers in regards to the incorporation of the blues into their compositions. For example, *The Bloos* is Handy's look at the blues through his own perspective, yet few of his other works give any indication of the importance of the blues to his compositional style. Duke Ellington, on the other hand,

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[10] These arrangements indicate that Handy did not feel that he had to lower his musical standards or limit his adventurousness to appease either the singers or the dancers.

[11] A blowing session is a recording date that concentrates more on the soloists than the compositions.

[12] These compositions were each based on the chord progressions of a different jazz standard.

clearly states, and makes evident in his music, that he consciously infused all of his music with the blues in an attempt to create music that represents his race.

Final words

As mentioned in the introduction, George Handy's musical career was both atypical (in his successes) and typical (in the difficulties he encountered). This duality is also expressed as we celebrate Handy's works and their contribution to the evolution of jazz composition, yet regret the wasted potential of such a unique and skillful composer. Two anecdotes, both occurring just after Handy rejoined Raeburn in San Francisco in 1945, articulate these perspectives.

Handy speaks of his return to the Raeburn band in 1945 at San Francisco's Palace Hotel as a watershed moment, after which he felt relieved of any compositional restraints.[13] This belief is echoed by saxophonist Hal McKusick as he recalls being shocked and amazed by what Handy had produced. McKusick states that he and Johnny Mandel (who sat in the trombone section, directly behind McKusick) both felt that the world was changing right before their eyes. McKusick states "we were enthralled," and recalls saying to himself, "This is it; period. And we are a part of it. How much nicer can it get than this; and then it did. It was a new music, a new expression."[14] With this new level of creative freedom, Handy threw down the gauntlet with an outpouring of radical compositions, and his colleagues were forced to react by raising their own level of creativity, which in turn raised the bar for those who followed.

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[13] Refer to chapter 1, pp. 16-18, for Handy's description of this period.

[14] McKusick, phone conversation, February 2, 2006.

From another perspective, shortly after the San Francisco engagement and Handy's triumphant return to the band, the Raeburn orchestra had an engagement at Sweet's Ballroom in Oakland. Here, McKusick recalls that Handy, during a dance set, sat at the piano and pounded the keys with both of his hands as he screamed and cried. His fragile emotional state, and probably his drug addiction, was out of control to the point that his father had to come and get him and commit him to a rehabilitation clinic.[15]

Handy was a skillful, gifted composer who showed the jazz world new possibilities and influenced the direction of jazz composition. Handy was also, particularly early in his life, a profoundly disturbed man whose inability to cope with both the exigencies of the music business and daily life cut short a significant compositional career.

Recalling a bittersweet recollection by Johnny Mandel, a major composer whose musical vision was greatly impacted by Handy, is a good way to conclude this study: "We thought [Handy] would be the biggest one of all. He was that good."[16]

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[15] McKusick, phone conversation, June 29, 2005.

[16] Mandel, phone conversation.

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Schremp, Bill. "George Handy Oral History." The Institute of Jazz Studies (Rutgers University-Newark), The Oral History Project, 1980.

Permissions

Selected Discography

Dalvatore Sally (George Handy, 1945). Released on *Innovations by Boyd Raeburn, Volume 3* (Savoy, MG15012, 1945) and *Boyd Meets Stravinsky* (Savoy, MG12040, 1946). Currently available on *Boyd Raeburn and His Orchestra 1945-1946* (Storyville, SYE 8313, 2001). Another version, recorded at NBC's Jubilee studio by the Standard Transcription Service, ca. December 1945, Los Angeles (Standard X-207), is currently available as a reissue on *Boyd Raeburn Jubilee Performances-1946,* (Hep Records, CD1, 1995).

Recorded ca. February 1946, Hollywood.

Boyd Raeburn Orchestra: Ray Linn, Dale Pierce, Nelson Shelladay, Zeke Zarchy (trumpets), Britt Woodman, Ollie Nelson, Fred Zito (trombones), Wilbur Schwartz, Harry Klee, Ralph Lee, Lucky Thompson, Hy Mandel, Boyd Raeburn (saxophones, woodwinds), Dodo Marmarosa (piano), Harry Babasin or Joe Mondragon (bass), Tony Rizzi (guitar), Jackie Mills (drums), Harp (unidentified), Two horns (unidentified).

The Bloos (George Handy, 1946). Released on *The Jazz Scene* (Clef Records, MG Vol. 1, 1949; reissued on Verve Records, 314 521 661-2, 1994).

Recorded October 1946, Hollywood.

George Handy and His Orchestra: Jules Jacobs (oboe), Robert Swanson (bassoon), Arthur Fleming (contra bassoon), Harry Klee (flute), Hal McKusick (clarinet), Herbie Steward, Lucky Thompson (tenor saxes), Chuck Gentry (baritone sax), Conrad Gozzo, Sonny Berman, Pete Candoli, Al Killian, Dale Pearce (trumpets). Vincent DeRosa, Evan Vail (horns), Bill Harris, Ed Kusby, Ollie Wilson (trombones), Jackie Mills, Jimmy Pratt, Don Lamond (percussion), Harry Bluestone (violin), Robert Jamison, Carl Walker, Arthur Krafton (cellos), Arvin Garrison (guitar) Red Callender (bass), Dodo Marmarosa (piano), George Handy (conductor).

Handyland U.S.A. (Label "X," LXA 1004, 1954).

Recorded August 16-17 (overnight), 1954, New York City (Webster Hall).

George Handy and His Orchestra: Ernie Royal (trumpet), Kai Winding (trombone), Dave Schildkrat (alto sax), Allan Eager (tenor sax), Danny Bank (baritone sax), George Handy (piano, composer), Vinnie burke (bass), Art Madigan (drums).

All compositions by George Handy: *Recoil*, *Lean Tree*, *Blinuet*, *Noshin'*, *Sprong*, *Rainbow*, *Foot Notes*, *Crazy Lady*.

By George! (Handy of Course) (Label "X," LXA 1032, 1955).
Recorded April 13-14, 1955 (overnight) and April 22, 1955, New York City (Webster Hall).
George Handy and His Orchestra: Dick Sherman (April 13-14), Charles Panelli (April 22) (trumpets), Gene Orloff (trumpet and violin), Frank Rehak (April 13-14), Billy Byers (April 22) (trombones), Ray Beckenstein, Dave Schildkrat (alto saxes), Tom Mace (tenor sax), Danny Bank (baritone sax), Tony Aless (piano), Buddy Jones (bass), Osie Johnson (drums).
All compositions by George Handy: (April 13-14) *Pulse*, *Pensive*, *Heavy Hands*, *Tender Touch*, *The Sleepwalker*, *A Wooden Sail In A Wooden Wind*, *Foolish Little Boy*, *Maretet*; (April 22) *Stream of Consciousness*, *The Flatterer*, *Knobby Knees*, *Of Gossamer Sheen*.

Zoot! (Riverside Records, RLP 12-228, 1957; also issued as *Zoot Sims Quintet*, Jazzland Records, JLP 2, 1957).
Recorded December 13 and 18, 1956, New York City.
Zoot Sims Quintet: Zoot Sims (tenor and alto sax), Nick Travis (trumpet), George Handy (piano, arranger), Wilbur Ware (bass), Osie Johnson (drums).
Why Cry? (Flo Handy), *Echoes of You* (Flo Handy), *Swim Jim* (Flo Handy), *Here and Now* (Flo Handy), *Fools Rush In* (Rube Bloom, Johnny Mercer), *Osmosis* (Osie Johnson), *Taking a Chance On Love* (John Latouche, Ted Fetter, Vernon Duke).

Zoot Sims Plays Alto, Tenor and Baritone (ABC-Paramount ABC 155, 1957. Also released [plus additional material] as *Zoot Sims Quartet: That Old Feeling*, Chess, GRD-807, 1996).
Recorded November 2 and 9, 1956, New York City.
Zoot Sims Quartet: Zoot Sims (alto, tenor, and baritone saxes, vocal), John Williams (piano), Knobby Totah (bass), Gus Johnson (drums).
All compositions by George Handy: *At Zonkin'* (aka *Speak Low*), *Blinuet*, *The Trouble with Me Is You*, *Where You At?* (November 2, 1956); *Pegasus*, *Major-Major*, *Noshin'*, *Minor-Minor* (November 19, 1956).

Zoot Sims Plays 4 Altos (ABC-Paramount ABC 198, 1957; reissued on MCA-Impulse, MCA 29069).
Recorded January 11, 1957.
Zoot Sims Quartet: Zoot Sims (alto sax), George Handy (piano), Knobby Totah (bass), Nick Stabulas (drums).
All compositions by George Handy: *I Await Thee Love*, *J'espere Enfin*, *Let's Not Waltz Tonight*, *Quicker Blues*, *See*, *A Key of C*, *The Last Day Fall*, *Slower Blues*.

Caine Flute Sonata (George Handy, ca 1955). Unreleased recording.
Recorded January 10, 1984, California.
Eddie Caine (flute), Neil Posner (piano).

Saxophone Quartet No. 1 (George Handy). Released on *The New York Saxophone Quartet (jazz-classical)* (20th Century-Fox, 20th Century-Fox 3150, 1965).
Recorded ca. 1964.
The New York Saxophone Quartet: Ray Beckenstein (soprano sax), Eddie Caine (alto sax), Al Epstein (tenor sax), Danny Bank (baritone sax).

Saxophone Quartet No. 2 (George Handy). Unreleased recording.
Date of recording unknown (perhaps ca. 1964-65).
The New York Saxophone Quartet: Ray Beckenstein (soprano sax), Eddie Caine (alto sax), Al Epstein (tenor sax), Danny Bank (baritone sax).

The Last Day of Fall (George Handy), *La Rue* (Clifford Brown, arr. George Handy). Released on Hal McKusick's *Cross-Section-Saxes* (Coral, CRL 571311, 1958; reissued as Decca, DL 9209).
Recorded (these particular compositions) April 7, 1958, New York City.
Hal McKusick (alto sax, bass clarinet, leader), Art Farmer (trumpet), Bill Evans (piano), Barry Galbraith (guitar), Milt Hinton (bass), Charlie Persip (drums).

For Handy's complete discography with Boyd Raeburn, see George I. Hall's discography, *Boyd Raeburn and His Orchestra* (listed in this dissertation's bibliography).