Abstract: Due to the colloquial and adaptive nature of jazz, not much is known about the process of how a jazz piece is composed. Often, pieces that were not intended for jazz performance are adopted by jazz musicians; those who compose jazz are almost always performers, as they focus their explanation on the performance of their compositions rather than their compositional process. To better understand the jazz compositional process, the process of composing five pieces of music with the explicit intent of being performed by jazz musicians was documented. This documentation includes explanations of different tools or mechanisms used while composing, a content analysis of the jazz pieces and why they are well suited for jazz performance, and a description of the thought process used throughout. Composition is often a highly personalized process, so this documentation will offer a detailed description of one possible approach to jazz composition. If any of the five pieces composed become widely accepted as a jazz performance piece, this documentation could also offer extremely valuable insight into the composition of a jazz standard.
A Self Study In Jazz Composition

by

Justin Schepige

A PROJECT

submitted to

Oregon State University

University Honors College

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Physics (Honors Scholar)

Presented July 15, 2013
Commencement June 2013
Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Physics project of Justin Schepige presented July 15, 2013.

APPROVED:

Co-Mentor, representing Jazz

Co-Mentor, representing Music

Committee Member, representing Jazz

Dean, University Honors College

I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

__________________________________________________________________________________
Justin Schepige, Author
Table of Contents

Abstract: ............................................................................................................................... i
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................... iv
Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 1
Background: General Trends in Jazz Standards ................................................................. 3
Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 4
Dark Dolphins ..................................................................................................................... 8
  Overview .................................................................
  Melody: .................................................................................... 8
  Chord Pattern: .......................................................... 10
  Signature Motif: ................................................................. 11
Source Material .................................................................................................................. 12
‘Round Midnight ............................................................................................................... 12
  Melody: .................................................................................... 12
  Chord Pattern: .......................................................... 13
Dolphin Dance .................................................................................................................. 14
  Melody: .............................................................................. 14
  Rehearsals ........................................................................ 14
Concerts ................................................................................................................................ 15
Recording & Closing Remarks ....................................................................................... 16
Shorter .................................................................................................................................. 19
  Overview ................................................................. 19
  Melody: .................................................................................... 19
  Chord Pattern: .......................................................... 20
Table of Contents (Continued)

Signature Motif................................................................. 21
Source Material ................................................................................................................... 22
Footprints ............................................................................................................................. 22

Melody ................................................................................................................................. 22
Chord Pattern ....................................................................................................................... 23
Black Narcissus .................................................................................................................. 23

Melody ................................................................................................................................. 23
Chord Pattern ....................................................................................................................... 24
Rehearsals ........................................................................................................................... 24

Concerts .............................................................................................................................. 25

Recording & Closing Remarks ......................................................................................... 26

Surely ................................................................................................................................ 29

Overview ................................................................................................................................ 29
Melody .................................................................................................................................. 29
Chord Pattern ....................................................................................................................... 30
Signature Motif .................................................................................................................... 31
Source Material .................................................................................................................. 32

Christmas Time is Here ...................................................................................................... 32

Melody .................................................................................................................................. 32
Chord Pattern ....................................................................................................................... 32
Rehearsals ........................................................................................................................... 33

Concerts .............................................................................................................................. 34

Recording & Closing Comments ....................................................................................... 34
Table of Contents (Continued)

Hugh’s Blues ..................................................................................................................... 38

Overview ........................................................................................................................ 38
Melody ............................................................................................................................. 38
Chord Pattern .................................................................................................................. 39
Signature Motif .............................................................................................................. 41
Source Material .............................................................................................................. 42

Night Train ...................................................................................................................... 42

Chord Pattern .................................................................................................................. 42
Blues #2 .......................................................................................................................... 42

Chord Pattern .................................................................................................................. 42
Rehearsals ....................................................................................................................... 44

Concerts .......................................................................................................................... 45

Recording & Closing Comments .................................................................................... 45

Checkered Knights ......................................................................................................... 48

Overview ........................................................................................................................ 48
Melody ............................................................................................................................. 48
Chord Pattern .................................................................................................................. 50
Signature Motif .............................................................................................................. 52
Source Material .............................................................................................................. 52

Rehearsals ....................................................................................................................... 53
Concerts .......................................................................................................................... 54

Recording & Closing Remarks ....................................................................................... 55
Table of Contents (Continued)

Works Cited .............................................................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Appendix A: Dark Dolphins Reference Material ............................................................. 57

Appendix B: Shorter Reference Material ........................................................................ 72

Appendix C: Surely Reference Material........................................................................... 79

Appendix D: Hugh's Blues Reference Material................................................................. 95

Appendix E: Checkered Knights Reference Material...................................................... 108

Appendix F: Rehearsal & Concert Track Listings & Data CD ........................................ 117
Jazz, at its core, is a verb and not a noun. As a practice, jazz is an action, a dialect, a mindset, an interpretation, and a conceptual framework that can be built around any genre or style of music. At the root of jazz lies the concept of improvisation: musical expression that exists entirely in the moment. True improvisation represents the freedom to play any note at any time during a given solo section of a musical piece. Although improvisation can occur in any piece of music, within the jazz community there are pieces that are thought to lend themselves more easily to this process, and such pieces are thus collectively defined as the genre known as jazz.

Within the body of jazz literature there are pieces that are more widely known and are improvised upon more frequently than others; these pieces are known as jazz standards. A jazz standard is most basically defined as any piece of music that is widely accepted and played frequently by jazz musicians. Because standards are determined collectively by the community, there is no static or universally agreed upon list of jazz standards, and over time new standards are adopted while old standards are forgotten.

Little is known about the compositional process that results in a jazz piece becoming accepted as a jazz standard. In many instances, pieces of music written for musicals, movies, and other outlets not directly related to jazz have become adopted as jazz standards over time, so no insight on jazz composition can be provided. Concurrently, jazz musicians that have composed jazz pieces with the intent for them to become jazz standards have generally provided little insight into their compositional process. Musicians such as Chic Korea and Miles Davis have indulged in interviews and instructional videos, but these videos still tend to focus more on the
playing and performance of jazz, not the compositional process. Even when explicitly confronted about jazz composition, some of the greatest jazz composers have had little to say about their own process, or the process in general.

I chose to compose five pieces of music with the explicit intent of being adopted as jazz standards by the community of jazz musicians. The analysis of my compositions strives to explain my compositional process, and includes such things as my thoughts and reasons for deciding on certain elements of a composition. If my pieces do become jazz standards, this documentation should provide valuable insight into one way a jazz standard is ultimately be conceived.
Background: General Trends in Jazz Standards

Any piece of music can become a jazz standard, but there are general patterns regarding which pieces become accepted as jazz standards and which pieces do not. Subsequently, I have identified three main trends that seem to encapsulate the majority of jazz standards. This information is something I used to help me direct my compositional process.

First and foremost, a jazz standard must provide a framework that fosters improvisation. Although improvisation can occur within any piece of music, there is a general agreement that some pieces create an environment that is more conducive to improvising than others. These pieces are more highly sought after by jazz musicians, thus allowing them to become jazz standards.

A jazz standard must also lend itself exceptionally well to the continual reinvention that is characteristic of jazz performance. Some pieces of music must be heavily modified to be appropriately represented outside of their original style, while others seem to easily flow between many styles or time signatures with little modification. Musical pieces that are easily translated into the widest variety of styles are more readily adopted as jazz standards.

Lastly, a jazz standard will usually have a strong and recognizable melody. A good melody will provide solo ideas to work with, as well as help determine the character of certain chord extensions. The melody will also help the listeners remember and identify with the piece of music. Most of the jazz standards have strong, recognizable melodies that can be identified even after they have been heavily altered.
Methodology

My compositions are intended to be malleable, open to interpretation, and ultimately accepted into jazz literature as jazz standards. Because new interpretation and modification is a mandatory qualification for jazz standards, what fundamentally makes my compositions uniquely identifiable must be explicitly defined. While composing, I conceptually divided the fundamental framework that defines my compositions into three categories: melody, chord pattern, and signature motif. The melody of a given piece is analyzed by using modal theory, proper harmonic relationships, and rhythmic placement; the chord pattern of a given piece is analyzed using chordal theory and proper harmonic relationships; the signature motifs of a given piece are more ethereal and are defined using whatever means might most clearly establish their status. These divisions helped streamline my thought process while composing and how the divisions applied to each composition is thoroughly explained in the analysis sections of this document. This approach also allowed me to directly compare my compositions to already established jazz standards, an integral part of my compositional process that helps define the domain in which my work will exist.

A main tenant to musical composition is drawing inspiration and ideas from an already existing body of established musical pieces. During my compositional process I was usually able to identify and subsequently analyze one or more jazz standards as a primary source for each piece I composed. In certain cases, I also included jazz pieces have not been acknowledged as jazz standards, but that had still influenced me. For each source, aspects of the piece that I drew inspiration from were identified and analyzed by means of all applicable categories used when analyzing my own compositions. Both the congruencies and the deviations from the primary
sources compared to my own compositions are categorized and explained so each source’s influence can be clearly understood.

One of the main methods of feedback I used during my compositional process was a rehearsal, which was used at different points during the development of each composition. During a given rehearsal I was able to experiment freely with all aspects of my compositions and see the effects of my alterations in real time. The various individuals I rehearsed with each offered their own unique perspective on my compositions, and from new interpretations I was able to garner new ideas. All the rehearsals were recorded so that any new musical ideas could be reviewed and analyzed in detail post rehearsal. Although I was able to create or alter melodic content based on ideas that arose during various rehearsals, I predominately used rehearsals to determine compositional aspects such as style and tempo.

Rehearsals also offered valuable insight as to how a particular piece was lending itself to alteration. During a rehearsal I would try to suggest at least one idea for a different stylistic interpretation of at least one composition; usually, this would be a stylistic difference, such as changing from a swing to a bossa nova. I would also solicit ideas for alterations from other members at the rehearsal and apply their ideas when applicable. In the Recording and Closing Remarks section, I address which compositions developed well in lending themselves to alteration and which ones did not during this part of the process.

An integral part of musical composition is the performance, or concretization, of a given composition. The professional presentation of a composition is important because the concert environment creates a unique set of stressors that simply cannot be simulated outside this environment. These stressors offer a new perspective on a given composition from both the performers and the audience. I was able to get my songs on the setlist of a few different shows
and record each performance for feedback. The recorded performances allowed me to analyze
how my pieces sounded in a professional concert environment based on how my pieces
translated to both the performers and the audience. In most cases, my pieces were performed
alongside well known jazz standards. Observations of how the audience responded to my
compositions compared to the traditional jazz standards were made. Although concerts function
differently than rehearsal, I was still able to use concerts for a similar method of explicit musical
feedback that allowed me to further refine my compositions.

Once my compositions had been published in final form, further alterations to the sheet
music became minimal or nonexistent. As is characteristic in jazz, this does not hinder any given
song from being altered in performance; such changes in stylistic, rhythmic, and harmonic
content will still flourish, but they will not be reflected in the written music. This tendency to
alter without written documentation heightens the importance of live or studio recordings, which
capture a given interpretation of a composition and allow it to be preserved. As an alternate
representation to the final written form of each of my five compositions, a professional studio
was used to record the most current interpretations of each piece.

The studio session marks the conclusion of my creative process as documented in this
paper. The final recorded product is used to represent my compositions in “original” form,
regardless of future alteration or interpretation. A final analysis is written about the recorded
material and includes closing remarks about each piece, as well what I might change about them
in the future if I were to revisit the project.
Dark Dolphins

Med. Swing

Justin Schoepke

©2019
Dark Dolphins

Overview: Dark Dolphins has two distinct key centers. The first eight measures exist in F-minor, and whether that is F-natural minor or F-harmonic minor is somewhat ambiguous based on the melody alone, though the Fm9maj7 and C7b13 chords suggest F-harmonic minor should be used. Measures 9-12 are atonal when analyzed as a group, though each chord could be thought of as its own unique key center. Measures 13-19 exist in Eb-major, with most of the melody and chords properly harmonizing within this key. Measure 20 reverts back to the F-minor key center that was presented in the first eight measures. The use of two distinct tone centers with a short atonal interlude allows for a large breadth of solo ideas. Soloists will not feel confined within a specific mode because the transition between modes happens at timely intervals, and the atonal section encourages creative transitions between the two centers.

Melody: The very first melody note of Dark Dolphins occurs on the first eighth note after beat 1. This rhythmic idea is prominent throughout the piece as it occurs again in measures 5, 9, and 10, all of which are sectional transitions or the beginning of new sections. This recurrence of eighth note off-beats lends Dark Dolphins well to a swing style, allowing the entire band to rest on the top of the beat, then kick the off-beat together (this can be heard in the recording). Medium swing was chosen as the primary style because of this fact. Because this off-beat is presented multiple times in the melody, it can be used as a good rhythmic mechanism for transitioning into a solo.

The use of improper harmonies in the melody over the first eight measures gives the song a feeling that is characteristic of harmonic minor. The E-naturals are not properly harmonized
with the key signature, but are properly harmonized with the presiding chord, Fm9maj7, thus suggesting F-harmonic minor. The use of a Gb in beat 3 of measure 2 also creates an improper harmony both with the key signature and with the Cb13, which has both a natural-5th and a sharp-5th, but not a flat-5th (flat-5th being Gb). In this sense, it is unclear why the Gb sounds proper in the melody, so the decision to use a Gb instead of a G here was entirely based on the fact that I preferred the sound of the Gb (a G also works fine in the melody).

In measures 9-12, the melody shifts dramatically out of key. The melody first mirrors the ideas presented in measures 1-8, then uses a transitional run to lead into the new key center of Eb-major in measure 13. The transitional run is properly harmonized with the presiding chords through which it passes. The decision to hold the Db for five beats at the end of the run came from wanting to leave space between melodic phrases bordering on the transition to a new key. A whole note gives the feeling of space in the melody because it is not a moving line. The lack of motion focuses the attention of the listener to other things that are moving, and allows rhythmic passages to be heard. Regardless of this notation, most jazz players will not hold out the Db for its full value, but will rather leave space or add improvisational licks of their own.

The melody in measures 13 and 14 is a quotation from Dolphin Dance. By using a small quotation, the melody will be more familiar to both listeners and performers, but will remain original in its overall presentation. This is a common practice in music, especially in jazz.

Measures 15 and 16 are a modification of the same melody line from measures 13 and 14, transitioning into an original melody that is properly harmonized in F-natural minor. This return to an F-minor harmonization foreshadows the chord transition in measure 20, where the C7#5#9 chord used in measures 4 and 8 makes a reprise to facilitate a transition back to the top of the piece.
Chord Pattern: The form of Dark Dolphins is “A.” Although some chord sections are repeated, the song is one form from start to finish, much like Stella by Starlight. This is not entirely uncommon in jazz, but is less common than the “AABA” form. The song can be conceptually broken down into three main sections: measures 1-8, measures 9-12, and measures 12-19, with measure 20 serving as a transition back to measure 1.

The first section of the piece, measures 1-4 (repeated 5-8), displays a chord pattern that is properly harmonized in $F$-harmonic minor. Many of the chord extensions were added to support what is happening in the melody, but these extensions do not leave the $F$-harmonic minor mode. The tonic progression is $I-V-IV-\#V-V$. The $V$ ($Dbmaj7$) functions as a stall, with the primary pattern being simply $I-V-IV-V$. Much like the initial $I-VI-II-V$ chord pattern in 'Round Midnight (discussed in the source material section), my $I-V-IV-V$ chord pattern is properly harmonized in its respective key center, $F$-harmonic minor. Also, in a style similar to 'Round Midnight, the four main chords in my chord pattern have three or more notes in common with each other. This high percentage of repeated notes creates a smooth, modally coherent soloing environment for the first eight measures. This environment is an excellent starting point for the song, allowing the soloist to choose between soloing within each chord individually and stringing a modal line through more than one chord at a time.

In measure 9, the chord progression moves out of the $F$-harmonic minor key. Technically, the $Bm11$ is properly harmonized in $F$-natural minor, but the $Dm9$ and subsequent chords dismiss a useful analysis of the tonic progression in the original key. The chord progression between measures 9 and 12 is mostly atonal, with each chord defining its own key
center. This atonal transition offers a great space for creative solo transitions between the two main key centers of the piece.

In measures 13-19, the chord pattern revolves around an Eb-major key center. The Dbmaj7’s used are not properly harmonized with Eb-major due to the major-7th, so they can be thought of as parallel motion between the keys of Eb-major and Db-major. However, continuing to use an Eb-major mode will work fine because Eb-major and Db-major share many of the same notes. The Gm7 and Abmaj7 are both properly harmonized in the key of Eb-major. This environment is conceptually very similar to what was presented in measures 1-8. The fact that the key center is now major instead of minor offers variety for both the soloist and the listener, and gives the song good forward momentum. This is because the major feel releases the tension created by the dissonance of the of the minor key center (especially since a m9(maj7)) chord is used). The lighter harmonies of the major key center also create anticipation of the impending return to the original minor key center.

Finally, in measure 20 the C7#5#9 chord is used as a transition back to the top of the piece. This transition feels natural due to the Dbmaj7 present right before it. In this case, the Dbmaj7 is a key chord linking the Eb-major and F-harmonic minor key centers.

**Signature Motif:** What I believe to be the main signature motifs of Dark Dolphins are bulleted below. The signatures are the most recognizable traits of the song and will most likely not be modified during future interpretations of the piece.

- The use of the major-7th in the melody against the Fm9maj7.
- The off-beat melody notes in measures 1 and 9.
- The Fm9maj7 used in measures 1 and 5.
- The C7#5#9 resolution in measures 4 and 8.
- The Dolphin Dance melody quotation in measure 13 and 14.
- The major-7 chords between bars 13 and 19.
Source Material

The two primary sources from which I drew when composing *Dark Dolphins* were ‘Round Midnight by Thelonious Monk and Dolphin Dance by Herbie Hancock. Both pieces are available, along with another copy of my composition *Dark Dolphins*, in Appendix A.

‘Round Midnight

Melody: No specific melody quotations or ideas were taken from ‘Round Midnight and used in *Dark Dolphins*. Monk’s general approach to melody writing was an influence to me, and his tendency to hold out 3\textsuperscript{rd}s and 7\textsuperscript{ths} of the presiding chord can be seen as they are longer valued notes in the melody. Some examples of this are noted below.

- In measure 2, beat 1, the melody holds out the 7\textsuperscript{th} of the presiding chord for 1 and ½ beats.
- In measure 3, beat 3, the melody holds out the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of the presiding chord for 1 and ½ beats.
- In measure 4, both melody lines that start on beats 1 and 3 start on the 7\textsuperscript{th} of the presiding chord, and both quarters notes on beats 2 and 4 are 7\textsuperscript{ths} of the presiding chord.
- In measure 5, beat 3, the melody holds out the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of the presiding chord for 1 and ½ beats.

In the first six measures of ‘Round Midnight (essentially the A section) there are eight notes that are held for one beat or longer. Of those eight notes, five are 3\textsuperscript{rd}s and 7\textsuperscript{ths}, while the other three are 5\textsuperscript{ths} and 1\textsuperscript{st}s. *Dark Dolphins* follows a similar pattern, with roughly half of the notes being held longer than one beat existing as 3\textsuperscript{rd}s and 7\textsuperscript{ths} of the presiding chords. It would be
good to note that this style of melody writing is not unique to Monk, and is fairly common throughout many jazz standards. Regardless, ‘Round Midnight serves as a great example of this type of melodic approach.

**Chord Pattern:** Although ‘Round Midnight is a very rich song chordally, the inspiration I drew from this piece comes almost exclusively from the first two measures. I-VI-II-V is an extremely common chord pattern in jazz, but rarely is it completely properly harmonized in a minor key. In ‘Round Midnight, the I, VI, and II are completely properly harmonized, but the V is not. Although altered chords are defined rather ambiguously, the altered designation does not change the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of the chord, it changes the 5\textsuperscript{th} and sometimes the 9\textsuperscript{th}. In this case, the Bb7\textit{alt} has a D-natural as the 3\textsuperscript{rd}, while the key signature mandates a Db. If the 5\textsuperscript{th} of the Bb7\textit{alt} is sharpened it will be properly harmonized, but if the 5\textsuperscript{th} is flattened it will be improperly harmonized. It is safe to assume that most musicians would sharpen the 5\textsuperscript{th} in this case, so a reasonable conclusion is that the only improperly harmonized note in the four chord sequence is the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of the V. Interestingly, the 5\textsuperscript{th} note of the V would still be properly harmonized if the chord was not altered.

Many of the same notes are shared between chords in the ‘Round Midnight I-VI-II-V chord pattern. The I to the VI transition only changes one note, leaving three out of four notes shared between the two chords. The II then shares three notes with the VI, and shares those same three notes with the I. Finally, the V shares one note with the II, two notes with the VI, and two notes with the I. This means that overall the ‘Round Midnight I-VI-II-V chord pattern shares on average at least 50% of the same notes between chords.

The ideas presented in the first two measures of ‘Round Midnight are reflected in the first four measures of Dark Dolphins. The root progression of the chords is not the same, but the
concept of shared notes between the chords still holds strong. The I and the V share four out of five of the same notes. The IV shares three notes with the V and three notes with the I. The #V shares four notes with the IV, two notes with the V, and three notes with the I. The reprise of the V is slightly altered, and now shares two notes with the #V, three notes with the IV, and three notes with the I. Dark Dolphins actually shares more notes between chords than ‘Round Midnight, with an average well above 50%.

**Dolphin Dance**

**Melody:** In Dark Dolphins, I used a melodic quotation from Dolphin Dance. The melody line that I used is the first line of the piece and shows up in measures 1 and 2 (and is repeated in later measures as well), so it is highly recognizable. In Dolphin Dance, the melody line starts on the 3rd of the Ebmaj7 and ends on the 2nd. In Dark Dolphins, the melody line starts on the major-7th of the Ebmaj7 and ends on the 6th. All of the relative note relationships are the same, so effectively the melody line was transposed down a 4th from where it was originally, relative to the Ebmaj7. This transposition does create a slightly different feel for the line, but everyone who played the piece thus far was easily able to recognize the quotation.

**Rehearsals**
Dark Dolphins was almost completely finished before I brought it to any rehearsals. This was primarily because I felt the song had a solid direction and melodic ideas, and did not feel the need to specifically seek outside input to finish the piece. Most rehearsals did not alter any harmonic content for Dark Dolphins, but rather explored the piece in different styles other than swing, the style in which I originally conceived of it.

The 4-28-2013 rehearsal did offer some insight into changing a chord used in the first eight measures of the piece. Originally, in measures 2 and 6, a C7(#5) was used. After discussing this with Martin (the guitarist) and Jake (the pianist) it was recommended that the chord be changed to a C7b13. They had both chose to interpret the C7(#5) as a C7b13 because of the use of the natural-5th during solos. The C7(#5) implies that the natural-5 should not be used, while the C7b13 implies that both the natural-5th and the sharp-5th can be used. Because the natural-5th sounded good during their solos, it was agreed that the chord be changed to a C7b13. This change can be seen between versions 4 and 5 of Dark Dolphins (Appendix A).

During the 5-6-2013 rehearsal and the 5-7-2013 rehearsal I asked the group to suggest different styles for Dark Dolphins to be performed in. The drummer, Adam, suggested we try a straight/ECM style (ECM being a recording company that produced many jazz records with a distinct style in straight 8ths). Adam’s suggestion was first tried at the 5-6-2013 rehearsal, and then revisited at the 5-7-2013 rehearsal. The ECM recommendation sounded much better than expected, so good in fact that I made the decision to include the ECM interpretation of Dark Dolphins on my final recording project and the 5-23-2013 concert.

Concerts
Dark Dolphins was performed on the 4-13-2013 concert, the 5-10-2013 concert, and the 5-23-2013 concert. The concert preparation forced decisions to be made about how the Dark Dolphins was to be performed and ended the experimenting present in the rehearsals. Originally Dark Dolphins was prepared only as a swing, but for the last concert it was prepared as a straight/ECM. Although Dark Dolphins was prepared and performed in more than one style, leading up to each concert the preparation was focused, and considered only the style of the upcoming concert.

For the first two concerts Dark Dolphins was performed as a swing, and for the last concert it was performed in the style of straight/ECM. In the case of the first two concerts, Dark Dolphins was performed along many other jazz standards and the audience was unable to distinguish between the performance of the standards and my composition. I believe that the similarities between Dark Dolphins and many other jazz standards make it easier to understand, and such the performers will be able to easier transmit their musical ideas to the audience.

**Recording & Closing Remarks**

Dark Dolphins was recorded in both a swing and straight/ECM style. The point of the recording session was to represent the piece in its original form at publication, but in this case there are two versions. If I were to choose an original form I would choose the swing version, but ultimately I would continue to perform Dark Dolphins in a straight/ECM style, and I would encourage others to perform as well.

After reviewing the harmonic content in post recording analysis, I did notice that the $Bbm7$ and $Abm7$ should probably be changed to $Bbm9$ and $Abm9$ given the notes present in the
melody. This is a small consideration, and most jazz musicians will add the 9’s in on their own.

Outside of this small tweak, I would not change anything about this piece.
Overview: Shorter has one primary key center, G#-natural minor. Measures 25-28 are not properly harmonized within G#-natural minor, so instead they can be thought of as an atonal short section. The melody supports the atonal transition by harmonizing with the out-of-key chords rather than G#-natural minor.

Melody: The first eight measures of Shorter start with a vamp over the two primary chords used during the piece, G#m13 and G#min6(9). Although the feel of the bass line (suggesting a similar pattern over all chords) will continue throughout the piece, initially it can be throughout of as a melody. For the first four measures, the bassline uses the 1st, 5th, and #9th (or flat-3rd) of the presiding chord, while in the second four measures it uses the 1st, 5th, and 9th (or 2nd) of the presiding chord. Both of these lines are properly harmonized in G#-natural minor. The change to the top note of the vamp mirrors the one of small changes between G#m13 and G#min6(9). The vamp exists primarily to setup the overall feel of the tune and is never repeated.

The melody and chord progression between measures 9 and 20 is properly harmonized in G#-natural minor. The judicious use of space throughout this section, and the entire piece for that matter, really defines the feel, especially in a swing style. The harmonization in a minor key naturally has the ability to make the piece sound eerie, and the large use of space serves to reinforce this concept. Holding out the B in measures 10 and 11 mirrors the emphasized melody note in the vamp and assures the piece’s placement in a minor mode. Overall, the melody in this section gives a solid direction to the piece and can be later used for solo ideas.
The melody between measures 21 and 28 is somewhat atonal within the key of G#-natural minor. The melody in this section derives from the supporting chords rather than the overall key. The melody is predominately properly harmonized within the chords during this section. This section provides a good contrast to the rest of the piece, allowing the soloist to explore other modal ideas before returning to the G#-natural minor key center in measure 29.

**Shorter** closes by reverting back to the original key of G#-natural minor. The descending melody reinforces this concept by hitting some of the more important notes of the natural minor scale: flat-3\(^{rd}\), 2\(^{nd}\), and 1\(^{st}\). Here, the resolution to the root in the melody marks a good ending point and guides the listener back to the top of the piece.

**Chord Pattern:** The form of **Shorter** is “A.” This is characteristic of both **Footprints** and **Black Narcissus**, which were my two primary sources for this piece. Excluding the eight measure vamp/introduction, **Shorter** is a 24 measure length form. This piece can be conceptually divided into four main sections: measures 1-8, measures 9-20, measures 21-28, and measures 29-32.

The first section of the piece, measures 1-8, is simply an introduction that has been written out for clarity and presents no different chordal ideas than the second section, measures 9-20. Measures 9-20 only use two chords: G#m13 and G#min6(9). The 13\(^{th}\) (or the 6\(^{th}\)) of the G#m13 and the 6\(^{th}\) of the G#min6(9) are improperly harmonized with the presiding key of G#-natural minor. The flat-6\(^{th}\) that arises from the G#-natural minor mode can still be used in these two chords, thus creating an interesting blend of the G#-natural minor mode against a slightly improperly harmonized chord set. Because more notes can be used within the chord set during solos, this allows soloist to externalize a larger amount of ideas.
In measure 21, the presiding chord changes to $F#7(b9)$. With the exception of the flat-9\textsuperscript{th}, the $F#7(b9)$ is properly harmonized in the key of $G#$-natural minor. The flat-9\textsuperscript{th} extension was added to support the flat-9\textsuperscript{th} present in the melody line. Because the root of the chord moves down, the overall modal feel changes in these four measures, however the soloist can retain their $G#$-natural minor modal ideas throughout this section.

In measures 25-28, the chord pattern becomes atonal in relation to the established key of $G#$-natural minor. The progression is characterized by parallel motion with the first three minor triads, then by moving to a tri-tone substitution (substitution for the III) on the IV chord. The extensions in this chord progression were hashed out before the addition of a proper melody over the chords, and chosen based on sonic value. Although these chords are entirely out of key in relation to $G#$-natural minor, due to the somewhat ambiguous and dissonant key center, it is possible to continue playing a $G#$-natural minor mode over the descending chord pattern.

Finally, in measures 29-32, the song returns the initial chord $G#m13$. By choosing $G#m13$’s to exist at both the end and the beginning of the piece, the transition from bottom to top is entirely seamless.

**Signature Motif:** What I believe to be the main signatures of Shorter are bulleted below. The signatures are the most recognizable traits of the song and will most likely not be modified during future interpretations of the piece.

- The vamp/introduction bass line featured in the first eight measures.
- Shift between $G#m13$ and $G#m6(9)$.
- The notes that are held for 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ beats or longer in measures 11, 13, 17, 19, and 21.
- Melody and $G#m13$ resolution in measure 29.
Source Material

The two primary sources from which I drew inspiration from when composing Shorter were Footprints by Wayne Shorter and Black Narcissus by Joe Henderson. Both pieces are available, along with another copy of my composition Shorter, in Appendix B.

Footprints

Melody: The primary melodic concept garnered from Footprints is space. In Footprints there are six measures of entirely blank space in the melody, and four measures where one note is held without interruption. In Shorter, there are seven measures where the melody is entirely empty and three measures where the entire measure is filled by only one note. In the case of the notes that are held out, they both exist within the last four measures of each piece.

In measures 1-16 of Footprints, the melody is properly harmonized in the mode of C-dorian. The corresponding measures 9-20 of Shorter imitate this, but use a natural minor mode instead. However, because the chord structure in this section uses improperly harmonized natural 6ths, the G#-Dorian mode can also be used along with the G#-natural minor key center. Footprints changes at measure 17, where the piece enters an eight measure atonal section in which the melody is now improperly harmonized in C-dorian. In the last four measures of the piece the melody resolves to the 4th and is once again properly harmonized in C-dorian. In regards to the melody, this modal transition is very similar to the one present in Shorter. The only difference is that Shorter leaves the natural minor mode four measures earlier than the transition in Footprints.
**Chord Pattern:** The overall form of *Footprints* is 24 measures long. The general form of *Shorter* mirrors that of *Footprints*, also exhibiting a 24 measure form length (form does not include vamp). The concept of having no change in the root chord over a long number of measures (at least 2-4 measures) can be seen in both pieces. In the case of *Footprints*, the Cm7 becomes an Fm7 in measures 9-12, which is improperly harmonized in the C-dorian, but properly harmonized in C-natural minor. The Cm7 chord is then reprised for measures 13-16, thus Cm7 exists in 12 measures out of 16 total. If G#m13 and G#min69 are to be considered the same chord (they only differ by one note), then there is essentially no chord change for the first 12 measures, after which the piece drops to a F#7b9 for four measures 21-24 (including the eight measure vamp).

In regards to the form, measures 17-20 of *Footprints* corresponds with measures 21-24 of *Shorter*. At this juncture both pieces leave their initial keys and enter into a descending atonal passage. In both cases we see descending parallel motion, though in the case of *Footprints* the chords are dominant while in *Shorter* they are minor-dominant (excluding chord extensions). Because *Shorter* displays a natural minor key center, the minor-dominant chords create a more coherent feel during this transition, though simply dominant chords could have also been used.

**Black Narcissus**

**Melody:** Although the main melody of *Black Narcissus* has a similar feel and layout to *Shorter*, it was not a primary source of inspiration during my compositional process. However,
the bass line used in Black Narcissus is very similar to the suggested bass line in Shorter, and served as a primary source of inspiration in the vamp used in the first eight measures of my piece. The rhythmic pattern of the bass line in Black Narcissus and the vamp in Shorter are identical with the exception of an added eighth note after the third beat of the phrase in Shorter.

The general feel of Black Narcissus was very influential to the composition of Shorter. The feel of the piece is fostered mostly from the previously mentioned bassline (which is not the main melody), and creates an environment for the melody to be portrayed within. In this sense, the bass line serves as a second melody, or a counter melody. Shorter employs this same technique by using a very similar bass line throughout the piece.

**Chord Pattern:** The chord pattern used in Black Narcissus does not follow the chord pattern used in Shorter. Although listening to both the bass line and the melody would suggest that the first eight measures exist in one chord, the chords actually move every measure. The constant chordal motion is a stark contrast to the long sections of no chordal change present in Shorter.

**Rehearsals**

Shorter was almost completely finished before I brought it to any rehearsals. This was primarily because I felt the song had a solid direction and melodic ideas, and with the exception of the melody between measures 25 and 28, I was satisfied with how the piece had turned out. Once again I was able to use rehearsals to explore stylistic alterations. Most rehearsals did not
alter any harmonic content for *Shorter*, but rather explored the piece in different styles other than swing, which was the original of which I wrote it in.

One major alteration to *Shorter* I gained through rehearsals was the melody in rehearsals 25-28, which was written after listening to solo ideas featured in the 12-29-2012-a rehearsal. While rehearsing *Shorter*, I suggested to the tenor sax player (Joel Stevens) that I was dissatisfied with the current melody in measures 25-28. After a number of passes over the tune, Joel worked out a new melody that I preferred to the one I had written initially. After taking a few days, I reviewed the recordings. I ultimately decided to transcribe the new melody and add it into my piece. This melody ended up in the final form of the piece, and the initial change can be seen between versions 2 and 3 of *Shorter* (Appendix B).

During the 5-6-2013 rehearsal and the 5-7-2013 rehearsal, I asked the group to suggest different performance styles for *Shorter*. A unanimous consensus was made to play the piece in a Latin style. This transition felt natural, although our Latin interpretation put the song into 4/4, changing time signatures from the original 3/4 it was written in. No one had any trouble conceptualizing the change in time signature, and the Latin version worked so well I decided to include it on my final recording project.

**Concerts**

*Shorter* was performed at the 4-13-2013 concert, the 5-10-2013 concert, and the 5-23-2013 concert. For all three concerts it was performed as a swing. The reception from both the audience and the performers was very good. In the case of the first two concerts, *Shorter* was performed as part of a set list including many well-known jazz standards and the audience was
unable to differentiate between my composition and other jazz standards that were performed. Because of Shorter’s spacious feel in a minor key, it is less accessible to listen to than say, a blues piece for instance, though during all three performances there was no indication that the audience was dissatisfied with the piece.

Shorter was received extremely well by the performers at all three concerts. The melody came alive easily and the solos were well constructed and flowed well. This piece was a favorite among the performers because of its balance between the main sections where the chords resided in the G#-natural minor mode and the atonal transition section. Also, the style of the tune is similar to more stereotypically “jazz” pieces (meaning the it is reminiscent of many jazz pieces in which people more freely experimented harmonically), and therefore the performers believed Shorter to have more freedom during solo passages.

Recording & Closing Remarks

Shorter was recorded in both a swing and Latin style. If I were to choose an original form for Shorter, I would choose the swing version, but ultimately I would continue to perform and encourage others to perform Shorter in both styles. After reviewing the recording and the final form of the sheet music, there is currently nothing I want to alter about the piece.
Surely

**Overview:** Surely exists in the key of F-major, though many of the chords are not properly harmonized in this key. This dictates that, more often than not, each chord should be treated as its own key center, and applying and overarching key center to the chord form will be ineffective. Despite this, the melody can be still loosely tied to F-major, though throughout measures 21-36, the key center dissolves entirely and the harmonic content only exists within the chords and there is no overarching key center.

**Melody:** Starting in measure 5, the melody is almost completely properly harmonized in F-major until measure 13. There are three notes that are improperly harmonized in F-major: the grace note in measure 7, and the two Eb’s in measure 11. Throughout this section there are four distinct two-measure phrases, each phrase leaving space before the next one begins. This is a common theme throughout the piece, and most of the melody phrasing exists in two measure patterns. The two measure patterns presented in the melody offer great phrasing suggestions for soloists, as well as space for the supporting rhythm section members to fill the space created by the phrasing.

In measures 13 and 14, the melody leaves F-major. The melody reflects the change to F#7 as the underlying chord, though not all of the notes are properly harmonized with the F#7. Because of this, the melody behaves chromatically instead of modally. In measures 15 and 16, the melody returns to the original F-major key center.

In measures 17 and 18, the melody again leaves F-major and properly harmonizes with the presiding chord, Dbmaj7. The Dbmaj7 exists within Db-major, thus the melody in measures
17 and 18 is properly harmonized in $Db$-major. $F$-major and $Db$-major are a third apart from each other and have only three notes in common. This creates a distinctly different soloing environment than the measures leading up to this point.

In measures 19 and 20, the melody once again returns to the original $F$-major key center. Two notes are improperly harmonized in $F$-major: the grace note in measure 19, and the $Db$ in measure 20. The $Db$ can be thought of as a flat-9th, and is improperly harmonized in both the key signature and the presiding chord. This simply creates tension while leading back into the start of the melody at measure 5, where the tension is released by the beginning melody line being properly harmonized in both the presiding chord and the key signature. The flexibility of the chord structured showcased by the melody line in measures 19 and 20 should encourage soloists to think outside of the box and create more sophisticated, melodic solo lines.

The bridge and extended ending of Surely (measures 21-36 and measures 53-56 respectively) follow in like suite to the previously described melody sections. The melody primarily follows each chord individually, using each individual chord as a separate key center rather than adhering to $F$-major. This is a very strong idea throughout the song, and because the melody is phrased repeatedly in such a way it will allow soloists to use a similar theme while constructing their solos.

**Chord Pattern:** The form of Surely is essentially “AABA,” although the final “A” of the piece is extended slightly, with the addition of the four extra measures that serve primarily to lead back into the top of the piece. Surely does not adhere well to a properly harmonized chord pattern, and instead each chord can primarily be used as its own key center, so there is little over all analysis needed for the general chord structure.
One of the main chordal anchors in Surely is the transition between Fmaj7 and Ebmaj9(#11). The Fmaj7 and Ebmaj9(#11) chords only share an F and an A, but the major-modes of each overlap, sharing five out of seven notes. The shared relationship between the chords creates a super imposed mode that is most easily described as an F-major scale with the addition of a flat-3rd and a dominant-7th (same as flat-7th). The addition of the flat-3rd allows the soloist to work in a “bluesy” feel if desired, or create a minor dissonance over the Fmaj7 to resolve to the Ebmaj9(#11). The dominant-7th creates a tri-tone relationship with the 1st and allows more versatile transitions to out-of-key solo passages.

The other main chordal anchor of Surely is the transition between Fmaj7 and Dbmaj9(#11). Once again the Fmaj7 and Dbmaj9(#11) only share two notes, an F and a C. The modal layering does not function that same as with the Ebmaj9(#11) because the Dbmaj9(#11) and Fmaj7 only share two notes between their basic modes, the same two notes they share between the chords. The F and C can be used as great linking points between the two chords during a solo, but ultimately these two chords function mostly independently, and the soloist should treat each one as its own key center. The Fmaj7 and Dbmaj9(#11) transition in the “B” section is critical to the song because it mirrors the Fmaj7 to Ebmaj9(#11) transition in the “A” section, thus allowing soloists to build on and alter their previous ideas used “A” section.

**Signature Motif:** What I believe to be the main signatures of Surely are bulleted below. The signatures are the most recognizable traits of the song and will most likely not be modified during future interpretations of the piece.

- The Fmaj7 to Ebmaj9(#11) transition in the beginning of each “A” section.
- The Db in measure 20.
- The Fmaj7 to Dbmaj9(#11) transition in the beginning of the “B” section.
- The eighth note run starting on beat 2 of measure 36.
The Abmaj7 to Fmaj7 transition to the “A” section at the end of the “B” section.

Source Material

The primary source I drew on while composing Surely was Christmas Time is Here by Vince Guaraldi. This piece is available, along with another copy of my composition Surely, in Appendix C.

Christmas Time is Here

Melody: The melody of Christmas Time is Here was not a primary source of inspiration during my compositional process. Stylistically, the two pieces are very different. Christmas Time is Here is a ballad written in 3/4, while Surely is a medium swing in 4/4. Naturally, the melodies of two pieces that have such different styles will not have many similarities.

Chord Pattern: The first four measures in Christmas Time is Here alternate between the two chords Fmaj7 and Eb7(#11). This was a large source of inspiration for Surely, which uses a very similar pattern in its first eight measures. The decision to use an Ebmaj9(#11) rather than an Eb7(#11) was governed mostly by potential soloing ideas. The natural-7th in Ebmaj9(#11) is properly harmonized in the F-major mode, thus allowing for more connections between Fmaj7 and Eb7(#11). The dominant-7th can still be used during solos, but will most likely be used as a passing or transitional tone instead. The sharp-11th in Ebmaj9(#11) and Eb7(#11) can be used to create a more dissonant soloing environment, or as a passing tone to create a less dissonant but “bluesly” feel during a solo passage.
As Christmas Time is Here transitions into its “B” section, the two chords used are $Fmaj^9$ and $Dbmaj^7$. This is again reflected in Surely in measures 21-28. The decision to use a $Dbmaj^9(#11)$ instead of a $Dbmaj^7$ stemmed from the already established usage of $Ebmaj^9(#11)$ earlier in the piece. The use of a sharp-11$^{th}$ is once again more advantageous in terms of soloing opportunities, allowing for a more dissonant soloing environment or a less dissonant and “bluesly” sounding one.

**Rehearsals**

The chord pattern to Surely was finalized before I brought it to any rehearsals. The melody was not complete however, and although the many ideas were suggested, and I later finished the melody independently, so ultimately the rehearsals did little to help finalize the composition. After the melody had been completed, the rehearsals were able to solidify certain ideas presented in Surely, with the most prominent being the use of a rhythmic break on beat 1 of measure 36. This was an idea I was playing with independently and was able to use the 4-28-2013 rehearsal, the 5-6-2013 rehearsal, and the 5-7-2013 rehearsal to confirm its effectiveness. Due to the lead sheet style of presentation, this rhythmic break is not reflected in the sheet music, but can be heard in the final recorded version. Overall, rehearsals had little influence on Surely, but were instead more useful as a way affirm the clarity in the written portrayal of my ideas.
Concerts

Surely was performed on the 4-13-2013 concert, the 5-10-2013 concert, and the 5-23-2013 concert. For all three concerts it was performed as a swing. On the 4-13-2013 concert the melody had not been completed and Surely was performed with an improvised solo over the “B” section. This seemed to weaken the song and the audience was noticeably less enthusiastic about thing song than the already completed Dark Dolphins and any jazz standard performed. The performers also had more trouble reading through the piece during this concert. I believe this was because the unfinished melody made it more difficult for the performers to hear the direction of the chord pattern, and thus the tentative confusion was translated into their playing and then to the audience.

Surely was completed for both the 5-10-2013 concert and the 5-23-2013 concert. The reception of Surely by both the players and the audience was much better on these two concerts than the previous one. During both concerts the performers were able to feel the direction of the song very strongly, the solos were well constructed, and the audience responded in a similar fashion to all of my finished compositions and any standards performed as well.

Recording & Closing Comments

Surely was recorded in a swing style only, and this recording represents the original interpretation of the piece. Other styles did not work as well during rehearsals, so performing Surely in a style other than swing will require much creativity on the part of the performers. This
is probably a disadvantage to Surely being well received by performers, but is not an excluding factor.

I had a lot of trouble writing a melody for Surely with which I was pleased. In hindsight, there are sections of this piece for which I may re-write the melody. Those sections are: measures 9 and 10, measures 13 and 14, parts or all of the “B” section, and measures 53-56. The melody present in these sections is close to what I feel I want, but could possibly use some tweaking. Chances are the melody will not change drastically when I rewrite these sections.

The chord pattern of Surely is mostly what I wanted, though I may make some small changes. The E7(#5) in measure 29 could be changed to a different chord with E as the root, such as a Edim7. Also, the extended ending (measure 53 and beyond) may be extended further and use a larger cycle of chords.
Hugh’s Blues

Overview: Hugh’s Blues is a 12-bar blues that has a separate section added between the second and third cycles of the piece. This form is commonly known as a “blues with a bridge” and is a fairly common song structure, particularly in blues performed by jazz musicians. Although the measures 22-26 do modulate to C-major, Hugh’s Blues exists primarily in the G-major key center.

Melody: A proper harmonic analysis is not particularly useful on a blues piece because the harmonic characteristics of blues focus heavily on the dominant-7th and the flat-3rd, both of which are improperly harmonized in a major key. What gives the melody in Hugh’s Blues that classic “blues” feel, seen in songs such as Blue Monk and Tenor Madness, is the use of a flat-3rd against a natural-3rd. This concept is used extensively in the piece, exemplified best in measures 2-3, and measures 6-7. The dominant-7th is often used as a leading tone when returning to the root note. The concept is exemplified in measures 1-2 and measures 5-6. This general melodic structure is not only characteristic of many other blues melodies, but also many blues solos. Naturally, the extensive use of dominant-7ths and flat-3rds will be expanded upon by the soloist.

In the “A” section there are three main phrases: measures 1-4, measures 5-8, and measures 9-12. Each phrase resolves to the root of the key center, G. This concept reappears in the “B” section, beginning the phrases in measures 15-18, and measures 19-22. This root resolution serves mostly to anchor the melody to the G-major key center.

The opening line to the melody of Hugh’s Blues rests for beat 1, then enters with an eighth note triplet run on beat 2. This is a common rhythmic theme throughout the piece and
begins first two major melodic phrases in both the “A” and “B” section. The use of this rhythmic figure sets up the overall feel of the piece, and creates a nice palate for soloists to reprise or modify.

The closing line of the melody, as seen in the last two measures of the coda, is a very standard ending to many jazz and blues pieces. This style of ending is called the “Basie” ending because it was made famous by Count Basie. This ending is best exemplified in the song Splanky. Conceptually, all that is happening is the 4th is resolving to the 5th. This happens chromatically while playing the 1st every time. The 4th resolving to the 5th mirrors the IV resolving to the V, one of the main tenets of the 12-bar blues chord progression.

**Chord Pattern:** The form of Hugh’s Blues is “AABA” (blues with a bridge). The “A” section of the piece is a modified 12-bar blues, expanding on the typical I-IV-V pattern that harmonically defines the blues genre.

Hugh’s Blues showcases what is commonly referred to as the “quick four” chord change. This means that in measure 2 the chord changes to a IV, and then in measure 3 it returns to a I. This contrasts to the basic 12-bar blues where the I is held for a full four measures before changing to the IV. Either the traditional I or the quick IV will work with the melody, so the IV was primarily added for variety when soloing.

In measure 4 there is another substitution. Again, during this measure in a basic 12-bar blues there would only be a I. In transitioning to the IV in measure five, a II-V substitution has been added. In thinking of the IV as a new key center, measures 4 and 5 represent a II-V-I transition. This is a very common chord pattern in jazz and blues and was again added to Hugh’s Blues for a more complex base for soloing ideas.
In measure 6 there is a #IV substitution. In the basic 12-bar blues form there would be a IV chord here, meaning measures 5 and 6 would be a single IV chord held out before returning to the I in measure 7. The #IV exists in place of the IV, though in actuality it is a tri-tone substitution for the I. This substitution is again added primarily for soloing, though the #IV does create tension against the melody line, which then resolves in the next measure.

In measure 8 there are two more chord substitutions in place of the usual I held through this section. The goal of this section is to reach the VI in the last two beats of the measure, so the #V added on the first two of the measure merely facilitates this transition. The purpose of the VI in this section is to smoothly transition into the impending II-V substitution in measures 9 and 10.

The II and V in measures 9 and 10 respectively are indirect substitutions for the V and the IV. This was a choice motivated primarily by the desire for variety in the chord pattern. Using yet another V and VI chord in the piece does offer as many soloing opportunities as a II-V transition. Considering the II-V was preceded by a VI, this creates a VI-II-V-I pattern. This is a very common chord pattern in many jazz pieces, thus allowing for more jazz elements to be added into the original blues form.

The turnaround at the end of the “A” section is #II-II-#I-I. This functions in place of the traditional I-V turnaround in the basic 12-bar blues. The turnaround is discussed in more detail in the Blues #2 section.

The transition to the “B” section at the end of the second “A” section in measure 14 is best described as a #II-#V because the first chord is minor. There is no resolution to the #I in this case, rather the beginning of the “B” section lands on a II properly harmonized in the original key of G-major.
The “B” section opens with a II-V-I chord pattern in measures 15-18, repeated again in measures 19-22. This is again a common chord pattern in many jazz tunes, and can be seen in many “B” sections of many jazz standards. In measures 17-18 and measures 21-22.

In measure 22, the key center switches to C-major. The C#° functions as a tri-tone substitution for the G7. At this point, the G7 becomes the V in the new C-major key center. In the following measures, the chord pattern proceeds with a II-V-I, again harmonized in the C-major key center. This modulated section offers a new key center for soloists, as well as keeping the “B” section from being too repetitive.

The F7 used in measure 24 does not fit well in standard chordal analysis. In this case, it would be best to classify it as a IV in the C-major key center, though this does not conceptually create coherence with the following Am7. Also, F7 and Am7 also do not share enough notes to consider the Am7 some sort of substitution for the F7 (for instance, if the F7 was instead an Fmaj7, the Am triad would be contained within the chord and a good argument for a substitution could be made). Ultimately, I chose the F7 because I thought it sounded good in the transition.

The “B” section closes by returning to a II-V-I pattern harmonized in the G-major key center. This pattern was also present in the “A” sections, so naturally it leads back into the turnaround quite well.

**Signature Motif:** What I believe to be the main signature motifs of Hugh’s Blues are bulleted below. The signatures are the most recognizable traits of the song and will most likely not be modified during future interpretations of the piece.

- The rising triplets in measures 1,5,15 and 19.
- The eighth rests in measures 9 and 10.
- The melody/rhythmic kicks in measures 17 and 18.
- The C#° on beat 2 of measure 21.
Source Material

The two primary sources from which I drew when composing Hugh’s Blues were Night Train by Jimmy Forest, Oscar Washington, and Lewis P. Simpkins, and Blues #2, a common blues pattern defined in the Jazz Improv Packet by Neal Grandstaff. Both pieces are available, along with another copy of my composition Hugh’s Blues, in Appendix D.

Night Train

**Chord Pattern:** Night Train is an “AABA” form “blues with a bridge,” just like Hugh’s Blues. The primary inspiration drawn from Night Train was the use of the rhythmic kicks present in Hugh’s Blues in measures in 17-18, and similarly in measures 21-22. The exact rhythmic figure present in measures 17-18 can be found in Night Train in measures 15-16, measures 19-20, and measures 23-24. This rhythmic pattern is by no means unique to Night Train, but Night Train was the piece I used while composing the “B” section to Hugh’s Blues.

Blues #2

**Chord Pattern:** The distinctions in the chord patterns between Hugh’s Blues and Blues #2 are very subtle. When it comes to blues however, the subtle distinctions make all the difference. Because the chord pattern is so short and simple, substitutions during the turnaround may define a completely new piece. There are three distinct differences that separate Hugh’s
Blues and Blues #2, though upon review it can be seen that these differences are not signature motifs, and can easily be changed or substituted.

The first difference is the omission of the $Gb_{13}$ present in measure 7 of Blues #2. This descending chord was used in measure 7 of Hugh’s Blues during the initial stages of composition, but was omitted due to a harmonic conflict with the melody in final form. In actuality, the $Gb_{13}$ could still be played under the melody because the genre of blues embraces this type of harmonic clashing, but I chose to omit it in favor of a cleaner, more harmonically coherent sound during the melody. Of course, during solos the $Gb_{13}$ could easily be added back in without any issues. This makes the omission of the $Gb_{13}$ fairly insignificant to the soloist.

The second difference is the turnaround used in the last two measures. Blues #2 uses a I-VI-II-V turnaround, while Hugh’s Blues uses a #II-II-I-I turnaround. Indecently, #II is a tri-tone substitution for VI, while #I is a tri-tone substitution for V. The tri-tone relationships mean that these two chord patterns are actually very similar, and the same set of notes could easily be used over both patterns effectively. The descending roots of the #II-II-I-I turnaround have a very different sonic quality than that of the I-VI-II-V turnaround. Given the lack of melody in the last two measures of the “A” section, either turnaround could be used effectively in Hugh’s Blues.

The third difference would be in the chord extensions used. Blues #2 uses a lot more 13 and 9 chords than Hugh’s Blues. This does change the character of the chord pattern, but the same 13 and 9 chords could easily be used in Hugh’s Blues. I choose to leave the primary chords in their basic dominant-7 form to keep the melody from getting over shadowed by too much harmonic content. Having too many notes in the underlying chords would make the melody harder to distinguish, though I would encourage the use of 13 and 9 chords during the solo
section.es This is a minor concern however, and also all of the Blues #2 extensions could be used during the solo sections of Hugh’s Blues.

**Rehearsals**

Hugh’s Blues was almost entirely completed before I brought it to any rehearsals. I wrote most of piece in one sitting during one afternoon, and I liked the way most everything worked, so I saw little reason to change anything significant. Hugh’s Blues was only rehearsed as a swing, though I believe there is potential for the song to be performed in other styles. The triplet figures present in measures 1, 5, 15 and 19 lend themselves well to swing however, so the melody may have to be altered some to work in style that uses straight time.

After some feedback during the rehearsals, I did decide to change two small things. A slight alteration to the melody in the last “A” of Hugh’s Blues was made after the 2-12-2013 rehearsal. In measure 40, in instead of repeating the melody used in measure 10, a new set of notes was used. The rhythmic pattern of the notes did not change, but the notes between beats 2 and 3 were altered to be higher in pitch, giving the melody an upward inflection before returning to the root in measure 41. This melody line was originally a result of misreading the melody by the keyboard player (Jake Busche) but ultimately gave the piece a better flow, and was written into version 2 of Hugh’s Blues (Appendix D) as a result. The upward inflection to the melody before returning to the root better suggests that the end of the piece is near, better defining the third “A” section as the “last A.”

During the 4-28-2013 rehearsal, I reviewed that transition between the end of the second “A” section and the beginning of the “B” section (measures 13 and 14). The original transition
between sections can be seen in version 1 of Hugh’s Blues (Appendix D). Although this transition did work, the switching from minor to major and back to minor again was awkward to solo over effectively, and also did not offer many options for a good bass line. After some experimenting, the transition that can be seen in the final version of Hugh’s Blues was settled on by the rehearsal group.

Concerts

Hugh’s Blues was performed at the 4-13-2013 concert and the 5-10-2013 concert. The piece was well received by both the audience and the performers. Hugh’s Blues fit very well when played alongside traditional jazz standards, though it did not stand out. In the context of the performers, there is nothing strikingly original about the piece. The chord pattern, although more complex for a blues piece, has been done many times before. The melody of course is original, but by no means does it blaze new trails. Overall the piece is easy to follow and easy to listen to, and I believe that is the most prominent reason it was so well received.

Recording & Closing Comments

Hugh’s Blues was recorded only in a swing style. One of the great things that came out of the recording session that was not present during the rehearsals or the concerts was a driving shuffle that occurred during the last pass of the saxophone solo. This added a lot of energy to the piece. As far as the final written product is concerned there is nothing I want to change about
Hugh’s Blues. However, with the new perspective given by the shuffle in the recording, I may rethink the rhythmic style of the piece.
Checkered Knights

**Overview:** Checkered Knights is at its core a heavily modified 12-bar blues. The 12-bar cycle has two iterations, with a separate turnaround for each of the two cycles of the piece. The three measure introduction is essentially the last three measures of the second pass of the piece. If Checkered Knights were to have a key center it would be D-natural minor, though many of the chords and melody notes are improperly harmonized in this key center.

**Melody:** The melody line in the first two measures of the piece follows the root movement of the chord pattern. Although the last chord in measure 1 is a A7(#5), it is played as an inversion starting on the 3rd, thus the root is a C#.

There is intended to be a drumfill in the gap between the end of the melody line in measure 2 and the beginning of the next in measure 3. The melody line in measure 3 functions more as a rhythmic kick that the whole band should use, and it is recommended that on the two A notes the whole chord should be played (for example, multiple horns taking different notes of the chord). The last eighth-note rest in measure 3 should be left silent as it serves to frame the beginning of the chord cycle.

Measures 3-6 are properly harmonized within the suggested D-natural minor key center. The melody in this section is intended as a contrast to the busy funk rhythms that will be present in the rhythmic accompaniment. There are a large number of rests and longer notes used, interspersed by sixteenth note runs. The sixteenth-note runs allow a large palate of notes to be laid out while still leaving space to expose the non-melodic content being played by the rhythm section. This is a common theme and governs the melody thorough the entire piece.
Measure 7 is a transitional measure that serves to lead into measure 8, the traditional IV chord change in the blues form. The melody in measure 7 starts with an upward run. This run, as well as the following notes, exists mostly for the rhythmic feel. The harmonic quality of this run could easily be altered and have the same desired effect (though not the rhythmic placement). The melody on beats 2-4 serves simply to rhythmically kick the chords that are moving underneath.

The melody in measures 8-10 expands upon the rhythmic pattern presented in measure 4. The same spacious feel characterizes the direction of the melody, and the dotted eighth note preceding sixteenth note rhythmic pattern occurs twice during these three measures. The melody in this section follows the chords without many notes.

In measure 9 there is a split melody. The lower melodic line serves to define the rhythmic kicks that should be present in the chord pattern. These notes can actually be played as a melody, or they can be left out (as seen in the final recording). This was the clearest way to write in such a specific rhythmic pattern outside of not writing it at all, and it a common practice in jazz notation.

In measures 11 and 12, the melody serves only to create rhythmic placement for the chord pattern. The whole band should play along with the rhythm in the melody throughout these two measures. It is important that for it to be silent during the rests in this section because that space sets up the descending line in measure 13.

A reprise of the melody occurs in measure 13. From here into the second ending of the piece, the melody is exactly as it was in the first 3 measures of the piece. The first ending however has a slightly different turnaround. In measure 15 the melody ascends the D-natural
minor scale before reaching the C#. The C# functions as a chromatic leading tone in returning the D present at the beginning of the melody in measure 4.

**Chord Pattern:** The first measure of *Checkered Knights* is chordally dense. The first four chords are all major triads, and descend in parallel motion. This chord sequence are not properly harmonized in any specific key center. The result is a chromatic, harmonically clustered feel. This will grab the listener’s attention during the beginning of the piece The A7(#5) breaks this pattern, and serves to lead into the root chord for the progression, Dm7. The A7(#5) is voiced as the first inversion, making the C# the root note. This gives the A7(#5) the feel of a tri-tone substitution leading into the Dm7 (implying C as the I and D as the II).

The A7(#5) used in measure 3 is the root inversion. The A7(#5) functions much differently here, and does not chromatically lead into the Dm7 in measure 4. In this situation, the A7(#5) is a modified V, characteristic of the turnaround in the basic 12-bar blues form. The sharp-5th was added to the chord to create more dissonance, which fits better with the minor key.

Holding the I for four measures as seen in measures 3-7 is characteristic of a traditional 12-bar blues form. The F and F#° in measure 7 are substitutions that simply offer a more creative way to get to the IV. The F is properly harmonized as the III in relation to the Dm7 (the F triad exists within the Dm7 chord), and the partially harmonized F#° gives chromatic motion into the Gm7. This upward chromatic motion is used again to transition back to the I in measure 9, and such creates a distinct feel for the piece. Rhythmic kicks should occur on beats 2 and 4 in measure 7.

Measure 9 moves briefly to the V before reprising the upward chromatic motion used in measure 7. The V is again modified with the sharp-5th to create dissonance, though in this case
the dominant-7th has been omitted. The dominant-7th would blend well with the following C chord, though the transition inexplicably sounds better without the dominant-7th. In this measure, the chords kick with the lower or “second” melody.

The chord pattern returns to the I in measure 10 as it would in a typical 12-bar blues. The next chord change is another modified V, however this V is again the first inversion, meaning the root note moves down a half step from the previous Dm7. The next chord, in measure 11, is another V, however this time the V is properly harmonized in D-minor. In measure 11, the chord again kicks with the melodic figure present. The change in the quality of the V offers a number of interesting solo opportunities due to the shared root in the labeling of the chords.

Measures 13 and 14 of Checkered Knights are essentially the same as measures 1 and 2. In measure 13, the same descending pattern can be seen as in measure 1, however the descending chord pattern is not written out. This was the best way to suggest alternative chord structuring during this section of the piece. Here the performers have the option of again using the descending chord pattern presented in measure 1, or using the C7(b5) to lay over the whole measure and the descending melody line. The duality of the measure not only offers a wide variety of options for the soloist, but the rhythm section as well, allowing them to easily switch between interpretations on the fly.

The last two measures of Checkered Knights present two different turnarounds. The decision to use two different turnarounds stems from my inability to choose between the two separate turnarounds I composed. In reality, including both turnarounds became a good mechanism to make the piece feel longer by requiring two cycles to reach back to the top. The second turnaround and measure 3 are identical. If measure 3 had been used as the first ending
instead, the cycle would have sounded more repetitive due to the introduction and first turnaround sharing the same content.

The first turnaround uses a $\text{#VI}-V$ transition, with both the $\text{#VI}$ and $V$ improperly harmonized in $D$-natural minor. The $A7$ used in this turnaround is the first inversion, which places a $C#$ in the bass. This creates the feel of a $\text{#VI-VII}$ chord progression. The first inversion of the $A7$ sounds very much like a $C#°$ (if the $A$ were an $A#$, they would be identical). If the $A7$ can be thought of as a $C#°$, then the first turnaround is very similar to the chord pattern that was presented in measure 9 and functions in the same manner when leading into the $Dm7$.

**Signature Motif:** What I believe to be the main signature motifs of Checkered Knights are bulleted below. The signatures are the most recognizable traits of the piece and will most likely not be modified during future interpretations of the piece.

- The descending chord pattern/melody in measures 1-2 and measures 13-14.
- The $F$ and $F#°$ in measure 7.
- The $C$ and $C#°$ in measure 9.
- The melody and chord structure in measure 15.

**Source Material**

Checkered Knights does not resemble any of the standard blues alterations (such as the Parker Changes), so the main source of inspiration for the piece is best understood as the basic 12-bar blues. A secondary source of inspiration for Checkered Knights was What Planet Is This? by Yoko Kanno. I liked the rhythmic style of this piece, but due to copyright issues the sheet music could not be displayed. An example of a basic 12-bar blues and basic minor 12-bar blues
Rehearsals

*Checkered Knights* was predominantly only a chord pattern when it was first brought to rehearsals. The rehearsals had some influence on the chord pattern and its rhythmic placement, but the melody was written almost entirely based on input and soloing ideas garnered from rehearsals.

The bulk of the *Checkered Knights* melody was written after the 4-28-13 rehearsal. The keyboard player (Jake Busche) took a few solo passes during various iterations of the piece, and one in particular caught my ear. Jake's solo pass located between 1:54:15 and 1:54:40 of the 4-28-13 rehearsal recording was used to write the melody for *Checkered Knights*. The melody is not a transcription, but some of Jake’s licks were used in the melody, and overall the melody was conceptually built around the feel of his solo during this pass.

The 4-28-13 rehearsal also offered some slight modifications to the chord pattern of *Checkered Knights*. Originally, as seen in versions 1 and 2 of the piece (Appendix E), the descending chord pattern used in measure 1 was also used in measure 13, instead of the $C7(b5)$. This modification allowed a larger variety of possible solo ideas, as well as flexibility in how the rhythm section may chose to support the soloist.

The 5-6-2013 rehearsal and the 5-7-2013 rehearsal offered some great insight about the written layout of *Checkered Knights*. During the rehearsal 5-6-2013 rehearsal, the performers commented that some sections of the piece were difficult to read, and that in fact some of the
rhythms were actually written out improperly. After some discussion, it was agreed what revisions needed to be made. The 5-6-2013 revisions can be observed between versions 4 and 5 of Checkered Knights (Appendix E). At the 5-7-2013 rehearsal the piece was revisited, and still the notation was causing problems. More revision were suggested, and these revisions can be seen between versions 5 and 6 of the piece (Appendix E). The revisions at the 5-7-2013 rehearsal cleaned up the remaining confusion regarding notation and placed Checkered Knights in its approximate final form.

Concerts

Checkered Knights was performed on the 4-13-2013 concert and the 5-10-2013 concert. At the 4-13-2013 concert, Checkered Knights did not have a melody and was performed only as a chord pattern. Lacking a completed melody to function as a strong anchor for the piece, the performers had trouble deciphering both the melodic and the rhythmic content. The rhythmic groove of the piece never really settled properly, and the differentiation between where the melody should have been and the solo section was confusing, making starting and stopping the piece a challenge. This confusion translated to the audience, so the piece was not well-received, and the audience seemed disinterested in comparison how they reacted to the standards it was performed alongside.

Checkered Knights was completed for the 5-10-2013 concert, and such the reception by the audience and the players was much better. The melody anchored the direction of the piece and made the piece more accessible to the performers. The audience received the piece better, though it did not seem to stand out when compared to the jazz standards and my four other
compositions. I believe this is the result of the melody, and is a primary consideration for an intended rewriting of the entire melody.

**Recording & Closing Remarks**

*Checkered Knights* was recorded in a funk style only, and this represents the original interpretation of the piece. No other styles were even suggested during rehearsals, so performing *Checkered Knights* in a style other than funk will require much creativity on the part of the performers.

After reviewing the harmonic content in post recording analysis, I was very pleased with the result of the chord pattern in *Checkered Knights*. The chord pattern seemed to work well in generating a large variety of solos. The nomenclature of the pattern still proved to be fairly confusing, primarily because some $A7(#5)$'s were root inversion and some were first inversion, so the way the many of the $A7(#5)$'s and $A7$'s are written may be altered.

I am still dissatisfied with the melody for *Checkered Knights*. At this point, I am not sure what things I want to keep and what things I do not. I believe I will try to write an entirely new melody and see how it sounds, and perhaps blend elements of the new and the old melody together. Settling on a good melody for *Checkered Knights* will be very challenging, and I believe this is primarily because of the chord pattern. Although very complex, original, and good for soloing, threading a memorable melodic line through such a rigid and fast changing set of chords has proven to be difficult.
Works Cited


Appendix A:

Dark Dolphins Reference Material
<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fm Maj7</td>
<td>C7alt</td>
<td>Bbm9</td>
<td>C# Maj7</td>
<td>C7#5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fm Maj7</td>
<td>C7alt</td>
<td>Bbm9</td>
<td>C# Maj7</td>
<td>C7#5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bm11</td>
<td>Dm9</td>
<td>Bbm7</td>
<td>Abm7</td>
<td>Db7alt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eb Maj7</td>
<td>Db Maj7</td>
<td>Eb Maj7</td>
<td>Eb Maj7</td>
<td>Gm7</td>
<td>Ab Maj7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Db Maj7</td>
<td>Eb Maj7</td>
<td>Fm11</td>
<td>C# Maj7</td>
<td>C7#5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Db Maj7</td>
<td>Eb Maj7</td>
<td>Bb7#11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-Version
FREGGIN BULLSHIT

Justin Schipke

Version 0
M31

Not a Ballad

Justin Scheifele

©2002

Version 2
Maj

Not a Ballad

Justin Scheppel

EMB(E9)

C7(#9)

B9

Ob07

C7♭5

EMB(E9)

C7(#9)

B9

Ob07

C7♭5

B11

Ob07

B9

A♭7

Ob♭5

Eb07

Ob07

 Eb07

G7

A♭7

Ob07

Ob07

 Eb07

Ob0

C7♭5

©2012

Version 3
Score

Dark Dolphins

Justin Schepide

©2012

Version 4
Dark Dolphins

Composer: Justin Sberge

©2015

Version 6
Round Midnight

Miles Davis: "Round Midnight"
Appendix B:

Shorter Reference Material
Version 3
Final Version
BLACK NARCISSUS

- JOE HENDERSON
Appendix C:

Surely Reference Material
Version 1
Version 1
Surely

Version 4
Version 5
Version 6
Final Version
(SLOWLY)

CHRISTMAS TIME IS HERE

-LEE MENDELSON/VINCE GUARALDI

Copyright © 1964 LEE MENDELSON FILM PRODUCTIONS, INC.  
Copyrights Inherited
Appendix D:

Hugh's Blues Reference Material
Hugh's Blues

Score

Version 1
Version 1
Hugh's Blues

Version 2
Version 2
Hugh's Blues

Med. Swing

(A)

G7  C7  G7  Dm7  G13

(C9)  C9#2  G7  F13  Em7

(Am7)  G7  Am7  G#7  G7  Am7  Am7  C#m7

(B)

Am7  D7  G9  G7  Am7

(D7)  G7  Gm7(b5)  C#9  Dm7  G9

©2021

Version 3
Hugh's Blues

Med. Swing

Version 4
240 NIGHT TRAIN

Slow Blues

C6

F9

C6

C9

G7

F9

C6

C9

F9

C6

F9

C6

E9

C6

F9

C6

F9

C6

F

E9

C9

F

E9

C6

G7

(C6 G7 C6 G7 C6)
BLUES #2 - C

C9  F13  C9  Gm7  C9  F13  F#0

C9  B9  Bb9  A13  Dm7  G13  C9  A13  Dm7  G13
Appendix E:

Checkered Knights Reference Material
Score

CHECKERED KNIGHTS

A G# G F# A7(#5) DM7

F F# G# C# DM7

A A7(#5) A m

A G# G F# A7(#5) DM7

©00.5

Verison 1
CHECKERED KNIGHTS

A  G♯  G  F♯  A7(b5)  Dm7  A7(b5)
Score

Checkered Knights

A G# G F# A7(#5)/Dm7 A7(#5) Dm7

F F# Gm7

A+ C Gm7 A7(#5) Am

C7(#5) Dm7 C A7 A7(#5)

©2005

Version 4
CHECKERED KNIGHTS

FUNK

A G# G F# A7(#5) Dm7

A7(#5) Dm7

A7(#5) Gm7

A7(#5) Am

A7(#5) Dm7

C A7 A7(#5)

©2005

Version 6
Funk

*Checkered Knights*

```
          G          G7          A          G          A7(9s)          D7
               F          F#         A7(9s)          D7
               F          F#          G7
               A7          G          A7(9s)          A7
               C7         G          C7(9s)          D7
               C7         G          C7(9s)          D7
               C7         G          C7(9s)          D7
               C7         G          C7(9s)          D7
               C7         G          C7(9s)          D7
               C7         G          C7(9s)          D7
               C7         G          C7(9s)          D7
               C7         G          C7(9s)          D7
```
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I7</td>
<td>I7</td>
<td>I7</td>
<td>I7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV7</td>
<td>IV7</td>
<td>I7</td>
<td>I7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V7</td>
<td>IV7</td>
<td>I7</td>
<td>V7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-7</td>
<td>I-7</td>
<td>I-7</td>
<td>I-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV-7</td>
<td>IV-7</td>
<td>I-7</td>
<td>I-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-7</td>
<td>IV-7</td>
<td>I-7</td>
<td>V7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic major blues and basic minor blues, fakebook notation
Appendix F:

Rehearsal & Concert Track Listings & Data CD
CD1: Audio CD of final recordings of jazz compositions.

Track listing:

1. Dark Dolphins - ECM Straight  
2. Surely  
3. Hugh's Blues  
4. Shorter - Latin  
5. Dark Dolphins - Swing  
6. Shorter - Swing  
7. Checkered Knights

CD2: Data CD with compressed recordings of rehearsals and concerts. Labeled by date of rehearsal or concert, as referenced in the paper.

Track listing:

1. Rehearsal 12-19-2012-a  
2. Rehearsal 12-29-2012-b  
3. Rehearsal 2-12-2013  
4. Concert 4-13-2013  
5. Rehearsal 4-12-2013  
6. Rehearsal 4-28-2013  
7. Rehearsal 5-6-2013  
8. Rehearsal 5-7-2013  
9. Concert 5-10-2013  
10. Concert 5-23-2013