A PERFORMER'S ANALYSIS AND IMPROVISATIONAL GUIDE TO JAZZ SONATA FOR SOPRANO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO (1994), BY RAMON RICKER (B. 1943)

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
North Dakota State University
of Agriculture and Applied Science

By

Brian Scott Hanegan

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

Major Department:
Music

August 2017

Fargo, North Dakota

North Dakota State University
Graduate School

Title

A PERFORMER'S ANALYSIS AND IMPROVISATIONAL GUIDE TO JAZZ SONATA FOR SOPRANO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO (1994), BY RAMON RICKER (B. 1943)

By

Brian Scott Hanegan

The Supervisory Committee certifies that this ***disquisition*** complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Dr. Matthew Patnode
Chair

Dr. Cassie Keogh

Dr. Tyler Wottrich

Dr. Justin Wageman

Approved:

10-12-2017
Date

Dr. John Miller
Department Chair

ABSTRACT

In the twentieth century, saxophonists are encountering compositions in the repertoire that contain musical elements from both the classical and the jazz idioms. As a result, saxophonists need more technical and improvisational skills to perform these works. Ramon Ricker's (b. 1943) *Jazz Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano* (1994) is an example from this repertoire that draws on both of these traditions.

This disquisition presents a comprehensive performer's analysis and improvisational guide to each of the three movements of Ricker's *Jazz Sonata*. In chapters 2, 4, and 6, the analysis chapters, I discuss the specific technically challenging elements within each movement. These elements pertain to altered scales, articulations, accents, and polychord harmonies in the first movement (chapter 2); to tuning, interpretation of the melody, subtone, rapid note passages, and swing style in the second movement (chapter 4); and to pitch, technical passages, accents, syncopated melodies, and interpretation of the melody in the third movement (chapter 6). In addition, musical examples and performance suggestions are provided to elaborate on these specific areas of focus. In chapters 3, 5, and 7, the improvisational guide chapters, I address two improvisational techniques for each chapter that can be used in the solo sections of each movement. These improvisational techniques refer to pentatonic patterns and intervallic or triad-pair patterns in the first movement (chapter 3); to the ii–V–I harmonic progression and rhythmic-based method of improvisation in the second movement (chapter 5); and to altered dominant chords and quartal patterns in the third movement (chapter 7). In addition, I have composed a solo for each movement using the two jazz concepts addressed in each chapter.

I consulted recent literature by jazz scholars and performers to provide a new perspective on how to develop both the technical prowess and the jazz conceptual prowess needed to

perform Ricker's sonata. This study has also been informed by two interviews I conducted with the composer about this piece. This disquisition is intended as a guide for saxophonists to help them create their own improvised solos in Ricker's sonata, and, by extension, in other jazz-influenced works in the saxophone repertoire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This disquisition is the culmination of countless hours of research, composing, analysis, and writing. Throughout this process, many great people were involved in helping me complete this document. I would like to recognize each one of them.

First, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Matthew Patnode, my research advisor, professor, and mentor. Thank you for your continued support throughout my doctoral studies at North Dakota State University, and for the extensive training on the performance and pedagogy of the saxophone. Without your support, I would not be the saxophonist, the educator, and the pedagogue I am today. In addition, I would like to recognize the members of my graduate committee, Dr. Cassie Keogh, Dr. Tyler Wottrich, and Dr. Justin Wageman. Thank you for helping me grow as a musician and for all of your critical insight associated with the completion of my dissertation.

Next, I would like to thank my thesis professor Dr. Annett Richter. We have spent numerous hours discussing and revising this document. Dr. Richter, thank you for the detailed instruction on how to properly conduct research in the field of music and for teaching me how to write with clarity and grace. My dissertation has benefited enormously from your tutelage. I appreciate everything you have done for me.

In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Ramon Ricker for taking the time to share his expertise with me in two interviews. With Ricker's insights, I was able to contribute a new scholarly study of his *Jazz Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano* and gain original feedback from him to strengthen my disquisition.

I would be remiss if I did not mention a few people who have influenced my musical career prior to my graduate studies at NDSU. Special thanks to Dr. Christopher Kocher and Dr.

David Moskowitz from the University of South Dakota, and to Mr. Fred Hemke, Dr. Alan LaFave, and Dr. Grant Manhart from Northern State University. I would also like to thank my high school band directors Mr. Shane Macklin and Mr. Jason Rygg.

Finally, I would like to recognize my parents, Susan and Scott Hanegan, and my girlfriend, Lynn Hofer. Mom and Dad, thank you for buying my first saxophone when I was a fifth grader and for encouraging me to continue playing the saxophone in high school. Lynn, thank you for the extra cup of coffee on a late night studying and for understanding all of the time I had to spend away from you in Fargo this past year. This support from my family has been critical in helping me achieve my terminal degree at NDSU.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

LIST OF APPENDIX MUSICAL EXAMPLES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The use of jazz elements as a vehicle for creative expression has influenced many twentieth-century composers.[1] In the saxophone repertoire, the number of pieces employing jazz elements has continued to grow. For this reason, it is important for a collegiate saxophonist to be well versed in both the concert (classical) and the jazz idioms. A common occurrence with today's player is that they develop prowess in only one of these areas, often the classical. As a result, many classically trained saxophonists lack the skills necessary to play jazz-influenced works. Due to this common trend, these works are performed with less regularity than they would be otherwise.

Ramon Ricker's (b. 1943) *Jazz Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano* (1994) is an example from the repertoire that incorporates elements from both the classical and jazz idioms. For this reason, I chose this sonata as the basis for this disquisition. In the liner notes to the score of his *Jazz Sonata*, Ricker speaks of the importance of being well versed in both traditions:

> This work combines musical elements from both contemporary "classical" and jazz traditions. It was inspired by the Sonatas of Phil Woods [1931-2015] and Bill Dobbins [b. 1947] and was written partially with the intention of stimulating the growing interest in crossing the boundaries between jazz and classical music. It is hoped that this work will help musicians to become familiar with the vocabulary and performance practices of both idioms.[2]

This disquisition presents a performer's analysis and an improvisational guide to each of the three movements from Ricker's *Jazz Sonata*. The need for this study is threefold. First, the scholarly literature written on this piece only addresses it from a macro perspective. For example, in his dissertation, Timothy Powell wrote program notes for ten sonatas including

---

[1] Edmund Cyker, Gary Martin, James Miller, and Milo Wold, *An Outline History of Western Music* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 216.

[2] Ramon Ricker, *Jazz Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano* (Rottenburg am Neckar, Ger.: Advance Music, 1994).

Ricker's and provided a few sentences describing each movement.[3] Also, Chris Beaty wrote an annotated bibliography of selected soprano saxophone works and included Ricker's sonata. Beaty offered a brief analysis of each movement and suggested a few performance considerations to play the piece.[4] My disquisition will help fill this void in the scholarly literature written about Ricker's sonata. Secondly, there is currently no research or guide to help a classically trained saxophonist perform the improvised solo sections in the piece. Lastly, there is no research that presents both a comprehensive performer's analysis and an improvisational guide to the piece. This disquisition is intended to be a resource for saxophone students and fulfill the following functions: to practice the technically challenging elements in each movement, to develop specific jazz improvisational concepts needed to play the improvised solo sections, and to apply the jazz concepts in each solo section. I will draw on dissertations, encyclopedia articles, and Ricker's musical score to elaborate on specific details regarding each concept. Additionally, I have consulted jazz improvisational books, such as Walt Weiskopf's *Around the Horn* (2000), for insight from professional jazz musicians regarding how to develop specific jazz concepts. Furthermore, I conducted two interviews with Ricker about his sonata which also informs this study. Ultimately, the goal is to help the student develop both the technical prowess and the jazz conceptual prowess needed to perform this sonata. I hope that this prowess will inspire students to play other jazz-influenced works in the saxophone repertoire.

Chapter 2 provides a performer's analysis to the first movement of Ricker's sonata, *Introduction and Allegro (danse macabre)*. The chapter consists of five sections: introduction,

---

[3] Timothy Powell, "Saxophone Sonatas 1980-2010" (DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2012), 15-16.

[4] Chris Beaty, "Annotated Bibliography of Selected Soprano Saxophone Repertoire" (DMA diss., 2004), 62-67.

exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda, and outlines the technically challenging elements within each section. These elements are related to altered scales, articulations, accents, and polychord harmonies. In addition, musical examples and performance suggestions are provided to elaborate on these specific areas of focus.

Chapter 3 presents an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 78-101) in the first movement. The chapter explains how to approach a new set of chord changes, and it identifies two jazz concepts—pentatonic patterns and intervallic or triad- pair patterns which a student can use to enhance their soloing prowess. I also include musical examples of each jazz concept. In addition, I contribute an originally composed solo using these two concepts to demonstrate how to apply them in the solo section in this movement.

Chapter 4 provides a performer's analysis of the second movement of Ricker's sonata, *Ballad (danse d' amour)*. The chapter consists of three main sections: introduction, ABA', and a codetta, and it outlines the technically challenging elements within each section. These elements are related to tuning, interpretation of the melody, subtone, rapid note passages, and swing style. In addition, I offer musical examples and performance suggestions to elaborate on these specific areas of focus.

Chapter 5 presents an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 28-45) in the second movement. The chapter identifies two jazz concepts—the ii–V–I harmonic progression and the rhythmic-based method of improvisation—that a student can use to enhance their soloing prowess. I also present musical examples of each jazz concept. In addition, I contribute an originally composed solo using the two concepts discussed in this chapter to demonstrate how to apply them in the solo section in this movement.

Chapter 6 provides a performer's analysis to the third movement of Ricker's sonata, *Allegro–Waltz–Allegro (danse infernale)*. The chapter consists of five sections: introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda, and it outlines the technically challenging elements within each section. These elements are related to pitch, technical passages, accents, syncopated melodies, and interpretation of the melody. In addition, I offer musical examples and performance suggestions to elaborate on these specific areas of focus.

Chapter 7 presents an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 141-207) in the third movement. The chapter identifies two jazz concepts—altered dominant chords and quartal patterns—which a student can use to enhance their soloing prowess. Also included are musical examples of each jazz concept. In addition, I contribute an originally composed solo using these two jazz concepts and the four jazz concepts (pentatonic patterns, intervallic or triad pair patterns, the ii–V–I progression, and improvisation based on rhythm) addressed in chapters 3 and 5, to demonstrate how to apply them in the solo section in this movement.

Chapter 8 provides a conclusion that illuminates the main points from each of the previous seven chapters of this disquisition. This chapter also identifies other jazz-influenced works that would benefit greatly from having an improvisational guide written for them. In addition, I present a recommendation for further study in areas outside the scope of my research including: continued development of the improvisational techniques discussed within this dissertation, listening, and transcribing.

In the appendices, following chapter 8, I include a transcription of two interviews (email and telephone) with Ricker on his Sonata. In the email interview (appendix A), I address the following questions: What is the significance of each of the titles in your Sonata? What was your inspiration for writing this piece? How long did it take you to write this piece? Can you

describe your collaboration and relationship with pianist Bill Dobbins? How did you come up with the chord progressions for the improvised solo sections? Is there anything special about your piece that listeners should know about? Did you write the piece from a jazz perspective, classical perspective, or both? What do you think is the most challenging part of your Sonata for a student? What were the influences to arrange your piece for saxophone quartet? Have you ever thought about arranging this piece for a soloist and rhythm section? In addition, appendix A provides Ricker's biographical information. In the telephone interview (appendix B), I address the following questions: Do you have any recommendations for playing your Sonata with a classical versus a jazz setup? I have heard a number of players perform the second movement on tenor saxophone. Do you have any reservations or recommendations regarding which horn to play on each movement? Are you ever going to write another jazz-influenced piece for saxophone in the future? Or have you considered writing another jazz sonata? Regarding the first movement, I wrote about the presence of the Super Locrian scale. Should I also include information about the major seventh ♯5 chord? Regarding improvisation, do you have a method or routine that works well with your students? You are extremely accomplished and have a lot of different projects going on at all times. How do you balance your work with your personal life?

In this dissertation, I provide a comprehensive performer's analysis and improvisational guide to Ricker's sonata. By studying the technically challenging elements, the six jazz concepts, and my originally composed solos, a student will be prepared to perform this sonata with a higher degree of virtuosity from both the classical and jazz styles. In addition, the concepts in this study can be used to perform other jazz influenced works in the saxophone repertoire.

CHAPTER 2. PERFORMER'S ANALYSIS TO THE FIRST MOVEMENT OF RICKER'S SONATA, *INTRODUCTION AND ALLEGRO* (*DANSE MACABRE*)

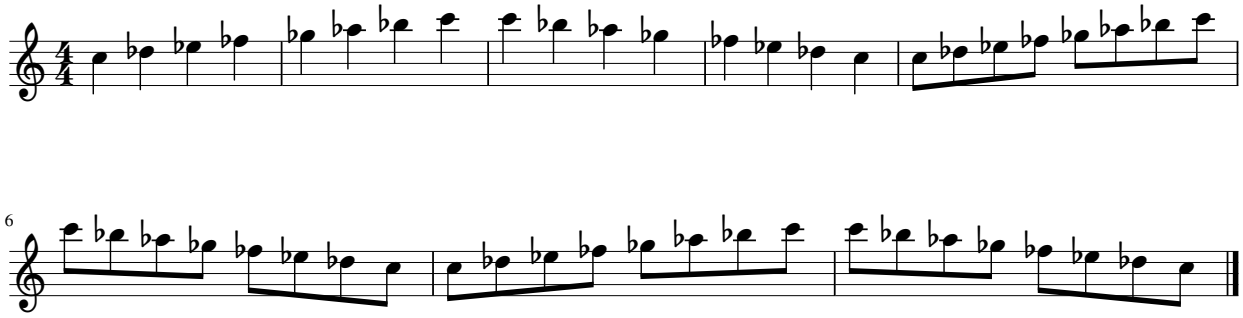
This chapter provides a performer's analysis to the first movement, *Introduction and Allegro (danse macabre)*, of Ricker's sonata. It is important for a student to analyze this piece because it will help them practice the technically challenging elements in it. In the following analysis, I will identify these challenging elements. They are related to altered scales, articulations, accents, and polychord harmonies from the major sections of this piece. In addition, I will include musical examples and offer performance suggestions to elaborate on these specific areas of focus. The purpose is for the student to work on each technically challenging area to build the requisite skills needed to perform Ricker's sonata.

When a student learns a movement of a new piece, it is important for them to identify its overall formal structure. Ricker's first movement is in sonata allegro form and consists of five sections: introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. This division will enable the student to focus their practicing efforts on the most technically challenging areas in each section. In this chapter, I will discuss the technically challenging elements in each of these sections in the order of their appearance in this movement.

Introduction

The introduction to this sonata (mm. 1-21), begins with a call and response between the piano and the soprano saxophone. The piano plays octave C pedals, while the saxophone answers with melodic fragments of quarter-note and eighth-note motives. From a harmonic standpoint, these motives center predominately around the C Super Locrian scale

(C–D♭–E♭–F♭–G♭–A♭–B♭–C).[5] This is a common scale in the jazz idiom. Because a classically trained student is often less familiar with the Super Locrian scale, it will be beneficial for them to practice this scale individually, i.e. independent practicing outside of the motives in the piece, in order to play the melodies of this section (ex. 2.1). I recommend playing this exercise with an evenness of tone throughout all registers of the saxophone. In addition, it will be important for the student to commit this scale to memory and play the eighth notes in example 2.1 using a swing style. These practicing efforts will help the student play the call-and-response melodies of the first movement of Ricker's sonata.



Example 2.1. A practice exercise to help the student become familiar with the C Super Locrian scale.

Throughout the introduction, a student will also need to navigate through numerous tempo markings (*accelerando*, *molto accelerando*, and *ritardando*) and dynamic markings (*piano*, *mezzo forte*, and *forte*) to capture the musicality prescribed by the composer. One example using these markings occurs at the end of the introduction where the saxophone plays a descending sixteenth-note flourish ending on a low C♯ (mm. 18-19). In these two measures, the

[5] The Super Locrian scale is also referred to as the altered scale, the Pomeroy scale, the Ravel scale, and the diminished whole-tone scale. It can be described as a scale that has the same tones as the melodic minor scale built on the note a half step above (see Ron Middlebrook, *Scales and Modes in the Beginning Created Especially for Guitarists* [Anaheim Hills, CA: Centerstream Publications, 1982], 86). I use concert pitch when speaking about keys and scales. I will specifically note the sections or examples that differ from concert pitch.

student should accelerate their tempo through the sixteenth-note flourish (m. 18) and gradually increase their dynamics until the piano enters on beat three of m. 18. Likewise, the pianist should gradually increase their tempo and dynamics when arpeggiating the altered G7 chord in mm. 19-20, until the cadence in m. 21.[6] These gradual fluctuations in tempo and dynamics need to remain fluid between the saxophone and piano to enhance the musicality of the performance. Throughout the introduction, the goal for the student is to use these markings as a guide for developing an interpretation of the melody that is idiomatic and expressive.

Exposition

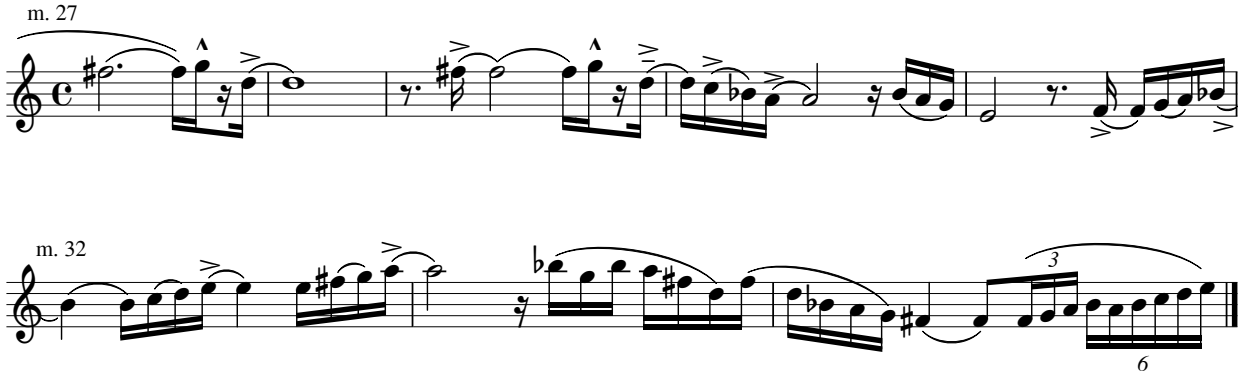
Following the cadence in m. 21, the *allegro* section begins (m. 22) with a transition of five measures to set up the first tonal area and primary theme of the exposition. During this transition, the soprano saxophone plays a sixteenth-note flourish (m. 26) that leads seamlessly into the primary theme (P1; m. 27).

In the primary theme of the exposition (mm. 27-34), Ricker uses numerous articulation markings including slurs, accents, and cap accents to provide the saxophonist with an idea of how to interpret the melody (ex. 2.2). A student should follow Ricker's slur markings for an accurate interpretation of phrasing, however the most important elements of this theme are the accent markings, specifically the *marcato* "cap" accents. Developing the "cap" accent articulation will be necessary for the student to capture the style of the *danse macabre*[7] and the overall character of the theme.

---

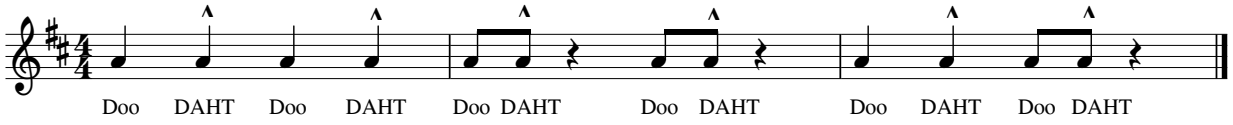
[6] This altered G7 chord includes a raised fifth (D♯), ninth (G♯) and eleventh scale degrees (C♯).

[7] *Danse macabre* or "dance of death" is a medieval and Renaissance symbolic representation of death where a skeleton leads the living to the grave (see Malcom Boyd, "Dance of death," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001–, accessed September 12, 2016, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07153).



Example 2.2. The primary theme of the exposition showing the articulation and slur markings. Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

The "cap" accent is a common articulation in the jazz idiom, and its purpose is to create both weight and space of a particular note. To create this weight and space, a student will need to use a "DAHT" syllable when articulating each cap-accented note. The "DAHT" syllable uses a heavy "T" from the tongue, and the tongue should stop the pitch to create the appropriate length of the note being accented.[8] The student should isolate the cap accent and work on it individually to become comfortable, outside of the melodies in the piece, with this change in syllable from "Doo" to "DAHT" (ex. 2.3).



Example 2.3. A practice exercise for the student to work on switching between a "Doo" syllable and a "DAHT" syllable.

In this exercise, one challenge will be the switch between the syllables "Doo" and "DAHT," while at the same time stopping the reed with one's tongue. Because the cap accent would not require a tongue stop, this technique is rarely used in classical playing. In the jazz idiom, however, the tongue stop (on the "DAHT" syllable) is used as a stylistic choice to

[8] Grant Larson, "Jazz Education for Classically Trained Saxophonists: A Pedagogical Resource for Skill Acquisition in the Jazz Idoim" (DMA diss., University of Colorado, 2013), 17.

enhance the swing style, keeping the emphasis on the backside of the beat. It is important for a student to develop the cap accent articulation in this exercise to enhance the performance of the P1 theme (and of subsequent restatements of the P and P1' themes).

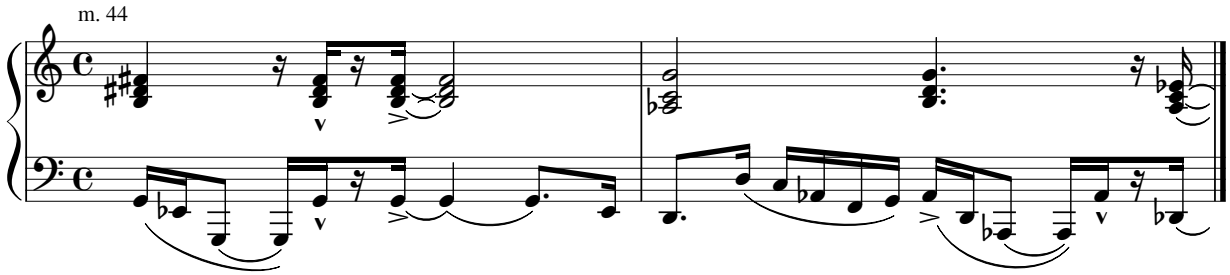
In m. 35, the P1' theme begins, and Ricker restates the primary theme (P1) in its entirety with no alterations to the melody or piano accompaniment.[9] These themes (P1 and P1') are based on the C Super Locrian and the F melodic minor scales, and the piano alternates between these two harmonies to accompany the saxophone melody. When performing the saxophone melody (of P1 and P1'), a student should consider using vibrato on some of the longer notes and leaving the tone straight (no vibrato) on others. The student should listen to Ricker's original recording to help facilitate this process. When listening, I recommend marking the notes in the music where Ricker uses vibrato and the notes where he does not. After listening, the student can make the artistic choice on which notes to color with vibrato. Overall, since the themes are identical, any choice the student makes regarding vibrato should be played the same way for both the themes.

After the cadence in m. 42, Ricker modulates briefly to the key of the dominant (G) to start the second tonal area (S1; beat three of m. 43). Ricker masks this dominant harmony by using tritone substitutions and polychords[10] in the piano accompaniment. The harmony in the

[9] There are two editions of this score, one in the key of E♭ and the other in the key of B♭. The E♭ edition to the score has one difference. The P' restatement at m. 35 is an octave higher. In the B♭ edition to the score, the P' restatement is exactly the same.

[10] I will provide a detailed explanation of the polychord and how to improvise over polychord harmonies in chapter 3.

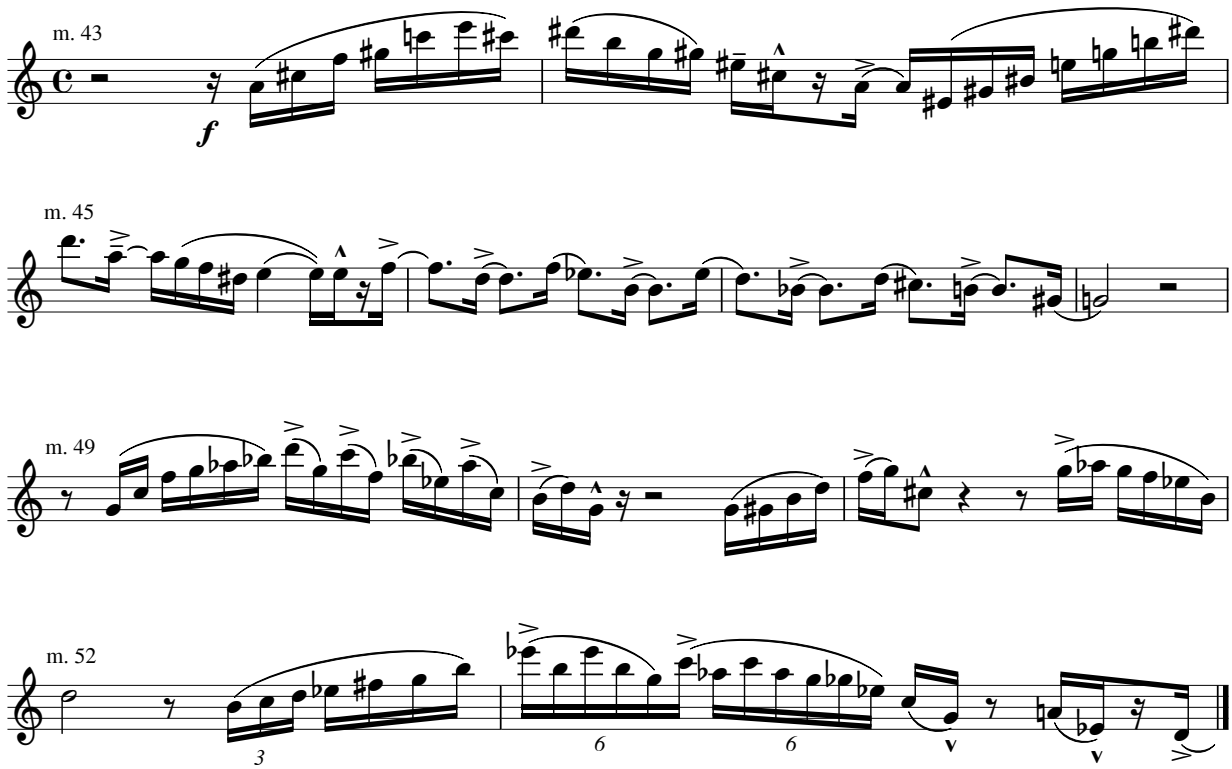
piano is based on a polychord of B major/G (or G major 7 ♯5)[11] in m. 44 and on an A♭ major 7/D polychord in m. 45 (ex. 2.4). The unique feature of these two chords (in mm. 44-45) is how Ricker enharmonically respells the D♯ in m. 44, to an E♭ in m. 45, making the note function in both harmonies. Ricker continues this polychordal relationship into the secondary theme (S2; m. 46) centered around two polychords: an A♭ major/D♭ chord on beat one and an A major/D♭ chord on beat three.



Example 2.4. Ricker's use of altered harmonies in mm. 44-45. Piano part from the score, in the key of C.

During these polychordal sections, both themes from the saxophone (S1 and S2) feature a combination of dotted eighth notes and sixteenth notes along with interjections of articulated sixteenth notes (ex. 2.5). Since both of these themes are syncopated, a student will need to become familiar with the polychordal piano part in this section to help them perform the S1 and S2 themes. After the S2 theme, Ricker transitions for two measures (mm. 52-53) to modulate the theme back to the key center of C to start the development section.

[11] The major seventh ♯5 chord can be found in all three movements throughout Ricker's *Jazz Sonata*. A corollary to this chord is the augmented scale (C–D♯–E–G–G♯–B–C) which alternates between minor thirds and half steps. Ricker uses both the augmented scale and the major seventh ♯5 chord as harmonic tools to form both the saxophone melodies and the piano accompaniments throughout each of the three movements of his *Jazz Sonata* (see Ramon Ricker and Walt Weiskopf, *The Augmented Scale in Jazz* [New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 1993], 3-14).



Example 2.5. The saxophone themes of the second tonal area (mm. 43-52) and the transition into the development (mm. 52-53). Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

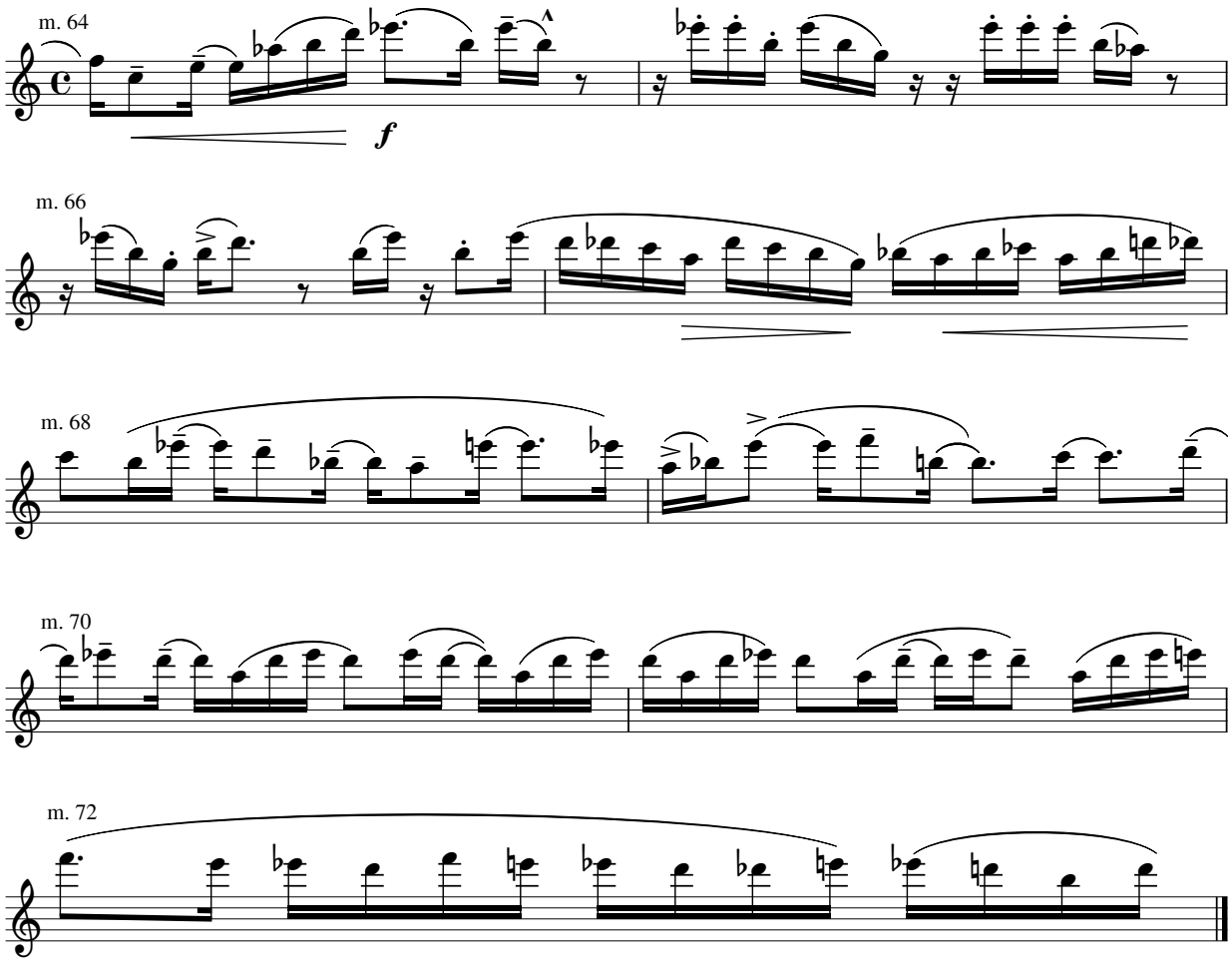
Overall, the themes of the second tonal area (S1 and S2) are influenced by polychordal harmonic relationships that weave between key centers to mask the dominant key. Understanding the harmonic underpinning of this second tonal area will provide a student with a better theoretical background to interpret the themes in this section.

Development

The development (mm. 54-160) can be divided into three main areas: a syncopated chromatic section, an improvised solo section, and another syncopated chromatic section. Each has its own challenges. In the first section (mm. 54-77), Ricker references some of the thematic material from the first and second tonal areas (P and S themes) by combining the sixteenth-note rhythms of P1 with the dotted eighth-note (beamed to a sixteenth note) rhythms of S2. Due to the syncopated nature of this first section, one challenge for a student will be to line up the

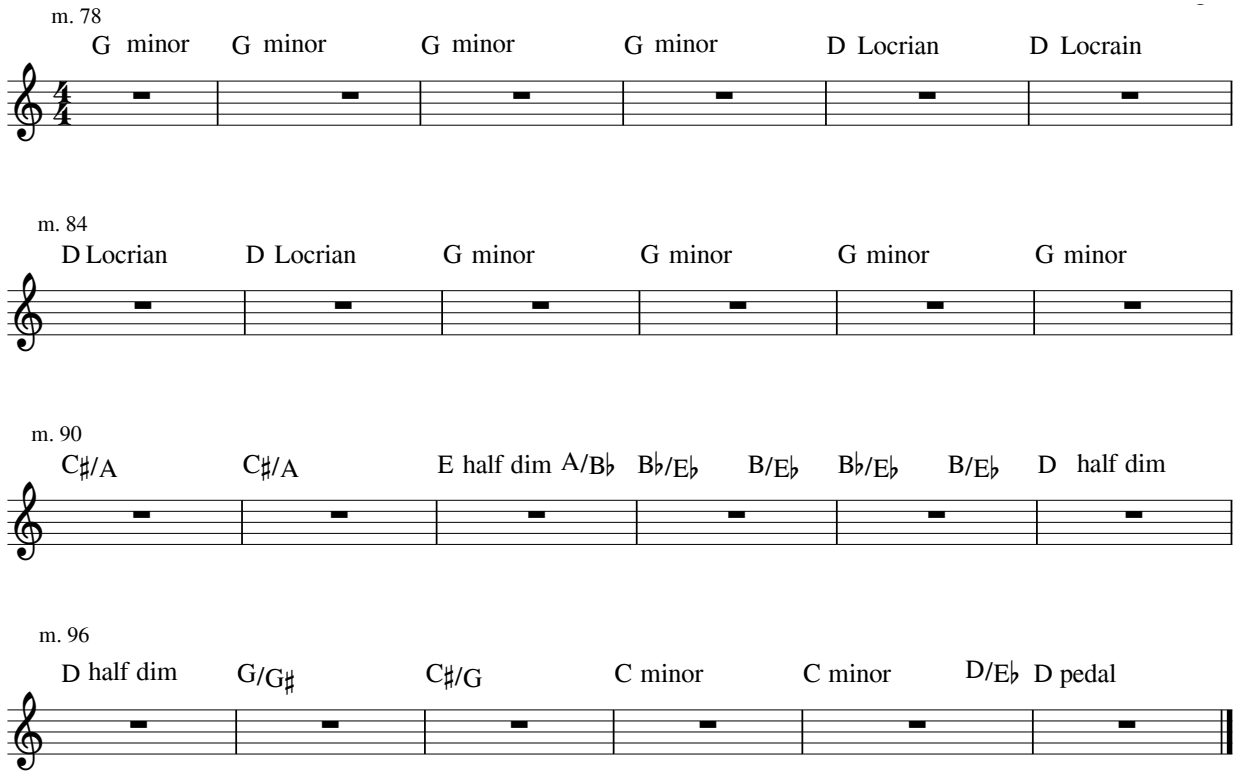
saxophone part with the piano. A solution to this challenge would be for both musicians to practice this section with a metronome at a slow tempo and gradually increase the speed. This will help both the student and the pianist develop the syncopated motives together. Another challenge for the student throughout this first section (starting on beat three of m. 64) will be to play in tune as the saxophone melody rises higher in the tessitura of the instrument (ex. 2.6). Often times, the student will play sharp in the upper register of the soprano saxophone (or any saxophone), and one solution for them is to play the notes in this register using the "AH" voicing (as in "father") in the throat.[12] The "AH" voicing creates an open throat position that will enable the student to slightly lower their pitch, helping to improve their intonation in the upper register of the saxophone. Ricker uses this register of the soprano saxophone to generate more melodic tension and to further develop the syncopated sixteenth-note rhythmic motive found within this section. Ultimately, the cadence in m. 77 brings a sense of harmonic resolution to the first section of the development and transitions into the improvised solo section of the piece.

[12] David Liebman, *Developing a Personal Saxophone Sound*, 2nd ed. (Medfield, MA: Dorn Publications, 1994), 23.



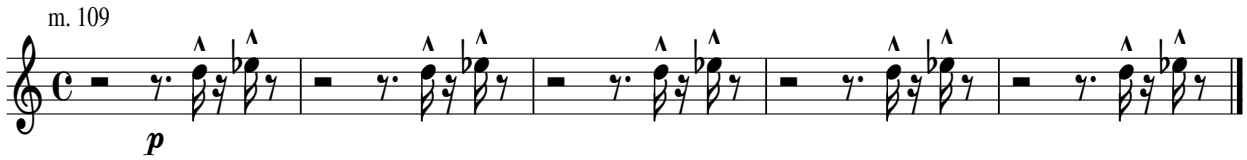
Example 2.6. The chromaticism in the first developmental section. Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

In the second section of the development (mm. 78-148), one challenge for a student will be to play an improvised melody over the set of chord changes. Both the saxophone and the piano exchange improvised solos in this section, with the saxophone playing the first solo over a twenty-four measure harmonic progression from m. 78 to m. 101 (ex. 2.7). From a pedagogical standpoint, this improvised solo will be a challenge for the student who has only studied the classical side of the saxophone. In Chapter 3, I will make recommendations for the classically trained student to play an improvised solo over this set of chord changes.



Example 2.7. The harmonic progression of the improvised solo section (mm. 78-101) in the key of B♭.

Following the saxophone solo, there is a piano solo (mm. 102-48), where the saxophone plays brief interjections of a syncopated ostinato pattern (ex. 2.8). A student will play variations of this ostinato pattern from m. 109 to m. 119 to provide a background accompaniment for the piano. This accompaniment creates a rhythmic pulse to provide the pianist with more flexibility and freedom to improvise over the harmonic progression. Overall, the most challenging element for the student will be to create improvised melodies over the set chord changes in this second section.



Example 2.8. The ostinato pattern played by the soprano saxophonist. Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

In the last section of the development (mm. 148-160), Ricker introduces a new soprano saxophone melody, however, this melody is still loosely based on the themes from the exposition and the first section of the development (m. 159 is similar to the thematic material at m. 70 from the first section of the development, using a slightly different rhythm). The saxophone melody and piano accompaniment contain many notes tied together, often over the bar line. Once again, the challenge of this section will be to line up the (ensemble) parts of both players so that the counterpoint between the two voices remains in sync. When practicing this section, both musicians should direct their attention to the larger beats (quarter note) within each measure. For a visual aid during a performance, a student can use their instrument to conduct each quarter note to keep the ensemble parts together.

Overall, the development contains some of the most difficult challenges in the entire piece. By isolating each section of the development, a student can work on building the necessary prowess to play both the improvised solo section and the syncopated chromatic sections.

Recapitulation

Following the development, a short retransition (mm. 161-164) sets up the first tonal area and the P1 theme of the recapitulation. This four-measure retransition is identical to the transition that ushers in the exposition earlier in the piece (mm. 23-26).

The recapitulation (mm. 168-195) is an exact restatement of the exposition. What is interesting is that Ricker bases the overall harmonic form of both the exposition and the

recapitulation on the set of chord changes (in the improvised saxophone solo) from the development (ex. 2.6). This set of chord changes is the harmonic framework Ricker uses for the entire movement. Realizing this significant connection will help a student with their preparation and practicing efforts in performing this movement. At the end of the recapitulation (m. 195), there is a brief cadence followed immediately by the coda.

Coda

In the short coda section (mm. 195-201), Ricker generates excitement and brings the movement to a dramatic close. The soprano saxophone creates this excitement by playing cadential sixteenth-note motives and finishing on a trill (D to E♭)[13] in the low register of the instrument. This trill should become faster and louder until the final cutoff, to end the movement.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an analysis of the first movement, *Introduction and Allegro (danse macabre)*, of Ricker's *Jazz Sonata* and provides a way to interpret specific altered scales, articulations, accents, and polychord harmonies within this movement. By studying my analysis and the specific concepts addressed above, a student can practice these technically challenging elements and perform this movement with a higher level of virtuosity. In addition, the above concepts will ultimately enable the student to be more successful in performing this movement and other "crossover" works in the saxophone repertoire.

[13] These are the soprano saxophone notes in the key of B♭.

CHAPTER 3. IMPROVISATIONAL GUIDE TO THE SOPRANO SAXOPHONE SOLO (MM. 78-101) IN THE FIRST MOVEMENT

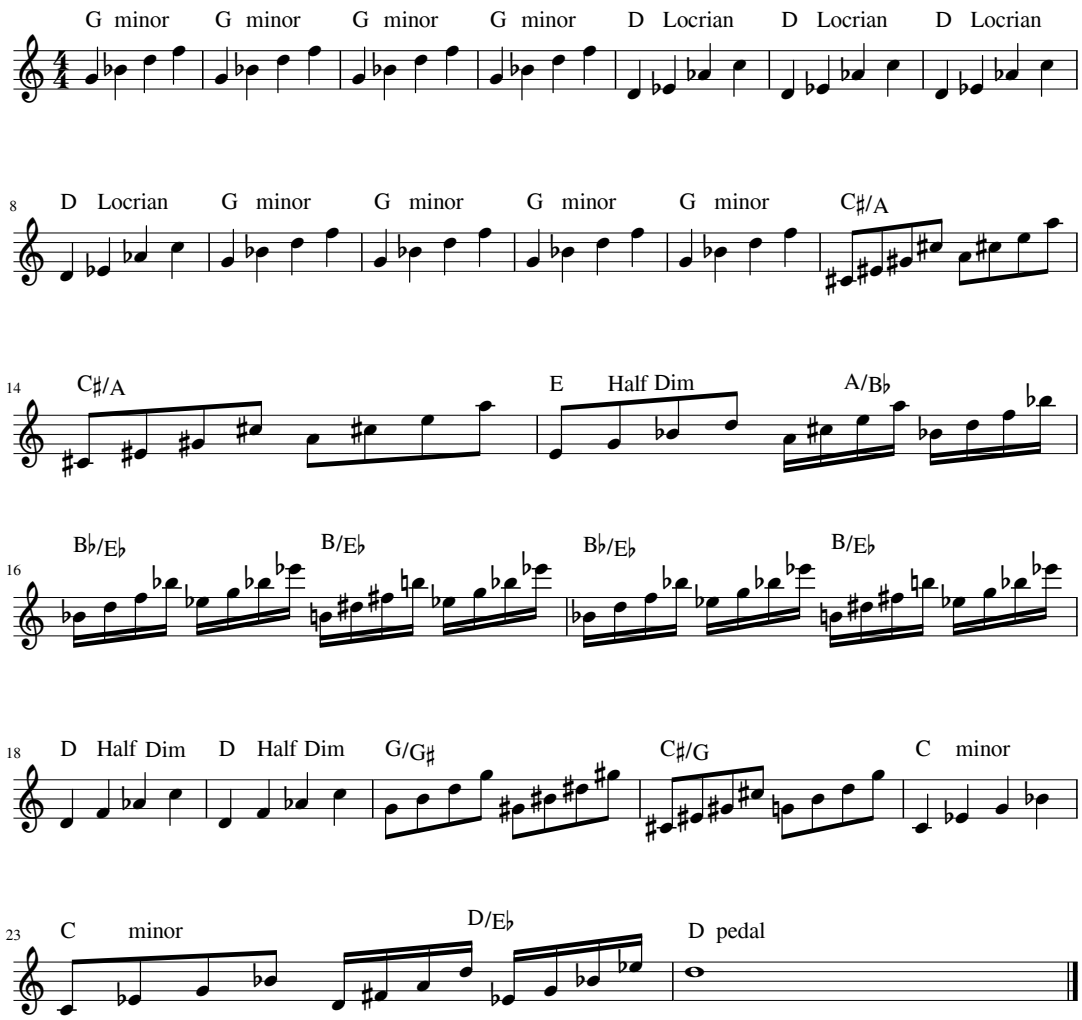
This chapter provides an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 78-101) in the first movement of Ricker's sonata, *Introduction and Allegro (danse macabre)*. In this improvisational guide, I will explain how to approach a new set of chord changes. I will also identify two jazz concepts—pentatonic patterns and intervallic or triad-pair patterns which a student can utilize to enhance their soloing prowess. I will include musical examples to aid the classically trained student in developing these improvisational techniques, and offer performance suggestions to elaborate on the specific area of focus. In addition, I will provide an originally composed solo using the two concepts mentioned above. The goal is for the student to use these concepts as a guide to help them create their own improvised solo in this section of the movement.

When a student is learning to improvise, the first question they ask is what to play. Since improvisation is a life-long learning process, the student will discover that there is no easy solution for this challenge. In addition, Ricker uses a non-traditional set of chord changes for the solo section in the first movement (and in the other movements of the sonata). These non-traditional chord changes further complicate this issue. To be successful, the student will need to work on different improvisational concepts that can be used to play this set of chord changes.

Approaching a New Set of Chord Changes

When a student is learning to improvise over a new set of chord changes, it is important for them to arpeggiate each chord in the set. By arpeggiating each chord, the student will develop both a comfort level with the chords that are less common to them and their ears to hear what each chord sounds like. Throughout the solo (mm. 78-101), twenty-four measures in

length, the student will arpeggiate thirteen different chords (including major, minor, Locrian, and polychords). Since some of the measures contain more than one chord, the student will need to arpeggiate using eighth notes or sixteenth notes to accommodate for the extra chords per measure. I provide an exercise to practice arpeggiating each chord in the progression, in example 3.1.



Example 3.1. A practice exercise to arpeggiate each chord of the solo section. Harmonic progression for the improvised soprano saxophone solo, in the key of B♭. The remaining figures will also be in the key of B♭.

The most common way for a student to arpeggiate each chord (ex. 3.1) is to play each note individually from the bottom to the top, starting on the tonic and following with the third,

fifth, and seventh.[14] This pattern will work with most chords, however, when determining which notes (that do not fit this description) to include in each arpeggio, I followed the guidelines described by saxophonist and jazz pedagogue Walt Weiskopf in his book *Around the Horn* (2000). Weiskopf suggests:

> in many cases the choice of chord tones that make up a particular chord is fairly well accepted; for instance: a C major 7 chord is composed of the notes C–E–G–B. These notes make up the arpeggio for C major 7. For chords that are not normally practiced in this manner, the construction of the arpeggio is more subjective. The criteria used in deciding what a good arpeggio is for each chord is straightforward; which sequences of notes best connotes the tonality of the chord.[15]

One of the subjective chords a student needs to arpeggiate in Ricker's solo progression is the D Locrian chord (since the name of the chord implies a modal harmony). The D Locrian mode can be described as the seventh mode of the E♭ major scale with the defining notes in its tonality being E♭ and A♭.[16] The problem is that if the student arpeggiates the root, third, fifth, and seventh of the D Locrian mode (D–F–A♭–C), they would be outlining the harmony of a D half-diminished chord and would be missing one of the defining notes of the D Locrian tonality, E♭. For this reason, the student should arpeggiate the D Locrian chord using the notes D–E♭–A♭–C (ex. 3.1); the D Locrian arpeggio then contains both defining notes of this tonality. Although there are other possibilities for the student to construct an arpeggio for D Locrian (including D–F–A♭–C), using the notes D–E♭–A♭–C will more accurately define its tonality.[17]

---

[14] Walt Weiskopf, *Around the Horn* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 2000), 7.

[15] Ibid., 7.

[16] Two other ways to describe the D locrian mode are the sixth mode of the F melodic minor scale (D locrian #2) or the seventh mode of the E♭ melodic minor scale (D super locrian). See Mark Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Company, 1995), 68-70.

[17] Weiskopf, *Around the Horn*, *19*.

Another subjective chord a student will need to arpeggiate from Ricker's solo progression is the polychord. A polychord (also known as a triad pair, or slash chord) can be described in two different ways: either a triad over a foreign bass note,[18] or a collection of two or more different triads sounding at the same time, both used to create bitonality or polytonality. In Ricker's solo progression (ex. 3.1), the student will need to arpeggiate seven different polychords, starting with the C♯/A polychord. This chord can be described as a C♯ major triad with an A as the lowest pitch (A–C♯–E♯–G♯), or a C♯ major triad and an A major triad sounding at the same time (C♯–E♯–G♯ and A–C♯–E). In the practice exercise (ex. 3.1), I provide an example of arpeggiating the polychords as two different pairs of triads, because this will help the student better understand the tonality of each polychord. Whether the student arpeggiates the polychord using two different major triads or one triad over a foreign bass note, the function of the chord will remain the same. What is more important for the student to recognize is that there are two different interpretations on how to arpeggiate polychords and this realization will better prepare them to improvise over this type of chord.

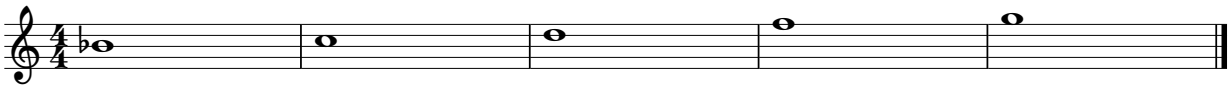
Developing Jazz Concepts: Pentatonic Patterns

After a student becomes comfortable arpeggiating each chord, the next step for them is to develop theoretical and technical aspects of different jazz concepts to enhance their soloing prowess. The pentatonic scale is one jazz concept the student can use as a resource to help them create improvised melodies throughout the solo section. As the name suggests, the pentatonic scale is a five-note scale consisting of intervals of the major second and the minor third, with no leading tone (seventh scale degree of a major scale) or any half steps found within it.[19] This

[18] Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book*, 104.

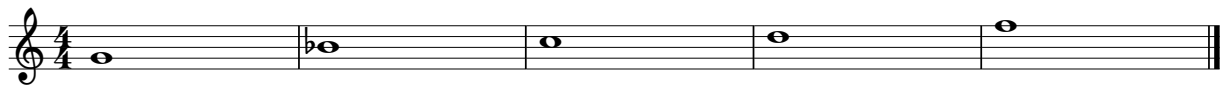
[19] Ramon Ricker, *Pentatonic Scales for Jazz Improvisation* (New York, NY: Alfred Publishing Company, 1976), 2.

scale can be major or minor, depending on how the five notes are arranged. The following notes spell a B♭ major pentatonic scale (B♭–C–D–F–G) (ex. 3.2).



Example 3.2. The B♭ major pentatonic scale with intervals of a major second from B♭ to C, C to D, and F to G, and an interval of a minor third from D to F.

Likewise, the B♭ major pentatonic scale is also known by the name of its relative minor scale, or the G minor pentatonic scale (G–B♭–C–D–F) (ex. 3.3).[20] Some jazz musicians prefer to call pentatonic scales by their major name, while others prefer the minor name.[21] Either way, both pentatonic scales share the same collection of notes and can be considered inversions of the same scale.



Example 3.3. The G minor pentatonic scale sharing the same collection of notes as the B♭ major pentatonic scale.

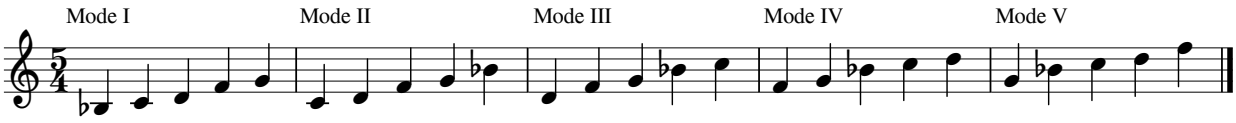
In his book, *Pentatonic Scales for Jazz Improvisation* (1976), saxophonist Ramon Ricker describes the five possible inversions of a pentatonic scale, which he calls "modes," and he provides an example of each mode (ex. 3.4).[22] These modes of the B♭ major pentatonic scale can be used to play many different chords, the most obvious being B♭ major 7 (Mode I) and G minor 7 (Mode V). In addition, the different modes can also be used to play other chords, the primary

[20] Jerry Bergonzi, *Inside Improvisation Series*: *Vol. 2, Pentatonics* (Delevan, NY: Advance Music, 1994), 9.

[21] Ibid., 9.

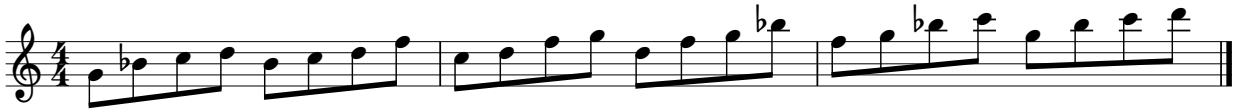
[22] Ricker, *Pentatonic Scales*, 2.

ones being C minor 7, E♭ major 7, F minor 7, A♭ major 7, E7 alt, and B♭7.[23] The significant realization for a student to make is that this one pentatonic scale can be used to play eight (or more) different chords. When improvising, the student should look for these pentatonic relationships to help simply the chord progression, and ultimately help them improvise at a higher level.



Example 3.4. This is Ricker's exercise on the five possible modes of the B♭ major pentatonic scale.[24]

Once a student has a theoretical understanding of the pentatonic scale, the next step is for them to develop patterns or "licks" using this scale. Pentatonic patterns work well over static harmonies. Throughout the first twelve measures of the solo section in Ricker's first movement, there are eight measures of G minor 7 chords. This is an area for the student to play pentatonic patterns from the B♭ major pentatonic and G minor pentatonic scales. One basic pattern is to play ascending eighth notes through the modes of the G minor pentatonic scale (ex. 3.5).



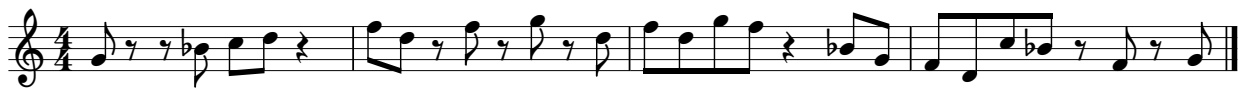
Example 3.5. A pattern using ascending eighth notes to be played over the G minor 7 chord.

This exercise (ex. 3.5) will serve as an introduction for the student to incorporate a pentatonic pattern over the G minor 7 harmony. The student should alter this pattern with

[23] Bergonzi, *Pentatonics*, *29*.

[24] Ricker, *Pentatonics*, 2. In his book, Ricker uses a C major pentatonic scale for the example. I transposed his exercise to B♭ major pentatonic, since it will work better for the chords in the improvised solo section.

rhythmic variation to make it sound less predictable. In addition, the student should incorporate ascending and descending eighth notes into the pattern to create a spontaneous-sounding melody (ex. 3.6).[25]



Example 3.6. A pattern using rhythmic variation to be played over the G minor 7 chord.

There are numerous patterns that can be created with the pentatonic scale. When a student is learning a new pentatonic pattern, it is important for them to use each pattern as a guide to ultimately form their own soloing ideas. Overall, the theoretical and technical aspects of the pentatonic scale (addressed above) is one jazz concept for the student to develop when creating improvised melodies throughout the solo section.

Developing Jazz Concepts: Triad-Pair Relationships

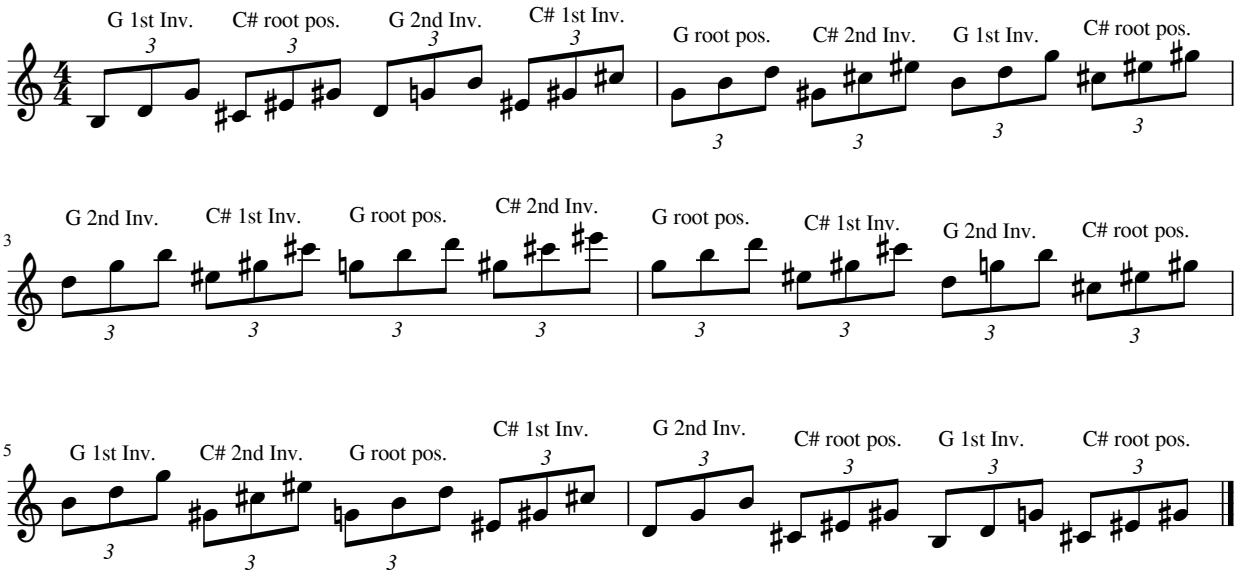
Since the solo section contains many polychords (ex. 3.1), a student will need to develop patterns or "licks" based on another jazz concept using triad-pair relationships to improvise over this type of chord. This concept of using triad-pair relationships when improvising is an intervallic method for the student to reference chord changes (based on intervals, specifically triads), rather than the more common linear method (learning what scale to play over each chord).[26] Throughout the solo section, there are seven different polychords where the student can use triad-pair patterns when improvising.[27] One example from the solo section involves the

[25] For more information on how to play pentatonic patterns using rhythmic variations, see Bergonzi, 27.

[26] Walt Weiskopf, *Intervalic* [*sic*] *Improvisation*: *The Modern Sound*; *A Step beyond Linear Improvisation* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold, 1995), 1.

[27] Triad pairs can be used over any chord change. At this point, I will introduce triad-pair patterns only on the polychords from the solo section. As they become more comfortable, the student can choose to play triad-pair patterns on other chords.

C♯/G polychord, where the student can play a triad-pair pattern using ascending eighth-note triplets from the C♯ and G triads (including inversions) (ex. 3.7).



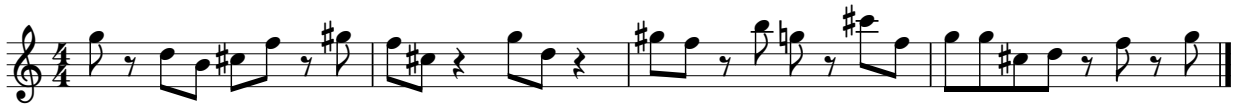
Example 3.7. A triad-pair pattern based on the C♯ and G triads for the student to play when improvising.[28]

In this exercise, I include the inversions above each eighth-note triplet to help a student discern the origins of the triads. Because this is a difficult exercise, it will require a significant amount of practice time in order to use this pattern in an improvised solo. These practicing efforts will prepare the student to play the polychords found within the solo section.

After a student has practiced several triad-pair patterns, the next step for them is to create their own melodies from pre-existing triad-pair patterns and incorporate them into the polychord harmonies in the solo section. The goal is for the student to create an improvised melody that is idiomatic and expressive, and to avoid sounding predictable. One example using the C♯/G

[28] Weiskopf, *Intervalic* [sic] *Improvisation*, 87. In his pattern, Weiskopf uses the D♭ and G triad pairs. I enharmonically respelled the D♭ triad to a C♯ triad to fit the polychord from the solo section. Also, I included the inversions above each triad where Weiskopf does not.

polychord involves playing the two triads with ascending and descending eighth note rhythms mixed with different combinations of rests (ex. 3.8).



Example 3.8. A melody built with the C# and G triad pairs.

In this exercise, I use eighth-note rhythms from the C# and G triads, however, by using different rhythmic variations of rests, I am able to create a melody that does not sound derived from a pattern. A student will need to emulate this process (taking a pre-existing pattern [ex. 3.7], and creating their own melodies based on that pattern [ex. 3.8]) to enhance their soloing prowess when performing the polychord harmonies in this solo section.

Overall, it is important for a student to develop triad-pair patterns when playing the polychord harmonies throughout the solo section. This development enables the student to form their own improvised melodies using triad-pair patterns and provides another jazz concept for them to reference when soloing.

Originally Composed Solo

In this final section, I provide an originally composed solo using the two jazz concepts mentioned above—pentatonic patterns and intervallic or triad-pair patterns, to prepare a student in creating an improvised melody throughout the solo section (ex. 3.9). During the first four measures, I create a melody (over the G minor chord) using the G minor pentatonic scale. From the exercise, the student will notice that I use non-chord tones absent from the G minor pentatonic scale to link one measure into another (m. 3 into m. 4). The student can use non-chord tones to link their ideas between measures and to generate tension in the melody.

In the next four measures (over the D Locrian chord), I create a rhythmic melody using the D Locrian scale. By using rhythmic variation, I am able to repeat the one-beat motive of a sixteenth note, eighth note, sixteenth note on different pitches found within the D Locrain scale. A student can connect their melodic motives together by repeating them; this is a beneficial way to relate with an audience, since the audience will hear this repetition.

After the D Locrian chords, the G minor chord returns (mm. 9-12) for four measures, and I again use the G minor pentatonic scale to form the melody. The only difference this time is the incorporation of the G blues scale with the G minor pentatonic scale (specifically in m. 12).[29] The D♭ from the G blues scale is a non-chord tone that a student can use to create chromaticism and tension in the melody.

In the next two measures, a student can use triad-pair patterns to build their melodies, since the harmony is based on the polychord of C♯/A. During these two measures, I create a sixteenth-note melody using the triads and inversions of both the C♯ triad and the A triad. When practicing this exercise, the student should label the inversions of the C♯ triad and the A triad above each sixteenth-note grouping, to help them perform the melody in these two measures.

For the polychords in the next three measures (A/B♭–B♭/E♭–B/E♭), I borrow the rhythm Ricker uses in his melody from mm. 45-47, however, I alter the notes in my melody to create more tension. Starting with the B♭/E♭ polychord (m. 16), I create a melody that modulates chromatically for the next two measures using the same rhythm. I transition into the next harmony by holding an A♭ into the D half-diminished chord in m. 18. When creating their own improvised solos, students are encouraged to borrow Ricker's melodies as I did. Many great

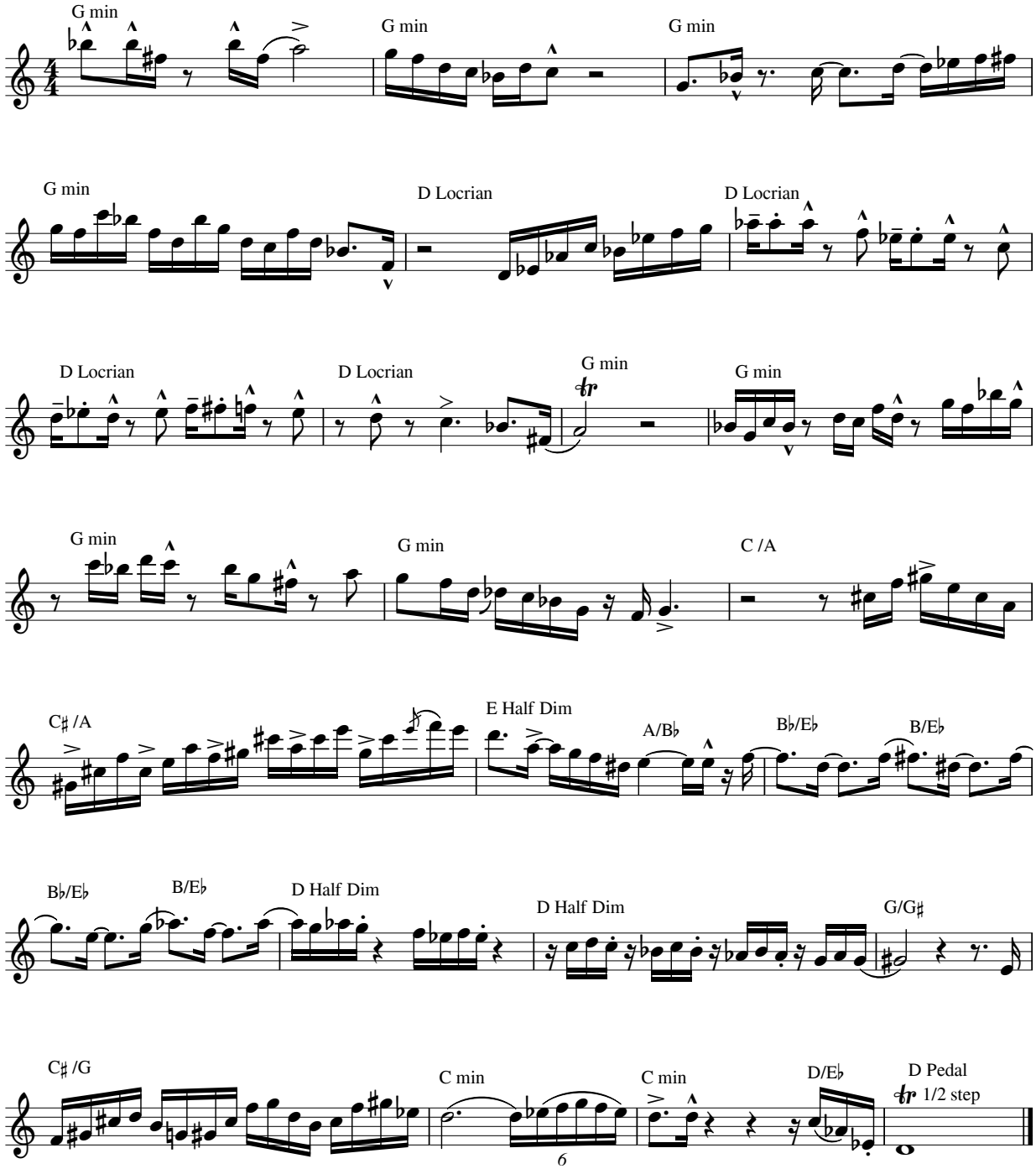
[29] D♭ is the only note that is different in the G blues scale from the G minor pentatonic scale. The G blues scale is G–B♭–C–D♭–D–F–G.

improvisers borrow “licks” or melodies from other musicians, and it demonstrates their level of maturity during their solos.

Over the next two D half-diminished chords (mm. 18-19), I create a syncopated melody based on the D half-diminished scale. I use a different rhythmic motive in each measure to make the D half-diminished scale sound more spontaneous. By repeating these rhythmic motives, I am able to transition the melody into the next two polychords (mm. 20-21).

I create a dissonant melody in the next two polychords (G/G♯ and C♯/G) by playing a half-note G♯ in the first measure, followed by a sixteenth-note triad-pair pattern in the second measure. The triad-pair pattern I use in the second measure features an ascending C♯ triad, followed by a descending G triad. Once again, a student should label the inversions of the C♯ triad and G triad above each sixteenth-note grouping, to help them perform the melody in this measure.

In the final three measures, I again borrow a melody Ricker uses in mm. 74-76 of the development, to help me end my solo (mm. 22-24). Ricker uses this melody to set-up the improvised saxophone solo section (in m. 78), and I am using it to conclude the solo section. The only difference between the two melodies is that I include a trill on the final whole-note of the solo section.



Example 3.9. An improvised solo to work on playing pentatonic patterns and triad-pair patterns in the solo section. In the key of B♭.

From this exercise, a student can use my recommendations regarding pentatonic patterns and triad-pair patterns to help them form their own solo in this section. As the student becomes

more comfortable with the chord progression, they can create their own patterns or "licks" to play over this set of chord changes.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 78-101) in the first movement of Ricker's sonata, *Introduction and Allegro (danse macabre)*. This improvisational guide explains how to approach a new set of chord changes and identifies two jazz concepts—pentatonic patterns and intervallic or triad-pair patterns a student can utilize to enhance their soloing prowess. By studying my originally composed solo and the two jazz concepts addressed above, the student can develop these improvisational techniques that will ultimately enable them to be more successful in playing the improvised solo in this movement and other improvised works in the saxophone repertoire.

CHAPTER 4. PERFORMER'S ANALYSIS TO THE SECOND MOVEMENT OF RICKER'S SONATA, *BALLAD* (*DANSE D' AMOUR*)

This chapter provides a performer's analysis of the second movement, *Ballad (danse d' amour)*, of Ricker's sonata. It is important for a student to analyze this piece because it will help them practice the technically challenging elements in it. In the following analysis, I will identify these challenging elements in this movement: tuning, interpretation of the melody, subtone, rapid note passages, and swing style. In addition, I will include musical examples and offer performance suggestions to elaborate on these specific areas of focus. The purpose is for the student to work on each technically challenging element to build the requisite skills needed to perform Ricker's sonata.

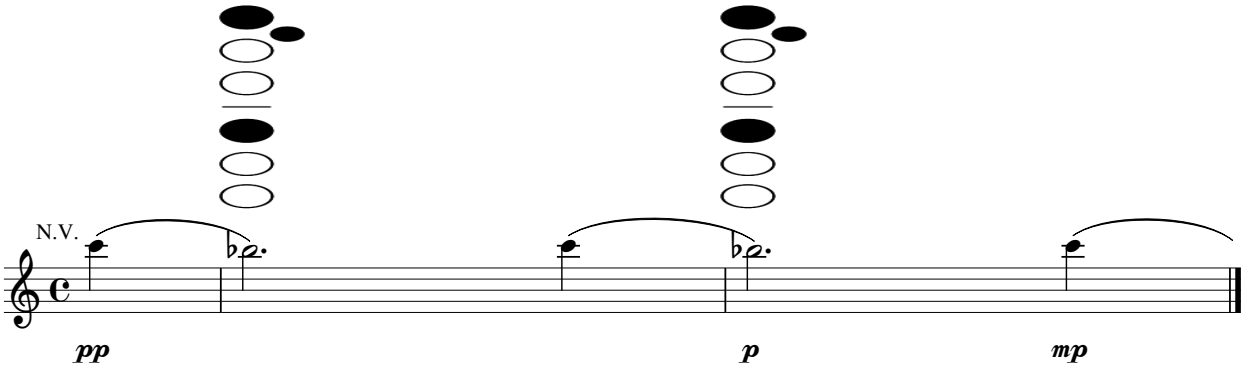
When a student is learning this movement, it is important for them to identify its overall formal structure. Ricker's second movement is in ternary form and consists of three main sections: introduction, ABA', and a codetta. Being aware of this structure will enable the student to focus their practicing efforts on the most technically challenging elements in each section. In this chapter, I will discuss these elements in the order of their appearance in this movement.

Introduction

In the introduction (mm. 1-2), Ricker uses a short two-measure motive to set the overall mood of the movement and to capture the style of the *danse d' amour* (French for "dance of love"). In these two measures, the saxophone repeats a motive of a quarter note tied to a dotted half note while the piano repeats a motive of octave A notes in the right hand and whole notes in

the left hand. Both the saxophone and piano increase their dynamics in each of the two measures from *pp* to *p* and eventually to *mp* to transition into the A theme of the movement.[30]

One challenge for a student in this opening section will be playing the B♭ notes in tune at the *pp* and *p* dynamics. Since the note B♭ is often sharp in the upper register of the soprano saxophone, the student should play the note using an alternate fingering to help lower the pitch. This alternate fingering for B♭ will help the student play the B♭ in tune at the *pp* and *p* dynamic levels. In example 4.1, I provide the alternate B♭ fingering above each note in the introduction.



Example 4.1. An alternate fingering to help lower the pitch of the B♭ notes in the introduction (mm. 1-2). Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

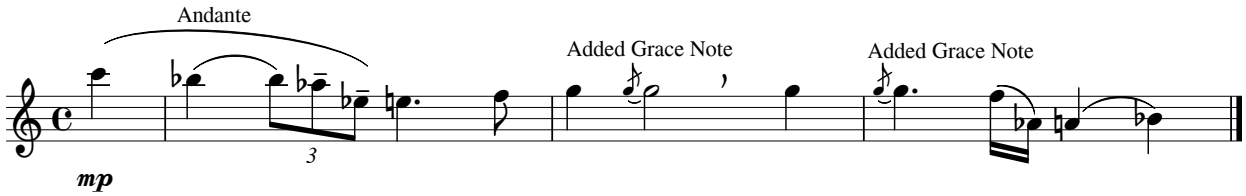
The A Section

In the A section of this movement (mm. 3-20), the saxophone plays a lyrical melody taken from an earlier jazz tune Ricker composed for his wife, entitled *Let Me Spend This Night with You Forever*.[31] At Ricker's *andante* tempo, this melody (mm. 3-10) is not difficult to play

[30] Throughout this chapter, the dynamic markings are abbreviated according to the following conventions: *forte* is abbreviated to *f*, *piano* to *p*, *pianissimo* to *pp*, *pianississimo* to *ppp*.

[31] Sydney Hodkinson, "Eastman American Music Series Vol. 8," liner notes for *Ramon Ricker: Jazz Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano*, Ramon Ricker, soprano saxophone and Bill Dobbins, piano. Compact disc (Albany Records TR361, 1999).

from a technical standpoint, however, the stylistic interpretation of the melody is deceivingly challenging. A student will need to focus on their interpretation of the melody in order to capture the expressive qualities of this theme. One subtle change the student can make is to add a grace note to the repeated pitches in the melody. For example, the melody in m. 4 has a quarter note G on beat one followed by a half note G on beat two (ex. 4.2). By adding a grace note to the half note G on beat two, the student is able to add more expression to the melody. The student should continue to add grace notes on each repeated pitch throughout the melody. These small changes will enable the student to be more expressive and will enhance their overall interpretation of the melody.

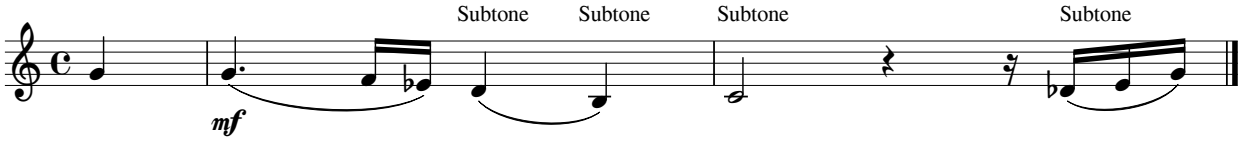


Example 4.2. An example to add grace notes to each repeated note in the melody (mm. 3-5). Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

In mm. 11-20, this melody (A') is repeated one octave lower and contains some new material to transition into the B section of this movement. Since the melody is one octave lower, one challenge for a student is to play it with an evenness of tone in the low register of the saxophone. The student should consider using subtone[32] on the notes in the low register to maintain this evenness of tone and elegance of the melody (ex. 4.3). On a saxophone, subtone is produced by moving the lower jaw towards the tip of the reed, with enough air to prevent the

[32] Subtone is a soft, breathy tone produced in the lowest range of the saxophone by carefully suppressing the higher partials of a note (see Barry Kernfeld, "Subtone," in *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz,* 2nd ed., *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* Oxford University Press, 2001–, accessed November 7, 2016, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/J433600).

note from breaking or fading, however, gently enough so that the upper partials of the note are not produced.[33] By using subtone on the low notes, the student can prevent the saxophone from "honking" and will allow these notes to sound more intimate with their interpretation of the melody.



Example 4.3. An example to play the low notes in the melody using subtone (mm. 13-14). Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

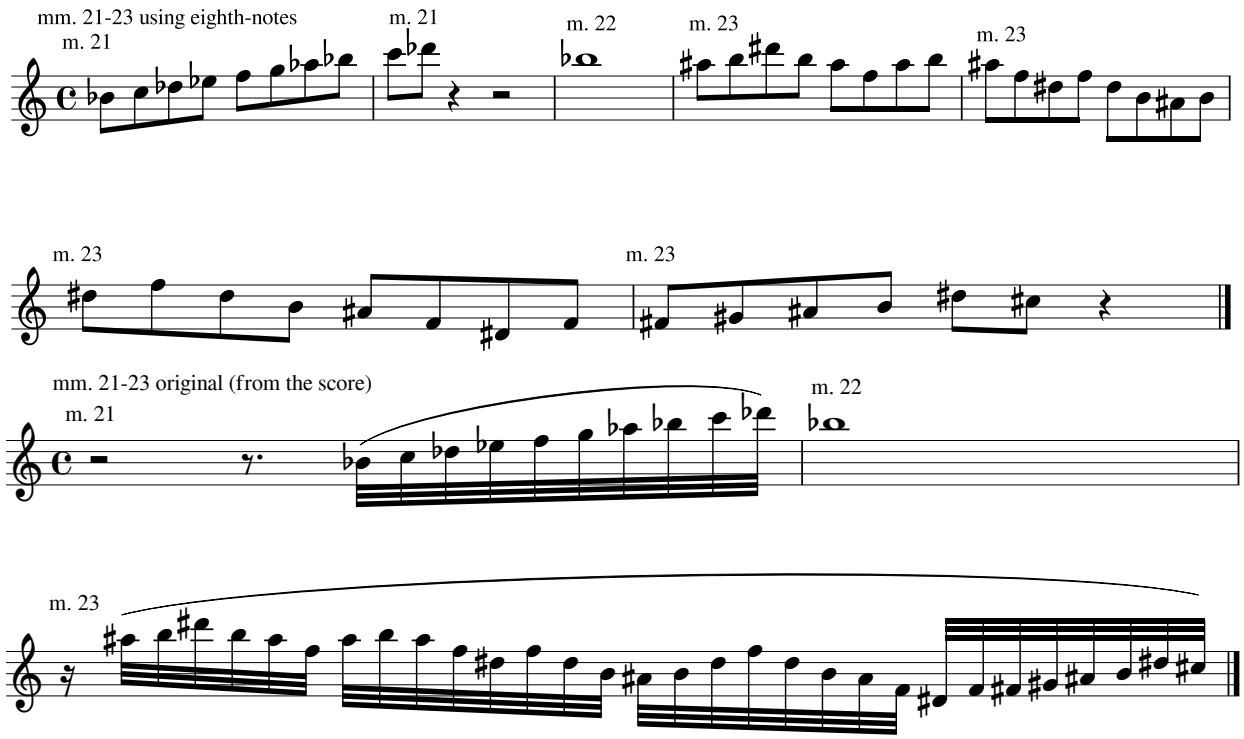
The B Section

In the B section (mm. 20-64), the style changes to a double-time swing feel[34] and can be divided into two parts: a series of rapid note passages and an improvised solo section. In the first part (mm. 20-28), Ricker's soprano saxophone melody contains several rapid note passages of thirty second notes and triplet sixteenth notes. In addition, this melody is chromatic and contains numerous accidentals making this passage challenging from a technical standpoint. When learning the saxophone melody, one practicing technique is to change the rhythm of a technical passage, such as the thirty second notes, into a more manageable duration, such as eighth notes. By changing the rhythm to eighth notes, a student can practice these passages at a slower rhythmic duration to build the necessary technique in order to play this melody. In example 4.4, I provide an exercise for the student to develop the thirty-second-note melody from m. 21 to m.

[33] Ibid.

[34] A double-time swing feel is defined as using rhythmic note values twice as fast as the prevailing note values, but without changing the tempo of the chord progression. In the jazz idiom, a double-time swing feel is often used during an improvised solo section of a ballad (see "Double Time," in *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Michael Randel [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003], accessed November 8, 2017, http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/harvdictmusic/double_time/0).

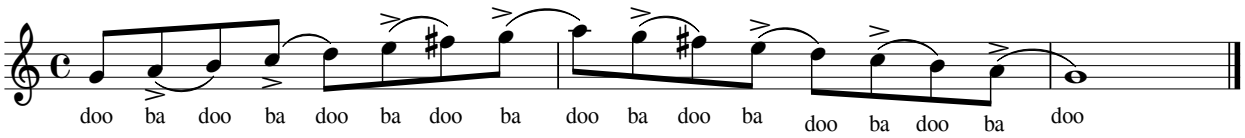
23. The student should use this practicing technique on any technical passages in Ricker's sonata.



Example 4.4. A practice technique showing how to change the rhythm of a technical passage, to build the necessary technique to play the original melody (mm. 21-23). The original melody is also included.

In the second part of the B section (mm. 28-64), both the saxophone and the piano exchange improvised solos, using swing eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The saxophone plays the first solo from m. 28 to m. 46, and one element to practice in this improvisation section is swing style. Often times, when a student is learning to swing, the first question they will ask is how to achieve this process. When music swings, we often play legato eighth notes or sixteenth notes on the back side of the beat coupled with a unique interpretation of how the notes are being

played.[35] Even though every musician's rendition of swing varies, the result is a laid-back sense of time—unique to each player. What is important for the student to recognize is that they need to develop their own swing style. One approach to develop a swing style involves practicing ascending and descending major scales up to the ninth scale degree using swing eighth notes. To make the eighth notes swing, the student will need to play each eighth note in a legato style and accent the up-beats of each eighth note grouping. Additionally, the student should use the "doo" syllable when articulating each note on the beat, and the "ba" syllable for each up-beat note. In example 4.5, I provide an exercise for the student to develop their own swing style.



Example 4.5. A practice technique using the G major scale (up to the ninth scale degree) to work on developing a swing style. Each upbeat should be tongued. This process should be repeated on other scales, including major, minor, and diminished.[36]

Overall, developing a swing style is an important element in this solo section. In order to perform the improvised solo in this section, a student will need to spend some time developing their swing style. In addition, the student will need to develop patterns or "licks" to play over the improvised solo section, which will be covered in Chapter 5. Following the saxophone solo, there is nineteen-measure piano solo from m. 46 to m. 64. Likewise, the pianist should use swing eighth notes and sixteenth notes during their improvisation. After the piano solo, the

[35] Howard Spring, "Swing," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001–, accessed November 15, 2016, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscribe/article/grove/music/A2258226.

[36] In the Jazz idiom, eighth notes are commonly notated without any articulation. It is assumed that the performer knows how to play the eighth notes using a swing style. The articulation I provide will serve as a guide to help a student learn how to swing.

saxophone plays a thirty second note flourish on beat four of m. 64, to transition back into the final A' section of the movement in m. 65.

The A Section

The saxophone melody (A') returns in m. 65 and is an exact restatement of the repeated A' section. Since the audience will expect to hear the same nuances in the melody (as previously stated), a student should play this melody with the same interpretation regarding subtone and grace notes addressed above, in the melody from m. 11 to m. 19. In addition, this will reassure the audience of the elegant and expressive qualities of the melody. Ricker introduces new material staring on beat three of m. 74, to transition the melody into the codetta.

Codetta

In the short codetta (mm. 74-80), Ricker generates excitement with rubato and gradual crescendos and decrescendos. The soprano saxophone creates this excitement by increasing the dynamic to *f* in m. 74 and gradually decreasing to *p* by m. 75. In addition, the soprano saxophone will slowly ritard until a fermata on beat three of m. 76. This fermata is followed by a quarter note on beat four (m. 76) and a final whole note tied to a dotted half note in mm. 77-78. This final note should gradually decrease in dynamic from *pp* to *niente* in m. 78, and the piano plays a final *ppp* chord in m. 80, to end the movement.

Conclusion

This chapter is an analysis of the second movement, *Ballad (danse d' amour)*, of Ricker's *Jazz Sonata* and provides a way to practice and interpret specific challenging elements including tuning, interpretation of the melody, subtone, rapid note passages, and swing style. By studying the specific concepts addressed above, a student can practice these technically challenging elements and perform this movement in a convincing manner—with an elegant and expressive

interpretation of the melody. In addition, the above concepts can be used in other pieces in the saxophone repertoire to help the student perform with a higher level of virtuosity.

CHAPTER 5. IMPROVISATIONAL GUIDE TO THE SOPRANO SAXOPHONE SOLO (MM. 28-45) IN THE SECOND MOVEMENT

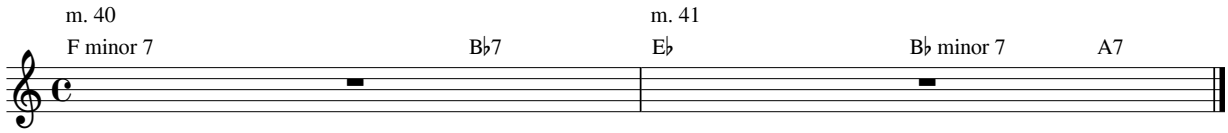
This chapter provides an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 28-45) in the second movement, *Ballad (danse d' amour),* of Ricker's sonata. In this guide, I will identify two jazz concepts—the ii–V–I harmonic progression and the rhythmic-based method of improvisation that a student can utilize to enhance their soloing prowess. I will include musical examples to aid the classically trained student in developing these concepts. I will also offer performance suggestions to elaborate on the specific area of focus. In addition, I will provide an originally composed solo using the two concepts mentioned above. My goal is to create a guide for the student to use these concepts in forming their own improvised solo in this section of the movement.

As discussed in chapter 3, regarding the chord changes in the first movement, Ricker continues in the second movement to use a non-traditional set of chord changes in the solo section. These chord changes will be challenging for a student to develop their own improvised solo in this section. To be successful, the student will need to work on different improvisational concepts that can be used to play this set of chord changes.

Developing Jazz Concepts: The ii–V–I Harmonic Progression

There are several passages in the solo section (mm. 28-45) that contain the harmonic movement of the ii–V–I progression. This is an important harmonic progression in the jazz idiom and a student will need to become familiar with it from a theoretical standpoint to play the improvised solo in this section. The ii–V–I progression is a succession of chords in which the

root of each chord moves up by a perfect fourth (or down by a perfect fifth).[37] The intervallic content of each chord is as follows: the ii chord (or second scale degree) is often a minor seventh chord, followed by the V chord (or fifth scale degree) which is always a dominant seventh chord, and finally the I chord (or tonic), typically a triad in root position. One example of the ii–V–I progression from Ricker's solo section is in mm. 40-41 (ex. 5.1). In these two measures, the chord symbols for the soprano saxophone are F minor 7, B♭7, and E♭ major, or a ii–V–I in the key of E♭. The student should identify all of the ii–V–I progressions throughout the improvised solo; this prepares them from a theoretical standpoint to play basic patterns or "licks" over this harmonic progression.



Example 5.1. The ii–V–I harmonic progression from the score. Soprano saxophone part in the key of B♭.

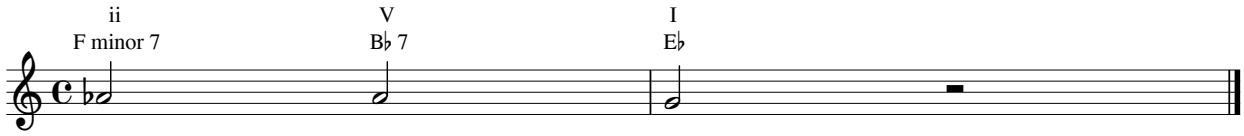
One basic pattern involves connecting notes from one chord to the next in the ii–V–I harmonic progression. This process is known as voice leading. To begin, a student should practice voice-leading thirds (of a chord) and sevenths (of a chord) in this progression. The relationship between the third and the seventh of a chord is an important element in playing this progression. In his book *Dominant Seventh Workout* (1999), saxophonist and jazz pedagogue Jamey Aebersold (b. 1939) stresses the importance of voice leading with thirds and sevenths when improvising:

> When a soloist emphasizes roots, thirds, and sevenths, the listener can easily tell what key is being outlined or implied and where the musical line or phrase is going

[37] Jamey Aebersold, *Dominant Seventh Workout* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 1999), 3.

harmonically. Professional jazz musicians as well as early musicians such as Bach and Beethoven knew this all-important aspect of our harmony and thus emphasized those notes in their compositions and their improvised solos.[38]

In this progression, the third of a chord voice-leads to the seventh of the next chord and vice versa. For example, in the key of E♭, the third (A♭) of the ii chord (F minor 7) voice-leads to the seventh (A♭) of the V chord (B♭7). Next, the seventh (A♭) of the V chord (B♭7) voice-leads to the third (G) of the I chord (E♭). In example 2, I provide a basic pattern using half notes to show this voice leading (addressed above) between the ii, V, and I chords in the key of E♭ major (ex. 5.2). The more comfortable a student becomes with this harmonic progression, the easier it will be for them to create more advanced patterns or "licks" using this progression.[39]



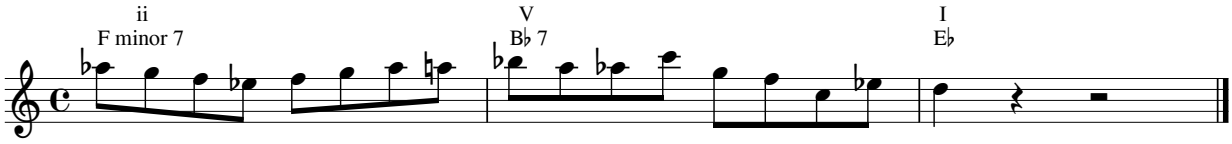
Example 5.2. Voice leading between the third and the seventh of a chord in a ii–V–I harmonic progression. Soprano saxophone part in the key of B♭.

After a student has practiced voice leading thirds and sevenths in the ii–V–I harmonic progression, they should begin to practice more advanced patterns or "licks" using this progression. One advanced pattern involves incorporating the dominant bebop (or mixolydian bebop) scale into the ii–V–I progression. This scale contains the same notes as a major scale with the addition of one note, the dominant seventh (E♭–F–G–A♭–B♭–C–D♭–D–E♭). In the jazz idiom, the dominant bebop scale is commonly used on any dominant seventh chord (or V chord). Furthermore, this scale can also be used on the ii chord (in a ii–V–I harmonic progression), as

[38] Ibid., 4.

[39] Jamey Aebersold, *The II–V7–I Progression* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold, 1974), 2.

long as the ii chord is followed by the V chord.[40] For example, in the key of E♭, the student can play a B♭ dominant bebop scale over both the ii chord (F minor 7) and the V chord (B♭7). Since the B♭ dominant bebop scale contains both an A♭ and an A ♮ , a non-chord tone (A ♮) will be incorporated into the ii chord (F minor 7). This chromatic tension is encouraged, as the A ♮ will resolve to the seventh (A♭) or root (B♭) of the V chord (B♭). In example 5.3, I provide an eighth-note-melody using the B♭ dominant bebop scale over the ii (F minor 7) and V (B♭7) chords, that resolves to the seventh (D) of the I (E♭) chord, in the key of E♭ (ex. 5.3).



Example 5.3. An exercise incorporating the B♭ dominant bebop scale into a ii–V–I progression in the key of E♭. Soprano saxophone part in the key of B♭.[41]

Often times, an improvised solo section will contain the ii–V–I harmonic progression in many different key centers. As a result, it will be important for a student to commit the dominant bebop scale to memory in all twelve key centers. This familiarity will provide the student with a resource to play the different ii–V–I progressions that they might encounter during an improvised solo section. In addition, the student can use the dominant bebop scale as a guide to start creating their own patterns to play over this progression.

There are numerous patterns that can be created with the ii–V–I progression. When a student is learning a new ii–V–I pattern, it is important for them to blend each new pattern with their own soloing ideas. This will ensure that their improvisations sound authentic, rather than a

[40] Steve Neff, *Mastering the Dominant Bebop Scale* (Boston, MA: www.neffmusic.com, 2007), 5.

[41] This melody is influenced from *Mastering the Dominant Bebop Scale* by Steve Neff.

regurgitated pattern from a method book. Overall, the theoretical and technical aspects of the ii–V–I harmonic progression (addressed above) is one jazz concept the student can use when creating improvised melodies throughout the solo section (mm. 28-45).

Developing Jazz Concepts: Rhythmic-Based Method of Improvisation

When a student is learning to improvise, rhythm is rarely their main concentration. Rather, they focus on the elements of harmonic improvisation or on learning what scale to play over each chord. The problem is that there are several other elements of improvisation (beyond harmony) needed to create an improvised solo, most importantly, rhythm.[42] In his book *Melodic Rhythms* (1998), volume 4, of his *Inside Improvisation Series*, saxophonist and jazz pedagogue Jerry Bergonzi (b. 1947) emphasizes the development of rhythm when improvising:

> Time and rhythm are king! Number one! We are constantly made aware of this fact when we are playing or listening to improvised music. All notes seem to sound good when they are played with "good time." Even melodies that use "wrong" notes or notes that aren't in the chord seem to sound good when played with good time. What often packages or dresses up a good time feel are the rhythms a particular artist chooses to use. Often jazz educators present improvisation techniques by first teaching which notes to play and then describing how to put these notes to various rhythms. There is a profound difference in taking rhythms and then applying the notes to those particular rhythms.[43]

By focusing on different rhythmic elements of improvisation, the student can enhance their prowess of harmonic improvisation with the non-harmonic element of rhythm, to create a well-balanced improvised solo.[44]

There are numerous different rhythmic combinations that can be used during an improvised solo. In the following six examples (ex. 5.4 to ex. 5.9), I provide three different

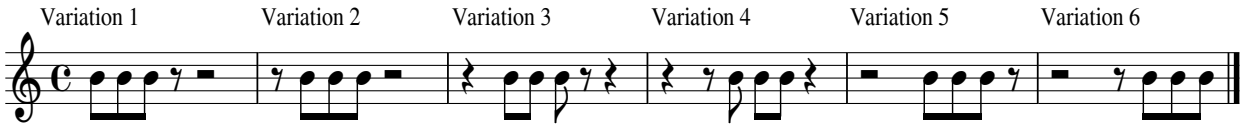
---

[42] Jonathan Campbell, "Beyond Harmony: Incorporating Rhythmic Elements of Jazz Improvisation through Pedagogy and Curriculum" (DMA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2015), 6.

[43] Jerry Bergonzi, *Inside Improvisation Series*, vol. 4, *Melodic Rhythms* (Delevan, NY: Advance Music, 1998), 8.

[44] Campbell, "Beyond Harmony," 6.

rhythmic exercises (ex. 5.4, ex. 5.6, ex. 5.8) for a student to practice, and I offer three examples (ex. 5.5, ex. 5.7, ex. 5.9) on how to incorporate these different rhythms into improvisations. The overall goal is to help the student expand their rhythmic vocabulary.[45] First, the student should explore a one-measure rhythmic idea using three consecutive eighth notes in common time (4/4). Using the durations of only quarter rests and eighth rests, this rhythmic idea yields six different variations for forming a melody in an improvised solo (ex. 5.4).



Example 5.4. Six different variations of a one-measure rhythmic idea using three consecutive eighth notes.[46]

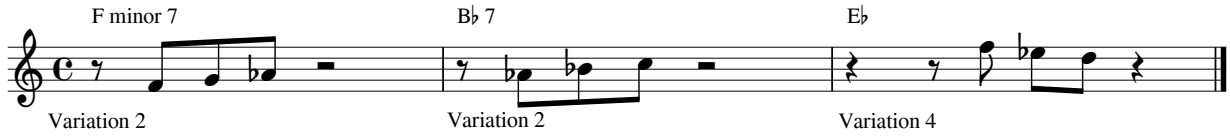
With this exercise, the student can play the same variation over a set of chord changes,[47] or they can combine different variations, as long as they adhere to the three consecutive eighth note limit per measure.[48] For example, in a ii–V–I progression (in the key of E♭), the student can play variation 2 over the ii and V chords, and variation 4 over the I chord (ex. 5.5). By using example 5.5 as a guide, the student can experiment with the process of creating their own melodies in a ii–V–I progression with the rhythm of three consecutive eighth notes per measure.

[45] Bergonzi, *Melodic Rhythms*, 8-9.

[46] No articulation markings are provided. For every example, the student should use different combinations of articulations to blend each rhythmic pattern into an original idea. This will help them present an authentic interpretation of each rhythmic idea.

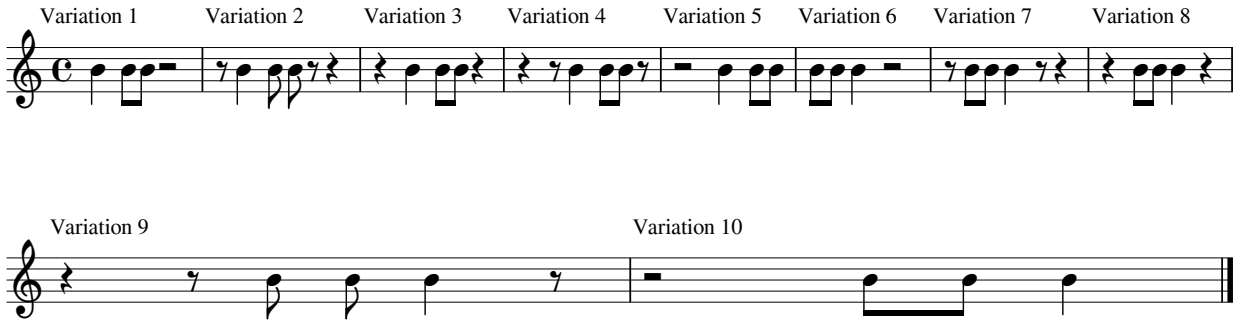
[47] In the jazz idiom, repeating the same rhythmic motive is a form of sequencing. Sequencing provides more structure to an improvised solo and demonstrates the soloists level of maturity.

[48] Bergonzi, *Melodic Rhythms*, 9.



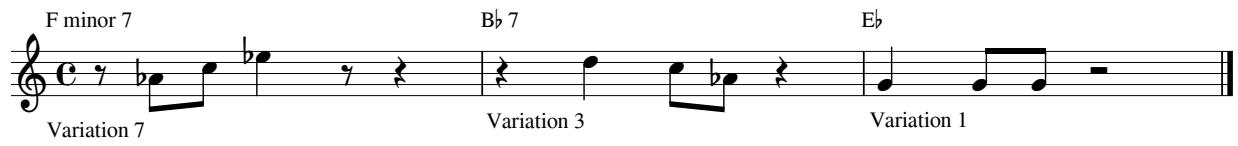
Example 5.5. A melody based on the variations of the rhythmic pattern using three consecutive eighth notes in a ii–V–I harmonic progression in the key of E♭. Soprano saxophone part in the key of B♭.

The second rhythmic combination involves consecutively playing a quarter note and two eighth notes (and vice versa) within one measure in common time (4/4). With the addition of the quarter note, more notes of different durations are incorporated into the one-measure rhythmic idea (ex. 5.6). Using durations of only quarter rests and eighth rests, this rhythmic combination yields ten different variations for a student to choose from when forming their melodies in an improvised solo.



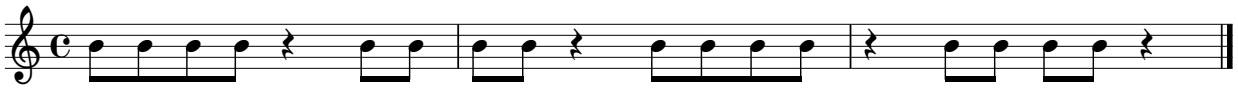
Example 5.6. Ten different variations of a one-measure rhythmic idea using consecutive quarter note and two eighth notes (and vice versa).

Once again, with this exercise, the student can play the same variation over a set of chord changes, or they can combine different variations, as long as they adhere to the parameters of this rhythmic pattern. For example, in a ii–V–I progression (in the key of E♭), the student could play variation 7 over the ii chord, variation 3 over the V chord, and variation 1 over the I chord (ex. 5.7). By using example 5.7 as a guide, the student can experiment with the process of creating their own melodies in a ii–V–I progression using this rhythmic pattern.



Example 5.7. A melody based on the variations of the rhythmic combination using a consecutive quarter note and two eighth notes (and vice versa) in a ii–V–I harmonic progression (in the key of E♭). Soprano saxophone part in the key of B♭.

The third rhythmic combination is more advanced and involves playing a specific number of notes independent of bar lines (or over the bar line).[49] For example, a student can play four consecutive eighth notes followed by a quarter rest and continue to repeat this rhythmic pattern three times (ex. 5.8). If repeated consecutively, this rhythmic combination will force the student to play over the bar line on the second repetition of the combination. Playing over the bar line helps in creating a more spontaneous sounding improvised solo. Bergonzi refers to this rhythmic combination as "a superimposition of one time signature over another, or a 3/4 pattern which takes three bars of 4/4 to work out."[50]

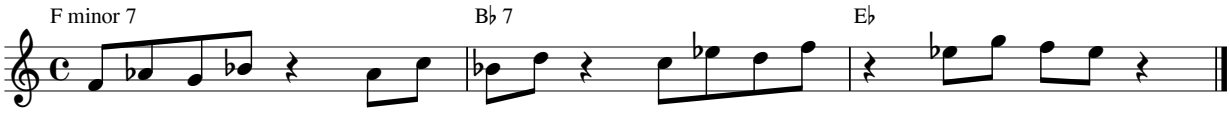


Example 5.8. A rhythmic combination using four consecutive eighth notes followed by a quarter rest.[51]

Since this rhythmic combination resolves every three bars, it can be used over the ii–V–I harmonic progression with ease. For example, in a ii–V–I progression (in the key of E♭), the student can play the notes of an E♭ major scale (using sequencing) throughout the entire rhythmic combination, that will eventually resolve both harmonically and rhythmically by the third

[49] Bergonzi, *Melodic Rhythms*, 14.
[50] Ibid., 30.
[51] Ibid.

measure (ex. 5.9). By using example 5.9 as a guide, the student can experiment with the process of creating their own melodies in a ii–V–I progression using this rhythmic pattern.



Example 5.9. A melody based on the rhythmic combination of using four consecutive eighth notes followed by a quarter rest in a ii–V–I harmonic progression (in the key of E♭). Soprano saxophone part in the key of B♭.

Overall, there are numerous different rhythmic combinations that can be used to build an improvised solo. The above examples are designed to help a student expand their rhythmic vocabulary and demonstrate how to incorporate the different rhythmic patterns into a ii–V–I progression. By focusing on these different rhythmic elements, the student can enhance their prowess of rhythmic improvisation, to create a unique improvised solo. In addition, the student can use this jazz concept to help them with creating improvised melodies throughout the solo section (mm. 28-45) and in other improvised solos in the future.

Originally Composed Solo

In this final section, I provide an originally composed solo using the two jazz concepts mentioned above—the ii–V–I harmonic progression and the rhythmic-based method of improvisation. This will prepare a student in creating an improvised melody throughout the solo section (ex. 5.10). My improvised solo begins with a sixteenth note pick-up into m. 2, since the B section melody and the improvised solo section overlap each other in the first measure (of the solo section). For the next two measures (mm. 2-3), I use a rhythmic combination of four sixteenth notes followed by an eighth rest to build my melody. This melody is similar to example 8, where I introduced playing a specific number of notes independent of bar lines (or over the bar line). This is a great way to sequence one rhythmic motive into the next melody.

In the next three measures (mm. 4-6), I use another rhythmic combination of ten consecutive sixteenth notes as the basis for my melody. As each chord changes in m. 4 to m. 6, I transpose this rhythmic combination to fit each new sonority. By repeating this rhythmic combination, I generate more tension in the melody and I continue this tension with a chromatic melody using syncopated eighth notes into the next two measures (mm. 7-8). This chromatic melody in mm. 7-8 coupled with the two other rhythmic melodies from mm. 2-6, sets-up an awaited resolution that occurs in m. 9.

The first ii–V–I progression (in the key of E♭) of the solo section starts in m. 9 to m. 10.[52] This is an area in the solo section to create a melody by voice leading the thirds and sevenths of a chord in the ii–V–I progression (as discussed in example 5.2). In these two measures, I voice-lead the melody through each chord by arpeggiating the F minor 7 chord (ii chord), using the B♭ dominant bebop scale on the B♭7 alt chord (V chord) and resolve to the third (G) of the E♭ chord (I chord) in m. 10. As each of the chords change from beats three and four of m. 10 to the end of m. 12, I again use voice leading to connect the melody through each chord. For example, on beat three of m. 10, the melody starts on the seventh (D) of the E♭6 9 chord and resolves to the third (C♯) of the A7 ♯9 chord on beat four. This voice-leading pattern continues into the next ii–V–I progression (in the key of E♭) in m. 13.

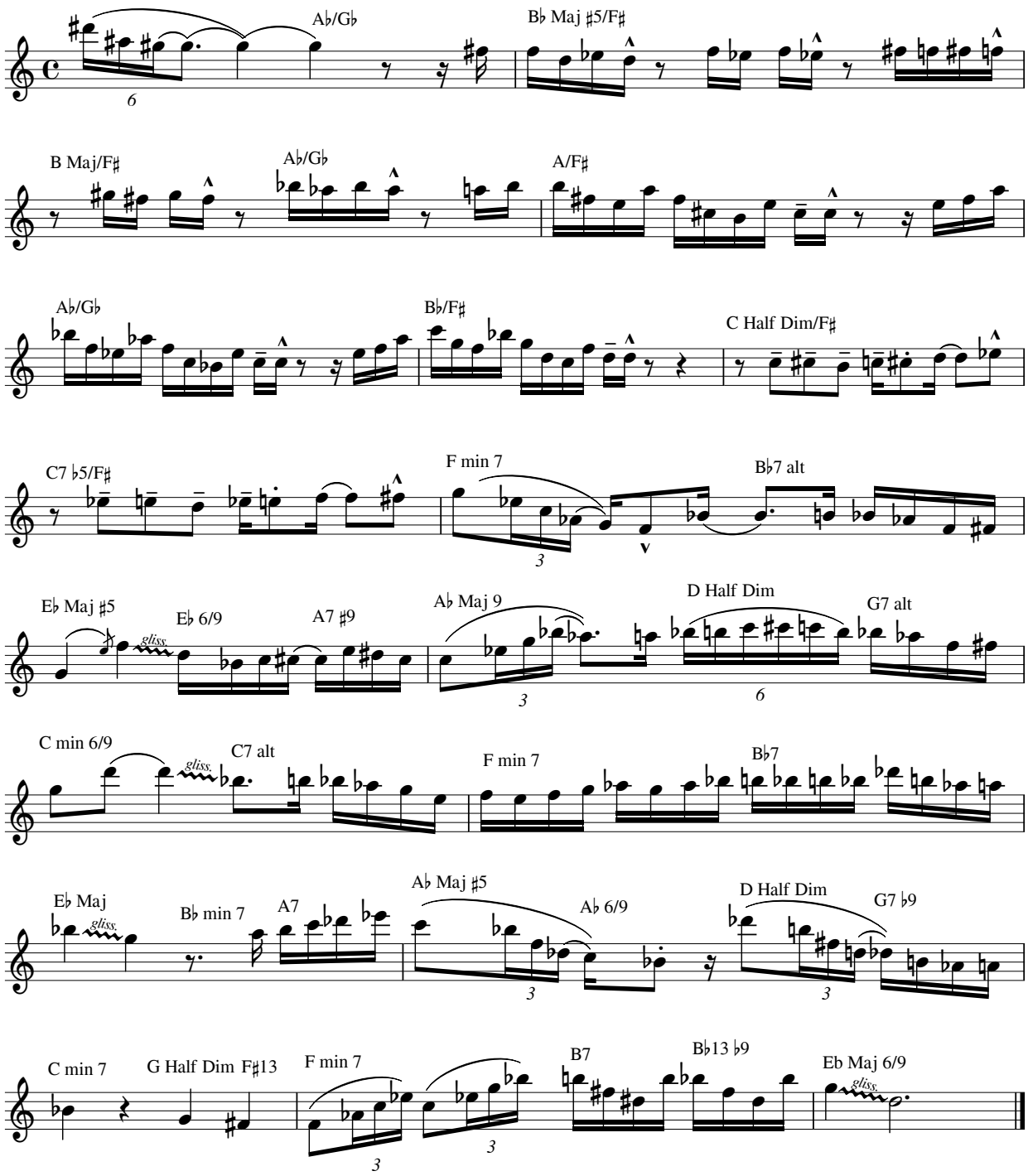
In mm. 13-14, I voice-lead the melody through the ii–V–I progression (in the key of E♭) by using consecutive sixteenth notes through the F minor 7 (ii chord) and B♭7 (V chord) chords. This melody is diatonic through the F minor 7 chord, but I incorporate two non-chord tones (B and D♭) into the melody over the B♭7 chord. These non-chord tones (B and D♭) over the B♭7

[52] Harmonic progression for the improvised saxophone solo, in the key of B♭.

chord set-up a resolution in the melody to the E♭ chord in m. 14. On beat four of m. 14, I use four sixteenth-notes to transition the melody into m. 15.

The melody in m. 15 features two variations of the "Cry Me a River" "lick". This "lick" is part of the melody at the beginning of Arthur Hamilton's (b. 1926) jazz standard entitled *Cry Me a River* and is widely popular in the jazz idiom. I use this "lick" to form my melody over the A♭ major ♯5 chord on beat one in m. 15 and repeat the "lick" up a half-step on the D half-diminished chord on beat three. In m. 16, the melody resolves on beat one to the seventh (B♭) of the C minor 7 chord.

In the final two measures of the solo section (mm. 17-18), I use a melody of an eighth note tied to a triplet sixteenth note on beats one and two of m. 17. I arpeggiate the B7 chord and the B♭13 ♭9 chord on beats three and four of m. 17, to setup a resolution of the melody in m. 18. The melody in m. 18 resolves to the third (G) of the E♭ chord on beat one, followed by a *glissando* to the seventh (D) on beat two to conclude the solo.



Example 5.10. An improvised solo to work on playing melodies using the ii–V–I progression and the rhythmic-based method of improvisation in the solo section. In the key of B♭.

In example 5.10, a student should use my recommendations regarding the ii–V–I harmonic progression and the rhythmic-based method of improvisation to help them form their

own solo in this section. In addition, they should pay special attention to how I use each jazz concept with each other to build an improvised solo. As the student becomes more comfortable with this chord progression, they can create their own patterns or "licks" to play this set of chord changes.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 28-45) in the second movement of Ricker's sonata, *Ballad (danse d' amour)*. This improvisational guide explains how to utilize the ii–V–I harmonic progression from a theoretical and technical perspective as well as demonstrates how to improvise using rhythmic elements, to ultimately enhance a student's soloing prowess. By studying my originally composed solo and the two concepts addressed above, the student can develop theses improvisational techniques that will enable them to be more successful in playing the improvised solo in this movement. In addition, this training will help them with other improvised works in the saxophone repertoire.

CHAPTER 6. PERFORMER'S ANALYSIS TO THE THIRD MOVEMENT OF RICKER'S SONATA, *ALLEGRO–WALTZ–ALLEGRO* (*DANSE INFERNALE*)

This chapter provides a performer's analysis of the third movement, *Allegro–Waltz–Allegro (danse infernale)*, of Ricker's sonata. It is important for a student to analyze this piece because it will help them practice the technically challenging elements in it. In the following analysis, I will identify the challenging elements in this movement: pitch, technical passages, accents, syncopated melodies, and interpretation of the melody. In addition, I will include musical examples and offer performance suggestions to elaborate on these specific areas of focus. The purpose is for the student to work on each technically challenging element to build the requisite skills needed to perform Ricker's sonata.

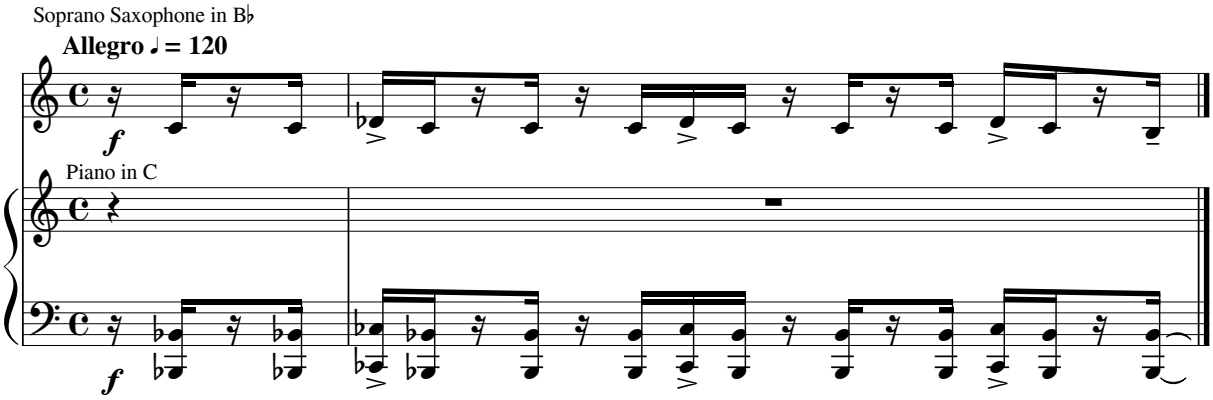
When a student is learning this movement, it is important for them to identify its overall formal structure. Ricker's third movement is in sonata allegro form and consists of five sections: introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. This division enables the student to focus their practicing efforts on the most technically challenging areas in each section. In this chapter, I will discuss these elements in the order of their appearance in this movement.

Introduction

The movement begins with a pickup into the first measure of the introduction (mm. 1-13). The saxophone and the piano state in unison in m. 1 a rhythmic pattern that becomes the overall rhythmic underpinning of the entire movement (ex. 6.1).[53] This rhythmic pattern serves as a recurring *ostinato* that Ricker uses throughout both Allegro sections and is based on syncopated sixteenth notes and sixteenth-note rest values. In addition, this *ostinato* is used in a number of ways, including in unison passages between the saxophone and piano, saxophone

[53] Chris Beaty, "Annotated Bibliography of Selected Soprano Saxophone Repertoire" (DMA diss., University of Memphis, 2004), 66.

only, or piano only.[54] Furthermore, this rhythm sets the overall mood of the movement which helps solidify the characteristics of the *danse infernale* (French for "dance of fire"). Later in this chapter, I will revisit this *ostinato* pattern to discuss how to practice the syncopated rhythms of this melody.



Example 6.1. The recurring rhythmic motive of the first measure of Ricker's third movement (with the anacrusis). Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭ and piano part from the score, in the key of C.

Following the statement of the recurring *ostinato* pattern in m. 1, the introduction continues with a sixteenth-note flourish from the saxophone into the extreme high register of the instrument. The saxophone will need to hold a high F♯ into a fermata in m. 3. One challenge in this register of the soprano saxophone is playing in tune as the saxophone melody rises higher in its tessitura. Since this register of the saxophone often sounds sharp, a student will need to adjust their voicing to accommodate for this register. As mentioned in chapter 2, the student can use the "AH" voicing in the throat to create an open throat position, enabling them to slightly lower their pitch.[55] This voicing will improve the intonation in the upper register of the saxophone.

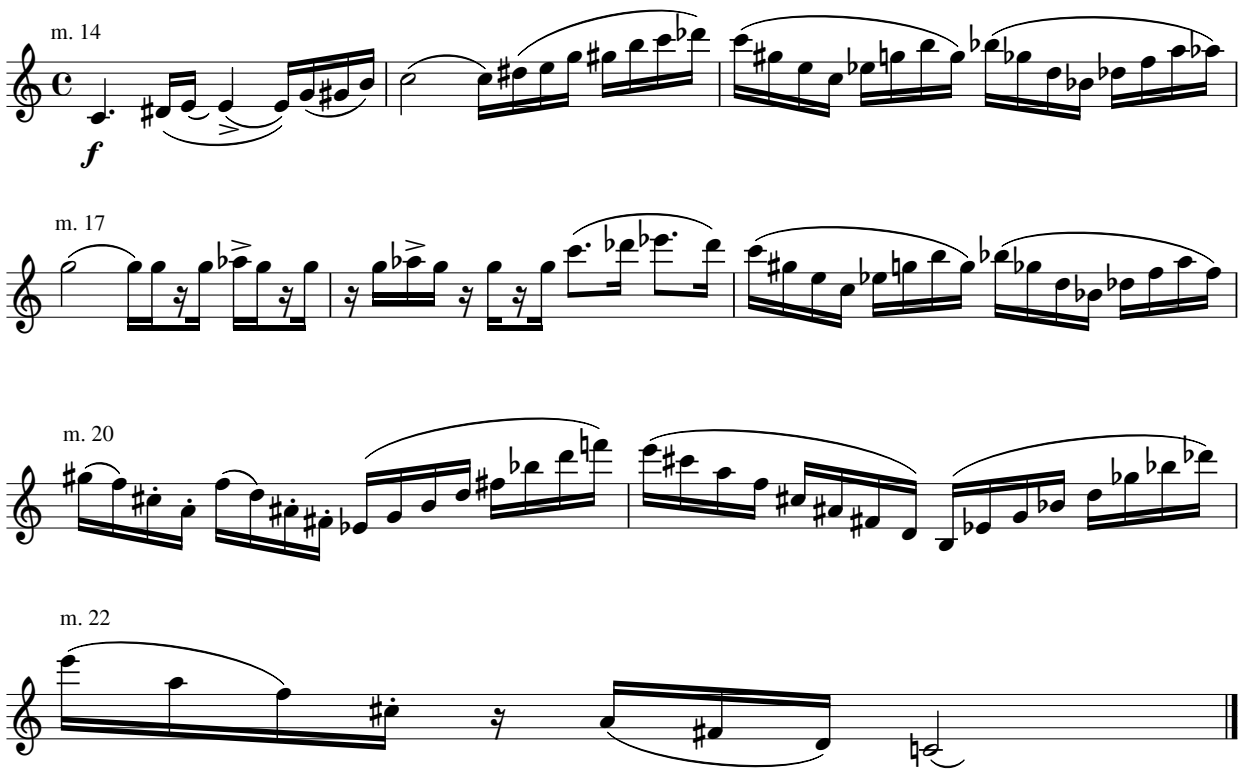
[54] Ibid.

[55] David Liebman, *Developing a Personal Saxophone Sound*, 2nd ed. (Medfield, MA: Dorn Publications, 1994), 23.

After the fermata in m. 3, Ricker writes specific instructions for the saxophone melody to start slowly and gradually accelerate into the initial allegro tempo in m. 5. With a pickup into m. 6, the saxophone melody in mm. 6-11 repeats the same concepts of rhythm and tempo in mm. 1-5, with a sixteenth-note flourish into another fermata in m. 8. Once again, a student can adjust their voicing on the high F in m. 8, to improve their intonation in this register of the saxophone. A brief transition in mm. 11-12, concludes the introduction and sets up the primary theme (P1) of the exposition.

Exposition

For the primary theme (P1) of the exposition (mm. 14-23), Ricker writes, from a technical standpoint, a difficult melody with consecutive sixteenth notes and syncopated sixteenth-note rhythms (ex. 6.2). This melody is chromatic and contains numerous accidentals, increasing the technical demands to play this theme. In addition, Ricker includes numerous slur markings to help facilitate how to phrase the melody in this section. These markings add another difficult element to an already complex melody. In order to develop the technique needed to perform this melody, a student will need to isolate these challenging sections of the theme and practice them individuality.

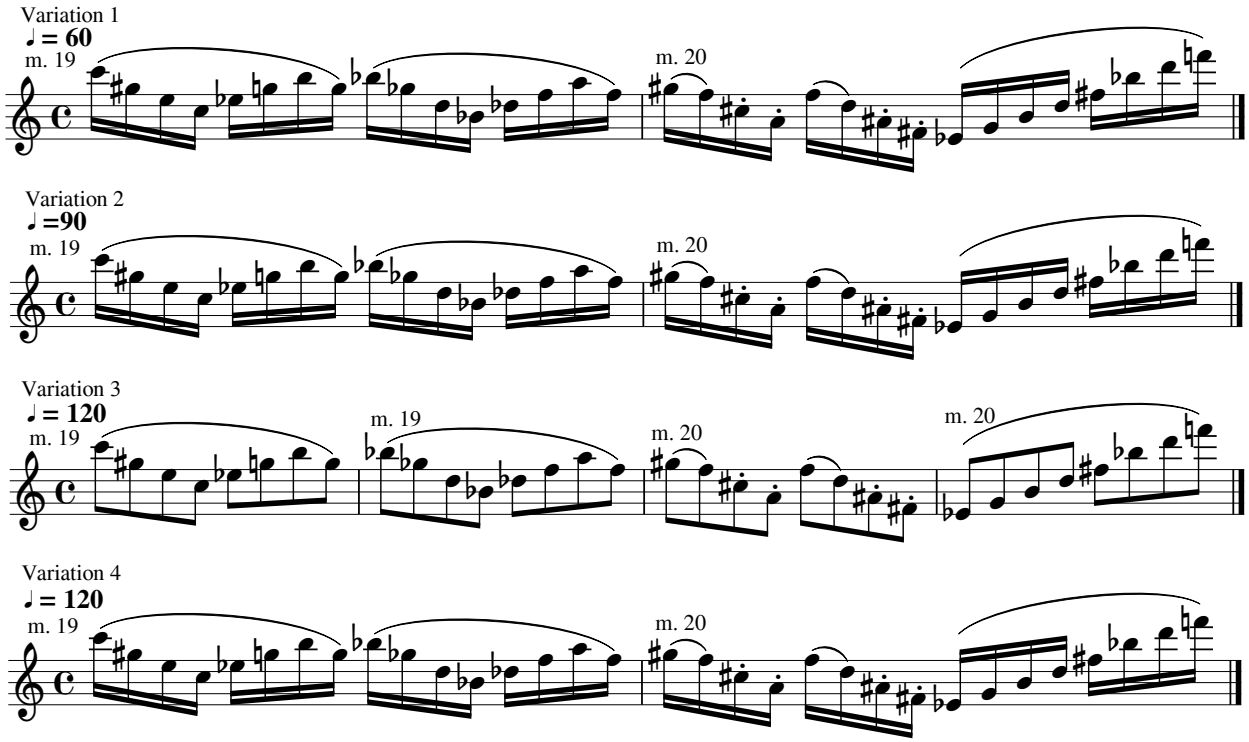


Example 6.2. The primary theme of the exposition showing the chromatic sixteenth-note rhythms and slur markings. Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

When learning the P1 theme (ex. 6.2), one practicing technique involves isolating a small phrase (one to three measures) from the theme and playing it at a slower tempo. For example, one difficult two-measure phrase of the theme occurs in mm. 19-20. A student can isolate this phrase and practice it at a slower tempo to develop the technique needed to play this part of the melody. After becoming comfortable with this smaller phrase, the student can repeat this process on other smaller phrases, to work towards playing the entire melody. If the student continues to struggle with the phrases of the melody, they can change the rhythmic duration of the sixteenth-note rhythms into a more manageable duration, such as eighth notes.[56] By changing the rhythms of the melody to eighth notes, coupled with practicing smaller phrases at a slower tempo, the student can work towards building the necessary technical prowess to play the

[56] This process is identified in example 4 of Chapter 4.

entire melody. In example 6.3, I provide an exercise for the student to develop the two-measure phrase from the melody in mm. 19-20 using these two concepts. This example is divided into four different variations. Variations 1 and 2 focus on playing the phrase from the melody at a slower tempo. In variation 3, I change the sixteenth notes of the phrase to eighth notes to practice the phrase at a slower rhythmic duration. Finally, variation 4 is the original phrase from the theme at the allegro tempo from the piece.



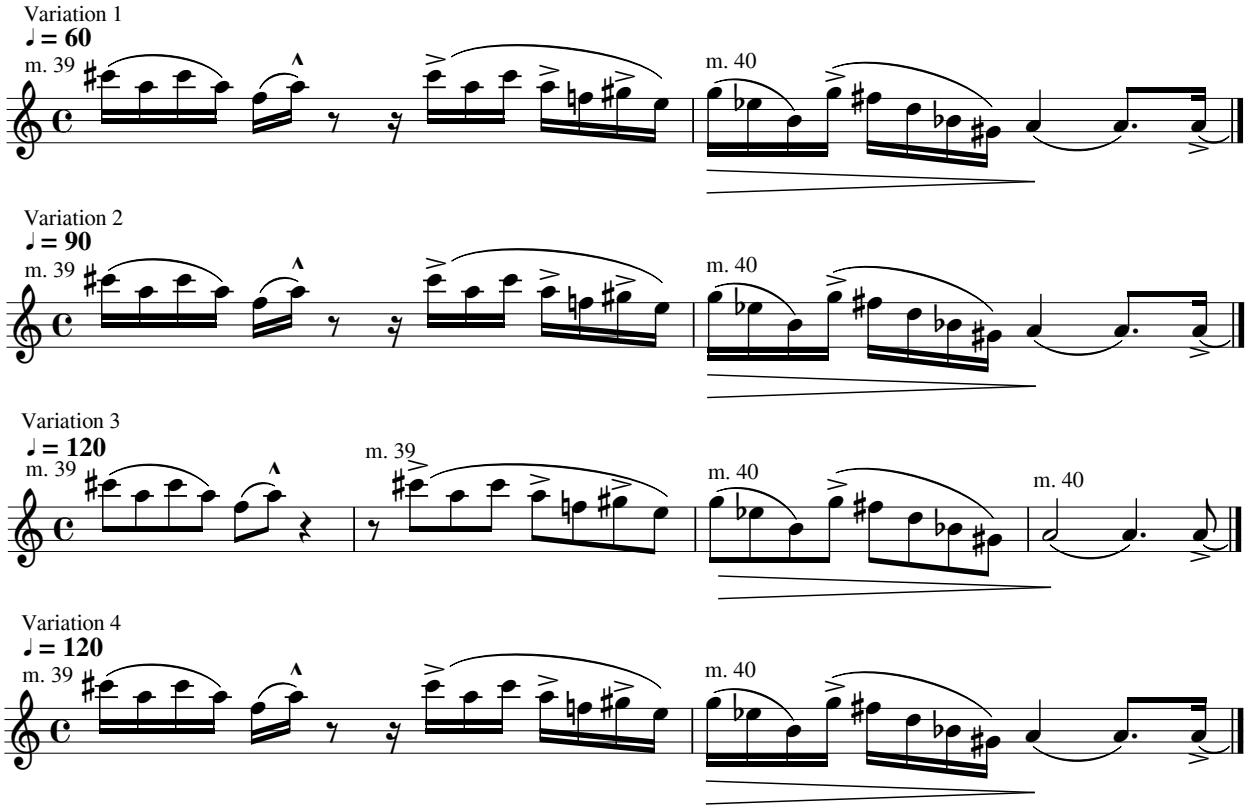
Example 6.3. A practice technique showing how to practice a phrase of the melody by slowing down the tempo and changing the rhythm of a difficult phrase. Soprano saxophone part, in the key of B♭.

After a three-measure transition (mm. 23-25), we hear the P1' theme in mm. 26-35. P1' is almost an identical restatement of the primary theme (P1; mm. 14-22); only two measures of the P1' theme differ from the original P1 theme (m. 30 and m. 34). In m. 30, Ricker changes the syncopation and the notes of the sixteenth-note melody from m. 18. By beat three of m. 30, the melody once again becomes identical to the P1 theme in m. 18. Likewise, in m. 34, the melody

in the P1' theme is idential to the P1 theme, however, Ricker changes the time signature to 2/4 in m. 34. Because of this change in time, the P1' melody in m. 34 cadences on the downbeat of m. 35, instead of on beat three in m. 22, like the P1 melody. In addition to the saxophone themes (P1 and P1') being similar, the piano accompaniment for both the P1 and P1' themes share common charasteristics. For example, the piano accompaniment for P1 (mm. 14-23) features the piano playing octaves in the recurring *ostinato* pattern from the introduction. When P1' begins (mm. 26-35), the piano plays the same recurring *ostinato* pattern from the introduction in the left hand, however not in octaves. Instead, Ricker adds a chordal accompaniment in the right hand. In other words, the P1 and P1' themes are uniquely similar, with only subtle differences. Realizing these similarities will benefit a student in their efforts to perform the P1 and P1' themes in these two sections of the exposition.

A short transition (mm. 36-37) follows P1', to set up the two secondary themes of the exposition. Both of these new themes (S1 and S2) feature a syncopated melody containing numerous pitch accents to add dynamic nuances to each theme. The S1 theme (mm. 37-47) begins on beat three of m. 37 and contains several pitch accents in the melody by m. 39. Since these pitch accents are added to an already challenging syncopated melody, a student will often times omit these accents to make it easier to play the melody. These pitch accents are an important element in the melody and will need to be played accurately to capture the musicality prescribed by Ricker in this section. If the student is struggling to incorporate these pitch accents into the melody, they can use the practicing techniques discussed in example 6.3 above, to develop the technical prowess needed to play this part of the melody. For example, the student can isolate mm. 39-40 and practice them at a slower tempo, and if needed, at a slower rhythmic duration (changing sixteenth notes to eighth notes) to incorporate the pitch accents into the

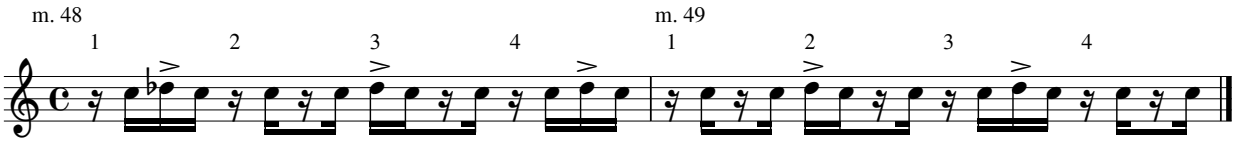
melody (ex. 6.4). Example 6.4 is divided into four different variations: variations 1 and 2 focus on playing the pitch accents in the phrase at a slower tempo, variation 3 features a slower rhythmic duration (eighth notes) to play the pitch accents in the phrase, and variation 4 is the original phrase from the theme at the allegro tempo from the piece.



Example 6.4. A practice technique to develop the pitch accents of the S1 melody by slowing down the tempo and changing the rhythm of a difficult phrase. Soprano saxophone part, in the key of B♭.

The S2 theme (mm. 47-74) begins on beat three of m. 47, and the melody line in the saxophone part features the recurring *ostinato* pattern from the introduction. Starting in m. 60, Ricker uses this *ostinato* to modulate the saxophone melody chromatically by half-steps. By beat three of m. 68, the saxophone melody is stated one octave higher than the initial statement in m. 47. This gradual rise in the tessitura of the saxophone, coupled with a long crescendo (from *pp* in m. 47 to *f* in m. 67), helps generate excitement as the S2 theme comes to a close in

m. 74. Throughout S2, mistakes can occur frequently when playing the rhythms of this *ostinato* melody, since it contains different rhythmic groupings of sixteenth notes and sixteenth-note rests. One practicing technique, which can help the student play this challenging *ostinato* melody, is to direct their attention to the larger quarter-note beats within each measure (ex. 6.5). For a visual aid during performance, the student can mark these quarter-note beats within each measure of the saxophone part to identify the groupings of the sixteenth notes and sixteenth-note rests. For example, in mm. 48-49, the student can mark each quarter-note beat in these two measures to help them improve their accuracy of playing the recurring *ostinato* melody. The student should repeat this technique as many times as needed throughout the S2 theme (mm. 47-74).



Example 6.5. The process of marking each quarter note beat of each measure to improve the accuracy of playing a syncopated melody. Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

Throughout the S2 theme (mm. 47-74), Ricker uses a clever compositional technique in both the saxophone and piano parts. He creates the S2 theme almost entirely from the thematic material of the saxophone and piano parts from the P1 and P1' themes. What is interesting is that the saxophone and piano switch parts. For example, S2 in the saxophone part in mm. 47-69 is similar to P1 and P1' in the piano accompaniment in mm. 14-37. Likewise, the piano accompaniment of S2 in mm. 47-69 is similar to the P1 and P1' themes from the saxophone part in mm. 14-36. Finally, in mm. 70-74, both the saxophone and piano parts come together in unison to end the S2 theme and set up the development.

Development

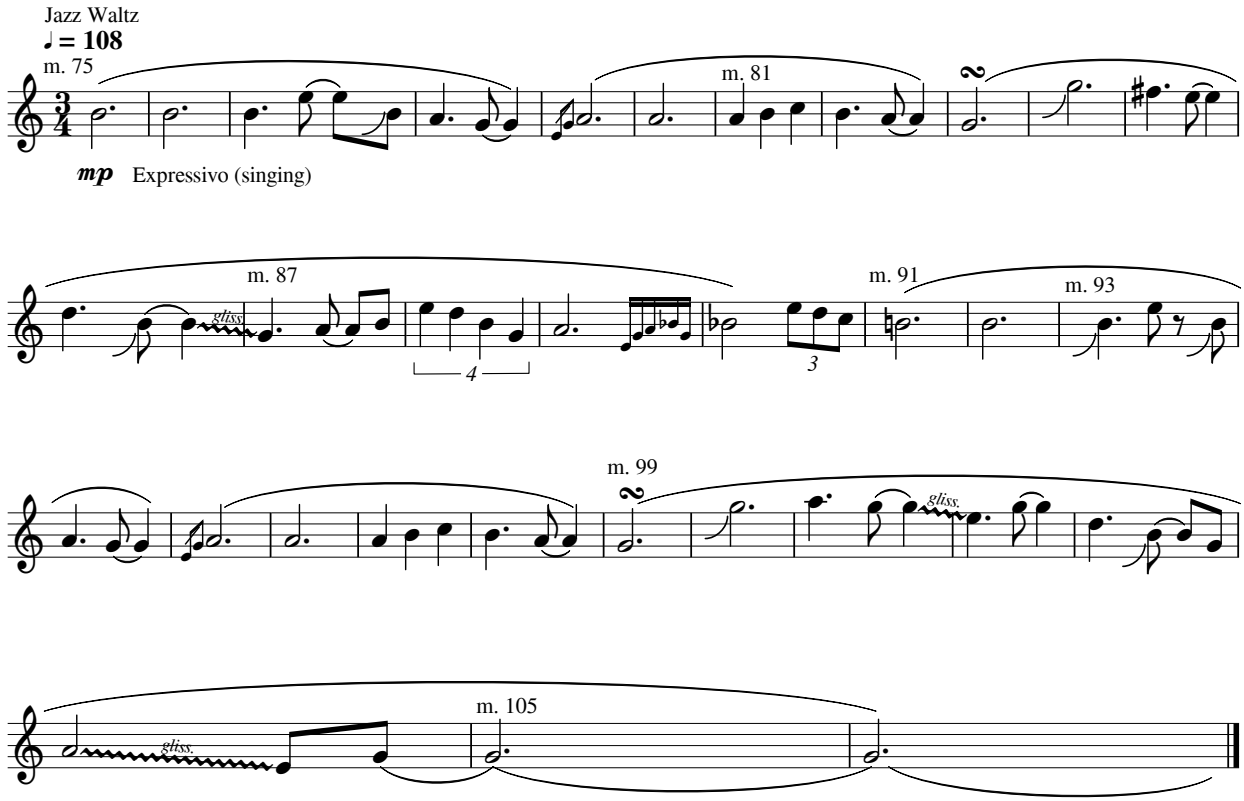
The development (mm. 75-207) can be divided into two main sections: an expressive jazz waltz section (mm. 75-140), and an improvised solo section (mm. 141-207). The most obvious difference between both sections is that Ricker changes the meter to 3/4 time. As a result, the overall mood of the movement changes from the driving syncopated melodies of the exposition to a more expressive, song-like melody section in the development.

In the first section (mm. 75-140), Ricker writes a lyrical melody starting in F major and modulating to D♭ major by m. 109.[57] All phrases in the first section are sixteen measures in length, with the exception of one phrase being eighteen. It is in this eighteen-measure phase (m. 91-108) where Ricker modulates from F major to D♭ major by holding the V chord (A♭7) of D♭ for three measures (mm. 106-108) to establish the new key center (D♭). In m. 109, Ricker continues the lyrical melody in the key of D♭ until the start of the improvised solo section, or second section of the development in m. 141.

When performing the saxophone melody in this first section, a student will need to focus on their stylistic interpretation of the melody in order to capture the expressive qualities of this theme. In the original recording, Ricker decorates the waltz melody by adding different ornaments, including grace notes, pitch bends, glissandi, and turns. The student should listen to Ricker's original recording and implement these nuances into their interpretation of the melody. To help facilitate this process, I provide a thirty-two measure transcription showing how Ricker interprets the melody from mm. 75-106 (ex. 6.6). In example 6.6, Ricker's ornaments (grace

[57] This modulation from F major to D♭ major is the overall harmonic outline for the improvised solo section following this jazz waltz section, in concert pitch (see Chris Beaty, "Annotated Bibliography of Selected Soprano Saxophone Repertoire" [DMA diss., University of Memphis, 2004], 66).

notes, pitch bends, glissandos, and turns) can be found in the following measures: mm. 79, 89, 95 (grace notes), mm. 77, 84, 86, 93, 100, 103 (pitch bends), mm. 86-87, 101-102, 104 (glissandi), and mm. 83, 99 (turns). After playing through this example, the student can use Ricker's interpretation of the waltz melody as a guide to begin taking their own liberties throughout this section of the development.



Example 6.6. A transcription of Ricker's interpretation of the waltz melody in the first thirty-two measures of the development. Soprano saxophone part from the score, in the key of B♭.

In the second section of the development (mm. 141-207), both the piano and saxophone exchange improvised solos over a repeated sixty-six measure solo form, with the piano playing the first solo. This is the longest solo section in the sonata and contains a more harmonically complex set of chord changes (including several altered dominant chords) than the two preceding

movements.[58] After the piano solo, the saxophone plays an improvised solo through the solo form until m. 190. In mm. 191-207, the waltz theme from the first section of the development (mm. 125-139) returns. Instead of improvising through the remainder of the form, Ricker provides instructions in the score for the saxophone to play this theme as written. Ricker uses this waltz theme to bring closure to the second section of the development, and to set up the retransition into the recapitulation.

Recapitulation

Following the development, a retransition (mm. 208-225) sets up the return of the P1 theme in the recapitulation. This retransition is similar to the opening introduction that ushers in the exposition earlier in the piece (mm. 1-13). The main difference in the retransition is a *subito lento* section (mm. 210-216) featuring thirty-second-note flourishes from the saxophone. The allegro section returns in mm. 217-225, and the thematic material here is identical to the introduction in mm. 5-13.

The recapitulation (mm. 226-266) is an exact restatement of the exposition. Since we expect to hear the same nuances in the melody (as previously stated), a student should play the melodies of the recapitulation with the same execution regarding pitch, accents, and accuracy of technical passages. At the end of the recapitulation (m. 266), there is a short transition (mm. 267-270) to set up the coda. In this transition, the saxophone plays a chromatic sixteenth-note flourish, while the piano plays block-chords to accompany the saxophone.

Coda

In the short coda (mm. 271-278), Ricker generates excitement with accented sixteenth notes and dynamics. The saxophone creates this excitement by playing a series of accented

[58] In Chapter 7, I will address the altered dominant chord and provide an improvisational guide for a student to play an improvised solo over this set of chord changes.

sixteenth notes while the piano interjects with accented syncopated sixteenth notes. In the final three measures (mm. 276-278), the piece culminates with the saxophone playing a C in the upper register and gradually increasing the dynamic from *p* to *ff,* while the piano plays syncopated sixteenth notes into the final chord in m. 278, to end the movement.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis of the third movement, *Allegro—Waltz—Allegro (danse infernale)*, of Ricker's *Jazz Sonata*. In addition, this analysis provides a student with techniques to practice and interpret specific challenging elements including pitch, technical passages, accents, syncopated melodies, and interpretation of the melody. By studying my analysis and the specific concepts addressed above, the student can practice these technically challenging elements and perform this movement with a higher level of virtuosity. Furthermore, the above concepts can be used to help the student become more successful in performing other works in the saxophone repertoire.

CHAPTER 7. IMPROVISATIONAL GUIDE TO THE SOPRANO SAXOPHONE SOLO (MM. 141-207) IN THE THIRD MOVEMENT

This chapter provides an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 141-207) in the third movement, *Allegro–Waltz–Allegro (danse infernale)*, of Ricker's sonata. In this improvisational guide, I will identify two jazz concepts—altered dominant chords and quartal patterns which a student can utilize to enhance their soloing prowess. I will include musical examples to aid a classically trained student in developing these improvisational techniques and offer performance suggestions to elaborate on the specific area of focus. In addition, I will provide an originally composed solo using the two concepts mentioned above and the four jazz concepts addressed in chapters 3 and 5 (pentatonic patterns, intervallic or triad-pair patterns, the ii–V–I progression, and the rhythmic-based method of improvisation). The goal is for the student to use all six jazz concepts as a guide to help them create a comprehensive improvised solo in this section of the movement.

This solo section is the longest in Ricker's sonata and features the most harmonically complex set of chord changes. Additionally, this solo section differs from the other two solo sections (from movements 1 and 2) in that the meter is in 3/4 time, not the 4/4 found in the other solo sections. As a result, this solo section will be the most challenging for a student to develop their own improvised solo. In order to be successful, the student will need to work on the above improvisational concepts to play the set of chord changes in this section.

Altered Dominant Chords

There are numerous areas in the solo section (mm. 141-207) that contain dominant chords with alterations to them (or altered dominant chords). As a result, this solo section contains a harmonically more complex set of chord changes. A student will need to become

familiar with the different altered dominant chords from a theoretical standpoint in order to play an improvised solo in this section. These alterations are notes of a diatonic scale which are chromatically raised or lowered and are often employed to a dominant chord to create new sounds or tensions.[59] In particular, the most common notes altered in dominant chords are the fifth and the extensions of the chord, or the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth.[60] For example, a C13 (♯11) chord contains the following notes: C–E–G–B♭–D–F♯–A. In this construction, the notes D, F♯, and A are the ninth, eleventh (raised), and thirteenth of the chord, or the extensions of the C13 (♯11) chord. In the jazz idiom, the fifth, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth are most commonly altered in the following ways: the fifth and ninth can be raised or lowered, the eleventh is only raised, and the thirteenth is only lowered.[61]

Some of these altered dominant chords exist naturally in the modes of either a major scale or a melodic minor scale harmony, with the exception of a few chords. For example, in the solo section, Ricker frequently employs a raised eleventh (♯11) to dominant chords, such as B9 (♯11). The B9 (♯11) chord contains the notes B–D♯–F♯–A–C♯–E♯ and is often referred to as a Lydian dominant chord, or the fourth mode of the F♯ melodic minor scale. Another chord in which Ricker employs a raised eleventh (♯11) is a major 7th chord or major 9th chord, such as F major 9 (♯11). In this construction, this chord, F–A–C–E–G–B, can be found in major scale harmony in the fourth mode of the C major scale. What is unique about the F major 9 (♯11) chord is that it does not have a dominant seventh; instead it contains a major seventh. For this reason, a student should refer to this chord within a modal context, meaning the F major 9 (♯11) chord implies C major. In jazz nomenclature, there is one dominant chord in particular that

---

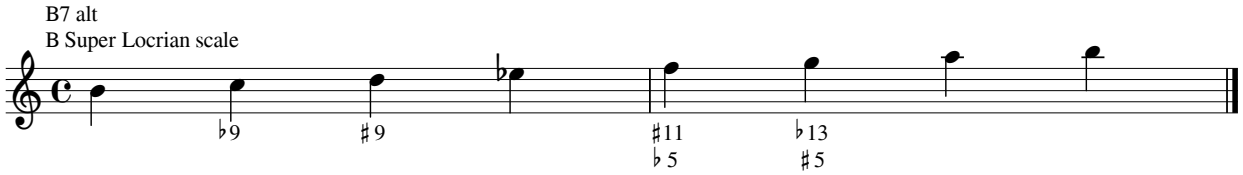
[59] Frank Mantooth, *Voicings for Jazz Keyboard* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1986), 19.

[60] Walt Weiskopf, *Intervalic* [*sic*] *Improvisation*: *The Modern Sound*; *A Step beyond Linear Improvisation* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold, 1995), 10.

[61] Ibid.

employs every standard alteration (♭9, ♯9, ♯11, and ♭13) to the same chord—the "alt" chord, such as B7 alt.[62] Instead of reading a chord with numerous alterations, most jazz musicians prefer easier-to-read nomenclature, or shorthand symbols, when playing chord changes.[63] For this reason, the B7 ♭9 ♯9 ♯11 ♭13 chord is abbreviated simply as B7 alt. All of these alterations for this chord are contained in the seventh mode of any melodic minor scale which is also referred to as the Super Locrian scale and numerous other names (see chapter 2).[64]

In example 7.1, I provide the B Super Locrian scale (B–C–D–E♭[or D♯]–F–G–A–B) and identify each of the notes being altered to show how the B7 alt chord is constructed. It is important for the student to recognize that this scale can be used to play any altered dominant chord.[65] From a theoretical standpoint, this will help the student simplify the different altered dominant chords that they will encounter in Ricker's solo section. As they become more comfortable with altered dominant chords, the student can experiment with creating patterns or "licks" to play over these altered dominant chords.



Example 7.1. The B Super Locrian scale, or the seventh mode of the C melodic minor scale, showing all of the alterations within the scale. This example is influenced from Mark Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Company, 1995), ix.

---

[62] Ibid.

[63] Mark Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Company, 1995), ix.

[64] The Super Locrian scale is also referred to as the altered scale, the Pomeroy scale, the Ravel scale, and the diminished whole-tone scale. It can be described as a scale that has the same tones as the ascending melodic minor scale built on the note a half step above (see Ron Middlebrook, *Scales and Modes in the Beginning Created Especially for Guitarists* [Anaheim Hills, CA: Centerstream Publications, 1982], 86).

[65] Walt Weiskopf, *Around the Horn* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 2000), 10.

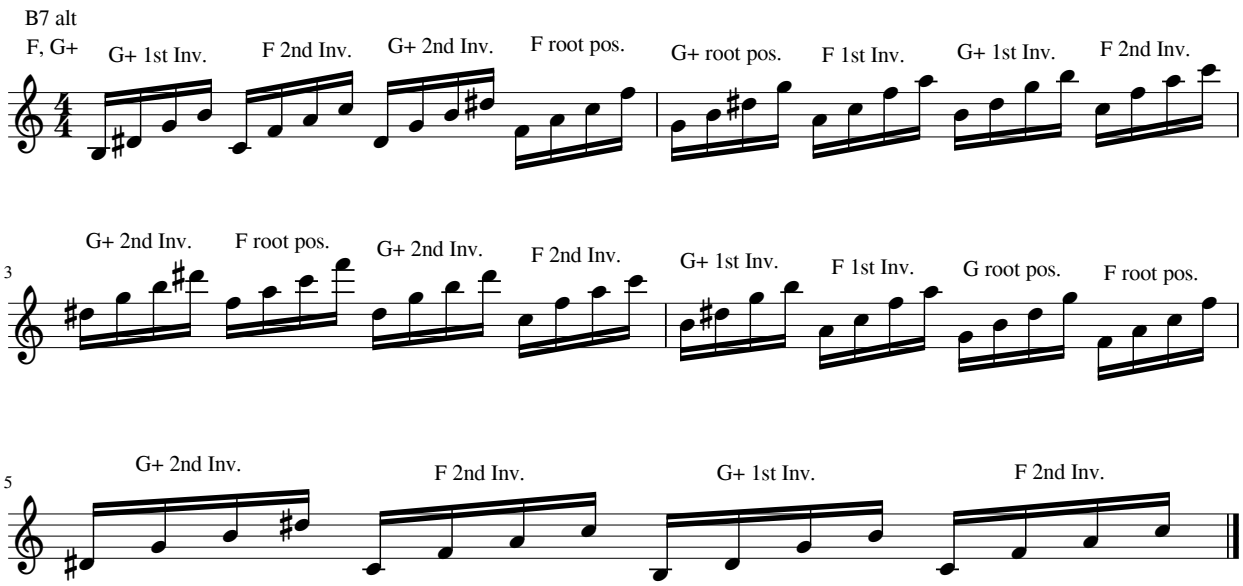
After a student becomes comfortable with altered dominant chords from a theoretical perspective, they should begin practicing patterns or "licks" to play over these harmonies. Since the altered scale contains every alteration of a chord (ex. 7.1), it can be used to play any altered dominant chord. For this reason, the student should focus their practicing efforts to develop patterns or "licks" using triad pair relationships from this scale.[66] In his book *Intervalic* [*sic*] *Improvisation*: *The Modern Sound*; *A Step beyond Linear Improvisation* (1995), Walt Weiskopf suggests: "since the altered scale is also the seventh mode of the melodic minor scale, one triad pair that works very well over a B7 alt chord is an F major triad and a G augmented triad. This is because these triads are derived from the B altered scale (B–C–D–E♭ [or D♯]–F–G–A– B)."[67]

To begin, the first pattern the student should practice using these two triads involves playing ascending arpeggios from both the F major triad and G augmented triad, including inversions of each (ex. 7.2). In the exercise shown in example 7.2, I have indicated the inversions above each sixteenth-note grouping to help the student discern the origins of each triad. Because this is a difficult exercise, it will require a significant amount of practice in order to use this pattern in an improvised solo. I encourage the student to also play this pattern in example 7.2 with descending arpeggios. These practicing efforts will prepare the student to create their own melodies over altered chords.

---

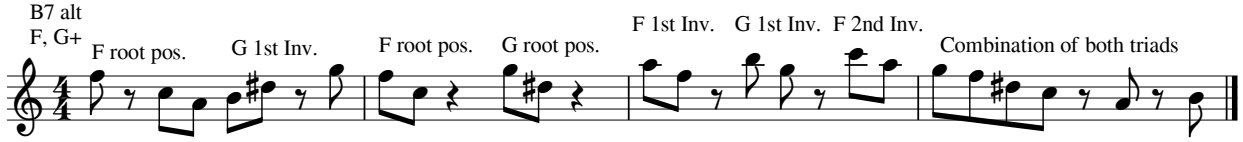
[66] In Chapter 3, I introduced an approach to playing polychords with triad pairs. A different combination of triad pairs will be discussed in this chapter to play altered chords.

[67] In the original quote, Weiskopf describes this process based on the C♯ altered scale. I transposed his example to the B altered scale to coordinate with example 7.1. See Weiskopf, *Intervalic [sic] Improvisation*, 10.



Example 7.2. A triad-pair pattern based on the F major and G augmented triads to be played over the B7 alt chord. This example is influenced from Walt Weiskopf, *Intervalic* [*sic*] *Improvisation The Modern Sound: A Step beyond Linear* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold, 1995), 44.

After a student has practiced several triad-pair patterns over altered chords, the next step for them is to create their own melodies from these pre-existing triad-pair patterns and incorporate them into the altered harmonies in the solo section. The goal is for the student to create an improvised melody that is idiomatic and expressive, and to avoid sounding predictable. One example to play over the B7 alt chord involves playing the two triads (F major and G augmented) with ascending and descending eighth-note rhythms mixed with different combinations of rest values (ex. 7.3).



Example 7.3. A melody to play over the B7 alt chord using the F major and G augmented triad pairs.

In this exercise, I use eighth-note rhythms from the F major and G augmented triads, however, by using different rhythmic values of rests, I am able to create a melody that does not

sound derived from a pattern. Above each eighth-note grouping, I include the triad pair that is being used. This will help a student recognize how each triad pair is being used to form the melody. Students will need to emulate this process (forming melodies from triad-pair patterns) to enhance their soloing prowess when playing the altered dominant chords in the solo section.

Overall, students will have more success playing an improvised solo in the solo section if they understand the altered dominant chords from a theoretical perspective. This understanding will help them play triad-pair patterns over altered dominant chords. Together, this development will enable the student to form their own improvised melodies in this section, and it will provide another jazz concept for them to reference when soloing.

Quartal Patterns

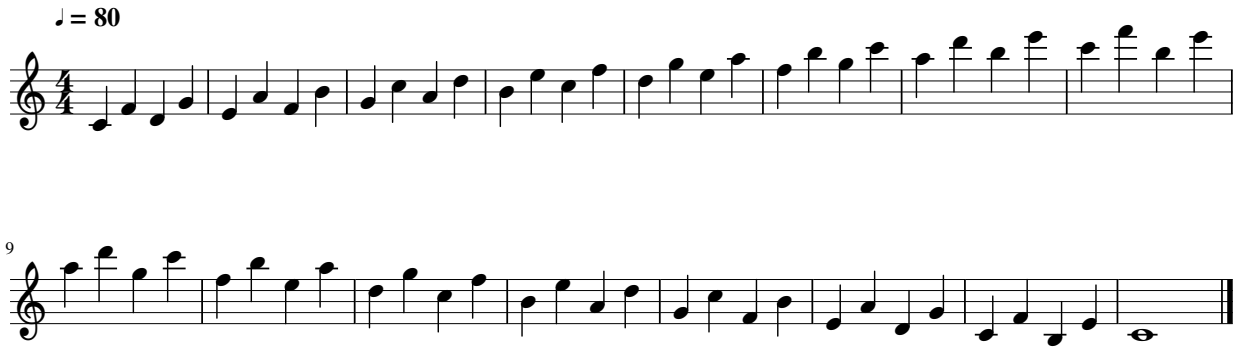
After a student becomes comfortable with the altered dominant chords, the next step for them is to develop quartal patterns (or patterns based on the interval of a fourth) into their playing. In jazz improvisation, a quartal pattern is a melody that is constructed using the intervals of a perfect fourth, an augmented fourth, or a diminished fourth. Many great jazz artists incorporate quartal patterns into their improvisations.[68] In his book *Technique Development in Fourths for Jazz Improvisation* (1976), Ramon Ricker describes the importance and the evolution of the quartal pattern:

> In an effort to make their music unique from bebop, many post-bop players, such as Jackie Byard and Joe Farrell, began incorporating patterns in perfect fourth intervals into their improvised lines. During this same period in jazz history, many pianists began experimenting with left-hand voicings based on quartal harmony. This technique of integrating fourths into jazz improvisation began perhaps around 1960 and continues to this day.[69]

[68] Ramon Ricker, *Technique Development in Fourths for Jazz Improvisation* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, 1976), 1.

[69] Ibid.

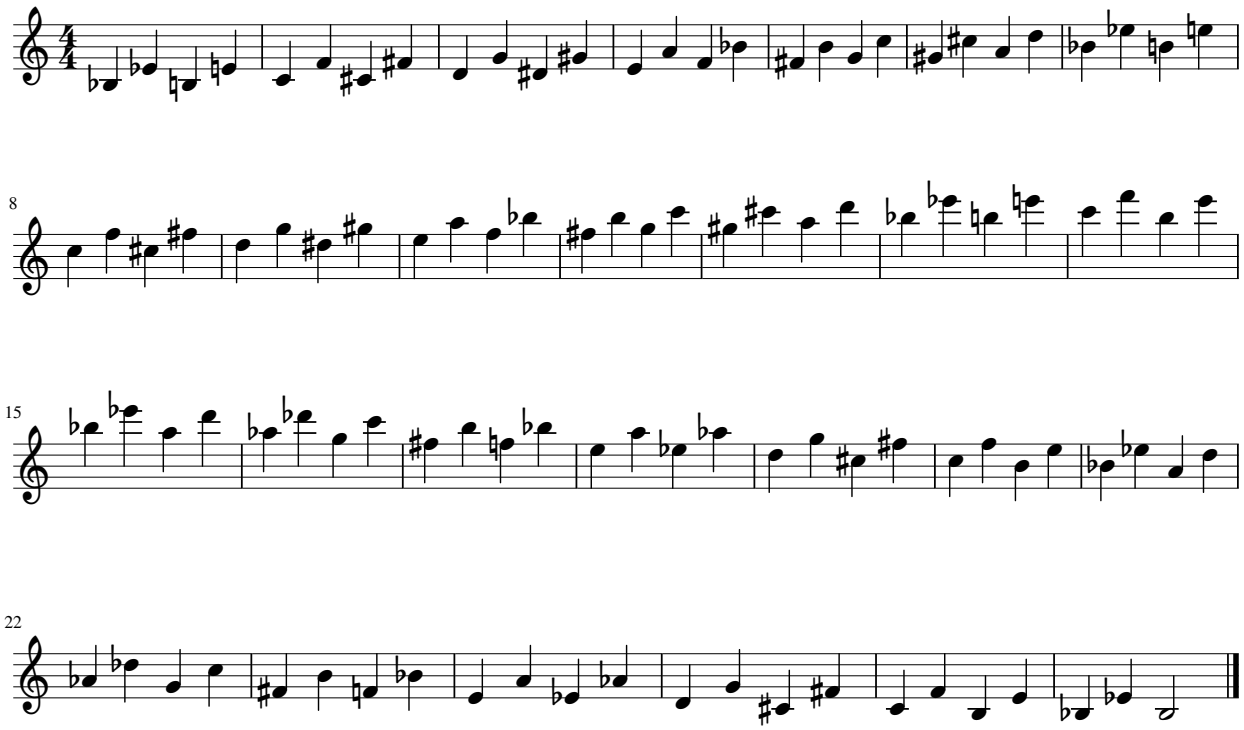
The first step for a student to incorporate quartal patterns into their improvisations is to practice their major scales in fourths. By practicing their major scales in fourths, the student will begin to train their fingers and develop the muscle memory needed to play quartal patterns. For example, the student should practice the ascending C major scale in fourths (throughout the full range of the saxophone) starting with quarter notes at a slow tempo (ex. 7.4). Once they become comfortable with playing quarter notes, the student can play the same fourths pattern (at the same tempo) using eighth notes and eventually sixteenth notes. This process should be repeated in all twelve major keys, and eventually the twelve minor keys. For further development, the student should also practice each scale in descending fourths.



Example 7.4. A practice exercise using the ascending C major scale in fourths to develop the muscle memory needed to play quartal patterns.

The second step for a student is to practice ascending fourths chromatically throughouth the full range of the saxophone. For example, the student should play ascending quarter notes in fourths starting with the low B♭ to E♭, B to E, C to F and continue this pattern throughout the range of the saxophone (ex. 7.5). This exercise will help the student play a quartal pattern chromatically in all twelve keys. Once they become comfortable with playing the quarter notes, the student should commit this pattern to memory and repeat the pattern using eighth notes and

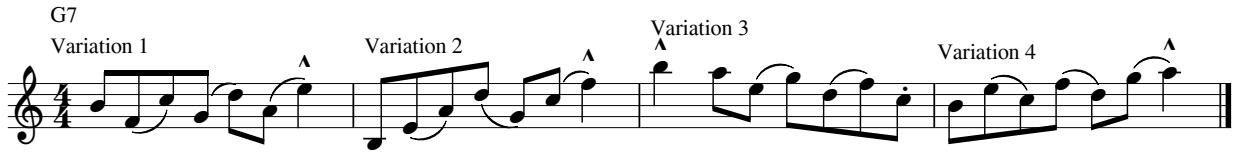
sixteenth notes. The student should also practice this pattern using descending fourths to further develop their technical prowess using quartal patterns.



Example 7.5. A practice exercise ascending chromatically by fourths to develop the technique needed to play quartal patterns. This example is based on an exercise from Ramon Ricker, *Technique Development in Fourths for Jazz Improvisation* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, 1976), 19.

The final step is for a student to practice quartal patterns and play them throughout the chord changes in the solo section. Since playing quartal patterns is a difficult task and since they can be used on any type of chord, the student should practice integrating quartal patterns over a harmonically less challenging chord, such as G7. In example 7.6, I provide four different variations of a quartal pattern all starting on the third of the G7 chord (or B). Each pattern includes every note of the G mixolydian scale (G–A–B–C–D–E–F–G) and uses only eighth notes and quarter notes. The student can use this example as a guide to eventually form their own quartal patterns in the solo section. When applying quartal patterns to the various chords in the

solo section, the student should use these patterns intermixed with other jazz concepts (such as pentatonics or triad pairs) to create a mature and natural-sounding solo.[70] Overall, these quartal patterns will provide the student with another jazz concept to use when soloing in this section of Ricker's sonata.



Example 7.6. An exercise for a student to practice playing quartal patterns over specific chord changes. This example is influenced from an exercise in Ramon Ricker, *Technique Development in Fourths for Jazz Improvisation* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 1976), 12.

Originally Composed Solo

In this final section, I provide an originally composed solo using the two jazz concepts mentioned above (altered dominant chords and quartal patterns) as well as the four jazz concepts addressed in chapters 3 and 5 (pentatonic patterns, intervallic or triad- pair patterns, the ii–V–I harmonic progression, and the rhythmic-based method of improvisation). The goal is for a student to use all six concepts in their preparation of creating an improvised melody throughout the solo section (ex. 7.7). This solo section can be divided into four main areas: a sixteen-measure section in the key of F, an eighteen-measure section that modulates from the key of F to D♭, a sixteen-measure section in D♭, and a sixteen-measure section featuring the return of the waltz theme from the first section of the development (mm. 125-139).[71]

In the opening twelve measures of the first area, I build a melody that draws upon three different jazz concepts (pentatonic patterns, triad-pair patterns, and altered dominant "licks") in

[70] Ibid., 4.

[71] Concert pitch is used when speaking about the modulation that occurs during the solo section.

two-measure rhythmic groupings. For example, I construct a pentatonic melody using triplet eighth notes in m. 5, and an altered eighth-note melody (centered around the alterations of the E♭7 ♭5 ♯11 chord) in m. 6. From a rhythmic perspective, these measures are identical to the opening two measures of the solo (mm. 1-2). Another example occurs in mm. 11-12. Here, the melody is formed from triad-pair relationships using the rhythm of triplet eighth notes. The triad pairs D and E are used in m. 11, and F and G in m. 12.

The final four measures of this first area (mm. 13-16) break away from the two-measure rhythmic groupings (of the opening twelve measures) and feature one-measure rhythmic motives. Measure 13 is rhythmically simple, using a half note with an eighth rest and an eighth note pick-up into m. 14. This sets-up a sixteenth-note flourish using the B♭ dominant bebop scale in m. 14. In m. 15, there is an eighth-note melody using the triad pairs A and G that seamlessly transitions into a triplet eighth-note melody based on the A♭ augmented arpeggio in m. 16.

In the second area (mm. 17-28), three jazz concepts are used to form the melody, including the rhythmic-based method of improvisation, quartal patterns, and altered dominant "licks." To begin, in the first four measures (mm. 17-20), I borrow Ricker's waltz theme from the development (mm. 75-78) to create the melody.[72] The next three measures (mm. 21-23) are built using the rhythmic-based method of improvisation featuring a chromatically ascending melody of dotted-quarter-note rhythms. Next, in m. 24, there is a one-measure eighth-note melody that arpeggiates the C♯ half-diminished chord, followed by four measures of trills from m. 25 to m. 28. These trills feature the common note G, and descend chromatically by half-step. For example, the saxophone trills between the notes E and G in m. 25, and between E♭ and G in

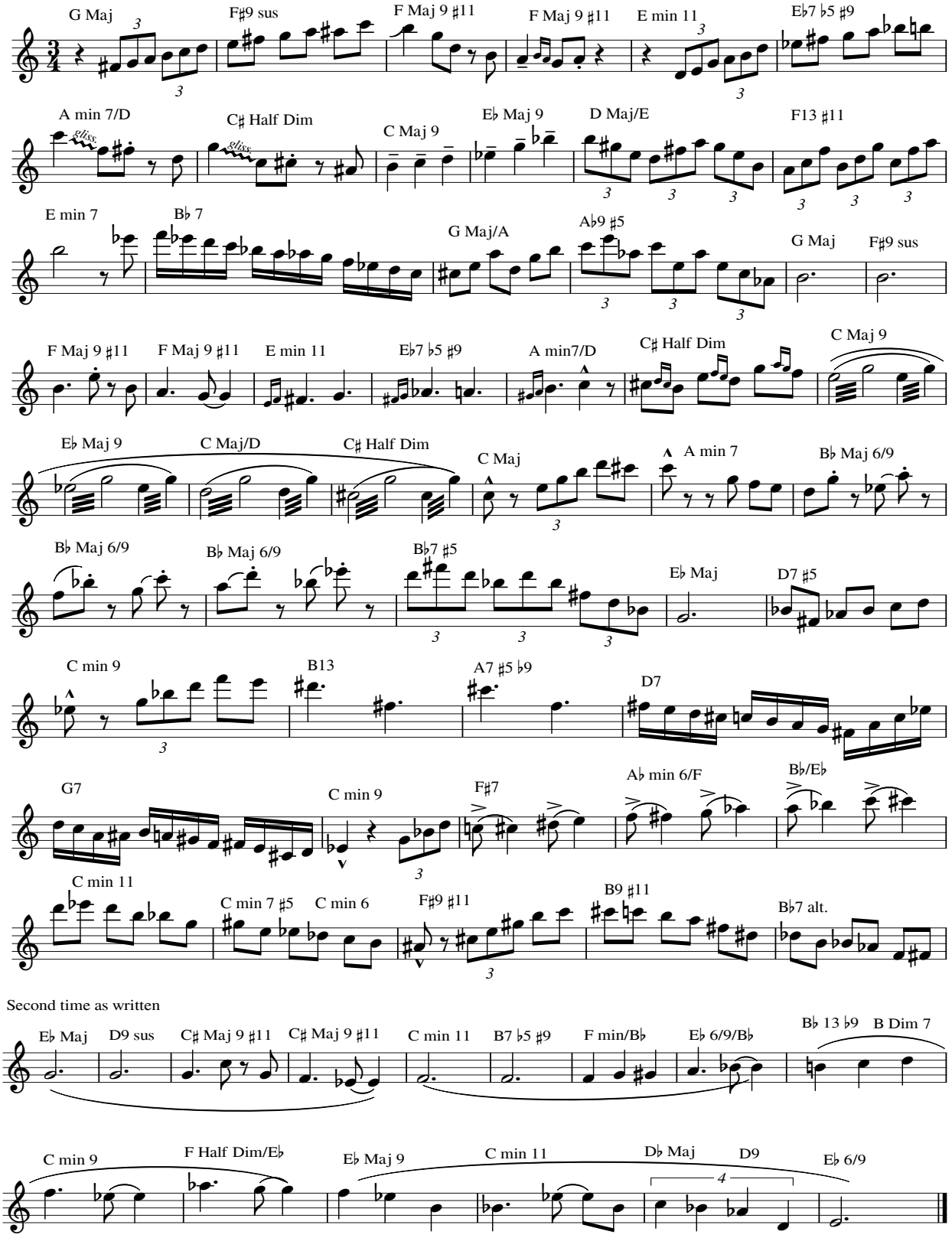
[72] Students are encouraged to borrow melodies from Ricker and other jazz artists, as this demonstrates a level of maturity during an improvised solo.

m. 26. This chromatic and rhythmic pattern continues through each chord until the downbeat of m. 29. From m.29 to m. 30, the melody voice-leads through each chord and serves as a two-measure link into the final four measures of this section (mm. 31-34). During these measures, the melody is built using quartal patterns and altered dominant "licks." For example, in mm. 31-33, I write a syncopated eighth-note melody based on two consecutive eighth notes followed by an eighth rest, with each eighth-note grouping ascending by either a perfect fourth or diminished fourth. These three measures of quartal patterns are followed by a one-measure altered dominant "lick" (m. 34) based on the B♭ augmented arpeggio. This arpeggio leads the melody seamlessly into the third area of the solo section.

In the third area (mm. 35-50), three jazz concepts are used to form the melody including altered dominant "licks," rhythmic-based improvisation, and the ii–V–I harmonic progression. The first altered dominant "lick" occurs in the second measure (m. 36) of this area over the D7 ♯5 chord, where the melody is built using the D whole-tone scale. Next, I voice-lead the melody through the C minor 9 chord in m. 37. Through the next two measures (mm. 38-39), I use a dotted-quarter-note rhythmic motive to transition the melody into the next jazz concept in mm. 40-41. In these measures, the melody is built on the ii–V–I harmonic progression featuring consecutive sixteenth notes using the D dominant bebop scale in m. 40 and the G dominant bebop scale in m. 41. This sixteenth-note melody resolves to the third (E♭) of the C minor 9 chord in m. 42. A triplet eighth-note pick-up on beat three of m. 42 transitions the melody into the next three-measure rhythmic motive in mm. 43-45. This rhythmic motive features an eighth note tied to a quarter note. With each repetition of this motive, the melody ascends higher in the tessitura of the saxophone, eventually resolving to the ninth scale degree (D) of the C minor 11 chord in m. 46. In the final four measures of this area (mm. 47-50), I create an eighth-note

melody that features the alterations of each altered dominant chord. For example, in m. 50, I incorporate a D♭, B and F♯ into the eighth-note melody over the B♭7 alt chord. This melody transitions seamlessly into the final sixteen-measure area of the solo section.

In the final area of the solo section (mm. 51-66), Ricker provides instructions in the score for the saxophone to play the waltz theme as written, instead of improvising through the remainder of the form. This is the waltz theme from the first section of the development (mm. 125-139). Ricker uses this theme to bring a sense of closure to the improvised solo section (or second section of the development), and to set up the retransition into the recapitulation.



Example 7.7. An improvised solo to work on all six jazz concepts discussed in chapters 3, 5, and 7. In the key of B♭.

In example 7.7, a student should use my recommendations regarding all six jazz concepts (discussed in Chapters 3, 5, and 7) to help them form their own solo in this section. In addition, they should pay special attention to how I use each jazz concept to build an improvised solo. As the student becomes more comfortable with each jazz concept and with this chord progression, they can create their own patterns or "licks" to play this set of chord changes.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an improvisational guide to the soprano saxophone solo (mm. 141-207) in the third movement of Ricker's sonata, *Allegro–Waltz–Allegro (danse infernale)*. This improvisational guide explains how to utilize the altered dominant chords from a theoretical and technical perspective as well as demonstrates how to improvise using quartal patterns. In addition, this guide incorporates the previous four jazz concepts discussed in chapters 3 and 5 to ultimately enhance a student's soloing prowess. By studying my originally composed solo and the two concepts addressed above, a student can develop these improvisational techniques that will enable them to be more successful in playing the improvised solo in this movement and in other improvised works in the saxophone repertoire.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

Throughout this disquisition I presented a method that addressed the topics of analysis and improvisation. This is an effort to provide a new perspective on how to develop both, the technical prowess and the jazz conceptual prowess, needed to perform Ramon Ricker's (b. 1943) *Jazz Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano* (1994). In addition, I identified the need for today's saxophonists to be well versed in both the concert and jazz idioms to adapt to these new demands in the saxophone repertoire. Although not exhaustive, each chapter was intended to serve as a guide for saxophonists to help them perform Ricker's sonata with a higher degree of virtuosity and to facilitate the creation of their own improvised solos in each solo section of the piece.

In chapters 2, 4, and 6, the analysis chapters, I discussed the specific technically challenging elements within each movement. These elements pertained to altered scales, articulations, accents, and polychord harmonies in the first movement (chapter 2); to tuning, interpretation of the melody, subtone, rapid note passages, and swing style in the second movement (chapter 4); and to pitch, technical passages, accents, syncopated melodies, and interpretation of the melody in the third movement (chapter 6). In addition, musical examples and performance suggestions were provided to elaborate on these specific areas of focus. In chapters 3, 5, and 7, the improvisational guide chapters, I addressed two improvisational techniques for each chapter that can be used in the solo sections of each movement. These improvisational techniques referred to pentatonic patterns and intervallic or triad-pair patterns in the first movement (chapter 3); to the ii–V–I harmonic progression and rhythmic-based method of improvisation in the second movement (chapter 5); and to altered dominant chords and quartal

patterns in the third movement (chapter 7). In addition, I have composed a solo for each movement using the two jazz concepts addressed in each chapter.

There are numerous jazz-influenced pieces in the saxophone repertoire that require improvisational skills in order to play them. A classically-trained saxophonist studying these other jazz-influenced works would benefit greatly from having an improvisational guide written for them similar to this disquisition. Some of these pieces already have an improvisational guide, for example, Jeremy Long's dissertation on an improvisation-specific guide to *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano* (1997) by Phil Woods (1931-2015), while others do not.[73] A few of the works still in need of an improvisational guide include: *Concertino for Tenor Saxophone, Strings and Winds* (1992) by Bob Mintzer (b. 1953), *Sonata for Soprano or Tenor Saxophone and Piano* (1991) by Bill Dobbins (b. 1947), and *Echoes from a Distant Land* (1994) also by Dobbins.

Since learning to improvise is a life-long process, further study is needed to develop the improvisational techniques (pentatonic patterns, intervallic or triad-pair patterns, ii–V–I harmonic progression, rhythmic-based method of improvisation, altered dominant chords, and quartal patterns) found within this dissertation. Each one of these improvisational techniques will require a significant amount of practice time on the saxophone. A student should consult the jazz improvisational books that this dissertation draws on for additional information regarding each improvisational technique. This will be helpful to them as they develop as an improviser in the jazz idiom.

Lastly, there are two additional areas outside the scope of my research where further study is needed to communicate the language of jazz effectively. These areas pertain to listening

[73] Jeremy Long, "Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano by Phil Woods: An Improvisation-Specific Performer's Guide" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2008).

and transcribing. Since jazz is an aural art form, listening and transcribing are essential components of the learning process. A student should listen to as many jazz recordings as they can to train their ears with the vocabulary of jazz music. In addition, a student should find a jazz artist who they admire and begin transcribing the artist's improvised solos. This process of listening and transcribing is an invaluable asset to a student's success as a jazz improviser.

REFERENCES

Books and Book Chapters

Aebersold, Jamey. *The II–V7–I Progression*. New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold, 1974.

Aebersold, Jamey. *Dominant Seventh Workout*. New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 1999.

Ake, David. "Learning Jazz, Teaching Jazz." In *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, edited by Mervyn Cooke and David Horn, 253-69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Accessed September 9, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL978052166320 5.015.

Bergonzi, Jerry. *Inside Improvisation Series*. Vol. 2, *Pentatonics*. Delevan, NY: Advance Music, 1994.

Bergonzi, Jerry. *Inside Improvisation Series*. Vol. 4, *Melodic Rhythms*, Delevan, NY: Advance Music, 1998.

Cyker, Edmund, Gary Martin, James Miller, and Milo Wold. *An Outline History of Western Music*. 9th ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1998.

Fishman, Greg. *Jazz Phrasing for Saxophone*. Vol. 1. Evanston, Ill: Greg Fishman Jazz Studios, 2013.

Horch, Kyle. "The Mechanics of Playing the Saxophone." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone*, edited by Richard Ingham, 75-100. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Accessed September 9, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521 593489.007.

Ingham, Richard. "Jazz and the Saxophone." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone*, edited by Richard Ingham, 125-52. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Accessed September 9, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521593489.013.

Levine, Mark. *The Jazz Theory Book*. Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Company, 1995.

Liebman, David. *Developing a Personal Saxophone Sound*. 2nd ed. Medfield, MA: Dorn Publications, 1994.

Londeix, Jean-Marie. *Hello! Mr. Sax or Parameters of the Saxophone*, Paris: Alphonse Leduc & Cie, 1989.

Mantooth, Frank. *Voicings for Jazz Keyboard*, Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation, 1986.

Middlebrook, Ron. *Scales and Modes in the Beginning Created Especially for Guitarists*. Anaheim Hills, CA: Centerstream Publications, 1982.

Monson, Ingrid. “Jazz Improvisation.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, edited by Mervyn Cooke and David Horn, 114-32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Accessed September 9, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL978052166320 5.009.

Neff, Steve. *Mastering the Dominant Bebop Scale*. Boston, MA: www.neffmusic.com, 2007.

Owens, Thomas. “Analyzing Jazz.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz*, edited by Mervyn Cooke and David Horn, 286-98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Accessed September 9, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521663205. 017.

Rascher, Sigurd. *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Carl Fischer, 1983.

Ricker, Ramon. *Pentatonic Scales for Jazz Improvisation*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 1976.

Ricker, Ramon. *Technique Development in Fourths for Jazz Improvisation*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 1976.

Ricker, Ramon, and Walt Weiskopf. *The Augmented Scale in Jazz*. New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 1993.

Steinel, Mike. *Essential Elements for Jazz Ensemble*: *A Comprehensive Method for Jazz Style and Improvisation*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2000.

Teal, Larry. *The Art of Saxophone Playing*. Evanston, IL: Summy-Birchard, 1963.

Weiskopf, Walt. *Around the Horn*. New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 2000.

Weiskopf, Walt. *Intervalic Improvisation The Modern Sound: A Step Beyond Linear Improvisation*. New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc., 1995.

Weiss, Marcus and Giorgio Netti. *The Techniques of Saxophone Playing*. Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter, 2010.

Periodical Articles

Duke, Stephen. “An Integrated Approach to Playing the Saxophone.” *The Saxophone Symposium* 13 (Fall 1988): 21-23. Accessed September 15, 2014. http://www.steve duke.net/articles/integrated_sax.shtml.

Grandt, Jürgen E. “Kinds of Blue: Toni Morrison, Hans Janowitz, and the Jazz Aesthetic.” *African American Review* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 303-22. Accessed September 9, 2014. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1512293.

King, Peter. “The Right Pitch for Saxophonists.” *Science* 319, no. 5869 (Mar. 2008): 1483. Accessed September 9, 2014. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20053564.

Leonard, III, Neil. "A Personal Approach to Contemporary Jazz: Works for Saxophone and Computer-Controlled Electronics." *Leonardo Music Journal* 6 (1996): 15-20. Accessed September 15, 2014. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1513299.

Tolson, Jerry. "Jazz Style and Articulation: How to Get Your Band or Choir to Swing." *Music Educators Journal* 99, no. 1 (Sept. 2012): 80-86. Accessed September 15, 2014. http://mej.sagepub.com/content/99/1/80.

Schlomicher-Their, Josef, and Matthias Weikert. "Laryngeal Movements in Saxophone Playing: Video-Endoscopic Investigations with Saxophone Players—A Pilot Study." *Journal of Voice* 13, no. 2 (June 1999): 265-73. http://search.proquest.com/docview/1411961?accountid=6766.

Encyclopedia Articles

Boyd, Malcom. "Dance of death." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, 2001–. Accessed September 12, 2016, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07153.

Kernfeld, Barry. "Subtone." *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz 2nd ed. Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press, 2001–. Accessed November 7, 2016, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/J433600.

Spring, Howard. "Swing." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, 2001–. Accessed November 15, 2016, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/Subscriber/article/grove/music/A2258226.

White, Bryan. "Articulation" *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, 2001–. Accessed November 2, 2014. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e420.

Musical Scores

Ricker, Ramon. *Jazz Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano*. Rottenburg am Neckar, Germany: Advance Music, 1994.

Recordings

Hodkinson, Sydney. "Eastman American Music Series Vol. 8." Liner notes for *Ramon Ricker: Jazz Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano*, Ramon Ricker, soprano saxophone and Bill Dobbins, piano. Compact disc. Albany Records TR361, 1999.

Dissertations and Theses

Beaty, Chris. "Annotated Bibliography of Selected Soprano Saxophone Repertoire." DMA diss., University of Memphis, 2004.

Campbell, Jonathan. “Beyond Harmony: Incorporating Rhythmic Elements of Jazz Improvisation Through Pedagogy and Curriculum.” DMA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2015.

Chamberlin, Michael. “Improvisation and the Concert Saxophonist: A Survey of Compositional and Performance Techniques.” DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2012.

Eriksson, Ulf. “Finding Pedagogical Strategies for Combined Classical and Jazz Saxophone Applied Studies at the College Level: Based on Interviews and a Panel Discussion with Branford Marsallis, Donald Sinta, Thomas Walsh, Thomas Bergeron, Andrew Bishob, Andrew Dahlke, Gunnar Mossblad, James Riggs, Rick Vanmatre, Steve Duke.” DMA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2012.

Ford, Christopher. “Eleven Jazz-Influenced Works for Concert Saxophone.” DMA diss., University of Maryland, 1991.

Larson, Grant. “Jazz Education for Classically Trained Saxophonists: A Pedagogical Resource for Skill Acquisition in the Jazz Idiom.” DMA diss., University of Colorado, 2013.

Long, Jeremy. “Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano by Phil Woods: An Improvisation-Specific Performer’s Guide.” DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2008.

Perrine, John. “Crossover Considerations: Performing Three Works by Ludmila Ulehla, Phil Woods, and Bill Dobbins.” DMA diss., Louisiana State University, 2002.

Powell, Timothy. “Saxophone Sonatas 1980-2010.” DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2012.

Schwartz, Richard. “Transitions: A Graduated Method that Improves Jazz Musicians’ Facility and Improvisational Skills Through Use of the Major Scale and Sequenced Harmonic Motion.” DMA diss., Boston University, 2010.

Trezona, Jeremy. “Utilizing Classical Saxophone Articulation Techniques in Jazz Performance.” Honor’s thesis, Edith Cowan University, 2012.

Vanderheyden, Joel. “Approaching the Classical Style: A Resource for Jazz Saxophonists.” PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2010.

Websites

Ricker, Ramon. “Biography.” Ramon Ricker: Composer, Arranger, Author, Performer. Accessed April 24, 2017. https://www.esm.rochester.edu/faculty/ricker_ramon/.

Ricker, Ramon. “Curriculum Vitae.” Ramon Ricker: Composer, Arranger, Author, Performer. Accessed April 24, 2017. https://www.esm.rochester.edu/uploads/Ramon-Ricker-Vitae-2012.pdf.

APPENDIX A. EMAIL INTERVIEW WITH RAMON RICKER CONDUCTED ON APRIL 22, 2017 AND BIOGRAPHY

Brian Hanegan: What is the significance of each of the titles in your Sonata?

Ramon Ricker: As I was writing my Sonata, each movement began to take on a distinct feel that had an influence on my composition process. I began to think of each movement in terms of descriptive titles. The overall piece felt, to me, like three contrasting dances. The first movement is dark, ominous, and blues influenced. *Macabre* is a strong, descriptive word, but to me, it conveys the "vibe" of movement. The thematic material for the second movement was written some fourteen years earlier in the form of a tune for my wife, and entitled *Let Me Spend This Night with You Forever*. The last movement, *Danse Infernale* has a repetitive and unrelenting rhythmic intensity in the "A" sections. I wanted to somehow contrast this but was having second thoughts about it until my wife reminded me that Rachmaninoff did this all the time. The result was a tuneful jazz waltz. So, why the French subtitles? I studied one summer in France with Jean-Marie Londiex—studied the language, taught several times there, and really enjoy their culture. I also have a French publisher for some for my saxophone etude books (Alphonse Leduc). I thought they might be interested in publishing it, but I decided to go with Advance Music (a German publisher with a strong jazz catalogue).

BH: What was your inspiration for writing this piece?

RR: I was inspired by the saxophone sonatas of Phil Woods and Bill Dobbins. I wanted to combine stylistic elements of classical and jazz music and to provide saxophonists with some repertoire for those who perform in both idioms.

BH: How long did it take you to write this piece?

RR: That's difficult to say because my daily schedule was always very diverse with performing and teaching. I don't remember getting a dedicated block of time to write it, so I would estimate it took probably four to six weeks.

BH: Can you describe your collaboration and relationship with pianist Bill Dobbins?

RR: Bill and I have been making music together in a variety of settings since he joined the Eastman faculty in, I believe, 1974. At that time, I was already on the faculty teaching clarinet, saxophone and also part-time in the jazz department. As young assistant professors we talked about music a lot and developed courses in our areas of expertise. On the performance side we performed together in a jazz quintet in the early years. We also had a trio gig one night a week for a couple of years at a fancy Rochester restaurant/bar. Over the years we had opportunities to do residencies together at various higher-education institutions and music schools in the US, France and Germany. I learned a lot from Bill. He is a good friend.

BH: How did you come up with the chord progressions for the improvised solo sections?

RR: In each movement, the chords for improvisation come out of the previous material. I wrote the melody and harmony at the same time. In *Danse Macabre*, I probably got the bass line first and went from there. In the second movement, the send-offs to the improvised solos have some interesting chords that are new material but then transition to the chord progression of the tune. In the third movement, the frenetic "A" section screeches to a halt and is interrupted by the totally contrasting jazz waltz. The improvised sections use the chords of the tune.

Now, there may be some slight alterations here and there. I would have to check it carefully.

BH: Is there anything special about your piece that listeners should know about?

RR: Here are a few things that no one but me (and a Polish saxophonist who did her master's thesis on my piece) knows. I'll try to remember some of them, but after all, I wrote the music over twenty-five years ago.

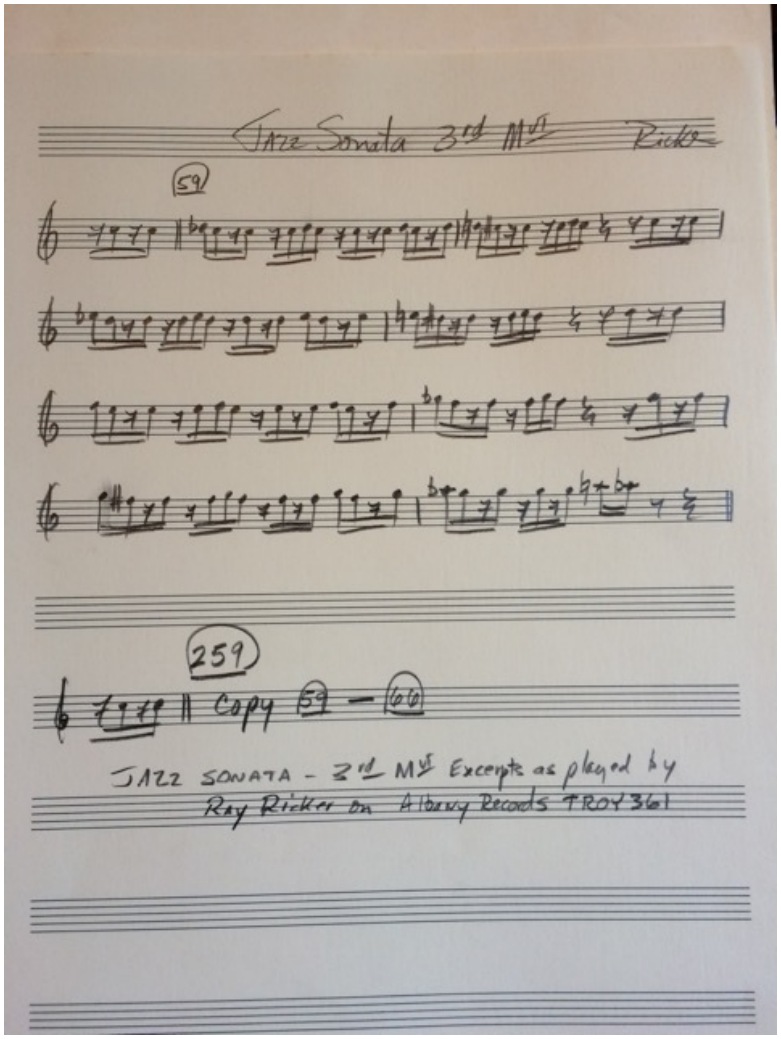
First movement—m. 22. Those pickup notes are almost the exact same first notes in the Alvin Etler *bassoon sonata* (https//www.youtube.com/watch?V=awuzygwnbqe). One of my Eastman saxophone students from around 1990 was a spectacular baritone saxophonist. She played the Etler *bassoon sonata* (on baritone saxophone) on her master's recital. I really liked the way it started, and I paraphrased those notes (of course in a completely different style) and used them to transition into the allegro section of the movement.

Throughout the work there are lots of uses of the major seventh ♯5 chord (CΔ7+ or Cmaj7♯5 or Cmaj7aug), mm. 43-44, for example. A corollary to this chord is the augmented scale—a scale alternating minor thirds and half-steps (C–D♯–E–G–G♯–B–C). During this time period I was very interested in this harmonic tool. I even wrote a book about it with Walt Weiskopf. "The Augmented Scale in Jazz—a Player's Guide" (http://www.jazzbooks.com/mm5/merchant.mvc?screen=prod&store_code=jajazz&product_code=aug&category_code=#.v8ryppmrluo).

Movement 2—the saxophone part consciously begins like the second movement of the Ibert *Concertino da Camera*. Here again, there is lots of augmented vocabulary in this movement.

Movement 3—the rhythmic intensity was inspired by a Joseph Schwantner piece, the title I can't recall. Lots of augmented material again. As said before, the waltz as the middle section provides some relief from the intensity of the "A" section. The transition from the waltz back into the final section (let's call that "A prime") was inspired by the clarinet part in Bartok's *Miraculous Mandarin.* We were performing that piece with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra during this same time. I was a contracted member of the RPO clarinet section (clarinet/bass clarinet/saxophone when needed) for 40+ years.

Here's a slightly embarrassing tidbit for you. In this third movement there is a discrepancy between what is notated and what I played on the recording. It was called to my attention by the previously mentioned Polish saxophonist. I play the excerpt at 59 and again at 259 differently than printed. Here is probably what happened. The way I compose for the saxophone is to play or sing something, then write it down and work with it. I either wrote it down incorrectly or made a mistake inputting it into Finale. I often take short cuts by doing a lot of cut and paste. In the case of something rhythmic like this, I will often copy a similar passage, paste it in, then move the note heads to the correct pitches. That is quicker than inputting the entire passage again. I could have done that. The printed way works, but I like the way I play it better. Attached is what I think I played.



Example A1. Transcription of Ricker's rendition of mm. 59-66 from the recording of the third movement of his Sonata. Reproduced with permission.

BH: Did you write the piece from a jazz perspective, classical perspective, or both?

RR: I wrote it from both a classical and jazz perspective. As musicians, the music that comes from us is a result of our study, talent, interests, and life experiences. It all goes in a big "hopper" and what comes out the other end is something that is unique to each individual. In my case, I had a strong background in clarinet. I played in a professional orchestra for 40+ years. I started clarinet at age 10, then added saxophone at age 16. I also had an interest in jazz, and I played lots of gigs

right from the very start of my saxophone study. My *Jazz Sonata* is a result of that background.

BH: What do you think is the most challenging part of your Sonata for a student?

RR: Well, there are definite technical challenges for both the pianist and the saxophonist. The piece is not easy. There are also some improvised sections that require a fairly sophisticated harmonic vocabulary. But musically speaking, the biggest challenge is to make the improvised sections blend with the written music. The improvisations should organically come out of the written music. When things are going well, the listener should not be obviously aware when the players are improvising. In the published music, I give some suggestions on how a student can approach this concept.

BH: What were the influences to arrange your piece for saxophone quartet?

RR: I just thought that the first movement of my sonata would work well for saxophone quartet, so I transcribed it for that instrumentation. I think it works rather well.

BH: Have you ever thought about arranging this piece for a soloist and rhythm section?

RR: I have not thought of doing that, but now that you mention it, it would be quick and easy to do. I had five saxophones and a rhythm section in a student group at Eastman (called Saxology). Some time ago I scored the entire sonata for that group. For some reason I never got a recording of it. Now I could go back and use the rhythm section parts that are already done and plug the saxophone solo in. Thanks for the idea!

Biography

Ramon Ricker is a contemporary composer, arranger, author, saxophonist, and clarinetist. He is trained both in the classical and jazz traditions and holds degrees from University of Denver (1965), Michigan State University (1967), and Eastman School of Music (1973).[74] Since 1971, Ricker has served on the faculty at Eastman.[75] In the spring of 2015, Ricker retired from his positions as Professor Emeritus of Saxophone, Director of the Institute for Music Leadership, and Senior Associate Dean for Professional Studies.[76]

Over the course of his career, Ricker has published dozens of books (over 150,000 copies sold worldwide) and professional articles on a wide array of topics, including: jazz concepts and improvisational methods, entrepreneurship, electronic music, woodwind doubling, and the clarinet in jazz, among others.[77] His latest book, *Lessons from a Street-Wise Professor; What You Won't Learn at Most Music Schools* (2011), was honored as a finalist in the Business: Entrepreneurship and Small Business category of The USA "Best Books 2011" Awards, sponsored by USA Book News.[78] In addition, Ricker has written and arranged music for solo instruments, television networks, and chamber ensembles (in particular Saxology, a jazz combo consisting of five saxophones and rhythm section at Eastman) in both the classical and the jazz idioms.[79]

---

[74] Ramon Ricker, "Biography," Ramon Ricker: Composer, Arranger, Author, Performer, accessed April 24, 2017, https://www.esm.rochester.edu/faculty/ricker_ramon/.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ramon Ricker, "Curriculum Vitae," Ramon Ricker: Composer, Arranger, Author, Performer, accessed April 24, 2017, https://www.esm.rochester.edu/uploads/Ramon-Ricker-Vitae-2012.pdf.

[78] Ricker, "Biography."

[79] Ricker, "Curriculum Vitae."

As a professional musician, Ricker has been a contractor and woodwind artist on numerous major television networks and television commercials including NBC, ABC, Cinimax, HBO, and Arts and Entertainment.[80] In addition, he has performed internationally and throughout North America in various formats, including as a member of touring ensembles (Buddy Rich Band, Chuck Mangione Orchestra), in a Broadway production (*Wicked*), as a clinician (AIMRA, Ecole de Jazz, Lyon, France), as a soloist (Selmer performing artist), and as a lecturer (*Colloque International Pedagogies Du Jazz*, Mullhouse, France).[81]

[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.

APPENDIX B. TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH RAMON RICKER CONDUCTED ON APRIL 26, 2017

Brian Hanegan: Do you have any recommendations for playing your Sonata with a classical setup versus a jazz setup?

Ramon Ricker: It depends. If your jazz setup is extreme, I don't know if you can control it enough to play the piece. For instance, on tenor saxophone, if you have a wide, open Dukoff mouthpiece, that is going to be pretty tough to make it work. I wrote the piece with a soprano in hand. For soprano, my mouthpiece is pretty open, I play a Selmer F. I use this for both classical and jazz music. I play this same setup in all kinds of musical styles, including orchestral works (like *Bolero*) and others. With this mouthpiece, I have the flexibility to make it sound good for both the "legit" and jazz styles. To me, it's just one mouthpiece. I would use the same mouthpiece on tenor also. I have an old Brilhart six-star hard rubber, which is good, but I'm not playing in a funk band. Again, with this tenor setup, I am able to play orchestral works, classical works, and jazz too. That mouthpiece suits me. I think if I was playing it on alto, I would use a Meyer 7. It is very bright, but it is good for playing lead. When I play "legit" on alto, I use a Selmer D. I think it depends on what you're going for. You have to be able to have some nuance when you're playing. Therefore, you don't want to be playing an extreme mouthpiece as far as the facing is concerned for this piece. That is what I would suggest. I try to find the sound in my head. For most people, if you give them a mouthpiece that they are unfamiliar with, in a couple weeks they will come back and they will sound how they did before. They might be working like crazy to get

that sound, but they will be close, in the area of how they sounded before. So, it's mainly what you hear, your makeup, inside of your mouth, that gets you to the sound that you eventually use all of the time. Actually, the idea is to have a sound that can change colors depending on what you are playing.

BH: I have heard a number of players perform the second movement on tenor saxophone. Do you have any reservations or recommendations regarding which horn to play on each movement?

RR: I think the B♭ version probably fits the instrument the best. It was written on a B♭ horn. But, I think I made some range adjustments on the E♭ version, I can't remember. I actually played this on clarinet too. I was asked to give an entrepreneurial talk at LSU a couple years ago. I played the first movement on clarinet and I have to tell you it's a lot harder on clarinet! I thought I could whip it up on clarinet, and that was not the case. I had to go back and practice the movement, it was pretty tough. Regarding the second movement on tenor saxophone, sure, go ahead and do it. I think it would be good. It's a long haul on soprano, about twenty-five minutes by the end of the last movement. You can get tired.

BH: Are you ever going to write another jazz-influenced piece for saxophone in the future? Or have you considered writing another jazz sonata?

RR: Geeze, I don't know. I retired in 2015, and I have still been playing and doing a lot of stuff. But I haven't written anything since 2001, when I took an administrative position at Eastman. I was also teaching the DMA students and some of the MM students, until that phased out. But I haven't written anything in

that time period. I want to get going again. Actually, I remembered since our previous interview that I did arrange this piece for five saxophones and rhythm section. So I could easily go back in and arrange this for a soloist and rhythm section. I looked it up, it's on a real old version of finale and won't open on my current computer. However, I have and old G4 computer in my basement that it may be on. I will see if it is there. I have some ideas for wind ensemble pieces and a few transcriptions that I am interested in doing. I have so many other projects going on right now that I just haven't gotten to them yet.

BH: Regarding the first movement, I wrote about the presence of the Super Locrian scale. Should I also include information about the major seventh ♯5 chord?

RR: Yes, there is a presence of the Super Locrian scale. In addition, much of the piece is influenced by the major seventh ♯5 chord. I am looking at the music here. For instance, in the first movement, look at m. 44. There is an influence of the major seventh ♯5 chord here. In the second movement, there are chords in the music, in particular m. 37, where the harmony is built around this chord as well. Get the book that Walt Weiskopf and I did regarding the major seventh ♯5 chord. This will shed some additional light on how to think of it. Once you start hearing it, you will hear it all over the place.

BH: Regarding improvisation, do you have a method or a routine that works well with your students?

RR: Well, I have students learn things in all keys and really try to connect the wire between their hands and their ears. Theoretically, if you can sing it, you should be able to come close to playing it. We don't have any trouble singing in C♯ as

opposed to C. But, we do have trouble playing in C♯ as opposed to C. I have found that students can make great progress by doing a few concentrated things in all keys. But, you have to slog through it. First, it is discouraging because you are not very good at it. For instance, I have freshman students play *K.C. Blues* from the Charlie Parker Omnibook. Then I would have them learn the solo and commit it to memory. From there, we start working it in all keys. In three months, or over the course of a semester, they can get it. This is just one thing out of the diet of saxophone playing that my students are doing. Here is another suggestion to achieve more success with this process. First, just get the head of the tune down. Then, go back to the head and take small pieces of the melody and play them up a whole step. Normally, this interval is easier than a half step. A student will make progress after a practice session, if they focus on those little bits and pieces. I have done this with junior-high kids as well. If they are having a hard time figuring things out on a particular "lick," you can identify the harmonic underpinning for them. This way they are using a combination of learning chords with their fingers to make progress. It takes too much time to learn an entire tune in a different key. You won't retain as much this way. That is why it is important to focus on learning small pieces of a solo in all keys to build towards learning an entire tune. The second thing I have them play is Charlie Parker's *Blues for Alice* from the Omnibook. They generally knock this one out in another semester. By that time, the students are doing pretty well. Other students have done harder tunes as well. Then, we start combining improvisation in these new keys. Let's say you get *Blues for Alice* in the original

key. I will advise students to take a solo and use the Parker transcription as their thread and play 90% of the transcribed solo and 10% you. Then I would say, give me 60% solo and 40% you. From there, I flip it and say 60% you and 40% solo. Finally, I do 90% you and 10% solo. That way, they are using the solo to learn the correct style and how to play in the pocket. This also involves listening to these solos multiple times and really analyzing the player you are transcribing. Concentrated listening, so you get every single nuance correct. If a guy vibrates three times, you vibrate three times. When you have students coming in and they have the Omnibook and still can't play the solo, they haven't done enough listening. It hasn't sunken in yet. I tell them this story about when I used to go to Germany every summer with the Eastman Philharmonia. I could speak a little German, but not enough to notice different accents. I went to this party once, and I was talking with this woman. She was asking me if I heard the accent from one of the other people at the party. She was telling me it was really strange. I told her I didn't even notice. Then it dawned on me that I didn't know enough German to pick up on that. I couldn't tell. It's a similar thing in music. Students think they are playing jazz, but it doesn't sound like jazz to someone who knows. That is why it is so important to have that intense listening experience. This goes for classical music too. Then you won't do stupid things like clip off the ends of phrases, or play too short or too long of notes in certain kinds of music. I really try to drill that into my students and for them to dissect what they sound like and to use their ears at all times.

BH: You are extremely accomplished and have a lot of different projects going on at all times. How do you balance your work with your personal life?

RR: Now that I am retired, I have a perfect balance with work and life. You go through periods of time when you are working a lot with many long hours of teaching, playing, and writing. Towards the end of my professional career, I would shut things down around 5-6pm to help balance that out. In the early days, I was working all the time. I liked that. When you have a family, it can be a tough balance.

BH: Thanks again for the interview and for all of your critical insight regarding your piece. Your contributions to my dissertation are invaluable.

RR: My pleasure. I am honored that you have chosen to dig into my *Jazz Sonata* for your DMA dissertation. I bet you will be able to get a publication or two out of it. Looking forward to reading the finished product.