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Creating unity within an album for  
compositions defined as “jazz style”

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University of Wollongong

Goyer, Edward, Creating unity within an album for compositions defined as “jazz style”, MCA-Res thesis, Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, 2008.  
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**Creating Unity Within An Album For  
Compositions  
Defined As “Jazz Style”**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree**

**MASTER OF CREATIVE ARTS RESEARCH**

from

The University of Wollongong

by

**Edward Goyer**

**FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS**

**2008**

## **Thesis Certification**

### **Certification**

**I, Edward Goyer, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award Master of Creative Arts Research, in the department of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.**

**Edward Goyer**

**26 March 2008**

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## ABSTRACT

Unity is an important factor when I compose music as it creates a sense of logic elements upon which the language of music can be communicated to the listeners. By the term 'listener' I am referring to anyone, novice or educated, who listens to my music. Without the logic of unity, communication breaks down and the language of music consisting of both emotional and structural elements is no longer experienced by the listener.

As part of my compositional approach, I have developed a set of rules that would allow unity to be created throughout the pieces to be recorded on the album. During the compositional process, it occurred to me that the largest unifying factor between all my compositions is that they were all written in "jazz fusion style".

If I was to consider style as a unifying feature, I needed to come up with a definition for what I believe qualifies my compositions as having been stylistically composed and performed as jazz, a major part of which, is the process of interplay and interaction between members of the ensemble.

All the compositions on the album were recorded live with no multi-tracking or overdubbing. Using a live recording creates the maximum amount of interaction and interplay amongst the ensemble members necessary for my definition of jazz style in my compositions. It is my aim that the listener should be able to experience unifying factors between my compositions in some form while listening to the recording provided. They



should also be able to recognize elements of interaction and interplay between ensemble members creating a sense of jazz style throughout my compositions.

### **Acknowledgements**

This Master of Creative Arts Research exegesis was supervised by Dr. Houston Dunleavy. I would like to thank Kjell Goyer for his musical suggestions and advice over the years. Gordon Rytmeister, Mark Costa, Kelvin Haisman and Adrian Petlevanny for playing on the recording of my compositions and doing such a great job of it. I would also like to thank Astid Holz for recording my compositions at JMC Studios in Surry Hills(Sydney).

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

‘Unity’, as defined by John White, is “the binding relationship amongst all the parts of a musical composition”. (White, 23)

This exegesis will look at the methods of creating unity within my compositions and between each track on the album. It will also define why this style of music I have written and performed can be defined as “jazz fusion style”.

Unity allows the listener to grasp a musical idea and follow it through the composition: to use it as a vessel on which to enjoy the musical journey. According to White “much of the meaning in a piece of music is found in the events during its flow”.(White, 22.) The songs on the album are related to each other through the various musical elements, which grow and create unity, in the generative process.

The music in my pieces has employed the instrumental language developed throughout the history of jazz. Other compositional devices such as combining different scales to create hybrid scales, Japanese traditional musical influences and improvisation have been developed to create a hybrid jazz style.

My compositions will create and explore a jazz style through interaction in the music between the members of the ensembles and how the players' interpretation helps to create the end product of a style of music that could be considered to be jazz.

Rules were developed that would allow me to create a system of unity across all the compositions. That is, each composition contains musical elements that may be recognizable by the listener throughout the album.

The rules are as follows:

1. All the ideas for each composition must originate from one original composition which I call 'The Template'. Using one song as a template on which to base the other compositions will create more unity amongst the other compositions.
2. The starting point for creating unity within an album is creating unity within The Template. It would be impossible to create unity within an album if there was not sufficient unity contained within The Template composition itself.
3. If a connection of unity between compositions is not recognized consciously by the listener it may be recognized subconsciously. I would expect educated listeners to form conscious connections more often than novice listeners. Recent studies have shown that "a subconscious brain is far more active, purposeful and independent than previously known."(Carey,B. New York Times, 2007) In my opinion, a subconscious recognition of unity could still be considered as recognition.

## 1.2 ANALYSIS METHODS

Why analyze music at all? According to Cook, “analysis is to uncover what the music thinking was” (Cook, 19.) For me, musical composition takes place on a conscious and subconscious level therefore musical analysis of my own compositions and the processes involved will hopefully reveal subconscious process to my conscious mind, making me more aware and skilled as a composer and listener.

The analysis of “3 Sided Coin” or The Template can be divided into two main sections:

1. The analysis of the compositional process used in the creation of the piece.
2. How these processes interrelate to create unity within the composition.

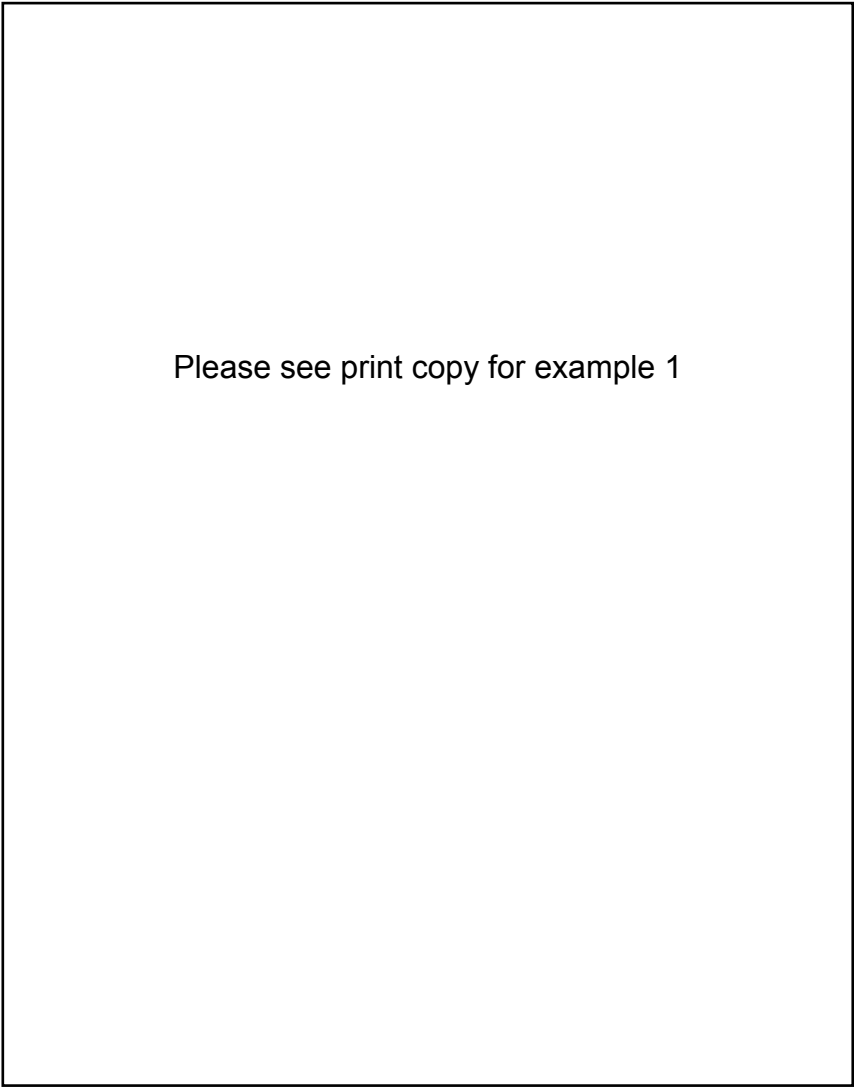
To analyze The Template composition (3 Sided Coin) I will use the process of musical analysis developed by John D. White from *Comprehensive Musical Analysis*.

White divides the analysis process into three different areas:

- Microanalysis
- Middle-Analysis
- Macro analysis

**Example 1**

Middle and Macroanalysis charts (White, 26 - 27)



Please see print copy for example 1

White also suggests that the compositional process can be observed on any of the above three analytical levels but is “least apparent on the micro analytical level.” (White, 22.)

Therefore I will analyze The Template at the middle and macro analytical levels only.

(Example 1)

White also states that “the analyst can see that at any point in this process the choices of how next to deploy the musical elements are very wide indeed”. (White, 22-23.) White suggests that the vast number of analytical options can be “distilled into four”: (White, 23.)

1. Repetition
2. Development
3. Variation
4. Use of new material

I will analyze The Template composition using these above four options as sub-headings for my analysis except that I will replace Unity for Variation in White’s table. This replacement is necessary to create more relevance to the central discussion of my exegesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### 3 SIDED COIN ( THE TEMPLATE ) ANALYSIS

#### 2.1 Repetition

“3 Sided Coin” or The Template is a composition based around the juxtaposition of two minor pentatonic scales G Minor & Bb Minor.(Example 2) The idea of using pentatonic scales to form the basis of harmonic and melodic progressions is based on the piece *A Flock Descends Into The Pentagonal Garden* by Toru Takemitsu 1977. All melody lines and harmonic progressions are for the most part based around the notes formed as a result of the combination of these two scales. The result is an octatonic scale (Example 3) from which I have chosen to start on G as this key forms the main tonal centre of The Template composition.

#### Example 2

G Minor Pentatonic

Bb Minor Pentatonic

Please see print copy for example 2

#### Example 3

G Octatonic scale

Please see print copy for example 3



Closer analysis of the verse melody ( letters A & B ) show that the notes used in the octatonic scale are all present except the Ab which does not appear until the chorus melody ( letter C ).

The harmonic movement contains the notes of the octatonic scale in a minor third type of ascending pattern (Example 4) however Ab as a chord tonic note is also not included in this progression. The harmonic movement for the verse melody is as follows:

**Example 4**  
**Verse(letters A & B ) harmonic movement 3 Sided Coin**

Please see print copy for example 4
-------------------------------------

The third degree of the scale in the harmony is not included to create a more “open type” of effect in the harmonic timbre. The main harmonic rhythmic pattern is repeated in this two bar ostinato pattern throughout the composition at various places.

The same harmonic movement for the verse is repeated at the chorus in the 3/8 section except that the harmonic rhythm has changed to one chord per bar.

Other aspects of repetition are form and instrumentation. The roles of the instruments mostly remain the same throughout the entire piece. The roles of the instruments can be defined as follows:

- Vibraphone- plays melody and ostinato groove in introduction
- Electric vibraphone- Plays improvised solo section with a synth sound
- Keys- plays the harmony
- Guitar- doubles melody with the vibraphone and takes a solo.
- Bass- keeps the time and the groove and dictates the harmony.
- Drums- keeps the time and the groove and takes a solo.

This is repetitious as the instruments mostly do not vary from their assigned roles throughout the entire piece except for the solo sections.

The form also contains repeating motifs and sections. This piece is written in a verse/chorus structure with the main motif that re-appears at various times throughout the piece. Below is a diagram of the form. (Example 5)

**Example 5**  
**Analysis of form for 3 sided coin**

SECTION	ANALYSIS
Introduction 1	Ostinato motif (example 4) played in unison with band 4 bars in length.
Verse 1 or section A	Vibraphone and guitar play melody. Bass and piano play introduction riff. Drums 4/4 rock feel
Verse 2 or section A1	Vibraphone and guitar play retrograded melody. Bass plays independent line separate to the opening ostinato. Drums continue 4/4/ rock feel
Chorus 1 or section B	Time feel change to 3/8. Vibraphone plays melody, guitar not playing. Drums play 3/8 feel. Bass also in 3 feel. Keys playing chords. 8 bars in length.
Chorus 2 or section B1	Vibraphone continues melody. Bass plays more syncopated 3 feel. Drums play in 4/4 time over 3/8 feel. Piano plays harmony. 8 bars in length.
Solo Section	Electronic vibraphone and guitar play solos around repeated chord changes. Other instrument maintain rhythm and harmony and interact with soloist. Change back to 4/4/ rock feel. Length defined by soloist..
Bridge section/Bass solo	New material introduced for melody line. Guitar, electronic vibraphone and keys play melody in unison. Drums maintain 4/4 feel bass solos around melody spaces. 16 bars in length. 2 x 8 bars sections repeated.
Introduction 2	All instruments except drums vamp introduction ostinato motif. Drums solo around motif rhythm. Length defined by soloist.
Verse 1 or section A 3	Exactly the same as verse 1
Verse 2 or section A4	Exactly the same as verse 2
Chorus 1 or section B2	Exactly the same as chorus 1
Chorus 2 or section B3	Exactly the same as chorus 2
Ending or Coda section	Unison syncopated rhythmic figure played by all instruments. 2 bars in length.

From this diagram repetition is evident in the following areas:

- Repetition of the total form of the song. Song repeats itself exactly after drum solo/introduction two sections.

- Repetition between sections of verses one and two with slight variations to melody and bass line feel.
- Repetition between chorus sections one and two with slight variation to the feel in the bass and drum parts. Melody repeats exactly at the chorus.
- Repetition of the roles of the instruments/timbre repetition.
- Repetition of the chord changes used for the guitar and electric vibraphone solos

## 2.2 Development

The development of “3 Sided Coin” is based around the initial octatonic scale from which the piece was created. On a macro level, the development of this piece could be seen as the overall combination of possibilities derived from the original octatonic scale.

On a more middle level analysis there are more subtle developmental devices at work. The initial verse melody at letter A (Example 6) is developed to become the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the verse melody at letter B (Example 7). Although the harmonic rhythm and chord changes remain the same, the melody at B is a retrograde version of the melody at letter A. The rhythm however is not retrograde and repeats the same rhythmic pattern found initially at

letter A. The numbers are used to highlight the retrograde line used in the construction on the verse melodies at letter A and B.

**Example 6**  
**End of letter A main melody in “3 Sided Coin”**

Please see print copy for example 6

**Example 7**  
**Start of letter B 2<sup>nd</sup> half of main melody retrograde in “3 Sided Coin”**

Please see print copy for example 7

The main harmonic idea also develops further at letter C or the chorus. Here the harmonic rhythm changes to one chord per bar on the first beat of the bar instead of four chords per bar heard before in the ostinato pattern for the introduction and the verse (Example 4.) Upper extensions of the harmony are also introduced here with the addition of the 11th and 9th tones into the chords structure creating a richer sound and thicker texture.

The feel also is developed here with a change from the 4/4 16<sup>th</sup> note feel into a 3/8 waltz creating a double time feel. The melody is still based around the original octatonic scale

but for the first time the Ab is introduced in the melody. The chorus melody is also not as syncopated as the verse melody to match the less syncopated harmonic rhythm.

The electronic vibraphone helps to develop the timbre of the piece by injecting a completely new electronic synthesized lead sound during the solo and the bridge sections. It is only heard in these sections and is not repeated. The electronic vibraphone still allows the performer to use the four mallet technique developed by Gary Burton but also to select a wide range of synthesized sounds. The result is a hybrid mix between the keyboard and the vibraphone making it a very practical instrument for this fusion style of jazz.

Other variations in timbre occur during the solo sections where different instruments are featured. The drum solo is featured over the introduction riff creating a different timbral feel for that riff.

Although solo sections contain their own extensive examples of harmonic/melodic/rhythmic development through interaction with the other instruments in the ensemble, they are not mentioned here but will be addressed in more detail later.

### 2.3 Unity

As mentioned earlier (page two), it would be impossible to create unity within an album if there was not sufficient unity contained within The Template composition itself.

On a macroanalytical level, the main unifying factor for The Template is the roles of the instruments and their relatively static timbre throughout the piece. As outlined earlier (Example 5) the repetitious nature of the form also creates a sense of unity.

Unity is also found in the harmonic progression which repeats the same pattern of chords, but with different harmonic rhythm and chord qualities for the duration of the composition. I think this pattern is the most dominant and easily recognizable compositional device that creates unity within this composition and therefore deserves more attention.

Below is the main harmonic progression for '3 Sided Coin' (Example 8). The Chords are all in root position and contain no 3<sup>rd</sup> degree.

**Example 8**  
**Main harmonic movement for '3 sided coin'**

Please see print copy for example 8
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The root notes of harmonic progression in example 8 use all the notes of the original octatonic scale (Example 3) except that Ab is not included. This compositional device creates further unity by linking the notes of the scale used to create the melody and the harmonic progression of the composition. The harmonic progression, apart from its relationship to the octatonic scale, is characterized by internal intervallic relationships. The most dominant interval in this progression is that of the minor third. The minor third movements are between G & Bb, Bb & Db, C & Eb, D & F. The minor third interval was the original interval used to create the octatonic scale from the blending of two pentatonic scales a minor third apart (Examples 1&2)

The melody of verses one, two and the chorus also start with the interval of a minor third. (Example 9). Furthermore, the chords for the chorus are also mostly chords of a minor quality. Given these relationships, it would be apparent that the minor third interval and the minor sonority play a huge part in the overall unity of The Template composition.

**Example 9**  
**Minor 3<sup>rd</sup> Interval at Start of Verses 1, 2 & Chorus in "3 Sided Coin" (Letters A,B&C)**

Please see print copy for example 9
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## 2.4 Use of New Material

There are only two occasions in The Template composition where completely new material is introduced. The first is the introduction of the electronic vibraphone during the solo section and the bridge at letters D and E.

Not surprisingly, it is also at the bridge where the second lot of new material is introduced. (Example 10) In a sense, the synthesized electronic vibraphone sound seems to be preparing the listener for the musical change that is about to occur.

The second case of new material at the bridge is melodically based. Here for the first time notes outside the original octatonic scale (Example 3) are introduced. Example 10 below shows the exact line played at the bridge and the new notes that it introduces.

### Example 10 New material at Bridge

Please see print copy for example 10
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The new notes that differ from the original octatonic scale are the F#, E and A. There is a much heavier emphasis on the F# than any of the other three tones.

This line is based around the notes that can be played on the Shō. The Shō is a Japanese reed instrument used in traditional Gagaku orchestral music. Although it can only play “tone clusters” of sound, if the pitches were laid out so that the Shō could play in a linear sense, the following scale would be created. (Example 11)

**Example 11**  
**The Horizontal arrangement of the Shō pitches. ( Nuss, 58.)**

Please see print copy for example 11
--------------------------------------

It is from this series of pitches that the introduction of new material for the bridge melody was derived. In fact, looking at the first four notes of the horizontal arrangement of Shō pitches, (Example 11) we see they are identical to the first four notes used in the opening passage of the bridge melody. (Example 10)

## **CHAPTER 3 NEW COMPOSITIONS**

### **3.1 Creating New Compositions from The Template**

One of my rules for creating unity within an album as mentioned on page two was to take a compositional device(s) and develop that idea into a new composition. By using this technique, each new composition should then relate to the original composition and hence create a sense of unity throughout the album. I will analyze the compositions on the album and demonstrate how compositional devices from The Template were used in the development of these new compositions. The new compositions created from The Template on the album are:

- “Dichotomies”(Track 1)
- “Sunday Catch Up Plan”(Track 4)
- “Time Stories”(Track 2)

### 3.2 DICHOTOMIES (Track 1)

“Dichotomies” is so called due to the two main contrasting sections that appear in the piece:

1. The opening free improvised section.
2. The structured rhythmic section.

The free improvised section is based around the same scale used in The Template composition; the G octatonic scale. (Example 3) This same octatonic scale also forms the majority of the notes found in the two main riffs in the rhythmic section at letter B. (Example 12)

#### Example 12. Two Main Riffs in Dichotomies.

( Riff No. 1)

Please see print copy for example 12
--------------------------------------

(Riff No. 2)

The minor third interval featured in the harmonic progression used in The Template composition (Example 9 ) is repeated again here in “Dichotomies” with the G to Bb intervallic leap between riffs one and two. (Example 12)

Another compositional device used in The Template composition was the Shō pitches in their horizontal arrangement at the bridge. (Example 11) In “Dichotomies”, they are also used but in their traditional role as a collection of harmonic clusters played by the vibraphone at letter B. (Example 13 & 14)

**Example 13**  
**The Eleven “Gagaku” Chords of the Shō (Nuss, 57.)**

Please see print copy for example 13

**Example 14**  
**Shō Influenced Chord Clusters Played on the Vibraphone in Dichotomies.**

Please see print copy for example 14

Although the chords in “Dichotomies” are not in the exact transposition as the traditional Shō chords, the intervallic relationships between the voicings are similar. Due to the technical limitations of the vibraphone being able to play only four notes at one time, it would be impossible to replicate the traditional voicings exactly.

On closer analysis of the Shō chord clusters in “Dichotomies” (Example 14), it appears that chords 1 and 2 resemble the chord group “Bi” in the traditional Shō chords (Example 13) while chord 3 resembles “Ge” and chord 4 resembles “Kû”

Unity is also created through timbral similarities. The instrumentation does not change and their roles within the ensemble are also consistent.

Both pieces also use the electronic vibraphone exclusively in the solo sections, however in “Dichotomies” a marimba sound is used instead of a synthesized lead sound.(Track 1, 3.35”)

### **3.3 “Sunday Catch Up Plan” (Track 4)**

Unlike “Dichotomies” which was more scale/harmonically related to the template composition, “Sunday Catch Up Plan” is rhythmically related.

The most obvious rhythmic connection between this piece and The Template composition is the “feel.” The subdivisions of the beat, the use of syncopation, and a very similar pulse all contribute to an almost identical feel. Although “Sunday Catch Up Plan” is written with subdivisions of quavers and The Template with semi-quaver subdivisions,

the tempo in “Sunday Catch Up Plan” is almost twice as fast, which creates the same rhythmic pulse between the two pieces.

Another factor that contributes to the similarities of feel are the rhythmic patterns used in both pieces (Example 15). The rhythm of The Template has been re-notated using quaver subdivisions for analytical practicality.

**Example 15**  
**Comparison of the rhythmic figures used in “Sunday Catch Up Plan” & The Template**

**The Template (3 sided coin) Letters A & B**

Please see print copy for example 15

**Sunday Catch Up Plan (Letter B)**

On a macro-analytical level, both rhythms are four-bar repeating ostinato patterns that contain syncopation. On a middle-analytical level, more similarities become apparent:

- The rhythm of bars one & two of The Template, if played in retrograde, resemble the rhythm of bars one & two of “Sunday Catch Up Plan.”
- Bar three of both pieces are similar in the way they contain simplistic rhythmic figures with no syncopation.
- Bar four of both pieces are syncopated and have the same role of providing an ending rhythmic figure that leads back to the start of the ostinato.

Another rhythmic feature in The Template used in “Sunday Catch Up Plan” was a change of pulse to a double time feel. At letter C in The Template the pulse changes from 4/4 to 3/8 creating a double time feel. This is also apparent in “Sunday Catch Up Plan” at the coda section where “double time” is written on the score.

### **3.4 “Time Stories” (Track 2)**

“Time Stories” is more subtle in its relationship to The Template composition. Because the relationship does not occur on a scalar/harmonic level, the connections may not be instantly apparent to the listener on a conscious level. The relationships to The Template composition take place on an indirect harmonic, structural and rhythmic level.

“Time Stories” is related to The Template through its harmonic progression. Although the harmonic progressions between these two pieces are not identical they share similarities on a middle-analytical level.

The harmonic progression of The Template uses a pattern of ascending minor third intervals (Example 9). I used this idea of a harmonic progression of thirds for the composition “Time Stories”, except the harmonic line descends instead of ascends and



the interval of a third can be either major or minor. The chords used in “Time Stories” are mostly diatonic in the key of E minor (Example 16).

**Example 16**  
**Harmonic progression used in “Time Stories” Track 2**

Please see print copy for example 16
--------------------------------------

This main harmonic progression of E to C to A to F is used throughout “Time Stories” with the use of passing chords to add variety. The progression is most obvious at letter B in the solo section and the 3/4 drum solo section in the coda.

The change of time signature to a 3/4 feel in the coda was an idea that was originally used in The Template composition at letter C, changing from a 4/4 to a 3/8 feel. Although this connection to The Template composition is not as obvious as some of the others mentioned above, it still contributes towards creating a connection to The Template as well as unity throughout the album.

The idea of a drum solo played over a repeated vamp in The Template (Example 4) is also used in “Time Stories.” The end coda section follows the main harmonic riff in 3/4 in a four-bar pattern over which the drums take a solo adlib.

Below is a summary outlining the connections of the album compositions to The Template composition and the compositional devices that were selected from The Template to “spawn” the new compositions:

<b>Composition</b>	<b>Relationship to The Template (3 Sided Coin)</b>
“Dichotomies”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same octatonic scale used for the main riffs and melodic structures</li> <li>• Interval of a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> featured in harmonic movement</li> <li>• Shō style chords used in vibraphone</li> </ul>
“Sunday Catch Up Plan”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main rhythm of riff similar to rhythm used in the template</li> <li>• Same feel and rhythmic pulse with lots of syncopation and phrasing</li> <li>• Use of double time feel change</li> </ul>
“Time Stories”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main harmonic progression based around intervals of 3rds</li> <li>• Change of time signature to a 3 feel. 4/4/ to 3/4/ change</li> <li>• Drum solo played over repeated vamp of main harmonic riff</li> </ul>

Apart from the compositional devices mentioned above, the most easily identifiable and, I believe, most important feature of unity amongst the compositions on the album is that they are all in jazz style. It is because of this stylistic unifying feature that I feel it necessary to examine exactly what I mean by the term jazz style.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **USE OF “JAZZ STYLE” IN MY COMPOSITIONS**

#### **4.1 Defining the Term “Jazz Style”**

The word “jazz” and the word “style” need further explanation due to the broad definitions of these words.

The Collins Dictionary of Music defines style as:

“ Its manner of treating form, melody, rhythm, counterpoint, harmony and tone- colour; it is closely related to and limited by its medium, but not entirely dependent on it, since features of the style appropriate to one medium may be transferred to another.”(1988, 431)

The different sound worlds of my individual compositions stem from the collective influences of other composers/performers. This in turn has influenced the style in which the compositions were written and performed.

The influences of various jazz styles on each of my compositions are outlined in the following table:

Composition	Stylistic Influence
“3 Sided Coin”	Dave Weckl Band - “Multiplicity.” Jazz fusion style of music/drumming.
“Dichotomies”	Dave Samuels & David Friedman - “Double Image.” Hybrid jazz style of classical, fusion and free jazz.
“Sunday Catch Up Plan”	Cal Tjader - “ The Contemporary Music Of Mexico And Brazil.” Latin style vibraphone improvisation/composing.
“Time Stories”	Garry Burton Quartet – “Passengers.” Fusion style of vibraphone improvisation/composing.

The article *Three Approaches to Defining Jazz* by Gridley, Maxham and Hoff (513-514), has compiled a list of some of the definitions:

- Sigmund Spaeth: “Jazz is not a musical form: it is a process of treatment. It is possible to take any conventional piece of music and “jazz it.”
- Chambers’ Encyclopedia: “Jazz- Dance music, generally syncopated, played by a band eccentrically composed. The jazz drummer, a sort of one man band, provides the characteristic feature of jazz which is noise.....”
- Henry Osgood: “ It is the spirit of the music, not the mechanics of its frame or the characteristics of the superstructure built upon that frame, that determines whether or not it is jazz.”
- Henry Martin: “Jazz is a 20<sup>th</sup> century music originated in America by black Americans and characterized by a strong projection of rhythm.”

It is evident from reading these quotations that the word jazz has no concrete meaning.

The meanings have also changed through the decades from the time when jazz was first introduced as the popular swing band music of the 30's.

It could be argued that elements of the jazz tradition such as rhythmic qualities and improvisational styles are important when defining the jazz. Although my compositions contain syncopation, improvisation and strong rhythmic figures outlined in some of the above definitions, I believe they alone are not sufficient to define my music as jazz.

Robert Hodson in his book *Interaction, Improvisation and Interplay in Jazz* outlines what he believes qualifies jazz style of improvisation and writing:

“When one listens to jazz, one almost never hears a single improvised line, but rather a texture, a musical fabric woven by several musicians in real time.

It is important at all times to remember that an improvised solo line is but one thread in that fabric, and it is a thread supported by, responded to, and responsive of the parts being played by the other musicians in the group.” (Hodson, 1.)

It is this type of interaction that I will explore, between the musicians in my improvised solos, that I believe defines what can be described as jazz style.

Even when musicians are not improvising but instead playing the head over the written chord progression, improvisation is still taking place.

Hodson also comments on this type of interaction within the ensemble:

“Even though standard jazz performance practice assigns certain musical roles to each member of the rhythm section, the way that the members choose to fulfill these roles is flexible and often

spontaneously negotiated in performance. In other words, all members of the ensemble are improvising simultaneously; the improvised saxophone melody is supported by the rhythm section's equally improvised accompaniment." (Hodson, 7.).

Jazz analysis can take place on many levels, such as form, motif development and scales. The analysis of jazz style in my compositions will look specifically at the interplay and interaction between members of the ensemble during the improvised solo sections. This is where most of the interaction and interplay occurs, which I believe can be offered as a definition of jazz style.

## **4.2 Interaction and Interplay within the Ensemble**

I will examine various sections of ensemble interaction between the instruments. Although the interaction and interplay is constant through the recording, I have chosen what I think are the best examples of this type of interaction. This is what I maintain to be a significant factor which contributes to defining a performance in jazz style. Even when the ensemble members are performing the melody or just playing the chord changes there is still interaction with the feel and the groove of the piece.

Each instrument has its predefined role in the ensemble but can also vary from this to support and interact with other ensemble members and the front line instrument (the

soloist). The support of the front line instrument is offered by defining the harmonic, the regular rhythm and non-regular rhythmic events. I have chosen to focus on the interaction between the front line instrument and the ensemble. Below is a table outlining each instrument's role and relationship to the front line instrument(s).

INSTRUMENT	ROLE & INTERACTION
Piano and Guitar	Provides regular and non- regular harmonic events. Interacts with rhythmic and non-rhythmic events between drums and soloist.
Bass Guitar	Interacts with regular rhythms between drums, piano and guitar. Interacts with soloist, piano and guitar with regular harmonic and non- regular harmonic events.
Drums	Provides regular rhythms and interacts between bass regular rhythms and non-regular rhythms of soloist and piano/guitar.
Front Line ( Soloist)	Provides regular and non- regular rhythms. Interacts with non regular rhythmic events on drums, piano/guitar. Interacts with harmonic events regular and non- regular between bass, piano/guitar. Provides melodic variation based on harmonic changes and provides new motif ideas and direction of solo.

### 4.3 “Jazz Style” Interaction Within My Compositions

The first section I will look at is an example of rhythmic interaction between the electronic vibraphone and the drums between 3.51” and 3.55” on track 1 of the recording for the song “Dichotomies.” (Example 17).

#### **Example 17**

**Electric Vibraphone & Drum Interaction in Dichotomies. 3.51” – 3.55”. Track 1 of Recording.**

Please see print copy for example 17

At bar one the rhythmic figure introduced by the vibraphone has not yet been realized by the drummer who is playing a different type of feel with accents on different beats. By bar two however, the accents of the drummer and the vibraphone have linked up. As the rhythmic pattern played by the vibraphone was repetitive, it allowed the drummer to listen to the vibraphone player and attempt to interact. By bar three, the interaction is obvious with the same rhythmic figure played in both the drums and the vibraphone.



Although it is not always exactly the same, it is evident that both the vibraphone and the drums are listening and attempting to interact and interplay with one another.

The next example occurs between the electric vibraphone and the keyboard between 3.45' and 3.47'. The interaction is on a harmonic level rather than a rhythmic level. In this example, the keyboard provides new harmonic material with which the soloist interacts (Example 18).

**Example 18**

**Electronic Vibraphone & Keyboard Interaction in “Dichotomies.” 3.45” – 3.47”. Track 1 of Recording**

Please see print copy for example 18

At figure two, (Example 18) the keyboard plays a Bb as the top note of the chord voicing for the first time in the solo section. It is evident that the soloist (electronic vibraphone) reacts to the change of the minor third voicing over the G chord, the Bb. The soloist

varies from the usual role of repeated rhythmic G's and starts almost instantly to interact with this minor third tonality by incorporating the Bb into the rhythmic ostinato pattern. The keyboard player appears to notice this interaction with the soloist and continues to repeat the figure for the whole bar. There also appears to be some rhythmic interaction with feel and accent placement, however this is not as defined as the rhythmic interaction between the drums and the electronic vibraphone. (Example 17)

“Dichotomies” is unique in the sense that it is my only composition on the album that has elements of free improvisation. Free improvisation takes focus away from the restraints of rhythm and form and allows more interaction to take place between all instruments regardless of respective roles. The concept of a lead instrument or soloist is also blurred as all instruments play a lead role in the free improvisation section. In this example of free improvisation interaction the whole ensemble is involved in collective improvisation as instruments depart from their traditional roles. (Example 19).

**Example 19**  
**Free improvisation in Dichotomies. Track 1 1.00” to 1.06”**

Please see print copy for example 19

In this example, a low role on the vibraphone is complimented by low glissando slides on the bass. This low role effect is also recognized by the drums which play a low and fast roll around the tom toms. It may seem by looking at example 19 that the piano is not interacting. However, by playing in the higher register, the piano is consciously balancing out the lower tones and creating contrast.

The vibraphone and the drums are also interacting on a dynamic level with crescendo and decrescendo passages played in unison. Dynamic interaction is a common element of free improvisation where there is no rhythmic pulse or definite harmonic pattern around which to interact, allowing the musicians greater interactive and improvisational freedoms.

Hodson states that standard jazz performance, with a set of pre-determined chord changes and structure, allows the musicians to “create their individual parts within a range of possibilities defined by formal aspects of the tune being performed.” (Hodson, 117.) However in free jazz performance the rules of performance and interaction are different. According to Hodson free jazz “reverses this relationship; rather than exerting a controlling influence over the performers, musical materials are instead determined over the course of the performance through communication and negotiation between the musicians.” (Hodson, 117.)

Unlike “Dichotomies”, most of the structure and melody is notated in the piece “3 Sided Coin.” (Track 3)

This means that there is less freedom of interpretation as most of the melody and harmonic progression has been notated. There is however more creative freedom and

interaction in the solo section where musicians are able to expand and develop the harmonic progression and rhythmic aspects of “3 Sided Coin.”

The drummer has no individual drum parts notated but must interact within the ensemble by holding the rhythmic feel together by interpreting the accents and notated rhythmic parts of the melody. The drummer also must feel musical phrasing and set up new phrases by using “fills” which are usually played on the drums called the tom toms. The use of fills emphasizes the phrasing as well as communicating to the other ensemble members that a new section or end of a section is approaching. An example of this interaction in “3 Sided Coin” is at the chorus or letter C where the time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/8. The drummer sets up the new feel at letter C by playing a fill.(Example 20).

**Example 20**

**Ensemble Interaction in “3 Sided Coin” With Drum Fill Before Letter C. Track 3. 30” – 32”**

Please see print copy for example 20

The drums state what the new feel will be. The drum fill tells the ensemble that the new section will have a strong pulse and will not be too heavily syncopated. The simple rhythms in the drum fill and heavy pulse communicates this to the ensemble members. The fact that the drum fill is descending tells the players that the next section will be softer. This also helps contribute to a group decrescendo. All members must be actively listening and interacting with each other for this type of communication to be effectively conveyed.

Another example of drum and ensemble interaction in “3 Sided Coin” is during the second half of letter C where the dynamics increase and the pulse becomes stronger. (Example 21).

**Example 21**  
**Ensemble Interaction in “3 Sided Coin” With Drum Fill. 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of C. Track 3. 35” – 37”**

Please see print copy for example 21

Here the drummer is anticipating the change into the louder, heavier section with a strong back beat, and is communicating this change to the ensemble. This change is set up through a crescendo in the drum fill as well as the fill being played mostly on one pitch of the drum. The effect of this is to build tension in the music as a lead in to the next section.

The piano also is free to interact with the ensemble while playing the melody. The piano has the role of “comping” or playing a rhythmic accompaniment that interacts and reacts to the ensemble. The piano is free to interpret the rhythms and chord voicings of the accompaniment, to interact with and support the ensemble.

In “Time Stories” (Track 2), the piano interacts with the melody during the A section using a “call and response” pattern. (Example 22)

**Example 22**  
**Piano Interaction with Melody in Time Stories. Track 2. 25” – 33”**

Please see print copy for example 22

At figure one and two the piano has restated the melody in a call and response pattern. The same melody notes are used that were found in the melody. By figures three and four the piano accompaniment is varied. Rhythmically speaking, it is still a call and response figure played after the melody. Instead of a single note response, a chordal response was deemed to be most appropriate at the time. The mostly likely reason was that the end of a phrase and start of a new section was approaching after figure four. Playing chords here instead of single line accompaniment emphasizes the end of the phrase and communicates the start of a new section to the ensemble members. The chordal accompaniment is also descending which helps to further emphasize the end of the phrase.

This freedom to respond to the chord progression while interacting with the ensemble is a responsibility of all the players. Listening or “using your ears” is an essential part of jazz style.

This type of ensemble interaction, I believe, defines the modern jazz style. Even if the role is playing the melody or the head of the piece, there is still freedom for interpretation of the feel, dynamics and melody as a result of interaction within the ensemble. It is true to say that there are various degrees of interaction. Improvisational sections contain more ensemble interaction as there are fewer notated sections and hence more spontaneous



interactions as creative freedoms increases. The soloist, who has the greatest amount of creative freedom during the solo section, is creating a real time composition which in turn requires real time response and interaction from the ensemble for the solo section to be successful. A good improvised solo needs good support. However, a good soloist will provide the space and opportunity for that support to occur.

The degree of interaction also depends on the role of the instrument in the ensemble. In jazz, all instruments can be soloing, accompanying or playing the melody; sometimes more than one role at the same time during the course of the performance. Listening and knowing how to react to convey the appropriate musical response makes up the language of the jazz musician and is learned through wider listening to various styles of jazz and real life performance experience. Although there are multitudes of musical styles that are defined as jazz, they all have interaction and interplay as a common element that forms the basis of what I believe defines jazz fusion style.

## **CONCLUSION**

Unity, whether pre-determined or occurring organically, is an important musical element. Without it the performer and the audience would be lost as no musical direction and purpose is communicated. The amount of unity used in a composition is entirely subjective. I experimented in my original compositions with creating unity in an album.

Each piece of music related to another through common elements found in the original composition called The Template. I hope this has been successful given its subjectivity. Creating unity in an album was however a new approach to writing that allowed me to venture in new directions and expand my musical vocabulary.

My compositions I believe all fall under the definition of “jazz style.” This is also a subjective term to define, as jazz has its own unique meaning. I believe the interaction aspect between the players is what defines the jazz experience regardless of style and genre. The nature of jazz is to develop and incorporate new musical styles into its ever increasing repertoire. The jazz style one hundred years from now may be entirely unfamiliar to us or it may still contain the type of ensemble interaction and interplay outlined in this exegesis. Jazz is a progressive music and is destined to change over time along with the definitions of what is jazz.

Wittgenstein believed that “some words simply resist strict definition and we must content ourselves observing their use instead of trying to frame definitions.”(Gridley, Maxham, Hoff, 13.) There must be some truth in this statement however I believe that ensemble interaction and interplay form the common thread of unity between, what I consider to be, the use of jazz style in my compositions.

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## **ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS**

- 1. Dichotomies**
- 2. Time Stories**
- 3. 3 Sided Coin(The Template)**
- 4. Sunday Catch Up Plan**

Please see print copy for original compositions