

APPALACHIA RE-IMAGINED: JAZZ SEXTET ARRANGEMENTS
OF TRADITIONAL APPALACHIAN FOLK SONGS

by

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Abstract

The combination of musical genres is nothing new; different traditions have influenced each other throughout history. In the jazz idiom, this is very common: Latin-influenced jazz has a wide variety of subcategories, the hard bop era had a significant influence from more popular forms of funk and soul, and jazz fusion melded elements of jazz and rock. For this project, I arranged four Appalachian folk songs and one original song to be performed by a jazz sextet. The goals of the project were threefold: to build more knowledge of arranging techniques and formats, to create a work that would honor my Appalachian roots in a personal and creative way while paying respect to the jazz tradition, and to document and perform a suite of original arrangements.

Introduction

Having spent my whole life in the Appalachian mountains, this region has always been important to me. Mountains anywhere give me a sense of comfort and familiarity, and Boone's mountains, though different from those in Asheville where I grew up, have provided me with that same security for the past four years. I have always had the feeling that I belong here, and I am very grateful that so much of my literal and figurative growth has occurred in and among the Appalachian mountains. My musical growth is also deeply associated with the mountains--some of my earliest musical memories are of Appalachian folk songs sung with my family and friends. The decision to attend Appalachian allowed me to maintain the connection between my musical development and this region, and I have been very glad to be in this environment for the last four years.

After feeling constantly divided between jazz and classical study for most of my undergraduate education, I made the decision in October 2017 to study jazz in graduate school. I have benefited greatly from the faculty and resources here at the Hayes School of Music, and I have always felt supported in the pursuit of my musical interests. The opportunities provided to me to study jazz over the past four years—theory classes, improvisation classes, large and small jazz ensembles, sharing the stage with jazz greats, sitting in at faculty members' gigs—have been life-changing, and while I felt prepared for graduate school, one last large jazz-related project seemed an appropriate capstone for my undergraduate experience. My decision to focus on jazz and my sense of home here in Appalachia came together to form the idea for a project: I decided to arrange traditional Appalachian folk songs from my experience growing up here to be performed in a jazz setting.

The process of creating the work itself was a fairly structured one. Mr. Page and I designed most of the steps ahead of time, but some developed naturally as the project progressed. The first step, which occurred before I proposed the project, was to select which songs I felt would best come together in a jazz suite and propose them to Mr. Page. When the list of songs was solidified, I compiled notable recordings of each song and transcribed the melody and harmony in its most basic form. I have included these basic transcriptions with my discussion of each movement of the suite. After listening to the originals quite a bit and finalizing the transcriptions, the next step was coming up with a general idea of how each one would be changed. This step happened fairly gradually, and I finished some full arrangements of tunes before I knew how I would change others at all.

As the overall changes were developed, about one tune per week would get fleshed out into a grand staff or similar basic outline, discussed with Mr. Page, and then scored out for the full group. This involved in-depth work with melody, harmony, form, feel, and orchestration for each. Once each individual song was finished, we formed the suite by choosing an order and making some adjustments to allow for smooth transitions between the songs. When all the music had been written, I extracted and visually cleaned up the parts, emailed them to the group, and booked a date for the performance and defense.

The Songs

I.	Hard Times Come Again No More (Stephen Foster).....	6
II.	Dark As A Dungeon (Merle Travis).....	13
III.	Wildwood Flower (Traditional).....	23
IV.	Five Hundred Miles (Hedy West).....	30
V.	Hudsonia (Caleb McMahon).....	40

All arrangements by Caleb McMahon

“Hard Times Come Again No More”

“Hard Times Come Again No More,” by classic American composer Stephen Foster, was originally a parlor song, but has been recorded by Appalachian folk and pop artists such as the Red Clay Ramblers and James Taylor (among others). It has a plaintive melody and very simple harmony based only on the I, IV, and V chords.

I chose this song because it has a strong connection to my childhood. I listened to it a lot (especially the James Taylor recording) with my family when I was growing up. Choosing music that I connect to personally felt important since the whole project is a creative, personally expressive endeavor. I felt that I could write more meaningful and powerful music based on works that I already relate to. I also chose the song as a representative of the Appalachian genre; it has themes of poverty, hardship, and fellowship which I associate with a lot of Appalachian folk music. Additionally, it has a beautiful, plaintive melody that would work well in jazz instrumentation.

HARD TIMES COME AGAIN NO MORE

STEPHEN FOSTER

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of six staves of music. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. Chords are indicated by letters C, G, F, and C/G above the notes. The score includes a first and second ending bracketed together, and a coda at the end.

While trying to preserve the basic structure of the song, I did make some changes to the form to help the structure. A traditional performance of the song would have a number of different verses set to the same melody and harmony each time. I added an introduction to set up the feel, then changed the format to a more traditional jazz setting: melody once, improvised solos, then melody again. This change eliminated the redundancy that could arise hearing the same melody over and over without the lyrics to move the music forward. I also added a coda at the end to close the whole thing and provide a smooth transition to the next movement.

Melodically, I adjusted a number of things to get the feeling I wanted. I adjusted the rhythms to fit the new style, passed the melody between the horns in different sections to get

a variety of sounds, and added trombone and tenor harmonies underneath the trumpet melody in the B section.

I made some significant changes to the harmony as well. While the original, more basic harmony is effective and stylistically appropriate in the traditional context, a reharmonization with more complexity helped get a fresher sound and added some interest for the improviser. For the first half, the harmony rocks back and forth between two suspended seventh chords a whole step apart. The effect is a very open-sounding, “spacey” sonority that emphasizes the plaintiveness of the melody. It also gives an unresolved feeling to the music that fits with the message of the song. The second half is chromatically moving chords that build the tension for the more intense melody.

There were a few other considerations in the creation of the tune. Mr. Page and I agreed that the very opening of the movement made it feel like a good beginning to the suite, so we put this one first. I also considered having the solo section be just the two suspended chords, but decided to include the whole form so that soloists could have a wider variety of sounds to play over.

HARD TIMES COME AGAIN NO MORE

STEPHEN FOSTER/ARR. MCMAHON

$\text{♩} = 140$
TROMBONE SOLO UNTIL CUE

TRUMPET

TENOR SAXOPHONE

TROMBONE

KEYBOARD

STRING BASS

DRUM SET

(ON CUE)

5

TEN. SAX.

III

KEYS

S. BASS

Dr.

13

I

III

KEYS

S. BASS

Dr.

21

Chord changes for KEYS and S. BASS:
 Cmaj7, C#o7, D(add4), Ebmaj7(b5), Em7, Fmaj7, F#m7(b5), B7(b9)

29

Chord changes for KEYS and S. BASS:
 Em7, Eb07, G7/D, Db07, Cmaj7, D(add4)

To CODA

37

Chord changes for KEYS and S. BASS:
 A7sus, G7sus, A7sus, G7sus
 A7sus/G, G7sus/F, A7sus/G, G7sus/F

45 A7sus G7sus A7sus G7sus

I

TEN. SAX.

III

KEYS

S. BASS A7sus/G G7sus/F A7sus/G G7sus/F

DR.

53 Cmaj7 C#o7 D(add4) Ebmaj7(b9) Em7 Fmaj7 F#m7(b9) B7(b9)

I

TEN. SAX.

III

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

61 Em7 Eb°7 G7/D Db°7 Cmaj7 D(add4) G7sus **D.S. AL CODA**

I

TEN. SAX.

III

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

69

I

TEN. SAX.

III

KEYS

S. BASS

Dr.

cmaj7 D(add4) cmaj7 D(add4)

cmaj7 D(add4) cmaj7 D(add4)

77

BRIEF DRUM SOLO: TRANSITION TO QUICK 3 FEEL

I

TEN. SAX.

III

KEYS

S. BASS

Dr.

G7sus

BRIEF DRUM SOLO: TRANSITION TO QUICK 3 FEEL

BRIEF DRUM SOLO: TRANSITION TO QUICK 3 FEEL

BRIEF DRUM SOLO: TRANSITION TO QUICK 3 FEEL

BRIEF DRUM SOLO: TRANSITION TO QUICK 3 FEEL

BRIEF DRUM SOLO: TRANSITION TO QUICK 3 FEEL

“Dark as a Dungeon”

Written by Merle Travis, a known composer of Appalachian folk music, “Dark as a Dungeon” is a song about the trials of working in an Appalachian coal mine. The most popular recordings of this song are by Johnny Cash and Merle Travis, but it has been recorded by a number of other folk artists as well. It’s the only song in my project that was originally in a triple meter waltz feel. The form is AABA and it’s very simple harmonically, using only the I, IV, and V chords. The melody of the song, as is typical of the genre, is based largely on the major pentatonic scale with some exceptions.

I chose “Dark as a Dungeon” for a number of different reasons. The lyrics contain strong themes of poverty and hardship that I associate with Appalachian folk music. The song is in triple meter, which could create needed rhythmic variety in the suite. It’s also a well-known standard of the region, often played at jam sessions in Appalachian bluegrass circles. All of these elements made it seem like an excellent candidate to be a part of the work.

DARK AS A DUNGEON

MERLE TRAVIS

The changes I made to this song were designed to create an aural picture of the mining scenes the song depicts.

I shifted the form around some to accomplish this goal and maintain the continuity of the suite, adding an introduction to make the transition from the previous movement. I added a few bars with interjected responses to the melody to make it feel less regular. The call-and-response of it is designed to emphasize the main melodic statements, saying “Listen!” as the trombone delivers its message. The bridge of the song is in a 4/4 shout-chorus style to create contrast. The shift to duple meter is inspired by the lyrics of the bridge: “Where the dangers are double and pleasures are few.” After the melody, I added a drum solo section leading into a horn trading solo section. The drums to me give a sound of physical labor to the song and the four-bar trading between the horns creates a feeling of the communal nature of the work. I chose to end the tune on a somber note since the whole song is a sort of warning against the mining lifestyle, so I put a slow horn chorale at the end.

Regarding the feel, I kept the rhythm in three, using a faster tempo to contrast with the slower introductory movement. I used a specific drumbeat and bassline to resemble the sound of machines and miner's pickaxes.

I rhythmically augmented the melody to fit over the fast waltz, maintaining a feeling of intensity and a fairly somber mood at the same time. In some places, I further elongated and broke it up to build energy and tension, preventing an overly regular sound. I changed the melody of the bridge significantly, adding some jazz language and trying to create the effect of the shout chorus in a big band chart. This was a good opportunity for me to practice writing horn harmonies and creating a style I had never used before.

My reharmonization of this tune was intentionally sparse; for large sections of it, I did not include any filler harmony (piano comping or its equivalent), just a melody and bass line. In the places where I did spell out specific chords, I generally replaced the original harmony with a more open, suspended sound. On the bridge, though, I used a simple ii-V-I progression to give the music direction and imply more specificity in the harmony for the horn lines to connect to. As in "Hard Times," the harmony I used in my arrangement was significantly more complex overall than in the original.

DARK AS A DUNGEON

MERLE TRAVIS ARR. MCMAHON

5 DRUMS CONTINUE.
BASS ENTERS

5 BASS ENTERS

$\text{♩} = 180$

STRING BASS

DRUM SET

7 **13**

TBN.

KEYS

PLAY 2ND X ONLY

S. BASS

13

DR.

14

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for the piece 'Dark as a Dungeon' by Merle Travis, arranged by McMahon. It is in 3/4 time with a tempo of 180. The key signature has three flats. The score is divided into systems. The first system (measures 1-6) features a String Bass and Drum Set. The String Bass part is mostly rests, with an entry at measure 5. The Drum Set part has a consistent rhythmic pattern with triplet accents. The second system (measures 7-13) includes TBN, Keys, S. Bass, and Dr. The TBN part has rests until measure 13. The Keys part has rests until measure 13, with a 'PLAY 2ND X ONLY' instruction. The S. Bass and Dr. parts continue their respective parts. The third system (measures 14-17) features TBN, Keys, S. Bass, and Dr. The TBN part has a melodic line starting at measure 14. The Keys part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The S. Bass and Dr. parts continue. Measure markers 5, 7, 13, and 14 are enclosed in boxes.

21 TPT.TSX RESPONSE 25

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS 25

DR. 25

28

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

35

37 SOLI BREAK INTO 4/4

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

8bm7

37

37

40

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

Eb7(b9) AbΔ7 Cm7(b9) F7(b9) 8bm7 Eb7(b9)

Eb7(b9) AbΔ7 Cm7(b9) F7(b9) 8bm7 Eb7(b9)

BASS PEDAL 47
 DRUMS PLAY JAZZ WALTZ FEEL
 PIANO COMP. STRETCH HARMONY AND RHYTHM
 HORNS PLAY UNISON (8vb)

45

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

47

53

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

62

67

TEN. SAX. DRUM SOLO - VAMP 8X. GRADUAL DECREASE
HORNS GRADUALLY DROP OFF. JUST BASS AND DRUMS LAST TIME

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS F7(b13)5(4)

S. BASS 67 SIMPLIFY AS NEEDED TO FIT MOOD

DR. 67

70

71

TEN. SAX. Eb7sus ALTERNATE SOLOISTS EVERY 4 BARS Ab% SOLO BREAK INTO 4/4

TPT. Eb7sus ALTERNATE SOLOISTS EVERY 4 BARS Ab% SOLO BREAK INTO 4/4

TBN. Eb7sus ALTERNATE SOLOISTS EVERY 4 BARS Ab% SOLO BREAK INTO 4/4

KEYS Eb7sus ALTERNATE SOLOISTS EVERY 4 BARS Ab%

S. BASS 71 Eb7sus Ab%

DR. 71

76

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

8bm7 Eb7(b9) AbΔ7 Cm7(b9) F7(b9)

8bm7 Eb7(b9) AbΔ7 Cm7(b9) F7(b9)

85
 BASS PEDAL
 DRUMS PLAY JAZZ WALTZ FEEL
 PIANO COMP. STRETCH HARMONY AND RHYTHM
 HORNS PLAY UNISON (8V8)

81

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

8bm7 Eb7(b9) AbΔ7 Db7sus

8bm7 Eb7(b9) AbΔ7 **85**

85

88 93

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

93

93

98

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

“Wildwood Flower”

Based on a parlor song called “I’ll Twine ‘Mid the Ringlets,” “Wildwood Flower” has gradually developed into a folk song over the course of its existence. The original lyrics, which were somewhat florid, have undergone a significant change through years of being taught and sung by ear. The existing lyrics are now somewhat nonsensical and inconsistent from recording to recording; the two most notable recordings (by Johnny Cash and the Carter Family) have different words in a number of key places. Much like the previous two songs, it has basic harmony (I, IV, and V) and simple, repetitive melody. The melody is fairly disjunct and more upbeat than those of the first two movements of the suite.

In looking through recordings, I found that this song had been reimagined by jazz musicians before. I liked how it was done, but thought I could do it differently and make it my own. I also chose it because the title, focused on flowers, makes a thematic connection to “Hudsonia” and maintains a theme of nature in the work that fits with my experience and values growing up in Appalachia.

WILDWOOD FLOWER (CARTER FAMILY VERSION)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four staves of music. The melody is primarily in the piano register. Chords are indicated above the staff: C, G, C, C, G, C, F, C. The score includes bar numbers 6, 11, and 15. The melody is characterized by a slow, floating quality with wide intervals and a final cadence.

I based my interpretation of this song on one of my favorite jazz recordings: Ahmad Jamal’s rendition of the Nat Simon song “Poinciana,” on his album *Live At The Pershing/But Not For Me*. Drummer Vernell Fournier’s “Poinciana Groove,” as it is commonly known, is frequently used behind other jazz standards as a way to change the style.

As far as the form, I kept it fairly straightforward, adding vamps at the beginning and end and a solo section in the middle.

I kept the notes of the melody the same, but I spread it out rhythmically to match the way Jamal plays “Poinciana.” The melody is largely in the piano at the top of open, floating chord voicings. It also goes to the bass and horns at different times.

I took the original harmony and simplified it to a more modern sound, using suspended chords that go up by step every four bars.

WILDWOOD FLOWER

TRADITIONAL ARR. MCMAHON

POINCIANA GROOVE ♩ = 200
8 TIMES, 7-8X ONLY

Musical score for the first system (measures 1-8) of Wildwood Flower. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 200. It includes parts for Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet in Bb, Trombone, Keyboard, String Bass, and Drum Set. The Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Trombone parts play a rhythmic melody of eighth notes. The Keyboard part plays a bass line with a $F7sus$ chord. The String Bass and Drum Set parts provide a steady accompaniment. A double bar line is placed after measure 4, with a repeat sign. The second ending (measures 7-8) features a triplet of eighth notes in the Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Trombone parts, and a sustained chord in the Keyboard part. A note above the Keyboard part in the second ending reads "-PLAY CHORDS HIGH W/ MELODY ON TOP".

POINCIANA GROOVE ♩ = 200
8 TIMES, 3-8X ONLY

POINCIANA GROOVE ♩ = 200
8 TIMES

Musical score for the second system (measures 9-16) of Wildwood Flower. The score continues with the same instrumentation. The Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Trombone parts play a sustained chord in the first measure, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in measures 10-11. The Keyboard part plays a bass line with $G7sus$ and $A7sus$ chords. The String Bass and Drum Set parts continue with their accompaniment. A double bar line is placed after measure 12, with a repeat sign. The second ending (measures 13-16) features a sustained chord in the Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Trombone parts, and a sustained chord in the Keyboard part.

14

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

F7SUS

21

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

2. LEAD

28

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

34

TEN. SAX. **To CODA**

TPT. **To CODA**

TBN. **To CODA**

KEYS **To CODA**

S. BASS **To CODA**

DR. **To CODA**

40

TEN. SAX. F7sus/bb 1ST X ONLY G7sus/C

TPT. F7sus/bb 1ST X ONLY G7sus/C

TBN. F7sus/bb 1ST X ONLY G7sus/C

KEYS F7sus/bb G7sus/C

S. BASS F7sus/bb G7sus/C

DR. F7sus/bb G7sus/C

46 **A7sus/D**

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

52 **F7sus/Bb** **D.S. AL CODA**

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

“Five Hundred Miles”

Written by Hedy West (of Cartersville, GA) and popularized by Peter, Paul and Mary, Five Hundred Miles is another classic American folk song. It has themes of travel, hardship, and a sense of home. The harmony is somewhat more complex than that of the other songs in the suite--it uses I, ii, IV, V, and vi. The form, however, is simpler, following an A A' format with very repetitive lyrics and melody.

I chose this song for the personal connection it has to me. The idea of having a sense of home has always been important to me, and I heard the song a lot growing up and always loved the simplicity of it.

500 MILES

HEDY WEST

The musical notation is in 4/4 time. The first line consists of four measures: the first measure has a C chord, the second has an Am chord, the third has a Dm chord, and the fourth has an F chord. The second line begins with a measure marked '5' and a Dm chord, followed by a measure with a G chord. A first ending bracket spans the next two measures, which end with a C chord. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

When I was working with the harmony of the song, I realized that the melody works well over the chord changes to the A section of “Confirmation,” Charlie Parker’s bebop composition. I decided to arrange the song based on that, focusing on applying the bebop style wherever possible.

I elaborated on the basic form of the song, adding an original bridge to match the structure of “Confirmation.” In the bebop tradition, the melody of a tune is often angular, rhythmically active, and technically challenging. As I wrote the bridge to this movement, I was striving to match the style of other bebop tunes.

The feel I used was a straight-ahead swing in the bebop style. Since bebop is one of the most important periods in jazz history, I wanted to make sure to include that style somewhere in the suite, and this tune seemed perfect for it. The swung eighth notes also provide contrast to the preceding Poinciana groove and the straight 8th feel of Hudsonia afterward.

I kept the melody largely the same for the A sections; I had to change one note (from the major seventh to the dominant seventh) to fit a chord in the fifth bar, but it just added a bluesier sound that helped further establish the jazz style. On the bridge, I wrote a new bebop-style melody that is based partly on Hudsonia, the final movement, and partly on melodic fragments of the actual “Confirmation” bridge.

I based the harmony purely on “Confirmation,” but with a twist: the key center changes throughout the movement. It modulates by minor thirds over the course of the melody, going farther and farther “away from home” (as the lyrics lament). Each solo chorus is also in a different key, again going farther away from home, but the last solo works itself back to the original key for the melody at the end.

I stayed away from harmony between the horns and background figures on the solos because I was going for a more bebop style. In many of the classic recordings of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, they play the entire melody in unison and each play fairly short solos. I chose to follow that format since I was using the chord changes of a famous bebop tune.

FIVE HUNDRED MILES

HEDY WEST

MED. UP SWING ♩ = 190

TRUMPET IN B♭

TENOR SAXOPHONE

TROMBONE

KEYBOARD

STRING BASS

DRUM SET

FΔ7 Em7(b9) A7(b9) Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7 Bb7

MED. UP SWING ♩ = 190

6

9

TPT.

TEN. SAX.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

Am7 D7 G7 Bbm7 Eb7sus AbΔ7 Gm7(b9) C7(b9)

Am7 D7 G7 Bbm7 Eb7sus AbΔ7 Gm7(b9) C7(b9)

9

11

TPT.

TEN. SAX.

TBN.

Fm7 Bb7 Ebm7 Ab7 Db7 Bbm7 Eb7 AbΔ7 Ab7(b9)

KEYS

Fm7 Bb7 Ebm7 Ab7 Db7 Bbm7 Eb7 AbΔ7 Ab7(b9)

S. BASS

DR.

17

17

TPT.

TEN. SAX.

TBN.

C#m7 F#7 BΔ7

KEYS

C#m7 F#7 BΔ7

S. BASS

DR.

17

21

TPT.

TEN. SAX.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

Em7 A7 DΔ7 Gm7 C7

25

TPT.

TEN. SAX.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

FΔ7 Em7(b9) A7(b9) Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7 Bb7 Am7 D7 Eb%9

FΔ7 Em7(b9) A7(b9) Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7 Bb7 Am7 D7 Eb%9

25

4

33

31 *E♭ 9/8* SOLO BREAK

TEN. SAX. *E7(♭9)* *FΔ7* *Em7(♭9)* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭7*

KEYS *E7(♭9)* *FΔ7* *Em7(♭9)* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭7*

S. BASS *E7(♭9)* *FΔ7* *Em7(♭9)* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭7*

DR. *E7(♭9)* *FΔ7* *Em7(♭9)* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭7*

33

38 *Am7* *D7* *G7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Em7* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7*

TEN. SAX. *Am7* *D7* *G7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Em7* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7*

KEYS *Am7* *D7* *G7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Em7* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7*

S. BASS *Am7* *D7* *G7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Em7* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7*

DR. *Am7* *D7* *G7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Em7* *A7(♭9)* *Dm7* *G7* *Cm7* *F7*

45 *B♭7* *Am7* *D7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭Δ7*

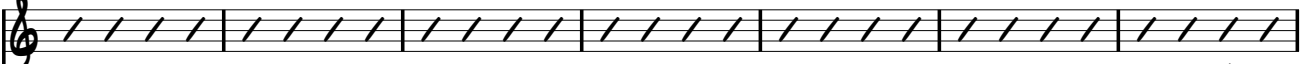
TEN. SAX. *B♭7* *Am7* *D7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭Δ7*

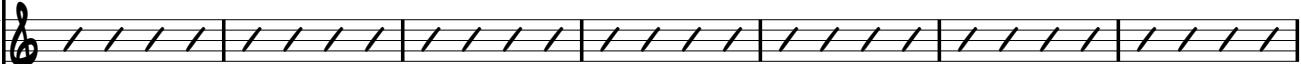
KEYS *B♭7* *Am7* *D7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭Δ7*

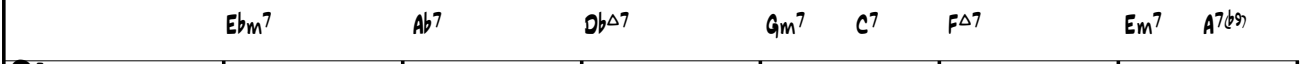
S. BASS *B♭7* *Am7* *D7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭Δ7*


DR. *B♭7* *Am7* *D7* *Gm7* *C7* *FΔ7* *Cm7* *F7* *B♭Δ7*

52 Ebm7 Ab7 DbΔ7 Gm7 C7 FΔ7 Em7 A7(b9)


TEN. SAX. 


KEYS 


S. BASS 


DR. 

59 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7 Bb7 Am7 D7 Gm7 C7 FΔ7

TEN. SAX. 

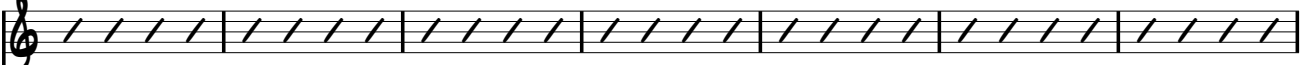
KEYS 

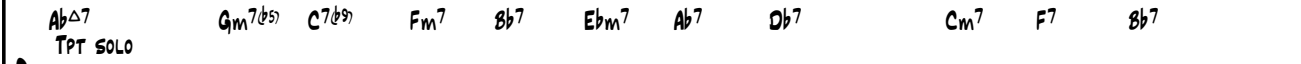
S. BASS 

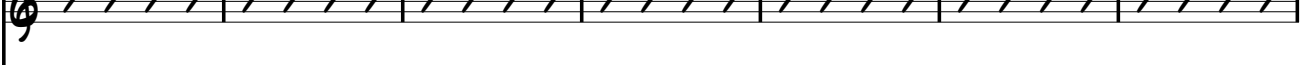
DR. 

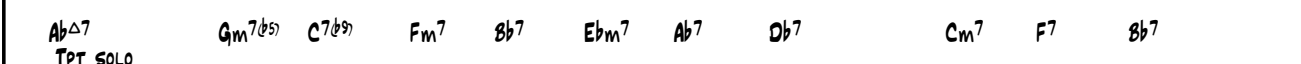
65

65 AbΔ7 Gm7(b9) C7(b9) Fm7 Bb7 Ebm7 Ab7 Db7 Cm7 F7 Bb7

TPT. 

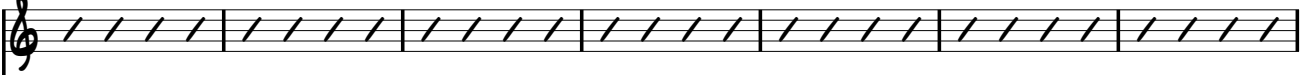
KEYS 

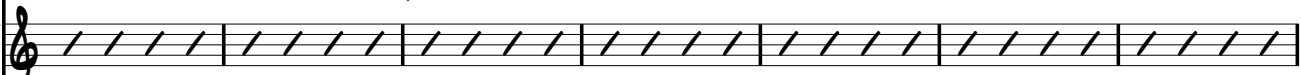
S. BASS 

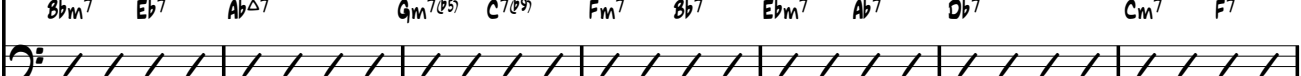
DR. 


65 TPT SOLO

72 *Bbm7 Eb AbΔ7 Gm7(b9) C7(b9) Fm7 Bb7 Ebm7 Ab7 Db7 Cm7 F7*

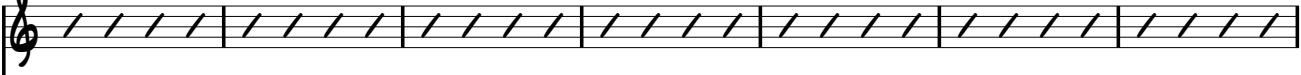
TPT. 

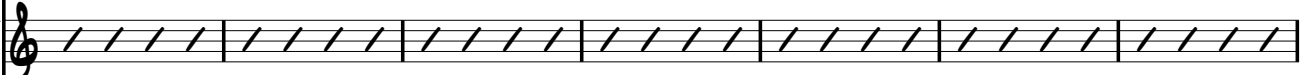
KEYS 

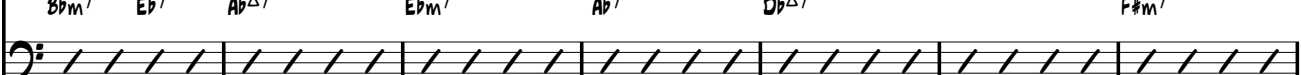
S. BASS 


DR. 

79 *Bbm7 Eb AbΔ7 Ebm7 Ab7 DbΔ7 F#m7*

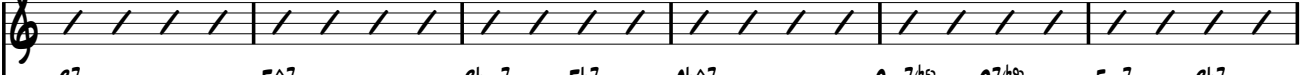
TPT. 

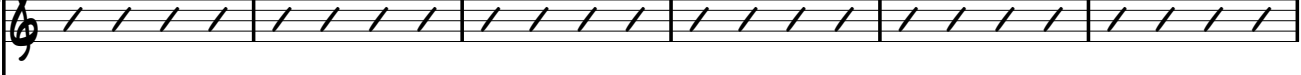
KEYS 


S. BASS 


DR. 

86 *B7 EΔ7 Bbm7 Eb AbΔ7 Gm7(b9) C7(b9) Fm7 Bb7*

TPT. 

KEYS 

S. BASS 

DR. 

92 Ebm7 Ab7 Db7 Cm7 F7 Bbm7 Eb7 AbΔ7

TPT.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

97

97 BΔ7 Bbm7(b9) Eb7(b9) Abm7 Db7 F#m7 B7 E7 Ebm7 Ab7 Db7

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

TROMBONE SOLO

97

104 C#m7 F#7 BΔ7 Bbm7(b9) Eb7(b9) Abm7 Db7 F#m7 B7 E7 Ebm7 Ab7

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

111 C#m7 F#7 BΔ7 F#m7 B7 EΔ7 Am7

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

118 D7 GΔ7 C#m7 F#7 BΔ7 Bbm7(b9) Eb7(b9) Abm7 Db7 F#m7 B7

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

125

TPT.

TEN. SAX.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

130

TPT.

TEN. SAX.

TBN.

KEYS

S. BASS

DR.

E7 Fmaj7(#11) Eb7sus Db7sus C7ALT.

E7 Fmaj7(#11) Eb7sus Db7sus C7ALT.

“Hudsonia”

I included the final tune, Hudsonia, because I wanted to end with an original song. This tune has a strong personal connection for me and fits in with themes of Appalachian folk music (focus on nature of the mountains), so it felt appropriate to use.

My personal connection to this tune begins with my maternal grandmother, Carol Henry, who lived in the Appalachian mountains near Burnsville, NC for many years. A local plant and animal enthusiast, she led Camp Carol Henry for many years, a summer camp for local kids that went on nature walks and learned about the world around them. On a hike, she discovered the rare wildflower Hudsonia Montana. At the time, it was only known to exist in one small colony in Linville Gorge. She reported it, a team of biologists went up to check, and the site is now protected from human foot traffic. The flower has since been discovered in four other locations, all in the mountains of Western North Carolina and Tennessee. The spot where the hudsonia blooms is up on an exposed ridge near the intersection of the Blue Ridge Parkway and NC Highway 80. I went up with my family when my grandmother died (to scatter her ashes on the hudsonia) and the view is astounding, with a clear sight line all the way to Linville. I wrote the song with that spot in mind, and the scene is reflected in the melody and harmony.

The form of the song is fairly basic: AABAA with an introduction and a three-peat at the end. I decided to have the solos be just on the A section of the tune because the progression is more comfortable to improvise over and I like having a shorter form to work with when I play.

The melody of the tune is based mostly on the pentatonic scale with some blues influence. The A section melody stays in one key while the harmony implies others underneath, and the B section does the same but in a different key.

The harmony is very open-sounding with lots of suspended chords. It mostly moves down by step, and the motion is largely non-functional with some dominant-tonic movement.

This tune was one of the first parts I finished for the project, so I did a lot of experimentation with different horn harmonies. The ones I ended up with were largely inspired by Steve Davis recording “A Little Understanding” from his recent album *Think Ahead*. The horns start in a chord of stacked fourths and then move parallel along the pentatonic scale. The open sound of the fourths in the horns matches the suspended sound in the underlying harmonies and helps to convey the open, expansive image I had in mind while writing the tune.

HUDSONIA

CALEB MCMAHON

KEYBOARD *F(SUS4)* *E^b(SUS4)/F*

DRUM SET *SET UP HITS*

STRING BASS *F(SUS4)* *E^b(SUS4)/F*

5

III *E^b6/9* *A^b13(SUS4)* *G^b6/9*

IV

KEYS *BOSSA NOVA*

DR. *BOSSA NOVA*

S. BASS *B^b6(SUS4)* *A^b13(SUS4)* *G^b*

2

10

III

IV

KEYS

DR.

S. BASS

gmaj13(#11) *Ab(SUS4)* *Eb%9*

B/F# *Ab(SUS4)* *Eb%9*

14

III

IV

KEYS

DR.

S. BASS

Ab13(SUS4) *Ab13(SUS4)*

17

III

IV

KEYS

DR.

S. BASS

$Gb^6/9$ $Gmaj13(\#11)$ $Ab(SUS4)$

$Gb^6/9$ $Gmaj13(\#11)$ $Ab(SUS4)$

21

I

KEYS

DR.

S. BASS

$A7(SUS4)$ $G7(SUS4)$ $Fmaj7$ $Em7(b5)$ $A7(b9)$

BRIDGE

$A7(SUS4)$ $G7(SUS4)$ $Fmaj7$ $Em7(b5)$ $A7(b9)$

BRIDGE

4

25

I

KEYS

DR.

S. BASS

Dm⁷ C⁷(SUS4) Bbmaj⁷ A⁷(SUS4)

29

I

III

IV

KEYS

DR.

S. BASS

E^b6/9 A^b13(SUS4) G^b6/9

34

I

III

IV

KEYS

DR.

S. BASS

MP

MP

MP

*g*maj13(#11)

*A*b(SUS4)

*E*b%9

6

38

I
 III
 IV
 KEYS
 DR.
 S. BASS

Ab13(SUS4)

41

I
 III
 IV
 KEYS
 DR.
 S. BASS

To CODA

Gb% *gmaj13(#11)* *Ab(SUS4)* To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

To CODA

SOLOS

45

$E\flat^9$

$A\flat^{13}(SUS4)$

BACKGROUNDS AS NECESSARY

I

SOLOS

$E\flat^9$

$A\flat^{13}(SUS4)$

BACKGROUNDS AS NECESSARY

III

SOLOS

BACKGROUNDS AS NECESSARY

$E\flat^9$

$A\flat^{13}(SUS4)$

IV

SOLOS

$E\flat^9$

$A\flat^{13}(SUS4)$

KEYS

SOLOS

$E\flat^9$

$A\flat^{13}(SUS4)$

DR.

49 $G\flat\%$ $g\text{maj}13(\#\text{11})$ $A\flat(\text{SUS}4)$ DS AL CODA

I

III

IV

KEYS $G\flat\%$ $g\text{maj}13(\#\text{11})$ $A\flat(\text{SUS}4)$ DS AL CODA

DR. $G\flat\%$ $g\text{maj}13(\#\text{11})$ $A\flat(\text{SUS}4)$ DS AL CODA

S. BASS $G\flat\%$ $g\text{maj}13(\#\text{11})$ $A\flat(\text{SUS}4)$ DS AL CODA

53 $G\flat\%$ $g\text{maj}13(\#\text{11})$ $A\flat(\text{SUS}4)$ 1.

I

III

IV

KEYS $G\flat\%$ $g\text{maj}13(\#\text{11})$ $A\flat(\text{SUS}4)$

DR.

S. BASS $G\flat\%$ $g\text{maj}13(\#\text{11})$ $A\flat(\text{SUS}4)$ 1.

57

2.

I

III

IV

KEYS

DR.

S. BASS

Ab(SUS4)

Ab

Conclusion

I learned a great deal from this project--this was the most music I had ever written before and the process of creating a larger work in a structured way taught me a lot about my own tendencies and how to streamline my writing. As far as the actual structure was concerned (with deadlines to meet and rehearsals to schedule), I learned that I actually benefit somewhat from tighter deadlines. Sitting down and writing the music was not too much of a challenge, but I tended to second-guess and over-revise myself when I had too much time in which to get something done.

I also learned more about what sounds I tend to like hearing and writing. I had very clear preferences in terms of form, orchestration, and harmony. Formally, I gravitate toward vamps at the beginning and ending of a tune; I like the way they set up the feeling and harmony before the melody comes in. The sense of anticipation before the first notes of the melody is satisfying to my ear. In the orchestration of melodies, I usually pass different phrases between instruments. For me, this adds a conversational feeling to the music and creates contrast. I also tend to build up volume over the course of a melody and end it with the two lower horns harmonically supporting the higher one (in the case of this suite, the trumpet). Harmonically, a few different sounds seemed to reoccur in my writing. Open-sounding, suspended chords came up a lot--I like the wider range of possibilities when improvising over them. Suspended chords also lend themselves to a more pentatonic improvisational approach, which is a sound that I connect to and enjoy. As far as progression, much of my harmonic motion is by step. I employed a great deal of movement back and forth between two chords and stepwise ascending or descending harmony throughout the piece.

As a part of this project, I had to step outside my comfort zone to lead rehearsals on my original music. This involved taking a more authoritative role than I am used to, and that was a challenge for me. The rehearsal went well, fortunately--thanks to Mr. Page's help and my hard work, the parts were quite legible and the group read them down well. There were several instances in which musicians would suggest changes to the score that I did not agree with, and I did my best to be firm without being dismissive. Fortunately, however, I did a good job of listening, because there were two different mistakes in people's parts that we were able to fix over the course of the rehearsal. While it was challenging, the experience of leading the group through my own written music and having to make clear executive decisions about every aspect of it has helped me prepare for my future as a professional musician; having the necessary leadership skills to be in charge of a performance and rehearsal is essential in the professional world.

Reflecting on the process, I believe this project achieved its goals. While I still anticipate gaining experience in arranging, composition, rehearsal, and performance, I feel much more prepared to begin my graduate study in jazz this coming fall at Michigan State University. Writing and rehearsing this music has given me new abilities and a heightened confidence that is essential to writing original music. I have learned a great deal about writing and arranging techniques, and I look forward to future opportunities to employ them. Though the goals of a piece of music rarely dictate the audience's response to or evaluation of it (preventing a truly objective decision about whether those goals are achieved), I genuinely believe that this homage to Appalachia and its music is an honest and meaningful endeavor. I hope to use it throughout the rest of my musical career, as the work certainly

holds a great deal of meaning for me. Wherever the music takes me, I will always have this connection to my home here in the mountains.