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OUTLINES

AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION FOR CONCERT BAND

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty

Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Education in Music

by

Bruce Albert Stephenson Hunter

4. g . A.

OUTLINES

by

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The literature for concert band, once mainly in the form of transcriptions from the orchestra, is now predominantly idiomatic and consequently possesses a much broader appeal. Many new and established composers are writing challenging works for school and college bands, though these works are outnumbered by the enormous bulk of band music of dubious aesthetic and educational value. The concert band now possesses the capability of being a vehicle for innovation. It has the potential to become an ideal reflector of the flashy, volatile, and super-cool second half of the century.

Statement of the Problem

There seems to be a somewhat perverse law at work which allows only the near-virtuoso band to participate in the innovations made possible by the rapidly expanding repertoire. The grade school or high school band, which consists of people keenly attuned to the present, is limited to the performance of standard works with only the rare excursion into twentieth century harmonies, forms, and styles. There are at least two reasons for this. One of

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these reasons concerns the lack of breadth in musical tastes of directors of the grade school, high school, and college bands. The market, after all, is a fair reflector of the consumers' buying preferences. Another reason becomes obvious when one sees the complexity and technical difficulty of most of the new innovative scores for band. They are designed for the college and university bands. Only a very small number of compositions featuring pantonality, serial technique, chance music, or improvisation have filtered down to the school concert bands.

One species of concert band music is worthy of special attention because of its appeal to young people of all ages, and because of its promise in bringing about the fusion of progressive jazz and twentieth century mainstream music. Third Stream music, from its inception in 1957, has been associated with its main proponent, Gunther Schuller.

Schuller has successfully solved two of the most challenging problems of contemporary composition--the fusion of jazz with music descended from classical traditions and the preservation of rhythmic vitality and propulsion in a serial texture. His jazz or jazzinfected compositions do not employ the surface devices of popular and commercial jazz, but rather reflect its spirit and coloration in a new idiom created by the composer (6:1961).

Progressive compositional jazz is very close to Third Stream music in its promise to unite jazz and mainstream music, but it differs in two respects. Progressive compositional jazz does not have to be serially composed, and it may or may not contain an improvised section.

Third Stream music and progressive jazz are capable of setting and changing moods quickly. They are basically rhythmic in conception. These two characteristics help to make the music attractive to young listeners and performers.

Purpose of the Composition

The very small number of serious works for concert band in the progressive jazz idiom¹ prompted the author to compose one within the performance capabilities of the average high school band. In spirit, <u>Outlines</u> is a Third Stream composition. No drum set is used, and cymbal "rides" are rare and designed to be evocative. A quasi-improvisational section, patterned after the solo section in small group progressive jazz, occurs just before the final section of the composition. By precise definition, however, <u>Outlines</u> is not Third Stream music, because it is not a serial composition and it has no real improvisation section.

If one attempted to study the history of jazz through the study of music playable by and available to the average high school band, he might conclude that jazz was a frivolous medium which died in the late 1940's. <u>Outlines</u> was composed in the hope that future high school musicians will develop a more balanced view of music trends in the last half of the century.

¹See page 6 for a partial listing.

Definition of Terms

Atonality. Literally, the absence of tonality (1:62).

<u>Pantonality</u>. The inclusion of all tonalities (1:640).

<u>Cymbal ride</u>. A repeated rhythmic pattern performed on a suspended cymbal with a drum stick. Cymbal rides in varying ways and to various degrees have been an integral part of jazz since its early days.

<u>Progressive compositional jazz</u>. Progressive jazz, with its extended harmonies and involved counterpoint, grew out of the "bop," or "hot-jazz" of the late nineteen forties and fifties. Progressive jazz is often referred to as "cool," in reference to the introspective, subtle, and sophisticated treatment of its constituent elements. Small-group jazz compositions are rarely written down on paper. They evolve in rehearsal or in performance. Bigband progressive jazz is composed, with sections of varying lengths devoted to individual solos. Big band compositional jazz is sometimes through-composed, leaving no room for solos.

<u>Serial music</u>. A term which includes the twelvetone or dodecaphonic system. Serialization can refer to an ordered use of musical elements other than pitch, such as rhythms and dynamics.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review will be confined to Third Stream music and compositional progressive jazz playable by a high school concert band.

An Edward Banjamin Restful Music Commission in 1963 led to the publication of Gunther Schuller's <u>Meditation</u> (Associated Music Publishers, N.Y., 1965). This composition stands alone in the concert band repertoire as an example of Third Stream music. It is serially composed and definitely jazz-flavored. The solos, since there is no harmonic underpinning, are structured by mood and the imaginations of the soloists.

There are several progressive jazz compositions published by MJQ (Modern Jazz Quartet) and distributed by Sam Fox Publications:

> Perception I The Queen's Fancy Three Jazz Moods Django England's Carol Jazz Tangents

J. J. Johnson John Lewis John Lewis John Lewis John Lewis David Ward-Steinman

Not all of these have improvising sections. <u>Django</u> is through-composed, but <u>Jazz Tangents</u> contains rather

extensive solos. The solos are solidly founded on a twelve measure blues chord-sequence.

The fact that the above compositions represent the very small number of mainstream/jazz works in the concert band repertoire does not, of course, indicate a need for more of them. However, on the basis of having prepared and performed <u>Django</u> with his high school band and of observing the reactions by both performers and audience, the author feels secure in the belief that there is a need for much more music in this style.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE COMPOSITION

<u>Outlines</u> is a multi-sectional work in one movement. The tempi of the successive sections are slow, fast, slow, medium tempo, fast, very fast. The melodies are modal and pan-tonal, and the harmonies are polytonal and added-tone chords. Instrumental ranges and technical demands were designed to be challenging to the average high school band. <u>Outlines</u> was rhythmically conceived and the rhythms were jazz inspired.

The introductory slow section states the melodic theme four times, in four different rhythms. This theme is an ascending sequence of the intervals M3, tone, semitone, and is played by the clarinets in the chalumeau register.



The introduction, which ends with an allusion to the opening chords of Paul Creston's Northwest Suite, moves quickly into the fast section, a hemiola section with added-tone chords in the accompaniment (in two) and the melody (in three) in the Lydian mode. The melodic theme acquires, and holds, a new rhythm in this section. Melodic and harmonic variations occur within a rather strict rhythmic form, and are performed by the high, middle, and low instruments in that order. The overall key feeling is B flat. To close, a rapid succession of statements in eighth, quarter, eighth rhythm lead to the transitional chord, which is a dominant B flat with the lowered fifth as bass note (mm. 54-56). During this sustained tutti chord the percussion section ritards, and all instruments enter the fanfare in unison. These few measures are an indirect quote from Hugo Montenegro's Jazz Fanfare, written for Stan Kenton's Neophonic Orchestra. After four measures the unison breaks into an ordered conversation between various instrumental groupings. The harmonic scaffolding is tonal, bi-tonal, and tri-tonal. This section evolves into a short clarinet cadenza (m. 88), the contents of which foreshadow the upcoming section.

The format of this medium-tempo section is somewhat similar to that of the preceding one, in that the melodies are introduced singly. The difference is that the melodies are stacked into a three-voice counterpoint lasting

throughout the section. The trombones lead, with the trumpets entering eight measures later with a contrasting theme (m. 98). Upon entry of the third melody (m. 106), the previous two melodies are released into an eight measure development. The section closes with the triumphal return (m. 114) of the two original themes below a stilldeveloping third melody. A short coda leads to a transitional chord built on F dominant seventh with the lowered fifth as bass note.

The fast section features the percussion in alternation with other combinations of instruments, within a form which evolved with small-group progressive jazz. This form is normally found toward the end of a jazz number and is variously called the solo section or "trading fours" (or any number of measures). Until very recent years the solo section had a very strict harmonic underpinning, but in recent years it has evolved beyond the furthest harmonic extensions to a predominantly rhythmic exchange with atonal melodic contours over serial or pan-tonal harmonies. This section provides a unique opportunity for fun: an opportunity to use rhythms and harmonies which are related to the feel of the composition but which are too remote to introduce suddenly within the traditional framework of thematic development. Here, the unifying factors are the elements of rhythmic dialogue between the percussion and small instrumental combinations and the predominant feeling

of the B flat tonality. At m. 149 the "solos" are pulled together and altered slightly for the sake of the underlying harmony. This four measure recapitulation leads into a six measure solo by the percussion section (m. 153). The remainder of this section is a more conventional handling of thematic material, passed from group to group until, after a grand pause, it terminates in a single tutti statement F to B flat concert. A snare drum roll at m. 178 introduces the final section, which opens with a very fast clarinet solo. Four measures later the flute is added at the fourth with xylophone. The first part of this final section is very similar in format to the last part of the preceding section. There is an ongoing melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic logic, but the melody passes quickly from group to group until it finally ends with a pianissimo cymbal tap (m. 202).

From this point, the composition is a scored crescendo. The percussion section dominates to the end. Immediately following the cymbal tap the second and third clarinets begin an ascending scale built on the intervals TSTSTSTS. This is the harmonic scaffolding for all instruments as they enter group by group at four measure intervals to close the work.

CHAPTER IV

THE METHOD OF COMPOSING OUTLINES

To start the composition, the author first wrote a literary description, in much the same way a critic would write a review of a concert. This helped to focus on a central theme and mood and hence provide a foundation on which to build the work coherently. With the literary description as a guide, the work was then composed rhythmically. The melodic contours were conceived and sketched together with the rhythms. Although the author felt no obligation to adhere slavishly to the rhythmic and melodic outline, it remained largely unchanged in the finished composition. Composing a complete rhythmic outline and sketching the architecture of the melodies increased greatly the possibility of overall logic, contrast, and forward momentum of the composition.

The idea of composing the rhythms first is not a new idea to the well-known composers of this century. Paul Creston states:

In planning the rhythmic form of a large composition (suite, sonata, symphony, tone-poem, etc.) it will be found that proceeding from the general to the particular clarifies the conception (3:175).

Transforming the melodic contours into definite pitches was often a process of translation rather than an act of composing. Often the rhythms narrowed the pitch possibilities down to one note only. In contrapuntal sections one melody was composed first and harmonized; then the remaining melodies were written. Since all melodies had been conceived with definite instruments in mind, the rhythms and pitches tended to be idiomatic. Scoring the composition, then, grew naturally out of the preceding steps.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

This thesis comprises an original composition for concert band and a covering paper. <u>Outlines</u> is a composition designed to be challenging to the average high school band. The rhythms are jazz-inspired, the melodies are modal and atonal, and the harmonies are tonal and polytonal.

The composition grew out of the belief that more innovations in band music should be within the performance capabilities of school students, in order that their willingness to expand their musical tastes may be sustained.

<u>Outlines</u> was first rehearsed on July 6, 1970, by the summer session band at Central Washington State College, in preparation for inclusion in a concert on July 15. The author felt that the composition was a musical success and that it fulfilled the function for which it was designed.

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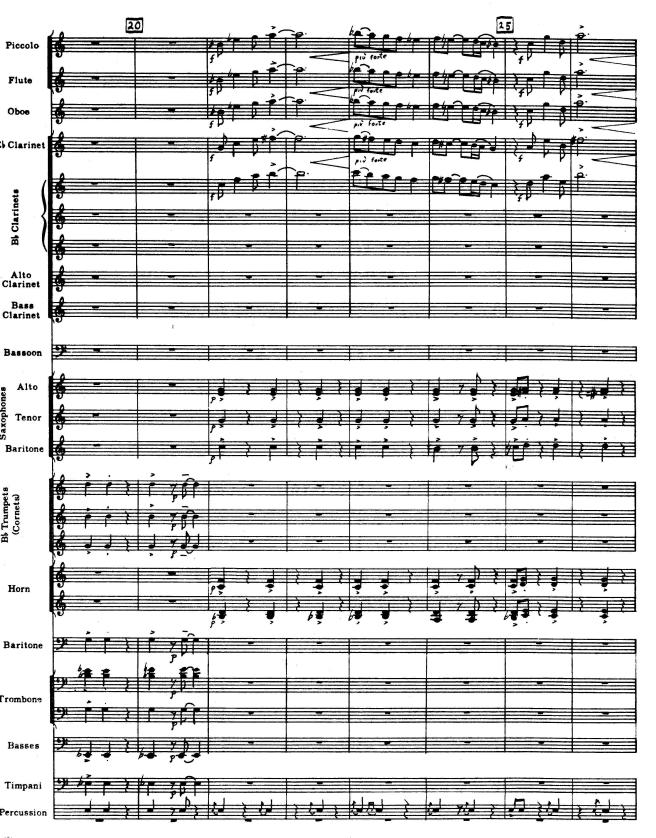
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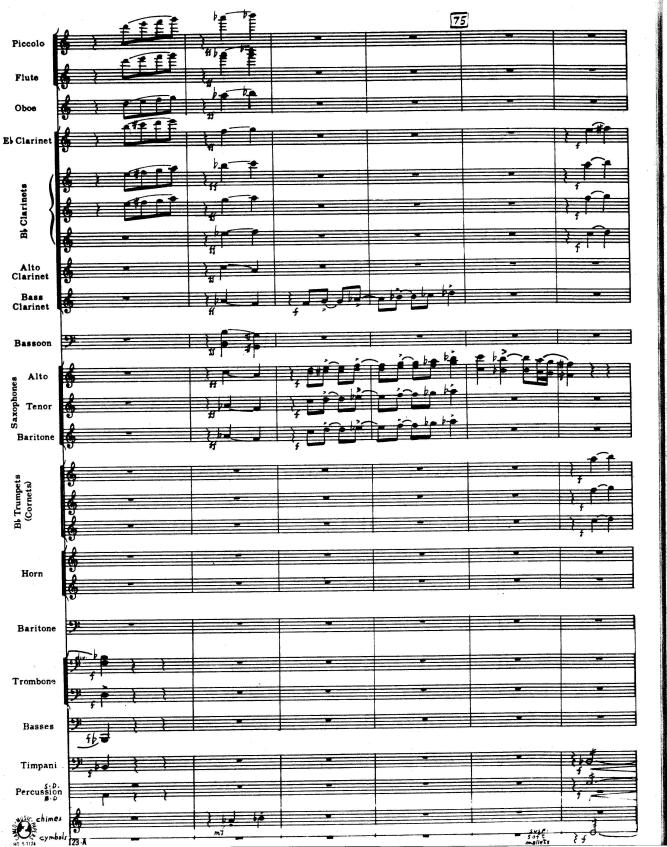
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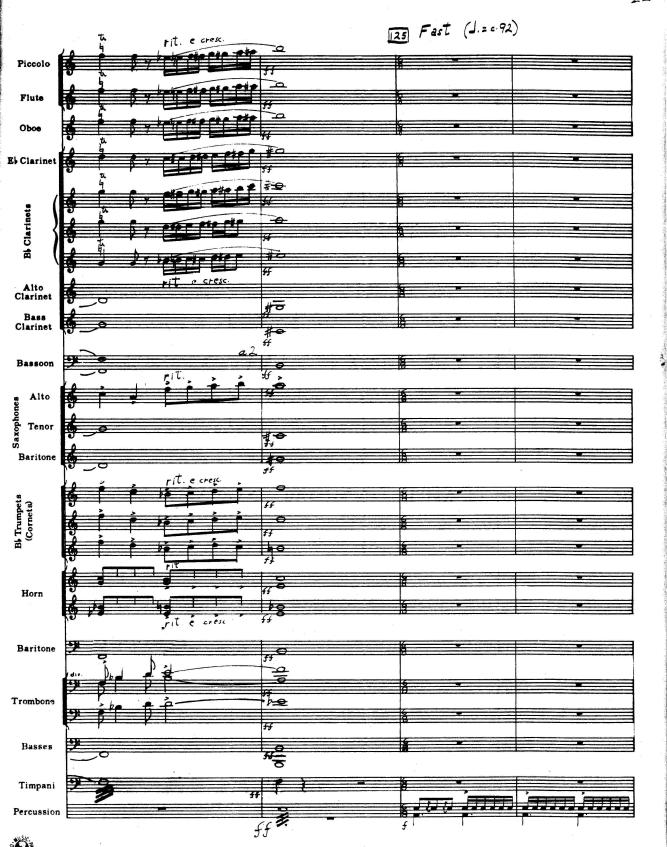
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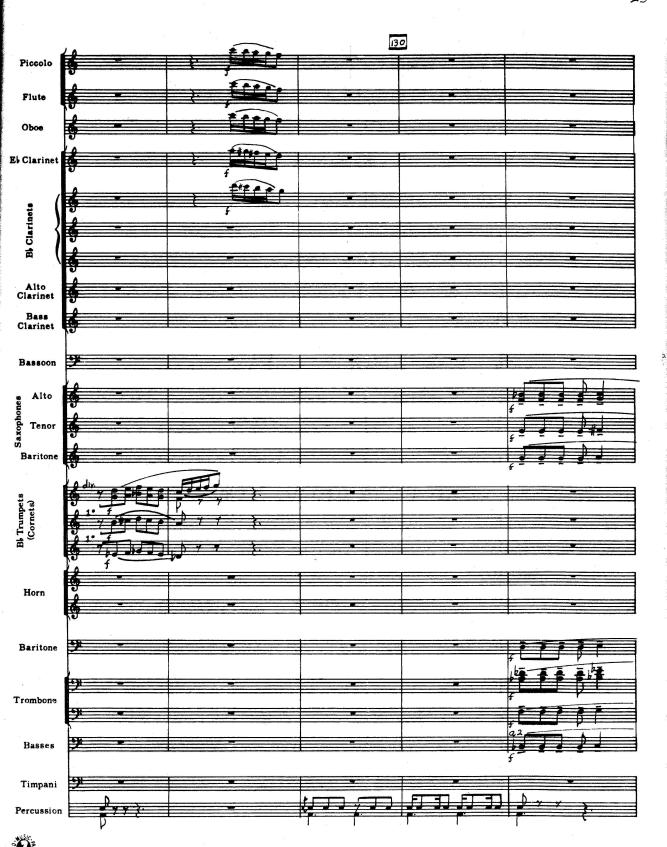


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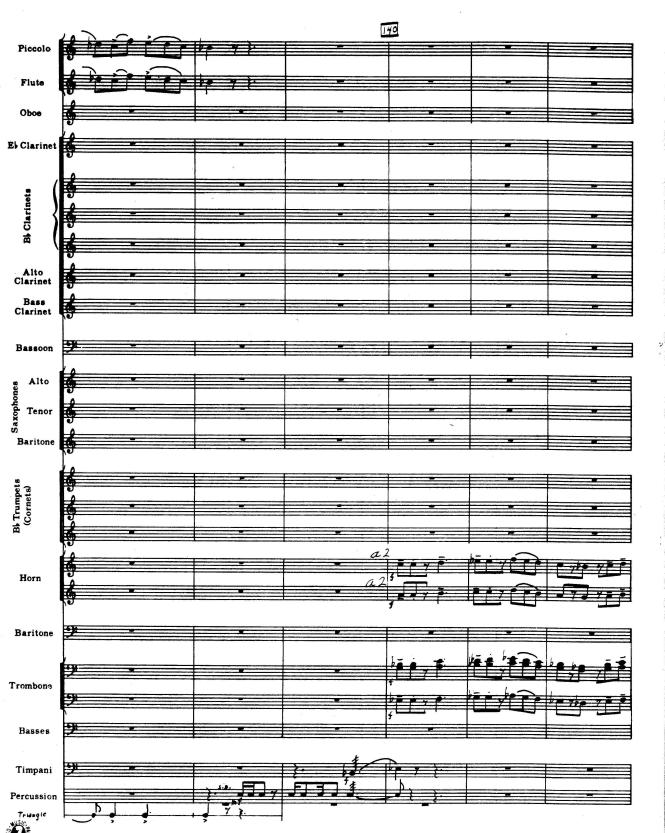
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135 Piccolo . Flute Oboe El Clarinet **B** Clarinets Alto Clarinet Bass Clarinet Bassoon 9 Alto Alto Conception Conception Baritone Alto 10 Bh Trumpets (Cornets) Horn Baritone e Trombons 9 Basses Timpani Percussion Susp. B.D. Ŵ Triangle P P Tri

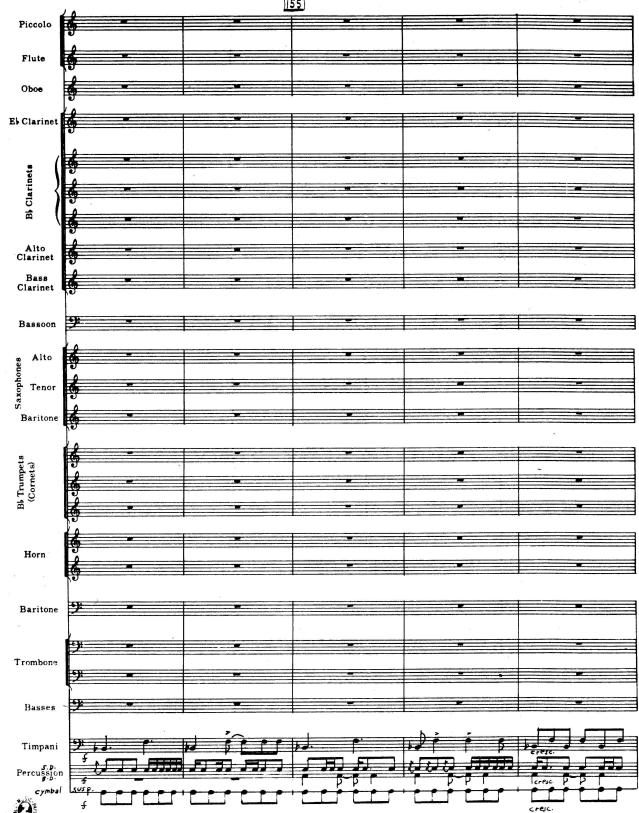
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