Jazz Scores and Analysis

VOL. 1

by Richard Lawn



Big Band Compositions by:

Darcy James Argue John Fedchock John Hollenbeck Jim McNeely Vince Mendoza Bob Mintzer

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Jazz Scores and Analysis Vol. I

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Preface

In 1982 Rayburn Wright, head of the Jazz and Contemporary Media Department at the Eastman School of Music, published what has become an iconic book that occupies a special place on many writers' bookshelves. It has become an important teaching and learning resource for many of us since its release. Published by Kendor Music, *Inside the Score* is revered by students and professionals worldwide. If you want to learn about jazz arranging and composition techniques employed by three master composer/arrangers from the 1960s and '70s, this has been one of the best resources to consult. The book offers in-depth analysis of several scores by Sammy Nestico, Thad Jones, and Bob Brookmeyer.

Ray was my mentor at Eastman, and his approach to analyzing nine big band jazz ensemble scores by these three composers was thorough, revealing, and a revelation to many of us learning the art and craft of jazz composition. With his guidance the reader learns, through analysis, about pacing, voicing techniques, orchestration, harmonization, and re-harmonization techniques, form, solo background writing, balance, and other essential aspects of writing for the jazz ensemble. I treasure the complimentary copy of his book Ray sent me, one of the first graduates of the MM program he created, shortly after its publication. At the time I was Director of Jazz Studies at The University of Texas at Austin, my second such position.

I had been contemplating the need for a sequel to this book for some time, hoping to one day take on this challenge. Aside from some work by the late Fred Sturm, another Wright protégé, no one has followed a similar approach to examining scores by more contemporary jazz composers since Wright's book was released in 1982. Jazz composition for large ensembles has developed significantly, and in some cases has made what could be described as quantum leaps since the 1960s and '70s. Just as small group jazz has evolved, so has composition for the large jazz ensemble. It was therefore because of Ray's early inspiration, and my desire to learn about and share the work of more contemporary composers whose work I have enjoyed playing and rehearsing, that I decided to tackle the task of creating what I hope to be the first of two volumes.

Aside from the debt I owe to Ray for putting me on the right track in 1976, I am very grateful to the six composers who contributed scores to this project, which could best be described as six case studies. Grammy nominated composers and arrangers John Fedchock, Bob Mintzer, Vince Mendoza, Jim McNeely, John Hollenbeck, and Darcy James Argue are among the jazz composers whose work I have admired as a performer, teacher, and writer. Their willingness to share their art in this way is quite extraordinary, especially in this age when work is pirated from artists on a daily basis. Despite this climate, "Les Six" were enthusiastic about the project. We worked together in the selection of a score, and they proofed my work to ensure I hadn't missed an important detail or misrepresented an aspect of their score. Selecting a score was a difficult process, since in many cases composers' early works are exciting for first revealing their unique, signature characteristics, which then mature over time. In most cases we decided together to use more mature examples of their work for these case studies. Each chapter dedicated to one of these six composers will include recommendations for other recordings and scores of interest that could serve equally well as an outstanding study, revealing aspects of their style that might not appear in these pages.

Many of these other scores are available for purchase from their websites or publishers, and you are encouraged to dig further on your own.

It is no surprise that two of the writers included in this book are students of Rayburn Wright, so it is most fitting that they are included. Ray always encouraged originality in his students, never telling us how to write, or what to write, but instead guiding us along the way and asking us just the right questions. While John Hollenbeck only studied briefly with Ray, nothing could be more contrasting than the two scores by the writers who studied with him – John Fedchock and Hollenbeck. It is also interesting to note that three of these composers, Hollenbeck, Argue, and McNeely, were either close cohorts of or studied with Bob Brookmeyer, the innovative composer whose earlier works for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra were dissected by Ray Wright in *Inside the Score*.

Who has been omitted and why? Scores by Kenny Wheeler and Maria Schneider and later work by Bob Brookmeyer are not discussed, and there are reasons why these writers have been omitted. Scores by Schneider and Wheeler have already been made available in volumes published by Universal Edition. In each case, however, their scores are made available without any significant analysis. Sadly, Wheeler and Brookmeyer have passed away, making access to the rights to use full scores challenging. Earlier works by Brookmeyer were the subject of Rayburn Wright's *Inside the Score*, and late Brookmeyer works are now available through his website. They are being reissued through the work of Ryan Truesdell. Schneider's later works are written for a specialized instrumentation that goes beyond the traditional big band instrumentation that I wanted to remain primarily focused on. An Appendix to this volume recommends recordings by these writers.

There are of course many other creative and original jazz composers and arrangers who could have been included, and for that matter each one of "Les Six" has many outstanding arrangements to his credit as well as original compositions. I made a conscious decision to limit this study to original compositions for the standard, or close to typical, big band instrumentation. If I am fortunate enough to be the beneficiary of Father Time, I hope to pursue a second volume to feature other deserving contemporary jazz composers not included in this first volume.

An interview with each composer is included at the close of each chapter. Interviews explore the composers' creative process, how they learned their art/craft, who influenced them, and particular aspects concerning the featured score. In some cases I learned as much from these conversations as I did from the hours spent combing through their scores and recordings.

A best effort has been made to overturn every rock in these great scores, but that's not to say there isn't a remaining hidden pearl left for you to find.

While recordings of all six compositions are readily available, the temptation to include them with this book was resisted in an effort to keep the cost down. You can get them at a much greater savings than what it would have cost to include them with this book.

As a special bonus, a link is included to download a computer application developed by the author and Steve Tjernagel as a tool that composers and arrangers might find useful. *The Orchestrator's ToolKit* is

compatible with Windows and Apple operating systems and is designed to quickly provide instrument ranges, transpositions, and various writing suggestions as well as cautions. The *ToolKit* provides a large menu of instrument sounds recorded over their full range. All of the sounds in the *ToolKit* library were professionally recorded and were produced by real instruments, not synthesized by machines. The *ToolKit* also includes a variety of brass mute sounds and pitched percussion instruments with different mallet strengths. Our *ToolKit* provides a handy reference to help writers to acquire an aural memory while also providing useful information about the instruments including ranges, transpositions, special techniques, idiosyncrasies, and hints about effective orchestrations. An additional note palette menu, accessible from anywhere in the *ToolKit*, provides a way to quickly see and hear what instruments are capable of playing a particular concert pitch. Not every pitch over an instrument's entire range is available, but close neighboring pitches to your choice provide an accurate idea of what the pitch area will sound like on a particular instrument.

Over the course of many years of teaching I have learned that beginning and intermediate arrangers and composers often lack an aural memory of the sound of instruments at various pitch levels, or brass mute possibilities in various ranges, making it difficult for them to make their scores both player friendly and orchestrationally colorful. We hope the *Orchestrator's ToolKit* will help to overcome such shortcomings. Download your copy of the *Orchestrator's ToolKit* by following the link. No support is provided by the authors, but none should be required.

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/79etjk2bhr9kaca/AAA1XwSGFsxGL_jVry3ilRXya?dl=0

The *Orchestrator's ToolKit* is made available to you at no cost but without any support, so please don't write me asking. On the other hand, if you find a mistake I encourage you to email me specifics so it can be corrected.

A special thanks to Chuck Sher, who believed in this project from the outset. I am of course grateful and indebted to the composers for their generosity and cooperation. I also owe a debt of thanks to the many students and colleagues I had the pleasure of working with at the University of Northern Iowa, The University of Texas at Austin, and the University of the Arts. May we all continue to write music that matters to people who want to listen.

March 2018

THE AUTHOR

Richard (Rick) Lawn has been widely published throughout his career. Kendor Music, C.L. Barnhouse, Walrus Music (now eJazzLines), Concept Music, Alfred Music, eJazzLines, Warwick Music, Dorn Publications, Baker's Jazz and More, LawnWorks Publications, and UNC Press, among others, publish his music. His books, *The Jazz Ensemble Director's Manual* (in its fourth edition), *Jazz Theory and Practice* (in its second edition, which includes interactive ear training software and an additional chapter), and *Experiencing Jazz* (now in its second edition), are considered staples among jazz educators and students. *Jazz Theory and Practice* users have said:

"I would never want to part with this invaluable book. I think this is one of the best books on the subject of jazz theory because the content is appropriately concise, clear, and very well organized. I can't thank the authors enough for making the contents of the book so readable and enjoyable to learn about. I find myself wanting to run to the piano to test out the concepts in this book."

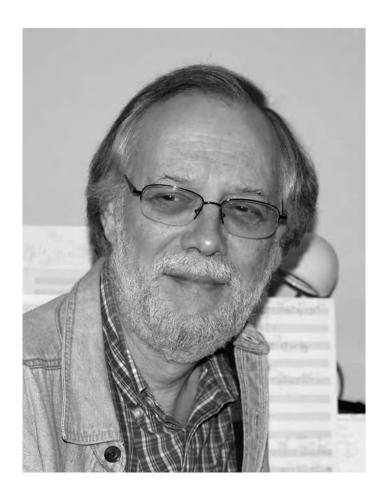
"This might be the most useful, and thorough, music theory book on my shelf. It's not just a useful resource for Jazz, but for music in general."

"I have gone through a lot of jazz theory books, but this one is my favorite by far."

Rick has received several significant composition grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and as a member of the Nova Saxophone Quartet he has recorded his music on the Musical Heritage Society, Crystal, and Equilibrium labels. The Sea Breeze record label issued *Unknown Soldiers*, a CD recorded by the Third Coast Jazz Orchestra that features his compositions and arrangements, including his arrangement of "Donna Lee" recorded by Bobby Sanabria's New York Latin big band on his 2001 Grammy nominated CD. In the fall of 2011 his Philadelphia based little big band Power of Ten released *Earth Tones*, which includes his original compositions and arrangements. The CD received coast-to-coast radio play and favorable reviews. Most of the material from this recording is available from eJazzLines.

Performances in addition to his own ensembles include extended engagements earlier in his career with Lionel Hampton, Chuck Mangione, the Rochester Philharmonic, and the Austin Symphony. He has also performed in backup orchestras with Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Charles, Joe Williams, Natalie Cole, Marian McPartland, the Temptations, the Four Tops, Dianne Schuur, Rosemary Clooney, Nancy Wilson, Aretha Franklin, and a host of others. Visit his website at http://www.RickLawn.com.

Richard Lawn is the former Dean of the College of Performing Arts at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, where he is now Professor Emeritus. He continues to teach various subjects, including Jazz History and Jazz Theory online for VanderCook College of Music and the University of the Arts. Formerly, he was affiliated with The University of Texas at Austin, serving as Director of Jazz Studies, Chair of the Department of Music, and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. He began his collegiate teaching career at the University of Northern Iowa and Hartwick College.



Acknowledgments

Dr. David Aaberg, Professor, Director of Jazz Studies at Central Missouri State University, a good friend, a great musician, and one of my first successful doctoral students at the University of Texas, used his lasersharp eyes and theorist radar to proof my work. His advice in the early and final stages of this project was of great help. Paul Baker, my old Austin, Texas, friend, section mate, and now occasional publisher of my high school-level charts, helped me on several occasions to sort out Sibelius software problems and discover some features that after years of use I didn't even know were there! Thanks, Paul!! And speaking of help with software issues, Dr. Tom Rudolph, who is an adjunct instructor for Berklee Online, the University of the Arts, Central Connecticut State University, VanderCook MECA, and the Rutgers Mason Gross School of Music, is considered a Finale and Sibelius expert, with publications on using both applications. Tom was an excellent resource when I needed to sort out Finale issues and got me back on track in using it. He has authored multiple online courses in music technology and music history. My lifelong partner Susan has always been there for me in such endeavors, and I'm grateful for her patience and support. Chuck Sher agreed to work with me on this project, though we had never met, and still haven't! He put trust in the outcome and value in its worth. It's not easy to find publishers like Chuck, who get it and understand the musician's point of view. Lastly, this project would never have gotten off the ground had it not been for "Les Six" - the six composers who agreed to take part and offer their scores for dissection and discussion. The greatest artists are those willing to share their work and aspects of their creative process with the world so that we can better understand how they think, work, and create. The world is certainly a better place because of their work.



Trombonist, bandleader, composer, and arranger John Fedchock

Photo by Joseph Verzilli

Chapter 1

John Fedchock – "Ten Thirty 30"

John Fedchock first emerged as a world-class jazz trombonist in the 1980s while serving as the lead trombonist and featured soloist in Woody Herman's last "Herd." During the seven years he spent with Herman he rose to become the band's musical director and often featured soloist. In this capacity, Fedchock served not only as musical coordinator but also as chief arranger in the production of Herman's last two Grammy Award nominated recordings – 50th Anniversary Tour and Woody's Gold Star. Famed journalist and historian Leonard Feather described Fedchock as the "unsung hero" of Woody's 50th Anniversary Tour album. Herman often referred to Fedchock as his "right hand man" and a "major talent." DownBeat magazine stated that "it was the young blood of musicians like Fedchock that helped keep Woody Herman's last years musically healthy and growing."

Striking out on his own career centered in New York City, the multi-talented trombonist has established himself as a renowned trombone soloist, Grammy nominated arranger, and bandleader. His big band has recorded five albums to date on the MAMA and Reservoir music labels, including *Like It Is*, which includes the original composition "Ten Thirty 30" discussed in these pages. Fedchock has been found in *DownBeat* magazine's Readers and Critics polls in multiple categories and has received countless reviews and notices in journals and prestigious newspapers such as the *New York Times*. His appearances are not limited to big band showcases, as his small group projects with his quartet and NY Sextet showcase A-list sidemen. His "incomparable trombone playing, which seems to have no limit, technically or musically" is the centerpiece of all of these groups (JazzReview.com).

Fedchock has gained global recognition and visibility through numerous tours and recordings with other groups such as T. S. Monk, Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band, Louis Bellson Big Band, Bob Belden Ensemble, Manhattan Jazz Orchestra, Jon Faddis Jazz Orchestra, and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. He has been showcased as a soloist and composer/arranger in concert halls and festivals worldwide. John divides his busy schedule between professional engagements and educational clinics, workshops, and performances.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Fedchock holds degrees from The Ohio State University and the Eastman School of Music, where he became a protégé of Rayburn Wright, author of *Inside the Score* (Kendor Music, Inc.), which serves as the inspiration for this study. His compositions and arrangements are published by eJazzLines Publications and Kendor Music, Inc. While he is perhaps more well known and recognized by the Grammy organization as an arranger, he willingly agreed to contribute this original score to the project for close examination.

Selected Discography

John Fedchock Big Band Recordings

Woody Herman and His Band 50th Anniversary Tour – Concord Jazz, Inc., 1986 Woody Herman and His Big Band Woody's Gold Star – Concord Jazz, Inc., 1987 John Fedchock New York Big Band – Reservoir, 1995 On the Edge, John Fedchock New York Big Band – Reservoir, 1998 No Nonsense, John Fedchock New York Big Band – Reservoir, 2003 Up and Running, John Fedchock New York Big Band – Reservoir, 2007 Like It Is, John Fedchock New York Big Band – MAMA, 2015

Sextet Recordings

Hit the Bricks – Reservoir, 2000 Live at the Red Sea Jazz Festival – Capri Records, 2010

"Ten Thirty 30"

To paraphrase from liner notes that accompany the MAMA CD *Like It Is*, "Ten Thirty 30" was commissioned for the Clifford Brown Symposium through a grant from the Philadelphia Music Project of the PEW Charitable Trusts and the University of the Arts. Fragments in the composition were drawn from "Brownie's" tunes and solos. The somewhat cryptic title references Clifford Brown's birth date – October 30, 1930.

The arrangement could best be described as a modern big band composition that builds on that tradition. While influenced by Thad Jones, Fedchock's style goes beyond this earlier master. Generalization is always risky, but Fedchock's overall writing style seems more conversational in terms of arranging for the full ensemble. The three horn sections are in constant dialogue. His harmonic ensemble language and voicing techniques also favor a modern, denser, and at times more polychordal approach, as can be seen and heard in the score chosen for this case study.

Lead Sheet Reduction — Melodic Overview

"Ten Thirty 30," as shown in the lead sheet reduction (Example 1.1), is an illustration of the classic hard bop style. It is angular at times, sequential on occasion, and organized in what first appears to be the predictable AABA song form associated with the tradition, and it is difficult to tonicize because of shifting accidentals and melodic/harmonic resolutions. This last attribute is likely why the composer chose to write this score without a key signature, though it is essentially in G minor.

It should be noted that the first measure gives the illusion of a pickup or a break to lead into the start of the form, but measure one is in fact the beginning of the tune. The fact that the melodic line in measure one is unaccompanied, aside from the downbeat, and that the rhythm section drops out for the balance of

the bar, contributes to this illusion. The syncopated nature of this tune also strongly suggests its intended roots in the hard bop tradition and dedication to the music of Clifford Brown. Example 1.1 illustrates the unique and time honored devices associated with the bebop and hard bop styles, such as sequences or near sequences, lines composed of diatonic and chromatic neighbor tones, surround tones, or simple passing tones, and a contour with lines that constantly shift direction.

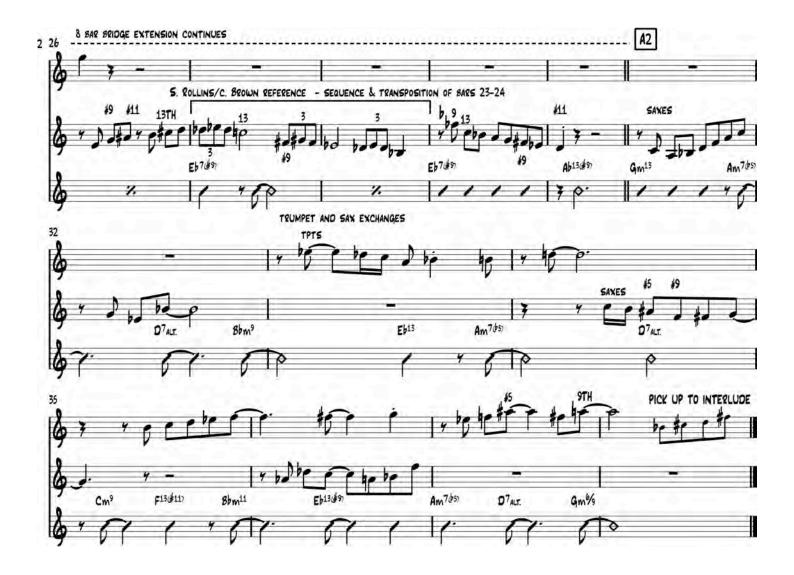
The melodic material frequently represents upper extensions and altered chord tones of the given harmony, a characteristic also typical of the hard bop style. These altered tones are labeled in Example 1.1.

The melodic rhythm is also very reminiscent of the bop and hard bop styles, as it is highly syncopated. Twenty measures, or just over 50 percent of this unusually structured thirty-eight measure tune, show lines that begin on the second half of beat one. The first four measures of the A section in fact show melodic upbeat entrances after beat one. Five additional measures throughout the tune show melodic entrances occurring on an upbeat at some point in the measure. These upbeat entrances tend to propel the melody forward, creating a constant sense of anticipation and over the bar line phrasing while also serving to anticipate changes in harmony.

TEN THIRTY 30



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Lead Sheet Reduction – Harmonic Overview

As previously suggested, the melody and harmony interact in such a way as to discourage the composer from using a particular key signature. This becomes even more evident when analyzing later sections of this score. While the tune appears to be fundamentally in G minor, there are numerous implications through ii⁷–V⁷ progressions that suggest new tonicizations to different keys even though these cadences may never resolve to the anticipated tonic.

The first phrase of the tune through measure 4 is quite predictable, showing classic $i^{6/9}$ – ii^{g7} – V^7 – iii^7 – V^1 7 movement. What is unusual, however, is the sequence of these four chords. The more typical movement is reversed, e.g., iii^7 – V^1 – ii^7 – V^7 . In the fourth measure the V^7 dominant chord resolves down a step to the V^7 chord rather than tonic. A chain of V^7 chords follows, moving down chromatically and without resolution until returning to the home key, with a V^7 progression in the last bar of the A section.

 A^1 , the near repeat of the A section, shows much the same harmonic motion but without the chromatic digression to the ii^7 – V^7 in the key of A.

Chromatic motion can be found once again in the bridge or B section, especially in measure 20 (\flat II⁷ – tritone substitution for V⁷), measure 23 (chromatic resolution from the preceding bar), and m.27, with a clear return to the VI⁷ chord in the home key. The A \flat dominant chord in measure 30 serves as a tritone substitution for the V⁷ chord in the home key (D7). The progression in the final 8 measures of the tune is identical to A¹.

The movement to the E7 chord on the seventh bar of the B section feels like a deceptive harmonic movement to the VI chord.

What is very unique about this tune is its unusual length, 38 measures, since most tunes from the period that served as its inspiration followed the 32 measure AABA song form model. More discussion about this unusual aspect of the form will follow.

Example 1.2

TEN THIRTY 30

HARMONIC SCHEME

