

something in the moon

russell scarbrough

Commissioned by the Bucknell University Jazz Ensemble
Barry Long, director

Instrumentation:

Alto Saxophone 1
Alto Saxophone 2
Tenor Saxophone 1
Tenor Saxophone 2
Baritone Saxophone

Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Trumpet 5 (optional)

Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Bass Trombone

Guitar
Vibes (optional)
Piano
Bass (acoustic preferred)
Drum Set

Notes on **something in the moon**:

The overall feel in the first part of the piece is simply straight eighths, in the “ECM feel” style — which is to say, that the drums should not engage in actual timekeeping much, if at all (the bass will perform this function, playing their part as written), but rather coloring the background with mostly cymbals. The drummer may explore their collection of mallets, brushes, and whatever else they may have for this purpose, as long as it remains in the background. I often suggest Peter Erskine’s ECM recordings as a model for drummers to study. See the 2023 recording by the Russell Scarbrough Big Band on the album “Fun Times” to hear an excellent performance featuring Jim Pugh on trombone, Jared Schonig on drums, and James Westfall on vibes.

The melody, beginning in bar 15, is based on a four-bar harmonic pattern which descends by a minor third every iteration. The piano and guitar may wish to experiment with creative ways to alternate comping during the melody (they probably should not both comp at the same time, of course).

At 71, we transition into a more rhythmically active period, starting to emphasize an eighth note pulse. While I do not consider this a minimalist piece by any means, I employ some techniques common to minimalism: specifically for this piece, strings of short repeated notes, beginning in the trumpets and flute at 71. Typically, I activate these with swells and other dynamic devices, which should be clearly audible (and perhaps exaggerated for the desired effect). Whenever there are short repeated notes in this piece, they should be separated, but full value — in other words, not so short that they are staccato or “stabby”, but also not so long that they run together audibly. Perhaps the term “classical eighths” gets the idea across.

In 81-102, I use another minimalist technique: arpeggiation of all harmonies. In this case, and elsewhere in the piece, each note is sustained as it is articulated, making a cascading, blurring effect. Wherever any wind player arrives on a sustained note, he should back off (rhythm instruments should decay naturally). The exception to this is, of course, the melody instruments from 85-97 (trombone solo, alto 2 and tenor 1), who are foreground and should sing out.

This all builds to a climactic moment at 102. Drums should set up 108. The eighth note tempo does not change, but the feel is double-time, for a jazz waltz. If your band has no vibes player available, the solo should be played on guitar. The vibes (or guitar) solo should play his written part at 156 as if it were a continuation of his improvised solo (this instruction is in his part). In the event that your lead trumpet is not confident about the high E’s at the climax at 169, he may play 171-175 down an octave, and the second player’s part can be the lead. Alternately, he can double the second part for those measures.

At 184, the cascades are applied to entire scales. At the trombone cadenzas, the rhythm parts contain the instruction “High Color Wash” —in other words, an active blur of fast scales, trills, clusters, tremolos, etc. in the upper register, so that no single texture is prominent. This need not be played particularly loud, however. The trombone solo should be clear throughout. For the final cadenza, at 204, you can experiment as to how this should go. For example, the “Wash” could crescendo and decrescendo in waves, or build throughout, there might be a big push to the final cut-off (in 205), or it might fade so that the actual cut-off is barely perceptible. They should ring (sounding as a cluster) from 205-208 as the solo plays his concluding figure before the return to the melody.

The final section of the piece is a straightforward recapitulation with minor variations. At 248, the ensemble should crescendo to an abrupt stop. The trombone solo may hold over slightly so his high C rings out prominently. The crescendo from 253-254 should not get too large, rather suggest that it was going to, but suddenly ran out of energy, leaving us with a peaceful ending.

Many thanks to Barry Long and the Bucknell University Jazz Ensemble for supporting the creation of this work.

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STRAIGHT 8THS $\text{♩} = 92$ (Flute)

The score is written for a jazz ensemble in 3/4 time with a tempo of 92 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The piece is marked 'STRAIGHT 8THS' and includes various performance instructions such as 'Fluoré', 'Fluoré', 'Fluoré', 'Fluoré', 'High, quiet sustained colors, clusters', 'PED.', 'Loop', and 'Very sparse colors'. The instrumentation includes Flute, Alto Saxophone 1, Tenor Saxophone 1, Tenor Saxophone 2, Baritone Saxophone, Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Trumpet 3, Trumpet 4, Trumpet 5, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Trombone 3, Bass Trombone, Guitar, Vibes, Piano, Bass, and Drum Set. The score spans 14 measures.

15

FLUTE

ALTO E

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

SAXE SAX

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TRP. 5

(FLUGEL)

UNIS.

222

mf

TBN. 1 (Solo)

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

SASS BONE

GRP.

mf COMP NORMALLY (SPARE)

F#m7(b9)/E

C7sus4(b9)

B7(b9)

Bbm7(b9)

Dm7/C#

A7sus4(b9)

A7(b9)

Gm7(b9)

VIBES

mf

F#m7(b9)/E

C7sus4(b9)

B7(b9)

Bbm7(b9)

Dm7/C#

A7sus4(b9)

A7(b9)

Gm7(b9)

PNO.

mf

BASS

mf

THE TONE: VERY LITTLE TONE, MOSTLY COLORS

YOU MAY USE MALLETS, SOUBRES, WHATEVER SUITS YOU

31

47

Musical score for various instruments including Flute, Alto E, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bari Sax, Trp. 1-5, Tbn. 1-3, Bass Bone, Gtr., Vibes, Pno., Bass, and D.S.

Chord progression for Gtr. and Vibes:

- 31: Bm7/A#
- 32: F#7(b9)(b5)
- 33: F7(b9)
- 34: Ew7(b5)
- 35: Abw7/G
- 36: Eb7(b9)(b5)
- 37: D7(b9)
- 38: Dbw7(b5)
- 39: Fw7(b5)/E

Handwritten annotations include "DIVISI" and "TO TRUMPET" above the trumpet staves, and "(FLUTE)" above the flute staff at measure 47.